

Critical book review

SÁDABA, T. *Framing: el encuadre de las noticias. El binomio terrorismo-medios*. (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: La Crujía, 2008, 251 pages.
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Framing reality to communicate it

Teresa Sádaba has a doctorate in communication from the Universidad de Navarra, where she is also a lecturer. The exact objective of her thesis, entitled “La teoría del encuadre desde una perspectiva simbólica” (*The theory of framing from a symbolic perspective*) and defended in 2001, is the analysis of framing theory. *Framing: el encuadre de las noticias. El binomio terrorismo-medios* is what has come from this work, which was published in 2006 by Ulzama Ediciones in its first edition (*Framing: una teoría de los medios de comunicación*).

A few years ago, Bryant and Miron (2004) included framing theory among the “26 most distinguished theories” of those related to mass media. In March 2007, the *Journal of Communication* published a special edition on *agenda setting*, *priming* and *framing* with the aim of maximising knowledge on theorisation and research in this area. Just two signs that indicate how up-to-date and opportune is Sádaba’s book in the field of communication.

Throughout the book, Sádaba seeks to answer a series of questions, such as “What is framing?, Why is it so relevant? What can we learn from it? What can it do for us? What is its relationship with the media?” (page 13). This is no simple task since, on the one hand, there are different definitions for the term *framing*, each with significant nuances and, on the other, the real challenge lies in making the concept operational and in studying framing processes. The author does this well and the result is a theoretical book, full of references to authors and trends but also making her own proposals and exemplifying her own statements with case studies on the relationships between the media and terrorism. Despite this dual approach, it is important to remember that the book is much more theoretical than an empirical analysis (the case studies occupy 27 out of the book’s 251 pages).

In the first chapter, entitled *The origin of the framing theory* (“El origen de la teoría del *framing*”), the author locates this concept within the context of interpretive sociology, giving a brief introduction to symbolic interactionism, phenomenology

and ethnomethodology, and takes from this her first definition: “Goffman’s frames are forms that are transmitted and shared by society, through which reality can be seen” (page 35). After analysing the research into social movements, Sádaba suggests that, although frames of media discourses are like maps – and that frames used by the media arise from journalistic work – this is inherent in the dynamic of the media itself and is not due to an ideological intention or an explicit desire for power. For the author, therefore, frames form part of the significant news process, making it possible for the audience to identify with the medium, even though authors such as Gitlin believe that frames organise social reality from a dominant position.

The second chapter places framing within the context of the theory of communication. If the previous chapter ended on the idea that media frames are providers of significant meanings, in this chapter Sádaba provokes debate about objectivity: “The answer provided by framing theory to objectivism is to negate its postulators, as it argues that, when recounting what happens, the journalist frames reality and introduces *his* point of view” (page 68). The author then introduces ‘agenda setting’ theory and a new debate: the ‘framing-agenda’ relationship. While McCombs and Ghanem consider framing to be a second level of agenda setting (the attributes level, since the media tell us what to think about certain things), other authors (Sádaba among them) believe that this is not true because framing is about interpretation not accessibility, and frames are situated above all within the sphere of news creation, not so much in the sphere of effects (which is another debate altogether). That said, the chapter focuses on the use of framing within the theory of communication, making reference to input from seminal authors and texts, to confront the definition of ‘frame’ as a selection of reality or as a key organiser of the news.

The next two chapters deal, respectively, with the cultural dimension and the representative dimension of framing, allowing the author to introduce her own proposals and look at frames from a symbolic perspective. “The symbolic perspective of framing highlights, above all, the relationship between

frames and concrete cultural contexts, extending culture as the shared arena for actions and meanings" (page 113). Thanks to media discourse, people construct their own meanings and now journalists develop these meanings according to a particular public opinion. Consequently, what ends up as relevant to the explanation is, especially, the communicative transaction produced between journalists and audiences, since the former, as well as taking their personal and professional values into account, also consider the culture and society to which they belong. Still, the cultural dimension must complement the representative dimension by overcoming a habitual lack in theoretical developments about *framing*, that have focused more on knowledge itself than what is not known and, as a consequence, haven't fully explained the transformation that occurs between what happens and what appears in the media. Sádaba retains Geertz's affirmation that symbols have the ability to be representative *of* and *for* reality. Symbols, therefore, express the world and at the same time give it shape. Communicative transaction and the double representative capacity of symbols are the two most relevant principles of the symbolic perspective of *framing*.

