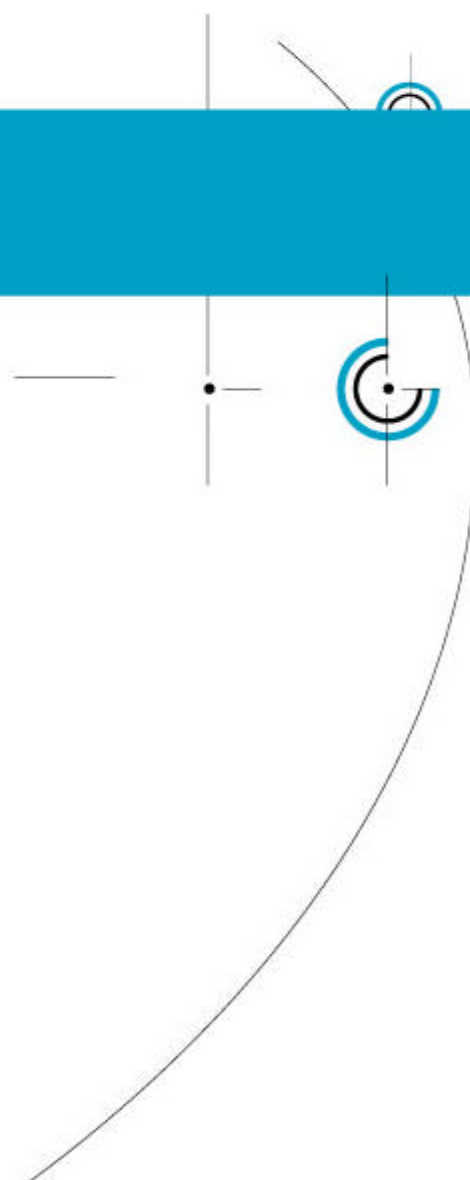# Coping with the agoraphobic media professional. A typology of journalistic practices reinforcing democracy and participation.

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Coping with the agoraphobic media professional. A typology of journalistic practices reinforcing democracy and participation.

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Introduction

This article offers a prescriptive typology of journalistic practices reinforcing democracy and participation, that wants to provide the broadest answer possible to the following question: how can mainstream media, active within non-fiction, stimulate active citizenship and work in a democracy-supporting way? The starting point for this question, (and thus for this article), validates active citizenship and a developed democracy, from a formal-democratic point of view as well as from a perspective that focuses on democratic practices and cultures; from a (narrow) approach of the political system, as well as from a (broad) perspective of the political as a dimension that entails the social.

After a quick and superficial reading, it appears to be quite easy to generate a number of singular answers to this question. However, its basic concepts, citizenship and democracy, cannot be easily defined in a singular way, since they encapsulate very different –sometimes even contradictory– meanings. The media's role in this myriad of meanings and significations thus also becomes problematic to be univocally described, and we now need to find a way to deal with the lack of a homogenous theory regarding the role of the media, the media professional[1] and the citizen within democracy.

The main explanation for this significatory complexity, and for the dispersed answers to this simple question can be found in the theoretical and ideological positions that structure the models that claim to answer the question. They are all based on specific worldviews that have a different way of dealing with Western basic values such as freedom, equality and justice. However, this does not imply that all models carry an equal weight and that their impact on the social is evenly balanced. Some of these models have indeed managed to conquer a dominant position in the theories and practices related to the media and democracy. At the same time Sayyid & Zac's (1998: 262) words need to be kept in mind: *'Hegemony is always possible but can never be total'*. There have been attempts –alternative media models and journalistic reform projects- to break with these hegemonic articulations of the media/democracy relationship.

Given the diversity and richness of these models, the traditional approach to simply list and compare them can quickly be abandoned. In stead, both the dominant and the alternative models are re-analysed and scrutinized in relation to the democratic and participatory tools they have to offer. This also implies that the general truth claims, ethical values or practical relevance of the separate theoretical frameworks are not under discussion: their ideological load is (temporarily) bracketed. The premise of this article is that the democratic and participatory practices that are promoted by these different models are complementary (and sometimes overlapping) and can be grouped into one overarching typology. The models that theorize –all in their own way- the media/democracy relationship will be used as building block for this typology.

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[1] The denominator 'media professional' covers a broadly defined journalistic identity, including popular journalism (see Meijer, 2001).

A toolkit for action research

In the meanwhile this typology has been tried and tested in an action research programme, and this article also aims to report on this action research oriented towards the Belgian mainstream media. Not only does this project contain relevant information in itself, but because it is intrinsically linked with the construction of the here-discussed typology, the resulting media projects also have strong illustrative capacities. In 2000 the Belgian King Baudoin Foundation initiated the campaign 'media and citizens', which among a series of other publications[2], led in early 2002 to a bilingually published version of the typology (Carpentier et al., 2002a & 2002b). This publication also included a number of journalists' testimonies and the analysis of a small-scale quantitative survey among Belgian journalists (Drijvers et al., 2002). The authors of this report, Nico Carpentier and Benoît Grevisse, formed -together with Anne-Françoise Genel, Tinne Vandensande and Rik Vanmolkot from the King Baudoin Foundation- the project team that remained involved during the entire campaign[3].

In a second phase four seminars for Belgian media professionals were organized, in order to familiarize interested journalists with the typology and to prepare them for the call for media projects, which was launched in February 2002. This call resulted in 18 North Belgian and 19 South Belgian proposals for projects, drafted by a diversity of media organizations. Two juries, acting independently from the King Baudoin Foundation[4], selected 22 projects, 11 from each language group / region, which were subsidized by this foundation for respectively 197.950 (Dutch language group) and 217.957 (French language group) Euros. The following table provides an overview of these projects, and a more detailed list can be found in annex 1:

Type of media organization	Names of media organizations	Number of selected projects
National[5] news agency	Belga	1
Regional public radio and television broadcaster	RTBF Radio, VRT (Radio 1) & VRT (Equal opportunities department)	3

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[2] Initially, three reports were published on 1/ audience feedback (Antoine, 2000), 2/ Public journalism (Puissant, 2000) and the reality / fiction relationship (Bitereyst et al., 2000).

[3] There were only a few changes in the project team. Stefan Crets of the King Baudoin Foundation was only involved in the initial phase and at first Rik Vanmolkot was involved as an external consultant, but later he joined the staff of the Foundation. It should also be mentioned that Danny Doublet and Greet Massart provided the administrative support.

[4] Next to Nico Carpentier and Benoît Grevisse, these juries were composed out of distinguished journalists and media professionals on the one hand and other academics working in the field of media and journalism studies on the other hand.

[5] The rather complicated Belgian state structure leads to some particularities in the usages of concepts as national, regional and local. To avoid confusion, the more international definitions of these concepts are used in this table. 'National' thus refers to Belgium, 'regional' to the Flemish, Brussels and Walloon regions, 'local' to the provinces and cities. In Belgium other meanings are attributed to these concepts. Both in Dutch and French (at least in Belgium) the local television stations, that have a broadcasting area which is smaller than a province, are termed 'regional television stations', and the regional television stations (public and private) are called national broadcasters, despite the fact that the only broadcast for one language group and/or region (located in North and South Belgium). In fact, the only national (= Belgian), bilingual media organization is the news agency Belga.

Regional private radio and television broadcaster	BEL-RTL Radio	1
Regional newspaper	Gazet van Antwerpen, Het Nieuwsblad, La Libre Belgique, Le Soir (Junior), Het Belang van Limburg & Sud Presse Group[6]	6
Regional magazine	Le Ligueur & Femmes d'Aujourd'hui	2
Regional media federation	Internationaal Perscentrum Vlaanderen & Fédération des Télévisions locales	2
Alternative (regional) media	Indymedia & Divazine	2
Local television station	TV Brussel, Télévesdre, No Télé, TV Limburg & Antenne Centre Télévision	5

In the course of the campaign the media professionals of the language groups were brought together in a series of three workshops, in order to further familiarize them with the typology of democratic and participatory media practices and to allow them to discuss their on-going projects amongst each other. When these projects ended, towards the end of 2003, they were asked to perform their own evaluation. These self-evaluations were then combined with the project teams' evaluations and published in two new reports, one for each language group (Carpentier & Grevisse, 2004; Grevisse & Carpentier, 2004). A selection from these 22 projects will be used in this article to illustrate the typology that will be discussed below.

