

Kurskod: SKOM12
Termin: Vårterminen 2013
Handledare: Howard Nothhaft
Examinator: Åsa Thelander

Democratic Communication as a Strategic tool
Exploring the nation branding-initiative Curators of Sweden as a
contemporary application of digital democracy

SUSANNA RICKNERT

Lunds universitet
Institutionen för strategisk kommunikation
Examensarbete för masterexamen



Abstract

Democratic communication as a strategic tool

This study explores the relationship between democratic ideals and web technology discourses observable in the US media debate on the nation branding initiative Curators of Sweden.

Having identified discursive patterns that touched upon issues of democracy and web technology, and by connecting the reactions to a theoretical foundation on digital democracy, the analysis show how the democratic value of the initiative was interpreted differently due to conflicting ideals and assumptions of democracy and web technology.

The study concludes that while democracy may be used as a self-evident value in the rhetoric and practice of digital democracy, it may also apply to communication practices that serve conflicting democratic ideals.

The findings allows us to problematize the use of democracy as a strategic tool, and explains some socio-cultural dynamics surrounding web technology discourse, illustrating implications for strategic communication practitioners and scholars with an interest in digital democracy, public diplomacy and nation branding.

Sammanfattning

Demokratisk kommunikation som strategiskt verktyg

Den här uppsatsen undersöker relationen mellan demokratiska ideal och teknologiska diskurser så som de uttrycks i den amerikanska mediala debatten kring nation branding-initiativet Curators of Sweden. Genom att ha studerat reaktionerna till kampanjen, och med en teoretisk utgångspunkt i digital demokrati, identifierades diskursiva mönster som framhöll andra demokratiska ideal än de som kampanjen avser att förmedla.

Studiens resultat vittnar således om de eventuella problem som kan uppkomma när demokrati används som strategiskt verktyg och belyser därmed även en allmän företeelse i retorik och praktik kring digital demokrati där konceptet demokrati antas innehålla samstämmiga ideologiska värden men som i praktiken genererar antingen oförutsedda eller motstridiga tolkningar.

Vidare illustrerar studien socio-kulturella mekanismer kring teknologiska diskurser som är av betydelse för olika kommunikationsverksamhetsområden såsom digital demokrati, offentlig diplomati och nation branding.

Keywords: Curators of Sweden, (digital) democracy, ideology, public diplomacy, strategic communication, web technology

Word count (including space): 119 679

Table of Content

PREFACE.....	6
1. Introduction.....	7
1.1 Background to the Study	10
1.3 Problem Statement and Discussion.....	11
1.4 Purpose and Research Questions	16
1.5 Delimitation	16
1.6 Notes on Terminology	17
1.6.1 Content Curation.....	17
1.6.2 Discursive patterns.....	18
1.6.3 Democracy	18
1.6.4 Nation branding	18
1.6.5 Public diplomacy	19
1.6.6 Second generation of web technology (Web 2.0).....	19
2. Research Design and Methodology	20
2.1 Objects of Study: Reactions to Curators of Sweden.....	20
2.2 Curators of Sweden in a US media context	21
2.3 Selecting respondents for Expert Interviews	22
2.3.1 Interview proceedings.....	23
2.4 A Critical-Hermeneutic Perspective	23
2.4.1 A Critical Approach.....	27
2.5 The Internet as a Social Construction	28
3 Theoretical Framework.....	30
3.1 An overview of the Digital Democracy Debate.....	30
3.3.1 The Virtual Public Sphere.....	33
3.3.2 “The Good Citizen” Theorizing discourses on citizenship and civility	36
3.4 Digital Democracy Ideals	38
3.5 Self Expression Values and Civility	40
4. Analysis.....	42
4.1 Individual empowerment and the role of the curator	42

4.1.1 Explaining the reactions through differences in citizen discourse	45
4.2 Questioning the functionality of the initiative	46
4.2.1 Explaining reactions through understandings on civility	49
4.3 What should belong in the (virtual) public sphere?	52
4.3.1 Sweden embodies values of (cyber-) libertarianism.....	53
4.3.2 Is it meaningful communication?	54
4.3.3 Balancing between public and private matters	55
5. Conclusion	57
Suggestions for further research	59
6. References.....	61
6.1 Attachment 1: Interview Frida Roberts	67
6.2 Attachment 2: Interview Ludvig Beckman.....	69
6.3 Attachment 3: Interview Philip Young.....	71
6.4 Attachment 4: Interview Deeped Niclas Strandh	73

PREFACE

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Howard Nothhaft-, for his contribution with immense knowledge and dedication in every step of this process.

A second word of thanks goes to my dear friends Alice and Annika, and to my wonderful sisters Caroline and Louise, for their patience and sincere encouragements throughout.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank everyone interviewed for making this study possible by offering their precious time and valuable knowledge.

A special thought goes to my grandfather Rune who despite his passing inspired me to keep on working.

Thank you!

1. Introduction

Winning the hearts and minds of foreign audiences is said to be the key to success in International relations (Anholt, 2007; Michalski, 2005; Nye, 2004). During the past decades, nations around the world have adopted the mantras of soft power, pioneered by political scientist Joseph Nye (2004); that strategies of *persuasion* is the way to attain foreign policy goals rather than through hard power such as military force or coercion. One of Nye's central claims is that those countries whose culture and ideas are closer to international norms, and whose credibility abroad is reinforced by their values and policies, are better suited for success in postmodern international relations (2004).

Nation branding and public diplomacy are features of statecraft based on principles of soft power communication and principally aimed at communicating with foreign publics to achieve foreign- and domestic policy goals. These practices are essentially linked to the field of Strategic communication by the means of informing, influencing and persuading publics on country image and values, as well as building long term relationships with publics on the international arena (Cornish, French-Lindley York, 2011).

Traditionally, place- and nation branding campaigns have followed a linear model of communication signified by an active sender of a message, to a more or less passive audience or receiver, making the communication structure hierarchical and asymmetrical (Ketter & Avraham, 2012). However, as the global communication environment undergoes significant transformations, particularly by modern networked forms of technology, the premises under which strategic communication practitioners interact with foreign publics are changing, especially due to difficulties in separating domestic audiences (public affairs) from foreign audiences (public diplomacy) (Melissen, 2005). Melissen (2005, p. 10) describes that current public diplomacy practice is taking new, less hierarchal forms, and refers to an erosion from state- and media centered models of foreign public communication: "This new public diplomacy moves away from (...) peddling information to foreigners and keeping the foreign press at bay, towards *engaging* with foreign audiences" (my italics).

Along with these changes in the global communication environment, with less hierarchical forms of communication, the assumed democratic potentials of web technology becomes of

interest for communication practitioners who want to use these tools in their communication with foreign publics or utilize democracy as a strategic tool in delivering policies. As communication practitioners are gradually acknowledging the unique, interactive characteristics of social media, PR-efforts are also increasingly being built upon the principle of user-generated content (UGC) impacting both the co-creation of and the distribution of (organizational) messages (Ketter & Avraham, 2012). Who controls the message is thus becoming a matter of public involvement, turning traditionally passive audiences into active ones.

Since the democratic potentials of web technology is vastly theorized in the academic field, as well as practiced as a rhetorical tool for political purposes (Dahlgren, 2009; Kaneva, 2011; Habermas, 2007) it has inspired me to ask how our understanding on democracy and its basic components are shifting in the new communication environment, and how it in turn affects our strategic approaches and perceptions of online communication. To this background, this study will hopefully encourage us to reflect on to what extent ideology determines both the strategy- and reception-, of our online communication practices. As indicated in the figure below, the focus of this study is to explore the complex dynamics within the relationship between three interlinked concepts. This would be an attempt to better understand the premises under which strategic communication practitioners act-; a contemporary communication environment that both celebrate and criticize the assumed democratic potentials of web technology.

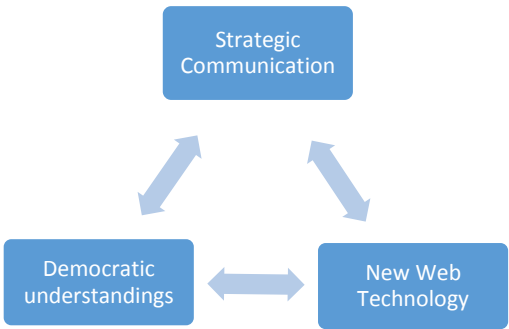


Figure 1: own

This study will originate in the nation branding-initiative Curators of Sweden that is based on a principle of *democratic communication*, where democracy and web technology (Twitter) are used as strategic tools in Sweden’s nation branding strategy. While most nation branding initiatives are still based on traditional marketing principles of coherent message creation and one-way communication, the strategic idea behind this campaign is to establish “a democratic form

of communication” by public involvement, where Swedish citizens alone, get to create and distribute their own narratives in an official online communication channel (Svenska Institutet, Pressrum 2011). With this campaign as an empirical point of departure, a unique opportunity is given to empirically explore the dynamics between assumptions of democracy and web technology and how it may impact strategic communication practices, such as public diplomacy and nation branding.

1.1 Background to the Study

In December 2011, Sweden offered its citizens “The world’s most democratic Twitter-account”. By deliberately handing over the official Twitter account @Sweden to a selected citizen each week, to tweet freely about the country, Sweden directed its nation branding strategy into a “mined” field of almost uncensored content curation (Svenska Institutet, Pressrum, 2011). The Curators of Sweden (CoS) initiative was introduced in an attempt to raise awareness about Sweden, and let ordinary Swedes “paint a picture of Sweden different to that usually obtained through traditional media” (available from <http://curatorsofsweden.com/about>). The campaign, which is currently running, and active with a new curator every week, is part of a larger nation branding strategy dedicated to the long-term promotion and profiling of Sweden through public diplomacy and strategic communication (available from www.si.se).

The creators behind the initiative, state-funded Swedish Institute (SI), VisitSweden, the marketing agency of Sweden’s Tourism Board (VS) and PR agency Volontaire, claims the initiative as a great success pointing to the large buzz CoS redeemed in both social- and traditional media, creating widespread publicity for the Swedish nation brand (Svenska Institutet, Pressrum, 2012). Internationally, and from an early stage, the initiative was covered favorably in the newspaper New York Times and the online current affairs magazine Slate, signifying the great attention the initiative gained. The biggest buzz however, was undoubtedly created in June 2012 when tweets of one curator caused great commotion and media attention worldwide. Due to the nature of some tweets, massive discussions followed and the initiative regained widespread media attention in the US and elsewhere (Haberman, 2012).

Many reactions to the initiative seemed to imply ideologically rooted interpretations, touching upon democratic premises and assumptions of the democratic effects digital technology. Some voices pointed to the concept’s fragility and sentenced it to fail, while others celebrated it as a democratic experiment in true citizen participation and free speech. Forbes Magazine (Hill, 2012) analyzed the rationale behind the campaign and suggesting that: “Sweden wanted to dramatically show how committed it is to freedom of speech and the power of the unfettered internet”, whereas a blogger for TIME Magazine concluded that some tweets just should be left “to the experts” (Traywick, 2012 para. 7).

Due to the controversy the campaign caused, I would argue that the CoS spurred discussions on very basic preconditions for (modern) democracy - e.g., censorship, representation and political incorrectness, making the initiative more than a matter of national image and publicity,

but a contemporary commentary on modern democracy discourse and the assumed democratic potentialities of new web technology and media.

1.3 Problem Statement and Discussion

During the past decades the world has experienced two generations of digital communication technology, providing billions of people the means of receiving, producing, and distributing information, with major shift in power relations as a result (Loader & Mercea, 2012). The 1st generation of Internet enthusiasts predicted a transformation of representative democracy onto strong participatory models with Habermasian (virtual) public spheres and online agoras as significant features (Barlow, 1996). These visions came to be discarded as utopian and replaced by the convergence of social and economic interests onto the online sphere which challenged the preconditions for those ideals (Loader & Mercea, 2012). Today, much attention is given to the political effects of the second generation of Internet and Communication Technologies (ICTs) or Web 2.0, signifying arising trends in citizen participation and transformations from top-down, authoritative structures of communication towards more interactive modes (O'Reilly, 2005).

In these days, the enthusiasm for the democratic potentials of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) is widely adopted by politicians, journalists, scholars and everyday citizen, and commonplace in discussions of the potential of web technology (Dahlberg, 2011; Nothhaft, 2012). Debating the potential of web technology, most prominent seem to be a deliberative discourse celebrating increased participation through the creation of new forms and modes of participation (Dahlberg, 2011), and it is also commonly argued (Barber, 2003; Loader & Mercea, 2012) that the interactive elements of Web 2.0 technologies have the ability to generate *new* forms of civic engagement and political activity, and thereby revitalize key components of democracy.

There are at the same time those who question the possibilities for web technology to meaningfully enhance democracy. Some authors point to the very opposite of these optimistic claims, that civic life, for instance, is being undermined by trends and processes of commercialist

thoughts in society, and an increased commercialization of cyberspace¹ (Dahlgren, 2009; Habermas, 2004). Here, it is argued that economic interests are not only privileged over other (civic) values, but that these values are intrinsically linked to the media discourse, where media acts as “carriers” of these modes of thoughts and structures (Dahlgren, 2009). Similar fears are raised against the emergence of individualistic structures, which arguably, by its celebration of individual autonomy, generate conditions that are harmful for modern societies. Fuelled by mass self-expression trends, such developments are enabling too much autonomy, in both the public- and virtual sphere- and are as such considered a threat to communitarian, or collectivistic values in civil society (Castells, 2009; Etzioni, 2011).

In spite of this debate, with seemingly contradictory predictions about web technologies’ effects on democracy, various actors, institutions and organizations, -(political or civil), frequently refer to the democratic potential of web technologies, as reasons to integrate them into their own activities (Dahlberg, 2011). The concept of democracy seem to apply to various phenomena and practices almost metaphorically, and even across ideological stances. At the same time, what is really meant by democracy-, is rarely defined in the rhetoric and practice of these technologies (Nothhaft, 2012). Conceptions like digital democracy, online democracy and e-democracy may sometimes be defined, but in very technical terms. More often the democratic rationales of web technologies seem to be mentioned rather haphazardly and, as something commonly known and unproblematic.

¹ Peter Dahlgren (2009, p.20) uses the term “economism”, understood as mode of thought where economic criteria is privileged over all other values.

Lincoln Dahlberg (2011) similarly observes:

“For well over a decade there has been widespread enthusiasm about the possibilities of digital media technology advancing and enhancing democratic communication. This enthusiasm comes from a surprisingly wide arrange of political interests (...). As a result there are very different understandings of the form of democracy that digital media may promote, with differences in digital rhetoric and practice. Despite this diversity, digital democracy (...) is often talked about as though there was a general consensus about what it is.” (2011, p. 855)

Following these observations, democracy, either as a term or concept, seem to be employed as *an empty signifier*², a concept initially coined by philosopher Claude Lévi-Strauss (1950). An empty signifier is “emptied of its particular meanings- a universal function of representing an entirety of ambiguous, fuzzy related meanings, an idea or aspiration” (cited in Gunder & Hillier, 2009, p. 3). The use of democracy as an empty signifier implies not only a simplistic understanding of a highly normative concept, but may also be applied on potentially contradictory practices. Mainly so, because it is also possible for an empty signifier "to represent an undetermined quantity of signification, in itself void of meaning and thus apt to receive any meaning" (Mehlman, 1972 p. 23). In other words, what counts as “democratic communication” is subject to various interpretations-, and definitions, of *which democratic value* should be promoted in any given communication setting.

