Bringing agency back in: the missing link between identity, knowledge, and mediated discourse

Robin Tschötschel^a & Thomas Jacobs^b

August 25, 2021

Abstract

In an era often characterised by the notions of “post-truth” and “identity politics”, the nexus between communication, knowledge, and identity forms a crucial realm for social-scientific analysis. However, existing approaches, inspired by content, frame, and discourse analysis often rest on a limited conceptualisation of the agency exercised by those appearing in mediated discourse as speakers or subjects. To remedy this, we argue for an intervention inspired by Actor-Network Theory (ANT) and propose a framework combining ANT and poststructuralist Discourse Theory (PDT). Building on a discussion of the theoretical similarities between the two, our core proposal is to study the associations between identity markers and knowledge claims at the sentence level to make transparent how and by whom they are articulated. The nuance gained deepens our understanding of the discursive construction of identity and knowledge, shedding light on the links between identity polarisation and the politicisation of facts.

Keywords: identity, knowledge, discourse, agency, actor-network theory, discourse theory,

Latour, Laclau

^aAmsterdam School of Communication Research (ASCoR), University of Amsterdam, Nieuwe Achtergracht 166, 1018 WV Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Email: r.s.tschoetschel@uva.nl, robin.tschoetschel@gmail.com

^bCentre for EU Studies, Ghent University, Korte Meer 1, 9000 Gent, Belgium.

Email: T.Jacobs@UGent.be

Introduction

Veracity is political. When individuals call a truth claim ‘fake news’ or present ‘alternative facts’, they strikingly exemplify the political nature of controversies about knowledge and meaning. Often, these controversies contain implicit and explicit markers of political identity, enmeshing disputes over what is (and can be) known with those over political belonging and identity. In the contemporary era of “identity politics”, this phenomenon has become almost omnipresent, not only in the United States where “affective polarisation” based on party identity has become the most important social cleavage (Iyengar & Westwood 2015). While the “politicisation of facts” (van der Linden, Leiserowitz, & Maibach 2018) may be evident in the field of cultural politics and immigration, it also touches areas that rely heavily on scientific experts, such as climate change and economic policy. As the study of identity and knowledge construction becomes ever more important to communication science, political science, and sociology, the analytical work conducted at the intersection of these traditions becomes ever more relevant.

In this paper, we want to single out three sets of approaches we see as contenders for studying the interplay of knowledge and identity in communication: “content” analysis, “frame” analysis, and “discourse” analysis. Frequently used in communication and political science, they serve as reference points for our subsequent discussion. In the later parts of our argument, we will particularly zoom in on discourse analysis, as many approaches falling under its umbrella statedly aim to tackle the co-construction of identities and knowledge (Van Dijk 2003). Our core argument is that many analyses drawing on one of these three approaches — especially those that focus precisely on the identity-knowledge nexus — suffer from a limited theorization of human agency and how it shapes public discourses (Leipold & Winkel 2017; Carpentier 2017, p. 7).

Empirical research informed by content and frame analysis — by choice rather than oversight — has a tendency to ignore the ongoing dynamics of identity construction as actors are passively portrayed or even actively given space to speak on their own behalf. Discourse analyses, meanwhile — even those calling themselves “poststructuralist” (Leipold & Winkel 2017; Carpentier 2017, Jacobs 2019) — are prone to conceptualising identity and knowledge as structural aspects of discourse, thus de-emphasizing the agency that is exercised by those appearing in and contributing to public discourse. Overall, this leads to a partial and limited understanding of how identity and knowledge are articulated by both — those producing texts and statements *and* those appearing within them. The result are analyses that lack a robust account of the manner in which participants in public discourse exercise agency in producing intersubjective understandings of knowledge and identity, accompanied by a relative neglect of the role of implicit power relations herein (Larsson 2015, Jacobs 2019).

In our view, discourse analysis, frame analysis and most other content-oriented approaches stand to benefit from an intervention inspired by Latourian Actor-Network Theory (ANT) (Latour 1999 2005) and the sociological study of meaning-making and knowledge practices. The framework we present here stresses the relevance of ongoing public and mediated controversies about (political) identities and knowledge. Following Latour (2005), we argue that such controversies and their closure are key points of entry to understanding how actors exercise their agency in shaping identities and knowledge. Our framework, based on a combination of ANT and Political Discourse Theory (Laclau & Mouffe 1985/2001), aims to allow analysts to capture the often disputed and contested actor-networks presented in discourse. It highlights the links between knowledge and identity and aims to do justice to the agency of those producing messages, those appearing in them, and the recipients alike.

This paper advances in five steps. We begin by (1) providing clear conceptual definitions and a brief argument that centring agency is crucial to understanding how knowledge

and identity are negotiated in public discourse. We advance with (2) a critical discussion of how political and communication science predominantly conceptualize the agency of their actors with a particular emphasis on frame and discourse-analytic approaches. We then (3) articulate the intervention proposed (inspired) by Actor-Network Theory (ANT) and formulate requirements for an agency-sensitive framework that can centre questions of identity and knowledge. Subsequently (4), we discuss our take on poststructuralist Political Discourse Theory (PDT). Rather than an alternative to our approach, we see it as a suitable theory to help operationalize our proposed framework, which we present in detail in step (5). As part of our exposition, we return to frame analysis and show how it can be modified to become an approach for studying identity and knowledge.

Agency shapes knowledge and identity

If we reflect for a moment about the purposes of studying mediated discourse and political messaging, what content analysis, frame analysis, and discourse analysis all share is the implicit or explicit aim to uncover patterns of human meaning-making. A crucial feature of the enterprise of meaning-making is the construction, interpretation, and expression of the agency of a multiplicity of actors. When we watch the news, we do not just gain knowledge of current affairs and events; we also watch journalists producing news items, anchors framing the news, sources giving information, experts offering their opinion, etc. Making sense of the world around us is impossible without making sense of how others make sense of the world around them, and when they do so, we learn as much about their identity as about the world they interpret. Identities and knowledge are thus always temporary outcomes of communication processes in which actors exercise their agency.