Before turning to the typology, some of the results of the small-scale quantitative survey, organized among 111 Belgian journalists (before the call for media projects was launched[7]), can be used to show the reluctance of many journalists to engage themselves in the more 'radical' participatory practices. As the graph on the next page shows, traditionally more accepted practices such as facilitating the audiences' understanding of news, correcting their own mistakes, contextualizing the news and acting as a (government) watchdog are considered useful and are said to be used by a clear majority of journalists. On the other hand, most of the less traditional practices are far less popular. Especially the practices that are strongly focussed on participation have very low scores, both at the level of usefulness and at the level of actual usage. Items like organising meetings between themselves and members of the audience, and between citizens and politicians, structurally analysing audience feedback, paying attention to and learning from participatory media and facilitating structural audience participation all have percentages of regular usage and perceived high usefulness below 12%. These data (however small the sample[8]) exemplify the media culture in Belgium, the media professional's position towards a more elaborate democratic-participatory role and their hesitance to become involved in projects that try to stimulate and deepen this democratic-participatory role.
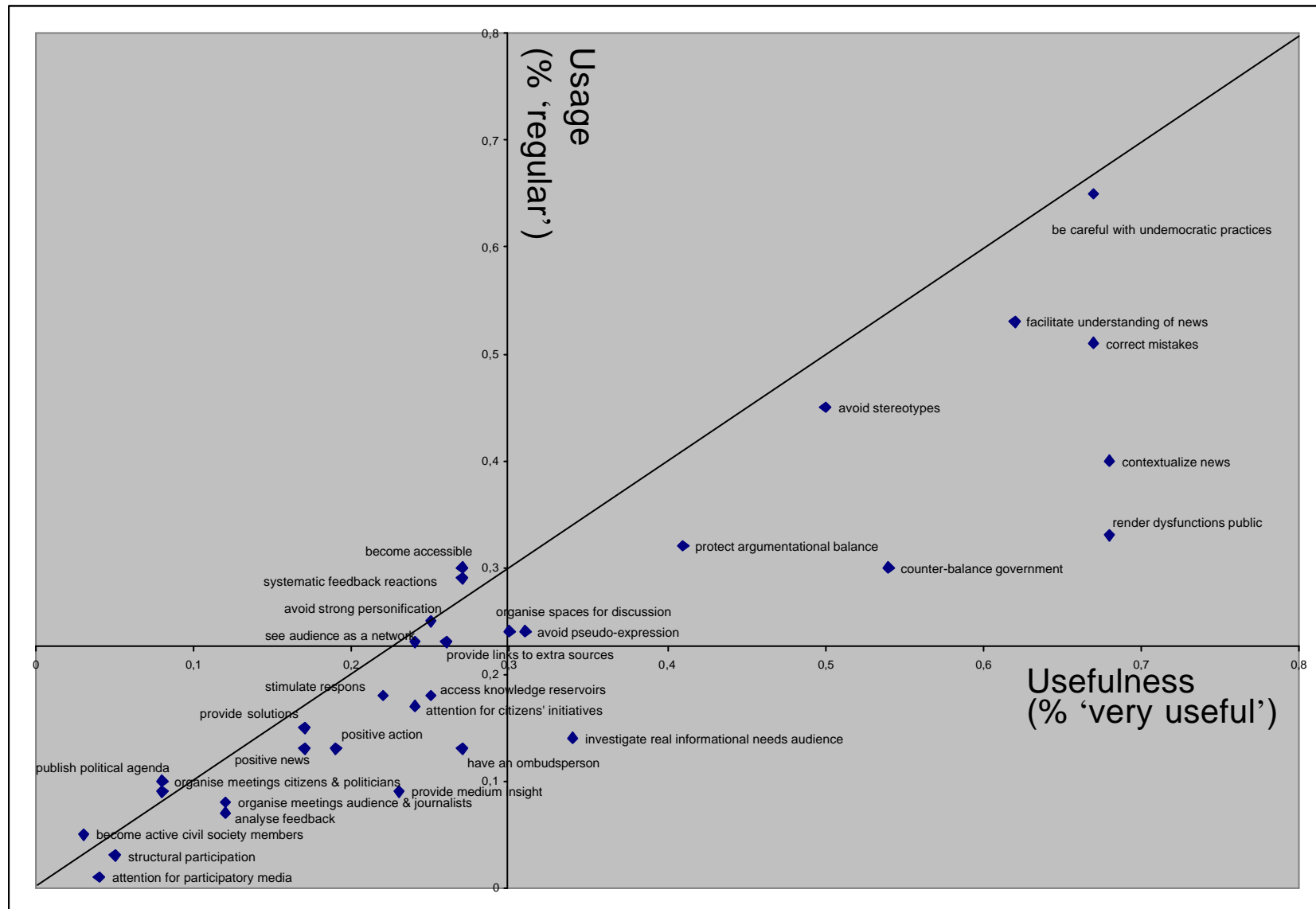
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[6] Sud Presse groups several more locally oriented newspapers: La Capitale, La Meuse, La Nouvelle Gazette, La Province and le Quotidien de Namur.

[7] The preparatory qualitative phase took place between October 15 and September 12, 2001. The actual survey was organized between November 26 and December 27, 2001. TNS-Media was responsible for this research project, its financing was provided by the King Baudoin Foundation. The call was launched afterwards, in February 2002.

[8] In order to make a selection out of the available databases with 2800 names of professional journalists and independent television producers, quotas were used for language group, media-type and media organization. Within each cell, media professionals were then randomly selected, resulting in 600 names. They were contacted by phone, interviewed using phone, fax or email and reminded by phone and email. Despite this procedure, only 111 media professionals reacted. Equally split over the language groups, the majority of them were males (74%), had a university degree (71%), were employees in a (relatively) stable position (76%) and worked full-time (84%). When it came to the length of their working experience and to their age, they were rather equally distributed over the different categories, although 40% came out of the age group of 35-44 years (Drijvers et al., 2002a).

Survey of Belgian journalists (N=111): participatory practices, their usefulness and usage[9]
Source: TNS Media – cd-rom included in annexes of '*Tussen woord en daad*' (TNS Media, 2002)

Usage
(% 'regular')

0,8

0,7

0,6
be careful with undemocratic practices

facilitate understanding of news
0,5
correct mistakes

avoid stereotypes

0,4
contextualize news

render dysfunctions public

become accessible
protect argumentational balance
0,3
systematic feedback reactions
counter-balance government

avoid strong personification
organise spaces for discussion
see audience as a network
avoid pseudo-expression
provide links to extra sources

0,3
Usefulness
(% 'very useful')

stimulate respons
0,2
access knowledge reservoirs
provide solutions
attention for citizens' initiatives

positive action
investigate real informational needs audience
positive news

publish political agenda
have an ombudsperson
organise meetings citizens & politicians
0,1
provide medium insight
organise meetings audience & journalists
analyse feedback

become active civil society members

structural participation

attention for participatory media
0

0   0,1   0,2   0,3   0,4   0,5   0,6   0,7   0,8

[9] See also annex 2.

Given these indicative results, the rather enthusiastic reaction of a large group of media professionals, for a majority originating from (for Belgian standards) large mainstream media, came as a surprise to the project team. It should be stressed that the call (and the preparatory seminars) were formulated in a very open way, only providing the media organizations with a large number of options and possible techniques. The content of the proposal and the exact nature of these projects were theirs to decide, although on a number of occasions the juries tried to increase the participatory character of some projects. The project content is summarized in the following table, distinguishing among four different (but partially overlapping) project content clusters:

Project content cluster	Names of media organizations	Number of selected projects
Emancipatory cluster	Belga; TV Brussel; VRT (Equal opportunities); Gazet Van Antwerpen; Divazine; La Libre Belgique; Le Ligueur; Femmes d'Aujourd'hui & Het Belang van Limburg	9
Participatory cluster	Antenne Centre; Divazine; Fédération des Télévisions Locales; Het Belang van Limburg; Het Nieuwsblad; Indymedia; La Libre Belgique; Le Soir; No Télé; Sud Presse; Télévesdre; TV Limburg & VRT (Radio 1)	13
Educational cluster	Internationaal Perscentrum Vlaanderen; Le Soir; Sud Presse; Antenne Centre; Het Belang van Limburg; Belga; TV Brussel & Indymedia	8
Service cluster	Bel-RTL; Fédération des Télévisions Locales; Femmes d'Aujourd'hui & Le Ligueur	4

Normative theory, journalistic reform and democracy

Now returning to the typology and its building blocks, it is no coincidence that in the media studies literature the theories on the role of the media within society can be found under the denominator of 'normative theories'. The well-known starting point here is the book '*Four Theories of the Press*' written by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956), based on the work of the Hutchins commission (1947), that even today contains quite a few positions that remain surprisingly contemporary. In this book, the authors describe four theories regarding the (written) press, of which two models[10] are relevant in this context: the liberal (or libertarian) model and the model of social responsibility.

The liberal model focuses strongly on information, but this media function is complemented by their role as a watchdog in order to control the authorities and by the need to create an independent forum for debate, a so-called market place of ideas. In the social responsibility model these functions are further completed by stressing the importance of correct representations of social groups[11] and of providing a '*truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account*' of '*the day's events in a context which gives them meaning*' (Hutchins, 1947 quoted by Siebert et al., 1956: 87). As the '*Four Theories of the Press*' was considered to be too reductive[12], McQuail (1994) added two more models: the development model and the participatory-democratic model. Both models focus on the participatory role of the mass media. They support the right to communicate, defining communication as a two-way process, based on dialogue and interaction. This is combined with an emphasis on the democratization of communication, facilitating non-professionals' access and participation in the content as well as in the content-producing media organizations.