The author concludes by saying that we must think of framing beyond selective cognition and the transposition of knowledge, without interpreting frames, referring only to specific aspects or concrete characteristics such as selection, the same textual content or ideological focus, and overcoming such reductionist visions as Lakoff's, which only concentrate on language and give pride of place to political parties in the creation of frames. Rather, one must talk of shared symbolic production and consider that "a journalist's knowledge is linked to his communicative task and this is the key area that framing theory must highlight when dealing with the media" (page 212).

Regardless of whether one shares Teresa Sádaba's theory on the symbolic perspective of framing, her book gives us an accurate picture of the authors who have developed the concept and the debates that have emerged around it. This is a valuable book for those studying media theory because it connects the concept of framing and its current developments with the theoretical basis on which it is founded, and presents the debates surrounding the concept, allowing us to arrive at our own conclusions. It is a work that scholars in this area can also complement with the published articles from Number 1, Volume 57 of the *Journal of Communication* (where one can read debates that have taken place after the publication of the book, while pointing to the same direction) and a key work in this field such as *Frame Analysis*, by Erving Goffman, translated into Spanish by CIS in 2006.

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Governing European communications. A political economy approach

Dr. Maria Michalis is a lecturer at the University of Westminster. Her career in communication policy research is extensive and she has dealt with issues related to policies for competition, public service, digital television and universal service. She has actively contributed to various international scientific journals and has published several chapters in books. Moreover, she is vice-chair of the Communication Policy and Technology Section of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR).

In this book, Dr. Michalis exhaustively documents and thoroughly analyses the emergence and development of the European governing of communications. This concept, of polyhedral nature, has been studied and defined from several theoretical perspectives of the Political Studies, it's approached with regard to the organizational and leadership capacity of the political system (Gamble 2000:110). The text is the result of a far-reaching empirical study based on primary sources of information, observation of the consultation processes concerning community public policies and 25 semi-structured interviews. Moreover, the author considers and interconnects the contributions of prior research that has tackled the object of study that is the focus of the book (Collins 1994; Humphreys 1996; Levy 1999; Krebber 2001; Ward 2002 & Harcourt 2005, among others). Starting from this basis, Michalis carries out an innovative analysis based on three pillars.

Firstly, Michalis goes over the theoretical perspective offered by the political economy of communication to overcome the dichotomy that has characterised previous studies. Her analysis of governance therefore goes beyond the study of different styles of public policies, of the different administrative cultures or different interests in the European Union and its member states. Her research focuses on the critical observation of the influence played on governance by factors such as the evolution of capitalism, the redefinition of the role of state, of the internationalisation and globalisation process and various fac-

tors from the economic, industrial and technological spheres.

Secondly, Michalis makes an effort to jointly deal with telecommunications and the media. Frequently the study of the two sectors is carried out separately, tackling very specific issues. This text aims for a broader view of both sectors to fully explore the relations between these two and how public policies affect these relations.

The third innovation that characterises this book is that it tackles the issue of governance without anchoring itself in an excessively regulatory or traditional view centred exclusively on studying public and regulatory institutions. Michalis goes beyond this and analyses to what extent and how the participation of a larger number of actors – not only new public institutions but also interest groups, private firms and civil associations – contribute towards the evolution of EU governance over telecommunications and the media.

The introductory chapter defines governance based on concepts from different theoretical perspectives, paying particular attention to prior work in the area of political science and European studies. It also details and interrelates the elements from the political economy that will be the key instruments for analysis in the subsequent chapters.

The book is then ordered chronologically. Each of the five chapters covers approximately one decade, from the end of the 1940s to today, 2007. However, this time-based segmentation is approximate and what takes priority is the identification of key issues that distinguish each period.

