

# Technostress and Generation Y in the mediatized working life

Mari Maasilta and Kerstin Liesem

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- Based on the project **Generation Y in a mediatized and globalized world of work: comparison between the center and periphery of Europe**
- Together with Dr Kerstin Liesem, Germany
- Comparative study between Finland and Germany

# Research questions

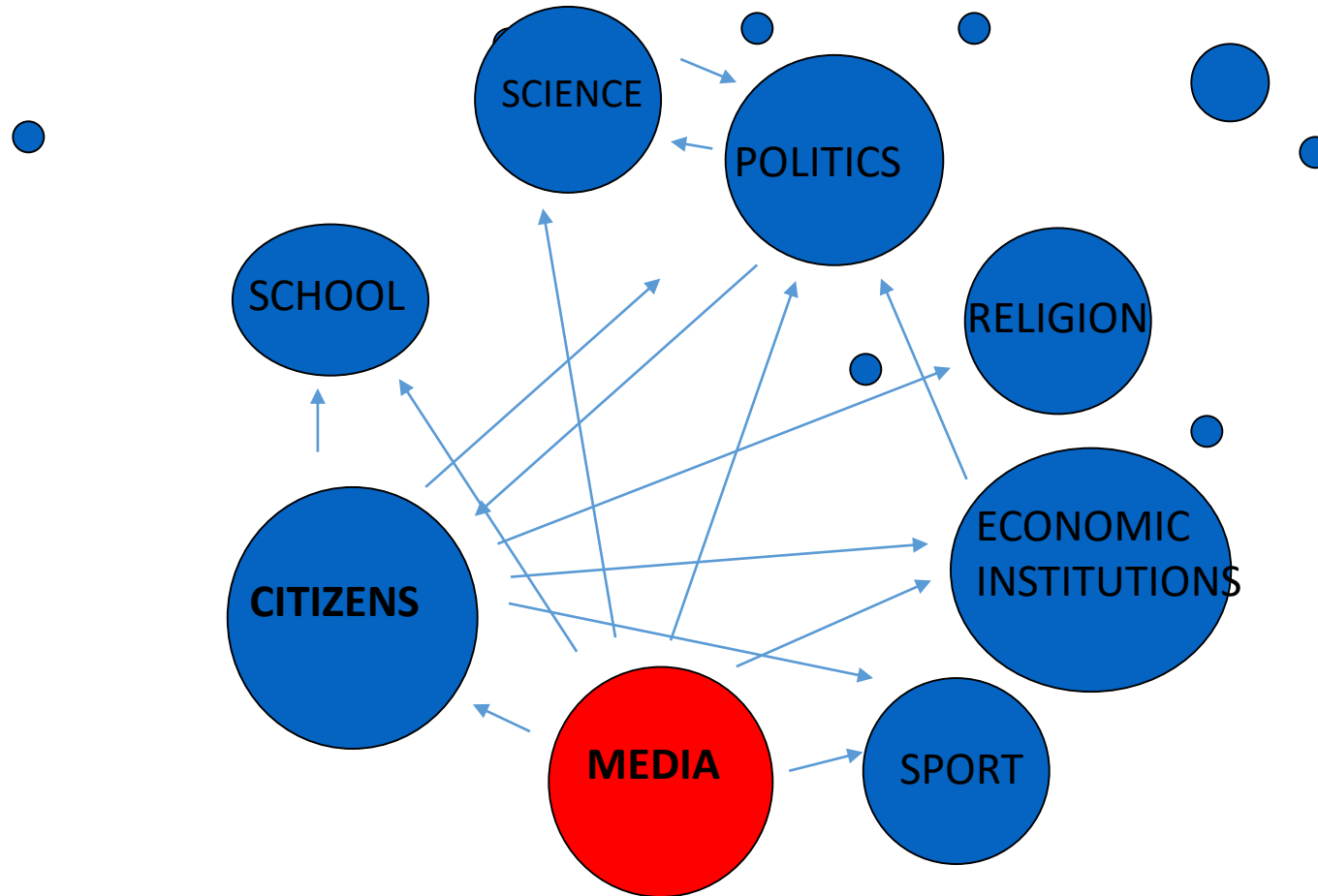
- How does **Generation Y** handle the challenges of the **mediatized working life** in relation to **technostress** (work overload, role ambiguity, invasion of privacy, work–home conflict, and job insecurity)?
- Do the experiences about mediatization of working life and technostress differ in Germany and in Finland? If yes, what kind of differences can be found?