Before engaging with the existing literature in greater depth, a definition of what we mean by knowledge, identity, and agency is in order. While all three are thorny concepts,

from a philosophical perspective, knowledge poses the greatest difficulties as “some contemporary epistemologists [even] reject the assumption that knowledge is susceptible to analysis” (Ichikawa & Steup 2018). Leaving aside such fundamental problems, we turn towards the sociological literature that studies knowledge from a pragmatic lens, focusing on how humans define, make, and use it (e.g. Knorr-Cetina 1981; Latour 1999). In line with this notion, we draw the reader’s attention to instances of knowledge *articulation*. They include claims about what is known (what the facts are), arguments aimed at distinguishing different types of knowledge from another (e.g. scientific fact from common sense or superstition), and ultimately also disputes about what can be known. Taking this perspective, it becomes clear that knowledge is inextricably tied to communication and subject to human agency. Inspired by the discourse-theoretical framework that we will formulate later in this paper, we see knowledge as produced, constructed, and stabilized in discourse. Consequently, what constitutes and does not constitute valid knowledge, depends on discursive power relations.

Second, the notion of identity is similarly complex and studied from a wide variety of social scientific angles. Here, we focus on the communication of identities in public and mediated discourse. For this purpose, we build on social-psychological theory arguing that humans use partially shared “social identity prototypes” (Hogg & Reid 2006) and “schemata” (cf. Monroe, Hankin, & Vechten 2000) to elaborate their own identity. In essence, these are mental assemblages of, among other things, behaviours, attitudes, norms, values, and beliefs, that individuals *identify* with to varying degrees. These blueprints are shared through symbolic action and the use of language, which “can be seen as reflecting, conveying, or constructing identities or as carrying out all those functions at the same time” (De Fina 2012, p. 1). In doing so, knowledge about identities is articulated together with other objects of

knowledge. Thus, analysing public and political discourse offers a key point of entry to understand the links between identity and knowledge about substantive issues, such as migration, climate change, or the economy.

Finally, turning towards agency, we find it fruitful to build on the proposition by Emirbayer & Mische (1998). They see agency as the “engagement by actors of different structural environments”, which “both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive responses to the problems posed by changing historical situations” (p. 970). In our view, actors’ knowledge claims about their life-world or their (and others’) identities are precisely that: engagements of shared meaning structures, transforming and reproducing them. On the other hand, other forms of behaviour often have an (implicit) element of agency that engages and transforms the identities and knowledge of and about themselves and other actors. We argue that analyses of public and mediated discourse, rather than emphasising de-humanised ‘objective’ meaning structures, should centre on actors and how they exercise their agency as entry points for analysing identity and knowledge articulation. While some existing approaches already facilitate such an endeavour to a certain degree or hold the potential to do so, we believe an even stronger focus and more elaborate theoretical background is needed.

Actors without agency?

Political and communication scientists studying mediated public discourses usually make claims about the production, the content, or the reception of these discourses. In the first and the last, human agency is usually well accounted for: most analyses of how discourses are shaped and interpreted take stock of the role of actors. In communication science, the production side has been theorised and studied using sociological approaches, for example by focusing on the hierarchy of influences journalists have to navigate when doing their work (Reese & Shoemaker 2016). At the other end, an entire subfield — media and message effects research — is dedicated to experimentally studying human reactions to public communication

in its various forms (e.g. Scheufele & Tewksbury 2007). Prominent macroscopic frameworks in political science tend to emphasize the intersection of ideas, interests, and institutions that shape discourse (Carstensen & Schmidt 2016) and the resulting political or policy shifts that arise from or in response to a changing public discourse (Schmidt 2011). However, when the focus shifts from the production or reception of mediated political discourses to their content, most actors appearing in the text are reduced to their role as “sources”, or “subject” and “speaker positions”, and theoretical frameworks often obfuscate or ignore how actors have exercised their agency in articulating the statements presented in the text.

Missing agency in content and frame analysis

In communication science, the label “content analysis” is often used to denote a specific combination of textual (including “text” in the form of visual and audio information) analysis that relies on “reliable” codebooks and quantitative (statistical) analysis. However, here we use the label more broadly and see it as an umbrella term for analytical approaches that focus on the “content” of communication and mediated discourse rather than its production, dissemination, or effects. Content analyses range from strongly positivist to fully interpretative but usually settle somewhere on the middle of the scale. At the positivist end of the spectrum, studies build knowledge based on analysing seemingly immanent text features (such as word counts, sentence length, lexical diversity) and strongly focus on reliability (cf. Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken 2002) and replicability. By adopting an agnostic stance towards the meaning created by both the author of the text and the actors appearing within it, this approach adopts a relatively objectivist stance towards the material used for analysis. Apparently “objective” measures can play a role in an interpretative analysis, for example by providing contextual information and insights about the scope and extent of other findings.

Still, they limit the researcher in analysing larger blocks of meanings necessary to make inferences about how different actors exercise their agency in constructing and disputing identities and knowledge.

Frame analysis, one approach often conducted under the label of content analysis, tries to bridge positivist and interpretative stances and make the analysis of meaning conveyed in text more explicit. In our view, “frame analysis”, like many other research strategies, is both a theoretical stance and a methodological approach. On the one hand, the abstract concept “frame” is meant to capture a device used for conveying meaning by organising the material presented, giving emphasis, or presenting equivalent information differently (cf. Cacciatore, Scheufele, & Iyengar 2015). On the other, researchers typically operationalise frames as the presence of certain frame elements that can be coded relatively “objectively” — so the proponents of this strategy argue (cf. Matthes & Kohring 2008) — giving the approach a positivist twist. This strategy shares with “holistic” or “hermeneutic” (Matthes & Kohring 2008) approaches to frame analysis that frames are conceptualised relatively independent of the actors articulating them. At times, the latter are indicators pointing towards the presence of a particular frame or are integrated into the analysis as “frame proponents”. Nevertheless, their agency is rarely central to the analysis, and neither are actors’ identities seen as co-produced by the frames attributed to them, giving frame analysis a structuralist underpinning. As a rare exception, some constructionist theorising on frames highlights the interplay of frame sponsors and journalists in shaping mediated frames (e.g. Gorp 2007) — our propositions for an identity- and knowledge-centred approach to frame analysis at the end of this paper can be seen as an extension of this line of work.