In chapters two and three, which cover 1940 to 1960, the book explores the roots of cooperation between European states in the area of telecommunications and postal services. It also provides an extensive review of the historical and political events leading to and affecting the emergence of the first supra-national public institutions and professional organisations to influence communications (International Telecommunication Union, European Broadcasting Union, European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations, European Economic Community, Council of Europe, among others). Michalis analyses the birth of community industrial

policy aimed at this sector and identifies as the main cause the fear of being technologically dependent on the United States. The text also highlights the difficulties of European governance in this period. Community institutions were incapacitated both by their lack of legitimacy and also by the particular and uncoordinated actions of national administrations. However, the lack of results from intergovernmental cooperation would lead to the creation of a common European market and to a more important role being played by community governance.

The fourth chapter (1980s) analyses the process that Michalis has called “defensive Europeanization”, caused by the realisation that the international situation required a joint European response. This is the time when community institutions focused on planning policies for infrastructures and technological standardisation and implemented protectionist measures regarding the trade of products and services. Moreover, the research and development plans attempted to favour the emergence of “European champions”. In the area of the media, particular attention is paid to the negotiation process of the Television Without Frontiers Directive, especially to its evolution, from an initial argument focusing on democratic values to its specific form in a text centring on industrial issues.

The fifth chapter (1990s) tackles the liberalisation and internationalisation of telecommunications and the media. Michalis thoroughly examines the causes behind the evolution of European institutions and their style of intervention. The failure of certain initiatives to control industrial policy and the consolidation of neoliberalism meant that governance focused on issues such as competition and competitiveness. European institutions and national administrations went from being managers or regulators to mere enablers of the market. For their part, market actors acquired more influence over the political agenda and their support became vital for the implementation of public policies. The result was, on the one hand, the emergence of more complex decision-making networks and, on the other, a more frequent use of less interventionist instruments of action.

The project of the information society is the nexus between the 1990s and the period 2000-2007, analysed in the sixth chapter. In her analysis, Michalis states that convergence and globalisation have reinforced telecommunications’ own logic, influencing the style and objectives of public policies. Although public discourse has not disappeared, the cultural or social issues of the media have taken second place to the achievement of industrial and economic goals. In this chapter, particular attention is paid to the processes to revise policies, both media and telecommunications, and to the effort to coordinate them, revealing the supremacy of the concept of competitiveness as a current leitmotiv in governing European communications.

The final conclusions review those given in each chapter. A view across the board is therefore missing, concerning the elements that condition European governance, which should reinforce the research perspective focused on the political economy of communication.

Maria Michalis’s book is a must for researchers and experts in the field of European communication policy, although it also brings elements for a better comprehension of the world trends. The historical review and exhaustive analysis of the evolution of public intervention and its actors make it an essential instrument in understanding the wide range of factors that condition European telecommunication and media policy, as well as the links between the two sectors. This book does not necessarily need to be read from page one onwards and the text is well organised so that it can be “dipped into” and consulted on specific points.

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The State's new public television

Right now, we find ourselves in the midst of television's transformation by the digital migration of broadcasting systems - terrestrial, satellite and cable - and the entry of internet, ADSL and mobile telephony platforms. These changes are being examined in an increasingly global fashion, yet attention is still being paid to broadcasting by Hertz waves because of the reduction in the frequency spectrum and because of its traditional use as the basis for universal public television service, i.e., providing all citizens with television free of charge. Governments are attempting to respond to the need to provide public services through new generalist, thematic models in the democratic, social and cultural realms. After the abuses of state monopolies, when governments manipulated television to suit their partisan goals, the trend is to seek models in which public television continues to be directed and managed by an authentically independent public entity in a mixed system of loyal competition with the private sector.

Reform Law 17/2006 of 5 June on public radio and television approved by Parliament laid the foundations for forging ahead with reforms in Spain. The object of the book under review is to analyse this law from the legal and financial perspectives in a broad, comparative context that allows us to probe the issue thoroughly, appreciate its originality and supply arguments for discussion.