Given any of these premises, this immediately becomes a significant matter for the communication practitioner who must determine how democracy should be utilized as a strategic tool, and for what purpose. From a critical perspective, digital strategies that communicate democracy based on the logics of an empty signifier, or as self-evident may in fact involve, or generate potentially contradictory outcomes, or even communications regarded as “undemocratic” when seen from other ideological standpoints.

The key rationale when examining this case is, thus, to highlight this very aspect, by exploring the dynamics of ideology and communication practices. It has lead me to ask how our understanding on democracy and its basic components are shifting in the new communication envi-

² The term *empty signifier* or *floating signifier* is in this study used solely for its ability to demonstrate and highlight my own observations of how the term of democracy is exploited in the everyday debate on digital democracy. As such, I do not intend to evaluate or analyze the concept of democracy as an empty signifier.

ronment, and how it in turn affects our strategic approaches and practices of online communication since it forces us to reflect on to what extent ideology determines both the strategy-, and reception of our online communication practices.

As web technologies are increasingly being used by communication practitioners as a tool to communicate with strategic publics, one should also question what role strategic communication play and should play in exploiting these tools for democratic purposes in a context of digital rhetoric. This issue is brought up by Benjamin Barber, and other scholars in the field (della Porta, 2012; Loader & Mercea, 2012) who are asking for a more critical understanding of the complex relationship between web technologies and democracy, and points to a key issue that will be the guiding principle of this study. Whether we experience new communication realities either as threats to modern democracy or as an opportunity for its revival, Barber argues that one must acknowledge the fact that there are variations of democratic conceptions out there, with highly subjective understandings on what an ideal democracy is.

Following Barbers warning, developments on democracy and web technology discourse should subsequently be of interests for communication practitioners and policy makers, as the ideological debate on digital democracy is a component of the very environment they engage in. For those reasons primarily, I find it interesting to direct this study towards commentaries and ideological discourses around a contemporary case related to digital democracy, to shed light on the dynamics between discourse and practice and how they can work instrumentally in shaping attitudes towards new technologies. The methodological approach will be elaborated on shortly, but a significant part of the analytical approach is dedicated to the identification of discursive patterns in this debate i.e. the many meanings, ideas and depictions of reality presented in the articulations surrounding the initiative, and interpret how they fit in to a larger theoretical framework of democratic ideology and web technology (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000).

By studying the digital democracy discourse surrounding the CoS and the interplay between ideology and web technology, this study aims to be a modest contribution to such knowledge and reflection. The research design is holistically driven, and involves analyzing the reactions to the case of CoS, prevalent in a US media context, as to illustrate the diversity of democratic understandings and discursive patterns. Just like the reactions to the initiative can be seen as discursive artifacts, the case can itself be seen as an application of rhetoric both on democracy and the promises of digital technology

The aim with this study is to identify and reconstruct contemporary discursive patterns, in a US media context, that touch upon ideas of democracy and web technology, and by doing so,

contribute to a more critical understanding of the assumed democratic potential of web technology. Moreover, I hope to pinpoint some implications on how to communicate with foreign publics given that there are competing/alternative visions of democracy that supposedly shape both the design and interpretations of online communication practices. As such, this thesis extends to scholars and practitioners in public diplomacy, nation branding and the wider field of communication.

1.4 Purpose and Research Questions

This study seeks to investigate the relationship between ideology and web technology in the US media debate as it becomes observable from the nation branding initiative Curators of Sweden. By identifying discursive patterns that touch upon issues of democracy and web technology, and by doing so using a critical hermeneutic approach, this study investigates how different notions of democracy and understandings of web technology relate to the media reaction of the CoS initiative. This study will hopefully allow us to problematize strategic communication practice and research in a contemporary context of digital democracy discourse as well as enable a critical discussion of the assumed democratic potential in social media use. To fulfill the purpose of the study, the following questions will guide the research design:

- What discursive patterns that touch upon understandings on democracy and web technology can be found in the reactions to Curators of Sweden in US media?
- What democratic ideals do, assumedly, underpin the different receptions of Curators of Sweden and web technology?

1.5 Delimitation

As in any study, the scope and boundaries of the research must be clearly defined. I will in this section discuss the most significant delimitations of the study.

The study is centered on the media reactions to the Curators of Sweden-initiative as a case study. The case is here used instrumentally, to “tease out” artifacts of contemporary democracy and web technology discourse such as articulations, assumptions and understandings. This means that there is no ambition to analyze the initiative in any other context than how it is perceived in a US media context. For instance, the initiative is not evaluated from a marketing- or branding perspective but principally aimed at investigating the surrounding debate and the context in which the case is situated. Related concepts however, such as public diplomacy, nation branding and content curation are however useful as conceptual frameworks theoretically.

As a result, this study makes no attempt to evaluate the quality of the initiative whether in terms of democratic impacts or as a PR-initiative. Instead, the purpose is to identify discursive patterns and dynamics in the debate that emerged from the Curators initiative in US media, to better understand the environment and context of digital democracy that strategic practitioners engage in.

The study is also limited to a *US* media context solely, and the debate that occurred in US media between December 2011 when the initiative first appeared in US media, and onward³. To that background I would like to emphasize that this is not a media study, or investigation on how the story was covered in US media, nor any attempt to evaluate the reporting on Curators of Sweden. The media is merely “a location” where articulations and commentaries of interest are situated. Therefore, one should not attempt to generalize the views expressed in the sources, nor are they representational for any larger population or media format. That is not the point either; neither generalizations nor representative understandings are rationales for conducting this study, but to seek out variations of understandings in this particular context.

Furthermore, it should be obvious that this study is less concerned with causality in the relationship between democracy and technological development, let alone evaluating or taking a subjective stance in this debate. However, there is one presupposition in particular that I take on in this study. I make the assumption that democratic understandings impacts our online communication behavior discursively i.e. that normative understandings of democracy are factors that help shape how we make sense of web technology and for which purposes. By the same token, I accept that the relationship can be the reverse, that web technology discourse impact democracy understandings and discourse.

1.6 Notes on Terminology

1.6.1 Content Curation

According to Steve Rosenbaum (2011 p. 3), author of the book *Nation Curation*, curation is about “adding value from humans who add their qualitative judgment to whatever is being gathered and organised”. The concept can also be summarized as “the creation, display and management of content in a consistent manner to encourage a desired understanding of an organization (Young, 2012). The case Curators of Sweden is designed upon this very principle, where each selected citizen act as a “curator”, thus managing the content of the tweets (available from www.curatorsofsweden.com).

³The Curators of Sweden is at the time of writing an ongoing project and there is no apparent reason to disregard any potential up to date coverage of the initiative.

1.6.2 Discursive patterns

According to (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000) discursive patterns is about conveying the many meanings, ideas and depictions of reality presented in various forms of artifacts surrounding a social phenomenon. In the analytical strategy of the media commentary on Curators of Sweden I will seek out discursive patterns against a larger theoretical framework and by following the logics of the hermeneutical cycle (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011)

1.6.3 Democracy

As democracy is a concept without any unanimous or agreed upon meaning, it would be beyond the scope of this thesis to elaborate on the concept to any depth-, or historical manner. Any definition of the term democracy is subject to political disagreements, and always has been since its foundation in ancient Greece. Within the scope of this study, democracy will be mentioned in various forms, either as a method of governance, as a normative ideal (e.g. rule by the people), or with reference to a set of practices. When referring to “democracies” in broad terms similar implications occur. This study is based on observations from western, liberal democracies as well as literature affiliated with western democratic discourses (e.g. Held, 2006).

1.6.4 Digital democracy

A common definition of the term is made by Kenneth Hacker and Jan van Dijk (2000): “a collection of attempts to practice democracy without the limits of time, space, and other physical conditions, using information and communications technology or computer-mediated communication instead, as an addition, not a replacement for traditional (...) political practices”. Obviously, the infrastructure of the Internet has gone through some major changes since 2000 but this, fairly broad, definition is yet useful for studying online communication practices such as Curators of Sweden and other forms of online participation.

1.6.4 Nation branding

As the name implies, this concept builds upon branding principles, but is largely concerned with reputation management, or managing a country’s reputation. Simon Anholt is one of the most prominent figures in the field as well as the man behind the *Anholt Nation Brand Index* (Kaneva, 2011). Nation branding often refers to “The strategic self-presentation of a country with the aim of creating reputational capital through economic, political and social interest promotion at home and abroad” (Szondi 2008, p. 5)

1.6.5 Public diplomacy

Public diplomacy is a term that is most frequently used within International Relations and the Political Science discipline. In broad terms, public diplomacy refers to communication practices towards foreign publics with the intent of establishing dialogue, to inform and influence strategic audiences as well as building relationships with stakeholders (Melissen, 2005).

1.6.6 Second generation of web technology (Web 2.0)

The Web 2.0 defines the second phase of the evolution of the Web and highlights its interactive and participatory character. According to O'Reilly (2005), whose definition is often cited in a media context, defines Web 2.0 as such⁴:

“Web 2.0 is the network as a platform, spanning all connected devices. Web 2.0 applications are those that make the most of the intrinsic advantages of that platform: delivering software as a continually-updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an architecture of participation, and going beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences.” (2007, para. 1)

1.6.7 Strategic Communication

The term is used in a variety of forms in this study; either as a concept, a process, practice or academic field. Strategic Communication can in broad terms be understood as “the purposeful use of communication to fulfill its mission” (Hallahan, et al. 2007 p. 3).

⁴ O'Reilly's definition is, however, subject to scholarly critique and that there are other understandings on the term (cf. Murugusan, 2010).

2. Research Design and Methodology

As the Curators of Sweden-initiative spurred discussions on basic premises and assumptions on (modern) democracy- e.g. censorship, freedom of expression as well as civic behavior, I saw an opportunity to look at *the reactions* to the initiative, as a contemporary commentary on modern democracy discourse and the assumed democratic potentials of web technology. To that background, this study aims to explore not only the dynamics between democratic understandings and communication practices but also to explore empirically how “democratic communication” is carried out as a strategic communication practice. In order to achieve this, the structure of this study is designed to first, identify discursive patterns in the reactions to the campaign that touch upon democracy and web technology and, secondly, to investigate the underlying ideological assumptions in these reactions.

2.1 Objects of Study: Reactions to Curators of Sweden

Using the Curators of Sweden-initiative as a case for this study has to do with its experimental character (Merriam, 2010) i.e. its ability to demonstrate interesting assumptions, arguments and logics prevalent in the US media debate on digital democracy. It thereby also connotes to what Yin (2009) calls a “unique case”.

However, as the purpose with this study is to identify and reconstruct discursive patterns of democracy and web technology, that arose in the US media from the Curators of Sweden-campaign, it also means that the case itself is not to be regarded as the *object of study* but as a stimulus to generate data necessary for the purpose of the study. Instead, it is the discourses surrounding the case that are of interest, i.e. the articulations, assumptions and commentaries elicited through the US media reporting on Curators of Sweden. For this purpose, the Curators of Sweden is used *instrumentally*, to help “tease out” abstractions and articulations on the objects of study; democracy and web technology discourses prevalent in the US media commentary.

2.2 Curators of Sweden in a US media context

The main area of study is a US media context alone, although the debate appeared on a global scale through social media, and in other international contexts. This context is of course one of many settings where one can study the initiative, but the significant media attention Curators of Sweden received in the United States makes this context a fruitful setting in which to study the reactions, taking into account the normative and influential role US media have in opinion formation. I have mainly focused on the reactions in press and television, but tweets and blogs were considered relevant only if they were apparently linked to a US media context, for instance journalistic blogs (j-blogs) or tweets linked to American newspapers or magazines. It would be unwise to disregard the online debate as it occurred on various social media platforms, and while the campaign itself appearing on Twitter. And more importantly, conversations that appear virtually constitute a significant part of today's media context (Jenkins & Thorburn, 2003) and are as such, part of the context of the case, the very conversations and articulations that the study is seeking to investigate.

Some 45-50 items comprised the empirical material, such as articles and video files. Additional blog posts and tweets were included as well. The gathering of the data was done holistically, attempting to integrate as much of the debate as possible. The guiding principle with gathering the data holistically was that the study would benefit from findings from various locations, as to generate synergetic results with the CoS being the common denominator. The empirical data was found primarily through online search engines⁵: Google, Google Blog Search, Google News, Storify, and Twitter.com which gave an indication of the "spreading of the story". These findings demonstrate that the story was covered in a variety of media forms press, television, (j-) blogs and tweets in various forms (re-tweets, shares etc.). News articles and blog posts have dominated the reporting, televised reporting being less frequent. Moreover, a principle of "the bigger span of media covered the better" is applied here, as it makes the study more inclusive and comprehensive, but it also implies that all "opinions" represented in the designated context is considered equally valid as relevant *sources* of data, regardless of where it occurred. Unfortunately, I have had no opportunity to investigate if the story has been covered in other media sources such as American radio, or American podcasts.

The US context is not only a strategic choice of context, but interesting also from a socio-cultural perspective shedding light on potentially different communication practices overseas.

⁵ Search engines and databases that required subscription or fees were not utilized e.g. Lexis Nexis.

The United States has a political history built upon liberal individual rights and a civil society that emphasize strong loyalty to groups and community (Schudson, 2003) but is at the same time a country that undergoes significant changes in the political discourse (Beckman, 2013; Schudson, 2003).

2.3 Selecting respondents for Expert Interviews

The research design does also include the use of expert interviews that adds another dimension to the holistic approach used in this study. The experts were selected with the purpose of generating empirical material, as well as to function as a theoretical ground for understanding the empirical material. The use of expert interviews is meant to contribute to the holistic approach in this study with the objective of letting each expert contribute with individual and different perspectives to the case. The idea behind this selection is that each expert should add value to the study by their mere unique position or relation to the context in which the case is being studied.

All respondents were deliberately selected due to their connection to, or expertise in related fields such as; Political theory and Democracy, Content Curation and Public Relations. One respondent was selected due to her professional connection to the Curators of Sweden initiative.

Respondents:

- Frida Roberts, Head of Communications, The Swedish Institute
- Ludvig Beckman, Professor at the Department of Political Science, Stockholm University. Recent publication: *Territories of Citizenship* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) (Co-edited with Eva Erman)
- Philip Young, project leader of NEMO. Research field: Public Relations, Social Media, Ethics and Curation
- Deeped Niclas Strandh, Deepedition DigitalPR, social media expert and brand planner at UnitedPower (Telephone Interview)

2.3.1 Interview proceedings

The research design of the study affected both the choice of respondents and the interview proceedings. Four experts were here interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide that was individually tailored to each respondent. Conducting the one interview by phone was done after a request from the respondent. The interviews lasted for typically 30-45 minutes and all but one (the telephone interview) were recorded using a digital recorder. Subsequently all recorded interviews were transcribed.

Two of the recorded interviews were conducted in each respondent's respective office or conference room, and one was situated at a café in Stockholm. In retrospect, the café as an interview environment was not ideal due to some noisiness that caused distraction and at times difficulties in hearing. This led to some, but not extensive, problems for the recorded material. At times, the interviews became more of a "conversational character" that shifted the setting from interview towards "a discussion". This became most apparent in the interview with my former teacher in Political Science. My honest impression is that this approach, being less formal and less standardized added to the quality of the interview.

2.4 A Critical-Hermeneutic Perspective

The methodology of this study is drawn from the ontological stance of social constructivism and the idea of *epistemic relativism*- the conviction that views on reality are results of subjective understandings and interpretations- as they are always relative to a "culture, an individual or

paradigm” (Kukla, 2000 p. 4; Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2008). The rationale for using this approach is to enable research that can generate knowledge of complexities in the interplay between understandings of democracy, web technology and the reactions to Curators of Sweden, thus interpreting the material through the logics of the *hermeneutical circle*, where theory and empirical material work synergistically (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011).

