

# Digital Perspectives & Global Narratives in New Media Communication

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## PLENARY SESSION 1 | Digital Data Activism and New Forms of Political Protest

**Daniel Stein**

*Professor of North American Literary and Cultural Studies,  
University of Siegen Germany*

This talk picks up the critique by African American scholars like Ruha Benjamin, Joy Buolamwini, and Simone Browne of the algorithmic criminalization of marginalized population groups through digitally supported forms of racial profiling, predictive policing, and race-based surveillance. These scholars challenge the understanding of crime by law enforcement agencies and other institutions involved in crime prevention and prosecution, whose work is increasingly informed and legitimized by digital technologies. By exposing the discriminatory logic of these technologies – their function as a “black box” in the double sense: a hidden mechanism and data-based discriminatory technology – these scholars move from the academic to the political arena and use their research as the basis for political protest. In doing so, they turn crime into a traveling concept (Bal 2001; Dollinger/Schmidt/Stein 2024) moving back and forth between law enforcement, scholarship, and data activism. My talk explores the shifts in the meanings of crime that these scholars seek to inspire and the institutional reactions their political interventions have triggered.

*Daniel Stein is Professor of North American Literary and Cultural Studies and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of Siegen, Germany. He is the author of Music Is My Life: Louis Armstrong, Autobiography, and American Jazz (University of Michigan Press, 2012), Authorizing Superhero Comics: On the Evolution of a Popular Serial Genre (Ohio State University Press, 2021), and Strange Fruit and Bitter Roots: Black History in Contemporary Graphic Narrative (University Press of Mississippi, forthcoming 2025). He is a principal investigator in the Collaborative Research Center “Transformations of the Popular” (since 2021), funded by the German Research Foundation, and a member of the Center for Interdisciplinary Crime Studies at the University of Siegen. He is a co-editor of Anglia: Journal of English Philology and the Anglia Book Series (De Gruyter Brill).*



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## PLENARY SESSION 2| **Reterritorializing the Studio Lot: Backstaging in a Digital Media Global Complex**

**Peter J. Bloom**

*Professor of Film and Media Studies  
University of California, Santa Barbara, USA*

The studio lot was once synonymous with the power of backstage allure. It was part of a vertically integrated context for glamor and ideological power closely associated with cinematic illusionism. A significant midcentury genre was known as the backstage musical, or a melodrama that substituted the theatrical musical stage with cinematic qualities of intimacy. The role and function of studio lots have shifted dramatically in recent years. A new regime of media logistics (Dickinson 2024) has incrementally replaced the indexicality of dedicated studio locations and their personnel. Instead, studio lots have expanded on a global scale which has created a new dynamic. On the one hand, historical know-how remains associated with studio cultures and their ability to stage historical dramas with great detail as with jidaigeki historical dramas. They continue to be filmed at Toei and Shochiku studios in Kyoto. On the other, new digital LED screen techniques and cameras are able to present depth perception in virtual environments as in the case of the Amazon MGM Culver Studios in Los Angeles. This means that many productions can be made anywhere.

I consider backstaging from the perspective of actual studios sites of production and their shifting role in an emerging media economy. Backstaging is not merely a physical location, but as Irving Goffman (1956) has described, “a back region relative to a given performance where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course.” By contrast with theatrical staging and related bodily practices, the territory of digital staging reterritorializes collective memory (Quintyn 2007). It provides an audiovisual context

for blurred boundaries between the individual and their avatars. It leads me to consider the effects of delocalization in a global context for media production.

*Peter J. Bloom is Professor of Film and Media Studies at University of California, Santa Barbara. He has published extensively on British, French, and Belgian colonial media including French Colonial Documentary, Frenchness and the African Diaspora (co-editor), and Modernization as Spectacle in Africa (co-editor), among other publications. With a geographical focus on West Africa and Southeast Asia, he is preparing a monograph entitled, Radio-Cinema Modernity: The Catoptrics of Empire. He recently completed a co-edited volume with Dominique Jullien, entitled Screens and Illusionism: Alternative Teleologies of Mediation (Edinburgh University Press, 2024).*

## PARALLEL SESSIONS

### Panel 1 | New Media: Cross-Cultural and Political Narratives

#### Social Media Use and Political Trust in Germany

**Anna-Marie Rönsch**

*Erasmus University Rotterdam  
Rotterdam, Netherlands*

Social media use in connection to political trust and political positions seems to be more relevant than ever for German society given the success of right radical parties in the European elections in 2024, especially among young voters, as well as the increasing use and operationalization of social media for political information and representation. This paper contributes to the study of social media use and trust in politics in Germany by specifically analyzing the connection between different social media platforms and political trust while including the political position of social media users. Multiple regression analyses were conducted based on the German digilog@bw dataset from 2022 with 1818 participants. The results suggest that people with radical political positions tend to use social media more frequently while especially Telegram and TikTok are characterized by users with radical political positions. Additionally, different platforms were found to vary in their effect on political trust. This study shows that social media can't be generalized under one category but needs to be examined in its diversity to combat current developments and strengthen political trust by employing purposeful and unifying strategies.

**Keywords:** Social Media Platforms, Political Trust, Political Positions, Polarization

*Anna-Marie Rönsch is a Researcher in Sociology of Culture, Media and Arts (M.Sc.) at the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication, Rotterdam. She completed her Bachelor of Arts in Literature, Art and Media Studies with a focus in Media Studies at the University of Konstanz, Germany.*

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## **The Political Face in the Digital Context: The Influence of the Instagram Profiles of Portuguese Political Parties with Parliamentary Seats**

**João Bernardo Barata<sup>1</sup> & Adriana Oliveira<sup>2</sup>**

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*São Mamede de Infesta Portugal*

*<sup>2</sup>CEOS.PP, ISCAP, Polytechnic of Porto,  
Portugal*

Increasing digitalization has played a major role in different areas of society, particularly in the field of politics, both nationally and internationally. And in this context, social networks, particularly Instagram, have grown significantly, changing the strategies of digital political communication. Thus, Instagram has become an instrument capable of transmitting speeches of a different nature, both verbal and non-verbal, and with the possibility of greater personalization, bringing leaders and voters closer together, either emotionally or through more interactive actions. and interactive. In other words, Instagram has been used to establish communication capable of mobilizing ideas and actions in order for political parties to build images capable of generating greater involvement between political candidates and their audiences. The following research question was therefore formulated: “What role do political parties’ Instagram accounts play in citizens’ voting decisions?”. The study focuses on Portuguese political parties with parliamentary seats. To collect data, we opted for a mixed qualitative and quantitative study. The data was collected using analysis grids based on the literature review. With regard to qualitative data, a content analysis was carried out in order to understand the type of topics published. The quantitative analysis was used to record metrics in order to understand the number of posts published in general and by topic, the number of direct interactions from the public, namely comments and reactions to feeds, stories and reels. The results highlighted that political parties take advantage of stories, reels

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and partnerships with influencers to humanize their messages and personalize their reach. The ability to integrate targeted ads into users' feeds further increases the intensity and specification of the message. The study also reveals challenges, including the risks of ideological polarization and the ethical concerns surrounding data-based microsegmentation. In dissecting the strategic use of Instagram, the research emphasizes engagement. The findings suggest that Instagram has redefined the paradigm of political communication, offering both opportunities and risks. The platform's ability to merge lifestyle narratives with political agendas provides an effective, albeit controversial, means of reaching voters. Future research should explore the long-term implications of digital political strategies on democratic processes.

**Keywords:** Digital Communication, Instagram, Political Engagement, Visual Media, Social Media

*João Bernardo Barata is a researcher in Digital Communication Consultancy, and he also works as a journalist. His work focuses on the intersection of politics and social media, particularly the role of Instagram in shaping public opinion and voter behavior. Currently, he is pursuing a Master's degree in Digital Communication Consultancy at ISCAP.*

## Counter-narrative in Contemporary Arab Media Politics:

### The Case of Aljazeera

**Ouidyane Elouardaoui**

*ALCS laboratory,  
Associate Professor in the English Department  
Chouaib Doukkali University, Morocco*

Aljazeera, the Qatari first-ranked all-news channel that was launched in 1996, has been considered as an exception to strong censorship rules that dominate private and public media in the Arab world. It is the only satellite Arab TV channel that is independent from the Ministry of Information in its country of origin. Aljazeera is also believed to reinforce a shared Arab-Islamic identity and diligence in presenting an even-handed treatment of contemporary problems and critical voices throughout the Arab world (Lynch 2006). In this paper, I shed light on Aljazeera's continuing role in presenting counter-narrative coverage of critical political events in comparison with the rest of the Arab TV channels. In this comparative study, I point out the techniques that Aljazeera relies on such as devoting generous airtime to covering public protests. Aljazeera also adopts a sharply defined editorial line in the way it covers the regional conflicts, particularly the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. Through a close study of these techniques, I suggest that unlike the majority of the Arab TV channels including its first all-news competitor Al-Arabiya, Aljazeera succeeded in maintaining an influential position among the Arab audiences in the way it has covered the different political unrests related to the Arab spring and more strongly in its persisting counter-war stand in relation to the recent violent attacks on the Palestinian territories.

