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Structural Coupling and Translation - Twitter observed as Communication Medium and Non-Human Actor

In einem interessanten Artikel von Jesper Tække, Associate Professor für Information and Media Studies an der Aarhus Universität, der sich gleichermaßen auf die Systemtheorie Niklas Luhmanns als auch die Actor-Network-Theorie Bruno Latours stützt, geht dieser der Frage nach, welche Rolle Twitter als Medium und eigenständiger Akteur im öffentlichen Kommunikationsprozess spielt: "In systems theory media can be seen as the mechanisms of structural couplings between psychic and social systems (…). In this way media are seen as a necessary third, making it possible for two different kinds of systems to process, using complexity from one another â€• leaving out the idea of direct transmission. In actorâ€•network theory society is described as networks binding bits and pieces together. Humans are also themselves networks of skin, bones, enzymes, cells etc. What homogenize the many heterogeneous entities in networks are processes of translations (…). Translation is never neutral, and is not meant like from Danish to English, but to describe: "displacement, drift, invention, mediation, the creation of a link that did not exist before and that to some degree modifies two elements or agents" (Latour…). I want to thank Kasper Schiølin for many fruitful conversations about Latour and the topic of this article. The paper works with two aims. The first aim is to discuss what kinds of structural couplings and translations the social medium of Twitter opens for. The second, but most prioritized, aim of the paper is to present, compare and discuss the two theories: How do they understand what becomes visible in their different optics, which observations become possible in the one or the other – and is it possible to compare the semantics of their concepts. The paper first provides an analysis and discussion of language as the mechanism of structural coupling between the levels of psychic and social systems. Then the article provides an analysis and discussion of translation as a transformation process between actors creating networks consisting in both humans and nonâ€•humans. Then the two appearing frameworks are used to observe Twitter and discuss which structural couplings and translations are made possible by this medium. In the end of the paper the two theories are discussed and compared."Zum vollständigen Text…

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