As the purpose of the study is to seek out understandings on democracy and web technology, an analytical method to *reconstruct articulations* is being used. This is done by drawing on an established method performed in a previous study about conceptions on digital democracy where articulations on digital democracy themes were interpreted and reconstructed in to general categorizations (Dahlberg, 2011). Following Dahlberg’s approach, the procedure in this study involved immersing myself in *all* material, i.e. all “media locations” where reactions to the campaign appeared, within the frames of this study, and perform the analysis in a “circular” manner based on theoretical knowledge and empirical data. I was thus able to delineate and extract articulations from the data that implicitly or explicitly touched upon democracy issues and web technology in general terms, for instance; censorship, representation, community, civil society, individual vs. community etc.

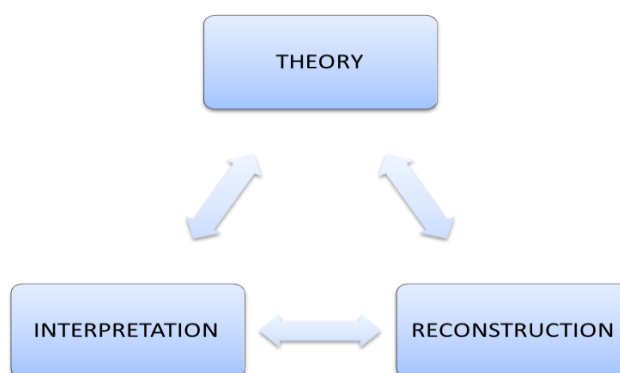


Figure 2: Own

The interpretations and reconstruction of the commentaries were here conducted synergistically and in conjunction with one another. The theoretical framework has been essential in the analytical process, enabling me to put the data into a context, frame and make sense of the commentary readings. Equally important, the theoretical basis has, at the same time, also evolved throughout the readings of the data. As my understanding of the case has deepened, ideas about what is regarded as appropriate theory came to change as well, which is the general procedure

of the hermeneutical circle (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). I believe that this way, of letting theory and analysis work synergistically, also reduced the risk of making mere empirical descriptions, as well as to the extent possible, reduce the risk of verification bias, i.e. the risk of confirming any preconceived notions.

The analytical strategy did of course involve a more selective reading that, together with the theoretical foundation emerged into three interlinked elements that would assist in the interpretation of the material. Similar to Dahlberg’s procedure, but departing in this study’s research questions, I developed interlinked elements related to established concepts in political theory and digital democracy:

1. The ideal role of the citizen/civic behavior
2. Understandings on the public sphere and a potential virtual sphere
3. The relationship between elites and citizens in terms of order and autonomy

By utilizing these “theoretical” elements in the analytical process, features of the commentary were analyzed against these three interlinked elements. This enabled me to categorize the findings into theoretical and abstract “positions” that subsequently conveyed the underlying ideological assumptions in the reactions.

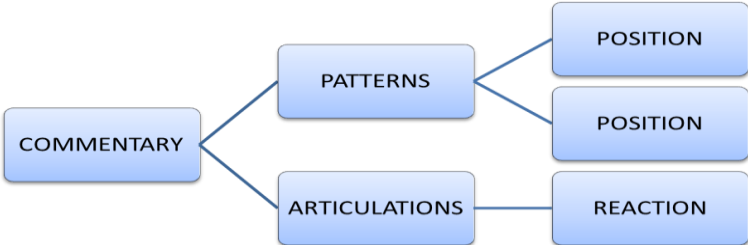


Figure 3: Own

In Dahlberg’s terms, this process is about *reconstructing* articulations, and commentary into *positions* that “provide a general categorization of existing empirical instances” (2011, p. 856). It is of course important to point out that such positions, or general categorizations are mere abstractions and approximations of my subjective interpretations, rather than firm ideal types. Rather, reconstructing the commentary into positions is a way to illustrate similar characteristics, patterns and attributes in the commentary on the case and of course accentuate differences

and nuances. Those aspects or features of the commentary, i.e. reactions to the case that subsequently did not fall into either position were discussed separately.

Naturally, the interpretations I delineate through the analytical procedure are, of course, the results of others' interpretations or reconstructions of reality- a result of a "double hermeneutic" to use the words of Anthony Giddens (1987, p. 20). The point to make here is that the study does not aspire to make any objective truth claims or assumptions of an objective reality. Instead, reactions, or subjective understandings articulated in the material are here regarded as equally valid epistemologically and I will not attempt to evaluate the validity or truth in either of these standpoints (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008). In fact, it is the manifold, and variations of understandings of democracy and web technology, that are of core interest in this study,

2.4.1 A Critical Approach

According to Alvesson and Sköldberg (2008) one of the main purposes of conducting critical research is about revealing taken for granted- understandings of social phenomenon. The hermeneutic approach⁶ is valuable in this sense as it permits interpretations of hidden meanings and implicit assumptions in human interactions and behavior (2008). Also, this study is concerned with the concept of democracy, that despite its elusiveness and normative character, its meaning is somewhat taken for granted in the everyday discussion. One presupposition that I take on in conducting this study is that there are varieties of democratic understandings (discourses) present in the digital democracy debate, that affects how and for what purpose web technology is used that may have implication for both democracy discourse and (online) communication practices. This is actualized by Jenkins and Thorburn (2003) who points out the value of looking into the rhetorical logics behind web technology as they might help explain why it has such an appeal.

“A surprising range of thinkers on the right and left have used a notion of “the computer revolution to imagine forms of political effects”. Examining the rhetoric of digital revolution we may identify a discourse about politics and culture that appears not only in academic writing or in explicably ideological exchanges, but also in popular journalism and science fiction. This rhetoric has clear political effects, helping to shape attitudes toward emerging technologies” (2003, p. 9)

The critical perspective I take on in this study is driven by an ambition to explore how ideological understandings on democracy correspond with perceptions on online communication practices, where the CoS can be seen as an application of digital democracy rhetoric, as well as the reactions to it. As such, the initiative as well as it surrounding context may function as an empirical example of a digital democracy practice and phenomenon that is widely theorized about (Barber, 2008; Habermas, 2004; Loader & Mercea, 2012). The point here is to explore a situation, or context, where strategic communication and digital democracy are used in conjunction with each other. When performed by policy makers or public diplomacy practitioners, such practice is likely to be bound to a particular policy and political practice which may determine

⁶ The hermeneutic approach can be divided into two basic stands; the objectivist and alethic. The method used in this study is more linked to the alethic perspective (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008).

the communication strategies of varying character. What this case provides, is a unique opportunity to investigate such practice empirically- and what *democratic communication* actually entails.

Another dimension I wish to highlight, by approaching this study critically, are the assumptions in the digital democracy debate and rhetoric that stress very different outcomes of a networked, individualized society, especially when it comes to the prospects for modern democracy (Dahlberg, 2011). As Hurwits (2003) points out, the Internet is “a contested area, with struggles of private versus public interest” and between “civil liberties/civil society” (p. 101-102). It is therefore fair to say that online communication practices are to play a significant role in the transformation of political structures on a societal level.

2.5 The Internet as a Social Construction

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2011) hermeneutic research methods are closely tied to studies in communication. They claim that “(...) *communication* is *the* fundamental activity by which humans *constitute* their social world as “real” phenomenon (...)” (italics in original). For the purpose of this thesis, applying a hermeneutic approach is a means to study “artifacts” of democracy and (web-) technology understandings to better understand its rather complex relationship. I believe that this makes one approach the concept of democracy as something more than a theoretical premise, but rather as a social practice and how people make sense of the idea of democracy in a context of web technology communication.

It is generally helpful, in qualitative studies of the Internet, to use pre-existing conceptualizations of the Internet, also understood as metaphorical frameworks (Markham, 2006). Given the constructivist nature of this study and its dedication to the communication field, there are obvious reasons to look at the Internet as a *communication medium*- where various forms of interaction is taking place, visually, textually and discursively. At the same time, I believe that (rhetorical) discourses surrounding web technology are underpinned by ideological ideals and interests which makes it relevant to look at online practices from a more constructivist and social perspective as it separates the understandings of the Internet from a “set of technological tools” towards a more socio-cultural understanding. This study will to that end, regard the Internet as a tool for communication as well as *scene of social construction*” (2006).

From a general perspective, this framework makes us explore the Internet as a factual place of cultural production; an arena of “complex interrelationship between language, technology and culture” and to explore what occurs when technology and culture are interwoven as well as

its implications on reality construction (Markham 2006, p. 98). The case that this study is centered on, and the context in which it occurred, can be seen as such “a factual place”, where ideology and communication practice are shaped in conjunction with each other, a kind of place for reality construction on for example, the democratic potential of web technology. Similar frameworks are being used in academic fields of communication, and there referred to as an “arena for social construction” or “a carrier of culture” (cf. Dahlberg, 2011).

3 Theoretical Framework

This chapter accounts for the theoretical framework of the study. The main focus has been to discuss key notions of democracy from a communications perspective, and illustrate how they can enhance our understanding of the Curators of Sweden-initiative and the reactions to it. The theoretical framework centers on the following theories and concepts; the role of *the good citizen* and *the public sphere*. It will also introduce Dahlberg's digital democracy positions on liberal, communitarian and deliberative ideals and postmodernist discourses on self-expression values and civility (2011; 2007). I will also describe the broader academic digital democracy debate⁷ that centers on the assumed democratic potential of web technology and subsequently relate the case to an existing research base on digital democracy. A critical perspective has been applied throughout the analysis using a critical hermeneutical perspective in understanding the initiative and the reactions to it.

3.1 An overview of the Digital Democracy Debate

“There are “high expectations on democracy as an ideal, yet low evaluations of the performances of representative institutions” (Pippa Norris 2001, p. 96)

Modern democracy, it is argued, is suffering from *de-politicization* of civic life with *democratic deficits* and decreased dependence in traditional political institutions as a result (Moravcsik, 2004). There are, as a result of this development, various interpretations of the health status of modern democracy. But the focus point of the debate, nonetheless, is the assumption that web

⁷ Contemporary digital democracy debate spans over a much wider context, covering topics such as governmental involvement, intellectual property, access to information, gender etc. Here, I will focus on the debate that centers on *the assumed democratic potentials* of web technology development.

technology can help, either to restore or revive, modern representative democracies (Dahlgren, 2009).

As will be demonstrated through this study, the strategic use of online communication, is partly dependent on the values one ascribe to technology and its potential, indicating (different) ideological understandings. Much of the contemporary writings on the democratic potentials of web technology are sprung out of a historical debate that has centered on the dichotomous relationship between technological determinism and social determinism (Jenkins & Thorburn, 2003). Simplified, this debate concerns the fundamental question of whether technologies have some inherent democratic qualities, or to the contrary, that technology is like any other aspects of society, largely bound to its societal context in the way it develops. Scholars in general however, seem to agree that both stands run the risk of oversimplifying the complex relationship between technology and democracy (Chadwick, 2006; Dahlgren, 2011; della Porta, 2012). Even so, the contemporary debate is yet to be polarized, resulting in sometimes very different understandings on the capabilities and impacts of web technology (Chadwick, 2006; Papacharissi, 2009). Curators of Sweden is an example of this, being both celebrated and criticized for the concept of a “democratic” Twitter account, which brings us back to the issue of what democratic communication actually entails in practice. With that being said, Papacharissi (2009) points out that how we make use of technologies, and ultimately how we measure the (political) impacts of web technology, seem to depend on the *values* we ascribe to them:

“While it is important to avoid the deterministic viewpoint (...) it is also necessary to understand that technologies frequently embed assumptions about their potential uses, which can be traced back to the political, cultural, social and economic environment that brings them to life. Therefore, it is not the nature of technologies themselves, but rather, the discourse that surrounds them, that guides how these technologies are appropriated by a society.” (2009, p. 230)

Optimists, generally, stress that recent developments in web technology are favorable for modern democracy, pointing out the increased access to information, the new modes of communication between citizens and representatives, and opportunities for increased transparency (della Porta, 2012).

While parts of the debate turn to the democratic deficits facing democracy, other scholars, like Manuel Castells (2009) and Pippa Norris (2011), argue that western democracy does not

necessarily suffer from *de-politicization*, but that civic engagement is evolving outside of traditional political structures. In a similar way, Lance Bennett (2008) argues that citizen engagement, especially among youths, is taking other forms than what is usually expected from citizens. The gradual increase of social media use, and the emergence of a more interactive web, is one of the most apparent indicators of such development. What Bennett highlights, to put it shortly, is a development where relying on non-governmental means for engagement is, by some, found to be a more attractive way of engaging, than for instance a visit to the voting booth. Ludvig Beckman, mentioned in our interview, similarly, how voters are more transient in their loyalties today which makes it more difficult for political parties to comprehend the political mobility amongst citizens (personal interview, January 16, 2013).

Given these circumstances, web technology has the potential to expand the boundaries of civic engagement and ultimately, political boundaries. One obvious implication of this is that practitioners who want to direct their communication strategies to these publics, which engage in less traditional ways of participation, thus run the risk of miss-communicating. This actualizes the point that communication strategies that rely on outdated views on, for instance, citizenship and (political) behavior might simply not work let alone use the traditional top-down communication methods. Such transformations are thus important to acknowledge as they are a part of the very environment communication practitioners engage in.

Following a critical point of view, some authors claim that technological developments are everything but egalitarian and just, and instead, that exclusion, and hierarchical structures are pervasive elements of modern technology discourse (Fraser, 2011; Habermas, 2004). In example, modern and technologically developed societies are involved in reproducing asymmetrical socioeconomic structures, where the technological infrastructure “connects the connected” to use the words of Pippa Norris, which brings forth the digital divide argument (2001, p.1). At the same time, there are also those who argue a form of status quo. Here a central claim is that web technology is so attached to social and economic structures that it mirrors pretty much the same political and social structures that appear offline (Margolis and Resnick, 2000).

A significant part of the digital democracy debate centers on how the Internet can provide opportunities for deliberation to create a more active citizenship and stimulate civic engagement (Dahlgren, 2009). Benjamin Barber (2003), an advocate of *strong democracy*, sees potential in web technology as to increase citizen deliberation and providing better opportunities for influencing local matters. Advocates of a deliberative digital democracy emphasize the idea of a virtual public sphere, where exchanges of ideas and opinions can flourish online under relatively free circumstances (Dahlberg, 2007; Papacharissi, 2009). Here, it is argued that not only

may the Internet generate two way- or interactive modes of communication to a fairly low cost, it may also have the ability to by-pass corporate and governmental structures of power, making it ideal, at least in theory, for processes of rational deliberation and the creation of a critically informed public (Dahlberg, 2007; Dahlgren, 2009).

However, the abilities for the Internet to facilitate a strong, deliberative democracy is widely questioned (Dahlberg, 2004; Papacharissi, 2009). Habermas (2004) and Papacharissi (2009) argue that the Internet is at risk of becoming a “virtual reincarnation” of the public sphere where *economism* and commercial interests undermine the conditions and objectives for critical discussion. Similarly, Habermas (2004) warns that instead of being a platform for rational, critical opinion, the virtual sphere, just like the public sphere, has succumbed to commercial interests, such as advertising and public relations, and thus assumed to generate the very opposite of *rational communication*. When discussing these topics during the interview with Deeped Niclas Strandh, he points out how Twitter as a social medium may turn into corporate “megaphone” tools, rather than being a channel of the individual citizen voice (personal communication, February 19, 2013), highlighting these very developments where commercial interests are “interfering” with social media, thus making the possibilities for democratic communication questionable.

