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STAKEHOLDERS AND ACADEMIA:
DIFFERENT MODES OF INTERACTION

1. THE FORMULATION OF STAKEHOLDER THEORY

Stakeholder theory moves organizational life and existence beyond the mere persecution of economic goals. The core idea of (the original formulation) of stakeholder theory is that business is (and should be) expected to serve society in ways that goes beyond economic objectives. If this is true for commercially oriented companies, the more it is for those organizations, such as universities, that pursue the common public good.

Our main objective in this article is to evaluate the relevance stakeholders have for academia today, more specifically for the field of media and audience studies, and to describe how, and with what consequences, relations between academia and stakeholders are being reshaped. Moreover, the article aims to critically evaluate who is (and can be seen as) stakeholder of universities. The article is based on a general reflection on academia's role and stakeholder theory, but also draws from 26 individual essays written by the members of Working Group 2 of the COST Action Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies, discussing their self-assessment of the societal relevance and impact of the work of academics in the area of media and audience studies. These short contributions were collected from scholars working within the COST Action, and we will depart from some of the points brought forward in those essays to problematize and discuss the relations between academia and stakeholders and the different modes of interaction at stake. We are grateful to all original authors for their contributions.

In 1998, UNESCO pointed out at the World Higher Education Conference held in Paris[1] that higher education was facing great challenges and had to implement several changes, including involving its stakeholders – namely teachers, students, parents, public institutions, businesses (including media) and society more in general – in its governance. Fifteen years have passed and the stakeholders' active participation in universities' organizational and management structure has increased in most European countries. Teachers and researchers, and sometimes students, who had already obtained a foothold in the universities – as higher education and research providers and active participants in

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[1] UNESCO (1998) *The World Conference on Higher Education World Declaration on Higher Education in the Twenty-first Century Vision and Action Adopted by the World Conference on Higher Education*, Paris: UNESCO, 1998. Available at: www.unescoorg/education/educprog/wche/declaration_eng.htm.

the organizational life of higher education institutions – were joined by many different other groups and organizations in society.

The active participation of several stakeholders in higher education and research institutions' governance has generated a context that shapes today's interactions between academia and its stakeholders. These interactions can be structured in two ways: "one-to-one" between the institution and its different stakeholders, who are organized into categories or profiles (i.e. the teachers; the NGO representatives...) and "many-to-many" relations, where relations exist also between each of the stakeholders, either within its group or within the larger structure. For the purpose of this article, we will first focus on the one-to-one relational model (and return later to many-to-many relations) as these one-to-one relations are the more traditional form of interaction where the institution meets (to some degree) the value expectations of its external (and internal) stakeholders. Of course, we should keep in mind that these value expectations may vary in accordance with the institution's general objectives and mission statement, and the stakeholders' positions.

We propose that these one-to-one relations are characterized by three modes of interaction that vary in accordance with their objectives: scrutiny, dependency and conflict. All these three are framed by the core of what defines the relation between an organization and its stakeholders – the creation of value – and the existing context that can hinder or ease the relationships focussed on that purpose. The modes of interaction we have just listed might assume different configurations: communicative and managerial actions that intend to capture stakeholders' value needs and expectations; secondly, the co-operative creation of value in order to make full use of available stakeholders' resources; third, the satisfaction and realization of value needs of stakeholders by academia to enhance stakeholders' recognition and involvement in higher education organizational life.

Each mode of interaction will vary in accordance with the positive or negative outcomes of these relations. We consider a positive or negative outcome of those relations to be defined by each group of stakeholders' subjective degree of satisfaction. Also, the considered outcomes will vary in accordance to the considered relational structure. For instance, in a scrutiny type of relation between academics and government bodies, the outcome will be negative for the academics since they feel themselves constrained by ever more bureaucracy. In contrast, for government bodies, it will be positive, since they feel they have more control and a better perspective on spending and results. From what has been said follows that any stakeholder theory in this area should focus on the identification of the variables that position the different stakeholders in face of these (potential) relations and establish a network of relationships with which academics have to cope.

In the following parts of the article we will discuss who these different stakeholders might be and how their identity and position within the structure we have just described pose a challenge to individual teachers and researchers working in the area of media and audiences studies. We will also evaluate how different formulations of the theory have an effect on how we can conceive those teachers and researchers' future roles and responsibilities, and the value their work has for the organizations they are part of.