Discourse Analysis and its (hidden) structuralism

Discourse-analytic approaches to content analysis are closest to the interpretivist pole of the spectrum. While scholars using discourse-analytic methods and theories mostly reject the

positivist paradigm underpinning most traditional content and frame analysis, they share an analytical focus on the internal structure of a message. Prominent discourse-analytic traditions such as Political Discourse Theory (PDT) (also known as Postfoundational, Post-Marxist, or Poststructuralist Discourse Theory) claim to extend their conception of discourse beyond the spoken or written message (Laclau & Mouffe 1985/2001) to include the practices and actions of the subjects of the discourse in question. Still, their operationalization usually focuses on the ‘textual’ component of discourse (Remling 2017) and particularly on how the producers of statements and text represent action and behaviour. Agency is thus primarily taken stock of in the production of discourse. Once a discourse’s manifest content comes under analysis, the active interventions of the subjects that feature in the text disappear out of sight, and thus their agency is largely neglected.

Furthermore, in explaining discourses and their effects, poststructuralist analyses tend towards a renewed structuralism (Leipold & Winkel 2017). Empirical phenomena are explained by referring to the macro-level ideological structures behind them (the discourse), while the power of these macro-structures is explained by a “fantasmatic investment” (Glynos & Howarth 2007), psychological attachment caused by features of that structure. Where agency can enter this picture is highly unclear. As a consequence, PDT, which is usually alleged to suffer from an institutionalist deficiency (Jacobs 2019), also suffers a deficiency concerning agency: The snapshots of a structure at a given point in time, presented as the outcome of a discourse-analytical study, do not elucidate the ongoing renegotiation and re-construction of that structure by its subjects and underappreciate the abilities of actors to articulate political logics. Subjects and speaker positions (and thus identities) are conceptualised as features of the discourse rather than as open-ended and disputed articulations of actors that retain their agency within the discourse in which they are being subjectivised.

Yet, creating additional room for agency need not detract from the central analytical concept of discourse, as Carpentier (2017). Instead, it functions as a supplement, enabling a “more nuanced perspective on the relationship between the discursive and the material, its structuring capacities, and the ways it actually allows for human freedom and agency.” (Carpentier 2017, p. 7). Consequently, the way actors facilitate or constrain the shape of their discursive construction can be taken into account while recognising the power of discursive and material structures.

To sum up, while many studies with a focus on production and consumption of mediated and political public discourse account for the agency of the authors and recipients, the tendency to ignore the agency of the actors appearing within it is striking — and that is despite these actors often being the primary source of sense-making. In fact, they are the key, privileged source of meaning, and their neglect is precisely the issue that this paper seeks to remedy. Below, we formulate an analytical framework built on an intervention informed chiefly by Latourian Actor-Network Theory (ANT) and Political Discourse Theory. The following section introduces the Latourian intervention, while the ensuing one discusses how it complements and fits with PDT.

The Latourian Intervention: Actor-Network Theory

Actor-Network Theory (ANT) can be seen as a theoretical and methodological challenge to the social sciences, defying their practitioners to flip their perspective on what their science is about. According to Bruno Latour (2005), most social sciences explain a range of phenomena, such as social outcomes, education, policy, opinion, knowledge, but also institutional arrangements, by different types of a priori social categories and the relations between them. This approach, he argues, should be replaced by an approach that explains social ties and categories by showing how they are actualised when actors act (figure 1). In other words: the

“boundary work” (Lamont & Molnár 2002) done by the actors studied should be a central element of all social scientific analysis. ANT does this by focusing on the “associations” (Latour 2005) between different entities (actors, groups, non-human agencies, objects of knowledge, etc.) created by human action. For example, speaking as a representative for a civic association, showing up for a meeting, or voting for a party all create links between entities and thus develop the social. In principle, any form of practice can establish associations, which means that a wide variety of methods (ranging from ethnography to statistics) is needed to establish a comprehensive picture, of which studies of mediated and public discourse are one — we would argue central — element.

Figure 1: relationships between the social, practice, and discourse as commonly conceptualized and inspired by Actor-Network Theory

Consequently, ANT can be read as a critique of structuralism’s dominance in various forms of content, frame, and discourse analysis: all associations are the outcome of actors exercising their agency, rather than properties of a discursive structure or mere expression of an existing social order and identity categories. ANT simultaneously also rejects the more positivist strands of content analysis: following ANT, all media statements are both expressions and building blocks of existing and new associations, and to analyse them requires an element of interpretation. In addition, in the view of most scholars working with ANT, researchers themselves participate in associational work: for example, every time a social category,

such as gender or age, is used, the distinctions it establishes are drawn again. As a consequence of this feedback of social research, scholars are challenged to exercise “reflexivity” (cf. Michael 2017, p. 16f) and show awareness of their role in making and breaking associations. Returning to how identity and knowledge are achieved and performed at the level of communicative action, ANT encourages researchers to set aside existing identity categories and inductively develop them from the empirical material instead.

This turn away from pre-configured structures and towards a focus on practice and agency is undergirded by a complex social theory. ANT, as typically presented, argues for a radical departure from the often-debated structure-agency distinction that much social scientific builds on (Latour 2005). Other (in particular sociological) approaches have sought to show how actors are at the same time both constrained and enabled by structures and how structures are both reproduced and transformed by action (e.g. Boltanski 2011). Following a similar line of thought, rather than positing a structure as something that can exist independently of agency, ANT emphasizes the work done by actors to bring “collectives” into existence, imbuing them with a level of agency to act (Latour 2005). The crucial point here is that if actors stopped maintaining and speaking out about their collectives (institutions, organisations, groups, ideas, etc.), these identities would simply fall apart and cease to exist. We want to alert content, frame, and discourse analysis to the fact that this way of thinking grants a form of agency to actors *even as they are situated in the discourse and being discursively constructed*.

