

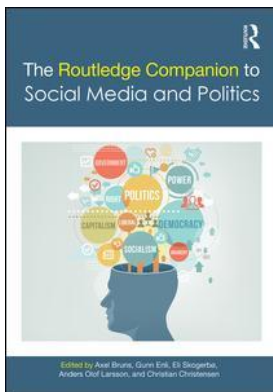
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On: 03 Oct 2023

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Publisher: *Routledge*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



The Routledge Companion to Social Media and Politics

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Network Media Logic

Publication details

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315716299.ch2>

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Published online on: 21 Dec 2015

How to cite :- Ulrike Klinger, Jakob Svensson. 21 Dec 2015, *Network Media Logic from: The Routledge Companion to Social Media and Politics* Routledge

Accessed on: 03 Oct 2023

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315716299.ch2>

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NETWORK MEDIA LOGIC

Some Conceptual Considerations

Ulrike Klinger and Jakob Svensson¹

Introduction

Researchers have long been interested in the interplay between media and politics. Depictions of journalists as watchdogs and of the media as a fourth estate illustrate the strong links between media and democracy.² Ideas on media logics even question whether it is possible to regard the two as different domains (Street 1997). Indeed, politics has always dealt with communication, even to the extent that it has been argued that politics *is* communication (Esser 2013). Many studies have discussed how politics and political actors adapt to the rules and formats of news media. For example, Kepplinger (2002) concluded that, while the quantity of information-related activities in the German Parliament increased sharply following the rise of modern mass media, the quantity of decision-making activities remained fairly constant. Studies have also shown that politicians have adapted to the dramatisation style used in media discourses, the increasing prominence of short sound bites, and the visual and entertainment formats used to obtain media coverage (Altheide 2004). In his study on personalisation and polarisation, Asp (1986) demonstrated that politicians phrase their statements so that they have a better chance of media coverage. Indeed, researchers have used the media logic concept as an analytical tool to discuss the interdependence between media and other social institutions. Nowadays it is argued that politicians express themselves in short “tweetable” phrases, such as former Swedish Minister of Finance Anders Borg’s comment on the ‘wolf pack behaviour on the market’ which went viral instantly. This is even acknowledged by mass media outlets, for example, in CNN’s statement that right-wing U.S. politician Sarah Palin “represented a brand of conservative politics that was Twitterable [sic]” (Granderson 2011: para. 3).

This leads us to the changing landscapes of media and communication. The rise, increasing use and perceived importance of social media has sparked an impressive amount of research in the area of political communication (Jungheer 2014; Larsson & Svensson 2014). Social media is, however, a contested term because it implies that traditional media do not encompass a social dimension. Discussions of social media often refer to online communication platforms, in which the *social* aspect seems to refer to users’ ability to influence and *interact* with the content and each other in one way or another. While an elaboration on the definitions of social media (for this, see, e.g. O’Reilly 2005; Ellison & boyd 2007) is beyond the scope of this chapter, we find it important to

underline the interactive and networking affordances of social media platforms without downplaying their broadcasting possibilities. Early studies highlighted their interactive, participatory potential to provide many-to-many communication, but more recent empirical studies have largely found that political actors and political organisations tend to ‘under-exploit’ (Cardenal 2011) this potential and to largely use social media platforms for conventional broadcasting, that is, as one-way information channels (Jungherr 2014; Vergeer & Hermans 2013; Enli & Skogerbø 2013: 770; Grant et al. 2010: 587; Graham et al. 2013; Klinger 2013). Broadcasting thus continues to be central to political social media practices, especially with regard to how some politicians spread messages on platforms like Twitter (see Svensson 2011). In this chapter, we use the term *social media platforms* to refer to online loci in which users can contribute, inform, be informed, and network with others (such as blogs, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter).

The recent focus on social media platforms within the field of political communication indicates a belief that something is changing when bringing politics to this online realm. However, more deterministic analyses (either conceiving of social media as bringing about positive effects for democracy, or that offline power structures are merely mirrored online) have not fully succeeded in accounting for how political communication changes on social media platforms. Therefore we return to theories of media logics. By conceiving of social media platforms as loci of different media logic, we may move beyond framings of social media platforms as inherently good or bad, while simultaneously avoiding resorting to an argument that they are neutral. We subsequently return to our concept of network media logic (see Klinger & Svensson 2015 for an in-depth definition), comparing it to other approaches to logics within the fields of mass media and politics. But before discussing network media logic we will first provide an overview over discussions of media logic and political logic.

