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Mediatization and Social Space: Reconstructing Mediatization for the Transmedia Age

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Inspired by Henri Lefebvre's triadic model of social space, this article reconstructs mediatization as a sociospatial concept. Such a reconstruction corresponds to a holistic, nonmedia-centric view of mediatization, and provides an analytical framework for generating complex and critical understandings of the media's role in the production of social space. Mediatization is defined in terms of 3 sociospatial regimes of dependence, which can be applied to different domains of society: (1) material indispensability and adaptation, (2) premediation of experience, and (3) normalization of social practice. Focusing on everyday life, the article outlines how the articulations of these regimes shift with the social integration of so-called transmedia technologies, and advances a critical humanistic research agenda for approaching the social consequences of mediatization.

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Mediatization is a concept that has a fairly long, but also shattered, history in media and communication studies. Already in the early 1930s the German sociologist Ernst Manheim (1933/1979) spoke about the general "mediatization of direct human relations" [*Mediatisierung*], referring also more specifically to the transformation of the civic public since the 18th century as a result of the press (see Averbeck-Lietz, 2013). Modern subjects, he argued, were increasingly shaped through "publicistic socialization." This is an interesting formulation, which points to the new, and expanding intersections between public and private life, as well as to the intertwining of "primary experiences" and "mediated experiences." The point made by Manheim in the 1930s, also reflected by several other thinkers of the early and mid 20th century (Boorstin, 1961/1992; Lippman, 1922/1949), albeit not explicitly using the concept of mediatization, has become increasingly valid. In present-day society, characterized by privatized and converging media forms, categories and distinctions such as public/private, direct/mediated experience, have even become problematic to sustain—and not only in particular social domains, such as politics, but across the board of social relations (Thompson, 2011). We are today witnessing a number of

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trends that not only alter the conditions of communication, as we know it, but also problematize the status of geographical key categories such as space, place, territory, borders, movement, and mobility. Adams and Jansson (2012) discuss five such trends, which indicate the close relationship between mediatization and sociospatial transformations:

- *Mediated/mediatized mobility*, which blurs the distinctions between texts and contexts; between symbolic and material spaces, and makes the settings of media use (production and consumption) increasingly fluid.
- *Technological convergence*, which makes various kinds of content flow more or less frictionless between and across platforms and spaces.
- *Interactivity*, which dissolves some of the lines of division between producers and consumers, and displaces the position of the ''author.''
- *New interfaces*, through which the user's interaction with the media may come closer to the body, whereas the mutual adaptation of software and user leads to various representational extensions of the Self.
- *Automation of surveillance*, through which the distinctions between those watching and those being watched partly dissolve, and user-generated data, which affect the spacing and timing of social practices, circulate through more or less diffuse, de-territorialized assemblages.

Assessing the type of transformations listed here, one could easily fall into technological determinism, stressing that recent innovations such as the smartphone and a range of new software applications have had revolutionary impacts on social life. This is partly true, of course. But there is much more to these changing forms of mediation. Most fundamentally, they do not only *affect* the communicational and spatial conditions of social life; they also *respond to* and *interact with* major social developments that mark out late modern societies at large, as well as the logics of particular social fields (Bourdieu, 1972/1977). When we say that developments such as interactivity and technological convergence probe us to consider mediatization in terms of sociospatial transformation, this does not only pertain to the observed consequences in terms of new spatial and communicational ambiguities. It also pertains to the social, spatial, and communicational preconditions that make (or do not make) these alterations possible. The appropriation of new means of communication (also operating as means of spatialization) may indeed alter the patterns of social life, as a ''molding force'' (Hepp, 2009), but the *shape* of these alterations are dependent on pre-existing sociospatial arrangements, which are, in turn saturated with deep-seated values, or metaphysics, related to space/place, mobility, and communication (cf. Cresswell, 2006).