**Keywords:** Arab television, counter narrative, public unrest, Israeli-Palestinian conflict

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*Ouidyane Elouardaoui is an associate professor at the University of Chouaib Doukkali, Eljadida, Morocco, and a Fulbright scholar who received her PhD in Film and Media Studies from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her current research interests include contemporary Arab media, melodrama and spectatorship, as well as television, globalization and modernity. Her publications appear in a number of academic peer-reviewed journals such as the Journal of Turkish Review, the Journal of Arab and Muslim Media Research, and the Journal of Imaginations: Cross-Cultural Image Studies.*



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## Media Framing in the 2023 Israeli-Palestinian War: A Crossroads of Narratives and Implications

**Mouad Mbeker**

*ALCS Laboratory, Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences  
University of Chouaib Doukkali, El Jadida Morocco*

The 2023 Israeli-Palestinian war has been a focal point of international attention, where Western news outlets play a critical role in disseminating, yet, framing, information to different audiences worldwide. That is, this article tackles the paramount issue of media framing with regards to this newly sparked out war; it underlines this issue's potential to steer and shape public opinion, not to mention its capacity to impact international diplomacy and politics. The study's purpose revolves around three aspects: to investigate how Western news outlets frame this war and identify dominant and recurrent narratives, to establish a methodological framework for media framing analysis, and to put in the spotlight the implications of media framing on conflict resolution diplomacy efforts and public opinion steering. However, by employing lexical and sentiment content analysis, this article will operate on revealing framing patterns that are instilled in two Western news representative articles edited by Daily Mail and The New York Times. The contributions of this study are centered on revealing divergent framing strategies employed by the two outlets, offering a systemic methodological framework of content analysis for future media analyses. The results of this article centralize upon the framed narratives presented by these outlets and enable the understanding of media framing discourse influence on complex international conflicts. The implications of this research suggest the potential for more informed and objective media reporting and diplomatic efforts in the quest for conflict resolution in the destabilized warzone.

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**Keywords:** Media Framing; Ideology; Content Analysis; Lexical Analysis; Sentiment Analysis; Conflict Resolution; Western News Coverage; News Articles

*Mouad Mbeker is a third-year doctoral candidate in the Applied Language and Culture Studies (ALCS) Laboratory; currently affiliated as a CNRST contractual assistant professor in the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences at the University of Chouaib Doukkali. Mouad's research endeavors focus on multimedia discourse framing, with a particular interest in the intersection of political discourse and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA); aiming to contribute to the understanding of how language, media, and ideological constructs interact to shape public perception and opinion in contemporary society.*

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## Panel 2 | Digital Narratives, Cultural Identities, and Ethical Dilemmas

### **The Manifestation of Self-othering through Comic Representations: Facebook as a Case Study**

**Zineb HAYI**

*Moroccan American Studies Lab, Hassan II University  
Faculty of Letters and Humanities Ben M'sik,  
Casablanca, Morocco*

This paper explores the use of self-deprecatative humor and subversive comedy in digital spaces, such as Facebook, to construct a backward Moroccan identity. While the main purpose of online comic content referred to as 'memes' is laughter, it can still transmit various social ideologies that shape people's attitudes and worldviews due to the nature of humor discourse and the way it softens speech. Hence, this form of self-representation celebrates backwardness as an important aspect of Morocco's cultural identity. This qualitative study seeks to investigate the social media movement #RedPill and its social implications, especially racism and sexism, and the way it creates an inferiority complex in the people's psyche, in which cultural identity becomes laughable. To do this, various posts were collected from Moroccan public groups using Facebook's search feature following a list of keywords. The posts collected all contain linguistic and visual content that possesses aspects of racism, sexism, and othering. The data was then analysed using the emergent (emic) to categorize redundant themes such as binary oppositions, sexual objectification, racial slurs, and sexist discourse, and the theoretical (etic) to categorize them into bigger frameworks such as self-othering, cultural ridicule, 'us' vs 'them' power dynamic, and essentialism. Using the justification-suppression model of prejudice as a theoretical framework, this study showcases the way Moroccan

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identity is represented to others and perceived by the self through humor, and how this form of expression unveils hidden mental patterns. This study concludes that the Moroccan Red Pill digital subculture circulating famous social media platforms such as Facebook, uses humor and comedy to spread ethnic mockery, gender stereotypes, and hate speech which unconsciously promotes a negative image of the Moroccan identity as a whole in comparison with the Western one. This ultimately leads to a sense of self-othering in which the authentic self is always inferior and ridiculed under the framework of laughter. These findings highlight the need to promote positive aspects of the Moroccan identity and create comedy without the need of self-debasement. Furthermore, this paper is a recommendation for authorities to identify this form of digital abuse, and for social media users to report it.

**Keywords:** Self-othering, cultural identity, representation, humor, Red-Pill movement, self-deprecating comedy, Morocco

*Zineb HAYI is a third-year doctorate student in the Moroccan American Studies Lab, at Hassan II University, Faculty of Letters and Humanities Ben M'sik in Casablanca. She specializes in Cultural Studies, Media Studies, Humor Studies and Identity Studies.*

## **"Autism-TikTok" and public outrage. Ethical considerations on how to minimize oppression of marginalized autistic people such as women, trans people, and/or BIPOC**

**Sybille Bauer-Zierfuß**

*Doctoral Student in Philosophy  
University of Applied Arts  
Vienna Austria*

So-called "autism-TikTok" has evoked public outrage. Claims were made such as the "self-diagnosis-trend" with autism is dangerous. However, are those claims justified when looking at them through the lenses of the concept of epistemic oppression and/or are they a byproduct of internalized ableism, misogyny, transphobia and racism? As a matter of fact, there is a multitude of marginalized autistic creators specifically who share content about autism on the social media platform in different manners and for different purposes. Many autistics are granted the possibility to curate their own content and present themselves as the experts that they are of their own individual autistic experience. Those short clips enabling autistic (self-)representation, at the same time, seem to serve as tools to get in touch with other autistic individuals through video responses, comments, and/or private messages. Hence, "autism-TikTok" has a highly participatory, even communal factor to it. Nevertheless, the algorithm on TikTok considers the words "autism" or "autistic" as slurs and, thereby, stigmatizes autism through the platform's very structure. Moreover, not everyone has equally of a voice and not equally of a reach within the autistic community on TikTok which suggests potential race and gender bias. The multifacetedness in meanings, functions and impact of TikTok videos on and to marginalized autistic people prompts further exploration. Media analysis of selected TikTok videos as well as scrutinization of power dynamics surrounding "autism-TikTok" with the help of the concept epistemic injustice coined by Kristie Dotson and Miranda Fricker serve to shed light on this issue. Finally, ethical considerations address ways to sensitize viewers and how to explore one's internalized biases towards autistic people. There is a dire need for a paradigm change in how to treat and how to speak about autistic people to propel equity.

**Keywords:** Autism, marginalization, TikTok, oppression, stigmatization

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*Sybillle Bauer-Zierfuß is a filmmaker, artist & doctoral student in philosophy. She was born 1989 in Linz (Austria) but is currently based in Vienna. Bauer-Zierfuß's work explores topics such as autism, ableism, queer identity, abuse, biographies, death & grief.*

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## **We Won't Look Away: Writing of Witness by Palestinians in the Diaspora**

**Summer Awad**

*Fulbright English Teaching Assistant,  
Chouaib Doukkali University  
El Jadida, Morocco  
Multi-genre author,  
Knoxville, Tennessee, USA*

What does it mean to witness genocide through a handheld screen? This question, which socially conscious media users have grappled with since October 7, 2023, has been especially pressing for Palestinian writers in the diaspora. This literary analysis will survey how Palestinian diasporic writers have engaged in critical reflection, self-critique, and documentation of the ongoing genocide in Gaza over the past year, tackling works by Omar Sakr, Sarah Aziza, Lena Khalaf Tuffaha, George Abraham, and others. This literary survey will analyze how writers answer questions like: What is the responsible writer in general, and diaspora writers in particular, in the face of genocide? Is the act of witnessing sufficient resistance to genocide? What impact does such witnessing have on the psyche of Palestinians in the diaspora? How do diaspora writers maintain accountability to those most affected by the violence? What unique themes have emerged in diasporic writing since October 7?

