



Selected Papers of AoIR 2016:  
The 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the  
Association of Internet Researchers  
Berlin, Germany / 5-8 October 2016

## **SHOUTING AT THE TELEVISION: ARGUMENTATION STRATEGIES IN SECOND SCREEN SOCIAL MEDIA USE FOR CHILEAN POLITICAL TV SHOWS**

Daniela Ibarra Herrera  
Lancaster University

Johann Wolfgang Unger  
Lancaster University

### **Introduction**

In this paper we argue that research into “second screen” use and the argumentation practices of viewers during Chilean political TV programmes is a useful way of examining broader social trends in the political and media fields. Numerous scholars have concerned themselves with the increasing interlinkages between traditional broadcast and print media with new forms of digital media, most notably Jenkins (2006) who suggests the term ‘convergence culture’.

### **The second screen and the digitally mediated public sphere**

The use of social media during TV shows has been described as a hybrid media system, in which the boundaries between genres are blurred (Chadwick, 2013; Ampofo, Anstead & O’Loughin, 2011). One common example of this is the use of twitter by TV producers in an attempt to engage the viewers, encourage interaction with and among them, and thus extend their experience as a public. This phenomenon has come to be known as second screen (see e.g. Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014). Through mentions and hashtags viewers can express their opinions and attitudes and represent the television programs and what is happening in them in different ways. This way of interacting with the TV shows is a relatively recent but now quite widespread practice. Giglietto & Selva (2015) find that in the United States 57% of viewers declare that they browse the web when watching TV, while 25% tweet about programmes daily. Our research shows that this practice is also widespread for different Chilean TV shows, especially political shows such as the popular panel show Estado Nacional.

Ibarra Herrera, D. & Unger, J.W. (2016, October 5-8). *Shouting at the television: Argumentation strategies in second screen social media use for Chilean political TV shows*. Paper presented at AoIR 2016: The 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Association of Internet Researchers. Berlin, Germany: AoIR. Retrieved from <http://spir.aoir.org>.

The concept of a second screen entails the idea that there is a first screen, which in this case would be the TV, determining topics that feed into discursive practices in different media platforms. Giglietto & Selva (2015) suggest that in this sense, social networks function as a backchannel for television in real time. However, there is also a sense in which from the perspective of viewers, the television becomes the second screen for the debates in social media. This is particularly visible in situations where tweets are displayed, commented on or alluded to during TV programmes, thus creating a multi-directional relation between viewers and TV shows (Jensen, 2015). We found this a good starting point for much-needed research into the dialogical nature of second screen practices, and the way they shape public debate. The main interest of this study is not primarily the mediatisation processes involved (Hjarvard, 2013) but rather how users structure their argumentation in a new hybrid media context and how the differences between media practices influence the meaning construction in the political debate.

### **Politics and argumentation**

Debates about the role of digital media in promoting an active and democratic public sphere have generally focussed on more “macro” political considerations (see e.g. Pappacharissi, 2009), while detailed studies of linguistic practices on social media (e.g. Page, 2012; Georgakopoulou, 2014) have often been more concerned with “micro” discursive features such as narrative or positioning. We proposed to bridge this gap by drawing on Edelman’s (1985) concept of “symbolic politics”, thinking of these TV shows as a form of political action and a way of creating politics (in the broadest sense) and not just reflecting it. Furthermore, we consider how Goffman’s (1959) concepts of “frontstage” and “backstage” politics need to be rethought for digitally mediated contexts.

While there are a number of salient linguistic and discursive features that could shed light on these issues, in this study we focus specifically on argumentation strategies as a way of understanding the key topics and ideological battlegrounds that are manifested in our data. There is a long tradition of analysing argumentation in political language in critical discourse studies, and we draw particularly on the discourse-historical approach (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015), which sees argumentation as a key discursive macro-strategy in texts that are about and around politics. The analysis of *topoi*, or argumentative shortcuts that allow arguments to be made more persuasive without having to spell out premises, is a particularly fruitful phenomenon not only in political language generally, but specifically in short messages such as those allowed by Twitter.

