

# Comparative History of Communication Studies: France and Germany

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**Abstract:** The aim is to outline general differences in two academic cultures, considering historic perspectives: German 'Kommunikationswissenschaft' with its roots in 'Publizistik-' and 'Zeitungswissenschaft' and French 'Sciences de l'information et de la communication' with its roots in semiotics and cultural views on communication. There are different internal and external (societal and political) means which influenced the development of communication studies and theories in each of the two countries.

The Sciences de l'information et de la communication (SIC) gained their academic acceptance in France in 1975 which under international comparison was late. One strong external moment of the institutionalization of SIC was the political aim to modernize the French University for the so called 'information society'. The French researchers developed their own focus. Semio-pragmatics and social constructivism are two basic theoretical orientations which, after the end of the limiting structuralistic paradigm of the 1960<sup>ths</sup>, lead to a fruitful connection of the analysis of the micro and the meso-level of communication processes. Thus, Pragmatics and Symbolic Interactionism played an important role in French SIC much earlier than in Germany.

**Keywords:** History of communication studies, French *Sciences de l'information et de la communication*, German *Kommunikationswissenschaft*, communication theories, social constructivism.

## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper<sup>1</sup> is to outline general differences of two academic cultures, considering historic perspectives: German 'Kommunikationswissenschaft' with its roots in 'Publizistik-' and 'Zeitungswissenschaft' and French 'Sciences de l'information et de la communication' with its roots in semiotics and cultural views on communication.<sup>2</sup> The *Sciences de l'information et de la communication* (SIC) gained their academic acceptance in France in 1975 which under international comparison was late. While rethinking the status of communication studies since Paul F. Lazarsfeld, the French researchers developed their own focus (see also Puustinen, 2007). *Semio-pragmatics* and *social constructivism* are two basic theoretical orientations which, after the end of the limiting structuralistic paradigm of the 1960s, lead to a fruitful connection of the analysis of the micro and the meso-level of communication processes. Thus, Pragmatics and Symbolic Interactionism played an important part in French SIC much earlier than in Germany (Averbek, 2005).

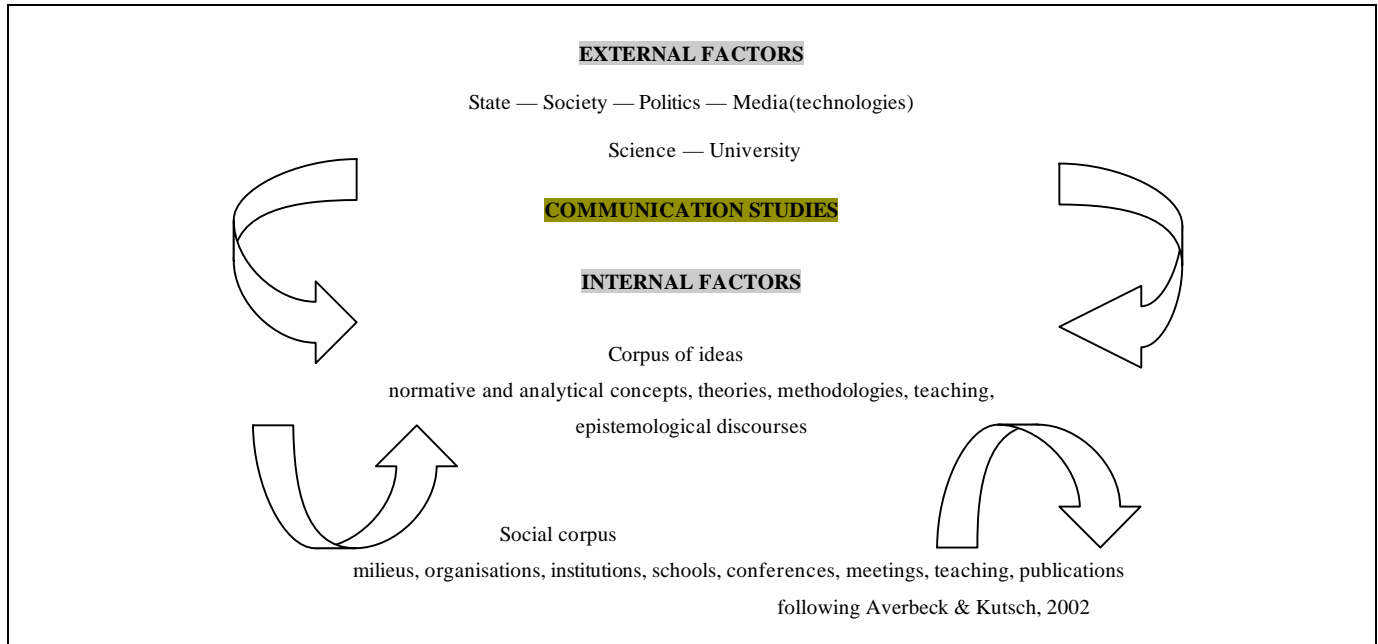
Communication studies in Germany are a comparatively 'old' discipline, which emerged since 1916 from newspaper studies. But the Nazi past of German 'Zeitungswissenschaft' caused a rejection of self-reflect over nearly three decades (Hardt, 2002; Kutsch, 2006; Koenen, 2007a). Today, the social history of the discipline, as well as its history of ideas, is a field of intense research in Germany. Meanwhile, French researchers are just about to start writing the history of communication studies in their own country (Balle & Cappe de Vaillon, 1983; Béaud & Kaufmann, 1998; Boure, 1997; Boure, 2002; Boure, 2005; Cazeneuve, 1982; Marhuenda, 1983; Mattelart, 1983; Mattelart & Mattelart, 2002; Georgakakis & Utard, 2001; Jeanneret & Ollivier, 2004; Olivesi, 2006). But *the body of knowledge* has been reflected from the start of the SIC until now. The French researchers have no urgent need to look at their academic past, especially not from a moral point of view, like the Germans. This may be the reason why in France the path has always been open for rich epistemological debates. These debates focused early on epistemology and that might also be the reason why *the concept of communication* is different to that used in Germany. Another reason is that German communication studies are rooted in 'Zeitungswissenschaft', in journalism studies and in mass communication research. Consequently, they are predominantly dealing with public, mass media mediated communication (Averbek, 1999; Averbek & Kutsch, 2002; Hachmeister, 1984; Löblich, 2007; Roegle & vom Bruch, 1986; Koivistu & Thomas, 2007). French scholars in return, have an extensive concept of social or human communication. This concept is fundamentally based on the philosophy of language, as well as on semiological and anthropological premises, promoting the fusion of semiotics and pragmatics (Averbek, 2000; 2005).