Mediatization is thus a concept that can help us think of media enhanced social transformations in complex ways; not as the consequences of technological innovation or media ''agency'' (Hjarvard, 2008), but in terms of a ''metaprocess'' (see especially Krotz, 2007), involving diverse combinations of morally and ideologically

inflected, and historically embedded, microprocesses at the level of social life. Whereas mediation, in simplified terms, refers to the process of transmission, dissemination or circulation of something (typically information) between sources, mediatization points to the extended social prevalence of certain regimes of media dependence (see Schulz, 2004). This, I argue, is why analyses of mediatization should neither start out from the media themselves, nor try to isolate any particular process of mediation. In times of media convergence, and under spatial conditions marked by "polymedia" (Madianou & Miller, 2013), where social subjects move easily between different channels and sources, such ambitions would lead entirely wrong. Rather, mediatization research should start out from the transformations, as well as the maintenance, of certain sociospatial arrangements, including the amalgamation of various mediated practices within these arrangements—what I call *textures*. The recent turn to mediatization thus seems to respond to an epistemological need for grasping—in a *nonmedia-centric* way (Hepp, 2010; Morley, 2009)—the complex forms of dependencies generated in times and spaces increasingly marked by *transmedia textures*.

In an attempt to define, in one sentence, what mediatization means at the most general level, my contention is that it refers to *how other social processes in a broad variety of domains and at different levels become inseparable from and dependent on technological processes and resources of mediation*. Although not everyone would agree on this definition, I will not provide any overview of the current field of mediatization research here since it spans areas as diverse as politics, consumption, tourism, love, play, and family relations—and others have already done a good job in mapping out the terrain (Lundby, 2009, 2013). The point I want to make in this article is twofold:

1. Mediatization can be fruitfully reconstructed as a *sociospatial concept*. Such a reconstruction, defining mediatization in terms of *sociospatial regimes of dependence*, corresponds to the holistic (and nonmedia-centric) nature of the mediatization concept. A sociospatial construct also provides an improved toolbox for generating complex understandings of the media's role in historical and contemporary transformations of social space.
2. Since mediatization, as defined here, refers to dependencies and normalizations in social space, the concept addresses the deeper moral and ethical issues of social life, and thus calls for a *humanistic research agenda* in media and communication studies. This is also to say that mediatization research from a sociospatial perspective attains a *critical potential*.

These two points identify a new way of thinking of the mediatization met-process, which is both analytically complex and critical. My arguments are developed in three parts. In the first part I introduce the sociospatial conceptualization of mediatization. Based on Lefebvre's (1974/1991) triadic model of social space (perceived space, conceived space, lived space) I suggest three sociospatial regimes of

mediatization: (1) *material indispensability and adaptation*, (2) *premediation of experience*, and (3) *normalization of social practice*. These regimes can be applied to various sectors of society, from sports to politics, but the main focus here is on the contexts of everyday life.

In the second part of the article, notably via Silverstone and Hirsch's (1992) edited collection *Consuming Technologies*, I revisit some of the groundbreaking media ethnographic studies of the early 1990s. Through a reassessment of how the appropriation of new media amalgamates with morally and ideologically saturated textures (e.g., within households) today, I provide an overview of how the regimes of mediatization alter in tandem with a general transition (in economically affluent environments) from *mass media textures* to *transmedia textures*. These alterations evoke not only spatial and communicational ambiguities, but also new questions of what it means to live in modern society.

Some of the arguments of parts 1–2 are grounded in empirical results from an ongoing Swedish research project, focusing on media, consumption and surveillance.[1] The project involves altogether 48 interviews from different social settings, but because of the conceptual aim of this article, the results are applied mainly for the purpose of illustrating some of the main points.

The third part of the article, then, advances the critical potential of the mediatization concept through a closer assessment of results from project interviews carried out among middle-class households in a Swedish small-town setting. The results underscore the socially and morally molded nature of transmedia textures, which in this case means that they tend to reinforce *centripetal*, or sedentarist, rather than centrifugal social patterns. These findings actualize the need for a *critical humanistic agenda* for mediatization research, focusing on problem areas such as hospitality and emancipation. It is no coincidence that many important thinkers of the mid-20th century, such as Harold Innis (1951) and Edward Relph (1976), just to mention two names, in spite of their diverging epistemological and ideological agendas expressed great concerns as to the human implications of the sociospatial alterations tied to a "space-biased" media society. Such concerns must be concisely reformulated for the transmedia age.