Media Logic and Political Logic

Departing from an understanding of media as a social force in society, Altheide and Snow’s (1979) original account sought to understand the role of media as constituting and recognising social reality. According to them, “media logic functions as a form through which events and ideas are interpreted and acted upon” (p. 240). The authors further refer to *formats* as ways to select and organise material, the style of presentation, the focus, emphasis, and the “grammar of media communication” (p. 10). According to Strömbäck and Esser (2014: 381), logic should be understood as appropriate behaviour that is consistent and reasonable within the rules and norms of the institutional context. Many scholars understand logic as *specific rules* that govern a domain. For example, in journalism, logic determines how news is selected, interpreted, and constructed (Esser 2013: 160; Lundby 2014: 28). If, say, conflict has important news value when journalists produce news content, then clearly outlining an enemy becomes part of the rules of the game for a politician who is seeking visibility in news media.

News about politics often results from a co-production between news media and political actors who try to influence the media (Strömbäck & Esser 2014: 392). In other words, it is the tension and interaction between media and other institutions with their different logics that drive social and cultural change (Lundby 2014: 27). Hence, we are not only looking at a one-way relationship in which politicians and political organisations succumb to the rules of the media. Political institutions are strategic organisations that seek to get their messages out in order to influence people to vote

for their candidates in election campaigns or to reach other strategic goals. Media outlets thus expand the action repertoires of politicians and political organisations (Esser 2013: 156).

The concept of media logic has been contested. Couldry (2008), for example, criticised what he claimed to be a tendency to identify a “single type of media-based logic that supersedes older logics” (p. 378) and that social transformations were “too heterogeneous to be reduced to a single media logic” (Couldry 2008). Similarly, Krotz (2009: 26) argued that media logic was a misleading concept, because it does not exist independently of sociocultural contexts or history. Moreover, Lundby (2009: 104–110) criticised media logic for its singularity, its linearity, being fixed to rules and formats rather than to processes and forms of social interactions. We agree that different logics, both in the media and in the political realm, coexist and may have different weight depending on the situation, actors, and other circumstances, and that they are not fixed. In other words, we cannot discuss network media logic without accounting for logics of politics and political organisations if aiming to understand the interplay between them.

Another contestation of diverging media logics in traditional mass media and social media platforms is the argument that contemporary media systems have transformed into hybrid phenomena that include online and offline tools and channels. This notion, while based on Chadwick’s (2013) suggestion to overcome the dichotomy of online versus offline media, often misunderstands Chadwick’s concept. Understanding media systems as *hybrid* does not dissolve the different norms and processes—the rules of the game—between traditional mass media (which can also be found online, e.g. on newspaper portals) and social media platforms. Chadwick himself acknowledges and discusses media logics as central aspects of this concept in the introduction to *The Hybrid Media System*: “How political and media actors shape and are shaped by older and newer media logics, and the extent to which they mobilize, traverse, and integrate these logics to exercise power, is what this book is about” (Chadwick 2013: 22). In fact, the idea of hybridity relies on at least two definable components that either converge into a hybrid form (such as a *melting pot*) or constitute the poles between gradually diverging hybrid forms. An example is *hybrid regimes* in democratisation studies, that is, political systems that are neither democracies nor dictatorships, but something in between, containing elements of both to different degrees (e.g. Diamond 2002). Similar to components of *democracy* and *dictatorship* in this example, we can only define hybrid forms of media if we can distinguish between the ideal types of mass media and network media even though they often overlap in the real world.

While media and communication scholars have elaborated on media logic, the concept of political logic has remained rather vague and multi-faceted. Political logic has been claimed and described in various contexts: Bawn (1993) explored the logic of government coalitions and their relationship with ideology, while Day (2004) used the term to trace what holds new social movements together. He argued that recent movements, such as the anti-globalisation movement, have adopted a *logic of affinity*, replacing the social movement *logic of hegemony* that was still prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s:

The goal is not to create a new power around a hegemonic centre, but to challenge, disrupt and disorient the processes of global hegemony, to refuse, rather than rearticulate those forces that are tending towards the universalization of the liberal-capitalist ecumene. (Day 2004: 730)

Other authors have connected political logic with phenomena as diverse as labour market reforms (Larsen 2008), political violence (Besley & Persson 2011), or the political survival of leaders (de Mesquita et al. 2005). The latter phenomenon claims that maintaining their *winning coalition* is the central political logic behind the old question why corrupt leaders remain in office. Moreover, political logic is not only said to be at odds with media logic, but also with economic logic (e.g. McKay 2005; Pempel 2006).