The different history of the social corpus, as well as the different history of ideas of French and German communica-

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<sup>2</sup> In the case of France the article presents findings of my habilitation project on the epistemological discourse of French Sciences de l'information et de la communication 1975-2005 and in the case of Germany of my PhD-dissertation on Newspaper Science in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Germany and also my workings with Amulf Kutsch on the history of communication studies in Germany. For this article it was impossible to outline details and single approaches (for example of Charaudeau, de Certeau, Escarpit, A. Mattelart, Morin, Mucchielli, Odin, Quére or Véron which are widely considered in my habilitation project (in addition to my present article see Averbek 2000, 2005).

**Table 1. Conceptualization: the History of Communication Studies**

tion studies, led to a striking differentiation of communication concepts; reduced to one denominator: ‘public communication’ in Germany, ‘social communication’ in France (Averbeck, 2005). Or, using the terminology of ‘flow’ and ‘meaning’ introduced by Elihu Katz (1987, p. 39) for classifying approaches in communication studies: ‘meaning’ in France and ‘flow’ in Germany.<sup>3</sup> Also, Alex Muchielli (2004, p. 45) marks the line between ‘communication-transmission’ and ‘communication participation’; he considers the last motive as typical for French SIC. Apart from these oversimplifications, the two communities of communication scholars, German and French, share in fact many common grounds, for example the debate on the ‘boundaries’ of the discipline and the question whether it would not be an inter- or a trans-discipline (for Germany see Saxer, 1993; for France see Jeanneret, 2001).

### FRAME OF REFERENCE

Our knowledge of international comparison of communication studies is still limited. There are some studies which deal – more or less isolated – with single countries (for France Boure, 2002; Jeanneret & Ollivier, 2004; Oliviesi, 2006; Puustinen, 2007; for Spain Jones, 2001; for the Netherlands Klein, 2006; for Switzerland Jarren, 2000; Süs, 2000; Göppner, 2005; Schade, 2005; for Austria Fabris, 1983; Duchkowitsch & Hausjell, 1993; Monschein & Randl, 1996; for Finland Pietilä & Malmberg & Nordenstreng, 1990; for South Korea Kim & Westerbarkey, 1998; for South America Massmann, 2004; for Japan Schäfer, 2005; for several Arabian countries Hammami, 2005). Mostly, it is communication research in the United States which is taken as a point of reference for comparisons. It was the US-communication research which was most influential worldwide – while researchers like Lazarsfeld, Lewin or Festinger have been emigrants from Europe (Reimann, 1990).

Caused by sometimes extremely different influences on science (from culture, from political system and politics, from technology), a clear cut comparison of two different cultures of communication science seems nearly impossible. I tried to develop a frame of reference which is abstract enough to find common grounds to compare different cultures of sciences<sup>4</sup> and at the same time helps to reflect on concrete dimensions as well as interdependency. There is not much interdependency between French and German Communication Studies<sup>5</sup> but there are common citation lines, especially via the US-communication research, and some theoretical settings which gained attention worldwide (like pragmatism and social behaviourism, cybernetics and system theory).

My methodological concept refers to a ‘phase model’ dedicated from studies in the history of science, referring to the German community of communication research by Arnulf Kutsch and me (Averbeck & Kutsch, 2002).<sup>6</sup> Another

<sup>4</sup>This also includes clashes in style. The French SIC are much more ‘literal’ in their expression than German Kommunikationswissenschaft (Saxer, 2000; Averbeck, 2000). For intercultural differences in scientific styles, thinking, and methodology see Galtung (1983).

<sup>5</sup> For an exception see the papers of the Paris-Munich Colloquium invented by Ursula E. Koch, Detlef Schröter and Pierre Albert (e.g. Albert & Freund & Koch, 1990; Albert *et al.*, 2003). — I do not subsume the adaption of French (Post)structuralism and media philosophy in German media studies under ‘Kommunikationswissenschaft’: Thinkers like Jean Baudrillard, Guy Debord, Paul Virilio, Régis Debray who are in fact sociologists or (media) philosophers are widely cited in German ‘Medienwissenschaft’ (see e.g. the biographic articles on French thinkers in Schanze, 2002). For further details on differences in denomination of ‘media science’ in Germany and France and ‘mediology’ around Debray as a field of research on its own, separated from French SIC, see Linde, 2005.

<sup>6</sup> Our scheme was reorganised by Meyen and Löblich in 2006 (Meyen & Löblich, 2006, pp. 30-31). Meyen and Löblich focus more on a biographical approach to the history of science; Kutsch and me refer to generations of scholars. For further discussion on the operationalisation of the aims of the sociology of science under generative aspects see Koenen, 2007; Lacasa, 2007; Meyen, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Katz himself doesn’t refer to Germany nor France, but mainly to the US.

reference is the sociology of science, especially Peter Weingart's notion of 'Denkmotiv' ('underlying concept') and Dirk Käsler's 'Ideen- und Sozialgestalt' ('corpus of ideas and social corpus of a science') (Weingart, 1976; Käsler, 1984). Many hints, concerning the epistemology and sociology of science, especially in France, I owe to the rich and fruitful work of Wolf Lepenies (1981; 1988; 1989).

External and internal factors are highly interwoven; the social corpus of a discipline is stratified in more or less strong connections with external factors as well as internal factors (competition for resources, but also for the acceptance of ideas, models, methods and theories) (Kuhn, 1976; Latour & Woolgar, 1979).

Those general items are applicable to the history of communication studies in Germany as well as in France, because they are formal categories which have to be filled with empirical data. Sources may be archive materials from involved (corporate) actors and institutions to reconstruct the social corpus and – on the other hand – publications to reconstruct the corpus of ideas. We have to take into account especially such publications which show the debates in the field, e.g. scientific journals, member bulletins of the main professional organizations of scholars in the field, the papers of the meetings of those scholars.

## GERMANY

Primary sources of my work on 'Zeitungswissenschaft in Weimar Republic' were rich archive materials (from university archives all over Germany) for reconstructing the social corpus of that science. For the corpus of ideas, sources were the first scientific journal in the field called *Zeitungswissenschaft* (1926-1944), the dissertations on communication problems which were supervised at some leading universities in the field between 1925 and 1935, those monographies and articles in the field which emerged in a citation and contact milieu between *Zeitungswissenschaft* and sociology. The workings in this circle of younger scholars and PhD-students I could identify as very promising under theoretical aspects (this milieu did not longer exist when the Nazis came into power) (Averbeck, 1999).

Our case studies in the history of ideas and institutions of German *Zeitungs-* and *Publizistikwissenschaft* in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century motivated Arnulf Kutsch and me to think about a general heuristic model to classify the history of communication research in Germany before 1970 (Averbeck & Kutsch, 2002). The 1970<sup>ths</sup> mark a break insofar as the old *Publizistikwissenschaft* became *Kommunikationswissenschaft* and drifted from historical and hermeneutical approaches to a social science (Bohrmann, 1997; Kutsch & Pöttker, 1997; Klein, 2006; Wilke, 2006; Löblich, 2007).