**Keywords:** Palestine; diaspora; literature; witness; genocide; social media; Instagram; Facebook; news; writing; poetry; journalism

*Summer Awad is a Palestinian-American multi-genre writer from Knoxville, Tennessee. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing and Environment from Iowa State University. Her poetry and nonfiction have been published in Adi Magazine, The Rising Phoenix Review, J Journal, and others, with work forthcoming in Fikra Magazine and Beloit Poetry Journal. She was the recipient of a 2023 de Groot*



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*Foundation LANDO grant for writing on refugees, immigration, and migration. She currently teaches English at Chouaib Doukkali University in El Jadida, Morocco, as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant.*

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## Digital Media and Parasocial Interactions in South Korea's

### Entertainment Landscape

**Veronika Mattová**

*Department of Mongolian, Korean, and Vietnamese Studies  
Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University  
Brno, Czech Republic*

In an era where digital media reigns supreme, a disturbing phenomenon has emerged: fans develop deeply emotional connections with celebrities who, in reality, have no awareness of their existence. This one-sided interaction, known as parasocial interaction (PSI), can dangerously evolve into parasocial relationships (PSR)—long-lasting emotional bonds that thrive despite their complete lack of reciprocity.

This study explores the evolution of parasocial interactions (PSI) into parasocial relationships (PSR) on digital platforms like Weverse and Bubble for JYPnation, originated in South Korea. The objective is to understand how these interactions, originally one-sided and fleeting, transform into deeper emotional connections. In a culture where emotional expression is often suppressed due to societal norms emphasizing collectivism and conformity, these platforms provide a critical space for emotional fulfillment and connection with idols, bridging the gap between fans' emotional needs and the constraints of real-world interactions, not only within the country but worldwide.

This research employs Conceptual Analysis to clarify key concepts such as PSI and PSR within the context of South Korea's media culture. Additionally, Inductive Reasoning is applied to analyze digital platform data, observing how PSI evolves into PSR as users engage emotionally with idols over time, fostering a sense of intimacy and personal connection.

General observations suggest that platforms like Weverse and Bubble for JYPnation facilitate this emotional evolution, providing fans with ongoing engagement that moves beyond one-time interactions to create lasting bonds with idols. These platforms serve as emotional outlets, compensating for the emotional restraint prevalent in South Korean society, particularly among individuals who may experience emotional starvation.

The findings suggest that parasocial relationships provide an essential emotional connection for fans, offering psychological fulfillment in collectivist societies where emotional expression is often limited. As fans develop deeper, ongoing connections with their idols,

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digital media platforms may offer new pathways for emotional well-being, possibly even serving therapeutic functions. Future research could explore the long-term impacts of these digital relationships on psychological health and social behavior in such cultures.

**Keywords:** Parasocial Relationships, Parasocial Interactions, Emotional Fulfillment, Digital Media, South Korea

*Veronika Mattová is a researcher at the Department of Mongolian, Korean, and Vietnamese Studies at Masaryk University in the Czech Republic. Her academic interests lie at the intersection of cultural studies, digital communication, and K-pop fandoms, with a particular focus on the role of parasocial relationships and the impact of digital storytelling. Veronika has presented her work at various international conferences and is currently exploring the influence of BTS's digital narratives on global cultural identities and fan communities. She is also passionate about interdisciplinary approaches to communication and the integration of cognitive science in media studies.*

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## Is ChatGPT more Moroccan than me? A Semiotic Analysis of AI's Interpretation of Moroccan Cultural Symbols

Hatim El Farouki<sup>1</sup> & Karima Bouziane<sup>2</sup>

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This paper is intended to discuss to what degree ChatGPT Plus, Semiotic Engine GPT, can understand the visual semiotics of cultural artifacts that bridge tradition and modernity when representing Moroccan cultural identity. The study uses a range of culturally distinctive symbols --including Amazigh tattoos and jewelry, tilework emanating from Zellij and the Hand of Fatima, traditional carpets, and henna. The study examines in detail the strengths of this model concerning item-by-item understanding and expression carried out by these visual forms. Each artifact, in its uniqueness of historical and symbolic value, and for modern reinterpretation, has underlined precisely how AI interprets the visual symbols of this balance between heritage and modern adaptation. The present paper will perform a ChatGPT-powered semiotic analysis, using Semiotic Engine, to identify the level of depth and accuracy of the interpretations provided by the model, along with weighing its advantages and shortcomings regarding AI representation of Moroccan cultural heritage. The results contribute to a wider discussion on the place and role of AI within a visual cultural analysis, with particular respect to heritage conservation, but also how the globalization process has shaped the meaning of traditional symbols.

**Keywords:** AI-powered semiotics, Semiotic engine, Cultural heritage, AI cultural semiotics, ChatGPT

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*Karima Bouziane is an Associate Professor at Chouaib Doukkali University (UCD), El Jadida, Morocco, holding a Doctorate and an MA in Intercultural Communication and Translation Studies. Her research interests include Cross-cultural Communication, New Media, Advertising, and Translation. She leads the Cross-cultural Media Studies research group at UCD's ALCS Laboratory and serves as Editor-in-Chief for the International Arab Journal of English for Specific Purposes (IAJESP) and The International Journal of Cross-cultural Communication and Media Studies (CMS). She also coordinates the MA Program in Cross-Cultural Communication and Visual Media and has managed several Erasmus+ mobility projects in the Humanities and Social Sciences.*

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## Panel 3 | Modern Narratives: Art, Cinema, and Digital Culture

### **Hollywood Movies Through Social Identity Theory: American Sniper as a Case Study**

**Chaymae Achami**

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Faculté des Langues, des Arts et des Sciences Humaines - Ait Melloul  
Ibn Zohr University. Agadir, Morocco*

This article aims to test the viability of social identity theory by attempting to apply it to the context of Hollywood films. Social identity theory is a socio-psychological approach that underlines the idea of individuals constructing their social identity through cognitive processes of social categorization, identification, and comparison which, if extended to a new scope, gives the theory the potential to predict what occurs in the mind of the viewers when watching a certain movie. By extending the premise of the theory, this paper examines in detail the possible impact of the selected movie on viewers through its interference with social identification processes. This work adopts content analysis as a methodology where an interpretative study of the Hollywood movie “American Sniper” allows a close and detailed examination of various relevant scenes, of course, guided by the framework. This leads to predicting the interactions of the audience with the movie by spotting the mechanisms by which it interferes with the cognitive processes of social identification. All in all, this paper extends social identity theory to the scope of media studies and especially film studies. And, in a movie like American Sniper, which is based on real-life events that portray the horrors that American soldiers have to go through because of a merciless terrorist enemy who “threatens American peace”, using social identity theory gives valuable insight into the kind of cognitive processes the movie scenes stimulate in the minds of individuals. The binary divisions

portrayed in the movie provide the basis for social comparison processes that lead to social categorization and identification. We can conclude that the movie performs one of the cognitive processes and serves ready-to-consume results for the audience on which they base their identification. Finally, the use of social identity theory uncovers the mental impact of the movie on the audience's process of social identification. It thus provides a new possibility of application for the theory.

**Keywords:** Social identity theory, social identity, Film Studies, Social categorization, Hollywood, Social comparison

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## **Global Narratives in Contemporary Cinema: Producing and Reinforcing Gender Antagonism The film Barbie as a case study**

**Rim Idrissi Azami<sup>1</sup> & Zineb El Abboubi<sup>2</sup>**

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El Jadida, Morocco*

This article examines the propagation of new global narratives in contemporary cinema, particularly those that contribute to the production and circulation of gender antagonism. To this purpose, the article uses the American film Barbie (2023) as a case study. The main objective of the study is to explore how modern films, such as Barbie (2023) with its ubiquitous cultural impact, portray and propagate exaggerated and amorphous gender roles which serve the sole purpose of reinforcing societal divisions between women and men thus further widening the gender gap. The analysis of Barbie reveals how cinematic narratives and visual strategies shape public perceptions on gender relations, reproducing extreme views on gender dynamics and roles. The research methodology integrates content analysis, CDA, and an examination of cinematographic tools to uncover how the film's narrative, imagery, and dialogue contribute to the production of its extreme feminist discourse. Content analysis is used to identify key themes of gender inequality, toxic/passive masculinity, dis/empowerment, and social critiques apparent in the plot and character revelations. CDA is applied to examine the language used in the film, concentrating on how dialogue and rhetoric construct and reinforce asymmetric power dynamics. Colour schemes, framing, and mise-en-scène are concurrently analysed to comprehend their role in strengthening misleading and intemperate representations of men and women. The primary findings suggest that Barbie uses both overt

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and covert cinematic and discursive techniques to overstate gender differences often positioning men and women in confrontational situations which intensify feelings of resentment between the two sexes. Through its explicit narrative structure, the film foregrounds oppositional roles where women are depicted as passive social subjects struggling to surpass patriarchy and oppressive social structures, while men are portrayed as either oppressive, passive, or outright pernicious. Moreover, while Barbie is marketed as a feminist narrative, it blatantly intensifies gender antipathy through the portrayal of extreme male and female social behavior. These radical representations contribute to a pervasive discourse that is inherently adversarial, fostering feelings of distrust between men and women. The article concludes that contemporary cinema exposes the two sexes to derision and contempt through concentrating on antagonistic tropes rather than promoting meaningful and tolerant discourses.