Mediatization as a sociospatial concept

When I discuss *social space* and infer that mediatization can be fruitfully reconstructed as a sociospatial concept, I follow Henri Lefebvre's (1974/1991) triadic model of spatial production. This model has to a great extent attracted the attention of media scholars in recent years in the wake of the "spatial turn" (Jansson & Falkheimer, 2006). It helps us conceptualize the sociospatial significance of mediatization at different levels and grasp the type of ambiguities listed in the introduction. Firstly, Lefebvre's notion of *perceived space* directs our attention towards the more material, sensuous dimensions of the media; the very stuff in terms of tools and infrastructures for mediation that make up our everyday environments, as well as a range of settings for

media circulation. Secondly, the concept of *conceived space* relates to the circulation, or mediation, of various representations of space, thus pointing to the media's significance for shaping our understandings and expectations of the social world. Thirdly, Lefebvre's notion of *lived space* points to the spaces of representation that hold our day-to-day lives together in a meaningful way—something which occurs through the (mediatized) cultural, ideological, and phantasmagorical saturation of the lifeworld.

According to Lefebvre, if we want to understand the nature of social space and its transformations, we must try not to isolate these realms from one another. They are intrinsically interrelated. None of these spaces can be thoroughly understood without taking the other two into account. Similarly, if we want to study the mediatization of a certain domain of social life, or certain sociospatial arrangements, we must aim for a holistic view that captures the composite effect that occurs through the interaction between perceived, conceived and lived spaces. At the same time, conceptualizing mediatization in this way makes it possible to discern how developments within one spatial realm may successively reinforce and spark off alterations within another realm. The everyday inclusion of social media is a good example. As vividly illustrated by one of our informants, social media have not only naturalized new forms and norms of social interaction, but also altered the very materiality of everyday life, and successively fostered certain expectations of information disclosure:

> I've changed how I act in the last five years. Facebook has gone from being an affront to my integrity to an extension of my daily life, as has Twitter, they're spaces where I meet people. There are conventions for how you're supposed to behave on Facebook, I'm not so sure about Twitter, I'm not so socialised in it. I'm on Facebook every hour if I can. It's up to you. If you don't participate you don't get anything back so it stimulates rewards. For example I put out a picture of my 1st hand rental contract and got 42 likes. [. . .] When I was a teenager I sat in my room with a long extension cable from the phone in the living room, and we carried on talking and hanging out for as long as we could. Now when you're home alone you can have all your friends, enemies, they're all there. (*25-year-old male student, Stockholm inner city*)

Examples like this underscore that mediatization does not occur as a "media effect," but through relatively long-term social processes of mutual accommodation and amalgamation (Schulz, 2004). Speaking with Williams (1974), mediatization attains analytical substance only in as far as a certain technology achieves the status of a *cultural form*, for instance, through ritualized behavior such as posting regular status updates on Facebook. This is when the media become significant to the production of social space. We may now translate this discussion into a more general model of what mediatization means as a sociospatial concept (Figure 1). Let us consider each realm and each *sociospatial regime of mediatization* in turn.

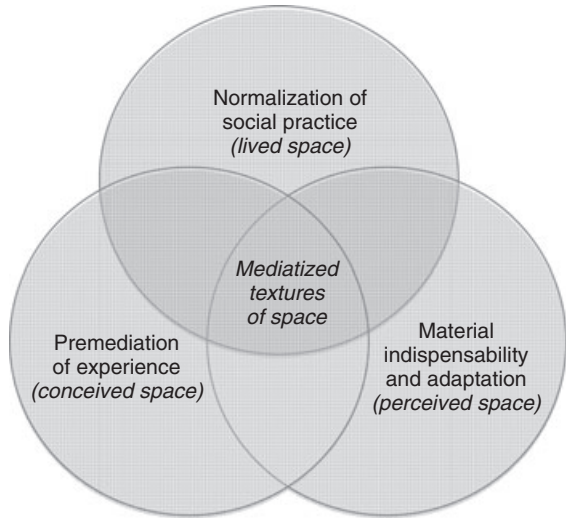

Figure 1 The sociospatial regimes of mediatization.