Five basic components that provide the foundations for the media/democracy relationship can be deduced from these normative theories[13]. These five basic functions are:

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[10] The authoritarian and Marxist-Leninist model are considered less relevant in the contemporary Western context.
[11] Siebert et al. (1956: 91) provide here the following (out-dated) clarification of this position: '[…] this requirement would have the press accurately portray the social groups, the Chinese and the Negroes, for example, since persons tend to make decisions in terms of favourable or unfavourable images and a false picture can subvert accurate judgement'.
[12] See Nerone, 1995.
[13] A relatively similar list can be found in Biltereyst et al., 2000: 22.

The informative function
The control function
The representative function
The forum function
The participatory function

Inspired by the research of Drijvers and his colleagues (2002) on the journalist's survey and driven by the need to avoid a too functionalist approach, this list of five media functions is reworked in four clusters that will structure the typology. First, the strictly informative cluster groups the informative and control function, as both functions focus on the production of information, be it critical or not. Secondly, as the difference between the representation of communities and subgroups on the one hand and the representation of the political on the other is vital in this context, the representative function is divided into two clusters, one regarding the representation of the social, focussing on a community and its subgroups. A second cluster deals with the representation of the political. Both clusters contain elements of the forum function. These forums create spaces for self-representation (as individuals, but inevitably also as members of societal subgroups) and contain a diversity of discourses (cluster 2). As the forum function also relates (indirectly) to creating 'market places of ideas' and/or 'public spheres' this function is also related to the representation of the political as such (cluster 3). But the strongest link is between the forum function and the participatory function, as these forums are (at least) aimed at enhancing audience participation. Given the importance of media access, interaction and participation, these aspects are grouped in the fourth participatory cluster (cluster 4).

Despite the importance of these normative theories, media functions and the resulting clusters, more input for this typology is required, as the normative models (for obvious reasons) remain rather generalist in their approach. This additional input can be found in a number of journalistic reform projects[14], that all offer specific toolkits for media reform. These models will play a supportive role in this text, although they will be –whenever necessary- slightly adapted for usage in a Western European context.

A first group of reform projects and source of inspiration is Development & emancipatory journalism, Peace journalism and Public or civil/c journalism. Crucial to these projects is their resistance against a too absolute interpretation of the principle of neutrality. In the tradition of Development & emancipatory journalism -which should mainly be situated in developing countries- it is explicitly stated that neutrality does not apply when universalized[15] values -such as peace, democracy, human rights, (gender & racial) equality, (social) progress and national liberation- are at stake. Peace journalism puts the emphasis on avoiding conflict-oriented journalism and on the importance of structural and solution-oriented approaches, building on the universalized value of peace. And quite similarly vis-à-vis the two previous reform projects, the US-based Public journalism-tradition pleads for reviving the public debate and for centralising democracy as a universalized value. At the same time advocates of Public journalism plead for a tighter link between community and journalism -the so-called *'community connectedness'* (Rosen, 1994: 371). This connectedness runs counter to the detachment that is said to be contained in the concept of impartiality. This critique of impartiality and the 'detachment from the community' that lies behind it does not imply that any other form of objectivity should be rejected. In his book 'Doing Public Journalism' Charity (1995: 144) summarizes this pithily: *'journalism should advocate democracy*

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[14] For a description of Development and (specifically) Emancipatory journalism, see Shah, 1996, for New journalism, see Wolfe, 1973 and Thompson, 1980, for Human-interest journalism, see Harrington, 1997 and Meijer, 2000; 2001, for Peace journalism, see Galtung & Vincent, 1992 and for Public journalism, see Rosen, 1994, Merritt, 1995; 1998, Glasser & Craft, 1998 and Puissant, 2000.

[15] Values of course risk receiving Western interpretations. To better capture the required process of cultural dialogue when articulating them, the words 'universalized' and 'universalizable' are preferred.

without advocating particular solutions'. In the words of Merritt (1995: 116), journalists still have to keep their *'neutrality on specifics'*. Media have to respect the social pluralism and promote it, in order to establish and preserve the democratic achievements. The area of tension between involvement and neutrality, and the new interpretation that the concept of neutrality consequently receives, is captured by Manca (1989: 170-171) in the concept of *'pluralist objectivity'*.

A second group of journalistic reform projects combines New journalism and Human-interest journalism. These traditions plead for centralising of subjectivity (instead of objectivity). Especially in New journalism -developed in the USA during the sixties- the undermining of the principle of objectivity is an explicit goal. This also applies to the subjectivity of the journalist, who now participates in the events: '*[the new journalists] developed the habit of staying with the people they were writing about for days at a time, weeks in same cases*' (Wolfe, 1973: 38). The literary techniques used in New journalism are in many cases functional towards the outlining of the personality (or put otherwise: the exposing of the identity) of the 'characters' that appear in the pieces. Human-interest journalism will, in part, build on this by putting the accent on soft news and on authenticity, and by resisting the neutrality, impersonality and factuality of 'traditional' journalism. The additional emphasis on the '*personal lives, joys, tragedies, and varied activities of other people, particularly those in high places or in familiar settings*' (Graber, 1994: 212) will also lead to a shift towards the private sphere, a process that Van Zoonen (1997) describes as intimization[16]. Thirdly, the narrative aspects of the news are also stressed in the tradition of human interest (news)*: Schudson (1978) refers in this regard to *'story journalism'*. The emphasis on narration turns the media professional more into a storyteller than an *'authorized truthteller'* (McNair, 1998: 65). Though widely used, Human-interest journalism still remains distinct from (and contested by) 'traditional' journalism, as for instance Meijer (2001: 193) puts it: *'the conventional view [highlights] rationality, conflict, and content rather than emotionality, dialogue and impact.'*

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[16] Van Zoonen (1997: 217) describes intimization as 'a growing attention to human interest subjects, an intimate and personal mode of address and the treatment of political behaviour and issues as though they are matters of personality'. In this text the evoluative aspect of this description - which lies in Van Zoonen's term 'growing' - is not taken into account, so that the accent on the personal can also be seen as a factual condition.

The four clusters of the typology

As mentioned before, the structure of this typology of democratic and participatory journalistic practices is based on the discussion on normative theory, which resulted in four clusters: a strictly informative cluster, a cluster on the representation of a political community and her subgroups, a cluster regarding the representation of the political and a participatory cluster. Within each cluster, different dimensions are defined. When elaborating these specific dimensions, inspiration was mainly found in the practices promoted by the different journalistic reform projects. Although the structure of this typology, with its four clusters and 12 dimensions, is partially inspired by the analysis of the journalists' survey discussed above, it of course remains only one of many possible forms of systematizing this complex reality.

Besides the rather general description of each cluster and its dimensions, each cluster will be illustrated by one of the 22 media projects from the 'media and citizens'-campaign of the King Baudoin Foundation. To counterbalance the too strong emphasis on the democratic potential of so-called new media, and the resulting neglect of traditional media, all four examples are selected from traditional media projects. The theoretical argument behind this choice is that participation and democracy enhancing practices are indeed social practices and cannot be automatically attributed to specific media technologies. Care was also taken to create a balance between newspaper and television projects and between the French and Dutch language groups. This resulted in the following selection:

	Dutch language group	French language group
Newspaper	Case 1 – Cluster 1 Het Belang van Limburg	Case 3 – Cluster 3 La Libre Belgique
Television station	Case 4 – Cluster 4 TV-Limburg	Case 2 – Cluster 2 La Fédération des Télévisions Locales

The democratic importance of information is emphasized in most theoretical models. The liberal model touches the heart of this argumentation, affirming that the media – by putting information at people's disposition- enable citizens to formally and informally control the state (or in other words: the political system). The media's watchdog-function follows naturally from this line of argument: any dysfunction of the state (and by extension: of the market) should be tracked down and brought to public attention by the media. Offering critical information is therefore considered an important democratic media task.

One should however keep in mind that information is not a neutral concept. On a first level the problems of the selection and distribution of information and the related processes of societal surveillance has been part of scientific scrutiny for decennia. Only the question of whose information will be offered illustrates the difficulties hidden behind the notion of information. Furthermore it is epistemologically impossible to map out the exact boundaries between 'factual' information and the representations information contains. Factuality builds on representational regimes that are unavoidable in their presence, varied in their nature and at the same time targeted by hegemonic projects. A specific problem here is that these informational flows sometimes provide us with representations that we can only describe as stereotypical. A
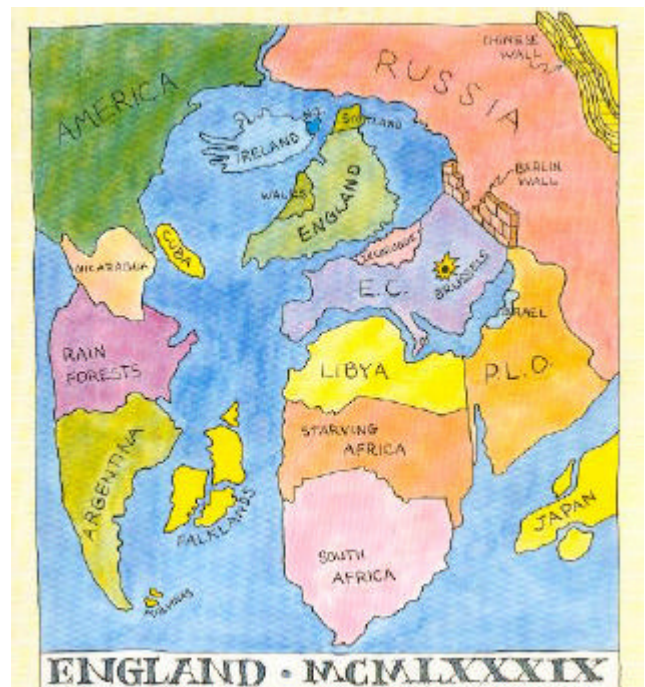
Front cover – Wallis and Barran (1990)

classic example is that of the information given on the African continent, which is strongly associated with conflict and underdevelopment (and with 'hunger' in particular (see Boschman et al., 1996)). A rather provocative and extremely rich image of the representational consequences of information can be seen on the cover of 'the known world of broadcast news', written by Wallis and Baran (1990). On this book cover they show the representation of the world in 1989 according to the British electronic media, including the articulation of a large part of the African continent as 'starving'.