None of the cases mentioned above refer to political logic as a methodological approach of applying formal logic, as, for instance, Zinnes (2004) does when describing the construction of political logic in the *democratic peace puzzle*: that is, his explanation of why democratic states wage war against non-democracies, but not against each other. Resonating with our understanding of logic as the ‘rules of the game’, logic is used as a metaphor for the internal workings of politics, as well as the inherent norms, rules, and processes that guide political behaviour. This is similar to what Breiner (1995) describes as a *logic of modernity* in Max Weber’s works:

A logic in which different spheres of life conduct—the economic, the ethical, the scientific, the artistic, the political—represent different and competing values to which we might commit ourselves and demand a variety of conflicting logics of action. (Breiner 1995:41)

Despite such varying accounts of political logic, it has remained unclear how political logic and media logic intersect and/or collide. After all, media societies (Jarren & Donges 2006) manifest themselves in different political systems; and those political systems remain quite stable despite the increased importance and changing landscapes of the media: Electoral systems, party systems, majoritarian versus consociational settings, and one or two-chamber parliaments set the structural context in which political actors develop strategies and in which political logics emerge.

To close this gap, Esser (2013) differentiates between media logic and political logic by referring to the three well-established political dimensions—policy, politics, and polity—underlining the difference between the *production of politics* (making binding decisions) and the *self-presentation of politics* (see also Strömbäck & Esser 2014: 383). Policy logic concerns the production side of politics, such as policy-making and policy implementation. As policy logic is confined to the (backstage) negotiation of policies, it is often not in the centre of the media strategy of politicians and political institutions. Political logic, on the contrary, concerns the presentational side of politics and concerns gaining and remaining in power. Evidently, politicians and political institutions depend more on favourable media coverage and thus have to adapt to the rules of the media to a larger extent, especially during election campaigns (Strömbäck & Esser 2014: 394). Polity logic concerns the institutional side of politics. Here, media are more prone to adapt their coverage to the logic of the political system, since the formal structures, such as the constitution, are likely to remain unchanged regardless of changes in the media landscape. In Sweden, for example, a political party needs 4 per cent of the vote to gain seats in Parliament. This threshold influences how mass media cover elections. Switzerland is another case. From 1959 to 2003, the Swiss Parliament elected the government (*Bundesrat*) according to the principles of consociational democracy: The three strongest parties in parliament could staff two positions, while the fourth strongest staffs one position. In the UK, by contrast, the winner takes all in a constituency, usually resulting in single-party governments. Hence, even among liberal democracies,

political systems vary considerably—this in turn influences how media cover elections and day-to-day political processes.

Therefore, the argument we wish to put forward here is that media logic and political logic coexist and inform each other. Altheide and Snow (1979) also clearly stated that media logic should not be understood as “media dictating terms to the rest of society, but [as] an interaction between organized institutional behavior and media” (Altheide and Snow 1979: 15). Having accounted for different logics within the media and politics, we now elaborate on the concept of network media logic, which only recently emerged from social media platforms.

Network Media Logic Reconsidered

In a prior article (Klinger & Svensson 2015) we discussed how social media platforms differ from mass media, and outlined the emergence of network media logic. In this chapter, we provide a condensed, general and non-platform-specific version of this discussion. In previous work, we departed from a delineation of how production, distribution, and media use on social media platforms differ from those of traditional mass media. We know that production, distribution, and media use are not easy to separate, especially on social media platforms. However, for analytical purposes, we continue to distinguish between these processes when comparing network media to mass media logic. In this section, we further develop the concept of network media logic by connecting it to three aspects of news mass media logic: (1) ideals, (2) commercial imperatives, and (3) technology (Esser 2013). Ideals, in our argument, refer to common perceptions about how content should be produced, distributed and how media should be used—as an ideal type and with regard to public communication. *Commercial imperatives* mean the economic contexts and opportunity structures within which media content is produced, distributed and within which media is used. *Technology* refers to the specific affordances that influence how media content is produced, distributed, and how people make use of media.