In this model, Kutsch and I thought about: actors (scientists, organizers of science, politicians) and structures (organizations, journals, meetings, a 'scientific community'). We thought about analytical concepts of German *Zeitungs-* und *Publizistikwissenschaft*, including their underlying normative motives and value systems and also about 'breaks' in the German history of communication studies. For classifying the institutional stages, we used Terry N. Clark's scheme which marks steps from 'solitary science' over 'amateur science', 'emerging academic science', 'established science' to

'big science' (Clark, 1974).<sup>7</sup> Breaks, we argued, had been induced by internal and external forces; external forces were mainly economic and political ones. The overwhelming break was introduced with Nazi-Newspaper Science – which was *not* an invention of the politicians of the 'Third Reich' (nor the Ministry of Propaganda). On the contrary, it resulted from motivations that came mainly from the core of *Zeitungswissenschaft* itself: it was a 'Selbstgleichschaltung' with the Nazi ideology, not some kind of external banner which caused the loss of highly modern ideas of Weimar *Zeitungswissenschaft* on the formation of public opinion (Bohrmann & Kutsch 1975/76; Hausjell, Duchkowitsch & Semrad, 2004; Kutsch, 1984; Averbeck, 1999, pp. 102-144; Averbeck, 2001; Averbeck & Kutsch, 2002; Koenen, 2007a). The break was initiated by young scholars, many of them convinced Nazis, some of them careerists who took their profits from the forced emigration of their former colleagues or pupils (for the emigration of scientists in newspaper and media studies to the US and other countries see Kutsch, 1988; Wilke, 1991; Averbeck, 2001). After the 'Third Reich', the German *Zeitungswissenschaft* as a whole was blamed, the output of the discipline, like the 'Handbuch der Zeitungswissenschaft', speaks a language of totalitarian ideas, Antisemitism, racism and strong stimulus-response perspectives on communication, especially propaganda (Bohrmann & Kutsch, 1979; Hausjell *et al.*, 2004; Kutsch, 2006). It was not easy to (re)build *Publizistikwissenschaft* in Germany (Bohrmann, 1997; Kutsch & Pöttker, 1997; Klein, 2006; Wilke, 2006; Löblich, 2007). As Hardt outlined, the Nazi past of German *Zeitungswissenschaft* led to a strong positivistic attitude and to a ban on philosophical traditions in the field (Hardt, 2002) – as if the Germans would have to ensure that no ideology would ever again get a chance to infiltrate their thinking on communication. During the Weimar Republic, Newspaper Science was dominated by historical approaches, but also phenomenological ones, some of which integrated semiotics (Traub, 1933). Young scientists who shared a common milieu between *Zeitungswissenschaft* and sociology explained that communication might be a process *between two poles*: professional journalism and its readership or the audience. It was supposed that the attitudes of the audience were developed in a rich socialization process – here we find the first reflections on intervening variables in the mass communication process, namely from Walter Auerbach, Hans Traub, Ernst Manheim and Gerhard Münzner (Averbeck, 1999; Holtz-Bacha & Kutsch, 2002). This is the forgotten past of the German tradition. Nowadays, German *Kommunikationswissenschaft* has to be described mainly as empirical social research on mass communication with strong input from the 'classical' US-American tradition (Lasswell, Hovland, Lewin, Lazarsfeld). In my opinion, the orientation of German *Kommunikationswissenschaft* towards the US was also a remedy to forget the Nazi past as soon as possible, and to find out how to measure 'reality' (and not to build up ideologies...). The rich culturalistic tradi-

<sup>7</sup> To Clark are also referring, Averbeck (1999, p. 43) for a classification of *Zeitungswissenschaft* in the Weimar Republik, Koenen (2005) for classifying the 'solitary' position of Erich Everth who held the only chair in newspaper science in Weimar-Germany and Wilke (2006) for the whole range of the history of *Kommunikationswissenschaft* in Germany.

tion in the field of communication studies in the US came to Germany only from the 1980<sup>s</sup> onwards or later, when the empirical social science attitude had been tightened. German Kommunikationswissenschaft mainly consists of empirical social research in the fields of the uses and effects of mass communication, with a strong impact on quantitative content analysis in the tradition of Bernard Berelson. This is very well documented by a quantitative content analysis of the leading journals in German communication studies: *Publizistik* and *Medien & Kommunikationswissenschaft* (Donsbach/Laub *et al.*, 2005). The declaration of aims of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Publizistik- und Kommunikationswissenschaft (DGPK) excludes interpersonal communication from their schedule if it is not linked to or involved in the mass communication process (DGPK, 2001). This self-restriction actually causes a new debate on the boundaries of (German) communication studies and on perhaps widening the field, as well as concerning the subject of communication studies and the methodology, which is regarded by some members of DGPK as too narrowly focused on quantitative research and mass communication (see for example Aviso, No. 35/2004). This is an ongoing debate. The new self-declaration of the DGPK is announced to be published in 2008.<sup>8</sup>

The following periodization is based on the phase model of Kutsch and me (2002), but it is not identical: I extended our 4-phase model to seven phases.<sup>9</sup>

This model has to be considered as a *heuristic* one. Only the first three phases are well explored on a sufficient data base (Averbeck, 1999; Averbeck & Kutsch, 2000; Averbeck & Kutsch, 2005; Benedict, 1986; Große, 1989; Groth, 1948; Hausjell *et al.*, 2004; Hachmeister, 1984; Heuser, 1994; Klose, 1989; Kutsch, 1984; Kutsch, 1985; Lacasa, 2007; Meyen & Löblich, 2004; Roegele & vom Bruch, 1986; Straetz, 1984; Szyska 1990). Detailed work on the more recent history of the discipline is outstanding, but there are some efforts: Arnulf Kutsch's and Horst Pöttker's edition of autobiographic views on phase 4 and 5 (Kutsch & Pöttker, 1997); Petra Klein's dissertation on the Prax School (Klein, 2006), Bernd Söseman's books on the era of the professorships of Emil Dovifat and Fritz Eberhard at the Free University of Berlin (Söseman, 1998; Söseman, 2001), Jürgen Wilke's edition on Publizistikwissenschaft at the University of Mainz (Wilke, 2005) as well of the edition of Michael Meyen and Maria Löblich on Zeitungswissenschaft at the Munich Institute (Meyen & Löblich, 2004); Maria Löblich's reconstruction of the work of Otto B.

