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Contents

List of Figures and Tables vii

Notes on Contributors ix

1 Mediatized Worlds – Understanding Everyday Mediatization 1
Andreas Hepp and Friedrich Krotz

Part I Rethinking Mediatization

2 Mediatized Stories in Mediatized Worlds 19
Knut Lundby

3 Culturalizing Mediatization 38
Johan Fornäs

4 When Mediatization Hits the Ground 54
Nick Couldry

5 Media, Mediatization and Mediatized Worlds: A Discussion of the Basic Concepts 72
Friedrich Krotz

Part II Mediatization and New Media

6 Mediatized Connectivity: Historical Traits of Telephony and Theoretical Considerations about a New Dispositive of Communication 91
Thomas Steinmaurer

7 Intensifying Mediatization: Everyware Media 107
James Miller

8 From Mediation to Mediatization: The Institutionalization of New Media 123
Stig Hjarvard

Part III Mediatized Communities

9 Benedict in Berlin: The Mediatization of Religion 143
Hubert Knoblauch

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10 Technology, Place and Mediatized Cosmopolitanism 159
Miyase Christensen

11 Mediatized Worlds of Communitization: Young People as Localists, Centrists, Multi-localists and Pluralists 174
Andreas Hepp, Matthias Berg and Cindy Roitsch

Part IV Mediatization and Private Life

12 Media Life and the Mediatization of the Lifeworld 207
Mark Deuze

13 Media Love: Intimacy in Mediatized Worlds 221
John Storey and Katy McDonald

14 The Meaning of Home in the Context of Digitization, Mobilization and Mediatization 233
Corinna Peil and Jutta Röser

Part V Mediatization in Organizational Contexts

15 Mediatized Politics – Structures and Strategies of Discursive Participation and Online Deliberation on Twitter 253
Caja Thimm, Mark Dang-Anh and Jessica Einspänner

16 The Quantified Listener: Reshaping Providers and Audiences with Calculated Measurements 271
Jan-Hendrik Passoth, Tilmann Sutter and Josef Wehner

17 Schools as Mediatized Worlds from a Cross-cultural Perspective 288
Andreas Breiter

Part VI Conclusion

18 Mediatization: Concluding Thoughts and Challenges for the Future 307
Lynn Schofield Clark

Author Index 324

Subject Index 328

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1
Mediatized Worlds – Understanding Everyday Mediatization

Andreas Hepp and Friedrich Krotz

1. Mediatization: A concept emerges

While mediatization as a concept is nothing new in media and communication research, it has recently emerged as an international term: in 2008, Sonia Livingstone referred to 'mediatization' in her address as president of the International Communications Association (ICA) when she reflected the increasing 'mediation of everything' and its relation to changing approaches of media and communication research (Livingstone, 2009). Various panels and papers at the recent ICA conferences referred to 'mediatization' as a research-guiding concept. And, in 2011/12, the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA) set up a working group on mediatization. In addition to this, various special issues relating to the concept have been published over the past few years. For example, a special issue of *Communications: European Journal for Communication Research* (2010, 35(3)) focused on empirical perspectives on mediatization, an issue of *Culture and Religion* (2011, 12(2)) on the mediatization of religion debate, an issue of *Empedocles: European Journal for the Philosophy of Communication* (2013, 3(2)) on mediatization as part of more general 'media processes', a thematic issue of *MedieKultur* on mediatization and cultural change (2013, 29 (54)), and, most recently, an issue of *Communication Theory* (2013, 23(3)) on conceptualizing mediatization. In addition, Knut Lundby (2009c) edited the book *Mediatization: Concepts, Changes, Consequences* to present international reflections on mediatization across various research fields. And a comprehensive handbook on mediatization is in preparation, again edited by Lundby. Various other books and journal articles have been published with 'mediatization' in the title.

So how can we explain this intensifying discussion about mediatization? Fundamentally speaking, Sonia Livingstone is right in relating the growing attention to the concept to the increasing everyday relevance of

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communication mediated by the media. As she writes about the recent development within media and communication research:

> It seems that we have moved from a social analysis in which the mass media comprise one among many influential but independent institutions whose relations with the media can be usefully analyzed to a social analysis in which everything is mediated, the consequence being that all influential institutions in society have themselves been transformed, reconstituted, by contemporary processes of mediation.
>
> (Livingstone, 2009, p. 2)

This said, the concept of mediatization represents such a move. However, while this empirical appraisal explains many aspects of the increasing interest in mediatization research, it is important to bear in mind that the concept itself has a far longer history within social sciences.

'Mediatization' as a term can be traced back to the early 20th century, and therefore to the beginning of so-called 'mass communication research' (Averbeck-Lietz, 2014). One example is Ernest Manheim (1933) in his post-doctoral thesis *The Bearers of Public Opinion* (German: 'Die Träger der öffentlichen Meinung'), which he had to withdraw because of the pressures in Nazi Germany. In this book he writes about the 'mediatization of direct human relationships' (German: 'Mediatisierung menschlicher Unmittelbarbeziehung', p. 11). He uses this term in order to describe changes of social relations within modernity, changes that are marked by the so-called mass media. Jean Baudrillard (1995, p. 175), in *Simulacra and Simulations*, described information as mediatized because there is no measure of reality behind its mediation. Within his 'theory of communicative action' (German: 'Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns'), Jürgen Habermas (1988a; 1988b) uses the term 'mediatization' to describe a sub-process of the colonialization of the lifeworld. However, he does not refer to communication media but to generalized symbolic media like power and money. In his edited volume *Medier och kulturer*, Ulf Hannerz (1990) characterized the cultural influence of media as such (that is, beyond their contents) on culture as mediatization. John B. Thompson (1995) writes in his book *Media and Modernity* about the 'mediazation of culture', meaning the increasingly irreversible mediation of culture by institutionalized mass media. These examples demonstrate that the term 'mediatization' in its different variants is deeply related to social and cultural research as a whole. However, a more detailed substantiation of the concept took place in media and communication studies. This, for example, started as early as 1995 in Germany, where related concepts like 'mediatized communication' were used (Krotz, 1995).

Within this discipline, two traditions of mediatization research emerged: an 'institutionalist tradition' and a 'social-constructivist tradition'. While it is not possible here to discuss the traditions in detail (see for this Couldry

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and Hepp, 2013; Hepp, 2013b), at least a fundamental understanding of them is necessary to grasp the further development of the concept.