2. WHO ARE THE STAKEHOLDERS?

Freedman[2] defines stakeholders in the commercial arena as "any group or individual

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[2] D. Freedman, "The Political Economy of the 'New' News Environment", *New Media, Old News: Journalism and Democracy in the Digital Age*, edited by N. Fenton, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage, 2010, 35-50.

who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives", showing congruence with Bryson[3] who talks of "persons, groups or organisations that must be taken into account…". Stakeholders are all those actors who may gain or lose from an organization's activities. Stakeholders can be divided into two groups: internal and external stakeholders. As the terms suggest, internal stakeholders come from within the organization and external stakeholders are those outside the organization but with a vested interest in it. In this sense, individual academics are themselves academia's primary stakeholders, since their interests are closely dependable on their institutions' performance. But as higher education and research institutions must account for their activities to a large number of people and wider society, external stakeholders have gained preponderance in academia in the past decades. Most commonly, the group of external stakeholders includes funders or investors, but regulators, policy makers and legislators are also included.

This brings us to one of the main dilemmas when formulating a stakeholder theory in relation to academia: are we considering these teachers and researchers as stakeholders of the universities or as a crucial facet of the relation between the university, as an institution, and its other stakeholders? This gets further complicated when taking power positions into account. Benneworth and Jongbloed[4] actually suggest that the distinction between internal and external stakeholders is less relevant when compared with the ability one has, independently of its position, to influence the organizational decision-making process. Focusing on the particular case of the humanities and social sciences, these authors proposed that stakeholders in these areas, namely non-governmental regulators, communities and other NGOs, are less relevant today for institutions because they have failed to prove their *power* – to produce value for the institutions – their *legitimacy* – societal impact of the results of their work - and their *urgency* – a call for immediate actions. An additional reason for this seems to be that in many cases, individual actors, while acting as stakeholders, also fail to confirm the need of recognition of their own area of performance.

In order to find an adequate answer to these dilemmas, we suggest firstly to focus our attention on the kinds of value that are produced by universities and academia, trying to understand if they are homogenous and on which type of valorisation are they grounded. When talking about a commercial firm, this is a relatively simple issue since this value is defined in financial terms, but when talking of a university and its individual stakeholders, the question becomes much more complex. For the universities this value mostly concerns the promotion of activities that will generate results that will in the long term assure the institution's sustainability. This can either be defined in economic terms (i.e. the revenue generated from intellectual propriety produced by faculty), in branding terms (i.e. the degree of public recognition of the university's brand measured by its degree of attractiveness for foreign students) or in political terms (i.e. the level of services it provides to local authorities measured in accordance with the volume of local acquired funding). For academia the issue is completely different. Although sometimes individual objectives are aligned with institutional ones, in many other cases, academics define their notion of value following the information resulting from many-to-many relations. This means that their notion of value is mostly oriented towards peer recognition and individual compensation. This allows us to better understand that, if we consider academics as a specific group of

[3] J. Bryson, "What to Do when Stakeholders Matter", *Public Management Review*, 6 (2005), 1: 21-53.
[4] P. Benneworth, B. Jongbloed, "Who Matters to Universities? A Stakeholder Perspective on Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Valorisation", *Higher Education*, 59, 5 (2009): 567-588

stakeholders, their relational mode with the institution will vary in function of the value expectations in question. If, for instance, they are not equivalent, we will have a conflicting relation. But that is seldom the case since in most cases what we have is a situation in which either academics and institutions are dependent on others, for example in funding terms, and, as a consequence of that dependency, can develop stronger scrutiny mechanisms, an interaction mode that seems to have become dominant[5].

The previous propositions are in line with stakeholder theory's assumption that the value that stakeholders get (from working with stakeholder-friendly organizations) may not be exclusively captured in economic measures. While economic returns are often fundamental to the core stakeholders of an organization, most stakeholders want other things as well[6]. In this sense, stakeholders are both beneficiaries and risk-bearers of any organization's policies and actions. In the academic context, valorisation encompasses all activities that contribute to ensuring that the outcomes of scientific knowledge add value beyond the scientific domain. It includes making the results originating from academic research available or more easily accessible in order to increase the chances of others – outside academia – to make use of it, as well as the co-production of knowledge with non-academic groups[7]. Valorisation is therefore broader than 'commercialisation' and points to the larger societal contributions universities should be responsible for[8].