**Keywords:** Gender antagonism, CDA, feminism, content analysis, cinematography

*Prof. Idrissi Azami is a lecturing professor at Chouaib Doukkali, faculty of sciences. She obtained her BA in American literature, MA in Applied Linguistics and Culture Studies, and Doctorate in Applied Linguistics and Literature from the same university. She worked as a High-school teacher with the Ministry of Education for six years before joining the university. She published many journal articles and conference articles throughout her Doctoral studies and participated in various conferences locally and abroad. Her areas of research interests include gender studies, cultural studies, applied linguistics, and media studies.*

*Prof. Zineb El Abboubi holds the position of Lecturing Professor at The Higher School of Education and Training and is a distinguished researcher specializing in Gender and Language Studies at Chouaib Doukkali University in El Jadida, Morocco. Additionally, she is a valued member of the Didactics, Languages, and Cultures Research Team. Her research explores the intersection of gender studies and language, with a focus on pragmatics and cultural studies. She examines how linguistic practices shape and reflect societal gender norms, emphasizing the role of language in negotiating identity and power dynamics within multicultural contexts. Dr. El Abboubi's work also delves into the pragmatic and cultural dimensions of communication, particularly in educational settings and media representation. Alongside her research, she is committed to mentoring future educators and promoting inclusivity and gender*

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*equity in academic spaces. She meticulously examines phenomena such as linguistic biases, sexism, and manifestations of gender-based violence, shedding light on crucial issues pertaining to gender socialization. Through her work, she offers invaluable insights into the complexities of language and its profound implications for gender relations and societal norms.*

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## **The Discursive Construction of Gender and Space in Contemporary Moroccan Cinema**

**Abdelghani Moussaoui**

*Chouaib Doukkali University, El Jadida*

*Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences*

Casablanca has exerted and continues to exert a fascination for both international and Moroccan filmmakers. Within the framework of discourse analysis, this paper takes up the intersectionality of gender and space by delving into the link between women and the city in two postcolonial Moroccan films: Abdalkader Laqtaa's *Love in Casablanca* (1991) and Mustapha Darkaoui's *Casablanca by Night* (2004). It unravels how Casablanca, as a postcolonial city, empowers and disempowers Moroccan women. The chosen corpus is worthy of scrutiny by virtue of casting light on the cruciality of the urban space in liberating women. This paper is immensely indebted to postcolonial theory. After the analysis of the suggested films, it was inferred that Casablanca is conceived of as a subdual of the female body and as a space where Moroccan women enjoy more freedom. Both filmmakers, Laqtaa and Darkaoui, reveal that while Casablanca is, at first glance, a male-dominated city where women suffer from patriarchy and oppression, it is at the end a city where women can move freely and withhold power. The two films also show how the utopian space is superimposed upon the dystopian space. Given that the dystopian space does not meet the subjects' expectations, the utopian space (i.e., dreams and fantasies) is utilized as an alternative for individuals to escape the daily life in Casablanca. *Love in Casablanca* and *Casablanca by Night* take on the social paradoxes of Casablanca and exemplify the way postcolonial Moroccan filmmakers see and interpret the urban space in relation to the thematic issues of sexuality, the female body, and virginity. The city of Casablanca has been then widely represented in contemporary postcolonial cinema because of the multi-layered spaces and the social struggles it offers.

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**Keywords:** Gender, Space, Intersectionality, Moroccan Cinema, Postcolonial Theory.

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## **Interactive art as an example of democratization of the art and culture: Audience engagement and participatory culture in digital media**

**Izabela Franckiewicz-Olczak**

*University of Lodz,  
Łódź, Poland*

The democratization ideas are more and more important in nowadays culture. The presentation concentrates on new media interactive art as an example of democratization of art and culture. In the perspective of new media, interactive art is the one that provides a context in which, thanks to the recipient, the work of art materializes. The presentation, in the theoretical field, refers to Karl Mannheim's essay Democratization of culture, A. Swingewood, The Myth of Mass Culture and other theoreticians of the democratization of culture on the one hand. On the practical level it bases on the result of research consist of observation of people in interaction with pieces of art and surveys they fill in. The results are interpreted in the theoretical perspective of Erving Goffman's symbolic interactionism.

By analyzing selected examples of interactive art, it examines to what extent interactive art is the most direct and materialized form of democratization of art.

**Keywords:** new media art, interactive art, symbolic interactionism, democratization of the culture

*Izabela Franckiewicz-Olczak - sociologist, media scientist, Assistant Professor at The Department of Sociology of Art, University of Lodz. The author of the books: Colour, Sound and Rhythm. The Relation Between Sound and Vision in New Media Arts and Interactive Art. Social Context of Perception. Her research interests focus on new media, contemporary art and the problem of democratization of art.*

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## Crisis Communication in Digital Contexts

**Inês Soares<sup>1</sup> & Adriana Oliveira<sup>2</sup>**

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Communication is a determining factor in the success of organizations, as it is a key element in building solid relationships and fostering trust with different audiences. Therefore, creating consistent and aligned messages is fundamental to achieving effective communication.

This scenario is felt in today's business landscape, marked by growing digitalization and interconnectivity, where communication has become a powerful tool for stimulating public interest and reinforcing the value of products or services. Accelerated by the dissemination of information on social networks, this dynamic brings new challenges for organizations, which need to protect their image and maintain a good reputation. The speed and unpredictability of crises in the digital environment have made responsiveness and strategic crisis management an essential priority for companies, and a decisive factor in preserving their credibility.

In view of these issues, the proposed research seeks to explore how companies face crisis situations, highlighting the strategies used to protect their reputation. The focus of this study is the analysis of concrete practices and their effectiveness in real contexts, assessing the impact they have on public perception. To achieve these objectives, a qualitative methodology based on a case study will be adopted. Data collection will be carried out through semi-structured interviews, based on the literature review, and will seek to gather information on corporate tactics implemented in times of crisis, to understand how companies use digital platforms to communicate during crises, as well as the adaptations they make to their traditional response and risk mitigation strategies.



It is hoped that the results of this study will show that companies that adopt an integrated approach, identifying common patterns and practices, have greater success in mitigating reputational damage in digital environments, pointing out the importance of continuous monitoring of online conversations to detect potential crises at an early stage, allowing for more agile responses. It is also hoped that the work will contribute to the advancement of academic knowledge by filling existing gaps in the literature on the effectiveness of digital media in crisis management.

**Keywords:** Crisis Communication; Reputation Management; Digital Age; Business Context; Public Relations

*Inês Soares is a researcher in Digital Communication at the Polytechnic of Porto, with a strong focus on corporate communication and public relations. She draws on her academic background and professional experience to explore innovative solutions in the communication field. Besides her master's focus on Digital Communication, she holds a bachelor's degree in communication sciences, bringing a comprehensive perspective to modern communication challenges.*

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## **Beyond the Mnemonic Function of Modern Technological Media of Memory: Recording and being Recorded in the “Black Mirror”**

**Brahim Akaya**

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FLASH Ait Melloul, Ibn Zohr University,  
Morocco*

The preservation of memory has always been an onerous task. For this reason, scholars in the field of memory studies propose that the history of memory has consistently been shaped by memory media (Blackwell, 2018; Cubitt, 2007; Erll, 2011; Hall, 2006; Jenkins, 2019; Nucera & Campione, 2021; Schmidt, 2010). Humans have always been aware that events, be they small or big, are subject to oblivion and erosion by other elements. In this paper, I performed a content analysis of “the entire history of you,” which is the third episode of the British anthology series “The Black Mirror” with the following question in mind: Do new media of memory (represented by the grain) function as mnemonic devices, or do they have another function? Blackwell (2018), who approached the same episode using the Foucauldian approach, inspired this paper. It aligns with Erll's 2011 discourse on the creation of memory media. The results of my study demonstrate that the construction of media of memory in our contemporary technology-driven society serves a purpose beyond mere memorization. They foreshadow a panoptic society where technological media of memory carry memories and position people concomitantly both as witnesses and witnesses.