The book is divided into two clearly differentiated parts: the first, entitled "European audiovisual regulation: public television reform in a digital transition environment", is a very appropriate approach that focuses on this dynamic line of change in order to be useful in the future, rather than serve as an historical contribution. The second part offers an analysis entitled "The application of European audiovisual regulations in Spain" through two key dimensions: the concept of State aid applied to public television and the overhaul of Corporación RTVE, Spain's public television network. Each part, in turn, is made up of two chapters.

Chapter one, by Mercedes Muñoz Saldaña, lecturer in

Information Law at the University of Navarre, addresses the basic demands in EU policy as regards the configuration of public television in Europe in its definition of public service and financing. The author highlights the legal imprecision of the conception of public service and contrasts it with "services of general economic interest" as a category that also applies to broadcasting, which has arisen from regulations on competition and is based on liberalising approaches to television markets. The jurisprudence created by the European Court of Justice in the case of Denmark's TV2 is used to clarify this approach.

Chapter two, by Julián Rodríguez Pardo, lecturer in Audiovisual Communication at the University of Extremadura, delves into the study of digital terrestrial television as a major technological development that makes it necessary to revisit and overhaul all the legislation on the distributions of frequencies in force, as well as redesign public service and finance innovation in the new businesses it originates. In this case, the law enacted to promote DTT in the European Union is reviewed, as is the comparative law regarding legislation in Germany, Spain, France, Italy and the United Kingdom. The conclusion drawn is that the situation is still wide open and in transition while awaiting Europe's definitive digital switchover in 2012 to have a clearer appreciation of digital migration's repercussions.

Chapter three, written by Arancha Pérez Moriones, lecturer at the University School of Business Law at the University of the Basque Country, tackles the issue of financing the new Corporación RTVE within the principle of free competition. She examines RTVE's evolution from its inception and focuses closely on the pillars of the two major changes in the entity: the Radio-Television Statute of 1980 and the proposals in the so-called "Sages' Report" on reforming public media and its transposition into the Law of 2006, currently in force. The work again insists on the financing angle, in this case in light of the principle of free competition. Through an extremely thorough analysis of European jurisprudence, special emphasis is laid throughout an exposition of the public debate over the

accounting principles underlying State aid for public television under EU regulatory demands. The conclusion reached is that the RTVE Reform Law complies with these demands and that imprecision still lingers when specific measures are laid down. The author believes these measures should be conducted within framework mandates and programme contracts between Corporación RTVE and the government.

After these frameworks, chapter four, by Ana Azurmendi, Associate Professor of Information Law at the University of Navarre, examines RTVE's overhaul in 2006. The author looks at reforms in other countries and analyses the contribution of the "Sages' Report" as the Law's immediate context, as well as the basic documents that served as the foundation for the BBC's reform, which was launched in January 2007. The results from the two models are compared and a preference is voiced for the orientation of the BBC's reports; the Spanish report's proposal is criticised for having based its approach on the concept on public duty. The analysis of the reports is overly protracted, especially since the laws are already in place and in fact are partly sustained, albeit with major differences. What's more important is the model established by the law, something that calls for a more thorough and critical analysis, instead of the brief, although very precise, summary offered here.

In conclusion, this work is of great interest to academics and professionals as well as the public and private companies involved in the legal and economic debates over how public television should be organised. A highly valuable work in documentary terms, thanks to the wide-ranging bibliography, legislation and website addresses to which it refers, which will be helpful in tracking the changes to come in the future. However, the reason why public radio has been shunted to the sidelines is not clarified, since all the reforms tackle the two public media at the same time - albeit with their corresponding specific nuances - because of their inseparable links to each other and their, at times, different solutions for similar situations. More thorough references to content and services are also missing. The reform is global and its analysis also requires a global view. The legal and financial approach serves for very little if it is not involved with content and services, the only *raison d'être* for the communication media in their connection to citizens.

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Examining public DTT policies in Europe

The implementation of digital terrestrial television (DTT) in Europe is an open process that continues to pose enigmas. The role DTT will play in the audiovisual market is still uncertain, as is this new technology's contribution to the democratisation of communications. María Trinidad García Leiva tackles these issues in her work *Políticas públicas y televisión digital. El caso de la DTT en España y el Reino Unido* through a detailed analysis of the factors and stakeholders playing a part in introducing DTT in Europe.