When one seeks to identify academia's stakeholders, we are – as a consequence of the previous argument and at least at this stage – including all those that might see their activities being valorised by academia. These external stakeholders include government and private companies, suppliers and administration, competitors and employees, but also regulators and potential partners in new ventures. Their relationships with academics (and of academics with their institutions) are complicated, as academics constantly have to prove their power and legitimacy to generate value, which results in two modes of interaction – dependency and conflict. Dependency, since the fact that they are internal stakeholders makes them highly dependable of the institutions in financial terms, and conflict, because the challenges one faces in order to affirm the value of its activities for the overall valorisation of the organization, results in a permanent conflict to acquire more power and legitimacy. Considering the specific characteristics of higher education institutions, we may suppose that the starting dilemma – teachers and researchers as stakeholders of the universities or as a crucial facet of the relation between the university, as an institution, and its other stakeholders – could be better formulated through a more nuanced and ambiguous conceptualization, where academics are considered as internal stakeholders that find power and legitimacy in becoming (and proving to be) crucial mediators of the relation between the university, as an institution, and its other stakeholders.

3. THE "OTHER" STAKEHOLDERS

We would now like to propose that there is a third set of stakeholders that is highly

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[5] C. Chapleo, C. Simms, "Stakeholder Analysis in Higher Education: A Case Study of the University of Portsmouth", *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 14 (2010), 1: 12-20.
[6] D.A. Bosse, R.A. Phillips, J.S. Harrison, "Stakeholders, Reciprocity and Firm Performance", *Strategic Management Journal*, 30 (2009): 447-456.
[7] J. Bryson, "What to Do when Stakeholders Matter", *Public Management Review*, 6, 1 (2005).
[8] OECD, *Higher Education and Regions: Globally Competitive, Regionally Engaged*, Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Institutional Management of Higher Education, 2007. Available online at: http://oecd.org/document/33/0,3746,en_21571361_50115957_39378401_1_1_1_1,00.html.

relevant for communication and media scholars, namely media users. Focusing on this type of stakeholder allows us to return to the third mode of interaction: scrutiny. In fact, communication and media scholars, the internal stakeholders of academia, deal with media users on an almost daily basis, rendering them their objects of scrutiny. In addition, several public bodies are also concerned about influence media consumption trends are exerting on their own activities and interests, and the sectors in their societies they are responsible for. But also media companies scrutinise their audiences, for instance, as they too do research on them. For media companies, it is essential to understand and follow their audiences' journey between different contents and platforms. In today's media landscape, where content production is fairly stable but channels and timing may be substituted according to viewer preference, the quality of content and the presence of well-established community spaces may help content producers to be heard by audiences. Within the flow of the viewers through content and platforms, broadcasters (and other professional content providers) may develop strategies to monitor, manage and exploit (better) the new audiences' behaviour. For them, it is always relevant to understand what users need, value, expect and look for, so that the industry and the market can offer better services in those areas.

Academic research in this area has always been concerned with the type of services most commonly used by users as well as new and original forms of usage. This information is, of course, relevant for the industry and for the development of new services and new features. Frequently, data from the industry or from the market focus mainly on quantitative results based mostly on frequencies regarding the use of certain technologies or services. Therefore, academic research can add value and help in deepening the interpretation of stakeholder data, by considering, for instance, more qualitative and theory-driven analyses. But this form of institutional research is still imprisoned in the one-to-one relationships that mould the instrumental view of stakeholders we have been describing. By opposition, we can consider a non-instrumental view framed by many-to-many relationships, making them less dependable on the modes of interaction we have described before.

Today's media landscape helped to create several spaces for public discussion, such as online forums, blogs or readers' comments in the news. Additionally, the rise of new modes of audience participation can be linked to accounts of the increased role of the public in producing material that previously have been the exclusive domain of professional journalists, blurring the frontiers of news producers and consumers[9]. This process marks the rise of the *prosumer* or *produser*, or if one prefers, of a diffuse mass of individuals, that are also contributing, via their participation in media production.