**Keywords:** Cultural Memory-Black Mirror-Memory Media

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*Brahim Akaya is a PhD student at the Faculty of Languages and Arts, Ait Melloul (Ibn Zohr University, Morocco). His fields of interest include Cultural Memory Studies, Anthropology, and Linguistics. He earned his master's degree from Cadi Ayyad University of Marrakech and is currently researching the narrative remembrance of the Jewish community in the Al Houz region of the High Atlas Mountains. In addition to his academic pursuits, he works as an EFL teacher for the Ministry of Education in Morocco.*

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## Panel 4 | Gender Perspectives in New Media

### One Caftan at a Time: How Moroccan Women Are Dressing for Empowerment

Imane Alqaraoui<sup>1</sup> & Fatima-Zohra Iflahen<sup>2</sup>

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Cadi Ayyad University, Marrakech, Morocco

<sup>2</sup>Full Professor at the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences,  
Cadi Ayyad University, Marrakech, Morocco

This paper explores how Moroccan women use fashion content on social media to reclaim and reshape their narratives, challenging colonial and patriarchal norms that have historically defined them (El Idrissi Amiri, 2024). Drawing on feminist media theory, the study examines how these women use traditional Moroccan and Amazigh attire—like caftans, djellabas, and Amazigh jewelry—to reconnect with their cultural identity while asserting agency and self-expression. On social media, they bring these styles into everyday wardrobes with modern adaptations, creating visual narratives that celebrate cultural pride, honor heritage, and assert agency. In this digital landscape, fashion is more than aesthetic—it is an empowering medium where women feel both beautiful and self-possessed, aware of being seen but choosing how they are seen (Muzna, 2021). This allows Moroccan women to challenge the male gaze and confront cultural taboos, asserting confidence in ways that defy and subvert traditional gender expectations (Mulvey, 1975). This study employs content analysis of social media posts, focusing on how Moroccan female influencers present themselves, incorporate traditional elements, narrate their identities, and navigate sensitive topics through fashion (Lai, 2015). By examining visual choices, captions, comments, and hashtags this paper investigates how these narratives challenge the historical male gaze and

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construct a self-defined representation of Moroccan women in the digital realm. Preliminary findings reveal that fashion when used as a tool for self-presentation, allows Moroccan women to confront stereotypes, reclaim their cultural heritage, reshape narratives about their identities, and assert an empowered image of Moroccan womanhood. These women actively participate in redefining beauty standards, asserting control over how they are seen in the digital realm, and challenging societal expectations placed on their bodies and their dress. Overall, this paper shows how Moroccan women use fashion to engage in ethical storytelling, asserting culturally grounded self-representation that reshapes perceptions and fosters a more harmonious global dialogue.

**Keywords:** Feminist media, Visual Storytelling, Agency, Fashion Activism, Cultural Identity

*Imane Alqaraoui is a second-year doctoral student at Cadi Ayyad University, specializing in Cultural Studies. With a bachelor's degree in English and Cultural Studies from Mohammed V University and a master's degree in foreign applied Languages: Business, Culture, and Media from Cadi Ayyad University, Imane is passionate about studying societal dynamics. She questions the efficacy of social media as a catalyst for positive change. Her research explores how Moroccan women leverage social media to promote their works and attend agencies, shedding light on innovative strategies to fight gender disparities.*

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## **Empowering Marginalized Voices Through Digital Platforms: A Comparative Study of Women's Rights Campaigns in Morocco**

**Ikram Douaou & Fatima-Zohra Iflahen**

*Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences,  
Cadi Ayyad University, Marrakech, Morocco*

This paper investigates how digital platforms are used to empower marginalized voices and promote gender equality in Morocco through focusing on three initiatives: the grassroots campaign “Masaktach”, the corporate-sponsored program “We4She”, and the government-backed “National Committee for Gender Equality and Women's Advancement”. This study analyzes how these initiatives use digital tools to address women's rights through examining their approaches and contributions to social change. The methodology used in this research is a qualitative comparative method, using data from campaign materials, social media posts, and advocacy reports. This approach calls attention to the interplay between grassroots activism, corporate influence, and government efforts in addressing gender inequalities. The study finds that while each initiative has a different approach to the dimensions of gender equality, they collectively show the growing potential of digital platforms as tools for advocacy and systemic change. By focusing on the strategies and challenges of these initiatives, the research emphasizes the importance of cross-sector collaboration and culturally sensitive approaches in designing effective interventions. This paper contributes to broader discussions on the role of digital platforms in advancing women's rights and offers insights into creating inclusive and sustainable strategies for empowering marginalized voices in Morocco.

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**Keywords:** Gender equality, Women's rights, Digital activism, Women's empowerment, NGOs

*Ikram Douaou is a doctoral student in Gender and Media Studies at Cadi Ayyad University in Morocco within the LIMPACT laboratory, investigating women's empowerment in the Digital Age, intersectionality, and violence challenges through digital activism. She holds a master's degree in Applied Foreign Languages in Media, Culture, and Business from Cadi Ayyad University, Morocco, and a master's in Humanitarian and Cultural Project Management from Aix-Marseille University, France. Her research compares the impact of NGO interventions in Morocco's family code reform and Tunisia's inheritance law reform contexts. Actively engaged since 2016 in local associations, addressing precarity and education, her internship with a feminist NGO in Paris, France, specializing in women's rights advocacy, deepened her commitment to social justice and women's empowerment.*

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## **Unveiling Narratives: Contrasting the Representation of the Veiled Woman in Moroccan Cinema and Instagram Reels**

**Khawla Lailoune, Prof. Mohammed Derdar & Prof. Raja Rhouni**

*Applied Language and Culture Studies Laboratory*

*Chouaib Doukkali University, Morocco*

Morocco is a country that comprises a Muslim majority, wherein women make up nearly half of the population. A considerable percentage of this demographic dons the veil or hijab as a means to embody their faith and assert their agency. Though veiled women can be seen as occupiers of many careers, these images are seldom reflected on the big screen. Veiled women remain to be an underrepresented group, with images mainly pertaining to background characters and older motherly figures. Portrayals of young, veiled women, though rare, are often problematic. With the surge of the digital world, however, representation has shifted to the hands of individuals — extending beyond producers of the film industry. Young women can be seen as autonomous agents as they foster an online presence while representing their faith. The study at hand aims to investigate the contrasting representations of veiled women in traditional Moroccan cinema and on Instagram — a widely used social media app, through the lens of Stuart Hall's theory of representation. A mixed-methods approach is employed, including surveys highlighting audience perception of veiled women in cinema as opposed to Instagram. In addition to this, the study adopts content analysis of films such as *Veiled Love* (*Hijab al-hob*) and *Without Limits* (*Bila houndoud*) — wherein veiled women are exoticized for the camera, as well as Reels (short, engaging videos that allow users to create, edit, and share content on Instagram) posted by veiled creators such as Ihssane Benalluch who creates humanitarian content, Meryem Derni who specializes in marketing, and Abira who wears the niqab while creating travel content, thus subverting expectations and



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breaking barriers. Findings indicate that Moroccan cinema oscillates between erasing and stereotyping veiled women, whereas social media provides a platform for diverse, self-authored narratives that challenge conventional portrayals. The study further explores whether digital self-representation compensates for the absence of veiled women in mainstream media and its implications for gender and cultural discourse. By highlighting the evolving dynamics of representation, this research contributes to understanding the intersection of religion, agency, and media in contemporary Moroccan society.

**Keywords:** Hijab, instagram, cinema, representation, agency

*Khawla Lailoune is a doctoral student. Her research focuses on the ways in which veiled women use digital platforms to negotiate identity and autonomy through fashion and self-expression.*

*Mohammed Derdar is a professor and Vice-Dean in charge of pedagogical affairs at Chouaib Doukkali University. His expertise spans cultural studies, exploring the intersections of gender, identity, and more.*

*Raja Rhouni is a professor specializing in gender studies at Chouaib Doukkali university. Her academic work explores themes of feminism and Islam, with a focus on gendered narratives.*

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## Personal Branding in Social Media: Unveiling Empowerment Pathways for Moroccan Women

**Chaimae El Idrissi Amiri**

*Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University*

*Fez, Morocco*

This paper investigates the concept of personal branding via digital platforms and its influence on Moroccan women's empowerment. By leveraging social networks, Moroccan women have cultivated a distinct digital identity, which helped them establish lucrative online businesses, leading to financial autonomy. Employing a feminist approach, I analysed data collected from a sample of five prominent Moroccan bloggers and influencers, whose effective personal branding in social media drives them to 'stand out from the crowd', transgress into the male-dominated digital world, overcome the pre-determined gender stereotypes, and set up self-made career. The research explores how these women have created and marketed their personal brands, examining the strategies and processes that have contributed to their online success. Through a qualitative content analysis and a quantitative assessment of the reception and prospects of female blogging in Morocco, the study uncovers the empowering effects of personal branding on women's confidence, visibility, and economic independence. The findings emphasized the transformative potential of personal branding to enhance women's self-esteem, challenge societal norms, and create new possibilities for gender equality within the online sphere. Ultimately, the study contributes to gender studies literature by examining personal branding through a gender-centric lens and highlighting its benefits for women's personal, social, and economic well-being.

**Keywords:** Personal Branding, online entrepreneurship, empowerment, female agency, financial independence

*Chaimae El Idrissi Amiri is an English language teacher and doctoral researcher specializing in gender studies. Her research focuses on the intersections of gender and society, media, and Islam. She holds a master's degree, with her thesis titled Moroccan Women and Personal Branding: Towards Digital Empowerment. Currently, her doctoral research explores the role of Ijtihad and lenient hermeneutics in advancing women's rights in Morocco.*

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## Panel 5 | Education and New Media Communication

### Teacher-AI Collaboration for Reflective Practice: Friends or Foes

**Brahim Outamgharte, Mohamed Yeou & Hicham Zyad**

*Applied Language and Culture Studies Lab (ALCS),  
Faculty of Letters and Humanities (FLHS)  
Chouaib Doukkali University, El Jadida, Morocco*

Given the widespread use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in different domains, the present study seeks to investigate Moroccan EFL teachers' perceptions of teacher artificial intelligence collaboration (TAC) for reflective practice. A mixed methods approach was adopted, with 56 Moroccan EFL teachers teaching in the Souss Massa region. The data was collected using a teacher AI collaboration reflective practice questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The findings indicate that the EFL teachers are positive about integrating TAC for reflective practice with some reservations. Also, the findings show that the depth of engagement in TAC varies among the EFL teachers. Further, the study found that TAC for reflective practice can increase teacher confidence and identify areas for improvement. However, the findings highlight that many factors influence the effectiveness of TAC for reflective practice amongst which are teachers' expertise and context of use. Implications for teachers, policy makers, and researchers are provided.