Despite the importance of these nuances, the distinction between information and representation remains crucial for analytical reasons, as some of the potentially democracy enhancing practices are well embedded within this strictly informative cluster. In this first cluster, five dimensions are included, which all (potentially) enable citizens (individually or collectively) to participate (more and better) in a democratic society. Within all five dimensions, the truthfulness of the information is considered a necessary condition. These aspects are:

Dimension 1:   comprehensible and accessible information
Dimension 2:   information oriented on social (inter)action
Dimension 3:   positive information
Dimension 4:   structural information
Dimension 5:   critical information (the control and watchdog
                         function)

The first dimension formulates the necessary condition for all democratic communication, namely its comprehensibility and accessibility, in order to prevent mechanisms of exclusion. The three following dimensions are (each in their own way) related to the empowerment of the audience. Information oriented on social (inter)action (dimension 2) makes it possible to –as affirmed by Alex Puissant (2000: 28) in his comments on the instruments of Public journalism- '*systematically inform people about all the occasions they are given to participate in discussions and civil activities [considered relevant]*'. This kind of information pays attention to initiatives from within civil society, aimed at complementing the information on the political system.

Positive information (dimension 3) also contains such an action and stimulation-oriented component by for instance giving '*large and small examples of people who had made some difference*' (Merritt, 1995: 89). The underlying reason is that an overload of negative information risks creating paralyzing effects. Consequently, such an overload would not motivate or stimulate citizens' active engagement. Structural information (dimension 4) allows audiences to contextualize news events and see them as part of long-term evolutions and social phenomena. Although structural information is often seen in contrast to personalized information, an underestimation of the socio-political value of private and/or individual experiences should be avoided. This structural information dimension is related to the fifth dimension, which focuses on critical information, which, as has been said before, reveals dysfunctions within the functioning of the state and the market.

These five dimensions of the strictly informative cluster find themselves in a complex field of tension towards each other. The dimensions (and the entire typology) should therefore be seen as a scale: the plea for more comprehensible information, for instance, is not a retreat into simplicities and to (completely) undermine the expert's status. In the same way, the plea for more communication that stimulates social (inter)action should not be interpreted as a legitimization to narrow down (or dumb-down) the information on the political system. Finally, the plea for an increase of positive news should not be used as an excuse to (further) cut down on more critical journalism. This typology of journalistic practices aimed at reinforcing democracy and participation implies the permanent need for balancing the more traditional practices with some of the alternatives introduced here.

/ 2.   Cluster 1 example: 'Lekkere Letters' (nice letters) and Het Belang Van Limburg

The project Lekkere Letters of the North Belgian newspaper Het Belang van Limburg put the focus on people that were enrolled in the Open School adult education centres in the North Belgian province of Limburg. As these students were still involved in a process of language acquisition, offering them comprehensible information became one of the main objectives of this media project.

In an original move, this objective was realized by letting the members of the target group write the articles themselves. During a period of 10 months, Het Belang van Limburg published a weekly article –under the heading of Lekkere Letters- on their Centipede-page, which is centred round audience interaction. Lekkere Letters appeared for 43 times, from the 14th of September 2002 until the 28th of September 2003, always on Saturdays. The articles ran to about a third of the Centipede-page.

Van Alliantie tot Zetel

Op zondag 18 mei moeten we gaan kiezen voor een politieke partij of voor een politicus. Wat betekenen al die moeilijke woorden die in deze periode gebruikt worden? We zetten ze op een rijtje.

Lekkere Letters

A
Alliantie: samenwerkingsverband

B
Blanco stem: bij het stemmen niets aanduiden, onthouding
Boegbeeld: belangrijk en bekend persoon van een partij

C
Coalitie: partijen die afspreken om samen te regeren
Conservatief: tegen ingrijpende veranderingen
Cordon sanitaire: afspraak tussen alle democratische partijen om niet met extreem rechts samen te werken

D
Democratie: letterlijk: macht van het volk. De mensen geven de macht vrijwillig door aan de mensen voor wie ze kiezen met stemmen
Député: afgevaardigde, iemand die is aangeduid om een bepaalde taak op zich te nemen
Dictatuur: staat waar een alleenheerser aan de macht is

E
Eedaflegging: belofte of verklaring afleggen
Electoraal: alles wat te maken heeft met de verkiezingen

F
Federaal: een verenigde of overkoepelende regering van samenwerkende gebiedsdelen
Formateur: Die zoekt uit welke partijen samen willen en kunnen regeren en met welke programmapunten of akkoorden. Hij zoekt ook uit wie minister of staatssecretaris wordt.
Fractie: groep vertegenwoordigers van een politieke partij

G
Gecoöpteerde senator: leden van de senaat die door andere senatoren worden gekozen
Geldige stem: een stem die meetelt, bovenaan de lijst of naast de naam van één of meer kandidaten of opvolgers
Gemeenschappen: België telt drie gemeenschappen op basis van de taal: een Vlaamse, Franse en Duitstalige gemeenschap. Een gemeenschap mag zelf beslissen over persoonsgebonden inhouden: onderwijs, gezondheidsbeleid, cultuur.
Gewesten: De gewesten zijn ingedeeld per grondgebied: Vlaams, Waals en Brussels hoofdstedelijk gewest. Ze mogen zelf beslissen over domeinen van het leven die met hun streek te maken hebben: economie, huisvesting, vervoer. In Vlaanderen valt het beleid van de gemeenschap en van het gewest samen.

I
Informateur: Na de verkiezingen duidt de koning deze persoon aan om met de verschillende partijen te praten om te kijken welke samen een regering zouden kunnen vormen

K
Kamer van volksvertegenwoordigers: vormt samen met de senaat het parlement en zijn een deel van de wetgevende macht
Kiescampagne: de reclame die de kandidaten voor de verkiezingen maken.
Kiesdrempel: Per kieskring kunnen partijen slechts meedoen aan de zetelverdeling als ze in de kieskring minstens 5% van de stemmen behaalden.
Kieskring: het land wordt verdeeld in 20 kieskringen, waarin een aantal kandidaten van dit gebied te verkiezen zijn en waarin een hoofdbureau toezicht houdt op de verkiezingen

L
Lijstduwer: iemand die onderaan een lijst staat

M
Monarchie: een staatsvorm met een koning of keizer aan het hoofd

N
Nationalisme: voorliefde voor het eigen volk, het eigen land

O
Oppositie: een partij die zich verzet tegen de regerende meerderheid
Overloper: een persoon die van de ene naar de andere partij overstapt

P
Parlement: kamer van volksvertegenwoordigers en de senaat
Politiek: alles wat te maken heeft met het regeren en besturen van een land
Premier: eerste minister, hoofd van de regering
Progressief: vooruitstrevend, op vooruitgang gericht

R
Regering: uitvoerende macht van ministers en staatssecretarissen met de Koning aan het hoofd
Republiek: een staatsvorm met aan het hoofd een verkozen president
Ritsen: bij de lijstsamenstelling voor de verkiezingen beurtelings een man en een vrouw op de lijst

S
Senaat: deel van het parlement, behoren bij de wetgevende macht
Staatssecretaris: wordt benoemd door de Koning, krijgt een bepaalde bevoegdheid en wordt toegevoegd aan een minister
Stoelendans: de wisseling in politieke functies
Strijdplaats: een plaats op de lijst waarvan het behalen van deze zetel voor de partij onzeker is

V
Verkiesbare plaats: een plaats bovenaan op de lijst waarvan ongeveer zeker is dat de partij hiervoor een zetel haalt
Voorakkoord: een overeenkomst, die afgesloten wordt voor de verkiezingen, tot samenwerking tussen partijen

Z
Zetels: plaats als afgevaardigde of als minister

KIES KRING

The election Alphabet - Lekkere letters – Het Belang van Limburg – 7/8 September 2003.