In the 'institutionalist tradition', media are understood more or less as independent social institutions with their own sets of rules. Mediatization, then, refers to the adaptation of different social fields or systems like politics or religion, for example, to these institutionalized rules. The latter are described as a 'media logic' (Altheide and Snow, 1979; Asp, 1990); that is, in the widest sense of the word, institutionalized formats and forms of staging. This 'media logic', on the one hand, takes up non-mediatized forms of representation. On the other hand, non-media actors have to accommodate to this 'media logic' if they want to be represented in the (mass) media or if they want to act successfully in a media culture and media society. Starting with such a preliminary understanding of 'media logic', the concept became differentiated within that tradition, while the link to these original ideas remains (Hjarvard, 2013, pp. 8–40).

The understanding of mediatization from a 'social-constructivist' point of view moves the role of various media into the foreground as part of the process of the construction of social and cultural reality. Mediatization, then, refers to the process of a construction of socio-cultural reality by communication (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Knoblauch, 2013; Krotz, 2001) and the status of various media within this process is analyzed (Hepp, 2013a, pp. 54–68). Mediatization describes how certain processes of the construction of reality by communication become manifested in certain media and how, in turn, existing specifics of certain media have a contextualized 'influence' on the process of the communicative construction of socio-cultural reality.

Having these different traditions of mediatization research in mind, a shared fundamental understanding of mediatization has developed across them in recent years. Basically, the term 'mediatization' does not refer to a single theory but to a more general approach of media and communication research. In this sense, *mediatization is a concept used in order to carry out a critical analysis of the interrelation between the change of media and communication, on the one hand, and the change of culture and society on the other*. Based on such a fundamental understanding, mediatization refers to something other than mediation (cf. Couldry, 2012, pp. 134–7; Hepp, 2013a, pp. 31–8; Hjarvard, 2013, pp. 19–20): mediation is a concept to describe the process of communication in general, that is, how communication has to be grasped as a process of mediating meaning construction. Mediatization is a category to describe a process of change. In a certain sense we can link both concepts as follows: mediatization reflects how the process of mediation has changed with the emergence of different kinds of media. This said, the concept of mediation describes a very fundamental moment of communication as symbolic interaction. In contrast to this, mediatization is much more specific in analyzing the role of various media in the further process of socio-cultural change. However, it has to be linked to

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an analysis of communication as symbolic interaction (c.f. Krotz, 2001, pp. 51–2).

At this point, we can see significant similarities to – but also differences from – the *medium theory* as it was originally introduced by Harold Innis (1950) and Marshall McLuhan (1994) and brought forward by others (cf. for an overview Meyrowitz, 1995). Two similarities are striking. First, both mediatization research and medium theory focus not (only) on media content but also on the role media as such play in altering communication. Joshua Meyrowitz – one of the most prominent present scholars of medium theory – put this as follows: 'To observe [...] potential media effects – whether in the past, present or future – one needs to shift from the content of media to the nature and capacities of each medium itself' (Meyrowitz, 2009, p. 518). Mediatization research does not argue along the lines of the effect paradigm (not even in an alternative manner, as medium theory does), but it emphasizes in addition the necessity to focus on 'capabilities' (Lundby, 2009b, p. 115), 'moulding forces' (Hepp, 2013a, pp. 54–5), 'affordances' (Hjarvard, 2013, p. 18) and the 'dissolution of media boundaries' (Krotz, 2001, pp. 188–9). Second, both medium theory and mediatization research understand their respective approaches as being inclusive across the micro, meso and macro levels. For medium theory, this is explicitly expressed by Meyrowitz (1995; 2009) in his distinction between 'microlevel' and 'macrolevel medium theory': while the 'macrolevel medium theory' is focused on long-term and comprehensive changes across centuries, for example, from 'modern print culture' to 'global electronic culture', the 'microlevel medium theory' is interested in a detailed analysis of the altering of interaction orders by such comprehensive changes. Moreover, mediatization research at the level of certain interactions and/or institutions is interested in more general statements on the change of culture and society. This becomes thickened in the idea of understanding mediatization as a 'meta-process' (Krotz, 2009, p. 22). Bearing these two similarities in mind, it is no wonder that both paradigms are in dialogue with each other (cf., for example, Hug and Friesen, 2009 and Schofield Clark in this volume).

This said, a number of differences between medium theory and mediatization research are striking – differences which substantiate the uniqueness of the mediatization approach. In this introduction we can name only the four most important points, while a more comprehensive discussion can be found in other publications (cf. Hepp, 2013a, pp. 11–17; Hjarvard, 2013, p. 12; Krotz, 2014). First, mediatization research is sceptical about the narration of change as introduced by 'macrolevel medium theory'. This narration of change is based on the idea that each culture and society is dominated by a single medium, which is more or less stable over time. Within mediatization research many examples can be found that demonstrate the shortcomings and under-complexity of this idea. This already refers to the second point, namely the transmedial perspective of mediatization research. Increasingly,

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the scholars of mediatization research emphasize the necessity to focus (also historically) on the interrelation of various media and not solely on a single medium. This is because the media-related transformation we are confronted with is 'driven' by the interaction of these various media in certain contexts. It's not just the mobile phone that makes the difference for our present everyday lives, but how the mobile phone interacts with social media, e-mail, digital television and so on. Third, within mediatization research the specificity of media is also core, albeit understood as one moment of the 'double articulation' (Silverstone and Haddon, 1996) of the media as objects and bearers of meaning. Mediatization research considers both. Fourth, mediatization research is in the trajectory of a 'non-media-centric' (Morley, 2009) media and communication research. The idea is not to take media without question as the source of change – there are many contexts in which 'new' media come up but are not the sources of change. Mediatization research wants to consider the *interrelation* between the change of media and communication, on the one hand, and culture and society, on the other. This also implies that the driving forces of change might not be the media at all. In sum, it becomes obvious that mediatization research is something different from medium theory.