**Keywords:** Reflective practice, generative AI, EFL teachers, teacher development

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*Mohamed Yeou is a professor at the English Department and a researcher at the Applied Language and Culture Studies Laboratory at Chouaib Doukkali University, El Jadida, Morocco. He is also the Dean of the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences.*

*Hicham Zyad is an associate professor and researcher at the Applied Language and Culture Studies Laboratory, Chouaib Doukkali University, El Jadida, Morocco. He is the Head of the Department of Transversal Skills and Languages at the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences.*

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## **Virtual reality in the context of opinions and preparation of teachers for its use in the educational process. A Large-Scale Survey**

**Kamila Majewska**

*Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń  
Toruń, Poland*

Virtual reality (VR) is an interesting teaching tool, that is increasingly being included in the education process. Thanks to VR goggles equipped with appropriate sensors and software, it is possible to support the educational process to various extents and at various levels. Of course, in order to achieve the expected results, it is important to properly prepare the teacher – the leader of the educational process.

In the context of working with VR goggles, both knowledge and skills in using the new technology are important. The teacher must know the applications that can support learning their subject. Another challenge that the teacher faces is mastering the didactic aspect of working with VR technology. The few available research results show that in the context of working with VR, the appropriate methodology is extremely important. VR goggles are tools that require a specific pedagogical approach. The teacher should know the principles of immersive action (which allows for the full use of the potential of technology, as well as maintaining the involvement of students). The ability to create educational situations and scenarios that will build an emotional connection with the content being conveyed is also equally important.

Currently, little is known about the preparation of teachers to work with VR technology. Therefore, it was decided to conduct mixed research (qualitative and quantitative), verifying the level of knowledge and preparation of teachers to use VR technology in the educational process. As part of the procedure, teachers' opinions on the educational use of virtual reality

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were also verified. The research was conducted using a survey sent to randomly selected schools. As a result, the study covered 870 teachers working in both primary and secondary schools. During the research, depending on the analyzed values, the following were determined: mean, mode, median, Spearman's rho correlation, and Cramer's V. The collected data showed that teachers' opinions on virtual reality are correlated with their age, gender, and the subject taught. Regarding the preparation of teachers for using VR goggles in the course of education, it should be noted that approximately 74% of them have very low, and 18% low knowledge in this area. Based on the collected data, it can be concluded that only 8% of teachers would be able to properly conduct classes using VR goggles.

**Keywords:** VR Goggles, Virtual Reality, Teachers' opinions on VR, VR in teacher's work, VR in education

*Kamila Majewska affiliated with the Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. Her research interests focus on new media and educational technologies.*

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## **AI-Integrated Education: Addressing Opportunities and Challenges**

### **Mohamed University Students at the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences as a Case Study**

**Hanae Zahout, Imane Moulay Rachid**

*PhD researcher at the Applied Communication in Context Laboratory*

*Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences*

*Mohamed First University, Oujda, Morocco*

The paper explores how the digital revolution and Artificial Intelligence (AI) affect higher education by addressing advantages, negative aspects, challenges, and ethical issues. Our main hypothesis is that there is a correlation between AI and students' academic performance. To prepare the reader for the empirical section of the paper, we began by giving some background information. Both surveys and interviews were used to gather data. An online survey was distributed to students at the Faculty of Literature and Human Sciences in Oujda to gather quantitative data. The survey gathered insights into participants' perspectives on artificial intelligence and explored how AI technologies can be leveraged to align with their specific needs, interests, and preferences, ultimately enhancing the personalization of their educational experiences. Qualitative data was collected through interviews disseminated to educators at Mohamed First University in Oujda who teach at the faculty of literature and human sciences. The findings reveal that there are two different viewpoints among students regarding the use of AI in their education. While some students feel that employing the latter such as Chat GPT excessively makes them lazy and impairs their critical thinking skills, others say that it helps them learn by tailoring their education and identifying their areas of weakness so they can work harder to strengthen them. According to the findings, universities should control and coordinate the implementation of AI tools for teaching and learning, raise ethical concerns about their use, and set up training courses, materials, and support systems to raise



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digital literacy and make it more straightforward for instructors and students to benefit from AI technologies while avoiding their drawbacks. In conclusion, we highlight our main conclusions and go over the study's limitations and implications.

**Keywords:** Digital Revolution, AI, Education, Opportunities, Challenges, Higher Education Institutions

*Imane Moulay Rachid and Hanae Zahout are second-year PhD researchers in the Faculty of Literature and Human Sciences at Mohamed First University in Oujda. We also benefit from the PASS Scholarship (PhD Associate Scholarship-PASS).*

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## Harnessing New Media to Empower Visually Impaired Learners: A Pathway for Inclusive Education

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This study investigates how new media platforms enhance accessibility, promote autonomy, and foster a sense of belonging among visually impaired learners. It employs both qualitative and quantitative methods, including interviews and questionnaires, to explore these dynamics. When used appropriately, new media can serve as a powerful catalyst for inclusivity, enabling visually impaired learners to overcome barriers and achieve academic and social success. The study also highlights the need for continued development of accessible technologies and pedagogical practices to fully harness the potential of new media in supporting these learners.

**Keywords:** New Media, Visually Impaired Learners, Inclusive Education

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## **New Media in the Service of Cross-cultural Education and Inter-faith Dialogue**

**Mohamed Chtatou, PhD**

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It is a well-known fact that ignorance begets fear that in turn begets misconceptions about the other and his culture. Unfortunately, misconceptions, quite often, turn into stereotypes that are downgrading and destructive for any potential healthy communication and potential exchange between cultures and creeds.

However, the advent of IT and its social media sibling turned the big and diverse world into a “global village” to use the much-expressive phrase of the Canadian philosopher and media theorist: Herbert Marshall McLuhan. Indeed, the Internet brought people virtually closer to each other destroying the yesterday insurmountable distances and turning cultural and spiritual walls into bridges facilitating encounter and exchange of ideas.

Today billions of people of different location, creed, culture and color talk directly to each other and consequently initiate friendships, love bonds, marriages and business partnerships. On another level the new media allows negotiations between governments, delivering academic lectures, teaching university courses and achieving social cohesion.

The present paper will highlight the fact that the role of information technology in intercultural education and interfaith dialogue is significant as it facilitates communication and access to diverse perspectives. By leveraging digital media and communication tools, educators can create inclusive environments that promote understanding and respect among different cultures and religious beliefs. This integration allows for the sharing of resources, discussions,

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and collaborative projects that encourage dialogue and learning from various viewpoints, ultimately enhancing the intercultural education experience.

This work will aim to show that intercultural education plays a vital role in promoting social cohesion by fostering understanding, respect, and collaboration among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Intercultural education, also, helps individuals learn about different cultures, traditions, and belief systems. This understanding reduces prejudices and stereotypes, leading to greater acceptance and appreciation of diversity.

The work will, also, point out that by encouraging dialogue and interaction among students from various backgrounds, intercultural education improves communication skills, making it easier for people to connect and resolve conflicts amicably. Indeed, intercultural education equips individuals with the skills to navigate and resolve conflicts arising from cultural misunderstandings, promoting peaceful interactions and reducing tensions within communities.

This paper will also show that digital platforms enable individuals from different faiths to connect regardless of physical distance. This allows for a broader exchange of ideas and experiences, promoting global understanding. These platforms facilitate discussions where individuals can share perspectives, ask questions, and engage in conversations about faith and spirituality in a public or semi-public space. The fact is that digital tools allow for the organization of online events, such as webinars, workshops, and panel discussions, making it easier to include diverse speakers and audiences, thus broadening the dialogue.

**Keywords:** dialogue, communication, exchange, respect, understanding.

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*theological, historical, and cultural aspects of Islam. Dr. Chtatou has addressed topics related to migration, examining the challenges and dynamics faced by migrants and their integration into host societies. He engages with various social science themes, including societal change, community development, and the role of education in social cohesion. His research often addresses the coexistence of diverse religious beliefs and practices, focusing on fostering mutual respect and understanding.*

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## New Media in Education: Potential, Challenges and the Role of the Teacher

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New media such as social networks, streaming platforms, mobile applications and interactive digital tools have transformed education over the last few decades. These technologies have changed the way information is transmitted and, of course, traditional teaching methods have been rethought, not least because the new generations, especially Generation Z and Alpha, have different interests from their predecessors and generally shorter attention spans, as they are digital natives.