In our reading of ANT, most entities and collectives (human and non-human) have both a life on their own but also depend on individual human actors to be *mobilised* to act in a particular situation. For example, it is not a matter of human interpretation if a storm unleashes itself onto a city, whether bees are dying in the billions or the Earth is getting warmer. Nonetheless, without humans claiming that such events and phenomena occur, they would be

irrelevant and not exist as objects of knowledge in mediated public discourse. Other beings and collectives can only act when they are brought into play — “the Law” may prevent certain things from occurring, but it cannot act without a range of spokespeople (police officers, public prosecutors, judges, etc.). Meaning is thus ultimately dependent on actors’ articulation and consequently an object of contestation. As we will discuss in greater depth below, this view of agency as meaning-making by reference to partly independent beings and collectives (or structures) also underpins PDT and constitutes the fundament of our co-articulation of the two theories.

Knowledge supported by chains of reference

Above, we argued that questions of knowledge are inextricably linked with the articulation of identities. Turning towards knowledge, at an epistemological level, ANT questions the Kantian distinction between the world out there and the representations in the minds of humans and articulated within language (Latour 1999 1993). This duality, so Latour, leads to an unfruitful discussion about the (in-)ability of humans to represent an external nature. Instead, according to the onto-epistemological position developed by ANT (based on a range of studies of scientific practice), scientific knowledge is a “chain of reference” (Latour. 1999, pp. 69-73): through multiple steps, more and more general and abstract claims refer to particular and concrete “data” at a lower level. While none of these links can claim to represent the lower levels of data, science gives strength to its knowledge claims by making these chains transparent and explicit.

Building on this notion of knowledge, we draw on Latour’s earlier work to analyse how actors construct knowledge in mediated public discourse by presenting chains of reference as ‘evidence’. For example, actors may claim that the severity of a downpour is indicative of a relatively high water content in the atmosphere and thus partly caused by climate change. The advantage of conceptualising knowledge claims this way lies in bringing ANTs

theoretical strands about group formation, agency, and knowledge together and applying them to public and mediated communication. We can thus pursue our interest in the knowledge-identity-communication triangle from one theoretical framework.

While ANT, as presented here, offers a way of thinking about identity, knowledge, and agency that suits our purpose in this paper, we also find that it holds certain limitations that prevent us from outright adopting it as a framework without modification. To begin with, ANT scholars have traditionally paid little attention to the arenas where humans explicitly articulate their groups and identities: the public sphere and institutionalised politics (cf. Michael 2017, pp. 10-51). However, precisely these realms hold a wealth of data to study the controversies central to ANT (e.g. Venturini 2009; Besel 2011; Marrres 2016) and are critical arenas in which power struggles over representation play out. When this field of group-formation and human interaction is ignored, ANT's potential to analyse and critically interrogate power and public discourse cannot be realised.

In our view, this is a moment where Discourse Theory's capacity to take stock of power and political dynamics can make a fruitful addition: its conceptual and methodological tools allow us to identify power-laden discursive patterns of meaning-making in the public sphere. It has a rich history when it comes to analysing political (e.g. Howarth & Torfing 2005) and media discourse (e.g. Phelan & Dahlberg 2011), and its conceptual apparatus is attuned explicitly to this purpose. While it was long alleged to suffer a methodological deficit, recent interventions in entirely different directions have ensured that there are plenty of different methods available to scholars seeking to operationalize PDT in empirical research (e.g. Glynnos & Howarth 2007; Remling 2017; Jacobs & Tschötschel 2019). Bearing in mind our ANT-inspired intervention, the strengths and theoretical focus of PDT allow us to develop a framework attuned to questions of power, identity, and knowledge negotiated in mediated and political discourse.

The Social Theory of Political Discourse Theory

Post-Marxist or poststructuralist Discourse Theory has a highly interesting account of identity and knowledge (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002), but despite its best intentions, its applications often fail to develop a coherent understanding of agency, as it has a structuralist inclination (Leipold & Winkel 2017; Carpentier 2017, p. 7). Put briefly, the agency of a discourse's subjects disappears, as they are relegated to being articulated into the subject positions established by that discourse (Leipold & Winkel 2017, pp. 3-5). At the same time, the hegemony-driven account of public, political, and institutional discourse offered by Laclau and Mouffe (1985/2001) is highly sensitive to power relations, a quality we find lacking in traditional Actor-Network Theory. A productive cross-pollination between ANT and PDT thus appears to be possible, and this section ventures deeper into how PDT stands to benefit from ANT.

Political Discourse Theory's core postulate, the idea that meaning is never final or fixed but always "dislocated" and hence "political" (Dyrberg 2004), "opens up the way for constant social struggles about definitions of society and identity, with resulting social effects" (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002, p. 24). As Laclau and Mouffe (1985/2001, p. 105) put it themselves, articulation is "any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice", and discourse is "the structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice." In other words, the construction and contestation of knowledge and identity as a political practice are at the very core of PDT.

However, this interest usually does not translate into a concrete and tangible concern with agency exercised at the knowledge-identity nexus. PDT combines a predominantly Lacanian conceptualization of the subject (Hudson 2006) with some Foucauldian influences (Laclau & Mouffe 1985/2001, pp. 115-119). Both of these conceptions understand subjectivity "in the sense of subject positions within a discursive structure", which "cannot be the

origin of social relations” (Laclau 1990, p. 43). Agency is reduced to merely denote identification with a pre-existing structure that lends the subject his or her identity (figure 2). Evidently, this hinders a direct focus on subjective agency. While an ontology casting the subject as a structural phenomenon should not a priori preclude agency, it requires a theoretically nuanced and methodologically complex approach that is de facto often abandoned in favour of a focus on the structures that subjects partake in.

Figure 2: renewed structuralism often implied by discourse theoretical analyses: identities are an indirect consequence of the discursive structures, agency is lost

An example of this tendency is the concept of political strategy. Though it originally featured in the title of Laclau and Mouffe’s magnum opus and PDT’s foundational text ‘Hegemony and Socialist Strategy’, for decades, the notion had all but disappeared from Discourse Theory’s conceptual apparatus. Only recently has it started to be reappraised again (Herschinger 2012; Jacobs 2018; Nonhoff 2019). This long repudiation can be explained by the view that strategy is too suggestive of the intentionalist conception of agency in which a sovereign and voluntarist subject is unconstrained and free to do as he or she sees fit — strongly rejected by Discourse Theory (Howarth 2013, pp. 158-159, 184). However, as Herschinger (2012) has shown, strategy need not imply voluntarism, but to avoid this pitfall, intricate definitional and conceptual work is necessary – work that is often all too easily side-stepped in favour of the use of a different concept that is less associated with “decisionism” (Howarth 2013, p. 176).