# 1. Mediatization

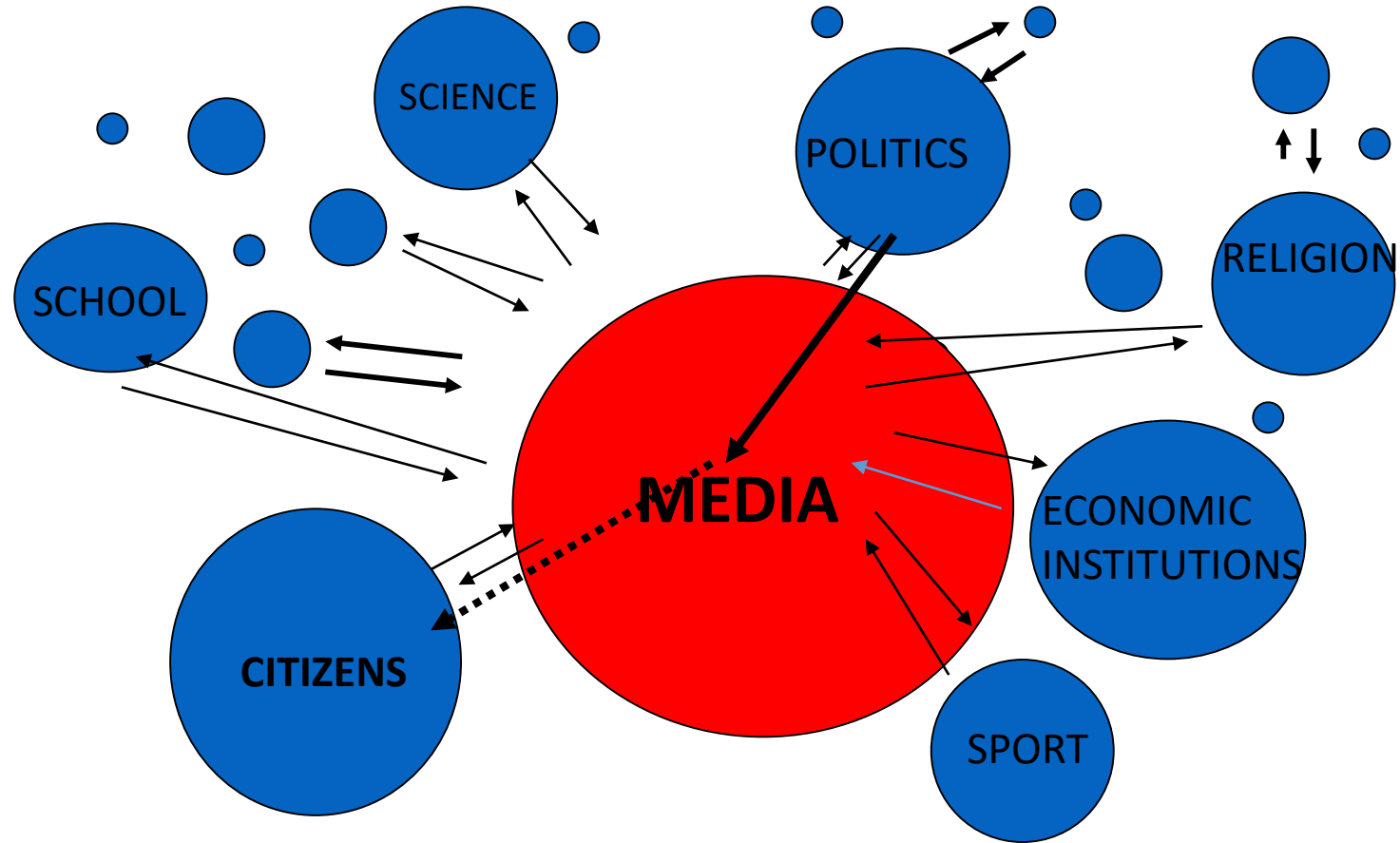
Stig Hjarvard 2008

- A process where we are constantly connected to media
- Media have become integrated into the operations of other social institutions
- Media have acquired the status of social institutions in their own right
- A process whereby society is dependent on the media and their logic

# Non-Mediatized society



# Mediatized society



# Mediatization in this study

- We understand the mediatization of working life as a long-term process, which has consequences not only for **the ways of working** but also for **the psycho-social well-being of people**.
- Against the backdrop of different cultural, social and economic backgrounds, the consequences of Mediatization vary from a culture to another

## 2. Technostress in the mediatized working life

- Despite the benefits of the mediatization of working life, continuous interaction with media technology has caused several psychological and physiological symptoms.
- The term **technostress** was coined in 1984 by clinical psychologist Craig Brod, who described it as a modern stress disease caused by one's inability to cope or deal with the demands of ICTs in a healthy manner (Brod 1984).
- Research has found that individuals experiencing technostress have lower productivity and job satisfaction, and decreased commitment to the organization (Ragu-Nathan et al. 2008; Tarafdar et al. 2007).