3.3.1 The Virtual Public Sphere

The digital democracy debate is often framed within the theoretical concept of the public sphere, developed by Jürgen Habermas (Dahlberg, 2005). Habermas (1997) defined the public sphere as “a realm of social life, in which something approaching public opinion can be formed” (p.102). In principle, the public sphere is open to *all* citizens to discuss matters of “public concern” or “common interests” independent of market or government concerns (Fraser, 2011 p.58; Dahlberg; 2005). Habermas’ concept of the public sphere is closely linked to the idea of *communicative rationality*; communication and exchanges of ideas oriented towards a mode of consensus, through the force of the better argument (Habermas, 1997). The formation of a public opinion should thereby be power- or coercion free to serve the common good.

While modern society seem quite different from the thoughts worked out by Habermas, the very idea of a public sphere, that operates outside of government and economic forces, is according to Chadwick (2006), still “meaningful as a normative ideal (...) to judge the existing communication structures” (p. 88). In a similar vein, Papacharissi (2009) argues that rational deliberation still is a valuable outcome of deliberation, but that “the true value of the public

sphere concept “lies in its ability to facilitate uninhibited and diverse discussion of public affairs” (p. 10-11). She makes a valuable distinction between the two;

“(…) a new public space is not synonymous with a new public sphere. As public space, the internet provides yet another forum for political deliberation. As public sphere, the internet could facilitate discussion that promotes a democratic exchange of ideas and opinions. A virtual space enhances discussion; a virtual sphere enhances democracy.” (p.11)

As Papacharissi’s distinction highlights, the idea of a virtual public sphere is far from straightforward, and something very different to an Internet that serves as space(s) for “civic talk”.

One central theme in the digital democracy debate is to ask how new structures of communication appear to *change the borders of the public sphere*. Manuel Castells (2007) argues that the very foundation of the public sphere is changing due to the evolution of a network society, and that the frequency of online communication is expanding the public sphere. One key element in Castells hypothesis is that the state is becoming a weaker form of governance, and thus no longer central in defining the public sphere. Instead he argues, that “the public sphere is moving from the institutional realm to new, online communicative spaces” (p. 238). This development is, according to Castells, characterized by the convergence of two major trends; one-directional mass communication and of horizontal networks of mass self-communication. Castells describes this as the convergence of two modes of communication;

“The interactive capacity of the new communication system ushers in a new form of communication, mass self-communication, which multiplies and diversifies the entry points in the communication process. This gives rise to unprecedented autonomy for communicative subjects to communicate at large. Yet, this potential for autonomy is shaped, controlled, and curtailed by the growing concentration and interlocking of corporate media and network operators around the world” (Castells, 2009 p.135)

The online sphere can as such be understood as an extension of the public sphere, as well as a place of greater autonomy for the public in creating and distributing content. An apparent implication of this is that the gatekeeper role of the traditional media is being reduced, but yet present in the new emerging horizontal media, by the participants, or audiences, themselves. Castells also highlights the changed role of the media and its political impacts in opinion formation. Skeptics looks upon this development also as a “corporate colonization of cyberspace”

(Dahlberg, 2005) where democracy is threatened as such tendencies limit the possibilities for critical communication, or “marginal” voices. Castells expands this line of thought and sees a supposed conflict between media corporations with interest in “commodifying” the virtual sphere, yet he acknowledges the emergence of a more autonomous public with greater freedoms to create and distribute information.

This “blend” of commercial and public interest in pursuing the online sphere, is elaborated upon by Papacharissi (2009) who see some “democratic” potential in this development, despite a virtual sphere succumbing to commercial interests. She suggests a hybrid form of the virtual public sphere, which compromises the power of larger corporations:

“Online public spaces do not become immune to commercialization. However, they become adept at promoting hybrid of commercially public interaction that caters to audience demands and is simultaneously more viable within a capitalist market” (p. 243)

An example of a compromised hybrid relationship is when larger corporations buy smaller online entities with formats of typically audience-created content. She observes some larger trends like YouTube being bought by Google, MySpace incorporated with News Corporation, or file-sharing network Napster partnering with the entertainment industry. The result of this, she argues, is changed media formats with changed standards of gate-keeping and information structures (2009).

So far, the debate on the transformations of the public sphere is definitely not limited to the theoretical requirements of Habermas. Rather it seems to mirror the many socio-economic trends of contemporary society and a clear skepticism towards the real potentials of deliberative democracy. This is elaborated upon by Chantal Mouffe, who is skeptical of the way the concept of democracy is approached by a “rationalist” deliberative understanding (2005) as it tends to ignore structures of powers. Mouffe’s premises is that reaching a true rational consensus is practically impossible, a mere cul-de-sac and suggests an alternative democratic view built upon the idea of *agonistic pluralism*. This view, in general terms, is about recognizing the diversity of values, opinions and identities present in public life and to encourage “a clash” between them, instead of promoting an ideal of consensus. True democracy is hindered, she argues, by the principle of consensus in the political life, as clashes between diverse opinions are either being banished or circumvented by this principle. As antagonism is an unavoidable element of society, democracy should be about generating *agonism*, where the “other” view is seen as equally legitimate. To this background, a public sphere based on rational deliberation and

consensus is dramatically different to the one that Mouffe advocates, and would subsequently generate very different forms of communication to pursue either ideal.

3.3.2 “*The Good Citizen*” *Theorizing discourses on citizenship⁸ and civility*

Historically, citizens have always been encouraged to be civic and to engage in public matters. As Dahlgren (2009) points out, the term civic resonates with the notion of the public, and is thus outside of the private realm. Civic also implies some kind of engagement in the public life and may also “signify the public good” and “a kind of service, doing good for others” (2009). Moreover, what constitutes desirable forms of civic engagement is closely linked to understandings on the role of the citizen, on the meanings ascribed to citizenship (Bennett, 2008). Citizenship is at the same time generally understood as a concept built upon rights, duties, equality and a form of universalism (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2011). It is also inextricably linked to the organization of the nation state, where citizens constitute a territorial “public” and a civil society separated from the state (Kymlicka & Norman, 2000).

One scholarly approach in the field is to study how understandings on citizenship changes over time, as well as what meanings the concept acquire in different historical and socio-cultural settings. Knight-Abowitz and Harnish (2006) who have studied contemporary citizen discourses in United States illustrate two dominant citizen discourses; the civic republican and the liberal. They conclude that within these discourses “believes a vibrant and complex array of citizenship meanings that have more recently developed out of, and often in opposition to, these dominant discourses (2006, p. 656). The civic republican discourse is largely built upon principles of a strong political community. Good citizenship involves active participation for a “common good” and a “sense of responsibility” to society at large (2006, p.660). In the republican discourse, the political community is not necessarily linked to the state or government but to the civil society at large (2006). Therefore, the civil society is the fundamental sphere for citizenry to take place, and it is also the fundamental place for unity and cohesion amongst citizens. In short, it is the (civic) duties and responsibilities and workings towards a common good that defines the democratic citizen (Dahlgren, 2009).

⁸ The term citizenship is in this context understood as a mode of *social agency* (Dahlberg, 2009) and not as a legal or formal status. Understanding citizenship as a social agency is similar to McMahon’s understanding of citizenship as “a *social practice* to be analyzed through contextualized discourses, rituals, laws and institutions” (2012, p. 2 my italics)

In the liberal discourse, the basic premise is that of individual liberty and democratic rights. Freedom from any form of oppression prevail this tradition and stresses the virtue of autonomy. Deliberative democracy has been present in liberal political discourse, and has introduced values of discussion, disagreement and consensus (Knight Abowitz & Harnish, 2006). The ability for the citizen “to reason” and think freely, is important in this tradition and highly associated with “civility” and respecting the rights and actions of others (p. 663).

In contemporary theoretical debate much attention is given to the political impacts of an increasingly networked, individualized society and how transformations in communication structures are changing “the role of citizen” (Bang, 2004; Deuze, 2008; Putnam, 2004). One common assumption is that traditional forms of communication and participation are eroding, and that new forms are emerging, either to replace or reform its predecessors. For instance, it is sometimes argued that the citizen is no longer a passive receiver of information, but more of a consumer because of the new horizontal modes of communication available through digital media (Deuze, 2008). Here, larger trends of individualism and commercialism is claimed to pose a threat to civic- and public values, and that modern society experience an ongoing “atomization” where citizens, instead of being dedicated to public life, turn into “atomized citizens” that may inhibit meaningful participation (2008).

However, there are prominent ideas in this debate that suggests that understandings of citizenship are changing. Lance Bennett (2008) suggests that new communication structures is causing changes in citizen discourse, and as a result, transforming traditional ways of looking at political boundaries. Bennett describes a shift amongst citizens from enjoying a sense of duty towards civic affairs and traditional ways of participating in society, towards engagement for the purpose of personal fulfillment. Bennett’s typology mirrors changes in both attitudes towards citizens and expectations of behavior which ultimately can impact the way one relate to both means and modes of communication.

The Changing Citizenry: The Traditional Civic Education Ideal of the Dutiful Citizen (DC) versus the Emerging Youth Experience of Self-Actualizing Citizenship (AC)

Actualizing Citizen (AC)	Dutiful Citizen (DC)
Diminished sense of government obligation—higher sense of individual purpose	Obligation to participate in government centered activities
Voting is less meaningful than other, more personally defined acts such as consumerism, community volunteering, or transnational activism	Voting is the core democratic act
Mistrust of media and politicians is reinforced by negative mass media environment	Becomes informed about issues and government by following mass media
Favors loose networks of community action—often established or sustained through friendships and peer relations and thin social ties maintained by interactive information technologies	Joins civil society organizations and/or expresses interests through parties that typically employ one-way conventional communication to mobilize supporters

Figure 4: The Changing Citizenry: The Traditional Civic Education Ideal of the Dutiful Citizen (DC) versus the Emerging Youth Experience of Self-Actualizing Citizenship (AC) (Bennett, 2008: MIT Press)

3.4 Digital Democracy Ideals

The research design in this study is based on Dahlberg’s method of *reconstructing* rhetorical articulations and practices into positions, i.e. demonstrating discursive patterns in the digital democracy rhetoric and practice around CoS. But Dahlberg’s research on digital democracy also functions as a theoretical framework to this study, as a tool to make sense of the empirical material and to understand the ideological assumptions behind the reactions. I will here outline concepts of democratic theory and digital democracy research described by Dahlberg.

Dahlberg describes some prominent camps and democratic positions that are prevalent in digital democracy rhetoric and practice. These “positions” draws on classical concepts in political theory and have emerged from his research on digital communication rhetoric and practice. In his article *Cyberspace Democracy* (2001) he outlines three visions of (digital) democracy in which he explores “how each vision sees the Internet as aiding its cause” (p. 157). In another article *Reconstructing Digital Democracy- an outline four positions* (2011) he demonstrates the democratic assumption each vision entails in each “position”. These positions are also drawn from established concepts of political theory and critical interpretations from articulations, commentary of the digital democracy debate.

The liberal-individualist approach is according to Dahlberg dominating the digital democracy discourse, and in sharp opposition to communitarian ideals. There is an additional stance that highlights the deliberative aspects of online communication and structures, namely the deliberative stance.

The liberalist-individualist stance is concerned with the expression of individual interest and is as such open to those communication structures that encourage and facilitates those aims. From this perspective, new media and online practices are appreciated as long as it is fairly decentralized and opens up for the possibilities of information, expression and the pursuit of own, individual or corporate, interests. Such ambitions typically connotes those of the *liberal self*, the view on citizenship as “less a collective, political activity, than an individual, economic activity” (Dahlberg 2011, p. 859) The liberal individualist might appreciate decentralized organization forms, but are at the same time different from cyber-libertarians claims a virtual public sphere for “the primacy of individual liberty” as an ideal and where online communication is about maximizing civil liberties without restriction (Thierer & Szoka, 2009).

In the communitarian stance, typical liberal rights as freedom of expression are valued but the fostering of the community and societal developments are yet to be prioritized (Etzioni, 2011). A strong democracy must counter-balance individualist and commercial interest, as the good society is about generating shared values and agreed upon definitions of “the common good”. New media and technology should foster communitarian ideals of responsibilities as well as the promotion of public interests and establishing community ties.

As the name implies, the deliberative stance is based upon the ideals of deliberative democracy that centers on rational dialogue and deliberative means to foster democracy. Benjamin Barber (2003) a prominent figure in deliberative thought, advocates a “strong” democracy where citizens should be encouraged not to pursue individual interest or community, but to be publicly oriented and active citizens. Democracy can here be understood in terms of a consensus, in contrast to the liberal-individual aim of aggregating opinions. New media is here believed to have the capabilities in executing these ideals, especially by extending the public sphere to a rational virtual public sphere of rational communication (Dahlberg, 2011).

3.5 Self Expression Values and Civility

In their theory of Modernization, Inglehart and Welzel (2005) expands the classical Modernization theory by emphasizing cultural conditions as drivers of societal change and democratization. While large parts of the world experience a shift from survival to self-expression values, this cultural change is predominant in affluent, postindustrial societies where survival, i.e. physical and economic security, is taken for granted. These societies tend to prioritize liberating actions, such as freedom of expression, gender equality, and environmental protection.

According to this theory, societies that demonstrate a high level of self-expression values show a stronger demand for autonomous choices and an effective execution of individual rights. In fact, it suggests that it produces greater levels of (interpersonal) trust and social tolerance, values that are conducive to maintain and strengthen democracy. While such values are individualistic in character, they also demand empowerment “from above” to bring about autonomy to pursue these liberty aspirations. This can be seen as an “emancipation” from cultural and institutional constraints. The key assumption within this line of thought is that it is the broadening of human choice, creating greater autonomy that is the key driving force of democratization, and as such cultural symptoms that also make effective democracy more probable:

“Economic development facilitates a shift toward some cultural syndromes associated with individualism and away from some of the cultural syndromes associated with collectivism, resulting in increased emphasis on individual freedom-focused values and reduced focus on traditional hierarchies; these cultural shifts are conducive of the emergence and flourishing of democratic institutions” (Inglehart & Oyserman, 2004 p. 1)

There is however a disagreement, rooted in the premises of individualism, whether these values are civic or uncivic in character, and whether symptoms of self-expression are beneficial or detrimental to a democratic society (Welzel, 2010). Welzel, who sees self-expression values as “an emancipative set of orientations (...) that emphasize freedom of expression and equality of opportunities”, argues that these values by all means are civic as their individualistic character generate a sense of “human equality (...) that allows for a generalized form of trust that cuts through group boundaries” (2010, p. 153). Consequently, increased demands for individual autonomy engenders cultures of trust and reciprocity, as forms of social capital that in turn, strengthens democracy.

To the contrary, critics of individualism equate such values to the very opposite, where the self-interests of individuals are served rather than the common good (Welzel, 2010). Robert

Putnam argues against the effects of individualism in his theory on the decline of American civil society. In his article *Bowling Alone* (1995), and in subsequent writings, he demonstrates declining rates in group-based civic activities (such as bowling) that underpins a society's social capital. Social capital such as informal interactions between people is here a pre-condition for civic participation and his thesis illustrates typical republican values that the civil society is the most important aspect of democratic life.

Putnam's assessment that modern civil society is on decline is of course debatable, especially with today's new forms of (online) engagement but yet influential in the political discourse (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Critics of Putnam does however counter-argue claiming that even though we might experience declining rates in certain forms of participation or communication it does not necessarily imply erosion in civic life. Instead, as Inglehart Welzel and Deutsch (2005) argues, mass self-expression values nurture self-assertive publics and emancipative social capital that motivates various forms of elite-challenging actions pivotal for democratic power relations.