**Table 2. Phases of Communication Studies in Germany Since 1916**

<p><b>1. IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEMS (1916–1925/26)</b></p> <p><u>social corpus</u>: solitary and amateur science first Institute for the Studies of the Press at University of Leipzig, 1916</p> <p><u>corpus of ideas</u>: &gt;&gt; perspectives of the mother disciplines history, economics, literature press history, press law, press economics nature of the press/definition of the press: periodicity, publicity, universality, timeliness cultural and political value of the press, journalism and public opinion (e. g. Emil Dovifat's dogma of 'publizistische Persönlichkeit' – typing the journalist as a 'publicistic personality') influence of the press on public opinion (e. g. Emil Dovifat's dogma of 'Einhämmung' – to hammer the information to the public)</p>	
<p><b>2. DEFINITION OF PROBLEMS (1925-1935)</b></p> <p><u>social corpus</u>: (emerging) academic science Between 1916 and 1932 19 academic unities (institutes, little departments, only one chair at Leipzig) emerged<sup>10</sup></p> <p><u>corpus of ideas</u> &gt;&gt; perspectives of newspaper science sui generis, public opinion the role and function of journalism in society journalism as a profession 'nature of the public' (e. g. Gerhard Münzner's differentiation of masses, crowd, public and peer groups) (e. g. Gerhard Münzner's, Hans Traub's, Walter Auerbach's, Ernst Manheim's concepts on audience selectivity caused by peer group influences, political interest and education) functions of the press and radio (e. g. Erich Everth's dogma of 'Vermittlung'<sup>11</sup> – intermediation of different publics via press, e.g. Hans Traub's dogma of media as 'geistiger Zwischenverkehr', a 'cognitive interrelationship' between people)</p>	

<sup>8</sup> This was announced at the latest yearly congress of DGPK in Bamberg in May 2007. See also <http://www.dgpuk.de> (12.6.2007).

<sup>9</sup> This model refers to a huge amount of primary and secondary literature (most of it can be found in the bibliography of this article; I only mark my sources of information directly in the model insofar as not yet cited).

<sup>10</sup> See in detail Averbeck, 1999, pp. 54-65.

<sup>11</sup> For Everth see Bohrmann & Kutsch, 1979; Averbeck, 2002; Koenen, 2005.

Table 2. contd....

<b>3. IDEOLOGY</b>	<p><b>(1933–1945)</b></p> <p><u>social corpus</u>: established science expansion of the institutional corpus of ‘Zeitungswissenschaft’ (fund raising from the National Ministry of Propaganda), organization and standardization by ‘Deutscher Zeitungswissenschaftlicher Verband’ (DZV)</p> <p><u>corpus of ideas</u></p> <p>&gt;&gt; perspectives derived from political and ideological standpoints, conform to the state Legitimation of propaganda, reducing of the public to ‘Volksgemeinschaft’ (Nazi-ideology), declaration of press as a ‘Führungsmittel’ (a central ‘leading’ social force) &gt;&gt; abolishing of the sociological perspectives of phase 2 press history (glorifying the German press history)</p>
<b>4. RECONSTRUCTION</b>	<p><b>(1945–1960)</b></p> <p><u>Social corpus</u>: academic science under reconstruction<sup>12</sup> (only a few institutes and departments were <i>not</i> closed)</p> <p><u>corpus of ideas</u></p> <p>&gt;&gt; The aim to rebuilt scientific perspectives for ‘Publizistik’ as the science of public communication via mass media (e.g. Walter Hagemann’s approach of ‘systematical publicistics’) The phenomenon of propaganda and political influence via mass media market research and opinion polls (Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann)</p>
<b>5. REDEFINITION: EMPIRICAL SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH (1960-1980)</b>	<p><u>Social corpus</u>: emerging and established science (new institutes emerge)</p> <p><u>corpus of ideas</u>:</p> <p>‘Publizistik’ remains a leading motive (e. g. Henk Prakke’s ‘funktionale Publizistik’ – ‘functional publicistics’ – with a strong impact on social communication, including interpersonal and nonverbal communication); School of Munich Press Science (‘Münchener Zeitungswissenschaft’) on social communication and its motive that public communication is filtered by social organisation, adaption of US-communication research (e. g. by Gerhard Maletzke who invented his famous ‘field model of the mass communication process, public opinion (e. g. Noelle-Neumann’s spiral of silence), applied research forced by political and economic demands<sup>13</sup></p>
<b>6. DIFFERENTIATION OF RESEARCH FIELDS, SUBJECTS AND APPROACHES (1980-1990)</b>	<p><u>Social corpus</u>: established science, big science</p> <p><u>corpus of ideas</u>:</p> <p>‘Publizistik’ is no longer the leading motive, but ‘communication’, especially ‘public communication’, influence via mass communication on public, as well as uses of mass media; Funktionale Publizistik is loosing ground School of the Munich Press Science is loosing ground combinations of communicator- and audience research, new theoretical setting: ‘Dynamisch-transaktionaler Ansatz’ by Werner Früh/Klaus Schönbach 1982 orientation versus system theory (e. g. Manfred Rühl’s ‘Redaktion als soziales System’ 1969, influenced by the work of Niklas Luhmann) orientation versus actor theory (e. g. Carsten Renckstorf’s and Will Teichert’s ‘Nutzenansatz’ up from the late 1970ths referring to Max Weber’s theory of social action) applied research: standardized methods are survey and content analysis adaption of US-research in agenda setting, uses and gratifications, knowledge gap hypothesis etc.</p>
<b>7. NEW THEORETICAL SETTINGS</b>	<p><b>(1990 till today)</b></p> <p><u>Social corpus</u>: Big Science (caused especially by a constant demand of students)</p> <p><u>corpus of ideas</u>:</p> <p>systems theory (e. g. Frank Marcinkowski’s ‘Publizistik als autopoietisches System’) radical constructivism (‘School of Münster’ with Klaus Merten and Siegfried J. Schmidt) actors theory / interactionism (e. g. Roland Burkart’s view on ‘verständigungsorientierte Kommunikation’ following Mead and Habermas or Friedrich Krotz’s integration of Uses and gratifications and Symbolic Interactionism) Cultural Studies (e. g. Andreas Hepp’s view on international and intercultural communication; Margreth Lünenborg’s approach to communicator studies) following Averbek/Kutsch, 2002</p>

<sup>12</sup> Wilke classifies the ‘starting position’ of German Publizistikwissenschaft after 1945 (which in fact was *not a new start*) as ‘emerging’ science. Like me, he refers to the stages of Clark (Wilke, 2006, p. 320). In my opinion the term ‘emerging science’ is not clear enough to classify this stage compared with phase 1-3.

<sup>13</sup> This is exemplified by Maria Löblich on the case of the study programme in media politics by the government of the Federal Republic of Germany up from 1970 (Löblich, 2007a).

Roegele (Löblich, 2004); currently she is working on the epistemological debates on 'Publizistik- versus Kommunikationswissenschaft' around 1960 (Löblich, 2007).