In the context of education, the new media has brought more dynamic and personalized learning opportunities. For example, platforms such as YouTube, educational podcasts and social networks can complement 'traditional' lessons by providing diverse content that stimulates pupils' autonomy and curiosity. Interactive tools, such as educational games and simulators, allow for practical and more immersive learning, adjusted to different learning styles and rhythms.

In addition, new media facilitate collaborative learning, eliminating geographical barriers and promoting the exchange of ideas more quickly. Students and teachers can participate in international and global knowledge communities through forums, video platforms and social networks, which has created a more inclusive and multicultural educational environment.

Despite all these advantages, the use of new media in education also presents significant challenges. The amount and dispersion of information often leads to

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misinformation, cognitive overload and a lack of information and digital literacy can jeopardize the effectiveness of learning. Inequal access to technology, and to the new media particularly, continues to be a barrier for many students, especially those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

The role of the teacher must also be rethought in this context because, in addition to transmitting content, teachers must guide students in the critical use of new media, helping them to assess the credibility of information and develop information and digital literacy skills. This current situation requires continuous training and adaptation to rapid technological change. The explosion of artificial intelligence has exacerbated these challenges.

The new media thus have the potential to enrich education, making it more interactive and accessible. However, their impact, which is intended to be positive, depends on careful and critical integration, which values both innovation and fair access to knowledge.

The Impact of Media Literacy on University Students' Intercultural Communicative Competence: The English Department as a Case Study

**Keywords:** New Media, Interactive Learning, Educational Games, Interactive Learning

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## **The Impact of Media Literacy on University Students' Intercultural Communicative Competence: The English Department as a Case Study**

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The rise of social media tools has allowed learners to engage virtually in intercultural interactions. This situation has brought intriguing topics to the realm of education, namely the extent to which media literacy contributes to enhancing students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) among English language learners in Moroccan tertiary education. The fundamental role of schools in general is to equip learners with the requisite soft skills that would enable them to be active global citizens. Hence, the study aims to explore the interplay between media literacy and ICC and investigate the specific media tools that can be adopted by learners to spur their intercultural communicative competence. In a similar vein, the study seeks to determine the potential impact of media tools on the development of ICC among university learners. A qualitative approach was adopted throughout the study. Data was collected employing focus group discussions and interviews with 20 postgraduate students. The research tools allowed us to gain more insights into learners' experience and perceptions. To identify key themes and recurrent patterns, the study opted for thematic analysis. The findings indicated that communication tools played a significant role in forging students' intercultural awareness and building up their intercultural communication skills. Furthermore, students reported increased empathy and greater confidence in navigating intercultural interactions. The study concluded that coupling digital literacy with intercultural competence



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training supplies students with the skills necessary for thriving in a highly globalized and interconnected world. The study aspires to draw the attention of decision-makers to the importance of the 21st century in higher education reforms and urges the community of educators to make use of media tools in reinforcing learners' intercultural competence.

**Keywords:** Intercultural communicative competence, media literacy tools, globalization, soft skills, and university students

*Amine Adroui is a doctoral student at the University of Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdellah in Fez. He has been working as a high school teacher for 14 years. His main areas of research and interest fall within the realm of applied linguistics.*

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## Panel 6 | Language, Translation, and Digital Innovation

### **Deaf Signers' Narratives on Video Remote Interpreting in Italy: Opportunities and Challenges for Enhancing Online Accessibility**

**Gabriella Ardita**

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The way we conceive language guides translation theory and practice (Meschonnic 2024); sociocultural, semiotic, and usage-based approaches (Jakobson 2005; Eco 2016; Bybee 2006; for Italian Sign Language (LIS) see Volterra et al. 2022) recognize language as a multifaceted phenomenon, thus making translation a dynamic and flexible process shaped by contextual elements (Eco 2024; Cokely 2002). A factor that may influence translation and has recently drawn attention in literature is the online modality. In fact, since the COVID-19 pandemic, Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) has rapidly spread, impacting sign language (SL) interpreting through both advantages and challenges for interpreters and Deaf users worldwide (among others, Rui Xia Ang et al. 2022; Warnicke, Matérne 2024; De Meulder, Sijm 2024; for the Italian context, see Greco 2020; Izzo 2024; Del Vecchio et al. 2024). In Italy, SL interpreting faces this digital complexity, alongside the need to meet high-quality demands from Deaf users, who have gradually assumed an active role in interpreting processes (Fontana, Zuccalà 2011). Consequently, research involving Deaf community's narratives has been recommended to improve accessibility (Gambini, Fontana 2016). However, Deaf LIS signers' perspectives on VRI remain underexplored.

Therefore, this study aims to explore Deaf LIS signers' perceptions of VRI, investigating its perceived opportunities and challenges. Adopting an ethnographic and data-driven approach (Hymes 1974), six semi-structured interviews in LIS were recorded on Zoom and

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translated in written Italian. Thematic analysis identified 8 macro-themes, revealing balanced views that vary across different online settings. Specifically, Deaf users consider VRI as an opportunity for easier and more efficient accessibility, although they recognize its limits. Technical, time-related and communicative barriers emerge, together with technological and linguistic challenges which interpreters should cope with. Overall, these findings align with the literature, emphasizing the importance of updated training programs. Moreover, they provide novel insights from Deaf narratives, representing a valuable resource for improving LIS interpreters' training in Italy. Finally, the results promote a co-constructive approach that acknowledges Deaf users' centrality in developing high-quality interpreting services, thus enhancing online accessibility.

**Keywords:** Video Remote Interpreting; LIS interpreting; Deaf signers' perceptions; data-driven approach; thematic analysis

*Gabriella Ardita is currently a Ph.D. student in Science of Interpretation at the University of Catania. Her research focuses on Deaf signers' perceptions of Italian Sign Language (LIS) interpreting services, investigating both linguistic and technological aspects. Her research interests also include LIS linguistics and teaching issues. She holds a MA in Language Sciences (Ca' Foscari University of Venice, 2021) and is a certified LIS translator and interpreter. She has experience as LIS interpreter in educational and conference settings and has contributed to accessibility projects across educational and museum contexts.*

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## Multimodal Digital Narratives: Enhancing Inclusion for the Deaf Community

**Maria Adele Limongelli**

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This study explores how Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) fosters inclusivity and accessibility in the Deaf community by integrating visual tools such as emojis, stickers, and memes into digital narratives. CMC often merges oral and written characteristics, creating hybrid forms of interaction that are increasingly multimodal (D'Achille, 2019). For Deaf individuals, these tools go beyond decorative purposes to serve as essential communicative means, depicting metaphoric depth and functional clarity (Yang, 2019).

The research examines three key dimensions: i) accessibility through visual metaphors, because nowadays emojis and stickers improve textual communication, promoting accessibility by simplifying complex messages and enabling efficient meaning-making (Caruso and Maffia, 2023); ii) cross-cultural communication by embedding cultural, humorous, or symbolic references, visual tools facilitate intercultural dialogue and the creation of shared digital languages, fostering inclusivity (Fontana, 2013); iii) cognitive and social inclusion as the multimodal nature of CMC supports linguistic diversity, reducing cognitive barriers for the Deaf community while enabling active participation in digital spaces (Kress, 2010).

The methodology takes advantage of digital ethnography (Wesch, 2009) and netnography (Kozinets, 2010) to analyse Facebook interactions on topics such as social issues and creative expressions. Data reveal that visual tools act as bridges across linguistic and cultural gaps, restructuring digital inclusivity and empowering Deaf users to construct co-narratives in virtual environments.

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Preliminary findings highlight the transformative role of visual metaphors in fostering digital participation. Emojis and memes, for instance, not only enhance comprehension but also serve as cultural artifacts that embody and transmit collective experiences. This research underscores the intersection of technology, multimodality, and social inclusion, showcasing how digital narratives reshape accessibility and engagement in diverse online communities.

**Keywords:** Digital Inclusion, Visual Communication, Deaf Community, Multimodal Narratives, CMC

*Maria Adele Limongelli holds a BA in Linguistic and Intercultural Mediation (2020) and a MA in Linguistic Sciences for Interculturality and Education (2024) from the University of Catania, where she also completed a one-year master's program, becoming a certified Italian Sign Language (LIS) translator and interpreter. She works in academic settings to support accessibility for deaf students. She has contributed to projects in subtitling and museum translation, including collaborations with the Lega del Filo d'Oro to support deafblind individuals. She is now pursuing a Ph.D. in Science of Interpretation (XL cycle). Her research project focuses on the role of mediation in Narrative Medicine, providing a new perspective on accessibility within the healthcare context. In order to create inclusive communication frameworks, her research and professional practice aim to fill gaps in accessibility within medical and educational settings.*

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## Error Simulation in Arabic Audiovisual Translation: A Case Study of Togo (2019)

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This paper explores challenges in Audiovisual Translation (AVT), particularly the tension between subtitlers and quality control personnel caused by the absence of standardized assessment methods. It highlights an analysis of common errors in the Arabic subtitles of Togo (2019) as a potential model for enhancing quality control. The study categorizes errors into two main groups. The first category, General Translation Errors, includes issues such as misinterpreting source language idioms, improper use of prepositions, and ambiguity arising from words with multiple meanings. The analysis shows the significance of paying attention to syntax, lexical choices, and semantic accuracy during translation. The second category, AVT-Specific Errors, stems from the unique challenges of subtitling, including spatial and temporal constraints that demand concise expression. This group involves problems like excessive text shortening, incorrect timing of subtitles, omission of diacritics (used to guide pronunciation), and failure to convert imperial measurements to metric units. The results underline the importance of addressing both general and AVT-specific errors to improve subtitle quality. The study suggests using these errors as a checklist for quality control and stresses the need to consider the target audience's cultural context and understanding.