In such a general orientation, the term 'mediatization' implies quantitative as well as qualitative aspects. With regard to quantitative aspects, mediatization refers to the increasing temporal, spatial and social spread of media communication. That means that over time we have become more and more used to communicating via media in various contexts. With regard to qualitative aspects, mediatization refers to the role of the specificity of certain media within the process of socio-cultural change. This means that it does 'matter' which kind of media is used for which kind of communication. Some researchers understand this process of mediatization as a long-term process that has more or less accompanied the whole history of humankind (Hepp, 2013a, pp. 46–54; Krotz, 2009). Seen from such a perspective, human history is, besides other things, a process of intensifying and radicalizing mediatization. In contrast to this, other researchers use the term 'mediatization' to describe the process of an increasing social and cultural relevance of the media since the emergence of so-called independent 'mass media' (print, cinema, radio, television) (Hjarvard, 2013, pp. 21–3; Strömbäck, 2011).

It is in this general discussion that we also have to locate the volume at hand. It includes articles from authors of both traditions of mediatization research as well as articles that discuss across the lines of these different traditions. As such, it can be understood as an attempt to bring these different traditions of mediatization research closer together. However, this attempt is related to a certain idea – and that is the importance of linking mediatization more closely to an analysis of changing everyday lifeworlds and social worlds. This is the point at which the term 'mediatized worlds' comes in, which frames the different chapters of this volume.

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2. Mediatized worlds: Everyday mediatization

Within media and communication research, the concept of 'media worlds' has a certain tradition. David L. Altheide and Robert P. Snow (1991), for example, relate their understanding of 'media logic' to 'media worlds' when they use the latter term to describe social worlds marked by a 'media logic'. Elizabeth Bird (2003) describes the everyday use of (mass) media from an ethnographic perspective as 'living in a media world', as she writes in the subtitle of her book. Faye D. Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod and Brian Larkin (2002) characterize the cultural anthropology of the media as analyses of different 'media worlds'. Leah A. Lievrouw (2001) sees a relation between the establishment of 'new' digital media and the pluralization of lifeworlds. David Morley (2001, p. 443) reflects on questions of belonging in the 'present mediated world'.

However, in a general sense, 'media worlds' is no more than a metaphor for the fact that various contexts of present everyday life are marked by media communication. That said, we use the concept of 'mediatized worlds' in a much more concrete sense when referring to (1) social phenomenology and (2) symbolic interactionism (see, for the following, Hepp, 2013a, pp. 75–83; Krotz, 2009; Krotz and Hepp, 2013).

1. Within *social phenomenology*, Alfred Schütz and Thomas Luckmann have described the everyday world as a very special part of the lifeworld of a human being: 'The everyday life-world is [...] that province of reality which the wide-awake and normal adult simply takes for granted' (Schütz and Luckmann, 1973, vol. 1, p. 3). The everyday lifeworld is accepted without question, not the 'private world' of individual(s), but intersubjectively: '[T]he fundamental structure of its reality is shared by us' (p. 4). As such, the everyday world does not only include nature but also the social and cultural world in which a person exists.

Very early on, Benita Luckmann (1970) emphasized the fragmentation of everyday lifeworlds into various 'small life-worlds'. For her, these are the 'segments' (Luckmann, 1970, p. 81) of everyday life that exist as specificity within organizational as well as private contexts: 'The life round of modern man is not one piece. It does not unfold within one but within a variety of small "worlds" which are often unconnected with one another' (Luckmann, 1970, p. 587). Empirically, Benita Luckmann refers to 'worlds' of different jobs, of social clubs, of political parties, religious communities, subcultures and so on. Therefore, in present (post-)modern societies, we are confronted with a variety of 'socially constructed part-time-realities' (Hitzler and Honer, 1984, p. 67) which impact more and more on the experience of men and women.

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2. Within *symbolic interactionism*, the concept of 'social worlds' is well established and can be linked to our outlined understanding of mediatized worlds. Here, three points are especially striking:

The first point is that *mediatized worlds have a 'communication network' beyond the territorial*. It was Tamotsu Shibutani (1955) who in the 1950s reflected on the characteristics of what he called 'social worlds'. One of his key arguments was that, already at that time, media played an important role in the construction of social worlds. However, as these mediated 'communication networks are no longer coterminous with territorial boundaries, cultural areas overlap and have lost their territorial bases' (Shibutani, 1955, p. 566). Quoting Shibutani, our argument is not that questions of (re)territorialization will not matter for the analysis of mediatized worlds. More specifically, the argument is that mediatized worlds are at least partly articulated by mediated communication networks, and that these communication networks transgress various territories with increasing mediatization. To take one of our above-mentioned examples: the mediatized world of stock exchange dealing is something that takes place not only in the stock exchange building itself but at nearly every place where bankers as well as private persons can deal their stocks via desktops and laptop computers or smartphones. It is the mediatized communication network by which this mediatized world gets constructed, not a territoriality.

A second important point is that *mediatized worlds exist on 'various scales'*. Some years later than the publication by Tamotsu Shibutani, it was Anselm Strauss (1978) who reflected Shibutani's arguments somewhat further. In so doing, he perceives one important indication of why the concept of social worlds (and, therefore, also our conceptualization of mediatized worlds) presents a highly promising starting point for empirical research. Strauss argues that they 'can be studied at any scale, from the smallest (say, a local world, a local space) to the very largest (in size or geographic spread)' (Strauss, 1978, p. 126). Therefore, the concept of mediatized worlds offers an approach for investigating mediatization empirically by defining an investigation perspective, meaning the perspective of the thematic core of a mediatized world. At the same time, the concept is not so narrow that it is reduced to a micro-concept of interaction at a certain place. We can use it on various levels or scales, across which we can conduct mediatization research.

The third point is that *mediatized worlds are 'nested/interlaced' with each other*. Again, we can refer here to the arguments by Anselm Strauss. Discussing Shibutani's ideas, he remarks that 'social worlds *intersect*, and do so under a variety of conditions' (Strauss, 1978, p. 122). We are also confronted with the '*segmenting* of social worlds' (Strauss, 1978, p. 123), not only in the sense that they segment the totality of lifeworlds but also in the sense

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that they segment internally, producing 'specifiable subworlds'. We can take as examples here the mediatized worlds of popular cultural scenes like hip hop, black metal or techno: the ongoing articulation of their mediatized worlds is likewise an ongoing segmentation and (re)invention process. That said, researching mediatized worlds also entails investigating the transgression from one mediatized world to another as well as the processes of demarcation.