## FRANCE

In France, the Sciences de l'information et de la communication (SIC)<sup>14</sup> emerged in the mid 1970<sup>th</sup> from the mother discipline literature, respectively linguistics, and not from (press) history, (press) law, sociology (of the press) and (press) economics as in Germany, after World War I. Anyhow, there also have been strong influences from the last-mentioned ones, especially press history and law (Albert, 2001; Balle & Cappe de Vaillon, 1983; Delporte, 1999; Gritti, 1999; Mercier, 1994; Ruellan, 1997). Reversely, in Germany the sciences concerned with literature had not been the main influence on the upraising discipline in the 1920<sup>th</sup>. – Only to mention here, that the 1970<sup>th</sup> and the 1920<sup>th</sup> are as hardly to compare as the environment of the institutionalization processes of communication studies in the two countries.

Indeed, it was a Professor for Comparative literature, Robert Escarpit (1918-2000), who has to be considered as the institutional founding father of SIC. He established the First Institut Universitaire Technologique (IUT) for communication in 1967 at the University of Bordeaux, which has been copied in the following years by other French universities. He initiated the Comité Français pour les Sciences de l'information et de la communication which succeeded in pushing the political administration to install SIC as a discipline in 1975 (Escarpit, 1992; Robine, 2001). The strong external factor for the implementation of this new discipline was the aim of the politicians to reform the Sorbonne and to implement education programmes into the French University which were oriented to the professions of the new 'Société de l'information' (Miège, 2000, p. 558; CNE, 1993). From those days onwards, the generation of the founding fathers, like Robert Escarpit, and their successors have been confronted with the double character of SIC: it has to fulfill mainly practical aims for society (external means) and at the same time research aims (internal means). Such problems are also not unknown in Germany – but in the French debates in the inner circles of SIC, this problem is much more highlighted (CNE, 1993, p. 70).<sup>15</sup> The cause might be that German 'Zeitungswissenschaft' was installed for other reasons and in another historical context (World War I and the 'failure' of the German Press, see below) than French SIC (shift from the industrial to the postindustrial, so called media society). Zeitungswissenschaft was *not* installed into the German University for special training in journalism ('Ausbildung'), but for a *general* education on the function of press in society ('Vorbildung'). Up from the beginnings of 'Zeitungswissenschaft' – 90 years ago – the academic staff struggled for acceptance of the faculties and neighbor sciences (Bohrmann, 1986); French SIC are looking backwards on a history of only 30 years – including such acceptance problems.

In the Committee for the French SIC, Escarpit was accompanied by Roland Barthes (1915-1980) and Jean Meyriat (born in 1921). At that time, Barthes worked together with Georges Friedmann (1902-1977) and Edgar Morin (born 1921) at the Centre d'Etudes de Communications de Masse (CECMAS, founded in 1962) at the famous Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS). This milieu was in fact a melting pot of people and ideas: Barthes with semiology, Friedmann with the sociology of work and leisure, Morin with the sociology of pop culture and later on with his focus on cybernetics, systems and complexity (for details of the history of the SIC, including CECMAS see Averbeck, 2000; Averbeck, 2005; Escarpit, 1992; Devèze, 2001; Meyriat, 1994; Mattelart & Mattelart, 2002; Tétu, 2002; Vroons, 2005). Jean Meyriat, the third committee member, was an information scientist working in the field of book science (Couzinet, 2001). The name of the field 'communication and information science' was not an accident, but a strategy: The founding fathers bundled different branches of 'one' (?) field: 'Le terme de SIC est finalement conservé pour des raisons d'efficacité: le sentiment prévaut que le mot plus concret 'd'information' précise un peu la notion vague de 'communication'; ce couplage permet en même temps de servir les intérêts de plusieurs groupes distincts de spécialistes, sans prendre une position définitive sur l'épistémologie du domaine' (Meyriat, 1994, p. 7). Information science lost ground in the SIC during the 1980s and differentiated own institutional structures (Palermity & Polity, 2002).

After World War II, the Rockefeller Foundation aimed to implement the American model of social science research (widely influenced by Lazarsfelds 'administrative research') in Europe. Their underlying aim was a normative one: to stabilize democracy *via* social science research (Pollak, 1990). In its first years, the CECMAS at Paris was co-financed by the Rockefeller Foundation. Lazarsfeld advised Friedmann, Morin and Barthes how to build up research teams (Revel & Wachtel, 1996, p. 15; Souchon, 2004). That is the institutional line. In fact, French communication studies always have been sceptical about US-social science functionalism. Structuralism has been considered incompatible with functionalism and positivism. The cultural meaning of communication is underestimated in functionalism, one argues (Morin, 1972, pp. 97-98; Boure, 2002, p. 11; Maigret, 2004, pp. 113-114). Communication is a circular, transactional process, not a linear one, as approaches from Eliséo Véron and Patrick Charaudeau are revealing (Véron, 1981; Véron, 1987; Charaudeau, 2006). That way of thinking can also be found in the American tradition. It is what James W. Carey calls the 'ritualistic view' on communication, in contrast to the 'transmission view' of the Lasswell/Lazarsfeld-tradition (Carey, 1992, p. 19). So, one might argue, there might be a strong line from French SIC to today's British and North American Cultural Studies. But that is not the case – why? My hypothesis is that the culturalistic view is integrated so strongly in the French tradition itself that Cultural Studies were of small significance. Not to forget: Cultural Studies themselves refer to the French tradition of semiotics (Hepp, 2004, pp. 25). *Réseaux* had published a framework of texts of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in 1996 (*Réseaux*, No. 80). It was not before 2003 that Erik Neveu and Armand Mattelart published a monographic introduction to Cultural Studies (Mattelart & Neveu,

<sup>14</sup> The abbreviation SIC is widely used in France, so I do here.

<sup>15</sup> Perhaps the so-called Bologna Process will diminish differences – presumably to a more practical orientation of studies in Germany, too.

2003). The circle of influences is closing: the search for 'shared meaning' is widened by looking for approaches to explain this phenomenon in the anglo-american hemisphere.

