



Different Democracies, Same Media Power? Elections and Governance in Europe and the United States

Thursday 4th to Saturday 6th September 2008, San Francisco



Organization:

SwissGIS

Swiss Centre for Studies on the
Global Information Society
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Official Sponsor:



Stadt Zürich

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Swissnex San Francisco

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In Cooperation with:

National Center of Competence in Research
Challenges to Democracy in the 21st Century
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Conference Timetable and Abstracts

Thursday 4th September

18.30 Door Opening

19-20.30 **Roundtable: Media Power and Elections**
Speakers: Amy Mitchell, Lance Bennett, Claes de Vreese, Shanto Iyengar

Friday 5th September

9.45-10.30	Welcoming Remarks by the Mayor of Zurich Elmar Ledergerber and the Rector of the University of Zurich, Hans Weder
10.30-11.00	Shanto Iyengar , Stanford University: Changing Patterns of Political Communication
11.00-11.30	Lance Bennett , University of Washington: Media Structures and Democracy
11.30-12.00	Discussion

12.00-13.00 **Lunch at swissnex**

Panel 1 **Media Power and Media-Politics-Relations in Europe and the United States**

13.00-13.20	Steve Reese , University of Texas, Austin: Journalistic Independence in an Age of Global News
13.20-13.40	Daniel Hallin , University of San Diego: Journalistic Independence in Mature and Transitional Democracies
13.40 -14.00	Open Debate
14.00-14.15	Short Break
14.15-14.30	Jesper Strömbäck , Mid Sweden University, Sundsvall: Mediatization of Politics in Western Democracies
14.30-14.45	Frank Marcinkowski , NCCR-Democracy: The Media's Impact on Political Decision-Making Processes in Europe: Case Study Results
14.45-15.00	Patrick Donges , University of Zurich: The Media's Impact on Political Party Organizations in Europe: Case Study Results
15.00-15.20	Open Debate

Panel Outline

Mediatization describes a distinctive stage in the long-term development of contemporary mass democracies in which many political processes have grown more or less dependent on the mass media (Strömbäck). Mediatization of politics thus refers to an increasing media influence over political party organizations (Donges), political decision making processes and citizens' political perceptions and worldviews (Marcinkowski). But the degree to which the media play an active and independent role in politics is affected by the contextual environment, i.e. the political setting and the media setting of the respective country (Hallin). This leads us also to expect significant cross-national differences with regard to the conditions and powers that shape the news (Reese). However, the world is not a static entity: all countries and their media are affected by similar technological innovations, secularization processes, commercial pressures and transnational convergence. Starting with these broader questions on the role of journalism and news in a globalized world, the panel will gradually focus in on the shifting power balance in the media/politics relationship of modern mass democracies.

Discussion Points

- Which forms of news journalism are endangered species, which are coming to the forefront? What are the implications for political communication?
- What are the conditions that promote or constrain journalistic independence and media influence in society?
- What are the dimensions and effects of mediatization of politics in Western democracies?
- To what extent do we see evidence of Americanization processes in the political communication systems of (selected) European countries?

Friday 5th September

Panel 2 Monitoring the Democratic Performance of the Media: Research and Records in the U.S. and Europe

15.45-16.05	Mark Whitehouse , IREX Europe: Media Monitoring in Mature and Transitional Democracies
16.10-16.30	Amy Mitchell , Project for Excellence in Journalism: Structure and Content - Monitoring Media Excellence
16.30-16.45	Short Break
16.45-17.05	Gabriele Siegert, Matthias Gerth , University of Zurich: Democratic Performance of Branded Media Outlets
17.05-17.25	Josef Trappel, Tanja Maniglio , University of Zurich: Media for Democracy Monitor: The Democratic Value of Monitoring Media Conduct
17.25-18.00	Open Debate

Panel Outline

Media are essential for the functioning of contemporary democracies. For more than 60 years – when the Hutchins Commission published its crucial report – media researchers, social scientists, media professionals and responsible journalists struggle to monitor how media performance is linked to democratic quality. The tasks required from the media change over time and need to be adapted to changing democracies. Findings from media monitoring exercises might in turn feed into media policy and media governance. The panel looks at contemporary issues for media monitoring, methodological problems and ways of policy implementation.

Discussion Points

- Contemporary democracies require essential services from modern mass media. The gap between what democracy needs and what the mass media deliver is widening. How can social science identify the relevant criteria to monitor/measure this trend?
- What democracies require from the mass media changes in correspondence to the degree of democratic maturity. The more participatory and deliberative democracy becomes the more important the mass media become. What are the common features important for all types of democracy? And how can these features be monitored/measured?
- Mass media that are accountable to contemporary democracies can be identified along specific criteria. What are the essential criteria of „democratically excellent“ mass media?
- New forms of computer mediated communication have the potential to improve democracy. How exactly do Web 2.0 and other forms of participation contribute to the democratic progress? How can this contribution be monitored/measured?

