COMMUNICATION & SOCIETY

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Bibliography. Book review

Communication Research into the Digital Society. Fundamental Insights from the Amsterdam School of Communication Research

Theo Araujo and Peter Neijens (Eds.)

The Amsterdam School of Communication Research (ASCoR) has celebrated between 2023 and 2024 its 25th anniversary. Together with several events, one of the highlights has been the publication of the book *Communication Research into the Digital Society. Fundamental Insights from the Amsterdam School of Communication Research*. Edited by Theo Araujo and Peter Neijens, and authored by current or former ASCoR researchers, this could have been a complacent book, celebrating the success and rapid evolution of one of the leading institutes in the field. Rather than that, the attention to detail and thoroughness of each chapter exemplifies the high working standards that define this institution.

Given the plurality of topics, methods, and theoretical backgrounds covered over its 16 chapters, the book does not only prove the diverse research conducted by ASCoR's members but also becomes a relevant overview of the state of the art in the broad field of communication. The book illustrates the evolution of communication research over the last 25 years, showing how this institute has managed to influence those trends, but also how its capacity to navigate them has been a key to its growth over the years.

The book does not offer groundbreaking discoveries, nor deep theoretical discussions or advanced methodological developments. It is not its goal. But it clearly shows how these contributions have been a constant aspiration for ASCoR researchers. Many of their significant advances (e.g., in framing theory, in the use of and research on Artificial Intelligence and Computational Methods, Valkenburg & Peters' Differential Susceptibility to Media Effects Model, or Leydesdorff's work on the Triple Helix concept) are highlighted to in different parts of the book.

Much like the work conducted in the past 25 years at ASCoR, this book has a strong focus on Western Europe, specifically Netherlands (understandable in an institute based at the University of Amsterdam), and the United States. Similarly, although a great diversity of methods is mentioned, there is also a predominance of quantitative and computational methods. Aware of the impossibility of covering all topics, settings, and methods, the different authors do not only reflect on the work that has been done, but also on what is missing and how future lines of work could look like. Perhaps one of the greatest strengths of the book is the decision to end each chapter with explicit ideas for future research. This makes the book a very good collective exercise of self-reflection about the past and the present, but also the future.

Talking now more specifically about the content of the different chapters, it is worth mentioning that they rely on a large bibliography. This is partly explained by the book's intention to cover and make visible the research conducted by ASCoR scholars, but it also demonstrates the meticulousness of the authors, who do not overlook the key names and works related to any given topic. Thus, the research presented in the book tends to establish a dialogue with broader frameworks and previous relevant investigations. Consequently, although the

book is clearly focused on the digital society, as announced in its title, it is also aware of how we, as a society, got here.

The book starts with two chapters focused on the history of the institute. Although this might be less relevant for a wider audience, it can be considered a benchmark and an illustrative example for other research institutes and their leaders, showing how ASCoR became a reference in the field in only a short period of time. This section becomes paradigmatic of the philosophy of the institute, as even in these chapters a serious academic style, structure, thoroughness, and even self-criticism are displayed.

The following 13 chapters depict a broad overview of the many different themes, objects of study, theoretical perspectives, and methods in the institute. It is precisely in this diversity and richness where the book becomes attractive for broad audiences. Indeed, the different chapters do not seek to offer a deep or comprehensive analysis of their topic, but rather to provide a clear and descriptive overview. This way, each chapter can be relevant for experts to review recent advances, while remaining approachable and interesting for less experienced readers as a light review of key ideas, themes, or methods within the communication field.

Despite their intentional diversity, these central chapters show clear interconnections, highlighting how collaboration and group efforts are common practice among different researchers, program groups, and lines of work. For instance, the legitimacy of organizations discussed in chapter 7 connects with the topic of delegitimization addressed in chapter 3. Similarly, the knowledge about persuasion tactics in chapter 10 can be applied to, for example, pro-environment communication, connecting it to the work on sustainability in chapter 8. Another example is the implementation of the computational methods (described in detail in chapter 15) in the research depicted in many of the other chapters. There is also an important cross-cutting attention to vulnerable or underserved groups, which makes the societal impact of research more relevant. This is clear in chapter 5 about youth, but also in those about persuasion (chapters 10 and 11), or the one on diversity and sustainability in organizations (chapter 8). Hence, although most of the chapters can be valuable by themselves as reviews of the state of the art in a particular topic or method, the book as a whole shows the synergies and interest of collaborative research.

The book ends with a review and homage to Loet Leydesdorff's work. This is pertinent and deserved not only given Leydesforff's enormous relevance and achievements, but also given his capacity to innovate and advance the field.

Indeed, that is what communication scholars around the world are trying to do every day with their work. This book reflects on the paths that brought research conducted in one of the leading institutions in the field, the Amsterdam School of Communication Research, to where it is today. More importantly, it also looks towards the future of ASCoR, and with it, of communication research.