What we need then, is an analytical approach to agency that helps put the subject in focus, but that respects Discourse Theory's poststructuralist conception of subjectivity. Zienkowski's (2017) work on how minority activists articulate their self-perception illustrates such a possibility by using linguistic pragmatics and meta-pragmatics to tease out the discursive mechanisms supporting this identification process. We believe the Latourian route advocated here could achieve similar results by revealing how the subjectivities that are represented and constructed in a discourse involve the articulations of actors cast into those subjectivities, thereby granting them a form of agency that needs to be accounted for analytically.

A second problematic consequence of PDT's account of the subject is that it loses track of the receptive side of meaning-making. The trio of production, content, and reception discussed earlier has a particular status in PDT's ontological framework. Production and content are collapsed into a single category via the notion of articulation. The status of reception remains unclear, however, precisely because PDT's interpretation of subjectivity is not conducive to a sophisticated account of agency (Leipold & Winkel 2017). What is the place of reception and interpretation of a message in the theory of articulation, and what agency do actors exercise in their role as recipients? To clarify this, and hence allow PDT to develop its empirical study of reception, PDT could relish an ANT intervention.

Crucially for the facilitation of this cross-pollination is that both theories seem to be compatible at the ontological level: for both, indeterminate external realities seem to exist, but their meaning is ultimately dependent on human sense-making. This results in two holistic accounts of discourse that do not need an 'extra-discursive' sphere to explain the discursive (Howarth 2010, p. 314; Jacobs 2019, p. 394). Both ANT and PDT see what PDT calls 'discourse' — the association-making through actors' practice in the words of ANT — as

their essential ontological category (Laclau & Mouffe 1985/2001, p. x). Crucially, their perspective leads neither of both theories to deny the materiality of events like an earthquake. Nevertheless, both wager this materiality itself does not suffice for an event to be significant; only in their construction as meaningful through discourses and associations articulated by actors do these events become loaded with the meanings we attach to them (Laclau & Mouffe 1985/2001, p. 108).

Likewise, both theories imply that the entities raised to exist through communicative action have a degree of reality but need to be mobilised again and again to maintain some form of stability. Like Latour, Laclau and Mouffe do away with the Kantian distinction between external reality and our (limited) capacity to make sense of this reality as observers. Instead, both collapse this dualism into a single ontological category (Jacobs 2019) – discourse (although ANT refrains from using this term). This makes their combination feasible in the sense that it would result in a theoretically coherent framework. Discourse Theory's notion of articulation and its ontological monism lie close to ANT's conception of knowledge and identity, as does its view of meaning-making as a relational endeavour. The question is now, what could such a combined ANT-DT framework look like? In the next section, we draw a potential outline intended as a proposition for further theorising at the intersection of these two traditions and a starting point for empirical operationalisations.

Overlapping networks: towards a new view on discourse

At the outset of this paper, we discussed three modalities of mediated public discourse: production, content, and reception. This distinction into separate realms seemingly creates tension with the social theories underlying Political Discourse Theory and Actor-Network Theory. PDT upholds the view that “everything is discursive” (Laclau & Mouffe 1985/2001), and thus any and all forms of human practice should be studied with the same theoretical apparatus. ANT equally emphasizes how actors create associations and boundaries across social

realms, establishing a unified framework to analyse them. We subscribe to the notions that an element of articulation and associational work can be found in most human interaction and that identities and knowledge are (re-)constructed in practice spanning multiple modalities. Nonetheless, we contend that analytically distinguishing the production of public and political discourse from its content and its reception adds fruitful analytical clarity.

The framework we propose here builds on the notion of *overlapping network views of discourse*. These include production networks, a network view of “content”, and networks of reception, with each having sets of agencies that work internally or link to other modalities (see figure 3). Concerning each of these, we take the combination of ANT and PDT as a theoretical and methodological point of departure and elaborate the consequences for discourse-oriented studies that investigate notions of identity and knowledge, illustrating our arguments with some empirical insights from a study by one of the authors (author, n.d.) While the other two dimensions are left as a sketch, our specific emphasis in this section lies on the “networked view of content”, the area that most directly links to the criticisms we levied against common forms of content, frame, and discourse analysis. At the end of our discussion, we pick up frame analysis and show how we would modify the approach to emphasise agency, identity, and knowledge.

Production networks

The practices constituting the production networks of discourse are specific to the field investigated. For example, when studying parliamentary discourse, they include the political groups and individuals elected as well as the many resources and sources they draw from: their formal and informal ties with other parts of government, political parties, scientific research bodies, trade unions, lobby organisations, etc. Especially when media organizations are involved, the production networks are vast as few people are as well-connected as jour-

nalists. They are embedded in a rich organisational, political and cultural environment, deserving study in its own right (e.g. Reese & Shoemaker 2016). Ultimately it is up to the researcher to decide how far the analysis should extend, and these choices are informed by the empirical focus of the research conducted.

Figure 3: different modalities of discourse and their associated agencies

Nevertheless, in our view, even studies that do not centre the networks of production are still well-advised to retain a sensitivity towards how they influence and interlink with their primary object of interest. For example, the study from which we present empirical material compared climate change-related identity portrayals in news media consumed by audiences identifying predominantly as left- or right-leaning in the USA and Germany. The different outlets are parts of diverse networks, encompassing their ownership structures, the legal-institutional framework they operate in, and the (sometimes) long-lasting ties to political parties, businesses, and civil society. Given the comparative aim of the study, these contextual factors help to explain the empirical findings: existing political polarisation, close ties

between partisan politics and the media, and the more substantial influence of owners on media content (cf. Gustafson et al. 2019) can explain the more pronounced forms of media polarisation observed in the US.

Networks of reception

A frequently visited pitfall in content- and discourse-analytic studies is to overlook the recipient. In the former approach, this can, for example, take the form of analysing a selection of media outlets and making claims about news coverages impact on “the public”, while not being aware that the audience reached by these outlets is limited in terms of class, geographical location, race, gender, etc. In discourse analysis, it can appear as an exclusive focus on the articulation and the composition of the message, while the relation between this articulation and the context in which it manifests itself is neglected. There is ample evidence that media affect recipients but that these are differentiated depending on a range of audience characteristics (cf. Bennet & Iyengar 2008). Next to choosing what media to consume leading to “partisan selective exposure” (Stroud 2010) to certain information, opinions, and sources, audiences react to cues in content and context, leading to different interpretations of the same text (cf. Gunther & Liebhart 2006).