The Open School students filled in the available newspaper space in the most autonomous way possible, assisted by the 'educationals'[17] of the Open School, who furthermore took care of the project's coordination. A division of labor was drawn up for the seven participating adult education centers so every school could collaborate alternately. Each of these schools then worked with their own class groups. This way, about 200 Open School students were involved the project. It was a labor-intensive project for all parties: the time investment for the production of one article amounted to about nine class hours. The journalist in charge of the Centipede-page of Het Belang van Limburg worked on the project on an almost daily basis.

Apart from the journalist in charge of the Centipede-page, ten other journalists of Het Belang van Limburg, coming from all four departments of the newspaper, were involved in this project. Together they constituted about 20 percent of the regular editorial staff. They too assisted the students. More specifically, they visited the schools in order to discuss their professional activities with the students and to help them in their writing activities. In most cases the students did write the Lekkere Letters-article themselves, although in some cases the text was still written by a journalist because of time constraints.

These journalists also occasionally accompanied the students on working visits. The Belgian news department of Het Belang van Limburg played a role mainly during the elections, organizing a visit to the Parliament and drawing up an election-related dictionary (see example on the previous page). The editor-in-chief of the regional department (focussing on the province of Limburg) visited a class in Sint-Truiden and explained the students how news is dealt with in his department; they then reported on it in the newspaper. During another visit, the editor-in-chief of sports talked about the functioning of the sports department and the students again wrote an article about it. He also took a class group for a bicycle ride on the race circuit of Zolder (just before a world championship race) and accompanied students on a visit to the Fashion Museum (dedicated at that time to sportswear). Regarding the fourth newspaper department, one of the journalists travelled with a student group to a major book fair and another journalist went to an adult education centre in Beringen for an evening, where he talked about books and how they come about.

The 'educationals' of Open School were very much focused on basing their assistance on emancipatory principles, and also the journalists involved in the project -still holding the final responsibility- adopted a merely executive attitude whenever possible. His/her task mainly consisted out of demystifying the working of a media organisation and empowering the students. This way, students, 'educationals' and journalists strived for the most equal power balance possible, which constituted one of the major strengths of this project. This however does not alter the fact that such forms of audience participation remain difficult balancing exercises. The power of the participants can of course never become total, as this would contradict the elementary definition of participation as sharing power. It was, is and always will be a walk on a tightrope, during which, in spite of all good intentions, structural failures in the power balances keep on popping up.

At the same time this approach allowed the students to represent themselves, and to (at least partially) counter the stigma of having limited reading and writing skills. Most relevant in this context, the project also resulted in articles that were very comprehensible, both for the specific target group (the Open School students) and for the 'general' audience of Het Belang Van Limburg. Probably even more important was the continuous feedback from these Open School students to the journalists of Het Belang Van Limburg, constantly confronting them with the consequences of their 'traditional' writing style.

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[17] Open school staff members – they avoid calling themselves 'teachers'.

The concept of representation has also obtained a prominent place in different normative models, emphasising the need to avoid misrepresentations and stereotyping. Building on the need for correct representations of more traditional social groups like immigrants and women[18], a broader approach is introduced here. This broadened approach considers the audience as a conglomerate of all kinds of subgroups, small- and large-scale communities, criss-crossed by differences related to class, ethnicity and gender. This diversity also includes (representations of) 'ordinary people'[19], seen here as active citizens capable of participating in the public debate. 'Ordinary people' are often shown and given the floor in order to access their authentic experiences. In this fashion, these experiences gain public relevance, thus granting them (possible) political relevance (Livingstone and Lunt, 1996: 102). The importance of representing citizenship within the public sphere should however not remain limited to accessing individual affects. Representing citizenship includes the creation of images regarding situations in which citizens organize themselves to rationally and emotionally defend their (collective) interests, and develop a series of public activities from within civil society. It is this complex combination of individuals and collectivities, organizations and societal categories that shapes the nation as an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983) or as a political community.

Finally, the importance of self-representation cannot go unmentioned in the discussion of the second cluster. Emphasizing the importance of access and participation (see below in cluster 4) of for instance marginalized and misrepresented groups, often via so-called community media, enables these groups to control their own representations, and be present in (one of) the public sphere(s).

This cluster includes two specific dimensions: on the one hand, an orientation towards the audience and the community (dimension 6), and on the other hand, pluriform representations (dimension 7). Media products aiming to reinforce democracy and participation have to focus on their audiences and communities, instead of operating in a medium-oriented way. At the same time, one needs to take the complex, situated and multi-layered meaning of the term 'audience' into account. The 'audience' is always part of all sorts of intertwined groups, communities and organizations, and cannot be reduced to merely quantitative behavioural data. Putting these complex and active audiences at the centre of the media attention, allows articulating them as directly concerned stakeholders and enables the media to increase their community connectedness.

The seventh dimension starts from the (representation of) specific (misrepresented) groups. Based on the argument of equality, it can be argued that all social groups have to be able to gain access to the media landscape and that they all have the right to be correctly represented. The mere presence of members of different social subgroups, avoiding their symbolic annihilation (Tuchman, 1978), is a first necessary condition for correct representation. One step further is to focus on their active presence, avoiding that they disappear into the background. Thirdly, it is important to guard against the presence of stereotypes[20]. Smelik and her colleagues (1999: 45) summarizes these points by contrasting forms of stereotypical representation (that are to be avoided) with the notion of what they call 'pluriform representation'. Here the members of misrepresented groups are actively present.

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[18] In spite of the fact that communication studies focus on these two subgroups, it is evident that the discussion cannot be narrowed down to them. Others, like handicapped persons, homosexuals, children and elderly people (sometimes) also find themselves in inferior positions of power. More radical examples of these social subgroups are homeless and poor people, prisoners and prostitutes.

[19] The concept of 'ordinary people' is often – following the footsteps of Laclau (1977) and Hall (1981) and Fiske (1993)- defined in a negative way by comparing it to the elite, the power bloc or – in the words of Livingstone and Lunt (1996: 9) - the 'elite representatives of established power'.

[20] Keeping Dyer's (1984) differentiation between types and stereotypes in mind.

Moreover the duality of the oppositions that characterizes stereotypes is deconstructed, thus enabling a greater diversity of societal representations. Hall (1997: 274) adds to the list of possible strategies the importance of working from within the complexities and ambiguities of representation. He pleads in other words for '*contest[ing stereotypes] from within*'.

/ 4.   Cluster 2 example: 'Profils' (profiles) and La Fédération des Télévisions Locales

Quite a large number of media projects aimed to provide more balanced representations of specific societal subgroups, such as women, youngsters, elderly people, immigrants, less educated people, and economically disadvantaged people. The TV-magazine Profils already existed before the call for projects of the King Baudoin Foundation, and was already oriented towards unemployed people. Produced by the Fédération des Télévisions Locales, it is broadcasted by the network's twelve local stations.

The project proposed by the Fédération des Télévisions Locales aimed to improve the modus operandi of Profils. The objective of the project was to conceive and to produce a series of specific broadcasts that took the concerns of the target audience as a starting point. In other words, the project team wanted to bring their programme as close as possible to the everyday-life situations of the unemployed. To achieve this ambition, the Fédération des Télévisions Locales created -what they called- a 'participatory editorial team', composed out of journalists and unemployed people. These citizen-editors were considered as spokespersons for the audience target group of Profils. The work of the editorial team was explicitly based on the perspectives, problems and questions of the unemployed and of the people following training programmes in order to improve their chances on the labour market.

After a series of training sessions in participatory techniques for the journalists, the project team went in search of spokespersons within different associations and institutions. The participatory editorial team that resulted out of this selection procedure consisted of four non-professional spokespersons and of five journalists. These spokespersons were actively involved in every production phase of the programmes: the editorial work (choice of programme themes, focus of the programme, treatment of the issues involved, …); the preparation of the shooting days; the pre-editing and the editing of the acquired footage; the preparation of the studio discussions (choice of guests, selection of interview questions, …); the attendance to the shooting of the studio discussions (as a participant or as an observer) and the evaluation of the completed broadcasts.

The work of the participatory editorial team began with a series of editorial meetings in order to choose and mark out the first two themes. The first one, dedicated to 'people in vulnerable statutes', concerned the way in which people experience the article 60-statute[21]. The second theme was a reflection on 'work' and 'active living'. The participants were consequently involved in the production process of the two broadcasts, transmitted respectively in January and February 2003. The editorial team was then opened up to new members and three more people joined the group. They assisted in the production of the third broadcast of the series, which was dedicated to 'confidence as a work competence' and broadcasted in April 2003.

The project continued even after the formal project of the King Baudoin Foundation had come to an end. FOREM, the Walloon employment service, expressed their interest and suggested the formation of a group of jobseekers, coming from a specific workshop. This group put down the foundations of a

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[21] This is a specific statute that allows a local social welfare council to act as an employer for a limited period in time.

fourth broadcast, in May 2003. Finally, as an ultimate reflection on the project, the team made a last broadcast where they evaluated the project. It was transmitted in June 2003, bringing together all the actors for the last time.