It is within these two frames of discussion that we want to use the concept of 'mediatized worlds'. Mediatized worlds are still lifeworlds in the phenomenological sense and social worlds in the perspective of symbolic interactionism, and at the same time new versions of these already existing concepts, as they are mediatized worlds and should be studied in this sense. They are *structured fragments of social lifeworlds with a certain binding intersubjective knowledge inventory, with specific social practices and cultural thickenings*. Mediatized worlds are the everyday concretization of media cultures and media societies. They are the level where mediatization becomes concrete, where people use media in specific contexts and with specific interests and intentions, and by virtue of this can be analyzed empirically. To give some examples: while it is impossible to research the mediatization of a culture or society as a whole, we can investigate the mediatized world of stock exchange dealing, of schooling, of the private home and so on. Analyzing these 'socially constructed part-time realities' as mediatized worlds means researching empirically in what way their communicative construction is shaped by various media, as well as how this communicative construction changes in the sense outlined above. If we raise the question of how this can be done in practice, a look at the already existing studies of Anselm Strauss, for example, and at other work in the frame of symbolic interactionism may be helpful, as well as the existing studies in phenomenological sociology and sociology of knowledge. This is done in practice, for example, in the priority programme *Mediatized Worlds* (see below).

The analysis of various mediatized worlds and their change by virtue of becoming mediatized can, of course, be only one starting point for undertaking empirical mediatization research. However, the idea is to start at this concrete level to get different 'grounded theories' of how media communicative change and socio-cultural change are interlaced with each other, and how this interplay can be theorized in an appropriate way as part of the meta-process of mediatization. The deployment of a good number of such grounded theories of mediatized worlds makes it possible to develop a more general theory of the present mediatization.

If we link mediatization in such a way with a social (life)world perspective, the concept of mediatization begins to speak in a new way: if we follow the above-mentioned argument that one main moment of present mediatization is the situation of an increasing 'media saturation' (Lundby,

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2009a, p. 2), the 'media manifold' (Couldry, 2012, p. 16) and 'polymedia' (Madianou and Miller, 2013, p. 172), mediatization research is not so much concerned with investigating the 'influence' of one single medium, but more with the changing role of a variety of media in our lives. While such an argument is theoretically striking, the main problem is how to turn it into empirical research. One possibility for this is not to start the research with one medium but to take one kind of social world or (small) lifeworld as a unit of research. Then it becomes possible to investigate how this social world or (small) lifeworld changes with mediatization – or, in other words, how it changes as a mediatized world.

Such a move, however, also emphasizes that mediatization does not offer a closed theory, as, for example, the system theory within sociology does. This is not the idea of mediatization research. Recently, Sonia Livingstone and Peter Lunt (2014) compared mediatization research with a Twitter 'hashtag'. By this they want to emphasize that mediatization is a 'meta-project' of integrating various detailed studies into and overall analysis of transformation and change. This metaphor points to one very important aspect of current mediatization research, because of the complexity of its undertaking – to research the interrelation between the change of media and communication, on the one hand, and culture and society on the other – various detailed and competing analytical concepts are necessary, as well as various methods. However, a group of scholars who have gathered around the term 'mediatization' are engaged in bringing this form of analysis forward. With this volume, we hope to bring the discussion one step forward by introducing the concept of 'mediatized world' to ground mediatization research better in an everyday perspective.

3. About this volume: Background, structure and arguments

The aforementioned shift of mediatization is the reorientation we adopted with the priority programme *Mediatized Worlds*. Since 2010, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), 12 research projects have investigated the mediatization of various social worlds or (small) lifeworlds. Topics are the everyday world of community building, the world of sport betting, 'scopic media' in various social worlds, mediatized business models in social worlds, the mediatized home, and the mediatized world of political deliberation and of members of the parliament, of security policy and of music – and how to investigate the changing social relations of present mediatized worlds in a long-term perspective (for detailed information about the projects, see http://www.mediatizedworlds.net).

While these projects operationalize the idea of mediatized worlds in very concrete ways, it is nevertheless linked with an argument that goes beyond this specific research. This is the argument for bringing mediatization research closer to the everyday world. As such an argument is much

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more general, in 2011 the priority programme hosted a conference at the University of Bremen with the title 'Mediatized Worlds: Culture and Society in a Media Age'. The idea of this conference was to discuss internationally such a shift in mediatization research. In all, 54 presentations were given by scholars from 14 different countries. The present volume consists of revised versions of the best of these papers. In addition, a number of authors were invited who have been more recently engaged in the discussion about linking mediatization research with a social and lifeworld perspective.

The volume comprises six parts. Part I, 'Rethinking Mediatization', opens with a chapter from Knut Lundby, 'Mediatized Stories in Mediatized Worlds'. In this chapter, Lundby, on the one hand, introduces the mediatized story project which played an important role in the present international push of mediatization research. On the other hand, he reflects on how far the phenomenon of mediatized storytelling is related to the idea of living in mediatized worlds. The core argument of this chapter is that a mediatized story is, for sure, not a mediatized world. However, living in mediatized worlds means that mediatized stories gain relevance in a number of these social worlds.

In the following chapter, Johan Fornäs argues for a culturalizing of mediatization. With the move to a more concrete investigation of mediatized worlds, he links the argument that more culturally oriented approaches to mediatization should be revitalized. Such a cultural orientation means looking more carefully into the different levels and kinds of mediatization and relating mediatization more deeply to process concepts such as modernization, lifeworld colonization and reflexivity. For this, a reconnection of mediatization to anthropologically and hermeneutically inspired theorizations of the early 1990s is a help.

Nick Couldry, too, links the idea of mediatized worlds to a new 'grounding' of mediatization research. However, this 'grounding' needs an appropriate foundation in social theory, for which especially the field theory in the tradition of Pierre Bourdieu is helpful. This theory is, on the one hand, linkable to the idea of mediatized worlds – different fields consist of various, though characteristic, mediatized worlds. On the other hand, linking the mediatization approach with field theory makes it possible to explain that mediatization results in different phenomena depending on which part of culture and society one investigates.

