Cultural Diversity and Social Media

Concluding Remarks
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Plan

- Summarize main points
- Distill ‘best practices’
- Share experiences
I: Role of the Media

- Emphasis on mediation
- Mediation understood as a dialectical, albeit uneven process, by which the media influence and are influenced by the world
- Technologies, institutions, policies and politics, but also professional values and practices, genre conventions, as well as audience/user responses, practices and habits are all factored in.
- Mediation is dynamic, i.e. changes over time
- Empirically, the question is: how do (social) media mediate cultural diversity?
II: What is Cultural Diversity?

- Ethno-cultural identity/difference relies on conceptions of socio-political organizing such as the nation-state

- How did the nation come about?
  - Perennialists: It was always there
  - Modernists: It is the result of:
    - Industrial Capitalism and the invention of tradition (Gellner, Hobsbawm)
    - Print capitalism which allowed for the nation to be imagined (Anderson)
III: Multicultural dilemmas

- What ought societies do to diversity?
  1. Essentialism or Fluidity?
  2. Universalism or Particularity?
  3. Recognition or Redistribution?
- No permanent solution
IV: Production

- Mainstream media organizations:
  - Operate with a media logic that typically excludes diversity
  - Erect barriers to entry for culturally diverse media professionals
- But what should we expect from culturally diverse media professionals?
V: Representation

• Regimes of representation
  1. Racist regime
  2. Domestication
  3. Commodification
  4. Essentialist
  5. Alternative
VI: Reception

- Preferences for own media
- Trauma and anger over racist representation
- Most use ‘banal’
- Media may enhance negative reps but not (usually) change them into positive
VII: Internet

- Ethnicity in the Network:
  - Project or Resistance?
- Production: Broadened, but new divides
- Contents: Plural, vast, and ambiguous
- Uses: Personal, but also political
VII: Discussion Points
Social Media Production

- Produsers
- Digital divides
  - Cultural Capital: what people know
  - Social Capital: who people know
- Anonymity linked to credibility
- Strategic production of contents to trigger reactions
- Rise of infomediaries
Social Media: Representations

- Trolling and hate speech: increased
- Misinformation
- Facts: often confusing and misquoted but also used to correct or engage with contents
- Policing of communities
- Context collapse (danah boyd), but:
  - Important tendency to compartmentalize different contexts
- Presentation of self: complex, multiple resources
- A post-race environment
Social Media: Uses

- Surveillance
- Use of social media to continue/pass traditions from generation to generation
- Generally, use social media to keep in touch with ‘homeland’
- Diasporas ‘coming together’ in virtual spaces => sometimes this may lead to nationalism
- Homophily: the tendency to link to similar others
VII: Social Media

- Polymedia: the current communicative environment
- Shaped both by technological architectures and user practices
- Cultural diversity and polymedia:
  - Mostly favoured
  - But inequalities (material and symbolic)?
Best practices I

- What do we want?
  - Protection of cultural diversity
  - Fluidity of borders: entry and exit
  - Address inequalities
  - Address insult and injury
  - Other?
Best Practices II

- What ought we to do as:
  - Persons
  - Media professionals
  - Journalists

- Consider polymedia practices:
  - What about this?