Perceived space: Material indispensability and adaptation

A key feature of mediatized society is that certain types of tools and systems are constructed as necessary, or indispensable, for leading a comfortable and socially integrated life. By the 1930s radio had entered the ordinary living-room, occupying not only a particular place in the household, a "box on the dresser," to paraphrase Moores (1988), but also giving rise to a series of material adaptations to the physical, visual and audible presence of this new object. The indispensability of new "media things" thus refers to the general social acceptance of literally buying into a particular way of communicating, and to the restructurings through which the material presence of these things are naturalized in our day-to-day lives. At a certain point the need for new technologies may become more or less absolute in material terms. For example, in the last few years many bank offices have ceased to handle cash money—a systemic shift, which forces the general public to become computerized whether they like it or not, and to continuously upgrade their systems. However, the production of indispensability cannot be explained in terms of alterations in perceived space alone. As Spigel (1992) showed in her classical analysis of how television was appropriated among American families in the mid-20th century, material and infrastructural transitions are conceptually coded through representations of space (most significantly various kinds of advertising and popular media), as well as the deeper layers of family values, classificatory structures, and the mythologies of consumer society (lived space).

Conceived space: Premediation of experience

The concept of premediation is a rather recent invention in media theory, introduced by Grusin (2010) in his book with the same title. Grusin suggests that the media

not only shape our expectations and anticipations of future events and experiences, but also generate particular forms of action and interaction that are performed, or staged, in order to become mediated within a certain representational register. Similar ideas were presented in the mid-20th century by Boorstin (1961/1999) in his exploration of mediated "pseudoevents" and in Baudrillard's (1983) notion of the "hyperreal." We may think of tourism as a case in point—an institution whose very existence largely rests upon the circulation of attractive images that nurture people's desires to experience something extraordinary. Touristic practices and events are thus scripted and to a certain degree also staged according to conceived media spaces (Larsen, 2005; MacCannell, 1976/1999) in order to be socially shared and stored as part of one's life-biography (whether materially, in a photo album, or as a Facebook posting).

Grusin also points to the political potential of premediation, namely the fact that alternative groups, such as the *Occupy* movement recently, may use the new means of circulation (notably Twitter) for problematizing and altering dominant ideologies of space and place. The following quote is taken from Grusin's blog: "Premediation works by mobilizing affect in the present, by deploying multiple modes of mediation and remediation in shaping the affectivity of the public, in preparing people for some field of possible future actions, in producing a mood or structure of feeling that makes possible certain kinds of actions, thoughts, speech, affectivities, feelings, moods, mediations that might not have seemed possible before or that might have fallen flat or died on the vine or not produced echoes and reverberations" (Grusin, 2011). This again testifies to the interplay between perceived, conceived, and lived spaces. It also points to the intrinsic relationship between mediatization and the contested production of social space. In order to enact the new potentials for sociospatial change via alternative representations, certain media and certain infrastructures are in fact indispensable.

Lived space: Normalization of social practice

The final dimension has to do with the ways in which the appropriation of media changes social norms, conventions and expectations at the level of everyday practice. These normalizations, which largely operate through *common sense*, pertain both to the timing and spacing of our life activities. For instance, part and parcel of what we may call "television culture" has been the adaptation of social life to the schedules of broadcasting, and vice versa—a social adaptation process which in turn may look quite differently in different parts of social space (Morley, 2000). Such institutionalized modes of regulation have established not only particular rhythms and rituals within households and other communities, but also established informal agendas of media-related talk, modes of social monitoring and control (e.g., parents vs. children), and stratified expectations of cultural/media literacy. These are the types of patterns that were explored in the ethnographic studies conducted by media scholars from the 1970s and onwards—an interest that also marked the "cultural turn" of media and communication studies (Morley, 1992; Silverstone

& Hirsch, 1992). However, with the widespread diffusion and popularization of networked media, as we will see, many of these social normalizations are destabilized; supplanted or combined with new ones.

From mass media textures to transmedia textures

Now, let us go back to the diagnosis presented at the beginning of the paper, that is, the five transitory trends identified by Adams and Jansson (2012). One concept that seems particularly suitable for assessing these trends is *texture*. The combined effect of the trends might be described as a *textural transition*; a shift from *mass media textures* to what I call *transmedia textures*. This transition, in turn, corresponds to alterations within the regimes of mediatization. If the appropriation of radio and television corresponded to an alteration of the textures of mid-20th century households, something similar can be said about the technological innovations of the early 21st century. It does not imply that mediatization means something else today on the conceptual level, but that its appearance is different and that it ''feels'' different.