But these audiences' position as citizens – that is, as people who are (or can become involved) in the everyday life of democracy – could still be strengthened. Through this process, a wider view of democracy could potentially take shape beyond the formal electoral system and within the participatory terrain of our heterogeneous civil societies[10]. Participation can take many forms and be embedded in a broad array of settings:

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[9] A. Bruns, "Some Exploratory Notes on Produsers and Produsage", Snurblog, 3, November, 2005. Retrieved from http://snurb.info/index.php?q=node/329.

[10] S. Ridell, S., "Mode of Action Perspective to Engagements with Social Media: Articulating Activities on the Public Platforms of Wikipedia and YouTube", *The Social Use of Media. Cultural and Social Scientific Perspectives on Audience Research*, edited by H. Bilandzic, G. Patriarche and P.J. Traudt, Bristol: Intellect, 2012, 17-35; K. Schrøder, "From Semiotic Resistance to Civic Agency: Viewing Citizenship through the Lens of Reception Research 1973-2010", in *The Social Use of Media. Cultural and Social Scientific Perspectives on Audience Research*, edited by H. Bilandzic, G. Patriarche and P.J. Traudt, Bristol: Intellect, 2012, 179–200.

enduring associations, single issue organisations, loose collectivities, temporary issue publics, lobbying outfits, NGO's, social movements, protest activists, citizen networks and other formations – active at local, regional, national and global levels. While the last two decades have witnessed a general decline in participation in the formal political system, the picture in the broader realm of civil society activities and alternative political engagement is more mixed, with some areas of intense political activity, but also with sometimes strong counter-strategies, for instance, driven by commodification processes. These stakeholders and their uses of digital media play an important role in this regard – and it is at this point where the question about their status as stakeholder comes up[11].

These media users can be seen as a vast array of individuals or organisations, informal networks, and movements who traditionally had no relevance for the academia, at least not as stakeholders. But their constant level of activity makes them highly relevant for academia because it points to the possibility of engaging with community stakeholders who are actually contributing to the transformation of society and can benefit by the knowledge produced by academic research. That democracy is facing an array of very serious dilemmas has become an established and engaging theme within academic and public discussions in the past two decades; foundations are ear-marking ever greater sums to study the issues; NGOs are trying to tackle them in diverse ways; journalistic pundits analyse the difficulties, while political parties and governments are obviously troubled by these non-institutional forms of politics[12]. Although the concept of democracy is routinely invoked, we must keep in mind that within Europe and the EU, differences and even tensions in regard to political traditions, notions of citizenship, assumptions about openness and access, conceptions of what constitutes civil society, and so on, are noteworthy. At the same time, the traditional nationalist frame for politics is problematized by globalized forces and regional structures, most notably that of the EU (with all its dilemmas, for instance, the distance between citizens and their democratic deficit in decision-making). Growing worries about trust, belonging, individualism, legitimacy, and other issues make difficult for government to devise policies to simply promote a generic notion of citizenship as an all-purpose panacea for society's ills[13]. Many citizens feel an estrangement from – and often a growing cynicism towards – governments and the political process[14], All these tensions within the social and political arena affect the different modes of interaction between academia and stakeholders. More importantly, they are shaking the balance between one-to-one and many-to-many relationships by questioning established positions of both organizations and individuals.

In response to these developments, we see a range of efforts, emanating from dif-

[11] K. Starkey, P. Madan, "Bridging the Relevance Gap: Aligning Stakeholders in the Future of Management Research", *British Journal of Management*, 12 (2001), (Supplement s1): S3-S26; D. Crilly, "Cognitive Scope of the Firm: Explaining Stakeholder Orientation from the Inside-Out", *Business Society*, 50, 3 (2011): 518-530; S. Chiu, "Legitimacy, Visibility, and the Antecedents of Corporate Social Performance: An Investigation of the Instrumental Perspective", *Journal of Management*, 37 (2011), 6: 1558-1585.

[12] S. Bermam, A. Wicks, S. Kotha, T. Jones, "Does Stakeholder Orientation Matter? The Relationship Between Stakeholder Management Models and Firm Financial Performance", *Academy of Management Journal*, 42, 5 (1999): 488-506; S. Hayibor, "Equity and Expectancy Considerations in Stakeholder Action", *Business Society*, 51, 2 (2012): 220-262.