### **The case of Twitter comments on political TV shows in Chile**

Recent crises in Chilean politics (see Mayol, 2012) have resulted in different modes of expression, going beyond just traditional television and print media to encompass social media, which “concedes direct interaction at the same time that it supports the negotiation of political meanings” (Cárdenas, 2014). In recent years, Chilean politics has been a recurrent topic in social network sites, not least Twitter. The discovery of corruption scandals and cartels provided ample fuel for an increasingly concerned citizenship which expressed itself through different media to condemn and complain about these facts.

At the same time, a number of Chilean TV shows actively encourage participation on Twitter, mainly through the use of hashtags, which are displayed on the screen during the program and allow the users to share their opinions with other viewers and the TV show itself. We argue that on the one hand this interaction has the potential to make the TV shows more interactive and dialogical by inviting different social actors to participate. On the other hand, it is rare to find direct interaction between the producers, hosts or guests and the viewers, other than occasionally displaying or reading out tweets on air. By examining argumentation, as outlined above, we draw out links between what is happening discursively on the TV screen and on Twitter.

The data comprises a set of ca. 5000 hashtagged tweets collected in 2015 relating to different Chilean political TV shows, namely Estado Nacional (#enacional) and Ciudadanos (#ciudadanos), which display tweets on screen during the programme, and Entrevista Verdadera (#opinaev) and El Informante (#elinformante), which do not display tweets. The displaying of tweets on screen could be relevant to the users of these type of media because the fact of their opinions can be display on the screen and be part of the TV show, maybe influence the structure of their arguments and the resources used in them.

Our qualitative analysis of a semi-random sample of these tweets indicates that the tweets with the hashtag #enacional and #ciudadanos speak directly to the guests and the political figures involved in or mentioned in the discussion. Furthermore, multimodal resources (infographics, images and videos) and hyperlinks in tweets are mainly used as “evidence” in arguments about these guests and figures and related topics as topoi of number or authority. In tweets marked #opinaev and #elinformante there is typically taboo language and visual memes are often used ironically or playfully to make *ad hominem* attacks. There are generally more multimodal resources (links, memes, pictures and videos) in this subset of tweets. The differing Twitter practices associated with these programmes may be partly to do with different publics, but we argue that the broadcasters’ decisions to directly engage second screen users have implications for our understanding of the symbolic boundaries of politics and furthermore have the potential to shape the quality of debate and argumentation in the digitally mediated public sphere.

## References

- Cárdenas, C. (2014). Representación de la Acción Política de los Estudiantes Chilenos: Movilización de Significados en Redes Sociales. *Ultima década*, 22(40), 57-84.
- Edelman, M. (1985). *The symbolic uses of politics*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Hjarvard, S. (2013). *The mediatization of culture and society*. London: Routledge.
- Georgakopoulou, A. (2014). Small stories transposition and social media: A micro-perspective on the "Greek crisis." *Discourse & Society*, 25(4), 519–539.
- Goffman, E. (1959) *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Garden City: Doubleday.
- Giglietto, F. & Selva, D. (2014). Second screen and participation: A content analysis on a full season dataset of tweets. *Journal of Communication*, 64(2), 260–277.
- Gil de Zúñiga, H., Garcia-Perdomo, V., & McGregor, S. C. (2015). What Is Second Screening? Exploring Motivations of Second Screen Use and Its Effect on Online Political Participation. *Journal of Communication*, 65(5), 793-815.
- Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide*. New York: New York University Press.
- Jensen, M. (2015). The emergence of second-screen gatekeeping. *Digital Journalism*, DOI: 10.1080/21670811.2015.1054408
- Mayol, A. (2012). *El derrumbe del modelo*. Santiago: LOM Ediciones.
- Page, R. (2012). *Stories and social media: Identities and interaction*. London: Routledge.
- Papacharissi, Z.(2009). The virtual sphere 2.0: The internet, the public sphere and beyond. In: Chadwick, A. and Howard, P. (eds.) *Handbook of internet politics*. London: Routledge, 230–245.
- Reisigl, M. & Wodak, R. (2015). The discourse-historical approach (DHA). In: Wodak, R. & Meyer, M. (eds.) *Methods of critical discourse studies*. London: Sage, 23-61.