To illustrate this, one of the striking phenomena motivating a comparison of identity portrayals in US and German media are the vastly different audience profiles in the two countries. In the US, outlets read by predominantly left- or right-leaning individuals have much larger audiences (Newman et al. 2018). Furthermore, the US is deeply divided along party lines (Iyengar & Westwood 2015), and partisan identity is crucial in determining how people process and respond to climate change-related messages (Newman, Nisbet, & Nisbet 2018). Knowledge of this second contextual feature allows inferences (in hypothetical form) about the likely consequences of empirical findings. In this case, we argue that portrayals emphasising differences to the ‘political other’ of most of the audience reinforce negative stereotypes,

polarisation and the politicisation of facts (van der Linden, Leiserowitz, & Maibach 2018) in the field of climate change.

A network view of discourse “content”

As discussed above, studying their “content” is one of the most prominent ways to engage with public and mediated discourses. We want to highlight four crucial takeaways from the arguments presented so far: First, identity and knowledge are temporary outcomes of the work done by a variety of actors, and this often involves struggles over definition. Second, to do justice to the complexities involved, analysts need to emphasize all actors’ agency. Third, knowledge and identities are products of associations between different groups and actors and cannot be understood in isolation. Finally, any articulatory praxis says something about the objects being talked about and about the speakers simultaneously, and both dimensions deserve in-depth study. In the following, we discuss the implications of these takeaways by raising several theoretical and methodological points, illustrated by empirical examples gleaned from a recent study by one of the authors (author, n.d.).

First of all, a network view of discourse content implies a heightened sensitivity towards the fact that identities — group labels and definitions — and knowledge are typically contested, in flux, and contingent on who is speaking. Many labels used may, to a considerable degree, be “floating signifiers” in the terminology of PDT (Laclau & Mouffe 1985/2001, pp. 113-114) — where little meaning is fixed and shared across groups. For instance, in the empirical material we analysed, when used by a Conservative politician appearing in Fox News, the term “activists” is typically linked to notions of unrest, disturbance of public order, and disruption of regular American life. In contrast, a journalist working for Huffington Post would usually associate it with moral integrity, political engagement, and courage. Abstracting from the specifics of this case, the theoretical point here is that capturing these nuances allows the analyst to understand that the identities of groups are contingent on who gets to

speak about them at a given point in time. Deciding who can speak for or about a group is a central aspect of how news media exercise political power.

However, and this is our second point, their power in this regard is limited: media and journalists do not operate in a vacuum and depend on their sources and the information they provide, and these actors have agency in shaping how they want to be represented in the media and public discourse. Even when actors are not given a voice directly but are merely ‘covered’ or talked about by others, they are not stripped of their agency entirely, as their actions and utterances often serve as a point of reference for what is being said about them. This is particularly relevant when we remind ourselves that the entities and collectives brought into play in public discourse are not only social groups we feel familiar with but extend to what we would typically call objects of knowledge. In our empirical data (author, n.d.), the most prominent of these is Hurricane Harvey, along with a range of others with a physical presence (forests, insects, etc.), and without (beliefs, theories, attitudes, etc.). All these entities, while not actors with agency of the same flavour as humans, are consistently given causal power, attained independently of human action and choice, but with the ability to impact humans in various ways. The degree to which humans influence and are influenced by these non-human ‘actants’ (Latour 2005) is core to much public debate, and what has been said about the struggles over definition and identity of human groups and identities also pertains to these non-humans. Knowledge, like identity, is the subject of struggles over-representation and does not exist independently of the objects under discussion.

The third theoretical point we raise is that identity and knowledge in media content are temporary outcomes of associations and equivalences. Speakers create and transform identities and knowledge by setting a range of entities in relation to each other, and we advocate for an approach that conceptually highlights this aspect of discourse content. In our

view, this can be achieved by using the Latourian notions of “entity” and “collective” as categories for content-oriented studies of discourse. Asking what entities are present in the text and how they are connected allows the analyst to create a map of the networks of meaning presented in each text or statement by individual actors within that text. For example, one of the current disputes about climate change can be recast as a dispute over whether or not climate change (an entity) belongs to the collective of “things that could threaten humanity’s existence”. In the “content” of discourse, actors make claims that re-affirm or dispute associations between entities and collectives and thus establish or transform objects of knowledge and identity formations. In a given research project, theoretically motivated guiding questions can help to identify relevant types of entities, collectives, and associations. Generic questions include asking who is said to belong to which group, have which knowledge or opinion, behave in a certain way, hold which goals, and to care about sets of values, norms, and moral evaluations. From what we argued above, it should be clear that answers to these tend to differ depending on whom you ask (metaphorically speaking). In the words of PDT, subject and speaker positions are rarely agreed upon, and presenting just one construction of a specific position usually does not do justice to the complexities of discursive practice. As researchers, we are challenged to attend to the differences between actors, whether they consider themselves part of a group or not.

Finally, we want to stress that when actors establish associations between the entities and collectives they talk about, they also relate themselves with those entities, collectives and associations. To illustrate this, think of a piece of news quoting a government official claiming that US greenhouse gas emissions are falling faster than those in any other country. This claim establishes an association between, say, “greenhouse gas reductions” and “things the US can claim leadership on”, but it also establishes a relation between the government official and “people who believe the US is a leader in GHG emission reductions”. In other

words, any articulation can be analysed with a focus on its content and with a focus on those doing the articulating. Both are relevant to understand how knowledge and identities are usually co-created. In fact, in this example, a third layer concerns the actor producing the text: they chose to present this particular government official with this particular opinion, and thus also give the analyst information about themselves and the collectives they belong to (chiefly the media organisation they work for). Whether or not this last aspect is relevant to the analysis depends on the research project and its aims — when analysing the role of media in public discourse, we believe it is crucial and has implications for existing approaches, such as frame analysis.