Such predictions becomes meaningful in a context of digital democracy where new technologies are transforming traditional power structures between elites and civilians, governments and corporations. Ultimately, where we locate self-expression values or symptoms we are also locating elite-challenging actions possibly outside of institutional realms, for instance within the virtual public sphere and without of significant governmental control.

4. Analysis

The *introductory* part of the analysis chapter answers the first research question: *What discursive patterns that touch upon understandings on democracy and web technology can be found in the reactions to the Curators of Sweden-initiative in US media?* I will begin by outlining the discursive patterns evident in the US media commentary and discuss these discourses against the theoretical framework. These patterns emerged throughout the reading of the material following the logic of the hermeneutical circle.

In the *second* part of the analysis chapter, I will discuss how the reactions to CoS, underpinned by different convictions of democracy, also conveyed different normative ideals on web technology. Here, I will discuss how different, or even conflicting views of digital democracy can be understood from a wider context of communication practice in a digital era.

The last, adjoining chapter is dedicated to a discussion of the results. I will there pinpoint the most significant conclusions drawn from this study and discuss the complexities between democratic understandings and web technology practice, with the CoS as the empirical fulcrum.

4.1 Individual empowerment and the role of the curator

One key feature of the CoS initiative is to “empower” citizens through the means of web technology, in this case an official Twitter account. The curators are here “empowered” by both the *access* to an official communication channel and through the *ability to express* individual voices. And in the sense that they are given access to an official communication channel aimed at promoting the brand of Sweden, they are as well given the opportunity to “*define*” the Swedish brand based on their unique view and unmediated narratives. The apparent democratic value lies in expanding the rule of a public matter to the people, and as such, a form of empowerment.

By stressing the individual voice, rather than a collective voice, as well as the ordinary and the authentic, the initiative reflects another dimension to the democratic feature of empowerment. The empowerment aspect extends also to the *individual* citizen, as the curators are supposed to represent themselves, as swedes, and not the entire population, nor any official image

of Sweden. The focus on individual representation, or unique voice, is stated in various places where the initiative is promoted. For instance, in the Local:

“What we have told them is to continue being themselves on Twitter. They are not to be loudspeakers for an advertising campaign or to try to fit in to some sort of profile” (Martin, 2011 para. 18)

Or as in the official promotion video:

“By means of the various curators’ narrations, not one Sweden is conveyed, but several” (Curators of Sweden, 2012)

While the democratic value of the initiative seems to lie in empowering individual citizens, and enabling transparency, what became apparent after analyzing the reactions was that there were different interpretations of what role the curators had, which furthermore impacted on how the initiative was received. Those who acknowledged that the role of the curators was to provide a unique picture of Sweden, by representing themselves as Swedes, they also appreciated the fact that officials actualized the potential of its citizens, seeing it as a democratic gesture. When New York Times reported on the issue in early June 2012, they concluded their article stating: “there is no such thing as a typical Swede” capturing the diversity and authenticity aspect the initiators intended to communicate (Lyll, 2012 para. 4). Another article pointed out that although the curators appear to report only on mundane things and that it as such “does not carry the same weight as updates on the Jan25 uprisings in Egypt” they also concluded: “there is something to be said for the value of giving otherwise anonymous citizens (...) a major platform to share their thoughts about a country’s natural heritage and culture” (Stahl, 2011 para. 3).

There were, at the same time, those cases where the democratic ambition was acknowledged, but where the individual empowerment aspect was questioned. Forbes Magazine dedicated an entire article debating the very purpose with the initiative, one hypothesis being that Sweden wanted to demonstrate its commitment to freedom of speech and another hypothesis implying a naïve outlook from the organizers, Sweden being sort of oblivious to the fact that they had recruited a so called “internet troll”⁹:

⁹ The term Internet troll is net lingo referring to someone who “posts a deliberately provocative message to a newsgroup or message board with the intention of causing maximum disruption and argument” (UrbanDictionary)

“It’s possible they didn’t know she was a troll. She doesn’t *look* like a troll. She’s a gorgeous, blond-haired, 27-year-old mother of two. Though if they took a quick look at her blog, there were some pretty obvious clues, including her name there: “Sonja “Hitler” Abrahamsson” (Hill, 2012 para. 4)

Another interesting aspect is that there were reactions that simply did not acknowledge, or even disregarded, that the democratic value was in letting the individual citizen communicate the Swedish brand. Looking closely at those reactions, the role of the curator was here interpreted as a representative for the population, or a semi-spokesperson, and not as their unique selves as Swedish citizens, reactions that were the very opposite of the intention from CoS. LA Times wrote “sure, every individual has an important voice in the chorus - or cacophony- that is a democracy, but should they really be given an online bullhorn to speak for everyone in the country?” (Maltais, 2012 para. 15). Or as in NY Daily where the writer quoted angry comments from bloggers who said “step away from the keyboard” and “You are representing your country” (Roberts, 2012).

What this indicates is that the perception of the curator’s role affected the impression of the initiative, and also framed whether the discussion came to be about the *content* of the tweets or the very message CoS wanted to communicate.

In the interview with Frida Roberts (FR), she stated that they, the initiative-coordinators, had not discussed different interpretations of democracy, but some democratic elements, such as freedom of speech and transparency (personal interview, January 14, 2013). At that time of the interview I thus wondered whether or not this ambiguity, in how the role of the curator was understood, was due to flaws in communicating the role of the curator effectively. Roberts declined:

SR: “Would you say that you (the organizers) were communicating the message clearly enough, that empowering the citizens in this way is of value in itself? And that you (the official Sweden) are not behind each and every tweet?” (own translation)

FR: “I think so. We have had many spokespersons (on the issue) so it might also depend on who spoke with the press. But they write what they want anyway. Really. It’s interesting, but also a little bit frightening.” (own translation)

My question was merely a way to seek out if there were other possibilities to the different interpretations of the role of the curator, and whether the organizers (Visit Sweden, Swedish Institute and Volontaire) had discussed this beforehand, since it had consequences for how the initiative was perceived. This “alternative” interpretation of the role of the curator, as a representative of an entire population, does in my opinion demonstrate one of the possible implications of democracy being employed as an empty signifier. As I take it, the intended role of the curator (enabling the citizens to an independent voice) was to some extent taken for granted, by the organizers, as something unquestionably democratic and appreciated. And possibly so because such a stance represent typical post-modernist values based on emancipative elements such as self-expression, individual autonomy and freedom of speech. But just as the empty signifier may be ascribed universal, and self-evident meanings, it is nevertheless prone to receive additional meanings. Here, some comments reveal ideological assumptions that democratic communication is more connected to representativeness (e.g. country affiliation) rather than freedom of expression of the individual to communicate their own experience or narrative.

As mentioned in the theoretical chapter, postmodern theory suggests that emancipative values are becoming increasingly significant worldwide, but where Sweden happen to rank very high¹⁰, and that the broadening of human choice is the essential driving force of democratization (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). CoS does seem to embody some of these values in assuming that expanding the direct rule over a public matter is automatically democratic as it broadens the freedoms of the individual. This understanding of democracy is in this light also fuelled by the assumption that self-expression values actualizes the autonomy of the individual citizen, also meaning that representing his or hers country in any way they want is a form of emancipation and empowerment.

Shifting focus the perceptions of the initiative, what I will demonstrate below is that some of the reactions are in conflict with these postmodernist and individual values.

4.1.1 Explaining the reactions through differences in citizen discourse

As mentioned in the theoretical chapter, there are two prominent discourses on citizenship in the US, the civic republican and the liberal (Knight-Abowitz & Harnish, 2006). While the US certainly is a country celebrating liberal rights there is nonetheless a prominent discourse of civic republicanism present in the US that emphasize duties over individual rights, for example

¹⁰ cf. World Values Survey, 2011

communitarian values with ideals of social morality instead of rights and individual preferences (Etzioni, 2011). I suggest that the different interpretations of the curator may be rooted in citizen discourses that are in conflict with some typical postmodernist values that CoS embodied.

While the democratic value, from a postmodern, individualist perspective, lie in empowering the citizens through emancipative values such as self-expression and autonomy, the civic republican stance stress not an absolute right to carry out the right of freedom of speech or self-expression but the prioritizing of the *responsibilities* the citizen has to the community (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Etzioni, 2011). Such ideals are downplayed in the example of CoS, not only because of the generous freedoms the curators are given, but by the simple fact that the curators are supposed to act as *self-mediators* rather than spokespersons for any community or identity.

Given that CoS represents typical postmodern values such as the inherent democratic value of self-expression and freedom of speech, it also distances itself from the view of the dutiful, or, virtuous citizen, where citizenship is fostered “through social morality, rather than individual preferences” (Bang 2004, p. 3; Deuze, 2008). Instead, the CoS appears as an empirical example of the fostering of the “atomized citizen” that pursues self-actualization rather than duties, as well as someone who demands empowerment from above (cf. Bennett’s typology of *Changing Citizenry* in figure 4). Communication practices like CoS may thus be symptomatic of a general development towards individualism in society at large, where individualist rooted values appear as the prime democratic value at the expense of earlier notions that stressed duties and responsibilities (Dahlgren, 2009; Putnam, 2004).

4.2 Questioning the functionality of the initiative

The study of the commentaries of the initiative in the US media demonstrate that the intended message, in general understood as “demonstrating the democratic values the Swedish society rests upon” (F. Roberts, personal interview, January 14, 2012), was challenged by a considerable discussion regarding the content of certain tweets, rather than the intended democracy message. Additionally, amongst those reactions that did pick up on the intended message with the CoS initiative, rather than focusing on the content of the tweets, the functionality of the initiative became questioned, reflecting an ambiguity of the value of an unmonitored, or unmediated public voice. A quote in Mashable illustrate this ambiguity, with Berkowits’ paradoxical comment on the initiative. While Berkowits apparently appreciated the idea with the CoS initiative the controversy around it seemed simply too inconvenient.

“Seeing the clash of sensibilities on Twitter may not be pretty, but it is transparent and bold. At the very least, you can’t deny that it has raised awareness via its cringe factor.” “It’s so amazing to watch, says David Berkowits, vice president of emerging media at digital agency 3601.” “I’m so happy it’s not my country” (Wasserman, 2012 para. 12)

This quote came at a time when the entire concept of the initiative came into question due to the controversial tweets made by the curator at the time, Sonja Abrahamsson. TIME Magazine (2012) blogged about the initiative with the headline Epic Twitter Fail, and further described it as something “that started innocently enough” (Traywick, 2012 p. 2). New York Times, that initially celebrated the initiative, giving it a front page exposure, linked to a Mashable blog post titled “@Sweden experiment goes painfully awry” (Haberman, 2012) as did The New Yorker, “The @Sweden campaign goes pear shaped. An example of how to ruin a brand in 1 step. I’m stunned” (Arons, 2012 para. 1).

The reactions that followed were fully centered on the content of both Sonja’s and other curators’ controversial tweets, questioning the functionality of the case. Vanity Fair (Weiner, 2012 para. 1) wrote “The whole thing was very charming in a particularly Swedish sort of way- until now” and marketing magazine AdWeek (Beltrone, 2012) inquired in the article’s headline “How much transparency is good for tourism?” The interesting aspect here is that even though spokespersons for the initiative met the critique, pointing out that the CoS is a matter of freedom of expression, this message did not seem have bearing as the reporting continued to focus on the contents of the tweets. And not only those tweets from Sonja.

The fact that the functionality of the initiative was questioned can partly be understood against different assumptions on how far one is willing to go in empowering citizens with freedom of speech. Debating the limits of free speech is of course not nothing unusual, and certainly not within democracies, but nonetheless, the nuances in and between the reactions had apparent implications in this very setting, as they were rooted in different understandings of democracy and subsequently also diverging assumptions of how to pursue web technologies, like Twitter. With a significant part of the media questioning the functionality of the initiative, referencing controversial tweets rather than the democratic values of Sweden, the debate turned into demands on regulation and censorship, the exact opposite of the message of the initiative.

Consequently, and due to these different sensibilities on the limits of freedom of expression, the issue of regulation and censorship appeared. Here, Sweden’s stance on censorship seemed to cause some raised eye-brows rather than appreciation: WSJ wrote: “Organizers behind the

Twitter strategy declined to comment on specific tweets on the @Sweden feed, but appear to be open to letting Sonja continue to say what she wishes” (Stoll & Heron, 2012 para. 1). And TIME Magazine stated: “Sweden’s tourism board doesn’t seem too worked up about it either, maintaining that it won’t censor its curators” (Traywick, 2012 para. 6). Of course, the reactions I refer to did not necessarily *advocate* censorship, but they did raise the question, while others suggested harder regulations on who should be allowed to tweet. The interesting thing to note is that neither of them accepted the core message, that the value of self-expression and free speech was the primary democratic value.

The many reactions that brought up these issues, on censorship and regulation, extended the debate to an issue of *responsibility* and, ultimately, the question of what was appropriate behavior for governments to encourage. Huffington Post explicitly expressed that the officials behind the initiative were responsible for what was being said.

“As easy it is to place blame on the current @Sweden for her ignorant and misguided tweets (...) it is the people behind the page who are truly at fault. She is after all, still tweeting freely, still representing the country of Sweden.”¹¹ (Burnham, 2012 para. 1)

To that background there are indicators that there are other, stronger ideals than the right to express individual opinions present in these reactions. I thus suggest that the democratic value of self-expression and freedom of speech, embodied by CoS was challenged by a “regulative” discourse in US media that stressed “order” and “functionality” rather than autonomy as a democratic value. What it further demonstrates is also that there are significant limitations to the democratic value of transparency.

I will in the following section attempt to explain these discursive patterns conveyed in the reactions; the different sensibilities towards the limits of free speech, the discussion on censorship, and the demands of responsibility.

4.2.1 Explaining reactions through understandings on civility¹²

Civility has always been a precondition for democracy, as well as an indicator of a functional society (Papacharissi, 2004). According to Etzioni (2011), a prominent scholar of communitarian political thought, explains how the United States, a notoriously rights-focused country, is likewise permeated by discourses that strongly advocate social responsibility and duties to counterbalance this “rights culture”. A central claim in communitarian thought is that responsibilities might even be valued higher than individual rights (2011). In the academic debate, it is argued that contemporary society is constantly engaged with counterbalancing between rights and duties/responsibilities, as well as reacting to the emergence of increased individualism (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Habermas, 2004). The outrage expressed in some of the reactions to CoS, and the demands for responsibility and control, can be seen as a neglect of such responsibilities, either by government or the individual citizen. The initiative was, as pointed out earlier, both celebrated and significantly questioned for the very principle of executing the right of free speech, mirroring this conflicting interplay between rights and responsibilities. Thus, some reactions mirrors a regulative discourse, signaling that the initiative went too far in executing the rights of the individual (the curator) at the expense of individual social responsibility (e.g. towards community and/or other individuals).

The reactions that remarked on the lack of regulation are illustrative also of another discourse. They are symptomatic of the suggested detrimental effects individualism has for civility and democracy, especially the fear that civil society emerges towards self-centered forms of organization and not towards a common good (Flanagan & Lee 2003; Putnam, 2004). If we recall Putnam’s thesis on the decline of civil society and the lack of social capital, which he links to morals and civility, the demand for regulation found in the commentary becomes sensible. Assumptions that are based on these logics, that indicate top down, hierarchical structures of order, with a civil society as the primary ground for civility, would naturally react to developments that challenge such forms of societal organization. In fact, these logics are in direct opposite to the demands placed by the so called “atomized citizen” who “demands empowerment from above” (Bang, 2004). It is therefore probable that the CoS, situated in a context of online mass-communication with limited demands of control, became the embodiment of such weakening institutions, and ultimately a challenge to the frames for civility. To that background, the “demands” for regulation, indicates a demand for someone to act as “a gatekeeper”, to counteract

¹² Civility here is defined as “attitudes and beliefs regarding a hypothetical universalized community” (Labigne, 2012)

and balance the interplay between freedom of speech and responsibilities, but also to safeguard democracy understood against norms of civility and not as expanding the rights of the individual.