Friedrich Krotz in his article 'Media, Mediatization and Mediatized Worlds' rethinks what mediatization means in the frame of a social (life)world perspective. His core argument is that, if we take this perspective seriously, the idea of a 'media logic' is less helpful. Therefore, we must clarify what a medium is. This makes it possible to conceptualize mediatization as a process related to the social construction of the word. This process is always related to changing demands, expectations and interests of the people. Therefore, mediatization reminds us that there is a social entity that becomes

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Author Index

Abowd, Gregory, 115
Abu-Lughod, Lila, 6
Altheide, David L., 6, 44, 55–6, 59, 68, 73, 110, 126
Andersson, Magnus, 308
Aristotle, 76
Asp, Kent, 49
Atkinson, Will, 167

Baacke, Dieter, 293
Bächtiger, André, 257, 261
Baudrillard, Jean, 2, 155
Baudry, Jean Louis, 97
Bauerlein, Mark, 316
Bauman, Zygmunt, 210–11, 217
Beck, Klaus, 93, 98
Beck, Ulrich, 162–3, 210
Beck, Volker, 266–7
Bell, Alexander Graham, 93
Benjamin, Walter, 42
Berg, Matthias, ix, 12, 32, 310
Berger, Peter, 82
Bergmann, Jörg, 155
Bird, Elizabeth, 6, 58
Boczkowski, Pablo, 95
Bohman, James, 255
Boltanski, Luc, 56, 68
Boorstin, Daniel, 313
Bourdieu, Pierre, 10–11, 54, 56, 58–9, 160–1, 164, 166–7, 169, 310
Brake, David, 19, 24
Bratteteig, Tone, 19, 25
Breiter, Andreas, ix, 13, 310

Campbell, Heidi, 62
Carr, Nicholas, 316
Casares, Adolfo B., 213–16, 312
Castells, Manuel, 101, 123, 176
Champagne, Patrick, 58–9
Christensen, Miyase, ix, 11, 310
Churchill, Winston, 134
Couldry, Nick, x, 10, 19–20, 22, 50, 110, 146, 291, 310
Cowell, Simon, 59
Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly, 111

Dahlgren, Peter, 257
Dang-Anh, Mark, x, 12, 310
Davis, Aeron, 63
Degele, Nina, 81
de la Rouchefoucauld, Francois, 222
de Mul, Jos, 211
Deuze, Mark, x, 12, 107, 123, 312
Drotner, Kirsten, 19, 29
Durkheim, Émile, 68

Eco, Umberto, 75, 223, 319
Einspänner, Jessica, x–xi, 12, 310
Eisenstein, Elizabeth, 112, 144
Elchardus, Mark, 210–11
Elias, Norbert, 57, 68, 301
Erstad, Ola, 19
Espeland, Wendy, 274

Finnemann, Niels O., 124–5, 127–9, 131
Fornäs, Johan, xi, 10, 310
Foster, Christopher, 64
Foucault, Michel, 97
Friedlander, Larry, 19
Friesen, Norm, 217

Gadamer, Hans-Georg, 217–18
Galbraith, John, 313
Gauntlett, David, 19
Geertz, Clifford, 46–7
Gibson, James J., 127, 133, 310
Giddens, Anthony, 210, 222
Gielen, Amy-Jane, 65
Ginsburg, Faye D., 6
Gladwell, Malcolm, 315
Goffman, Erving, 55, 127, 134, 310
Gordon, Eric, 212
Graham, Billy, 145
Greenfield, Adam, 115
Gutenberg, Johannes, 77

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Habermas, Jürgen, 3, 45, 48, 163, 210–11, 256–7, 268
Haddon, Leslie, 81, 99, 111–12, 235–6
Hall, Stuart, 46
Handlin, Oscar, 313
Hannerz, Ulf, 2, 38, 46–7, 49–50, 163
Hansen, Mark, 113
Hartley, John, 217
Hartmann, Maren, 49, 99
Hayles, Katherine, 114
Hecht, Michael, 309
Hendy, David, 112
Hepp, Andreas, xi, 12, 21–2, 32, 49, 124, 145–6, 156, 213, 254, 309–10
Hertzberg Kaare, Birgit, 19, 27
Hickethier, Knut, 97
Hirsch, Eric, 235–6
Hjarvard, Stig, xi, 11, 19, 21–2, 40–1, 44, 49, 55, 110, 145–6, 156, 310
Hochschild, Arlie R., 150
Höflich, Joachim, 81, 99
Hofstader, Richard, 313
Hoover, Stewart M., 145, 156
Hug, Theo, 217
Hughes, Thomas, P., 133
Hugo of St Victor, 75–6
Hull, Glynda, 19, 24, 25
Husserl, Edmund, 209, 312
Hutchby, Ian, 133

Ihde, Don, 167–9, 211–12, 217
Illich, Ivan, 67, 75–8, 81
Innis, Harold, 4, 73, 314

Jansson, André, 308
Jenkins, Henry, 237
Jenkins, Richard, 166
Jensen, Klaus B., 125, 130, 132, 309

King, Martin Luther Jr, 320
Kittler, Friedrich, 78, 217
Knoblauch, Hubert, xii, 11, 310
Knorr Cetina, Karin, 155, 210
Koo, Gene, 212
Krönert, Veronika, 145–6, 156
Krotz, Friedrich, xii, 10, 21, 42, 49, 57, 63, 68, 110–11, 124, 145, 253, 289–90, 308–9, 311
Kuhn, Thomas, 311

Lahire, Bernard, 66
Lanier, Jaron, 316
Larkin, Brian, 6
Latour, Bruno, 21, 209, 211, 309
Lefèbvre, Marcel, 101
Leibniz, Gottfried, 208
Lewis, Wyndham, 314
Licklider, J. C. R., 108–9, 117
Lievrouw, Leah A., 6
Ling, Richard, 131
Livingstone, Sonia, 1–2, 9, 19–20, 24, 30, 54, 66, 235, 293
Lord, Albert, 314
Lövheim, Mia, 19, 31
Luckmann, Benita, 6, 27
Luckmann, Thomas, 6, 82, 155, 178
Luhmann, Niklas, 145
Lundby, Knut, xii, 1, 10, 40, 44, 49, 56, 311
Lunt, Peter, 9