Esser (2013) and Strömbäck & Esser (2014: 382) argued that professional ideals (1) in news production follow journalistic norms and criteria, that is, news values. As independent and supposedly autonomous professionals, journalists are governed by certain ideals as a distinct set of norms and values. What becomes interesting to discuss here is how such ideals differ on social media platforms compared to mass media. Can we discern distinct *ideals*—in terms of not only how political news is produced but also how it is distributed and used online?

Most mass media are also set in commercial contexts (2) that influence the ways in which information is produced, distributed, and used. Media platforms have to compete for attention, subscriptions, and advertising while keeping the costs of production and dissemination low in order to generate profits. Historically, the commercial pressures of mass media corporations have often been seen as being in opposition to professional ideals. With the rise of neo-liberalism, the commercial imperatives have become even more salient, which has given political news a distinct flavour of entertainment, speculation, and personalisation (Esser 2013:171). This raises the question of what kinds of *commercial imperatives* can be discerned on social media platforms.

Moreover, technology (3) shapes the processes of producing, finding, and reproducing news. The medium is the message, as McLuhan (1964) famously argued—or in the words of Hjarvard (2013), each media technology has inherent characteristics that

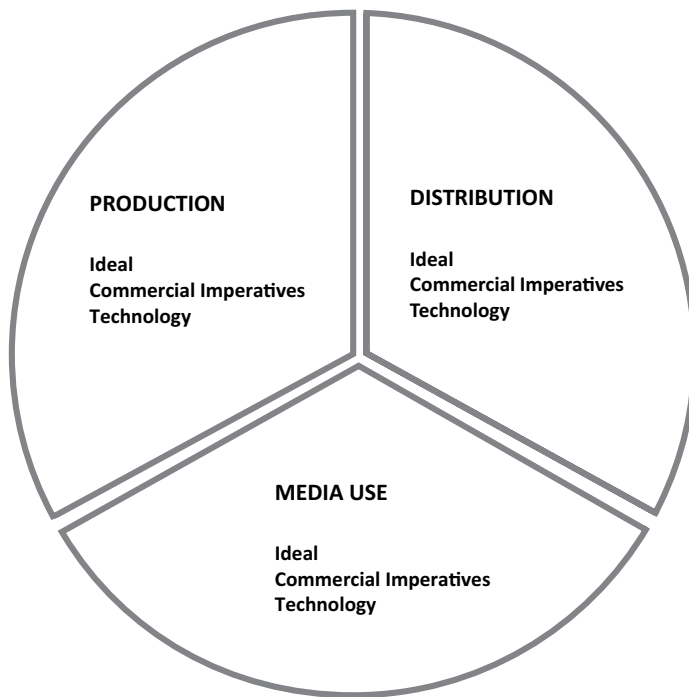


Figure 2.1 Dimensions of Media Logic

both enable and restrict news media in their production, processing, and presentation of content. Television, for example, affords more linear, visual, and affective formats than print platforms (Esser 2013: 173). This raises the question of how the *technology* of social media formats affect news practices online.

In Esser's framework, it is apparent that these three aspects—professionalism (ideals), commercialism, and technology—refer only to the process of content production. Limiting media logic to content production has, however, not been particularly helpful in illustrating the transformative shift towards a hybrid media system over the past decade. Hence, and in line with our previous delineation of a network media logic, we now apply these aspects to all three dimensions of media logic: production, distribution, and media use (see Figure 2.1). Do note that our following argument applies only to political, public communication. On social media platforms we also find a large amount of personal, phatic communication taking place within closed circles of friends who do not intend their exchanges to be public, and even less viral.

Production: Ideals, Commercial Imperatives, and Technology

Most of what people know about the world stems from media, because relevant events tend to take place beyond the horizon of personal experiences and encounters. However, only small parts of the endless stream of daily events occurring in the world become news. The processes through which such relevant events are selected, processed, interpreted and transformed into news differ between mass media and social

media platforms. Living in an era of information abundance, the challenge is to filter, attribute relevance, and contextualise information.

There is a difference between the professional *ideals* of mass media (the journalistic profession as a gatekeeper of traditional mass media), and the ideals of produsage on social media platforms (converging amateur content producers' and content consumers' roles; see Bruns & Highfield 2012). We have summarised the differences in production in Table 2.1. Although a large part of social media content originates from mass media in the form of, for example, retweeted or shared links to newspaper articles or radio shows (Neuberger & Lobigs 2010), the production ideal is shared personalised content. While a news item becomes relevant in mass media because it has been selected by trained staff who considered it important enough to be brought to the attention of the audience, the personalised selection on social media platforms seldom attributes relevance outside the personal network of the user. In fact, most content on social media platforms could be considered highly irrelevant from a news value point of view (O'Meara 2009). Users thus experience a logic in which content is produced reflexively with regard to personalisation and attention maximisation rather than professional codes, such as news values.