One of the conclusions I made earlier about the reactions to CoS was that there was considerable attention paid to the content of the tweets rather than the message of the initiative as a whole. Spurred by the controversies around curator Sonja, there were implicit and explicit discussions on what was “appropriate content” that ultimately lead to the questioning of the functionality of the initiative. Of course, not everyone saw the tweets as controversial or as inappropriate. Some tweets were brought up as mere amusements, including Sonja’s:

”Abrahamsson’s tweets also provided some truly hilarious characterizations of Scandinavian culture. “Swedish prisons are like hotels,” she wrote. “You come to prison as a thug but comes out as P. Diddy” (Arons, 2012 para. 3)

At the same time, many reacted to certain tweets, not only because they were controversial, but seemingly as they reflected “private” or “personal” expressions, revealing skepticism again, towards “self-centered” or “self-mediated” forms of communication.

If we keep in mind the very idea CoS had with the curation concept, letting the curator tweet from their own individual perspective, and as “ordinary citizens” a natural outcome of this is that the tweets will concern just that, ordinary and everyday activities. One author, who was generally impressed by the initiative, used the headline: “This guy holding a chicken- is he the future of Twitter?” (Stahl, 2011). While this headline seems rather harmless, there is a point to be made about the ironic undertone of worry it entails. Rather, it distances the CoS from being understood as a democratic initiative, towards something rather trivial, even silly.

Other articles touched upon similar aspects with references to reality television (Hill, 2012), “shock comic” and parallels between comedienne Sara Silverman and curator Sonja Abrahamsson (Wasserman, 2012). The “humorous” aspect of the Curators of Sweden was of course ignited when the initiative repeatedly appeared on political satirist Stephen Colbert’s television show on Comedy Central. Colbert ironized over the seemingly ignorant tweets by Sonja Abrahamsson, and over another curator who mentioned his fondness of “masturbation” (The Colbert Report 2012a; 2012b; 2012c). Colbert’s reports simply revealed the inability, for “Americans”, to comprehend how such an initiative can be sanctioned “from above” once again reminiscing the disregard of self-expression and free speech as superior democratic values. The initiative may perhaps be noble-, but people will always misuse such opportunities, was somehow the

implicit assumption and undertone Colbert's jokes drew on. Rather, it reflected the sympathies of a seemingly "elitist" view on democratic practice, where the CoS- initiative instead serves to prove the point of why democracy is about hierarchy and representation rather than "direct democracy": simply because the people cannot be trusted. When Colbert continued his musings with the bold claim that he himself was more suitable to represent Sweden, as a curator, than any Swedish citizen, he touched upon other "distortions" of contemporary technology discourse, when new technologies are in the hands of the masses. Colbert here made a stunt where he himself pretended to write down on Wikipedia, "the proofs" for his suitability to be the next @Sweden curator.

If we return to the attention that was given to the comments of "inappropriate" content, that the initiative generated, another article also reacted to the use of private, or personal opinions, but with a less forgiving undertone:

"One tweet yesterday for example, offers a disturbing take on what a mashup of the horror flick *Seven* and fairy tale-movie *Snow White* might look like (definitely NSFW¹³). Another draws a dark bizarre connection between Hitler and dolphins (also probably NSFW)" (Betrone, 2012 para. 3)

What this tells us is that the tweets that centered on mundane, trivial and/or private matters seemed to create ambiguity amongst those who reported on the initiative. From a CoS perspective, this ambiguity does not make sense as the value of individual representation of a country, and self-expression outplays other values. Frida Roberts makes this stance very clear in the interview:

"This thing about having good taste is incredibly personal, and in a democracy you are allowed to have good taste, but also bad taste" (personal interview, January 14, 2013 own translation)

As mentioned in the theoretical chapter, there are different takes on whether self-expression is beneficial for a democratic society in terms of civic behavior (Welzel, 2010) and a substantial critique suggesting that the emergence towards individualist values creates behavior that puts individual interests, such as self-expression, before the common good (Etzioni 2011, Flanagan

¹³ NSFW is a "web" abbreviation that generally mean "Not Safe for Work or Not Suitable for Work" (UrbanDictionary)

& Lee, 2003; Putnam, 2004. Reacting to the tweets that centered on private or mundane matters may be a way to question what *common good* such communication should generate and to question the execution of rights as the primary democratic value.

I will in the following section explain how the reactions were underpinned by ideals of a virtual public sphere, and ideological assumptions of web technology. This is done, to answer the second research question, and in an attempt to understand the implications divergent views on democracy and web technology may have for strategic communication practitioners in a context of digital communication.

4.3 What should belong in the (virtual) public sphere?

The reactions to the Curators of Sweden initiative does so far demonstrate that the perception of the initiative in the US media were underpinned by ideologically rooted discourses, such as different sensibilities when it comes to civility and the role of the citizen. These discourses seem to reflect different values in evaluating the initiative, either by stressing a more regulated communicative practice as to safeguard certain (democracy) values or emphasizing individual autonomy/empowerment to enhance democracy. There were also patterns that indicated ambiguity towards the use of self-mediation and revelation of “private” matters, implicitly questioning the democratic value individualistic trends.

In the theoretical chapter I mentioned the hypothesis by Manuel Castells (2007) that new forms of communication practices are changing the borders of the public sphere, and that new interactive and networked forms of communication expands the public sphere. For example, Castells claims that the ideals on the democratic dialogue are renegotiated through the increased use of mass self-expression. Following this hypothesis, that the global emergence of mass self-expression is extending the public sphere, liberal and communitarians would supposedly have diverse opinions on what democratic ideals a *virtual* public sphere should entail and also react differently to new communication realities. If we return to the ideals represented in CoS, encouraged by the means of self-expression, it suggest a democratic ideal that implies extended boundaries of the public sphere, towards less regulation, increased autonomy and a move beyond the domains of institutions. It also suggests that the border between what is considered public and private is negotiated in this context as well, with different convictions on what should be meaningful (democratic) communication. As shown, there are apparent discourses present in the US media, which challenge these ideals, and where more regulatory aspects are emphasized.

Below, I will demonstrate how norms and ideals of the public sphere translates into a hypothetical virtual public sphere, and how it became visible in the commentaries around CoS. The commentary gives us an indication on different democratic ideals for online communicative practices, in a *virtual* public sphere, that potentially sets the premises for the execution of strategic communication in terms of (democratic) digital strategies.

4.3.1 Sweden embodies values of (cyber-) libertarianism

The discourse in the commentary that suggested regulation rather than self-expression as ideals indicate that Curators of Sweden appeared, by some, to have gone too far in executing the right of freedom of expression and, ultimately, that democracy is not strengthened by (communication) efforts that promote such values. In fact, some commentaries reveal the exact opposite, that too much focus on individualism is a move towards Libertarianism, and arguably, a threat to democracy because of *the lack of* regulation. This was conveyed with multiple, more or less implicit, references to cyber-libertarianism and the assumption that regulation is needed to safeguard democracy against anarchistic tendencies. One of the first reports on CoS was titled “In Sweden Twitter is democratic and filesharing is a religion” (Goodman, 2012a), an article that focused more on the cyber-activist group Kopimisterna than the CoS-initiative. Forbes also picked up on the theme of piracy and cyber-freedom:

“Sweden wanted to dramatically show how committed it is to freedom of speech and the power of the unfettered Internet (...) “This is the land of the Pirate Party after all” (Hill, 2012 para. 8)

The digital strategy behind CoS is at one point described as “a laissez faire approach” reflecting a slight depreciation to the fact that the initiative is purposely unmediated (Goodman, 2012b para. 3). If one adds these “cyber-libertarian” references (filesharing and piracy) to the discourses on regulation found in the commentary, the image of Sweden appears almost anarchistic, being either senseless or naïve towards the potentials of the Internet. What these reactions touch upon is the inevitable question of how, and whether, the internet should be subject to regulation, either by governmental involvement or other forms of institutionalized gatekeeping. It also relate to the conclusion I made earlier that this regulative discourse bear witness also to limitations for organizations to pursue transparency.

The “fear” of a virtual sphere without regulation and gatekeeping enters the discussion here indicating that social media/web technology is something to be not only cautious about but

possibly also detrimental to democracy. But regardless of the CoS appearing as either silly, naïve or borderline anarchistic, more interesting is the fact that diverging assumptions of technology affects not only how communication efforts are received but also the way online practices are carried out- that the meanings and connotations to technology determines affects strategy. As shown, some of the commentaries were in sharp contrast to the brand values in the strategic idea behind CoS; to use Twitter as a component in their branding strategy to demonstrate, or activate, some core values of the country- Sweden being technologically advanced and innovative, capable of utilizing web technology for not only “social” but democratic purposes (F. Roberts, personal interview, January 14, 2013)

4.3.2 Is it meaningful communication?

One of the most essential aspects of the public sphere is that it should contain public dialogue (Dahlberg, 2011; Habermas, 2004). As shown in the digital democracy positions worked out by Lincoln Dahlberg (2011) there are variations on what a “meaningful” or “democratic” dialogue in the virtual public sphere entails. While the organizers behind CoS used Twitter to acquire cost-effective publicity, the idea of using the concept of curation and the promotion of self-expression illustrates an affinity with the liberal-individual view of the internet; a place for pursuing individual interest, self-expression and unfettered opinion formation (Dahlberg, 2011; Dahlberg, 2009). What CoS does at the same time, is to extend the ideal of pursuing the interest of the individual even further by encouraging the individual representation of a national identity. Recalling the many reactions that failed to acknowledge that the curators were representing themselves as individual Swedes and not the entire nation, it seems that the organizers behind CoS is picking up the marketing trends of personalization and adapting it to a policy matter of democracy.

While the idea of using Twitter as a tool for public voice was not criticized per se, it was the functionality and idea of having an unmediated Twitter account that seemed to cause the mixed reactions. For communitarians who see potential in using online communitarian forums for the purpose of enhancing community ties (Dahlberg, 2009), the very idea with having a curated Twitter account could possibly seem like a desirable attempt to both strengthen “local” community ties (between Swedes) as well as between other communities e.g. between countries or between individuals with “shared interests” a central ambition within the communitarian discourse of democracy (Etzioni, 2011). But as the controversies revealed, the democratic function became questioned as other “civic” ideals were cherished higher than self-expression. It became

more problematic of course given that some people saw the curator as a representative of the country Sweden, resulting in the assumption that tweets would hurt the own “community” i.e. Sweden as a country, or swedes as a group. By judging from the reactions underpinned by communitarian values, CoS simply caused fragmentation instead of building civic ties between communities or individuals, nor did it strengthen any meaningful democratic dialogue.

The different ideals of seeing the virtual sphere, either as a platform for possible “diverse opinions” i.e. the many different (world) views and experiences, or as a facilitator of community becomes apparent here. Naturally, organizers behind CoS did not experience the controversies in this way, nor did they question the functionality of this digital strategy. Instead, one acted upon the premise that there is a certain value to this “clash” of views, i.e. authenticity and transparency. The apparent reason here is simply because they stressed another democratic ideal, the ability to express the many different expressions and narratives from a multitude of individuals. Translated into an online setting, cyberspace is utilized not only as a place for plurality but possibly also dissent, which resonates a democratic view closer to the one of *agonistic pluralism*, rather than the ideal of consensus. Here, CoS seem to distance itself from the ideal of a consensus-oriented public sphere by encouraging a public sphere where differing takes on Swedish culture and identity is encouraged as it strengthens transparency and authenticity.

4.3.3 Balancing between public and private matters

There was also the element of civility that permeated the responses, something that was clearly demonstrated by the focus on the *content* of the tweets. As suggested in the earlier chapter, some tweets were seen as un-civic in character, e.g. that they did not add anything meaningful to a hypothetical democratic dialogue for a virtual public sphere. The sense of ambiguity towards the fact that the curators tweeted about ordinary, everyday activities, might be explained by an inherent conflict on where to draw the line between public and private affairs. In the Habermasian ideal of *communicative rationality*, meaningful dialogue in the public sphere dictates a distinction between public and private matters (Habermas, 1984; Papacharissi, 2002). I dare not speculate to what extent such an ideal have an impact in today’s society but according to Castells (2007), the networked society, induced by mass self-communication, is changing the borders of the public sphere, and thus also the boundaries between what is private and public. The horizontal networks of communication that Castells is referring to are defined by prin-

ciples of self-mediation and not institutionalized gatekeepers which would naturally create content that is more focused on the self. Initiatives like CoS seem symptomatic of this development, where the blurred boundaries between what is public and private equates with transparency.

5. Conclusion

This study emerged from the observation that democracy often appears as a ubiquitous and self-evident concept in the rhetoric and practice of digital democracy, but at the same time seems to encompass a very broad spectrum of ideals and practices. This inspired me to explore the dynamics between ideology and web technology in a contemporary setting where democracy is used as a strategic tool, with the purpose of generating more knowledge of how democratic discourse and communication practice work synergistically in shaping attitudes towards web technologies, and how it in turn affects our strategic approaches in a context of digital democracy. The case of Curators of Sweden is a unique example of a situation where the strategic use of democracy yielded very different outcomes in audience responses, bearing witness to the complex relationship between ideological assumptions and web technology, and the implications of democracy being employed as an empty signifier in digital communication strategies.

Having analyzed the US media reactions to Curators of Sweden, the empirical findings reveal different ideological assumptions on key components of democracy, some of them being in direct conflict with the democratic values inherent in the Curators of Sweden-campaign. While CoS embodies typical emancipative values, such as self-expression, and extending the right to freedom of speech, it also suggests its democratic value in pursuing an unmediated public voice, and by the means of web technology, ensure and expand autonomy for the individual. In contrast, a significant part of the reactions downplayed the democratic values of self-expression and transparency by invoking the ideals of civic responsibilities and duties, ideals that generated a debate on regulation and censorship, the very opposite of the transparency values proposed in the strategy behind the campaign. These reactions mirror a *regulative discourse* that is critical of the “emancipative” capabilities web technologies may bring, as they might generate too much autonomy at the expense of other democratic values

Furthermore, by looking at the ideological underpinnings in these reactions, and by connecting the regulative discourse to ideals embedded in a hypothetical virtual public, some generic patterns evolved suggesting differing views on what democratic values cyberspace should be organized around. While the CoS embodies ideals of an expanded public sphere by the means of web technology, towards less regulation and increased autonomy, the regulative discourse

suggest a need for gatekeeping to balance between rights and responsibilities, as to safeguard democracy from too much autonomy.

Arguably, the ideological conflicts identified in the commentaries are illustrative of the dynamics between assumptions on the capabilities of web technology, democratic understandings and strategic communication practice (cf. figure 1.) What some of these conflicts also revealed were examples of how opposing democratic ideals and assumptions of web technology affected the strategic idea behind the campaign, namely whether Curators of Sweden was understood as a meaningful democratic initiative or not.

Consequently, these empirical findings forces us to reflect upon how different understandings of democracy affects the premises for strategic communication practices in forming digital strategies. Here, the Curators of Sweden-campaign is an example where one wish to use web technology to establish more egalitarian, or horizontal relationships with its publics and at the same time use democracy as a strategic tool in this pursuit. But the regulative discourse, manifested in the reactions, does not only mirror other ideals for digital democracy practice, but shows that there are limitations to the ideals of pursuing more egalitarian, or symmetrical structures of communication, an ideal that is widely influential in both communication theory and practice (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2006).