Recasting frame analysis

Our points concerning the focus on the in-flux and contingent nature of entities, collectives, and their associations have been formulated in relatively abstract theoretical terms, thus tying in with our broader arguments for theorising discourses using the lens of overlapping networks. These reflections have methodological implications, which can be illustrated in a brief return to frame analysis. As discussed above, this approach typically focuses on a range of interpretations propagated by and in a text. It can potentially emphasise actors by centring the proponents of a frame or making aspects of the actions of those presented core of the indicators pointing towards a frame. This creates the possibility to recast frame analysis as a tool to investigate the knowledge and identities articulated by different actors by applying the notion of frames at a level more fine-grained than usual. Rather than seeing a frame as something present in one text, frames are contingent on individual speakers.

Within this perspective, the focus shifts towards investigating how identity labels and objects of knowledge are tied up in making and articulating frames. Three levels of analysis can be distinguished: First, zooming in to the frames propagated by the actors appearing in or writing texts, and investigating how other entities and associations are portrayed, the analyst

can study how identities and knowledge would differ if we only followed a particular cluster of proponents. For instance, we can ask the identity of climate scientists following only Conservative politicians appearing in Huffington Post. Second, these external frames are part and parcel of speakers and subjects' implicit and explicit self-definition. Thus, we can investigate how identities are defined partly by *defining other identities*. Third, in this regard, the power of journalists and media is readily apparent: presenting Republicans talking about Democrats in a certain way shapes the perceptions of Republicans among Democrats and Republicans alike (and the perception of Democrats). Thus, media framing of identities is partly an outcome of presenting those groups framing other groups. This should be kept in mind when studying public discourse at large (pooling Republican statements from different outlets ignores this aspect of media power) and can be made an object of inquiry in itself.

Concluding Remarks

This paper developed a framework for analysing how knowledge and identities are co-constructed in mediated public discourse. Inspired by Actor-Network Theory (Latour 2005) and Political Discourse Theory (Laclau & Mouffe 1985/2001), its core proposal is to study the associations between different identity markers by making transparent by whom and how they are articulated. In doing so, we responded to what we had criticised in content, frame, and discourse analysis: a tendency to theoretically and empirically underemphasise the agency of the actors appearing in mediated public discourse as speakers or subjects. Our proposition is a framework built around “network views” of production, content, and reception of discourse. In our discussion, we exemplified our points by referring to a recently conducted empirical case study. In addition, we showed that existing approaches, such as frame analysis, can be fruitfully modified to respond to our criticism.

We believe that this work is relevant to scholars studying mediated public discourses or political communication in multiple manners. First, social identity markers and group

norms (cf. Hogg & Reid 2006) are inherent features of communication with a political component. Analysing the ongoing controversies and (re-)negotiations of the links between knowledge and identity will contribute to our understanding of contemporary communication phenomena, including populist communication (Laclau 2005) and ‘fake news’ (e.g. Schulz, Wirth, & Müller 2018), disputes at the intersection of science and politics (e.g. Newman, Nisbet, & Nisbet 2018), the “politicisation of facts” (van der Linden et al. 2017), studies of economic policy debates, and many more. Second, the framework put forward in this paper can be operationalised for studying a large variety of cases and facilitates the integration of findings concerning media production, reception, and content. This possibility is direly needed to understand highly complex communication phenomena that have a social identity component, such as reinforcing spirals (Slater 2007), boomerang effects in science communication (Hart & Nisbet 2012), and the causes, mechanisms, and consequences of selective exposure more generally (Stroud 2010).

References

- Bennett, L. W., & Iyengar, S. (2008). A New Era of Minimal Effects? The Changing Foundations of Political Communication. *Journal of Communication*, 58(4), 707-731.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2008.00410.x>
- Besel, R. D. (2011). Opening the “Black Box” of Climate Change Science: Actor-Network Theory and Rhetorical Practice in Scientific Controversies. *Southern Communication Journal*, 76(2), 120-136. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10417941003642403>
- Boltanski, L. (2011). *On Critique: A Sociology of Emancipation*. 2011. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Brüggemann, M. & Engesser, S. (2017). Beyond false balance: How interpretive journalism shapes media coverage of climate change. *Global Environmental Change*, 42(2017), 58-67. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2016.11.004>
- Cacciatore, M. A., Scheufele, D. A., & Iyengar, S. (2015). The End of Framing as we Know it ... and the Future of Media Effects. *Mass Communication and Society*, 19(1), 7-23.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2015.1068811>
- Carpentier, N. (2017). *The Discursive-Material Knot: Cyprus in Conflict and Community Media Participation*. New York, USA: Peter Lang. <https://doi.org/10.3726/978-1-4331-3754-9>
- Carstensen, M. B., & Schmidt, V. A. (2016). Power through, over and in ideas: conceptualizing ideational power in discursive institutionalism. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 23(3), 318–337. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2015.1115534>
- Knorr-Cetina, K. D. (1981). *The Manufacture of Knowledge*. Oxford, UK: Pergamon Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/C2009-0-09537-3>

- Emirbayer, M., & Mische, A. (1998). What Is Agency? *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(4), 962–923. <https://doi.org/10.1086/231294>
- Glaser, B. G., & Holton, J. (2004). Remodeling Grounded Theory. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 5(2).
- Glynnos, J., & Howarth, D. (2007). Logics of Critical Explanation in Social and Political Theory. London, UK: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203934753>
- Gorp, B. V. (2007). The Constructionist Approach to Framing: Bringing Culture Back In. *Journal of Communication*, 57(1), 60–78. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0021-9916.2007.00329.x>
- Gustafson, A., Rosenthal, S. A., Ballew, M. T., Goldberg, M. H., Bergquist, P., Kotcher, J. E., Maibach, E. W., & Leiserowitz, A. (2019). The development of partisan polarization over the Green New Deal. *Nature Climate Change*, 9(12), 940–944. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-019-0621-7>
- Hart, S. P. & Nisbet, E. C. (2012). Boomerang Effects in Science Communication. *Communication Research*, 39(6), 701–723. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650211416646>
- Herschinger, E. (2012). ‘Hell Is the Other’: Conceptualising Hegemony and Identity through Discourse Theory. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 41(1), 65–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305829812449501>
- Hogg, M. A., & Reid, S. A. (2006). Social Identity, Self-Categorization, and the Communication of Group Norms. *Communication Theory*, 16(1), 7–30. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2006.00003.x>
- Howarth, D. (2010). Power, discourse, and policy: articulating a hegemony approach to critical policy studies. *Critical Policy Studies*, 3(3–4), 309–335. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171003619725>