In many occasions, network media logic and mass media logic overlap. Often, users share content from mass media, such as online newspaper articles or TV videos, in their networks. In these cases, users have selected the content according to their personal tastes and interests and at the same time reproduced the selection criteria of journalists. When network and mass media ideals overlap and inform each other, this can lead to role conflicts. Norms and practices change and bend when professional mass media journalists apply their own norms and practices to blogs and social media platforms, while the inherent production logic of networked media on their part penetrates professional news organisations. Bloggers with a professional background as journalists are reported to *normalise* blogs by “sticking to their traditional gatekeeper role” (Singer 2005: 192), while simultaneously moving away from a neutral, non-partisan presentation of information. Mass media journalists have become more personal and reflexive in their addresses. In Sweden (and probably other countries as well) we can find numerous recent examples of news journalists crying openly when reporting natural disasters or refugee catastrophes. There are even indications “that journalism norms are bending

Table 2.1 Dimensions of Media Logics: Production

	<i>Mass Media Logic</i>	<i>Network Media Logic</i>
Ideal	Traditional journalism: autonomous, following ideals of news values in the service of what is referred to as public interest	User-generated content: based on ideals of produsage, reflexivity, and personalisation
Commercial Imperatives	High organisational costs privileging business models around infotainment	Low organisational costs privileging business models around personal revelations
Technology	Affordance for a single public sphere	Affordance for fragmented publics

as professional practices adapt to social media tools such as micro-blogging” (Hermida 2010: 300). This exemplifies how mass and network media logics coexist in increasingly hybrid settings as professional journalists and mass media corporations attribute more importance to social media platforms.

Concerning *commercial imperatives*, content production on social media platforms has low organisational cost: Amateur content producers using ordinary consumer equipment and the sharing of already produced journalistic content involve little to no costs. Providing information on social media platforms is in fact so inexpensive that the commercial logic of mass media is reversed. Woodly (2008: 118) has pointed out that most bloggers are independent of revenue from advertisement, because of low production costs. The few bloggers popular enough to earn a small income from advertisements illustrate this reversed imperative: Usually, the ads reflect the blogger’s interests, not the blogger’s content or the interests of the corporations advertising there. Updating one’s image, life story, and interests becomes a never-ending practice, a necessity that is pushed by social media conglomerates, largely because they capitalise on the information shared on social media platforms (van Dijck 2013; Fuchs 2014). Hence, social media platforms have a commercial incentive to get users to disclose as much personal information as possible. In contrast, content production in mass media comes at a high organisational cost: professional journalists, offices, access to data and resources, to name but a few, must all be funded. However, hybridity is at work also here with increasing mobile journalists using network media to fulfil their journalistic tasks. Several studies have also shown (e.g. Schulz & Zeh 2005; Gerth et al. 2009) that demanding business models exert additional external pressure and that this affects content production, acting as a catalyst for phenomena such as the personalisation, spectacularisation, and dramatisation of the news (also referred to as a shift towards infotainment).

Production practices are also linked to *technology*. Esser (2013: 173) argued that television affords more visual, affective, and less cognitively complex information than print. Social media platforms afford user interaction and participation to a larger extent than mass media. We can thus argue that the technologies of mass media in general afford time-consuming information, produced by professional journalists for an audience of subscribers or a statistically mapped broadcast audience. Social media platforms, on the other hand, afford the quick, lay production of information for friends and like-minded others. This information production is based on reflexivity, since social media platforms afford immediate, more horizontal, interactive, and highly individualised communication. A stable, single public sphere is replaced by multiple and quickly fading spheres (see Rauchfleisch & Schaefer 2014 and the chapter by Bruns and Highfield in the present volume) to the extent that some scholars argued that citizens no longer share the same picture of a common sociopolitical reality (Pariser 2011; Sunstein 2002). Citizens choose the stories that resonate with them the most, and are not necessarily confronted by alternative narratives. In this sense, social media platforms have a tendency to afford filter bubbles and in-group polarisation to a larger extent than news mass media, which address a more heterogeneous audience and hence have to adapt their reports accordingly. With regard to the overlapping of network and mass media logic, we can see how mass media logic is at work on social media platforms when, for example, politicians use social media platforms as if they were tools for broadcasting political statements in an unidirectional way, non-responsive to comments.

