

Abstracts

Television in Portugal: A Difficult Transition From Fascism to Liberalism

Tomas Coppens

This article describes the unique television landscape in Portugal. Television started as a state-controlled instrument of power during the fascist years (1926-1974). The process of deregulation in the nineties led to a highly competitive environment, in which public and commercial broadcasters fight each other over advertisers and viewers, mainly through imported programmes. The public broadcaster RTP is struggling with its dependence from the government and its role as a public service. The commercial broadcasters, especially TVI, have to deal with a limited advertising market. And the regulatory body lacks real power to intervene. The future of Portuguese television is, therefore, very uncertain.

Key words: television, Portugal, deregulation, commercialisation, competition

The Influence of Family Communication Patterns on Media Use: A Study of 10 and 11 Year Olds

Jan Van den Bulck and Bea Van den Bergh

This article examines which kinds of parental guidance accompany children's media use. Three patterns, which previous research identified, influence not only tv viewing, but also the reading of books and comic books and computer game play. Gender proved to be an important variable both at the level of children and of parents. Differences in guidance behaviour exist between fathers and mothers and effects differ for boys and girls. Use of one medium does not automatically lead to a reduction in the use of another medium, but parental restriction of use may lead to an increase in the use of another medium. This study only found evidence of an effect of guidance of media use on the media consumption of girls, even though boys and girls reported similar levels of perceived parental guidance.

The respondents were 519 10 and 11 year old Flemish schoolchildren.

Key words: media use, parental guidance, children and media, family communication patterns

Media Coverage of Political Scandals: A Theoretical Approach

Jo Snoeckx

This article pleads for more attention in the field of communication studies for the working and the role of political scandals, whether it be in a theoretical or empirical way. Political scandals are being analyzed and defined, starting from the classic framework of news selection theory. It is concluded that political scandals generate an enormous public field of tension, that – together with their high newsworthiness – put a great responsibility on the media. For example, the analysis of the historic Watergate case raises significant questions about the role of the media in political scandals and stresses the crucial importance of the relationship source-communicator as a *raison d'être* of political scandals. Based on this analysis, this article intends to provide a framework for further applied research in the field of political scandals. In this respect, several possible trajectories are indicated.

Key words: political scandal, process of news selection, news sources, the public watchdog role of the media, Watergate