**Keywords:** Arabic, Audiovisual Translation (AVT), error analysis, quality assessment, subtitling, temporal constraints, *Togo*, translation errors

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*Karima Bouziane is an Associate Professor at Chouaib Doukkali University (UCD), El Jadida, Morocco, holding a Doctorate and an MA in Intercultural Communication and Translation Studies. Her research interests include Cross-cultural Communication, New Media, Advertising, and Translation. She leads the Cross-cultural Media Studies research group at UCD's ALCS Laboratory and serves as Editor-in-Chief for the International Arab Journal of English for Specific Purposes (IAJESP) and The International Journal of Cross-cultural Communication and Media Studies (CMS). She also coordinates the MA Program in Cross-Cultural Communication and Visual Media and has managed several Erasmus+ mobility projects in the Humanities and Social Sciences.*

## **The Role of Social Media as an Alternate Space for Minority Language Media in Promoting Cultural and Linguistics Diversity**

**Ibrahim Bouylagman**

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In today's digitized and globalized world, it becomes a real challenge for minority languages to be maintained especially when these minoritized languages are surrounded by dominated ones. Therefore, language shift has become an increasingly widespread linguistic phenomenon. On the other side, maintaining minority languages, to survive against the dominant languages, becomes an uphill battle since there are uncontrollable factors that contribute forcedly to the process of shifting from a minority language to a dominant one. Regarding this, it is estimated by linguists that many of the world's 6000 to 7000 languages are being lost because of the spread of a few dominant languages, which many speakers are shifting to. More than half of these languages are at risk of dying out by the end of the 21st century (Potowski, 2013). The hegemony of these few dominate languages extends to the media institutions which are dominated by major languages. That is why Moring (2007) claims that mainstream media accelerates language shift and assimilation, and its overall affect tends to undermine minority identity. Based on what is stated above, we argue that minority language media is crucial for the maintenance of minority languages as it "serves as a defensive tool, balancing the impact of language (s) that dominate the media landscape "(Moring,2007). Furthermore, the emergence of social media revolutionized the media landscapes as it enables many cultural minorities to voice their voices. This article then discusses critically how social media platforms provide an alternate space for minority languages and become a critical tool not only in maintaining minority languages and ensure



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their intergenerational transmission but also in promoting linguistic and cultural diversity in a modern society that is characterized largely by multilingualism and multiculturalism.

**Keywords:** Minority language media, social media, cultural and linguistic diversity, language shift, language maintenance, minority languages, minority identity

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## **Streaming Platforms and Informal Language Learning: Insights from a Portuguese Case Study**

**Célia Tavares**

*CEOS.PP, ISCAP, Polytechnic of Porto  
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Informal language learning theory suggests that language acquisition can occur unintentionally through exposure to native speakers or real-world language input, often facilitated by technology. The use of foreign language TV shows in informal learning has been extensively studied, as exposure aids language acquisition. In recent years streaming and video-on-demand platforms (SVOD) such as Netflix, HBO or Amazon Prime have emerged as influential tools, offering diverse content like series, films, and documentaries, which promote language exposure.

Streaming platforms outperform traditional television and cable channels in flexibility, customization, and user-centric features, particularly regarding subtitles and dubbing. These services offer a wide range of language options, significantly enhancing accessibility for global audiences. However, the reliance on various language service providers introduces notable inconsistencies between subtitled and dubbed versions of the same content. While these discrepancies may go unnoticed when subtitles and dubbing are used separately, they become apparent when both are consumed simultaneously.

Although the differences between subtitling and dubbing have long existed due to the inherent limitations of written text compared to spoken language, these discrepancies are becoming more pronounced and harder to justify, likely driven by the increasing demand for rapid content localization. Tight production schedules often compromise the quality and accuracy of subtitling and dubbing, while the increasing use of neural machine translation to

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expedite the process can fail to capture cultural nuances, idiomatic expressions, or subtle contextual meanings. These challenges can disrupt the alignment of spoken and written language, potentially hindering informal language learning.

This study focuses on content suitable for elementary school children, which is a demographic that is still developing reading and writing skills and examines a selection of children's entertainment content (animated films). The study analyses dubbing and subtitling in European Portuguese, highlighting the potential influence of their discrepancies on informal language learning. Through a comparative analysis of selected animated films, this research provides insights into the role of streaming media in shaping language acquisition. The findings underscore the importance of consistency in subtitling and dubbing and offer recommendations for optimizing streaming media as a tool for informal language learning, particularly for young audiences.

**Keywords:** Streaming; video on demand; subtitling; dubbing; informal language learning

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## Panel 7 | Global Dialogue and Diverse Perspectives

### Think Tanks' Communication Strategies in The Digital Era

**Assoc. prof. Desislava Andreeva, PhD, Assist prof. Georgy Ignatov, PhD**

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The study explores the growing role of think tanks in the digital age, examining their communication strategies, the effectiveness of their social media presence, and their implications for public policy and governance. Public policy institutes play a significant role in modern Bulgarian society, mainly by participating in the formulation of public policies and promoting informed debate on various issues. However, they often face fierce criticism, especially when their work is evidently influenced by political and corporate interests. Sometimes this raises public concerns about maintaining biased agenda and imposing intentional subjectivity in their findings and public performances.

Historically relying on traditional methods for communication such as reports, scientific events and publications, think tanks nowadays rely heavily on social media and networks to expand their reach and to grow their impact among audiences. This shift is driven by the need to influence the policies in real time, to shape public opinion and to establish world view patterns in today's digitalized world. The rise of social media has provided an additional opportunity for think tanks to disseminate their research outcomes, to advocate for policy change, and to engage themselves in a direct dialogue with policymakers and the public. Through a strategic use of social media, think tanks are able to build and impose narratives, to mobilize supporters, and to foster collaboration with other stakeholders.

By applying content analysis and case studies from the Bulgarian practice, our research reaches the conclusion that the digital landscape challenges think tanks public image and their

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objectives achievement with the risk of information overload, the growing information disorder, the spread of false information and disloyal practices in the rapidly changing communication spheres.

**Keywords:** Think tanks, Bulgaria, Digital Age, social media, challenges

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*Assist prof. Georgy Ignatov teaches radio journalism, local media, community journalism, media and social conflicts, social media and networks. He is interested in radio and podcast, media and culture intersections.*

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## Cultural Sensitivity and Visual Strategies in Global Advertising

### Campaigns: The case of the Laughing Cow

**Merieme El Amine, Es-Said Mazizi**

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This study explores the interplay between cultural sensitivity and visual strategies in global advertising campaigns, focusing on The Laughing Cow as a case study in Morocco. Drawing on Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2021) social semiotic theory of visual communication, this investigation employs the representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions to analyze how visual elements communicate meaning across diverse cultural contexts. Additionally, it incorporates feminist media theory to explore the cultural intersections of gender, race, and class within global advertising campaigns. Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) framework of cultural categories is used to look at the cultural narratives embedded within these advertisements, specifically source, international and target culture. A mixed-methods research approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data analysis, is employed. Since the product is advertised locally with particular cultural specificities, the findings reveal that source culture is the most dominant, followed by target culture, with international culture being the least represented. The findings also indicate a clear gender bias, with female dominance evident in most of the advertising campaigns. The current advertising campaign of The Laughing Cow is mainly associated with femininity, which is crystal clear in The Laughing Cow product itself, showing a smiling cow personified with feminine traits. At the level of social semiotic of visual communication, representational metafunctions indicate the ways cultural identities and practices are depicted in the advertising campaigns, while interactive metafunctions reveal the engagement of viewers through gaze, perspective, and modality.

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Compositional metafunctions demonstrate the organization of elements to balance a local culture with a global one. The study's findings hold significant value for advertising agencies, global brands and marketers, and consumers who are deemed to be the main partners in this process. To develop a more comprehensive research study in the future, a subsequent study with a broader scope, incorporating other global advertising campaigns, should build upon the findings of the present study.

**Keywords:** Multimodal discourse analysis, social semiotic theory, gender, source, international, and target culture

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