In Germany, Cultural Studies miss broader acceptance in the field of communication studies (Schwer, 2005). This is no accident: the traditions of *Zeitungs-* and *Publizistikwissenschaft* with their strong view on influence and power, transmitted via mass media, do not focus on the 'ritualistic view of communication' mentioned by Carey (see above) or 'sens' – the main paradigm of French SIC.<sup>16</sup>

As my research on France is mainly on the corpus of ideas, the social corpus of the discipline is not integrated in the following phase model.<sup>17</sup> In fact, we see the same dimensions as in Germany: 'amateur science' by some academics and journalists since the beginnings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Albert, 2001; Delporte, 1999; Mercier, 1994; Ruellan, 1997), the 'solitary science' of professors and lecturers – mainly at the Paris Centre d'études de communications de masse (CECMAS), the Institut universitaire Technologique (IUT) Carrières de l'information at University of Bordeaux and the Institut Français de Presse (IFP) – before the 'established' discipline emerged, and 'big science' with highly differentiated institutes today. Compared with Germany, the first phases did not lead directly to any larger institutionalisation, but only the initiative of Escarpit at the beginnings of the 1970<sup>ths</sup>. Obviously, the social demand on science was not as strong as in Germany, decades before. We know that the implementation of newspaper science in Germany to a great part was caused by the assumed loss of the 'press war', between 1914 and 1918 – assumed by politicians, public, journalists and publishers. The latter ones, at least, gave strong fund raising to build up 'Zeitungswissenschaft' (Averbeck, 1999, p. 46; Bohrmann, 1986, pp. 95-97, p. 99). For France, it was the huge modernization of administration, universities, professions and the *media sector* after 1968 which was the dominant external influence (Cazeneuve, 1972, p. 371; CNE, 1993). Balle and Cappe de Baillon outline a *tabula rasa* situation even in the 1970<sup>ths</sup>: 'In most countries, media research was periodically supplied with data from sample sur-

veys and polls. In France, radio and television developed slowly for both, technical and political reasons, so there was little to survey or poll' (Balle & Cappe de Baillon, 1983, p. 146).

Sources of my qualitative hermeneutic research for the corpus of ideas of SIC are the leading peer reviewed journals in the field in France *Réseaux* (founded in 1983)<sup>18</sup> and *Hermès* (founded in 1988),<sup>19</sup> the member bulletin of the Société Française des Sciences de l'information et de la communication (SFSIC) *La Lettre d'inforcom. Bulletin de la Société Française des Sciences de l'information et de la communication* (1975-2003)<sup>20</sup>, the collected papers of the biannual meetings of the SFSIC (1978-2004), and monographies on theory and theory building in the SIC.

For the corpus of ideas in French SIC, I propose the following, only *rudimentary*, abstraction, reduced on leading motives of theory building, methodology and research. The history of the Sciences de l'information et de la communication is not yet written – neither for *any* of its institutes nor its phases.

While we have to deal with the more or less rigidly formulated field of mass communication research in Germany, there is no such 'mainstreaming' in French SIC. As Gerhard Kopper mentioned: 'Das Land [Frankreich], in dem eine rigorose und zentral administrierte Klassifikations- und Nachwuchspolitik für das in den siebziger Jahren eingeführte Fachgebiet 'science [sic!] de l'information et de la communication' herrscht, erfreut sich eines nahezu ausufernden Themen- und Perspektivreichums sowie erheblicher Methodenvielfalt in der Forschung. Das Land hingegen, in dem sich die Disziplinen völlig frei von zentraler Aufsicht in zwischen mit Fragen der Medien und Kommunikation befassen, zeichnet sich durch hohe Rigorosität in der Methoden- und Anerkennung innerhalb einzelner Fachgruppen aus' (Kopper, 2004, pp. 103-104).

The cause lies in the focus of communication problems. The SIC knew the heritage of US-American communication studies (Balle & Padioleau, 1972; Béaud, Flichy *et al.* 1997; Lazard, 1991; Lazard, 1992; Mattelart & Mattelart, 2002; Rieffel, 2001), but at the same time they developed their own focus on communications studies, its research fields and problems (see also Pietilä, Malmberg, & Nordenstreng, 1990).<sup>21</sup> The early focus at CECMAS might have been programmatic: they worked together with Lazarsfeld, but at the

<sup>16</sup> Two typical citations may illustrate this: 'A un niveau très général, on peut distinguer trois pôles, trois dimensions dont toute recherche en communication cherche à élucider les rapports: celui de circulation de sens, celui des acteurs et des pratiques sociales, celui des techniques [...]. Les Sic sont la discipline qui s'intéresse prioritairement aux relations croisées que chacun de ces termes entretient avec les deux autres. Son originalité est de construire des axes de recherche guidé par l'intention de traiter conjointement ces dimensions que les spécialisations traditionnelles laissent séparées: comment faire se rejoindre les signes et les supports, les acteurs les objets, les situation et la génération du sens.' (Perret, 2004, p. 126). '[...] la communication est un concept qui désigne un processus social qui s'étend à tous les êtres humains, [...], selon lequel l'échange d'information sur un sujet donné conduisant à un partage de sens se fait en mettant les personnes en contact, en interaction' (le Coadic, 2006, p. 5).

<sup>17</sup> For the phases 1-3 in Germany my own research is based on archives sources; I did not undertake such research for France, but I exploited *La lettre d'inforcom. Bulletin de la Société française des Sciences de l'information et de la communication* (1978-2003) for the same aim: to look after the growing of the discipline as well as its breaks. The member bulletin is an excellent source for a first reconstruction of the institutionalization of SIC; of course it is not a sufficient one; archive studies are needed. – Balle and Cappe de Baillon are mentioning an interesting break, which – as far as I know – not yet has been a cause for research until now: The Institut français de presse (IFP) and also the Institut français de l'opinion public (IFOP) closed during World War II (Balle & Cappe de Baillon, 1983). Why? Was this caused by the German occupators?

<sup>18</sup> *Réseaux* emerged as a bulletin for the members of a research group around Patrice Flichy at the laboratory of Centre Nationale de Télécommunications (CNET) in 1983; I thank the archive of France Télécom at Issy les Moulineaux, especially Jean-Pierre Bacot, secretary of *Réseaux*, for the possibility of consulting those 'non official' numbers of the journal, which was available by book trade up from 1989.

<sup>19</sup> For the centrality of those journals see Maigret (2001).

<sup>20</sup> The last number of *La lettre d'inforcom* was published in 2003. See also <http://www.sfsic.org> (28.5.2007). Up from June 2007 the SFSIC is editing a new member bulletin: *Les cahiers de la SFSIC*.

<sup>21</sup> Pietilä, Malmberg and Nordenstreng present a three-variant-model for international comparisons in communication research: A 'European-American'-variant (empirical social research, functionalism), a 'French'-variant (semiotics) and a 'German'-variant (*Zeitungswissenschaft*). The model has its strong historical momentum, but nowadays nor the French nor the German variants are describable on such a restricted level: French SIC has gone to 'Post-Semiotics' (Semio-Pragmatics, Social constructivism). German *Kommunikationswissenschaft* broke up with *Publizistikwissenschaft*.