The project team itself explicitly pointed out that through this experiment, their medium could create spaces for a more pluriform representation of a specific social group. The series of programmes enabled the presence of ordinary people at all levels, on screen and behind the screen. Moreover, these often socially vulnerable people were not presented as 'media-objects' -things to be talked about- but as subjects: people who speak, who give their opinion and who have a say in the way they are being represented. '*Our concern*,' according to the project team, '*was to show the people involved as socially active persons- because that's what they are- without falling back into stereotypes. It is quite interesting to mention that how these stereotypes encircle such groups became one of the starting points of our reflection. Some of these stereotypes were also explicitly tackled in our broadcasts.*'

'Profils' June episode, broadcast between June 2 and 8, 2003 on 12 local television stations, with Carine Marion (member of the participa-tory editorial team) and Christine Ruol (host of Profils)

/ 5.   **Cluster 3: Representation of the political**

The representation of political and democratic practices *an sich*, also plays an important role in this typology. In this context, it is essential to first assess which interpretation is given to the floating signifier[22] 'democracy', as it is often wrongfully assumed that 'democracy' is a stable concept with a fixed signification. This way, three essential elements are ignored: the variety of democratic manifestations and variants, the distinction between formal democracy and democratic cultures and

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[22] Based on Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 112-113).

practices, and the distinction between the narrow-political system ('politics') and the broad-political dimension of the social (the 'political').

Especially this last distinction is of importance in this concext: the political can be defined, following for instance Schumpeter (1976), as the privilege of specific competing elites, while it can also be broadly defined as a dimension of the social. To put this differently: this interpretation deals with the distinction between centralized and decentralized societal decision-making. In the construction of this typology the emphasis is placed on the more decentralized societal decision-making[23], since this is a necessary condition for active citizenship. For this reason the top area in the graph below, that summarizes both levels of interpretation, is rendered grey. Another essential difference is the distinction between consensus and conflict-oriented approaches of the political. Here it does remain of crucial importance to take both the consensus and the conflict-oriented approaches into account and to try and reconcile them wherever possible. The rationale for this choice can be found in the radical contingency of the social that leads to an oscillation between stability and conflict. A mere focus on stability and consensus would foreclose the openness of the social and would imply an almost Hegelian belief in the end of history.
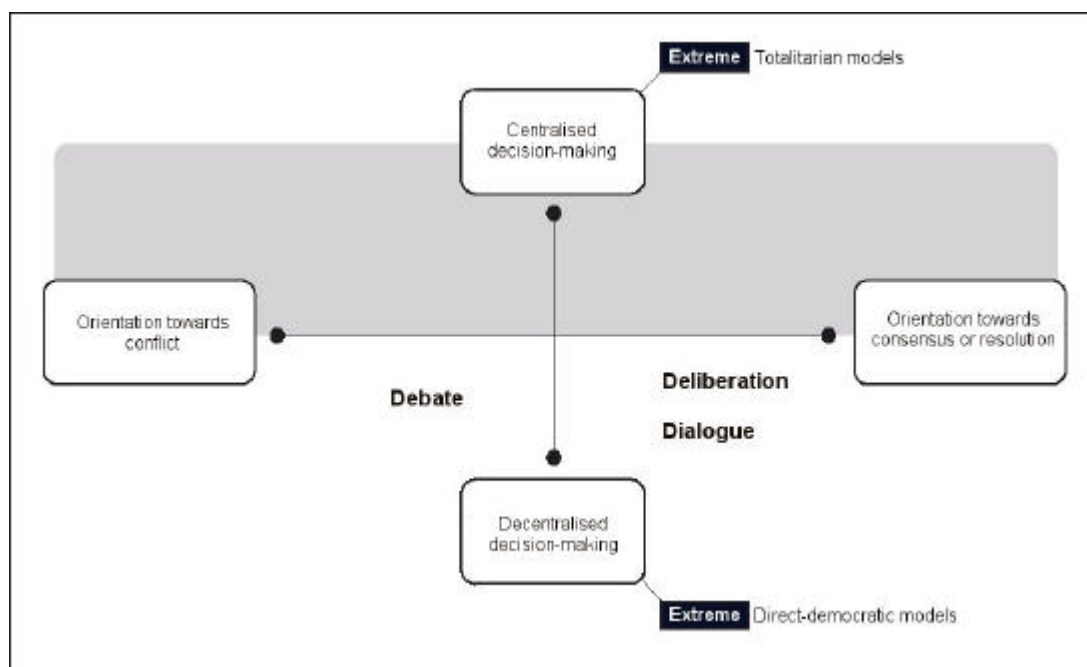
Consensus-oriented models of democracy largely built upon the notion of societal dialogue and deliberation, where collective decision-making takes place based on rational arguments, '*with the participation of all who will be affected by the decision or by their representatives. […] it includes decision making by means of arguments offered by and to participants who are committed to the values of rationality and impartiality*' (Elster, 1998: 8). As Glasser and Craft (1998: 213) rightfully remark, this does not necessarily mean that everybody is given the floor, but it does mean that '*everything worth saying gets said*'.

In contrast, conflict-oriented models focus on political differences and struggles. Although these approaches still need to be based on a total ('hegemonic') consensus regarding basic democratic values, within the boundaries of this core consensus a complete lack of consensus on any other theme is perfectly possible. In such a pluralist democracy, decision-making takes place on the basis of political struggle and debate. Mouffe (1994: 109) writes on this subject: '*The prime task of democratic politics is not to eliminate passions, nor to relegate them to the private sphere in order to*

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[23] This plea for maximizing the possibilities of decentralized societal decision-making does not imply the abolishment of representative democracy, but offers an opportunity to deepen it.

render rational consensus possible, but to mobilize these passions, and give them a democratic outlet.' This position shows some similarities with Edward Said's (1995: 12) broader plea for a 'universal' criterion *'regarding the suffering and the oppression of mankind […] in spite of political party bonds, national background or ingrained loyalty,'* however without falling back into an essentialist interpretation of the social and the political. It is suggested here that this 'universal' criterion holds five universalizable values: democracy, peace, freedom, equality and justice. Following Mouffe, it is however important to emphasize that once again the concrete interpretation and the internal consideration of these basic values form part of a political struggle.

Three dimensions of the typology fall within this cluster. The more general dimension that covers the orientation towards a broad-political and decentralized societal decision-making (dimension 8), is complemented by two more specific dimensions: providing an argument-based balance (dimension 9) and the defence of values considered universalized, here termed as pluralist neutrality[24] (dimension 10).

Dimension 8 refers to the importance of societal deliberation, dialogue and debate, avoiding the reduction of the political to the political system and the focus on what Gans (2003: 45) calls 'top-down news'. At the same time, this is a plea for more solution-oriented approaches. But this text cannot be seen as an over-simplified plea for the dialogue/deliberation model and the solution-oriented model, which would again contradict the ambition to avoid a dichtomization of the typology. I do however plead for a more balanced approach between dialogue/deliberation and debate, between (information regarding) social consensus and social conflict, and between (information about) solutions and problems. In a mediated context this implies that one represents news facts as a conflict only when these news facts really do take place within the framework of a (serious) conflict. And even in that situation sufficient attention should be spent to conflict resolution, effectively representing a diversity of opinions, without generating polarization (as is plead for within Peace journalism).

The notions of dialogue/deliberation and debate can also be applied to two basic components of the media professional's identity, namely the striving for balance (dimension 9) and neutrality (dimension 10). This again allows the re-articulation of these components in a way that is supportive towards social deliberation, dialogue and debate. The ninth dimension pleads for a more argument-based balance (in stead of a party- or person-related balance) in journalism. This dimension is strongly tributary to the theoretical reflections on deliberation, where the arguments (and not the persons) take in a central position. Their application implies that the social diversity of discourses and arguments, and the context within which they are situated, are taken into account.

The tenth dimension directs the focus towards the ideological-normative context. Especially in reform projects as Public journalism and Development journalism journalistic neutrality is said to be no longer valid in situations where the values considered universalized are under threat. As mentioned before, the universalizable values that can be mentioned in this context are restricted in numbers: democracy (and resistance against dictatorship and tyranny), peace (and resistance against war and violence), freedom (and resistance against human right violations), equality (and resistance against discrimination) and justice (and resistance against oppression and social inequality).

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[24] As Manca's (1989) concept of pluralist objectivity is considered too broad, it has been renamed as pluralist neutrality.

In this context the project of La Libre Belgique deserves a special mention. This project represents the school as a social and political community, in which pupils participate in a variety of ways. This is done by focusing on the question: who decides on what in a school? Consequently, a series of localized power processes is revealed, like the working of class and school councils, signifying that the concept of democracy is not restricted to the political system, but is highly relevant in different domains of the social.

Through L'école en boîte, a monthly series totalling nine articles, written between November 2002 and September 2003, journalist Françoise Raes and photographer Johanna de Tessières reported on a series of events in the Royal Athenaeum of Rixensart, a school not that different from many other schools in (South) Belgium. Their reports were structured according to specific themes and linked to certain well-defined moments in school life. The journalists captured the transition from primary school to college and described how a school can be a place for learning as well as for living, where diverse personalities are developed and confronted with each other. They sketched the challenges of living in a community that regularly has to adapt to newcomers. When the war in Iraq was about to burst out, the journalists tried to find out in which way the students were affected by this geo-political event and what place it took in their daily lives. The journalists infiltrated the staff room. They also took the readers to the school participation council, where the pupils tried to put democracy into practice. One could understand the important work that was being done there and learn about all the accompanying problems. Through pictures and text the reader was present when the pupils received their diplomas. The texts and images were not just detached reports or atmospheric descriptions, but sensitively covered the interactions between parents, pupils and teachers during all those- sometimes difficult- moments.