This work's contribution to the scientific community is relevant since, from a critical perspective and taking European measures as a benchmark for digital television, the author probes DTT policies in the United Kingdom and Spain and compares them in an unprecedented approach. The added value of this study with respect to others published recently in Spain (Bustamante 2008, Marzal and Casero 2007 and Caballero 2007) lies in its methodological proposal for analysing public digital television policies and evaluating the Spanish and British experiences within the European context. Furthermore, this book is a must-read for scholars in this area of research, given its documental rigor and vast amount of information, as well as the organisation of its contents.

The work, fruit of exhaustive research, is divided into six chapters. In the introduction, the author explains the study's objectives: on the one hand, to interpret the public DTT policies applied in the United Kingdom and Spain in the European arena and, on the other, to analyse the television models stemming from them. However, the ultimate goal of this lecturer at the Complutense University is "to understand the challenges posed by the so-called digital age" (p. 23). García Leiva comfortably surpasses her goal by properly identifying the challenges posed by the digitalisation process of Hertz-based television and the ominous risks and goes so far as to proffer suggestions for tackling these obstacles.

The decision to study the United Kingdom and Spain is due to the existence of major points of coincidence (these two

countries were the first to attempt to implement DTT in a payment platform model and failed in the strategy), yet also because of the interesting divergences between them that emerged during the DTT relaunch.

The study and subsequent comparison of policies in both countries is based on the application of a complex and interesting methodological tool: a table of analysis devised from a critical point of view, which is explained in chapter two in a detailed lesson on the conditions and stakeholders who may play a role in configuring digital television policies. These elements, which are described in full and illustrated with examples from Europe, are focal points of an analysis that encompasses different categories, each of which represents a divergent political option. The researcher, who claims that "a communicative policy that can truly be described as such must always have citizens at the centre of its concerns" (p. 59), formulates her proposal by evaluating policies in terms of democratisation and, in doing so, achieves her main goal: to determine the degree of social participation in the different areas of public policy, such as message production, decision-making and devising the policies themselves.

Chapter three contains a detailed description of the gestation process of DTT policies in the European Union to introduce readers to the European context. Next, the author studies the British and Spanish experiences meticulously by following the proposed methodology, which allows her to diagnose the degree of democratisation in each country's policies and offer the results of the comparison.

In the author's view, the United Kingdom and Spain share a DTT model that is far removed from constituting a plural, democratic service, since the existing order in Hertz-based analogue television architecture is being preserved - something that prevents the entry of new stakeholders - and as a result, the integration of factors from the audiovisual market is also being promoted. The analysis also sheds light on the ambiguous role of British and Spanish public television in implementing digital terrestrial television. Furthermore, it verifies that these countries' discourse tends more towards the economic-

industrial or political potential than towards the new technology's social and cultural benefits. Moreover, service receivers are being treated by operators as mere customers and not as citizens and the participation of social stakeholders in developing DTT is almost imperceptible.

As for the main divergences in these countries' performance, García Leiva highlights those stemming from the regulator's characteristics (there is one sole, independent and convergent regulator in the United Kingdom, whereas there are multiple public figures in regional and national arenas in Spain, each with its own political criteria). Another difference can be traced to the forms of regulation: while regulation in the United Kingdom is based on the "dictating of norms and the incessant search for consensus" (p. 298), in Spain, it is based on "governmental and regulatory-type" mechanisms (p. 299). Two different approaches are also noted with respect to DTT coverage, which is more local in Spain and more national in the United Kingdom. Although the author does not seem to consider this question very important, it needs pointing out that the extension of Hertz-based TV digitalisation in Spain is taking place from the start at three levels: national, regional and local. This undoubtedly hinders the process of implementing DTT, while it enriches it in terms of pluralism and democracy. The results of its application notwithstanding, this obvious strength in Spanish public policies contrasts markedly with the lack of interest in local television observed in British policies, which will only take this possibility into account after the digital switchover and always as a possibility, since no bandwidth has been reserved for it and it will have to enter into financial competition with other operators and uses when the spare bandwidth is auctioned off by Ofcom to the highest bidder.