[13] K. Schrøder, "From Semiotic Resistance to Civic Agency: Viewing Citizenship through the Lens of Reception Research 1973-2010", in *The Social Use of Media. Cultural and Social Scientific Perspectives on Audience Research*, edited by H. Bilandzic, G. Patriarche and P.J. Traudt, Bristol: Intellect, 2012, 179-200.

[14] M. Franklin, C. van der Eijk, M. Marsh, "Referendum Outcomes and Trust in Government: Public Support for Europe in the Wake of Maastricht", *Journal of West European Politics*, Special Issue: ''The Crisis of Representation in Europe'', 18, 3 (1995): 101-117.

ferent official levels, as well as from civic sectors. Not surprisingly, media technology is often given a (sometimes disturbingly) primary place in these contexts. Discussions about media literacy, for example, have become frequent at the policy level. There have been many government-funded projects to enhance media access and skills. The difficulty is that while media certainly can be highly relevant here, low levels of participation do not have their origin in the scarcity of media access and skills. Such horizons can lead us down the simplistic techno-determinist routes or direct us towards solutionist approaches[15]. Participation is a far more complicated question; it must be understood as forms of practice that take place under specific circumstances, shaped by concrete conditions – of which media are a part (see also the individual reports of Carpentier, and of Dufrasne and Patriarche)[16].

The overall task for communication and media scholars then becomes to clarify in which terms and conditions these new audience's positions can have an impact on democracy. The challenge is to analytically weave together aspects of social structures, institutions with media technologies, the socio-cultural parameters of media environments with concrete organizations and collectivities – and to make this available to those civil society actors that are aiming at contributing to social change. The issue is that while digital media can make participation easier, they also create conditions for one to bowl alone, and to engage in moral reasoning without much attention to others.

4. THE FOURTH MODE OF INTERACTION: NETWORKING

Scrutiny, as a mode of interaction, brought forward the relevance that other stakeholders have for the audience and media studies and allowed us to move past the conflict and dependency-based nature of the one-to-one relations with internal and external stakeholders that are informed by an instrumental view of these relations. In contrast, many-to-many relations are those that occur in an increasingly mediatised society, where people have to perform diverse "modes of action"[17] with/through media and ICTs – for instance, they should be able to act as audiences, publics and communities, and they should be able to move from one mode of action to another, depending on the aim of (and their role in) their activities. Such networking activities that happen in many-to-many relations actually represent a fourth mode of interaction. Today one's mode of action within its social networks has gained increased significance. By "social network" we do not specifically mean social networking sites, although these are technical tools that indeed provide new opportunities for media practices. The notion of social network encapsulates (at least) six key dimensions that specify typical practices: 1) building and maintaining relations, 2) bypassing intermediaries, 3) co-producing contents, technologies and organisations, 4) sharing and circulating materials and knowledge, 5) cutting across spaces and 6) blurring temporalities[18]. These modes of action in social networks

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[15] E. Morozov, *To Save Everything Click Here: Technology, Solutionism and the Urge to Fix Problems that Don't Exist*, London: Allen Lane, 2013.

[16] N. Carpentier, *Media and Participation: A Site of Ideological-Democratic Struggle*, Bristol: Intellect, 2011.

[17] S. Ridell, "Mode of Action Perspective to Engagements with Social Media: Articulating Activities on the Public Platforms of Wikipedia and YouTube", in *The Social Use of Media. Cultural and Social Scientific Perspectives on Audience Research*, edited by H. Bilandzic, G. Patriarche and P.J. Traudt, Bristol: Intellect, 2012, 17-35.

[18] G. Patriarche, M. Dufrasne, "Faire parler les réseaux: Ce que les catégories d'audience, de public et de communauté ne disent pas sur les pratiques médiatiques", in *Accords, désaccords et malentendus: le socio-*

challenge traditional relations with stakeholders – most often based on information, consultation and retribution – and point to normative ones, namely that stakeholders are not solely identified by their interest in the affairs of the network but also for the intrinsic value their interest has for the network. This normative view implies that this fourth form of interaction, based on networking, is more able to enforce stakeholders' claims than the previous ones, since these actors are now part of the environment whilst their main stakes still reside outside the organization, a fact which makes them more salient and less dependable.