Distribution: Ideals, Commercial Imperatives, Technology

Information reaching a large crowd on social media platforms has most likely followed the *ideal* of virality. Virality can be defined as “network-enhanced word of mouth” (Nahon et al. 2011: 1). If information posted on social media platforms does not have the viral quality that induces users to pass it on to like-minded others, it will not reach beyond a very limited circle (Bennett & Segerberg 2012: 8). In Table 2.2 we have summarised the differences between mass media and network media logic regarding the distribution of content.

While professionals working for traditional mass media outlets usually know that their information will reach a certain number of subscribers or broadcast audience, the same information on social media platforms first has to be found and thereafter distributed by and among networks of supposedly like-minded people. As a result, most information on social media platforms does not go viral. Virality, as a “social information flow process” (Nahon & Hemsley 2013:16), is usually an information distribution ideal rather than a reality in networked media. Information on social media platforms is distributed from users to users, like a chain letter in peer networks. We therefore argue that in political communication the logic of virality (that information should spread) is one ideal of network media. We underline that this aspect relates to public communication, while personal or phatic communication posted in peer networks is in most cases supposed to remain within this circle of friends—and only goes viral by ‘accident’ (e.g. unintended masses at Facebook parties).

This arguably differs from mass dissemination to a broadcast audience or paying subscriber base in traditional mass media. These logics do intersect in hybrid ways, for example in the party press, which distributes information to like-minded recipients but also to other subscribers. Indeed, a broadcast audience or the subscribers to a newspaper are not necessarily heterogeneous, but the ideals of information distribution are fundamentally different from the viral spreading ideal on social media platforms. This being said, as most mass media have online presence today, both distribution ideals intersect. We have the example of singer Susan Boyle’s first appearance on the BBC broadcast *Britain’s Got Talent*, distributed to broadcast audience mainly in the UK—as well as being catapulted into world fame by connected individuals who deemed the fairytale-like clip of the plain women with a surprisingly beautiful voice worthy of attention, appreciation and passing on.

Table 2.2 Dimensions of Media Logics: Distribution

	<i>Mass Media Logic</i>	<i>Network Media Logic</i>
Ideal	Mass dissemination to subscribers	Viral distribution to like-minded others
Commercial Imperatives	Business models depend on centralised distribution by professional journalists	Business models depend on principles of connectivity and popularity
Technology	Affordance for broadcasting	Affordance for updating in peer networks

Besides advertising revenues, mass media, especially print media and cable TV, *commercially* depend on a base of subscribers paying for professional information curation. The relevance of information on networked media does not stem from professional selection and content production, but rather from like-minded individuals' viral distribution of information. This is also the case when users link to content from mass media, because they attribute relevance to online newspaper articles or broadcast clips by re-tweeting or sharing it. Information on social media platforms mostly reach a number of self-selected, like-minded others, but often not the general public. In fact, only very little information on social media platforms receives much attention, most remains unnoticed. Virality implies that the asymmetry of the information distribution is based on both popularity (as with the Susan Boyle example) and like-mindedness in the sense that social media platforms enhance the domination of popular information and popular producers. Certain users and their postings gain more visibility than others. Elite and top general-bloggers facilitate swift information dissemination (Nahon et al. 2011). Hence, distribution on social media platforms depends partly on like-minded and popular online intermediaries who serve as catalysts. In some cases these intermediaries overlap with mass media professionals in hybrid ways, but often they are not the professional gatekeepers we find in mass media. One noteworthy example is Swedish computer game commentator and YouTube celebrity PewDiePie (Felix Kjellberg), who has launched campaigns for threatened animals, save the children, and clean water to name a few via his YouTube fans (30 million).

Distribution online has been discussed as a *connective culture* (van Dijck 2013); a culture that thrives on social media platforms and that is supported by the business models of today's social media conglomerates. Van Dijck (2013: 13, 62) talks about a *popularity principle* underpinning what she refers to as an attention economy in social media. This is also reflected in the commercial imperatives of social media platforms. Revenue depends on popularity (measured, for example, by the Klout Score) and viral distribution within algorithmically determined target groups. When PewDiePie uploads a new video clip, this upload is likely to spread faster than if a regular user would provide the same video. Indeed, there is an increasing incentive for users to network and connect with many well-connected others in order to spread their information and thereby to sustain an infrastructure of virality for their own information to spread.