Mandaville, Peter, 62
Manheim, Ernest, 2, 48
Manovich, Lev, 114, 116
Marvin, Carolyn, 93, 95
Mazzoleni, Gianpietro, 56, 73
McDonald, Katy, xii, 12, 223, 310
McLuhan, Marshall, 4, 13, 47, 72–3, 108–9, 117, 132, 313–16
McPhee, Robert, 298
Mead, George H., 82
Mendelsohn, Harold, 112
Merkel, Angela, 267
Metykova, Monika, 168
Meyer, Birgit, 145
Meyer, Thomas, 63
Meyrowitz, Joshua, 4, 129, 134–5, 137, 312
Miller, Daniel, 111
Miller, James, xii–xiii, 11, 254
Mitchell, William, 116
Moores, Shaun, 168, 289
Moors, Annelies, 145
Morley, David, 6, 50, 99, 101, 113, 230, 235–6
Munsterberg, Hugo, 114
Mynatt, Elizatbeth, 115

Nass, Clifford, 112
Nelson, Mark E., 19, 25

Copyrighted material – 9781137300348

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Nicotera, Anne, 298
Norman, Donald, 133
Nyboe, Lotte, 19, 29

Oudshoorn, Nelly, 111

Papacharissi, Zizi, 209
Passoth, Jan-Hendrik, xiii, 13, 310
Pearce, W. Barnett, 27
Peil, Corinna, xiii, 12, 310
Peirce, Charles, 307, 311, 317
Phillips, David, 294
Pinch, Trevor, 111
Pope Benedict XVI, 11, 60, 143–4, 146–8, 150–2, 155–6, 310
Pope John XXIII, 153, 155
Pope John Paul II, 144, 146–50, 152–3, 155
Postman, Neil, 312
Putnam, Linda, 297
Putnam, Robert, 210

Rammert, Werner, 93–5
Rasmussen, Terje, 212
Reeves, Byron, 112
Ricoeur, Paul, 38, 46–7, 49, 310, 313
Rochberg-Halton, Eugene, 111
Rogers, Richard, 64
Roitsch, Cindy, xiii, 12, 32, 310
Röser, Jutta, xiv, 12, 100, 310

Salen, Katie, 113
Saussaure, Ferdinand de, 80
Schofield Clark, Lynn, x, 13
Schrott, Andrea, 56
Schulz, Dorothea, 62
Schulz, Winfried, 49, 56, 73, 124, 129, 290, 309
Schütz, Alfred, 6, 179
Selwyn, Neil, 305, 312, 315
Seymour, Emily, 63
Shepard, Mark, 115
Shibutani, Tamotsu, 7, 84, 289
Shirky, Clay, 315
Shorter, Edward, 222
Silverstone, Roger, 20, 22, 39, 49, 81, 99, 107, 111–12, 126, 235–6
Simmel, Georg, 55
Sloterdijk, Peter, 208
Smythe, Dallas, 73
Snow, Robert P., 6, 44, 55–6, 59, 68, 73, 110, 126
Soeffner, Hans-Georg, 155
Sonesson, Göran, 213, 216, 312
Spörndli, Markus, 257, 261
Staksrud, Elisabeth, 19, 24
Steenbergen, Markus, 257, 261
Steiner, Jürg, 257, 261
Steinmaurer, Thomas, xiv, 11
Stevens, Mitchell, 274
Stone, Lawrence, 222
Storey, John, xiv, 12, 223, 310
Strauss, Anselm, 7, 84
Strömbäck, Jesper, 253
Suoranta, Juha, 212
Sutter, Tilmann, xiv, 13, 310
Swartz, Aaron, 318–19

Tarde, Gabriel, 208
Taylor, Paul, 212
Thévenot, Laurent, 56, 68
Thiele, Matthias, 274
Thimm, Caja, xiv–xv, 12, 310
Thompson, John B., 2, 49–50, 61, 126
Thrift, Nigel, 217
Thumim, Nancy, 19–20, 23–4
Tönnies, Ferdinand, 48, 175
Turkle, Sherry, 112–13, 123, 175–7, 207, 316

Uitermark, Justus, 65

Vadén, Tere, 212
van Couvering, Elizabeth, 293
Vecchi, Benedetto, 217
Vinken, Henk, 211

Weber, Max, 12, 59, 152, 175, 177–8
Wehner, Josef, xv, 13, 310
Weick, Karl E., 297
Weiser, Mark, 115
Wellman, Barry, 98, 176

Copyrighted material – 9781137300348

Copyrighted material – 9781137300348

Wertsch, James V., 19
Wesch, Michael, 315
Wilken, Rowan, 98, 101
Williams, Raymond, 20, 46, 98, 320
Willms, Johannes, 163
Winnicott, Donald, 113
Winston, Brian, 92–3
Wittel, Andreas, 176, 211

Yang, Hao, 296

Zaug, Pamela, 298
Žižek, Slavoj, 218

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Subject Index

abductive reasoning, 13, 308–9, 311–2, 316
actor-network theory, 221, 309
affordances, 4, 127–9, 131–8, 310
alphabet, 128–9
audience measurement techniques, 13, 275–80, 283–4
audiences, 56, 73, 148–56, 271, 276–7, 283
augmented reality, 84–5, 311

belonging, 29
black metal, 8
blogging, 24–5, 31–2
book culture, 74–9, 81
broadcasting, 81, 123

camera, 148–50, 153, 155
capabilities, 4
central perspective, 85
centre, 43, 101
Centre for Communications, Media and Information Research, *see* ZeMKI
centrists, 12, 174–5, 182–3, 188, 190, 195, 199–200
change, *see* media communicative change; socio-cultural change
commercialization, 21, 101
communication networks, 7, 197
communication technology, 91–2, 95, 99, 100–2
communication theory, 68
communicative figuration, 102
communicative networking, 182–3, 190, 195, 197
communicative practice, 12, 289
communitization, 12, 174–84, 187–8, 190–1, 195, 197, 199–200
community-building, 174–5, 310
computer animation, 29
computers, 7, 215
connectivity, 26, 91–2, 97–8, 101–3, 160–1, 163–4, 170, 176, 180–1, 208, 240
cosmopolitanism, 11–12, 159–70
critical research, 85
cultural change, 55, 78, 123–5, 246, 253
culturalization, 10, 38, 47–8, 50
cultural mediation, 23
cultural studies, 38, 46, 48
cultural theory, 38, 50
culture, 46–7, 49, 79

deliberative democracy, 256
deterritorialization, 162, 164
DFG, ix–xv, 9
digital divide, 101, 255
digital media, 6, 11, 19, 74, 124–7, 143–5, 168, 174–7, 199, 256, 279, 284, 289, 292, 294, 299
digital narration, 20, 29
digital natives, 175–7
digital storytelling, 19–20, 22–6, 29–32, 311
  digital faith story, 27–9, 32
digital television, 5
digitization, 12, 128, 163, 234, 236–8, 245
discursive participation, *see* participation
dispositive, *see* new dispositive of communication
dissolution of media boundaries, 4
domestication theory, 235–46
domestic communication culture, 238–9, 242, 246
domestic mobilization, 244–5
DUSTY: Digital Underground Storytelling for Youth (project), 25