Moreover, what this regulative discourse also imply is different assumptions on whether power should lie in the hands of representative/institutionalized structures or amongst individuals, a predicament that is actualized in today's communication environment where we see an increase in online mass self-expression and user-generated content (UGC), as well as a development where the professionalization of information is "outsourced" through practices like curation. These are practices where organizations strategically actualize the potentials of its audiences, by the means of web technology, as to achieve corporate goals. But again, the findings from the empirical case of CoS suggests that there are boundaries to the ideal of pursuing more decentralized forms of communication, as it does not necessarily equate symmetry with democratic enhancement. An assumed consequence of this is of course that "proponents" of the regulative discourse would be less willing, or even oppose, communication practices that imply decentralized power structures and communication forms that appear to celebrate the primacy of individual autonomy and self-expression at the expense of other democratic values, i.e. civility.

Ultimately, it raises the question on *what* democratic value any given communication effort promote, and what the outcome of such practice would be. Organizations may frame any digital strategy as "democratic" but in practice serve potentially different (democratic) ideals which

complicates our possibility to adequately evaluate the political effects of digital strategies that use democracy strategically.

From a management perspective, ideological conflicts on web technology, like those highlighted in this empirical example, should encourage reflection not only on stakeholder attitudes, in a culturally diverse- and networked society, but also on democratic or ideological assumptions within the own organization, as it may affect the decisions of how to carry out digital strategies. Also, the ability to balance between own ideals and cultural variations are similar strategic concerns to help reduce the risk of miscommunicating with stakeholders. For policy makers and diplomats, whose practice depend on relationship building and effective communication, such sensitivity should be crucial, especially when operating in virtual public spaces, beyond “local contexts”, to culturally diverse publics.

To conclude, using democracy as a strategic tool is largely about using web technology in a way that fit with own values, ideals, or policies. But there are vulnerabilities in pursuing democracy as an all-encompassing rhetorical tool, as the ideological conflicts experienced in the reactions to Curators of Sweden bear witness to. This study thereby suggest that strategic communication practitioners, especially practitioners and scholars with an interest in public diplomacy and nation branding, can benefit from developing sensitivity of the socio-cultural and ideological dynamics that surrounds the use of web technology.

Suggestions for further research

For future research, looking at the debate in other “locations” than what was done in this study should be encouraged if it adds to a better understanding of the implications of this case. The debate that occurred in the blogosphere is particularly interesting to analyze in conjunction with the debate in the media as it may generate competing narratives on the issue of Curators of Sweden as an empirical example of democratic communication. In theory at least, the blogosphere might reveal other discursive patterns that may be in contrast to, or different from, the (democratic) discourses in printed media. della Porta (2012) for instance has studied media biases towards social movements and describes a potential bias or tension between activists and journalists, activists being more likely to use social media as a communication tool. This might illustrate other discursive patters in locations in the media landscape where there are other, possibly discourses of a more counterbalancing nature involved in the discourse.

Furthermore, the use of social media tools, such as Facebook and Twitter, is a fairly new form of diplomatic practice (Hanson, 2011). From a national context, Swedish public diplomacy is

modernizing its use of web technology and in the recent Statement of Government Policy (February 13, 2013) Sweden gave a clear example on how public diplomacy practices and related governmental efforts are adapting to new communication realities, proclaiming: “Public diplomacy is becoming increasingly important. Before the end of the month, all of our embassies will be on Twitter and Facebook” (Utrikesdeklarationen, 2013). But digital diplomacy, amongst embassies and consulates, is currently used mainly as one-way communication (Brandel, May 18, 2013), thus missing out on the interactive capabilities for relationship building. Although the CoS by its design and purpose is more connected to PR-diplomacy and *branding* and the place marketing of Sweden, rather than formal diplomacy, the CoS is a unique example of new forms of public diplomacy, and an empirical example of innovative ways to democratize branding practices.

6. References.

- Alvesson, M. & Kärreman, D. (2000). Varieties of discourse: on the study of organizations through discourse analysis. *Human Relations*, 53(9), 1125-1149. doi: 10.1177/0018726700539002.
- Alvesson, M. & Sköldbberg, K. (2008). *Tolkning och reflektion: vetenskapsfilosofi och kvalitativ metod*. (2: a uppl.). Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Anholt, S. (2007). *Competitive identity: the brand management for nations, cities and regions*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Arons, R. (2012 June, 19). The pleasing irreverence of @Sweden. *The New Yorker*. Retrieved 2012-10-11 from: <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/culture/2012/06/sonja-abrahamsson-twitter-sweden.html>
- Barlow, J. P. (1996). *A declaration of the independence of cyberspace*. Retrieved 2013-02-20 from: <https://projects.eff.org/~barlow/Declaration-Final.html>
- Beltrone, G. (2012 June, 12). Sweden hand off its Twitter account and things get weird. *AdWeek*. Retrieved 2012-09-01 from: <http://www.adweek.com/adfreak/sweden-hands-its-twitter-account-citizens-and-things-get-weird-141069>
- Bennett, W.L. (Ed.). (2008). *Civic life online: learning how digital media can engage youth*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Brandel, T. (2013 May, 18). Digital diplomati brister i social kompetens. *Svenska Dagbladet*. Retrieved 2013-05-20 from: http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/digital-diplomati-brister-i-social-kompetens_8184040.svd
- Burnham, K. (2012, June 13). Sweden teaches us how to not do social media. *CIO Magazine*. Retrieved 2012-08-27 from: <http://blogs.cio.com/twitter/17162/sweden-teaches-us-how-not-do-social-media>
- Castells, M. (2007). Communication, Power and Counter-power in the Network Society. *International Journal of Communication*, Vol: 238-266.
- Castells, M. (2009). *Communication power*. Oxford: University Press Inc.
- Chadwick, A. & Howard, N. P. (Eds.). (2009). *Routledge handbook of internet politics*. New York: Routledge.
- Chadwick, A. (2006). *Internet politics: states, citizens, and new communication technologies*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cornish, P., French-Lindley, J. & Yorke, C. (2011). *Strategic Communication and National Strategy*. Chatham House. Retrieved 2012-10-28 from: <http://www.chatham-house.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/International%20Security/r0911strat-comms.pdf>
- Curators of Sweden. (2012, February 10). Curators of Sweden. (Video file). Retrieved 2012-04-11 from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3e7_NJznNY

- Dahlberg, L. (2004). Internet research tracing: towards non-reductionist methodology. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 9(3). Retrieved 2012-09-01 from: <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol9/issue3/dahlberg.html>
- Dahlberg, L. (2005). The Habermasian public sphere: Taking difference seriously? *Theory & Society*, 34(2), 111-136
- Dahlberg, L. (2011). Re-constructing digital democracy: An outline of four “positions”. *New Media & Society* 13(6), 855-872. doi:10.1177/1461444810389569
- Dahlgren, P. (2009). *Media and political engagement. Citizens, communication and democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- della Porta, D. (2012). Communication in movement: Social movements as agents of participatory democracy. In B. D. Loader & D. Mercea (Eds), *Social media and democracy. Innovations in participatory politics* (pp. 39-53). New York: Routledge.
- Deuze, M. (2008). The changing context of news work: Liquid journalism and Monitorial citizenship. *International Journal of Communication* 2, 848-865
- Etzioni, A. (2011, May 16). Communitarianism, civil rights and foreign policy. (Web log post). *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved 2012-11-01 from: <http://www.britannica.com/blogs/2011/05/amitai-etzioni-communitarianism-civil-rights-foreign-policy/>
- Flanagan, S., & Lee, A. R. (2003). The new politics, culture wars, and the authoritarian-libertarian value change in advanced industrial democracies. *Comparative Political Studies*, 36, 235-270
- Goodman, D. J. (2012b, June 12) On Sweden’s democratic Twitter account. Some odd questions about jews. *The Lede*. Retrieved 2012-07-19 from: <http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/06/12/on-swedens-democratic-twitter-account-some-odd-questions-about-jews/>
- Goodman, D.J. (2012a, January 18). In Sweden, Twitter is democratic and filesharing is a religion. *The Lede*. Retrieved 2012-08-13 from: <http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/01/18/in-sweden-twitter-is-democratic-and-file-sharing-is-a-religion/>
- Grunig, J., Grunig, L., Dozier, D. (2006). The Excellence Theory. In C. H. Botan & V. Hazleton (Eds.), *Public Relations Theory II* (pp. 21–62). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Gunder, M. & Hillier, J. (2009). *Planning in ten words or less: a Lacanian entanglement with spatial planning*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing.
- Haberman, S. (2012 June, 12). Sweden’s Twitter account goes painfully awry. *Mashable*. Retrieved 2012-08-20 from: <http://mashable.com/2012/06/12/sweden-twitter/>
- Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action. Volume 1: Reason and Rationalization of Society*. Beacon Press.
- Habermas, J. (1997). The public sphere. In R. E. Goodin & P. Pettit (Eds.), *Contemporary political philosophy*. Oxford: Blackwell Publications.
- Habermas, J. (2004). *The divided west*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Hacker, K. J., & van Dijk, J. (2000). What is Digital Democracy? In J. v. Dijk & K. L. Hacker (Ed.), *Digital Democracy Issues of Theory and Practice* (pp. 70-89) SAGE Publications: London.

- Hallahan, K., Holtzhausen, D., van Ruler, B., et.al. (2007). Defining strategic communication. *International Journal of Communication*, 1(1), 3-35. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15531180701285244>
- Hanson, F. (2011, April 4). New public diplomacy. *Lowy Institute for International Policy*. Retrieved 2012-12-2 from: <http://m.lowyinstitute.org/publications/new-public-diplomacy>
- Hill, K. (2012, June 12). Why did Sweden hand its national Twitter account over to a troll? *Forbes Magazine*. Retrieved 2012-08-27 from: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kashmirhill/2012/06/13/why-did-sweden-hand-its-national-twitter-account-over-to-a-troll/>
- Inglehart, R. & Welzel, C. (2005). *Modernization, cultural change and democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Inglehart, R. (1997). *Modernization and postmodernization: Cultural, economic, and political change in 43 societies*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Inglehart, R., Oyserman, D. (2004). Individualism, autonomy, and self-expression: The human development syndrome. In H. Vinken, J. Soeters, & P. Ester (Eds.), *Comparing cultures: Dimensions of culture in a comparative perspective* (pp. 74-96). Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill
- Inglehart, R., Welzel, C., Deutsch, F. (2006). Social capital, voluntary associations and collective action: Which aspects of social capital have the greatest 'civic' payoff? *Journal of Civil Society* 1(2), 121-146 doi: 10.1080/17448680500337475
- Jenkins, H. & Thorburn, D. (Eds). (2003). *Democracy and New Media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Kaneva, N. (2011). Nation branding: toward an agenda for critical research. *International Journal of Communication*, 5, 117-141. Retrieved 2012-10-22 from: http://www.academia.edu/405474/Nation_Branding_Toward_an_Agenda_for_Critical_Research
- Ketter, E., Avraham, E. (2012). The social revolution of place marketing: The growing power of users in social media networking. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 8: 285-294. doi:10.1057/pb.2012.20
- Kymlicka, W. & Norman, W. (2000). Citizenship in culturally diverse societies: Issues, contexts, concepts. In W. Kymlicka & W. Norman (Eds), *Citizenship in diverse societies* (pp. 1-41). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Labigne, A. (2012). Civility as a public opinion: Theorizing civility and discussing an attitude survey-based research agenda. *Journal of Civil Society*, 8(2), 123-135 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17448689.2012.704672>
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1950), Introduction à l'œuvre de Marcel Mauss, in M. Mauss, *Sociologie et anthropologie*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1950 (English trans. by Felicity Baker, *Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss*, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London 1987, pp. 62-63).
- Lindlof, R. T. & Taylor, C. B. (2011). *Qualitative communication research* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Loader, D. B. & Mercea, D. (Eds). (2012). *Social media and democracy. Innovations in participatory politics*. New York: Routledge.

- Lyall, S. (2012, June 10). Sweden's Twitter Voice: anyone saying (blush) almost anything. *New York Times*. Retrieved 2012-08-27 from: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/11/world/europe/many-voices-of-sweden-via-twitter.html?_r=0
- Maltais, M. (2012 June, 12). Guest tweeters' on Sweden's Twitter account stir up controversy. *LA Times*. Retrieved 2012-10-13 from: <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jun/12/business/la-fi-tn-sonja-tweets-on-jews-sweden-20120612>
- Margolis, M. & Resnick, D. (2000). *Politics as usual. The cyberspace revolution*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Martin, R. (2011, December 21). Sweden boasts world's "most democratic" Twitter account. *The Local*. Retrieved from: <http://www.thelocal.se/38072/20111221/#.UW578bWpVBY>
- Mehlman, J. (1972). The "Floating Signifier": From Lévi-Strauss to Lacan author(s). *Yale French Studies*, No. 48 Yale University Press. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2929621>
- Melissen, J. (Ed). (2005). *The new public diplomacy. Soft power in international relations*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Merriam, B. S. (2010). *Fallstudien som forskningsmetod*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Moravcsik, A. (2004). Is there a 'Democratic Deficit' in World Politics? A framework for analysis. *Government and Opposition*, 39(2): 336–363. doi:10.1111/j.1477-7053.2004.00126.x
- Mouffe, C. (2005). *On the political*. London: Routledge.
- Murugesan, S. (Ed.) (2010). *Handbook of research on Web 2.0, 3.0, and X.0: technologies, business, and social applications*. Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference.
- Norris, P. (2001). *Digital divide?: civic engagement, information poverty, and the internet worldwide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Norris, P. (2011). *Democratic deficit: Critical citizens Revisited*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Nothhaft, H. (2012). The dream of enlightenment beyond digital reach? Part 1: Concepts of Democracy. Unpublished manuscript, Lund University.
- Nye, J.S. (2004). *Soft power: the means to success in world politics*. New York, N.Y.: Public Affairs.
- O'Reilly, T. (2005, October, 1). Web 2.0: Compact definition? *O'Reilly Radar*. Retrieved 2012-11-15 from: <http://radar.oreilly.com/2005/10/web-20-compact-definition.html>
- Papacharissi, Z. (2004). Democracy online: Civility, politeness and the democratic potential of online political discussion groups. *New Media & Society*. 6(2):259-283. doi:10.1177/1461444804041444
- Papacharissi, Z. (2009). The virtual sphere 2.0: Internet, the public sphere and beyond. In A. Chadwick & N. P. Howard (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of internet politics*. New York: Routledge.
- Putnam, R. D. (1993). *Making democracy work*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Putnam, R.D (Ed). (2004). *Democracies in flux: The evolution in social capital in contemporary societies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Roberts, C. (June 12, 2012). @Sweden stirs critics with “Jew” rant. *NY Daily*. Retrieved 2012-08-27 from: http://articles.nydailynews.com/2012-06-12/news/32199730_1_twitter-account-official-account-single-tweet

Rosenbaum, S. (2011). *Curation nation. How to win in a world where consumers are creators*. New York: McGraw Hill Professional.