Information distribution online is based on reflexivity, since network media *technology*, to a large extent, affords immediate, interactive, and individualised communication. In other words, social media platforms afford peer-to-peer-communication, while news mass media instead afford a traditional top-down broadcasting model of distribution. Sometimes these logics intersect. PewDiePie's fans, for example, *subscribe* to his YouTube channel, signalling how the mass media logic of a subscription as well as top-down broadcasting has made its way to social media platforms. However, on social media platforms users may connect among each other in ways impossible for mass media audiences. It thus becomes important to keep each other updated online (Svensson 2012). Social media platforms thus adopt the technological rules often associated with the Web 2.0 concept (O'Reilly 2005), affording peer-to-peer distribution by means of updating practices in self-selected networks.

Media Use: Ideals, Commercial Imperatives, and Technology

Today, users navigate media landscapes that are characterised by an abundance of information. Users thus constantly need to discern which information is relevant to them,

which is why content sharing and suggestions from popular and like-minded others within their social networks become influential. The basic tenets of this third and last dimension of media logics, detailing aspects of media use, are outlined in Table 2.3.

Networks inform users about the variety of choices before them, while also providing cues regarding how their peers have acted in similar situations with similar choices (Anderson 2006: 108, 174; Manovich 2001: 35). This sharing of (personal) information is an online ideal, which involves reflexively confessing and spreading information and minute-to-minute updates on thoughts, feelings, whereabouts, opinions, and like-minded others' doings. Castells (2008) refers to this personalised information use as mass self-communication. This idealisation of the self, in tandem with idealising peers and like-minded others, when using network media differs from mass media use which instead is based on *ideals* of a rather passive consumption of professionally selected, framed, and interpreted news items (this is not to deny the notion of a cognitively active audience that unconsciously makes sense of the messages conveyed to it). These ideals may overlap in, for example, how mass media outlets invite subscribers to share their thoughts and feelings on a news topic via, for the occasion created hashtag, on Twitter or on their Facebook page.

The constant and reflexive sharing of information online also taps into the *commercial imperatives* on network media. When connecting to like-minded others and peers on social media platforms, users indirectly tailor what information will reach them. In other words, users increasingly construct and organise their social realities through their online social networks. News feeds displaying the online behaviours of selected others enable users to anticipate their future needs and wants based on actions undertaken by their peers, as well as on their own, aggregated past choices (Anderson 2006). It has become apparent that the capitalist logic of platforms owners, capitalising on the information their users share, informs social media practices. Time spent online contributes to the economic value of social media companies (van Dijck 2013; Fuchs 2014: 114). By spending time online and updating their social media profiles, users allow capitalist companies to exploit their information—knowingly or not. Social media companies accumulate capital through data mining of displayed personal information, which they sell to commercial actors or other organisations interested in targeting users with information. The logic of updating thus fits neatly into the

Table 2.3 Dimensions of Media Logics: Media Use

	<i>Mass Media Logic</i>	<i>Network Media Logic</i>
Ideal	Consumption of professionally selected and framed information	Sharing reflexive and personal information among peers and like-minded others
Commercial Imperatives	Business models depend on advertisements and subscriptions	Business models depend on data mining, target advertising, and surveillance
Technology	Affordance for passive use along geographically defined boundaries	Affordance for interactive use in peer and interest-based networks

logic of capital accumulation and the business models of such companies. In contrast, mass media corporations' income largely depends on their audience's belief that they provide quality content—only then will they pay or accept advertising breaks. While broadcasting companies marketise the attention of viewers or listeners during their use of the program, social media platform owners sell the data of their users; even collecting profitable data when users have left the social network sites (e.g. about their online shopping routines).