- Howarth, D. (2013). *Poststructuralism and after*. London, UK: palgrave macmillan.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137266989>
- Howarth, D., & Torfing, J. (Eds.) (2005). *Discourse Theory in European Politics*. London, UK: palgrave macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230523364>
- Ichikawa, J. J., & Steup, M. (2018). The Analysis of Knowledge. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2018 Edition)*. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/knowledge-analysis/>
- Iyengar, S., & Westwood, S. J. (2015). Fear and Loathing across Party Lines: New Evidence on Group Polarization. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(3), 690–707.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12152>
- Jacobs, T. (2018). The Dislocated Universe of Laclau and Mouffe: An Introduction to Post-Structuralist Discourse Theory. *Critical Review*, 30(3-4), 294–315.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08913811.2018.1565731>
- Jacobs, T. (2019). Poststructuralist discourse theory as an independent paradigm for studying institutions: Towards a new definition of ‘discursive construction’ in institutional analysis. *Contemporary Political Theory*, 18(3), 379–401. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41296-018-0279-3>
- Jacobs, T., & Tschötschel, R. (2019). Topic models meet discourse analysis: a quantitative tool for a qualitative approach. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 5, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2019.1576317>
- Jørgensen, M., & Phillips, L. (2002). *Discourse Analysis As Theory and Method*. London, UK: Sage Publications.
- Laclau, E. (1990). *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*. London, UK: Verso.
- Laclau, E. (2005). *On populist reason*. London, UK: Verso.

- Laclau, E., & Mouffe, C. (2001). *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (2nd edition). London, UK: Verso.
- Lamont, M., & Molnár, V. (2002). The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28, 167-195. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3069239>
- Larsson, O. L. (2015). Using Post-Structuralism to Explore The Full Impact of Ideas on Politics. *Critical Review*, 27(2), 174–197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08913811.2015.1073883>
- Latour, B. (1993). *We Have Never Been Modern*. Cambridge, USA: Harvard University Press.
- Latour, B. (1999). *Pandora's Hope*. Cambridge, USA: Harvard University Press.
- Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the Social*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Leipold, S., & Winkel, G. (2017). Discursive Agency: (Re-)Conceptualizing Actors and Practices in the Analysis of Discursive Policymaking. *Policy Studies Journal*, 45(3), 510–534. <https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12172>
- Lombard, M., Snyder-Duch, J., & Bracken, C. (2002). Content analysis in mass communication: Assessment and reporting of intercoder reliability. *Human Communication Research*, 28(4), 587-604. <https://doi.org/10.1093/hcr/28.4.587>
- Marres, N. (2016). The Issues Deserve More Credit. *Social Studies of Science*, 37(5), 759-780. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312706077367>
- Matthes, J., & Kohring, M. (2008). The content analysis of media frames: Toward improving reliability and validity. *Journal of Communication*, 58(2), 258-279. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2008.00384.x>
- McLaughlin, B., McLeod, D. M., Davis, C., Perryman, M., & Mun, K. (2016). Elite Cues, News Coverage, and Partisan Support for Compromise. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 94(3), 862-882. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699016655755>

- Michael, M. (2017). *Actor Network Theory*. London, UK: Sage Publishing.
- Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Kalogeropoulos, A., Levy, D. A., & Nielsen, R. (2018). *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2018*. Oxford, UK: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism/ University of Oxford. <http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/>
- Newman, T. P., Nisbet, E. C., & Nisbet, M. C. (2018). Climate change, cultural cognition, and media effects: Worldviews drive news selectivity, biased processing, and polarized attitudes: *Public Understanding of Science*, 27(8), 985-1002.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0963662518801170>
- Nonhoff, M. (2018). Hegemony Analysis: Theory, Methodology and Research Practice. In (t. Marttila (Ed.), *Discourse, Culture and Organization* (pp. 63–104). London, UK: palgrave macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-94123-3_4
- Reese, S. D., & Shoemaker, P. J. (2016). A Media Sociology for the Networked Public Sphere: The Hierarchy of Influences Model. *Mass Communication and Society*, 19(4), 389-410. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2016.1174268>
- Remling, E. (2017). Logics, assumptions and genre chains: a framework for poststructuralist policy analysis. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 15(1), 1–18.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2017.1382382>
- Scheufele, D. A., & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models. *Journal of Communication*, 57(1), 9-20.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00326.x>
- Schmidt, V. A. (2011). Speaking of change: why discourse is key to the dynamics of policy transformation. *Critical Policy Studies*, 5(2), 106-126.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2011.576520>

- Schulz, A., Wirth, W., & Müller, P. (2018). We Are the People and You Are Fake News: A Social Identity Approach to Populist Citizens' False Consensus and Hostile Media Perceptions. *Communication Research*, 47(2), 201-226.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650218794854>
- Slater, M. D. (2007). Reinforcing Spirals: The Mutual Influence of Media Selectivity and Media Effects and Their Impact on Individual Behaviour and Social Identity. *Communication Theory*, 17(3), 281-303. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2007.00296.x>
- Stroud, N. (2010). Polarization and Partisan Selective Exposure. *Journal of Communication*, 60(3), 556-576. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2010.01497.x>
- van der Linden, S., Leiserowitz, A., & Maibach, E. (2018). Scientific agreement can neutralize politicization of facts. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 2(2-3).
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-017-0259-2>
- van Dijk, T. A. (2003). The discourse-knowledge interface. In G. Weiss & R. Wodak (Eds.) *Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 85-109). London, UK: palgrave macmillan.
https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230514560_5
- Venturini, T. (2009). Diving in magma: how to explore controversies with actor-network theory. *Public Understanding of Science*, 19(3), 258-273.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0963662509102694>
- Zienkowski, J. (2017). *Articulations of Self and Politics in Activist Discourse*. London, UK: palgrave macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-40703-6>