ECREA, 1
e-democracy, 256
education, 288–9, 295
educational data warehouses, 289
educational governance, 13, 288, 290–2, 295–6, 301
effect paradigm, *see* media effects
effects, *see* media effects
electronic church, 145
electronic culture, 4
e-mail, 5, 131

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Copyrighted material – 9781137300348

ethnographic household portrait, 239
ethnomethodology, 221
European Communication Research and Education Association, *see* ECREA
everyware media, 11, 107, 114, 117
evocative objects, 113

Facebook, 41, 225, 227–9
faith education, 28
field theory, 10, 11, 56, 58–9, 160–1, 166–8, 310
figurations, 57, 301
fourth estate, 125
frames, 55

games, 113–14, 212, 291
gatekeepers, 124, 282
gender relations, 242–3
German Research Foundation, *see* DFG
globalization, 21, 43, 85, 159–60, 162–4, 166, 169
Google, 137–8
governance, *see* educational governance
grammar of the internet, 127–9
grounded theory, 8, 181
grounding, 10, 146
Gutenberg revolution, 144

hackers, 212
hashtag, 9, 259
hip hop, 8
home, 8, 12, 233–46
horizon of communitization, 183, 188, 190–1, 195, 197, 199–200
hybrid spaces, 100
hyperlink, 259

ICA, 1
Identification, 43
imagined community, 174, 178
individualization, 21, 85, 98, 163, 211
instant messaging, 41
institutionalist tradition, 2–3, 11
institutionalization, 11, 123–34, 136–8, 200, 289
institutional logics, 136
institutions, 21, 26
interaction, 4, 26, 28–30, 32, 43–4, 99, 127, 129–30, 132–6, 138, 262
  interactive communication, 11, 93, 128
  interactive technology, 11, 144–5
International Communications Association, *see* ICA
internet, 13, 108, 127, 131, 143, 174, 238, 240–5, 254–7, 284
internet banking, 125
interpersonal communication, 27, 80
interrelation, 5, 9, 124
invisibility of media, 12
  see also ubiquitous media
Islam, 62

journalism, 123, 125, 132, 273

Lasswell formula, 72
learning management systems, 289, 297
lifeworld, 5, 7–8, 28–32, 163, 200, 209–13, 216–17
  colonization of the lifeworld, 2, 10, 38, 45, 48, 210–11, 213, 312
  everyday lifeworld, 6, 12, 27, 99, 166–70, 179
  mediatized lifeworlds, *see* mediatized lifeworlds
  small life-worlds, 6, 9, 27, 31, 124, 177, 246
  social lifeworld perspective, 10
listeners, 31, 112, 152, 271–84, 313
localists, 12, 174–5, 182–4, 187, 190, 195, 199–200
locality, 233

mass communication research, 2
mass media, 2, 5, 48–9, 72–3, 79, 124–5, 127, 129–32, 135, 138, 143, 145, 154, 222, 254, 272–6, 279–80, 282–3
measurements, 272–84
media age, 21, 38–9, 41
media capital, 58–9, 63, 65
media change, 73–4, 77–8, 81–2, 85, 103, 113, 125, 144, 161, 272, 278, 295, 300
media characteristics and functions, 124, 130–2

Copyrighted material – 9781137300348

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media and communication research, 1–3, 5–6, 13, 20, 174–5, 178, 234
media communicative change, 8, 13
media control, 124
media culture, 3, 8, 83
media (definition), 79–81
media democracy, 63
media distribution, 13
media education, 292
media effects, 4, 222
media ensemble, 233–4, 238, 243–4, 290, 294, 298
media event, 146
media functions, *see* media characteristics and functions
media institution, 54, 64
media integration, 299
media life, 12, 107, 109, 117, 207–9
media literacy, 24, 289, 292–3, 296
medialization, 73, 144, 147, 155–6
media logic, 3, 6, 10–11, 21, 38, 44, 55–7, 59–60, 63–6, 73, 107, 109–11, 125–7, 137, 146, 155, 222, 284, 309, 314
media love, 12, 221–30
media manifold, 9
media matrix, 124, 127, 129
media objects, 112
mediapolis, 107, 109, 117
media processes, 1–2
media-related culture, 83
media repertoire, *see* media ensemble
media saturation, 8, 65, 67–8, 159, 161–2
mediascape, 117
media society, 3, 8
media sphere, 208, 244
media studies, 48, 50–1
media technology, 11–12, 44, 100
media text, 44
mediation, 12, 20, 22–3, 39–40, 49, 51–2, 54–5, 57, 66, 81, 83, 108, 123, 125–7, 144–5, 155, 161, 168
  concept, 3, 38, 81
  mediation of everything, 1, 54
mediatization, 1–13, 20, 30, 39–52, 54–66, 69, 82, 84, 91–2, 95–100, 103, 107–9, 116–17, 123, 125–7, 132, 138, 144–7, 154–5, 156, 159–66, 169, 175, 177, 182, 199, 209, 218, 234, 236–8, 245, 253–5, 272, 276, 284, 288–90, 293, 299–300, 307–20
  concept, 1–3, 38, 41, 51, 72–5, 144
  empirical perspectives, 1
  everyday mediatization, 1
  mediatization of culture, 2, 46–7, 74, 126, 168
  mediatization of politics, 12, 63–6, 126, 253–5, 258, 268, 310
  mediatization of religion, 1, 11, 61–2, 143–8, 310
  mediatization research, 2–5, 8–13, 54, 67–9, 72, 81–3, 85, 124–5, 129, 132, 174–6, 311
  mediatization of society, 46–7, 126
  mediatization theory, 13, 56–7, 114, 116–17, 124
  term, 2, 5, 23, 48, 143
mediatized communication, 2
mediatized communities, 11, 182, 187, 199
mediatized communitization, 175, 199–200
mediatized connectivity, 91–2, 97, 102–3
mediatized cosmopolitanism, *see* cosmopolitanism
mediatized events, 156
mediatized home, 238
mediatized horizons of communitization, 12, 174–5, 179–80, 182, 199–200
mediatized information, 2
mediatized lifeworlds, 12, 49, 160, 163–4, 169, 200, 213, 309
mediatized network organizations, 13
mediatized stories, 10, 19–27
Mediatized Stories. Mediation Perspectives on Digital Storytelling among Youth (project), 19–20, 22–6
mediatized worlds, 1, 5, 6–13, 19, 22, 24, 26, 29–32, 72, 77, 81, 84–5, 101, 104, 114, 117, 124, 136, 144, 146, 159, 161, 169, 177–80, 217, 234, 245, 254, 257, 288, 294, 301
Mediatized Worlds (priority programme), ix–xv, 8–9, 297
Mediatized Worlds: Culture and Society in a Media Age (conference), 10, 69