**Table 3. Phases of Sciences de L'information Et De La Communication (SIC) Since 1975**

<b>Phase 1: Definition of problems, discourse on terminology</b>	<b>1975 - ca. 1980</b>
system, language, code, sign, information, communication, content...	
<b>Phase 2: Differentiation of sub disciplines and approaches</b>	<b>1980 - ca. 1995</b>
<b>sub disciplines:</b>	
social uses of media, journalism studies, media sociology, political communication, media history	
<b>new orientations:</b>	
innovation research, public space and sphere, international communications, political communication	
<b>new approach:</b>	
semio-pragmatics ('sémiosis sociale' / 'sémio-pragmatique')	
<b>Phase 3: Diversification of problems and theoretical settings</b>	<b>ca. 1995 till today</b>
computer mediated communication, public relations / organizational communications	
media economics, history of communication science (social history and history of ideas)	
>>gaining status as sub-disciplines	
<b>new theoretical setting:</b> Social constructivism ('constructivisme sociale')	

same time they opened the field to social communication in its broadest sense: Barthes's semiology forced his pupils to think on the semiotic bases of communication processes. Such traces can be found for example in the work of Eliséo Véron (born in 1938) who himself inspired a younger generation (for example Alex Mucchielli, Jean-Jacques Bou-taud) to think about *semio-pragmatics*. Here the corpus of ideas and of institutions clash: Véron was not only a pupil of Roland Barthes and Christian Metz (1931-1993), but he spent some research time at Palo Alto in the Mental Health Institute. His semio-pragmatics is at least a fusion of ideas from Barthes over Peirce to Mead, Bateson and Watzlawick (see e.g. Véron, 1988). We can not outline this in detail here.<sup>22</sup> Semio-pragmatics which can be assigned also to Patrick Charaudeau and Roger Odin is not a closed theory, it is an eclectic approach of thinking social communication (for an introduction see Béaud & Kaufmann, 1998).

While Bernhard Debatin mentions for Germany that Kommunikationswissenschaft shortens Watzlawick to his 'five axioms' (Debatin, 2002), this is not the case in the French community, where the full epistemology of Palo Alto (not only derived from the work of Watzlawick himself, but also from Bateson and Birdwhistell) has a strong heuristic impact on communication theory, especially on the notion of interaction systems. Véron derives from Bateson, Watzlawick and – last but not least – Mead the idea that communication is an interaction process *embedded* in language and non verbal communication. Consequently sense-making is supposed to be a co-construction between actors. But not: a subjective construction nor a construction determined by society, 'symbols' or 'discourse' as held by Barthes or Foucault. Véron is clearly breaking with the structuralist paradigm (Véron, 1987). Véron's concepts are not too far from Berger and Luckmann's 'construction of social reality' and they share the reference on Mead (Berger & Luckmann, 1994). Berger and Luckmann are also present in French SIC, for example in the writings of Alex Mucchielli, he himself an adept of Véron and Watzlawick. Mucchielli is

one representative of social constructivism in France (Mucchielli, 2004).<sup>23</sup>

The concept of 'semiosis social' (Véron) in the version of semio-pragmatics leads to the social construction of reality; each actor takes part in it, but is not completely free in his interpretation: meaning is always a socialized process, mass media are only some (but strong) vectors of this socialization. At the same time they are *themselves* embedded in the societal process as a whole (Véron, 1981). No reader, viewer, listener and no communicator is completely autonomous. The linkage between reception and social construction in France is a direct heritage from structuralism – but from its criticism. One may read this in detail in the works of Patrick Charaudeau, Louis Quéér or Eliséo Véron. The latter argues with Mead against his own teacher Roland Barthes that Semiosis is not only the processing of meaning by discourse or an underlying 'structure' which is determining individual action. Meads 'I' is taking its creative role in the construction of meaning and the ongoing deconstruction of structures which are at the same time under permanent and dynamic reconstruction via inter-action.

We see: There is a strong adaption of American social philosophy and social science in French semio-pragmatism. This is the line of reception France – USA which is interesting to understand. It is not only canalized by citation milieus but by direct personal connections which are a constructive external/internal element of those citation milieus: Via his followers, Eliséo Vérons American experience 'Palo Alto' was widely influencing French Sciences de l'information et de la communication. In the mid 1990<sup>ths</sup> Véron went back to his home country, Argentina, where he today holds a professorship in communication studies. He once emigrated from Argentina to France in times of dicatatorship in his home country – external means of his scientific biography.<sup>24</sup>

Beyond theory building, we find early empirical research in France on social communication, including media gener-

<sup>22</sup> I refer to my forthcoming habilitation project.

<sup>23</sup> For Mucchiellis work in the field of corporate communications see Hopfe (2007).

<sup>24</sup> See Curriculum Vitae Eliséo Véron. Website of the National Research Foundation of Brazil. Retrieved June 10, 2007 from the World Wide Web: <http://busatextual.cnpq.br/>.



ated interpersonal communication via telephone and the famous *Minitel*.<sup>25</sup> It was the social science laboratory at the Centre National des Télécommunications (CNET) which brought onwards empirical research on social uses of media in the whole context of every day live and leisure and widely influenced the SIC (Jouet, 2000). This laboratory, directed by the sociologist Patrice Flichy (born in 1945) for 15 years, should be a research theme on its own. At the CNET, we find applied research as well as fundamental research; here external factors (resources from France Telecom, research on new technical developments) and internal factors of science again clash: In 1983 Patrice Flichy invented *Réseaux* which became one of the leading journals in the field of communication studies. In 1999 he left the CNET for a professorship in sociology at the University of Marne la Vallée; he is still editing *Réseaux*.<sup>26</sup>

**SYNTHESIS**

The following table may serve as an heuristical concept.

**Table 4. Concepts of thinking communication in Germany and France**

<p><b>Germany: dominant/traditional concept</b></p> <p><b>‘public communication’</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communicator</li> <li>• content</li> <li>• mass media (<i>functions and effects</i>)</li> </ul> <p><b>tradition:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zeitungswissenschaft/Publizistikwissenschaft</li> <li>• (newspaper science / ‘publicistics’)</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>France: dominant/traditional concept</b></p> <p><b>‘social communication’</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communication process</li> <li>• recipient</li> <li>• culture</li> <li>• meaning</li> </ul> <p><b>tradition:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• post-semiotics, semio-pragmatics</li> </ul>
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German speaking scholars like Friedrich Krotz, Klaus Beck or Roland Burkart (in Austria) are understanding communication as a process of sense-making, based on interaction and shared meaning (Krotz, 2001; Burkart, 2002; Beck, 2006). To explain the sharing of meaning which is implemented in cultural/social contexts is nearly impossible as long as the Episteme of communication studies is re-

stricted to mass communication. Klaus Beck defines ‘soziale Kommunikation’, social communication, distinguished from technical transmission referring to Mead: ‘Menschliche Kommunikation kann folglich definiert werden als wechselseitig aufeinander bezogene, reflexive und intentionale Symbolverwendung (symbolische Interaktion) mit dem Ziel gegenseitiger Verständigung über Bedeutungen (Bedeutungsvermittlung). Kommunikation ist ein voraussetzungsreicher Prozess, der auf einem von allen Kommunikationspartnern geteilten Zeichen- und Symbolrepertoire (beispielsweise einer Sprache) beruht, also kulturelle Gemeinsamkeiten und gemeinsame Erfahrungen voraussetzt’ (Beck, 2006, p. 133). According to this definition, the research problem is wider than the mass communication process, in fact mass communication is only one type of social communication.<sup>27</sup> – Roger Blum outlines the field of interpersonal communication in communications studies in an overview (see Table 5).