L'école en boîte (3)

L'école de l'exil

Comme chaque 3ᵉ mardi du mois, "La Libre" poursuit son récit du quotidien de l'Athénée royal de Rixensart. Au programme: la classe de "primo-arrivants" qui bouscule le ronronnement scolaire

"QUAND JE SUIS ARRIVÉE DE FRANCE, J'AI DÛ APPRENDRE À PARLER LE BELGE ET DIRE SEPTANTE, NONANTE, ETC."

First part of episode 3: L'école de l'exil – La libre Belgique, January 21, 2003, p. 16

From the beginning of the project, both journalists wanted to create a stronger and more contrasting image of this school, by going into themes that hardly ever make the news because of their commonplace value. The articles indeed dedicated a lot of attention to the participation within the school institution. Their objective was for instance to assess how and when pupils can intervene in debates. Apart from representing social and political participation, characteristic of school life, the pupils were also involved in the journalistic work itself. The pupils had the possibility to react whenever an article had appeared. They could criticize and give their impressions on the way in which the two journalists had depicted their reality, which could then be included in the next article.

This project can be seen as an heir of the old journalistic-ethnographic tradition that focussed on concrete and subject-oriented work. The technical choice of embedment in a specific environment for a longer period of time does however demand a considerable intellectual effort. In this case, the objective was to confront the journalistic work with the people concerned in it. This meant the acceptance of interaction with young citizens/students and all the accompanying risks and difficulties. The two journalists also gave a clearly aesthetic dimension to their work, mainly via their photographic interventions. During the exchange seminars, all media professionals who participated

in the 'media and citizens'-campaign acknowledged the quality of both texts and images. The series furthermore received the 2003 'Prix de journalisme' of the 'Parlement de la Communauté française Wallonie-Bruxelles'.

Second part of episode 3: L'école de l'exil

/ 7.   Cluster 4: the participatory function

From a participation-oriented point of view (in the strict sense of the word participation – see Pateman, 1972: 70-71), access of non-professionals to media organizations (and to their media professionals) and participation in the production of media output and in media decision-making is seen as an –often unequally balanced- power process. Not withstanding this inequality, power relations need to be considered in a Foucauldian sense as mobile and multidirectional. No one is ever rendered completely powerless and resistance against unequal power balances always remains a possibility. Power relations are two way-relations, even when the power of one actor seems limited in comparison to that of the other actor[25]. The questions formulated in the context of mass media-

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[25] More specifically, this approach is based on Foucault's (1984) so-called analytics of power.

production regarding this power process, are relatively simple: who 'can' take what decision and what degree of participation is made possible. In order to formulate an answer to these questions, a distinction is made between content-related participation and structural participation.

On the one hand, participation can be considered in relation to the produced content (dimension 11), which puts the media product in a central position. Consequently, the following questions become relevant. To which extent can citizens participate in the production process of specific content? What are the power relations between the media professional and the members of 'the audience' within this production process? To which extent (and how) can these citizens be present in the media product itself? When this kind of civil participation becomes visible, it also supports more active representations of citizens and their presence within the public sphere. The British television and web project *Video Nation* illustrates that the obstacles can effectively be reduced when the involved media professionals adopt an open, honest, respectful, process-oriented and (micro-)participatory attitude, based on a thorough analysis of the power processes and imbalances (Carpentier, 2003).

On the other hand, it is possible to focus more on structural media participation (dimension 12), putting the media organization and its policies at the centre of attention. In this case, the emphasis is placed on the power balances within the decision-making processes of media organizations and on the participation of members of the audience in the programming, policy and administration[26] of media organisations as such. An example can be found in the French 'Société des lecteurs du Monde' that holds 10.43% of the stock shares of the Le Monde group[27]. The legitimization for this kind of participation can be found in the rationale that (when decentralizing democracy) the democratic principles also need to be implemented within the different (organized) micro spheres of the social, thus including the different media organizations. This form of participation enables citizens to be active within one of the many micro spheres of the social, where decisions are made that have a real impact on -and are relevant to- citizens' daily lives. At the same time, it needs to be contended that, because of its radicalism, this form of participation is the most difficult to realize.

/ 8.   Cluster 4 example: 'Burgerzin' (citizenship) and TV-Limburg
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Although some of the Belgian media projects did try out 'soft' variants of structural participation, by improving access (of in casu immigrants) to a number of media organizations, by stimulating the discussion on media system itself, and by extending the knowledge on the functioning of these media, most media projects focussed on content-related participation.

One of the more interesting examples of this ambition was the project called Burger-Zin, which offered the audience of the local television station TV-Limburg an audiovisual platform for and about local organizations. The focus was placed on a series of specific target groups, namely youth organizations, organizations assisting jobseekers, senior organizations, self-aid groups and multicultural organizations. In most cases the initial contacts with these organizations were handled by the project partners (the Province of Limburg and the North Belgian Employment Service VDAB) with whom the people involved had already been working for years. The reportages that resulted out of these collaborations were broadcasted within the existing programme of TV Publiek –the regional human interest-show of TV Limburg- between January and August 2003. Additional information was offered through cross-media links with the website and the teletext-pages of TV Limburg.

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[26] Here can be referred to Prehn's (1991: 259) interpretation of participation (in relation to community media) as 'involving people directly in station programming, administration and policy activities'.
[27] In addition, the 'Société des Rédacteurs du Monde' holds another 29,58% (http://medias.lemonde.fr/medias/pdf_obj/dpmonde_150903.pdf).

Burger-Zin had the ambition to allow these organizations to participate in the production process as much as possible. The participants were actively involved in the project from the conceptual phase until the final editing. They themselves decided on the content and the location(s)- with the possibility to direct their shooting themselves or assisted by the TV Publiek editorial staff. After the seeing the rushes, the participants and the TV Publiek-editors selected the sequences and mapped out the core content of the reportage. Together they evaluated the final editing. The participants were also involved in the discussion on the reception of possible reactions and the use of the website and teletext-pages (regarding for instance references and points of contact). Furthermore, the organizations involved sometimes made use of their own relations and means of communication to announce the broadcasts, thus assuming part of the promotional task.

Regarding the actual broadcasting of the reportages, the TV Publiek-editorial team chose to leave the presentation into the hands of the participants, again whenever possible. This system of co-presentation kept a regular professional 'face' or 'anchor' on screen, but granted the participants at the same time access to this important position (usually reserved for the editorial staff). Only regarding the programming of the reports in the broadcasting schedule (guaranteeing a minimum of 10 reruns), the opinion of the TV Publiek-editorial team remained dominant.

This approach required a large investment in time from the part of TV-Limburg. All parties involved had to be thoroughly informed about and trained in the working procedures and methods, before more practical aspects of the production could be addressed. Apart from the discussions on viewing points, approaches, concepts and technical aspects of the production, the editorial staff also had to spend a lot of time on creating contacts and motivating the target groups to collaborate.

TV Publiek's objective was to make the end result fit the expectations of the representatives of the organizations as much as possible and to avoid disillusionment. The editorial staff came across two other main barriers: the distrust with respect to the formula (and towards the medium television in general) and the language barrier. Burger-zin had to make great efforts in order to demystify the project and to win the participants' trust. The language barrier specifically played a role when elaborating the migrant themes (although only in a limited number of cases). Despite these difficulties the editorial staff again proved that these forms of 'radical' content-related participation are within the possibilities of mainstream broadcasters.

Screen shot 1 of the 'Offerfeest', a reportage produced in collaboration with the Limburg Muslim council, and broadcast on March 9, 2003

Screen shot 2 of the 'Offerfeest'

Four clusters, twelve dimensions and one typology

When the different dimensions are finally brought together into one schema, this results in the following overview. It cannot be stressed enough that this typology is based on the plea for the reorientation of the existing choices made within the contemporary media system. It does not support the ambition to privilege one side of the model over the other, just the implicit plea for finding new balances.

From the perspective of continued and deepened democratization, the situation that is considered most desirable for the media can, in other words, not be simply found on one side of the typology, but can only be determined after a complex consideration of the different building blocks of this typology, without disregarding the context in which the mainstream media operate. At the same time, it is hardly feasible to take all twelve dimensions into account for the analysis or for the production of one specific media product. Rather, his typology has the ambition to offer a variety of possibilities, like a menu from which to choose *à la carte* but with good taste.