Schudson, D. (2003). Click here for democracy: A history and critique of an information-based model of citizenship. In H. Jenkins & D. Thorburn (Eds.), *Democracy and new media* (pp. 49-60). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Stahl, J. (2011 December, 30). This guy holding a chicken: is he also the future of Twitter? *Slate Magazine*. Retrieved 2012-08-01 from: http://www.slate.com/blogs/future-tense/2011/12/30/sweden_s_experiment_in_letting_citizens_run_its_twitter_account_.html

Stoll, J. D., & Heron, L. (2012 June, 12). Sweden stands by Twitter strategy despite controversy. Retrieved 2012-08-15 from: <http://blogs.wsj.com/dispatch/2012/06/12/sweden-stands-by-twitter-strategy-despite-controversy/>

Svenska Institutet, Pressrum (2011). Sverige låter invånarna ta över Twitterkonto (pressrelease). Retrieved 2013-02-20 from: <http://www.mynewsdesk.com/se/pressroom/si/pressrelease/view/sverige-laater-invaanarna-ta-oever-landets-officiella-twitterkonto-714793>

Svenska Institutet, Pressrum (2012). Multiple awards to Twitter Initiative Curators of Sweden (press release) Retrieved 2012-10-01 from: www.si.se/English/Navigation/Media/News/Multiple-awards-to-Twitter-initiative-Curators-of-Sweden/

Szondi, G. (2008). Public diplomacy and nation branding: Conceptual similarities and differences. Discussion Papers in Diplomacy. *Copenhagen: Netherlands Institute of International Relations*, Vol:5

Tench, R. & Yeomans, L. (Eds.) (2009). *Exploring public relations*. (2. ed.) Harlow, England: FT Prentice Hall.

The Colbert Report. (2012a June, 12). Operation Artificial Swedener (video file) Retrieved from: <http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/415197/june-12-2012/operation-artificial-swedener>

The Colbert Report. (2012b June, 18). Operation artificial Swedener. Sweden’s response. Retrieved from: <http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/415482/june-18-2012/operation-artificial-swedener---sweden-s-response>

The Colbert Report. (2012c June, 21). Operation artificial Swedener. C’mon Sweden. Take a chance on me. Retrieved from: <http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/415706/june-21-2012/operation-artificial-swedener---c-mon-sweden--take-a-chance-on-stephen>

Thierer, A., Szoka, B. (2009, August 12, 2010). What is cyber-libertarianism? The case for real internet freedom. Retrieved 2012-04-30 from <http://techliberation.com/2009/08/12/cyber-libertarianism-the-case-for-real-internet-freedom/>

Traywick, K. (2012, June 13). What the fuzz? Sweden’s tourism board tries to explain @Sweden’s epic Twitter fail. *Time Magazine*. Retrieved 2012-07-01 from: <http://newsfeed.time.com/2012/06/13/what-the-fuzz-swedish-tourism-board-tries-to-explain-swedens-epic-twitter-fail/>

Wasserman, T. (2012 June, 12). Why Sweden was right to hand over its Twitter account. *Mashable*. Retrieved 2011-08-01 from: <http://mashable.com/2012/06/12/sweden-was-right-twitter/>

Weiner, J. (2012 June, 13). Sweden's noble Twitter experiment falling apart like an Ikea desk. *Vanity Fair*. Retrieved 2012-09-01 Retrieved 2012-09-10 from: <http://www.vanityfair.com/online/daily/2012/06/Swedens-Noble-Twitter-Experiment-Falling-Apart-Like-an-Ikea-Desk>

Welzel, C. (2010). How selfish are self-expression values? A civiness test. *Journal of Cross-cultural psychology*, 41(2), 152-174 doi:10.1177/0022022109354378

Welzel, C., Inglehart, R. & Deutsch, F. (2005). Social capital, associational life, and collective action. *Journal of Civil Society*, 1(2), 121-146

World Values Survey,(2011) Available from: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>

Young, P. (2012 October, 10). Curating Nemo. (Web log post). Retrieved 2012-11-23 from: <http://publicsphere.typepad.com/mediations/2012/10/curating-nemo.html>

6.1 Attachment 1: Interview Frida Roberts

Frida Roberts
Head of Communications
Swedish Institute (Svenska Institutet)
Contact: 08-453 7879

Monday January 14, 2013
Swedish Institute, Stockholm

The interview was conducted in Swedish and can be translated upon request.

INTERVJUGUIDE

Presentation av studien samt syftet med intervjun: Forskningsdesign, Syfte och Utgångspunkt

- Kan du beskriva din roll som enhetschef på Svenska Institutet?
- Vilken roll hade du i utformandet av Curators of Sweden-initiativet

PRISBELÖNT PROJEKT

- Varför tror ni att just CoS vann priset?
- Hur väl speglar projektet vår mediala samtid?

CURATION SOM KONCEPT

- Tydlig fördel att låta svenskar ge egna oregisserade erfarenheter eftersom trovärdigheten stärks- samtidigt är nation branding initiativ baserat på traditionella marknadsförings-principer, med tydligt uttänkt budskap och målgrupp osv. vad var det som lockade?
- Curation är örhållandevis nytt inslag, men curation/crowdsourcing förekommer i andra sammanhang också, inte bara i turistbranschen: Varför tror du att det idag finns ett behov av att förmedla en ”autentisk bild”? Har folk slutat lyssna på typisk reklam? På experten? Är det ”det alternativa” kommunikationssättet som är värdet i sig?
- En del av kritiken har varit att en autentisk bilden av Sverige kommer fram genom att låta vanliga svenskar twittra och att en oförskönad lika gärna kan ge en orättvis bild av Sverige- att det rent av skadar varumärket Sverige. Hur resonerade ni i det sammanhanget?
- Vad sades kring eventuell negativ press? Hur förberedde ni er inför eventuellt negativ press? Hur väljs deltagarna?

DEN MEDIALA UPPMÄRKSAMHETEN och REAKTIONERNA (Från start december 2011 och vidare)

- Vad hade ni för förväntningar på projektet i termer av både ris och ros?
- Valet att *inte censurera* innehåll har genererat mycket uppmärksamhet. Att inte heller kommentera särskilda tweets eller kuratorer. Det finns samtidigt vissa förhållningsregler: hur har ni hittat en balans mellan den frihet som ges till kuratorerna och vad som helt enkelt inte kan uttryckas på @Sweden. Vad finns det för motiveringsgrunder?
- Skulle du säga att ni har varit generösa i vad som tillåts? Hur bemöter ni kritiken om att ni har varit *för* generösa? Har folk missat poängen? Den demokratiska poängen?
- Vad skulle behöva hända för att publiciteten verkligen övergår i negativ publicitet? Finns det en sådan gränsdragning?
- Vid fallet Sonja Abrahamsson, som varit mest uppmärksammat: Var det någonsin aktuellt att inte låta henne fortsätta?
- Var ni beredda på eventuella ”troll”?
- Hur skulle ni beskriva uppmärksamheten initiativet fick genom att Stephen Colbert uppmärksammade er? Fördel? Nackdel?

DEMOKRATI som marknadsföringsverktyg

1. Initiativet kallas för ”the world’s most democratic twitter account” :
Vad ges ordet ”demokratiskt” för innebörd i sammanhanget?
Handlar det främst om att ”alla svenskar får komma till tals?” eller ”att Twitter-kontot är ore-gisserat?”
Fanns det andra aspekter av projektet som också gör det demokratiskt?
2. Vilken betydelse hade begreppet demokrati rent strategiskt i marknadsföringen?
3. Diskuterades eventuella nackdelar med att använda just demokrati som kärnbegrepp i beskrivningen av projektet?
4. Försvårades någonsin projektet genom att ni hävda att projektet var ”demokratiskt” Pondera att projektet hade skett på VisitSweden eller SI:s hemsida, och inte kopplat till @Sweden, officiella Twitter-kontot. (Inget hindrar ju någon från att Twittra som svensk ändå?) Hade det gjort någon skillnad?
5. Har ni varit tillräckligt tydliga med att kommunicera innebörden av begreppet, och reflekterat kring eventuella andra synsätt på demokrati? Yttrandefriheten är ju oerhört kontextberoende, och dessutom allt annat än allmängiltig, en utgångspunkt som jag tar fasta på i min undersökning.

6.2 Attachment 2: Interview Ludvig Beckman

Ludvig Beckman,
Professor, Department of Political Science
Stockholm University
Contact: ludvig.beckman@statsvet.su.se

Wednesday January 16, 2013
Stockholm University, Frescati

The interview was conducted in Swedish and can be translated upon request.

INTERVJUGUIDE

- Presentation av studiens syfte och utgångspunkt i demokratiska diskurser.
- Vill du kort berätta om ditt forskningsfält? Jag tänker främst på det som är inriktat på hur synen på medborgarskap förändras.
- Vad har varit mest intressant i din forskning kring medborgarskap och demokratiska problem?
- Hur ser du på Ny, digital media som ämnesområdet- vad är de viktigaste aspekterna att forska kring? Du kan uttala dig för statsvetenskapen och utifrån din forskning.
- Om vi går in på den samtida idédebatten kring demokratiska *potential i ny media*: Den deliberativa tanken har ju varit framträdande, vissa deliberativa värden som dialog och medborgardeltagande är vanliga, hur ser du på den diskussionen? Att deliberativa ideal kan fungera som alternativ till trasiga representativa demokratier? Vad är din allmänna inställning till den debatten?
- Utöver de deliberativa tankesättet, hur har den allmänna politiska debatten följt den *akademiska*?
- Vilka tänkare är mest tongivande i den allmänna debatten?: Habermas, Putnam? På vilket sätt avgör de demokratiska diskurserna som finns representerade i media hur vi ser på hur demokratin påverkas? Och vilka potential ny media har för demokratisering?
- Vilka politiska (demokratiska problem) kommer inte fram i debatten?
- Vad finns det för problem med konsensus-tänkandet? (Mouffe och agonistic demokrati)
- *Det demokratiska samtalet* på sociala medier, inte alltid särskilt konstruktiv: är informella samtal av betydelse ändå?
- Kan man tala om en virtuell offentlig sfär?
- Demokratiska värden, retorisk funktion. Demokratisering genom teknologi, men också en teknologisering av demokratin- förenklat? Förtylligande? Kosmetisk demokrati? Ingen reell inverkan?
- **SYNEN PÅ MEDBORGAREN** och deltagande (politiskt såväl som i det civila samhället) Hur har synen på den goda medborgaren förändrats? *Vad finns det för nya aktuella medborgardiskurser?* (The liquid citizen, citizen as consumer, den autonoma?)
- Vad krävs för att alternativa synsätt på medborgarskap, och (kanske rent av på demokrati) ska få ökad plats bland de dominerande, liberala och republikanska?

- Om man tittar på politiskt deltagande i form av sociala rörelser så har det historiskt sett ingen nyhet, men dagens Occupy-rörelser sägs representera en ny form av politisk mobilisering. Hur ligger den typen av rörelser i tiden? Vad finns det för ny dynamik representerat där och hur hänger den ihop med demokratiska diskursiva förändringar?
- **STRUKTURELLA FÖRÄNDRINGAR:** Diffus gränsdragning mellan privat och offentligt i postmodernt samhälle: Diskussionen om hur individen blir mer autonom, och att den privata sfären integrerar mer i den offentliga.
- Mediaformat som uppmuntrar ”den vanliga människan”, crowdsourcing, personliga bloggar osv. Vad händer med experten när den vanliga medborgaren får tillgång till mer kunskap och större möjlighet att göra sig hörd?

6.3 Attachment 3: Interview Philip Young

*Philip Young,
Curation and Public Relations, Initiator of NEMO
Lund University, Campus Helsingborg
Contact: Philip.young@isk.lu.se*

Friday January 25, 2013
Stockholm

INTERVIEW GUIDE

PRESENTATION OF STUDY

- Presentation of Curators of Sweden and objective with case study.
- Objective with CoS: Create buzz, elevate brand visibility
- Reveal preliminary results.

- Variations in responses in US Media: Brilliant-democratic, foolish/risky:lack of quality
- Lack of quality-argument: being a swede is not enough to be the new expert.
- Conflict between group identity values and individual values of self-expression.

CURATION in Contemporary Democratic Society

- Could you tell me a little bit your relation to the concept of curating, and perhaps also a little bit about how the NEMO project came to be and how it relates to the field of content curation?
- If you were to name some major trends affecting the development of Curation and similar concepts, such as Crowdsourcing, what would that be?
- How would you say curation fit into digital democracy debate?
- There has been some discussion about the effects of personalized content; affect quality?
- Lot of discussion that Curating is changing the role of journalism and as a result in the formation of public opinion: what would you say are the most important indicators of this?
- What is the biggest problem facing curation today in terms of practice?

ADDING “THE HUMAN” ELEMENT to CONTENT AGGREGATION (The difference between content curation and content aggregation)

- What do you think about Rosenbaum’s definition?
- Anyone can curate, but not everyone can create value. Is that an unfair distinction do you think? Is that maybe the missing link in the case of CoS?
- Context dependent?: Sharing individual stories of travel destinations is one thing, but representing a brand name, nation brand is another.
- Can crowdsourcing and/or Curating be a form of exploitation?

THE ROLE OF THE CURATOR

- Curators are representatives of Sweden (editors) (Live reporters)
- How can this be understood in terms of brand value development?
- How can curation be managed in terms of strategy, how do we balance creativity from the curators and overall strategy? Especially in terms of branding.
- Do you think CoS was successful in this achievement?
- To what extent do you think the concept of curate will affect traditional marketing principles? They will have to work in conjunction with each other?

PERSONALIZED CONTENT

- CoS is about social and common storytelling- the citizens tell their stories about *their* Sweden. What explains this drive for more personalized content and authenticity? Other values?
- It leads to the question of content quality. The blurred boundaries between private and public. Why are we re-defining the role of the expert?
- Should one include content that not everyone agrees with to create buzz?

6.4 Attachment 4: Interview Deeped Niclas Strandh

Deeped Niclas Strandh

Title: Social Media Expert, Brand Planner, Digital Strategist at United Power, Co-partner Deepedition DigitalPR and blogger at digitalpr.se

Contact: niclas@digitalpr.se

Tuesday February 19, 2013

This interview was conducted in Swedish

- Vill du att jag tilltalar dig som Deeped?
- Du har diskuterat CoS i olika mediasammanhang, bland annat på Webbdagarna med Svenska Institutets Maria Siv. Vad är din generella uppfattning om CoS som varumärkesinitiativ?
- Att integrera sociala medier i just marknadsföringen av Sverige: Är det ett hållbart sätt att arbeta strategiskt när det gäller platsutveckling (jmf.. varumärkesutveckling)
- CoS är ett nyskapande men riskfyllt initiativ. Anser du att det skadat varumärket Sverige på något sätt? Isf, hurdå?
- Lyckades man med autenticitets-ambitionen? Förmedlade man den bilden på ett lyckat sätt?
- Vad var den avgörande faktorn till att det blev omtalat?
- Vilken roll tror du demokratiaspekten hade? Mindre uppmärksammat?
- Det vore riskfyllt att *tulla* på icke-censur-aspekten. På vilket sätt var kravet på icke-censur nödvändigt? Fans det något behov av starkare/tydligare riktlinjer?
- Reaktionen: av kritiker i amerikansk media finns mycket som tyder på att fokus på att man gått för långt när det gäller privatlivet. I CoS är kommunikeringen av "den vanliga människan" central, något som dessutom ligger i tiden. Hur ser du på kritiken om att man är för privat ute på sociala medier?
- Finns det alternativa sätt att förmedla demokrati-autenticitetsaspekten?
- Det har spekulerats kring att även icke-svenskar kan komma att ta över kontot. Hur tror du bilden av initiativet skulle förändras i sådant fall?
- Hur hänger autenticitetsvärdet ihop med att det är vanliga svenskar som twittrar?
- Tappar man i autenticitetsvärde genom att låta turister twittra om sina upplevelser?
- Tror du man skulle kunna använda sig av kungen till exempel?
- Är konceptet kring Curation- hållbart långsiktigt?
- Om intresse finns så mejlar jag dig gärna antingen uppsatsen i sin helhet alternativt de utdrag där du är citerad.