In any case, aside from these divergences, the common indubitable fact in both countries, as demonstrated by García Leiva, is that the opportunity to democratise the service is being wasted. In view of this, the author proposes to reorient European DTT policies towards major public intervention and regulation through a comprehensive legal framework that encompasses the entire audiovisual sector. She also believes that guaranteeing the transparency of the entire process is indispensable and advocates subjecting all decisions to public consultation to this end. In the name of pluralism, the author believes that frequencies and licenses should be distributed by balancing "new/existing, local/regional/national, public/private, for profit/not-for-profit stakeholders" (p. 317). This diversification of stakeholders will lead to an expansion of the offer of content, which will be accompanied by greater innovation, quality and the guarantee of open access. García Leiva believes it is fundamental for public service to recover its leadership in the process, not only to promote itself but also to correct possible discrimination, yet she also believes it crucial to find a viable business model that provides continuity to the service without risking new failures.

In short, García Leiva's book vindicates a policy that establishes a democratic DTT model to guarantee universal access

to the service, understood as a way of incorporating citizens into the Information Society and as an alternative for achieving "a fairer and more social model" (p. 319).

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Television Truths

In *Television Truths*, John Hartley rigorously analyses television culture and suggests that academic studies be overhauled to boost their prestige and address the changes the media is undergoing. According to the author, “television truths” are “persuasive, powerful and penetrating” (p. 7) and fulfil several functions in public and private life, which range from legitimating actions of war, businesses and the public administration to influencing private behaviour.

Hartley is a lecturer at the Queensland University of Technology and the Australian National University and, in 2001, was appointed to the Australian Academy of the Arts. Hartley previously taught and conducted research at a number of British universities. He is considered one of the greatest scholars in the epistemology of television, popular culture and cultural studies and has written distinguished works such as *Creative Industries* (2005), on the political, social and economic function of cities, companies and creative economies, *A Short History of Cultural Studies* (2003) and the now classic *Uses of Television* (1999).

The author argues that we have all become experts as well as critics, and not just of programmes, genres and the stars that fill the small screen but of the production system as well. However, the author claims that academic studies on television are undergoing an epistemological crisis and finding themselves sidelined from the prevailing discourse. Hartley points out that scholars who voice their views on television in the media often come from areas as diverse as psychology, marketing, political economics, paediatrics and criminology and devote themselves exclusively to denigrating content in most cases. However, Hartley believes that academic studies on television should shun an essentially negative approach, since the field generates media knowledge with profound cultural and political implications. In this sense, television studies understood as a “philosophy of popular reality” (p. 8) have a great deal to say not only about the medium, but also about education, politics (the relationship with the consumer-citi-

zen), creativity and the conception of society.

The book is divided into four parts. The first (*Is TV True?*) addresses the bases of knowledge and interpretation of the medium and shows how new paradigms associated with modernity are affecting contemporary thought, while it analyses television’s historical evolution in a global environment. Part two (*Is TV a Polity?*) considers the relationship between the audiovisual medium and the audience within the context of notions of mediatised citizenship and the consumer-citizen. Part three (*Is TV Beautiful?*) examines television content through examples of live TV, reality shows and sporting events coverage. Part four (*Metaphysics of TV*) offers a metaphysical point of view. Hartley contends that academic literature has neglected audiovisual historiography and he reformulates a method that allows us to investigate the broadcasting industry’s evolution, in this case, focusing on Australia. Lastly, the author puts forward a proposal for television studies in university education in the midst of the age of democratised media and “distributed truth”, in which user-generated content reconnects creative, critical and communicative aspects.

The burden of meaning in the chain of value in television production has now shifted from the creator/producer to the audience, who is the one that certifies a programme’s success through ratings, surveys, polls and messages in a kind of “democratainment” that satisfies consumers and voters (pp. 30-32). Hartley conceptualises the global dimensions of several phenomena that had previously only been experienced in the local or national arena. In this sense, he describes in detail how the coverage of floods in Asia during the December 2004 tsunami was an example of the globalisation of disaster, in which the global system of capturing and exchanging of images, broadcasting networks and the audience’s response was mobilised for the public good (pp. 70-73).