But why texture? And what is it? My implementation of the concept follows Lefebvre (1974/1991).[2] Texture then refers to the communicative weave, or *fabric*, that is created through human activities in space. These activities are often of a deliberately communicative nature, such as dinner conversations around the kitchen table, or crowds of people gathering at the movie theatre in the evening. But they also include those infrastructures and everyday streams of activity that leave meaningful, communicative traces in social space: daily commuting patterns in the city; the spatial organization of our home environments; border arrangements at airports, and so on. All such arrangements are communicative. At the same time they hold the capacity to enable certain types of communication in a given setting while excluding other types of communication (as well as groups of people). Accordingly, textures do not appear at random; they materialize through certain spatial and temporal regularities and rhythms. A texture is like a fabric with a particular pattern and a particular feel—and thus something more than a text or a sign system. Textures support our sense of continuity and belonging, not only at the representational level, but also in a deeply embodied sense as we learn how to move and act in various settings (Moores, 2012; Moores & Metykova, 2010).

Textures of various kinds are thus integral to our lifeworld at the subjective as well as the intersubjective level. A good way of discovering the deeply sedimented and more or less taken-for-granted nature of textures is to visit a foreign place, such as a big city in another part of the world. The fact that the inhabitants of the city seem to navigate and make conversation in a naturalized fashion adds to the sense of alienation that foreign signs, transit systems and dress codes may evoke in the visitor. As visitors, we would also discover that textures, while materially structured and hard to bypass or change, are essential to the fluidity of communication.

My understanding of texture as the *communicative fabric of space* (Jansson, 2007) would seem to suggest that we are dealing with a phenomenon located in perceived

space. And it is indeed possible to study textures through observations and direct interventions in people's everyday life environments. But one cannot *understand* textures and the ongoing processes of *texturation* without taking into account that textures also carry ideological and mythological meanings and may in themselves constitute, as well as contain, various representations of space. Textures are thus to be understood and analyzed at the very intersection of perceived, conceived and lived space (see Figure 1).

This also means that textures interact with mediatization processes at different levels. On the one hand, textures provide the *preconditions* for mediatization processes, enabling certain types of media dependencies and normalizations to occur, while making other developments less likely. The acquisition of new media, for instance, depends on "their anticipated or discovered inflexion of this pre-existing order" (Putnam, 1992, p. 201). On the other hand, textures are negotiated and successively altered through mediatization.

In the book mentioned above, *Consuming Technologies*, this mutual interplay, the nonlinearity of mediatization, is vividly unveiled. In the introductory essay Silverstone, Hirsch, and Morley (1992) talk about the "moral economy" of the household in order to explain how processes of media appropriation are socially shaped—pointing to the fact that there are economic constraints, moral-ethical judgments as well as premediated expectations at play when individuals and groups construct their everyday media spaces. Here, textures can be understood as the materializations of such structures, identifiable in daily routines of media use, the media adapted furnishing of the household, and the interactions between different members of the household—conditions that are also defined through *what is absent*. As to the latter, we may recall in particular Hirsch's (1992) study of a British middle-class family and their rejection of the video-recorder because of the perceived risk of watching too much television instead of spending time on more legitimate activities.

These studies of the television era, and many others, provide substantial, thick descriptions of what we may term "mass media textures"—textures that are socially and culturally stratified, but nonetheless involve certain common denominators in terms of how the regimes of mediatization materialize. Among such denominators are the more or less sacralized domestic environments of media consumption, the predominantly national(istic) patterns of spatial premediation, and the social normalization of institutionalized rhythms of broadcasting (see Table 1).