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medium theory, 4–5, 13, 91, 132, 308, 311–14
meta capital, 60, 64
meta process, 4, 8, 10, 21, 57, 60, 63, 66–8, 74–5, 81, 85, 103, 109, 159–62, 166, 237, 253, 271, 288–9
Middle Ages, 75, 81
migrants, 160, 163–5, 168, 310
mobile communication, 11, 96, 98
mobile phone, 5, 43, 81, 96, 101, 131, 209
mobile technologies, 237–8
mobility, 160, 164–5, 233
mobilization, 12, 234, 236–8, 244–5
modernity, 42, 237
modernization, 10, 38, 43, 45
moulding forces, 4, 179, 237, 254, 288–9, 291, 316, 320
multi-localists, 12, 174–5, 182–3, 192, 195, 199–200
multimediatization, 213, 312
multimodality, 25, 30, 128

narration of change, 4
natural user interfaces, 12
network analysis, 180
network cards, 181, 185, 189, 193, 196
networked individualism, 176
networked lives, 175–6
networked mobility, 101
networked sociability, 176
network research, 12
networks, 26, 28–31, 218, 233
network society, 68, 123
new dispositive of communication, 11, 91–2, 97–8, 102
new media, 11–12, 25, 82, 96, 108, 112–14, 117, 123–4, 129–32, 135–8, 177, 254, 283
news factors, 273
non-media centric perspective, 5, 50, 162, 289
numbers, 271–5, 282–3

object relations theory, 113
old media, 12
online deliberation, 12, 253, 256–7, 262, 264, 268
online participation, 240
ontological security, 99–100, 163
ontology, 55–8, 63–4, 107, 217, 298
operator, 258, 265
  functional operator model, 12, 259–60, 262

papal service, 146–52, 155–6
participation, 32, 91, 99, 150–1, 155–6, 253, 255–7, 264, 266, 268, 281–2
periphery, 43, 101
phenomenological geography, 168
phenomenological sociology, 8
phenomenology, 168–70, 178
place, 159–62, 164, 168–70, 233
placeworlds, 212, 217
platform, 271
pluralists, 12, 174–5, 182–3, 195, 197, 199–200
political communication, 73, 129, 255–6
political protest, 255, 263
politics, 12, 63–4, 254, 310
polymedia, 9, 114, 117
popular cultural scenes, 8
popular religion, 11, 144, 155–6
post-modern attitude, 223
print culture, 4
private sphere, 100, 237, 253
public sphere, 43, 130, 136, 210, 233, 246, 253, 255–7

quantification, 271–3, 276, 278–81, 284

radio, 112, 134, 145, 243, 281
reading, 75–7
reflexivity, 10, 38, 45
reification, 200
rituals, 146, 156

scale, 7
school information systems, 289, 296–7
schools, 8, 13, 288–301, 310
scopic, 155
segmenting, 7–8
self-representations, 19–20, 23–4, 30, 32
shaping, 133–4
Skype, 228
smartphones, 7, 85, 243
SMS-culture, 81
social analysis, 2

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social change, 56, 67, 96, 103, 124–5, 159, 176–7, 237, 253, 291, 295, 308, 310, 316
social-constructivist tradition, 2, 3
social institution, 2–3
social logics, 57
social media, 5, 165, 243
social network sites, 24, 30–2, 134–7, 181
social phenomenology, 6, 11, 169
social sciences, 2
social studies, 48
social system, 47
social theory, 10, 54
social web, 174
social worlds, 7, 9, 26–7, 57, 84, 177, 217, 221, 289–90, 300
society, 47
socio-cultural change, 3, 5, 8, 22, 77, 82–3, 177, 233, 237, 254, 307
sociology of knowledge, 8
specificity, 5
statistics, 275–6, 283
stock exchange, 7–8
story circle, 28
symbolic interactionism, 4, 6–8, 82
systemworld, 210–11, 312

techno, 8
techno-cultural traces, 11
technological change, 159, 162
technological determinism, 11, 108, 110–11, 133, 159, 161–2, 164, 235, 254, 300, 312, 315
technological innovation, 96, 253
technology, 103, 107–8, 110–17, 125, 132–4, 146, 155, 159–60, 162, 164, 168–70, 208–9, 211, 216, 221, 234–7, 241–2, 254
telephony, 11, 91–6
television, 145–8, 150, 155, 235–6, 243
territoriality, 170
territorialization, 7
territory, 127, 134–6
text, 23
texting, 225–8
theory of communicative action, 2
transformation, 9, 22–3, 43, 45, 69, 100, 103–4, 123, 125–6, 135, 144–6, 155, 168, 176, 180
transnationalism, 159–60, 162, 166–8, 170
Twitter, 9, 12, 253–4, 258–68, 310

ubiquitous computing, 91, 97, 101–2, 108, 115–7, 137
ubiquitous media, 137, 207–8, 213, 236, 254

videography, 147
visionary pragmatism, 13

Wahlomat, 73
Wikileaks, 73, 159
wikiworld, 212, 217

youth, 19–20, 25, 28–30, 99, 174–5, 182, 199

ZeMKI, ix, xi–xiv

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