The book devotes two chapters to reality shows as a continuously mutating format capable of interpreting anything that may come up and pays special attention to programmes such as *Supermodel*, *The Eurovision Festival*, *American Idol* and *Celebrity Big Brother*, in which the audience’s plebiscite

becomes a response to the challenge of consumer activism and a way to reform democracy in the creative industry. Hartley contends that *Celebrity Big Brother* is a worthy successor to Shakespeare's dramas, although the interpretation of what goes on in the house ranges beyond the meaning of the events and obeys the viewers', bloggers' and voters' judgements, whereby privacy becomes public property in which anybody can traffic.

Most of the arguments in the book's final chapter advocate overhauling communication studies. With the internet's appearance, all users have become potential producers of multimedia contents. Thanks to the computer screen interface, television spaces are integrated into online services and the offer is becoming synergic and compulsive. Thus, television, which is increasingly personalised and interactive, appeals to one's own experience. The author emphasises four areas of research: a) technical: convergence, integration and interactivity; b) policy: the new economy, the Information Society and creative industries; c) employment: the massive change in kinds of jobs in small companies and service providers and d) consumers: the creation of content and innovation promoted by users and social communities. Although corporate stakeholders are still powerful players, the time is ripe for innovative companies supported by values such as research, interdisciplinarity, internationality and integration (pp. 256-260).

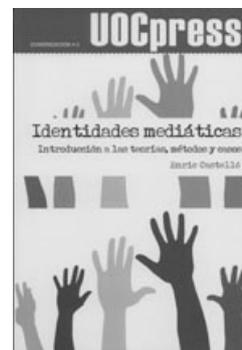
In short, Hartley's work commendably provides enough examples and proposals to accompany and clarify his theses in a sprightly, rigorous manner, making this book a must-read for those interested in studying the medium of television.

CASTELLÓ, E. *Identidades mediáticas. Introducción a las teorías, métodos y casos*. Barcelona: Editorial UOC, 2008, 295 pàg. ISBN: 978-84-9788-738-0.

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For research into the media and identities

Castelló, E. *Identidades mediáticas. Introducción a las teorías, métodos y casos*. Barcelona: Editorial UOC, 2008, 295 pp. ISBN: 978-84-9788-738-0.

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All text is *text within context*, hence if an analysis dispenses with this evidence, it runs the risk of missing the points whence flows a good part of what the text contains: style, strategies, intentions, etc., in short, a good part of what gives it meaning. This idea runs through Enric Castelló's work, modulated in forms on different objects: when he supports symbolic representation as a result of socially anchored discursive practices, when he defends culturalist theses on meaning as a textual proposal that has just been updated or constructed in the diverse circumstances of its reading and interpretation, and even when he warns us against every essentialist consideration of the social, changing, movable and constantly transforming identities in the multiple situations in which they are created, expressed and circulated. All text is text within context and so is Castelló's.

Identidades mediáticas is based on work the author conducted to prepare his doctoral thesis on national identity in TV fiction series, in which he studied Catalonia's case. An undoubtedly forceful choice, since it compelled him to consider a concept – identity – which is complex in its theoretical formulation (What is identity?), methodological management (Where and how we can understand it in its empirical form?) and practical consequences (Why should identities be studied?). As Miquel Rodrigo points out in the book's introduction, identity is a key concept in social sciences at the turn of this century, revitalised now by the advent of a second modernity

whose progress is driven by seemingly contradictory forces and ideas (globalisation and localism, cosmopolitanism and communitarianism, connectivity and fragmentation), in which every effort at comprehension comes up against the controversial issue of identities, no matter what.

Orienting oneself in this prolix stage is not a simple task and even less so for those who are about to take their first steps in social research. When Castelló was starting out on his thesis, he lamented the lack of a roadmap to guide him, to point out milestones and reference points, known territories and zones to be explored. Since no such roadmap existed, he proposed to draw one himself and the result is this work, the book "I wish I'd encountered during the research process" (p. 21). Hence, *Identidades mediáticas* is postulated as a roadmap, a tour guide for those venturing forth to get to know the media and social identities; this is the context in which we should appraise the interest in and benefits of what Castelló proposes.