Typology of democracy and participation enhancing journalistic practices

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Cluster 1: Information and control

Dimension 1: Comprehensible and accessible information	No attention for comprehensible and accessible information
Dimension 2: Information oriented on social (inter)action	No information oriented on social (inter)action
Dimension 3: Positive information	Negative information
Dimension 4: Structural information	Personalized information
Dimension 5: Critical information (the control and watchdog function)	No critical information

Cluster 2: Representation of the community(ies) and the constituting social subgroups

Dimension 6: Orientation towards the audience and the community	Media-oriented
- active audience	- passive audience
- multi-layered audience	- uni-dimensional audience as aggregate or mass
- spaces for direct fora (direct forum function)	- no space for direct fora
- community connectedness	- detachment
- empowerment of community as stakeholders	- elite-oriented
Dimension 7: pluriform representation of social subgroups	Stereotypical representations of social subgroups

Cluster 3: Representation of the political

Dimension 8: Orientation towards a broad-political and decentralized societal decision-making	Orientation towards politics in the strict sense and centralized decision-making by elites
- solution-oriented when possible and conflict-oriented when necessary	- conflict-oriented
- orientation towards dialogue and deliberation when possible and towards debate when necessary	- orientation towards debate
Dimension 9: Argument-based balance (indirect forum function or control function in the broad sense)	Party or people-based balance or no balance
Dimension 10: Pluralist neutrality (control function in the broadest sense)	Absolute neutrality or no neutrality

Cluster 4: Participatory function

Dimension 11: Content-related participation	No attention for content-related participation and power balances
Dimension 12: Structural participation	No attention for (forms of) structural participation

Conclusion

The here described twelve-dimensional typology of journalistic practices that reinforce democracy and participation first of all illustrates the variety and the broadness of the arsenal of methods and practices that are at the media's disposal. The choice for an approach that tries to respect and to extend the different ideologically inspired interpretations and projects has enabled me to build a model that encompasses a wide variety of possibilities. In spite of the fact that the mainstream media already make important contributions to our democracies, plenty of space for additional steps remains available. This typology makes it possible to validate existing practices as well as to implement new practices, as was well illustrated by the four media projects. They show–each in their own way- that it is possible to overcome prejudices and constraints in order to foster our democracy even more.

At the same time, both the actual typology and the evaluation of the media projects reveal the complexity of such practices. As is always the case when analysing the workings of democracy, an ideal pathway does not exist, but needs to be negotiated and constructed over and over again. The paths we finally choose to follow and the decisions that are made on the road are the result of an alternation between confrontation and dialogue, and remain always susceptible to criticism, contestation and re-articulation. Therefore the dimensional nature of the typology (including both poles) was explicitly articulated as part of the typology. This way the necessity to obtain a balance between both poles of each dimension and between the different dimensions is structurally integrated in this typology.

Implementing the choices that originate from this model is far from easy. The boundaries on which the media professionals and organizations stumble are not to be underestimated. Putting democratic and participation to practice often demands more expertise, time and financial resources than is considered rele vant or acceptable in contemporary media organizations. For this reason, external support (as was in this case provided by the King Baudoin Foundation, but could also be provided by a Funds for Media Democracy) is almost a necessary condition for the sustained development of similar practices. At the same time it also demands the willingness of the media to question their own position and to share more power than is the case now.

It is however especially this kind of attitude and willingness that makes it possible to find creative solutions for these boundaries. By means of continuous experimenting, it can also be shown that many of these journalistic practices that reinforce democracy and participation demand less investment (expect for an investment in willingness and goodwill) than expected. This way the mainstream media organizations can each find their own way to –as Drijvers et al. (2002) suggest- conquer their agoraphobia, to contribute in taking on their social responsibility and to reinforce the democratic quality of the mass media as a whole.

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Annex 1: project list

1. Anderlecht : Indymedia : 'Het mediacircus'
2. Antwerpen - Deurne : Internationaal Perscentrum Vlaanderen/Gazet van Antwerpen : 'On line media leeromgeving'
3. Antwerpen : Gazet van Antwerpen : 'Stadsklap'
4. Bornem : Het Nieuwsblad : 'Jonge stemmen'
5. Bruxelles : La Libre Belgique : 'L'école en boîte'
6. Bruxelles : Le Soir - Le Soir Junior : 'Journal Buissonnier'
7. Bruxelles : TV Brussel : 'Prisma'
8. Dison : Télévesdre : 'Informer, s'informer : mode d'emploi'
9. Etterbeek - RTBF : RTBF Radio : 'Quand les jeunes s'en mêlent'
10. Etterbeek - VRT : VRT - Radio 1 : 'De week van de verkeersveiligheid'
11. Etterbeek - VRT : VRT : 'Ontmoetingsdagen Allochtonen en media'
12. Gaurain-Ramecroix - Kain : No Télé : 'Création d'un centre de vidéo participative en milieu défavorisé'
13. Hasselt : Het Belang van Limburg : 'Lekkere letters'
14. Hasselt : TV Limburg : 'Burger-zin'
15. Houdeng-Goegnies - Houdeng-Aimeries : Antenne Centre Télévision : 'Ecoute jeunes'
16. Ixelles : Le Ligueur : 'Parents, comment répondre à vos jeunes devenus électeurs'
17. Mechelen : Divazine : 'D-files'
18. Namur - Belgrade : Fédération des Télévisions locales : 'Profils - pour la création d'une dimension participative'
19. Namur : Sud Presse : 'Journal de classe'
20. Schaarbeek : BELGA : 'Allochtone journalisten maken BELGA-nieuws'
21. Woluwé-Saint-Lambert - RTL : BEL RTL : 'Votre question nous intéresse'
22. Woluwé-Saint-Lambert : Femmes d'Aujourd'hui : 'Solitude : ensemble agissons'

Annex 2: journalists' survey data

Source: TNS Media - c d-rom included in annexes of 'Tussen woord en daad' (TNS Media, 2002)

| | | N=111 | | | | | |
| | | USEFULLNESS? | | | USAGE? | | |
Question	**Label**	Very (3)	(n°)	Not (1)	Often (3)	(n°)	Not (1)
Situate facts in their context	contextualize news	68%	1	3%	40%	5	8%
Render dysfunction public (political, economic, legal, violation basic values)	render dysfunctions public	68%	1	4%	33%	6	16%
Correct mistake in your own coverage	correct mistakes	67%	3	2%	51%	3	11%
Exert restraint with regard to undemocratic initiatives, organizations and parties	be careful with undemocratic practices	67%	3	6%	65%	1	6%
Apply techniques that increase the understanding of information	facilitate understanding of news	62%	5	4%	53%	2	6%
Actively search to counter-balance the organized publicity of elites	counter-balance government	54%	6	8%	30%	8	21%
Avoid stereotypes	avoid stereotypes	50%	7	13%	45%	4	16%
Search for a balance between different arguments	protect argumentational balance	41%	8	6%	32%	7	15%
Investigate the real (in stead of the presupposed) informational needs of the audience	investigate real informational needs audience	34%	9	14%	14%	20	38%
Avoid pseudo-expressions (street interviews e.g.)	avoid pseudo-expression	31%	10	32%	24%	12	38%
Organize spaces for discussion that allow for the free exchange of opinions	organize spaces for discussion	30%	11	22%	24%	12	45%
Make journalists accessible	become accessible	27%	12	18%	30%	8	27%
Systematically reply and react to audience feedback	systematic feedback reactions	27%	12	20%	29%	10	21%
Allow space for discussion on the workings of the media (ombudsperson, audits, …)	have an ombudsperson	27%	12	26%	13%	21	63%
Provide links to information outside the media output	provide links to extra sources	26%	15	18%	23%	14	27%
Avoid a too strong personification in news coverage	avoid strong personification	25%	16	13%	25%	11	17%
Provide access to the own journalistic knowledge reservoirs	access knowledge reservoirs	25%	16	23%	18%	16	51%
Pay attention to citizens' initiatives and to civil society	attention for citizens' initiatives	24%	18	12%	17%	18	24%
See the audience as a network and not as an atomized mass	see audience as a network	24%	18	23%	23%	14	34%
Increase audience knowledge and capacities by providing insight in the media	provide medium insight	23%	20	32%	9%	25	51%
Stimulate audience reactions towards the own media production	stimulate response	22%	21	23%	18%	16	35%
Actively open up the media organization for underrepresented societal groups	positive action	19%	22	29%	13%	21	51%
Searching actively for positive news that is also politically relevant	positive news	17%	23	24%	13%	21	36%
Provide possibilities for societal change / solutions in stead of problems	provide solutions	17%	23	26%	15%	19	42%
Analysing audience feedback systematically	analyse feedback systematically	12%	25	36%	7%	28	53%

Organizing meetings between members of the audience and journalists	organize meetings audience & journalists	12%	26	45%	8%	27	54%
Publishing an agenda of politically relevant activities	publish political agenda	8%	27	39%	10%	24	55%
Organizing meetings between citizens and politicians	organize meetings citizens & politicians	8%	27	55%	9%	25	66%
Grant members of the audience structural participation (advice councils, co-property, evaluation-moments)	structural participation	5%	29	62%	3%	30	76%
Pay attention to successful examples of media participation and collaborate with them	attention for participatory media	4%	30	52%	1%	31	72%
Become as journalist an active civil society member	become active civil society members	3%	31	61%	5%	29	63%