All types of communication may take part in ‘shared meaning’ on different levels (mikro, meso, makro).<sup>28</sup> While the German tradition highlights the field of ‘Public communication’ (see for the historical reasons Lacasa, 2007; and for the systematic reasons DGpuK, 2001 as well as Brosius, 2003), the French colleagues are looking at the whole scenario. This whole scenario is hardly to prove in its totality by empirical methods or could be fixed in one or few theoretical setting. This is the problem of French communication theory: It is – on a wide range – communication philosophy mixed with semiotic and/or discourse analysis. Methodologically, the two scientific communities hardly come together (see for an example in the field of audience research Albert *et al.*, 2003).

Even the views on social communication differ in France and Germany. Firstly: the perspective ‘social communication’ is the dominant one in France, but the marginal one in Germany. Secondly: while few German speaking scholars refer to Symbolic Interactionism as an Episteme of communication studies, they do it mostly without fusing semiotics and pragmatics – and if they do so, only on an applied level of ‘Zeichenverwendung’ (the uses of signs; for example to explain speech acts, see Burkart, 2002, pp. 76-196; Krallmann & Ziemann, 2001, pp. 13-19). In France, those two lines are bound together on a deeper *epistemological* level: what communication *is* (*sui generis in human nature*) is explainable in the focus of semio-pragmatism (which is not semiotics!). – Friedrich Krotz holds semiotics with their structuralist heritage for inapplicable to understand communication processes (from this standpoint he argues against Cultural Studies and their reference to French semiotics). Obviously he does not know the younger semio-pragmatist lines in France (which are in opposition to the elderly semiotics of the structuralist paradigm). In fact, Krotz (1997, p. 122) himself proposes to fuse semiotics and symbolic interactionism, too. This fusion was considered in French semio-pragmatism, more than one decade before.

<sup>25</sup> Minitel is a computer generated database, which revealed French public sphere as well as private communication habits (Rincé, 1990).

<sup>26</sup> See Flichys biography on <http://www.infoamerica.org/teoria/flichy1.htm> (6.5.2007). The centrality of *Réseaux* for French SIC has been subject of empirical research. See (based on citation analysis) Maigret (2001) as well as the DEA of Marie-Amélie Picard on *Réseaux* (Picard, 1995).

<sup>27</sup> As for example Henk Prakke at University of Muenster in the 1960s was well aware of, see Kutsch (2000).

<sup>28</sup> I only mention that the model of public opinion of Jürgen Gerhards and Friedhelm Neidhardt integrates interpersonal communication with informal (encounter) and with public character (meetings, hearings...) as well as mass mediated communication (press, radio, TV) (Gerhards/Neidhardt 1990).

**Table 5. Concepts of Thinking Communication in Germany and France**

	(Mass)mediated Communication	Interpersonal Communication
<b>Public communication</b>	press, radio, television, World wide web (for ex. websites of newspapers or broadcasters)	parliamentary debate, public discussion, lobbying, convention, hearing, demonstration, chat...
<b>Non-public and/or private communication</b>	letter, telephone, fax, email, SMS	encounter, internal meeting, diplomacy, classes and courses, chat...

following Roger Blum 2000<sup>30</sup>

What can be learned from a comparison of the corpus of ideas in French and German culture of communication studies? First of all: from an epistemological standpoint they do not exclude each other, but they could and should enrich each other (see Table 5 for the systematic side of such an enrichment). From French approaches there is to learn how to deal with epistemological questions on the nature and the social settings of communication. From the German approaches there is to learn how to operationalize concrete settings of questions about mass communication and their conditions in and consequences for society or parts of society. This does not mean that the respective counterpart is nonexistent in the other country, it only means that the two ‘national’<sup>29</sup> research communities differ in main lines.

Looking on approaches in both countries, there is an interesting common factor: the (re)turn to the actor. But while the so called active recipient seems a bit to be considered as an isolated being in the German context (rooting in Uses-and-Gratification tradition), the French researchers deal more with interdependencies between actors and structures (for example Eliséo Véron) or actors and systems (for example Alex Mucchielli). In Germany, we also find a strong impact of systems theory – but canalized through the work of Niklas Luhmann, which is a very prominent adoption in German communication studies (Meyen & Löblich 2006, 277-296)<sup>31</sup>. If Hardt (2002) is right in his diagnosis of the defiance of a critical theory of society in German mass communication research, and Meyen & Löblich are, too, then the Germans found the right candidate in Luhmann, who is not at all under suspicion of ideology. But with reference to Luhmann, it is almost difficult to join action and systems theory. This might be one cause that Luhmann is no reference of French SIC. In

France, the notion of system mostly refers to Paul Watzlawick's concept of *interaction systems* which are operating *via* ‘semiosis sociale’. – In contrast Luhmann: he declares his view on communication as not compatible with communication as action nor with communication as semiosis (Luhmann, 1986, p. 203). He regards communication as a macro process of social systems (not of psychological systems!); the French approaches deal more with the interconnection of the micro and the meso level of communication in society.

When we take into account which community reads (mostly) which thinkers and (mostly) under what focus, those preferences – Watzlawick or Luhmann – are rooted in the whole field of the epistemology of communications in each of the two scientific cultures, they are *not* accidental.

This article has not to be taken as normative: it is not on ‘better’ or ‘worse’ communication studies but on differences between traditions, and common grounds for (re-) thinking communication theory.

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<sup>29</sup> Science is never ‘national’; but it is bound in cultural settings, especially languages. Most German researchers are not able to read French and vice versa. Nonetheless the frontiers are permeable: for ex. via the US as outlined in this article. I did not refer on the strong affiliations between French SIC and Middle and South American Communication Studies nor affiliations with some Arab countries.

<sup>30</sup> Blum calls this scheme ‘The positioning of interpersonal communication’ (‘Die Positionierung der interpersonalen Kommunikation’). His aim is to legitimize interpersonal communication as a field of research in communication studies. My aim is to show, that ‘social communication’ is more than public communication.

<sup>31</sup> Meyen and Löblich estimate the influence of Luhmann's thinking on communication research in Germany for much more intense than this of his counterpart Jürgen Habermas. Habermas is widely read in French SIC – and Habermas himself had a strong input from Mead. For the Habermas reception in France see the writings of Rainer Rochlitz (among others Rochlitz, 2002).

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