Although the subtitle delimits something like three fields of play (theories, methods and cases), the text is more like a two-part structure: first, the current status of the issues involved in the different theoretical proposals on social identities is defined and afterwards the themes of media and identities are addressed in order to identify theories, propose methods and exemplify via cases. The first part ("Entendre les identitats socials") is resolved plainly and thoroughly. Here, the author uses excellent criteria to delineate what he considers to be the four major theoretical perspectives for tackling the study of identities (historicism, constructionism, technologism – inevitably - and postmodernism) and is careful, with even better criteria, not to present them as opposing schools but rather as complementary viewpoints of a multifaceted object to the effects of these viewpoints: identities are created during historical processes, constructed in social interaction, transformed by communication technologies and are now acquiring a fragmentary character. All of these theses are compatible with one another and the researcher, guided by this roadmap's author, would do well to follow the recommendation of integrating diverse ideas to grasp such a complex phenomenon.

In part two, Castelló's mapping goes from sketching the terrain of theories and methods to analysing the relationship between the media and social identities and refers to several available studies on specific objects in this theme (migrations and information; national identity and television fiction; gender and advertising and young people and mobile phones). To make order out of the current status of scientific knowledge on the media and identities, the author proposes a tour of the different schools of thought or paradigms of communicative research - structural-functionalism, critical theory, symbolic interactionism and cultural studies - in order to demonstrate the progressive advent of an "identity-based shift" (p. 167) in communication studies. In fact, this involves a kind of reinterpretation or revision of those paradigms from an identity standpoint, a suggestive thesis yet one teeming with risks, because history explained with a teleological vocation (things happen in a certain way until there is a shift in their evolution) must necessarily mark a point of rupture that can only be at the expense of having skilfully removed any affiliation with what preceded it.

According to Castelló, this point of rupture in the issue of media and identities comes about with the maturity of the interpretivist and constructionist perspectives (symbolic interactionism, cultural studies), graphically illustrated as one step from the idea of a society of masses to one of communities, precisely to reinforce the thesis that the issue of identity is taking centre stage. This approach deserves at least two comments. In the first place, it is not necessary to wait for constructionism in this conceptual transition, since the best contribution of mass communication research (structural-functionalism, to summarise), with Lazarsfeld in the lead, would probably be the rediscovery of this community (and therefore identity-based, if you will) factor in mass communication processes. Secondly, if the debate is made to revolve around this conceptual transition of mass to community, the realm of reflection on and study of the media and identity would apparently be reduced to the specific area of audiences and their relationships (use, interpretation, appropriation...) with media discourses.

Aside from these considerations, I believe that the roadmap Castelló sketches on the theoretical perspectives that converge in the study of the media and identity would have been richer if the criteria applied in the first part of the work had also been applied here to put the diversity of the theoretical proposals he tackles in order. The first part is a very effective explanatory strategy in pedagogical terms: Castelló identifies a series of particular issues related to the general theme of social identities and then proceeds to gloss the different theories and conceptual corpora related to each issue (the historical conformation of identity, the impact of technology, today's fragmentation, national identity, etc.). Applying these issue-based criteria would have allowed particular fields or realms of research within this diverse theme of the media and social identity to be identified; then the current status of the question could have been based on each of these areas, e.g. the depiction of iden-

tity in different media discourses (information, fiction, advertising, etc); the reception, interpretation and use of media representation as an ordinary cognitive resource; the social effects of these discourses; their production mechanisms or, finally, the influence exercised by media ownership or the circulation of cultural products, thoroughly addressed by the political communication economy.

All this is present in Castelló's work, but with a certain dispersion that reduces the pedagogical efficiency of the second part of the book, in my opinion. And pedagogical efficiency, its usefulness "to new researchers in the field of identity" (p. 233) and as a guide to this "labyrinthine debate" (p. 270) is what justifies this work. From now on, anyone who ventures forth into this prolix, controversial question of the media and identities will not be able to lament, as the author did, the lack of an extremely valuable guide with which to strike out down the road.