# 3. Generation Y

- First generation to grow up with the Internet
- Regular media consumption
- Solid education
- Desire for a proper work-life balance
- Negation of rigid hierarchies
- Search for meaning
- Self-realization
- Having fun while working

## 4. Empirical research setting

- Cultural approach: interest in the experiences of members of Generation Y and the ways they speak about the consequences of mediatization in working life
- The study is based on 48 guided interviews with German and Finnish individuals of the Generation Y.

# Information about interviewees

## **In Germany**

- 24 guided interviews
- The interviews were conducted between February and June 2016 (in Germany).

## **In Finland**

- 24 guided interviews
- 11 interviews were conducted in the autumn 2016 (in English) and 13 interviews between May and June in 2018 (in Finnish). The first interviews were shorter than the later interviews.

# 5. Results

## Stress at work is due to

### In Finland

- Unexpected events and tasks you have to react immediately
- Bad organization
- Studying besides to work
- Too much work
- Difficult tasks that you don't handle
- Disruptions
- Other stressed people

### In Germany

- Permanent disruptions through telephone calls or colleagues who want to have a chat or have questions
- Occurrence of unexpected things that disrupt and confuse the normal run of things
- Sitting in an open plan office
- Computer virus or if the computer has crashed
- Firm deadlines

# Work overload/Finnish results

- Being busy and having tight timetables sometimes is familiar to most of the interviewees. For some this causes a lot of stress while others have used to cope with the situation. *“I have noticed that the works will be done even if the deadline is not always met”*, says a female project manager.
- Finnish interviewees are mostly among the youngest and latest arrived employees in their workplace. Many of them are still studying. Work overload of the Generation Y is often connected to **working and studying at the same time**
- **Saturation of social media use:** Working days are crowded and updating social media is one of the duties that is considered as an extra work, which is easily forgotten. Using Facebook and other social media in work reduce their use for private purposes; one has already got enough of them during the working day and prefers to do other activities in free time.

# Work overload/German results

- Just like in Finland, German employees know the feeling of being busy and having tightly scheduled timetables. Some of the interviewees seem to enjoy it. *“I work best if my work is tightly synchronized by time”,* says a German editor. Some of them feel stressed. *“I feel stressed if I don’t have time to take a deep breath during different tasks.”*
- **Saturation of social media use:** Most interviewees refuse to use work-related social media-channels during their free time. *“During my free time I don’t care about the social media-channels of my employer. Free time is free time!”* *“When I relax I put away my smart phone.”*

# Role ambiguity/Finnish results

- In Finnish work places, there are usually no line phones. The employees are equipped with smart phones they carry with them wherever they go. Mobile tools allow working wherever you are and whenever. This is seen as an advantage but also as a disadvantage. On one hand, it permits you to stay at home when a child is sick and to continue working there. On the other hand, it blurs the limit between working life and personal life and may cause harm in family or couple life.

# Role ambiguity/German results

- In contrast to Finland, there are usually line phones in German work places. The reason is that people in Germany regard line phone numbers as more serious than smartphone numbers. Still, many employees are equipped with additional smart phones they carry with them wherever they go. Line phone calls are often forwarded to employees' smartphones. This is seen as an advantage but also as a disadvantage. On one hand, it permits people to work from everywhere. On the other hand, it blurs boundaries between working life and personal life. As a result, **some companies already established rules when employees have to switch off their work-related smartphones.**



# DIFFERENCE

- German interviewees tend to accept the constant interruptions and complain about it.
- *“The constant flood of messages disrupt my work constantly. That annoys me, but it is not in my hands.”*
- Finnish interviewees tend to react more self-critically and question their own behavior
- *“It disturbs, yes. Especially when you have in the same phone your work affairs and your personal social media. For example, I may be doing some updating or marketing for my work by phone, and at the same time, there is a personal message coming, which interrupts my work. Yes, it really disturbs.”* (Finnish interviewee)

# Conclusion

- Generation Y lives a transition period: some are still studying and work only temporarily, they don't feel a big stress; some have already permanent positions and feel more responsibility and stress
- Work overload of the Generation Y is often connected to working and studying at the same time
- Mobile tools are both an advantage and a disadvantage because they blur the borders between work and private life
- Work-overload may lead to the saturation in the use of social media: if you do it whole day at work, you may not be interested to continue it in your private life

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