

## Abstract

This Ph.D.-dissertation makes probable a radical connection between technical communication media and possible social structures, and possible psychic forms of self-awareness in regard to this connection. The dissertation develops a strategy for making an analysis termed *media sociography*, which depicts social structures as conditioned by media, and provides concrete analysis of the social based on a number of media, as they come into sight in the media-sociographic framework.

This media sociography is based on a special *interpretation* and *synthesising* of systems-theoretical sociology and medium theory. Medium theory coined by Meyrowitz (1994) contributes with the claim that media provide the milieu in which humans perceive, understand, communicate etc. Systems theory contributes with a sociological theory that takes its point of departure in communication and includes both a micro- and a macro analytical level and includes also an abstract concept of media. This abstract concept of media is the core concept in media sociography, enabling the theoretical synthesis between the two theoretical paradigms that makes the analysis of the reciprocal processes between humans and media possible.

Media sociography is a strategy to analyse and describe the social in regard to media. The media sociography is employed on the social in regard to dominant media in the social evolution, in regard to digital media in general, and in regard to a number of specific digital interaction media. In the analysis of the latter, studies of computer mediated communication from the literature are included together with my own empirical studies. Both forms of empirical studies are interpreted with a point of departure in the theoretical framework unfolded in the dissertation, together with the connections found in the analysis of dominant media in the social evolution. In this light the dissertation must be seen as an attempt to understand digital media against a background of social evolution seen as the interplay between the social and the media.

It is opted that media do not determine social processes but they are seen as providing the possibility space for handling social complexity in the form of meaning in time and space. The ensuing thesis is that the emergence of dominant media like oral speech, writing, printing, and electronic media opens for new social possibilities for handling complexity with epoch-making consequences, not only for the social but also for the psychic.