As discussed previously, social media platform's *technology* affords reflexive updating in more fragmented peer networks. Social media platforms thus allow for broader repertoires of media use rather than only for the consumption of professionally produced, reframed, and redistributed news broadcasts. Social media content may be manipulated by discerning, assembling, adding, or removing information (Manovich 2001: 27–30). Programming and manipulating media is easier in the network environment, and ordinary network media users are capable of doing so. Thus, news and information are constantly being produced and are endlessly variable (Manovich 2001). Social media platforms allow for a more interactive use of media content than traditional mass media and are bound to communities of peers and like-minded others to a larger extent than mass media (even though this started to change already with satellite and cable television). And as we have exemplified throughout, it is not as easy any longer to separate mass media from social media content. Most mass media corporations do have an online presence, often with similar content and the added feature of user comments, opportunities to share and like the professionally produced content, and closely monitor these activities (as shown by their ranking of most shared/most read article online).

Conclusion

Network media logic differs from traditional mass media logic in three different but interrelated dimensions: the production of media content, the distribution patterns of information, and the way people use media. Within these three dimensions, we can further delineate the underlying ideals, commercial imperatives, and technology that distinguish mass media from network media, although the two logics overlap. The remaining question is: How does this connect with politics and political logic?

As mentioned above, political logic is highly context sensitive. The political strategies in election campaigns, for instance, strongly depend on the specific political structures in which political parties and candidates compete for votes. Are they running in a two-party or multi-party competition? Does the *winner takes all* principle apply, or is it possible to form a multi-party coalition government? Are votes cast for parties or for candidates—or for both? As political systems and media systems tend to remain stable over time, the potentials and effects of social media platforms depend on this structural background. Social media platforms cannot per se *revolutionise* election campaigns or other political processes, because it is first and foremost the design of political institutions that determines whether, and in what way, social media platforms can be meaningfully employed in political communication. It is against this background that mass media logic and network media logic resonate with the strategic communication efforts of political actors and political organisations.

In electoral campaigns as well as in routine situations, political actors and organisations seek visibility for their heads and ideas. Their communication strategies and

media repertoires should reflect the different ways in which information is produced, distributed, and used in mass media and on social media platforms. The distribution patterns of social media platforms, for instance, promote personalisation: In self-selected and reflexive networks, private information about a candidate or representative will spread more easily than information about a new parliamentary initiative (see, e.g. Bennett 2012 on the personalisation of politics). On the other hand, journalists (despite the trend towards more personalisation in mass media) might find the parliamentary initiative more interesting, because, when put in context, it may constitute an even better story.

The objective of visibility is also closely connected to the different audiences of mass media and on social media platforms. When dealing with journalists, political actors know who the recipients of the shared information will be: The readers of a high-quality newspaper or the viewers of a late-night talk show on TV. They can also estimate the number of recipients that will be reached. When posting information on social media platforms, on the contrary, it remains unclear if and how far this information will spread. The number of followers on Twitter or friends on Facebook are only weak predictors of visibility, because they indicate to how many people the post will be broadcast, but not if and how it will travel from there via re-tweets and other means of sharing. This means that social media platforms cannot reliably and transparently deliver political information and create visibility for politicians or political organisations. It thus comes as no surprise that politicians continue to rely heavily on journalists and mass media when they seek to get their messages out (i.e. broadcasting information). What social media can do is provide data about friends and followers, enabling micro-targeting techniques in election campaigns—a feature that is increasingly used and might in the future change the strategies of political actors in election campaigns (Cookson 2015).

Network media logic poses a variety of challenges to political actors and organisations, not least because they have adapted to the rules of the game of news mass media and now struggle with the potentials and problems when communicating outside a well-rehearsed *broadcasting mode*. One of those challenges, for example, is the coherence of party politics and individual politicians. How can political parties ensure that the self-presentation of candidates, parliamentarians, and other politicians in their organisation is in line with the party manifesto and the strategic communication of the party? Traditionally, party communication was organised in a centralised way, by communications departments and heads of strategic communication. While this is still the case, individual politicians now have the opportunity to use social media platforms to portray themselves more personally and as a platform for sharing diverging views—views that could be more in line with their constituents' opinions than those of the party (see Svensson 2011).

This brief discussion of the consequences of emerging network media logic is, of course, far from complete. Social media platforms change political communication, but they do not substitute journalistic mass media. Moreover, they do not change political communication in a deterministic way based on their technology but can resonate only within the bounds of institutional design and contexts. Media logic is not external from society but results from the ideals, commercial imperatives, and technological aspects of media production, distribution, and use. The way media logic can unfold in political communication, then, depends on the political logic that shapes the communication strategies of political actors and organisations.

Notes

- 1 Both authors have contributed equally to this chapter.
- 2 Parts of this chapter are based on Klinger and Svensson (2015).

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