The shift from mass media textures to transmedia textures can be described as a shift to more *integrated* and *flexible* textures. The term "transmedia," inspired by Jenkins' (2006) notion of "transmedia storytelling," refers to the increasingly interconnected and open-ended circulation of media content between various platforms, where the subjects previously known as "the audience" are increasingly involved in the production of flows. Transmedia textures are thus *integrated* in the sense that single media forms, such as television, no longer act in the same way as social

Table 1 The Altered Regimes of Mediatization (Examples of Features)

Regime of Mediatization	Mass Media Textures	Transmedia Textures
Material indispensability and adaptation	–Dependence on technological shifts, e.g., color-TV, CD-player, satellite dish	–Indispensability within existing techno-systems; need to upgrade hardware and software
	–Adaptation of home environment to collective media use; media as fixtures	–Growing dependency on and trust in abstract systems
	–Mobile privatization; media as requirement for suburban life/consumer society	–Complicity with surveillance as adaptation to service production
Premediation of experience	–Institutionally premediated frames of spatial coding and expectation	–User-generated frames of spatial coding and expectation
	–Premediated anticipation of domestic media functions and status	–Premediation of lifestyles through data-doubles; automated surveillance
		–Premediated anticipation of the "circulated Self"; demands on social media self-profiling
Normalization of social practice	–Adaptation of daily routines to time schedules and rhythms of distribution	–Social media as normalized space of communion: seeing, showing, and sharing
	–Normalization of mass media-related talk; social integration	–Expectations on reachability, immediacy and visibility
		–Mobile media as normalized means of security

"gathering places" (Adams, 1992), or *fixtures*, within the everyday communicative fabric. Rather, as the media become more mobile, interconnected, and interactive, they hold greater potential to integrate with social practices at large, thus sustaining more polycentric textures. It should not be denied that (mass) media still attract people's joint attention—which is an important key to the social power of the media—but to an increasing extent media circulation occurs while on the move and at disparate locations by individual subjects. Accordingly, transmedia textures are also relatively *flexible*. Media practices often constitute microslots, amalgamating with other day-to-day practices and rhythms with little institutional determination. We may here think of, for instance, the popular success of mobile game applications such as WordFeud, or the transmedia circulation of Tweets. Furthermore, as shown by the following interview extract, flexibility manifests itself through the availability

of one particular communicative function, such as interpersonal communication or radio, via a multitude of different platforms:

> I think the telephone is also a computer, sometimes I sit with both, it depends on when. The phone's great when you're waiting or on the train, you can't really take out the laptop when you have 13 minutes to kill, but when I'm at work and I have the computer it becomes a phone again. I might watch Play on the computer, then on the phone if I go somewhere. The same things are always available in principle. I have the icloud now so it should be more integrated. (*42-year-old male academic, Stockholm inner city*)

These features actualize that the regimes of mediatization are changing: New forms of material indispensability; new premediations of experience, and new normalizations of everyday practice are taking shape (see Table 1). Whereas textures are still in place, the integration of media technologies follows an altered spatial logic.

There are two implications (at least) to this shift. Firstly, new media such as smartphones give people accentuated possibilities to strengthen pre-established *extramedia* textural arrangements, and to administrate and coordinate related activities and relations at a distance. Such patterns of everyday administration are not necessarily globalizing or liberating, but more typically of a socially reproductive kind, involving strong forces of social control. Secondly, as technological and commercial systems become more closely intertwined with daily patterns of communication and mobility, mediatization tends to create even stronger dependencies—especially in relation to various abstract systems (Giddens, 1991)—than during the mass media era. Altogether, as I would argue, a principal expression of mediatization in "media abundant" societies is the prevalence of *centripetal media textures*—a development that calls for further critical inquiry.

Centripetal media textures and the humanistic challenge of mediatization research

Transmedia textures enable us to move more freely in geographical space while still being connected to friends, family, and colleagues, and keeping updated on events in almost any place in the world. In geographical terms this points to a *centrifugal* dynamic, providing new opportunities for spatial exploration and flexibility. In social terms, however, networked media in general, and so-called "social media" in particular, tend to sustain a *centripetal* dynamic. Even though we are allowed to move more freely, we are also able to maintain strong bonds with our everyday environments and remain within this shared social space. The very same technological affordances that enable us to realize our cosmopolitan ambitions (if we have any), or to find time and space for ourselves, are the affordances that also pull us back into the ordinary, the safe, and the secure (Tomlinson, 1999).

The relevance of these patterns, which point to the sociospatial ambiguity of the mediatization metaprocess, has been reported on in several recent empirical studies.

