

## **Editorial**

**Salvatore Scifo**, Bournemouth University

This issue of *Interactions: Studies in Communication and Culture* (Volume 7, Issue 2) offers a selection of articles that range from the cultural representations of the link between the Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the representations of disability in Turkish television, and the nexus between politics of culture and Internet memes under President Obama in the US. It also explores the links between Facebook and political participation, the uses of ICT by 14-20 year olds in India and the political economy of Wikileaks.

In the first article, *From victims to aggressors: cultural representations of the link between the Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict*, Liat Steir-Livny proposes a reading of films and literary works of Jewish-Israeli directors and writers that represent a link between the Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. She examines the way artists reflect the complex political blend of the Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and shows that alongside a right-wing narrative that presents the Arabs as the Nazis' successors, Hebrew literature and cinema, especially in the last decade, reflect mainly the opinions of the left and extreme left wing in Israel, who don't accept this equation, but create what can be called a 'counter acting-out. According to Steir-Livny, the fact that the politicization of the Holocaust is tossed from one political side to the other reflects the confusion and ambivalence in Israel's 'postmemory' of the Holocaust, and indicates the struggle between different memory agents on the dominance in the different cultural fields of Holocaust collective memory.

In the second article, *Representations of Disability in Turkish Television Health Shows: Neoliberal Articulations of Family, Religion, and the Medical Approach*, Dikmen Bezmez and Ergin Bulut investigate representations of disability in Turkish television shows on health in their relation to the hegemonic ideologies that they shape and that are reproduced by them. Dikmen and Bulut argue that three categories emerge: disability as a familial, religious, and medical issue and that, respectively, each category is molded by and perpetuates a patriarchal motherhood discourse, an Islamic ethos, and a medical approach. According to them, the categories interrelate with the overarching disabling and neoliberal ideologies and produce contradictory representations and relate to the particularities of Turkey, defined by Islamic leanings towards disability, accompanied by neoliberalism, and cultural conservatism.

In the third article, *'I Have a Drone': Internet Memes and the Politics of Culture*, Kevin Howley, looks into the comparisons between Martin Luther King, Jr. and US President Barack Obama, according to him a commonplace in news and political discourse and takes up this comparison by way of a critical analysis of an Internet meme that emerged at the time of Obama's second inauguration. Specifically, he analyses the 'I Have A Drone' meme, an example of digital culture that calls out Barack Obama on his targeted killing program, with an eye toward better understanding the role political memes play in the compression of complex ideas into smaller packets, and the implications thereof for public discourse and political engagement. His discussion is located in relation to contemporary theorizing on Internet memes, with an emphasis on the cultural politics enacted within and through this emergent form of participatory culture. Throughout, he argues that the 'I Have a Drone' meme challenges the rhetorical equivalence between the two African-American leaders, thereby registering and articulating popular opposition to Obama's drone wars. Doing so, he

highlights the creative and incisive fashion in which activists, graphic artists and others appropriate, challenge, and reconfigure news and political discourse in digital space.

In the fourth article, *Facebook and political participation: virtuous circle and participation intermediaries*, Isidoropaolo Casteltrione, draws from the results of his mixed methods cross-national study focusing on Italy and the United Kingdom to explore how the contribution of Facebook to citizens' political participation varies in relation to pre-existing levels and different dimensions of political activity, namely political expression and information vs. political mobilisation. The findings indicate that politically active individuals are the ones who take more advantage of the mobilisation affordances of Facebook, whereas less politically active participants employ this social networking site mainly for political information. According to Casteltrione, activists consider Facebook as a key tool for the organisation of political initiatives, enabling them to quickly communicate and coordinate, and to operate independently from traditional political institutions such as parties and trade unions. He also argues that, with regards to citizens who engage to a lesser degree in offline and online political activities, the informative power of Facebook and its easiness of use come into play. Finally, Casteltrione states political information can reach less engaged users through the activity of participation intermediaries, activating a virtuous circle, and potentially produce, in the long run, a mobilisation effect.

In the fifth article, *ICT uses by 14-20 year olds in India: imperatives of parental intervention*, Rajesh Kumar discusses the role of parental mediation based on the findings of an exploratory study conducted in India. The research attempted to comprehend how technological changes are influencing children and their families, and what can be the role of the parents in this process. Situating the study in the wider context of global parental

mediation practices, Kumar attempts to explore current parental mediation practices in India, analyse how the young react to these practices and discuss effective parental mediation practice within the social and cultural context of India.

Finally, in the sixth article, *The Political Economy of WikiLeaks: transparency and accountability through digital and alternative media*, Kathy Dobson and Jeremy Hunsinger, discuss the uberization of the media through an analysis of WikiLeaks. They argue that the release of the “Collateral Murder” video by WikiLeaks, and the surrounding events, are an example of how alternative media platforms uberify journalism through the dissemination of information, avoiding the barriers that limit mainstream news media and thus become journalism’s future. According to Dobson and Hunsinger, this draws into question the future development of journalism, in particular values and norms around accountability, transparency, and bias, as digital leaking troubles relationships between journalism, various institutions, and the public. As the ideologies of uberification continue to shape journalism, they argue, these values, norms, and relationships of traditional journalism could be strengthened or face new challenges and obstacles.

We hope that you will enjoy the reading and will be looking forward to receive your contributions to forthcoming thematic issues on ‘Suicide and the Media’ (to be published in Summer 2017) and ‘Societies in Flux: Media, Democratisation, and Political Socialization’ (to be published in Fall 2017), as well as articles outside of these themes to be considered for the next mixed issue.

### **Contributor details**

Salvatore Scifo is the Editor of this journal, *Interactions: Studies in Communication and Culture*. Since January 2016 he is Senior Lecturer in Social Media and Communication and the School of Journalism, English and Communication, Faculty of Media and Communication, Bournemouth University. He is a member of the university's Centre for Media History and an associate member of the Centre for the Study of Journalism, Culture and Community. Prior to this, he has worked in Istanbul (Maltepe University, Koc University and Marmara University), London (London Metropolitan University and University of Westminster) and at the University of Siena in Italy. His research interests include community and alternative media, European media policy, British radio history, and crisis communication and social media.

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