19.00

Dinner

Saturday 6th September

Panel 3 Mediated Political Communication: Campaign Dynamics and Media Effects	
9.45-10.05	Claes de Vreese , University of Amsterdam: The Power of Political and Media Messages in Campaigns: European Experiences and Perspectives
10.05-10.25	Hanspeter Kriesi , University of Zurich: The Power of Politicians' Rhetorical Strategies in Campaigns: A European Case Study
10.25-10.45	Erik Bucy , Indiana University: The Dynamics of Presidential Election Coverage: American Experiences and Perspectives
10.45-11.05	Open Debate
11.05-11.20	Short Break
11.20-11.40	Markus Prior , Princeton University: The Media and Political Interest in Europe and the United States
11.40-12.00	Heinz Bonfadelli , University of Zurich: The Media and Political Knowledge in Europe and the United States
12.00-12.20	Open Debate

Panel Outline

The practice of political campaigning in the United States is regarded as the cutting edge of the electioneering industry. Some even call it the international “role model of campaigning” and claim that the rest of the world is following American methods and strategies to the letter. This notion appears to be exaggerated. The first two panelists (de Vreese, Kriesi) discuss dynamics currently found in overseas elections and take a keen interest in the players, tactics and effects of contemporary European-style campaigns. A characteristic feature of American-style campaigns is their media-centeredness. The road to victory in U.S. presidential campaigns runs through the newsrooms of the television networks. The patterns of American election coverage since 1992 are at the center of the third presentation (Bucy). Studying the media’s role in elections is crucial because they have become the most important sources of political information in both the United States and Europe. Of special relevance are the concepts of political interest and political knowledge which are considered important determinants of citizens' competence to fulfill their role in democracy. Political interest and knowledge are related closely to media reception habits but, as the last two panelists (Prior, Bonfadelli) argue, show vastly different patterns in Europe and the United States.

Discussion Points

- American media textbooks carry titles like “Do the media govern?”, “Out of order – The news media’s domination of American political process”, “The mass marketing of politics – Democracy in an age of manufactured images” or “Spiral of cynicism – The press and the public good”. Could a similar story be told about political communication in Europe?
- Scholars in Europe and the United States sometimes disagree about the standards of adequate political interest and knowledge that can be expected of citizens. Traditionalists have higher expectations than reformists; some kinds of political engagement may require more of citizens than others. Can we come to generalizable conclusions? What is your position?

12.30-14.00

Lunch at swissnex

Saturday 6th September

Panel 4 Media Power Structures and Media Governance: Similarities and Differences between USA and Europe	
14.00-14.20	Robert B. Horwitz , UC San Diego: Which Model of Media Governance is Emerging in the U.S.?
14.20-14.40	Shawn Chang , FreePress: To What Extent Should or Can the Civil Society Participate in Media Governance Decisions?
14.40-15.00	Open Debate
15.00-15.30	Short Break
15.30-15.50	Robert Picard , Jönköping University: Classical Perspective: Corporate Media Governance
15.50-16.10	Werner A. Meier, Pietro Rossi , University of Zurich: Radical Perspective: Participatory Media Governance
16.10 -16.30	Open Debate

Panel Outline

Panel 4 focuses on media power structures and media governance on both sides of the Atlantic. The aim is to search for both similarities and differences that can explain how media power structures are shaped. Moreover we are looking for different ways to regulate the mass media, in particular we are interested in new forms of governance beyond traditional state regulation.

The panel looks at new forms of regulation and their effects, either positive or negative, on media actors in general and on the public participation in the democratic institutionalization of media structures in particular. On the one hand, we will look at self-regulating activities by media companies (Corporate Media Governance), but also on the other hand at the role that civil society can play by participating in media policy decisions (Participatory Media Governance).

Discussion Points

- Which model of Media Governance is emerging in the U.S.? What analogies can be outlined between U.S. and European media governance? To what extent does the U.S. model influence the global framework of media policy?
- To what extent does the Civil Society participate in Media Governance decisions? Are there new forms of governance that enable the civil society to better participate in media policy matters? Is it even possible for the civil society to participate in media policy?
- Does Corporate Media Governance foster responsibility and accountability of mass media towards society? Which forms of Corporate Media Governance are emerging? What are the responses and reactions to Corporate Media Governance? On the company's side? On the political side?
- Does Participatory Media Governance foster responsibility and accountability of mass media towards society? Which forms of Participatory Media Governance are emerging? Does Participatory Media Governance represent an upgrade compared to the current practices of state media policy or, respectively, the self-regulation of media companies?

16.30-17.15

Closing Debate and Concluding Remarks

18.30

Dinner