In a qualitative analysis of a location-based networking service Humphreys (2011) found that the routinized behavior of "checking in" at various places established a new level of self-surveillance among its users, especially in terms of "expectations of continual information disclosure [. . .] among groups of friends" (Humphreys, 2011, p. 590). Abe (2009) concluded in a Japanese study that the so-called interactivity of social networking sites foremost operated as the negation of hospitality, and thus constituted a realm of anticosmopolitan boundary work. In a quantitative study of "connection strategies" among Facebook users, Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2010) could confirm that the platform was rarely used for meeting strangers or initiating new contacts. In qualitative fieldwork among Scandinavian development workers in Latin America, it was found that these subjects too, who actively promoted a cosmopolitan ethical agenda, reproduced various regimes of enclosure through their media use (Jansson, 2011).

These results do not rule out the possibility of socially centrifugal patterns of interaction, of course. Various dating sites, travel sites, and so on are cases in point. But the extent to which such patterns transcend the structural boundaries and comfort zones of social belonging seems to be very limited. In her analysis of the social networking site Couchsurfing, catering to alternative tourists' demands for local accommodation away from the commercialized mainstream, Germann Molz (2012) contends that also these networks, which build upon mutual trust and reputation, mainly reproduce dominant structures of social belonging. New social networking applications, such as Highlight, take this encapsulating social logic one step further by providing smartphone users with information about like-minded people (using the same app) located in their geographical vicinities.

Altogether, these examples illuminate the continuous interplay between the three regimes of mediatization; notably how material indispensability goes hand in hand with social normalization and cohesion (Ling, 2008). Transmedia textures thus operate much in opposition to what was typically proclaimed during the globalist heydays of the Internet revolution about a decade ago. As Tomlinson (1999, 2008) put it at that time, mobile, networked media function not so much as *technologies of cosmos*, but rather as *technologies of the hearth*, involving high degrees of peer-to-peer monitoring. It is also noteworthy that this bias, which problematizes Innis's (1951) classical understanding of space-biased media, is regularly represented, or premediated, through the conceived spaces of contemporary media advertising, whose main selling point is often the sustenance of shared experiences, social bonds, even social control. Symptomatically, the main tag line in a Nokia smartphone advertisement from 2012 is: "What is everybody else doing right now?" (Nokia, 2012).

The centripetal bias is not an outcome of technology alone, however. As the mediatization perspective indicates, the ways in which new media are appropriated depend on pre-established textures in households, public spaces, and so on. What is new today is that private media afford the possibility to "go with the flow," to

amalgamate with pre-existing textures and assist their owners through all regions of daily life. This means that while the media saturate our daily experiences to an increasing extent, and extend our connectivities in time and space, they also function as social cement.

In the Swedish research project underpinning this article, the centripetal movement was found to be particularly salient among the members of 14 middle-class small-town households. In this particular group of people with predominantly local life biographies, social media and mobile communication devices were in most cases integral to their household textures. However, television still operated as an important social fixture, albeit in a rather individualized manner, and the establishment of transmedia textures contributed above all, *because of* their flexibility, to the enclosure of pre-established social communities, notably the household itself. This centripetal drive was articulated in regard to all three regimes of mediatization. The mobile telephone, for example, was in most cases understood as the single most indispensable example of media technology, particularly for security reasons:

> The mobile is important when we go out somewhere, to be able to contact one another if one happens to be at different places, or in crowds. And to get in touch if I'm away somewhere and the family is at home. Letting them know that I'm on my way, and such things. [. . .] My son has a mobile now, so we can keep an eye on him. He must have the freedom to go wherever he wants, but we must be able to reach him, so nothing happens. I guess it's also a matter of me not worrying too much. (*35-year-old shop assistant and father*)

In our interviews the networking of the household was thus often motivated through security-oriented discourses, sometimes envisioning more or less self-sufficient social conditions. The flows of communication went in the direction of the domestic hearth, and maintained locally rooted relationships. Similarly, while the premediation of spatial experience may be typically thought of as an opening of horizons and possibilities, it might just as well be associated with representations of subjects, activities and spaces that belong to the familiar regions of social life. A good example concerns status updates that premediate further practices of bonding:

> I don't write very much on Facebook, but sometimes I share pictures and stuff. It's fun to show the kids and what we've been doing. Mostly for showing things that I'm proud of, perhaps. I don't mind if people take a look at it, it's just fun. And it can also be fun, even though I don't have any contact with my classmates 25 years ago, to have them as friends on the Internet and see how they live, and see some pictures from their lives. (*35-year-old shop assistant and father*)

What unfolds is a textural situation that resonates with more sedentarist life forms, and the *metaphysics of fixity* that Cresswell (2006) talks about. Obviously, such moral geographies are not at odds with the appropriation of transmedia technologies;

rather, the inherent flexibility of transmedia textures provides the groundwork for normalizing new social behaviors online and offline:

> Facebook is the page I always return to. When I start up I immediately go on Facebook and read until the end of the first page. And then I go somewhere else and do something else, to Aftonbladet or Expressen [newspapers], for example. [. . .] But then I spin back to Facebook, and see "hmm, two new updates," and then I have to check them out. (*41-year-old female social worker, single*)

As shown from other studies, social monitoring and coordination may even turn into an obsession, and the expectations on status updating or sharing particular experiences with specific circles may turn into a strong, sometimes anxiety-generating, social pressure (Hall & Baym, 2012; Humphreys, 2011). In the era of transmedia textures, the altered regimes of mediatization thus reactualize moral questions that are at odds with the commonplace representation of modernity as an increasingly liquid social condition (see especially Bauman, 2000).

In the mass media era, the definition of media research followed a famous linear formulation (Lasswell, 1948): *Who says what, in which channel, to whom, and with what effect?* This question, and variations of it, has been problematized ever since, in different ways. Based on the above discussions, I argue that the transmedia era calls for questions that explicitly address the alteration of sociospatial conditions: *What social practices amalgamate with what media, under what textural conditions, and with what social consequences?* The final part of this question—about "social consequences"—leads us not only to explore and explain the sociospatial regimes of mediatization as I have done in this article, but also to bring these analyses to bear upon broader ethical discussions on modern life conditions. Against this backdrop and instead of a summary, I would like to end this article by looking further ahead and point to two interconnected problem areas for critical, humanistically oriented mediatization research. These areas are examples of how mediatization research, starting out from a Lefebvrian sociospatial perspective, can extend its relevance through dialogues with various strands of critical social philosophy, ultimately bringing to light certain "pathologies" of the social (Honneth, 2001/2010).

1. *The problem of hospitality*: The vision of a cosmopolitan society (to provide a simplified characteristic) rests upon the precondition that social subjects are not only willing to show an interest in *the Other*, but also to express hospitality through practice (Delanty, 2009). As Silverstone (2007, p. 140) puts it: "Hospitality is dangerous. It is not without risk. If it was not, then it would not be true hospitality. But its risk is part of the cosmopolitanism of which it is a condition." As the empirical examples show, however, contemporary media appropriations largely serve the purpose of *eliminating risk*, and keeping an eye on persons in one's circles, rather than opening up the lifeworld to strangers. A challenge of mediatization research is thus to gain further insights into how the altered regimes of mediatization affect the constructions of open and closed spaces (at

different levels) (see Harvey, 2009), and ultimately the prospects of a cosmopolitan society.

2. *The problem of emancipation*: Whereas much theory on post-/late modern subjectivity has discussed the fragmentation of the self, and the existential dilemmas of increasingly open-ended life-projects (Bauman, 2000; Giddens, 1991), the prevalence of centripetal media textures seems to provide a reactionary moment of social de-differentiation and reembedding. This situation calls for a reassessment of the individual subject's access to any "real" life choices, and the possibility for "the marginal" to claim space and recognition at the centers of "mediapolis" (Silverstone, 2007). What is the potential for human emancipation and self-realization in view of the type of dependencies, premediations and normalizations that characterize present-day textural orders? This type of analysis would benefit from the inclusion of historicizing perspectives, dealing critically with the transformations of modernity and modern subjectivity, such as the works of the Frankfurt School and their followers (Honneth, 2010/2012; Horkheimer, 1968/1982; Marcuse, 1969).

Notes

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2 It must be noted, though, that Lefebvre's own discussion of the concept is not carried out in any systematic manner, but is rather dispersed, even poetic in nature.

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