5. LINKING THE COST TATS ACTION WITH STAKEHOLDERS: THE RELEVANCE STAKEHOLDERS ASSUME FOR RESEARCHERS

In this part of this article we will examine how the different modes of interaction with stakeholders that we have been describing are present in the research and activities of some of the COST TATS Action members who, in the case of Working Group 2, have written the 26 individual reports that have inspired our work. The aim is to illustrate how some of the problems we have been discussing, namely the ones related with the tension that the different modes of interaction generate between stakeholders and academia, are present in the research and work of these academics.

We can, on the one side, find researchers for whom stakeholders are first of all regarded as an object of study. Beybin Kejanlioglu for instance, affirms in her individual report that, in her research on alternative media, she identified a large number of stakeholders that correspond to her own objects of study:

> Civil society, especially feminist circles and community media/alternative journalists can be regarded as stakeholders here […]. Another stakeholder can be mainstream media.

Others, like Sirkku Kotilainen, recognize in their individual reports the existence of one-to-one relations, strongly based on dependency:

> My professorship covers media literacy education which means mainly audience research among younger generations and, continually discussions with public stakeholders and media companies on the educational perspectives of research results. My own interests lie on comparative settings of research. […] My professorship has been established by outside stakeholders […].

A similar insistence on the value that their work has for stakeholders – because they can instrumentally use the results of their research – is mentioned by Rocio Zamora Medina, who states that:

> my research's results have a great social value and significance, mainly in a time of political disaffection and crisis of political representation. (Because they) need to practice crossmedia (the same message adapted to different platforms), and transmedia (a coordinated entertainment experience through different media) and multiplatform strategies.

Dependency relations are also mentioned directly in association with funding and the need for recognition, namely by Nurçay Türkoglu, who mentions in her individual report three core outputs related to stakeholders: funding from the state; recognition from peers and funding from commercial companies.

The scrutiny modes of interaction also clearly appears in some of the individual reports. Paula Cordeiro for instance mentions in her individual report that:

> I had presented, in another conference, "Terrestrial Radio And Digital Platforms: How Multi-media Is Changing Radio" a in-depth analysis of digital and on line radio trends, developing a reflection on how the integration of new expressive models and multivariate apparatus change the message of the radio, and tracing paths and forms for emerging new radio models. One main objective was to understand the way on-line broadcasting, […] can change radio as we used to know it and how the market has shifted the balance of power away from radio as taste maker toward consumers' ability to select, hoard and arrange his own music.

But we can also see in the individual reports that networking modes of interaction are emerging as relevant for the academics. Lawrie Hallett, for instance, noticeably affirms this when considering his involvement in COST TATS:

> The provision of enhanced academic exchange and networking opportunities for collaboration with colleagues elsewhere in the UK and across Europe (was particularly useful). This was particularly the case at COST Action events, which I attended in person […]. I am certainly of the view that I would not have been able to take advantage of such exchanges without involvement in the COST Action Audiences programme. Some of the areas debated have fed directly into my on-going PhD research into Community Media and elements of the COST Action Audiences research are also likely to be of use to Community Media organisations seeking to better understand their audiences.

The above statements show an awareness of the different modes of interaction between academia and stakeholders. Moreover, they mostly depict a specific relational mode that we will discuss in our conclusion.

6. CONCLUSIONS

We started by characterizing the relation between stakeholders and academia in the area of audiences and media studies as essentially a one-to-one relation based on three distinctive modes of interaction: scrutiny, dependency and conflict. We then moved on to verify that the instrumental formulation of stakeholders' theory around the notion of value and, in particular in the case of universities, around the valorisation of outcomes, results in a process whereby only those stakeholders that can affirm their contribution to the value-making process that informs the organization are considered relevant. That relevance becomes verifiable via the evaluation of their power, legitimacy and urgency in the context of the relation between academia and its external stakeholders. By further evaluating the third mode of interaction – scrutiny – we verified that a relevant set of stakeholders with no clear interest in academia are emerging via new uses of media technologies. These groups of stakeholders inform a many-to-many relationship with the academia that we made equivalent to a fourth mode of interaction: networking.

Our main conclusion is that the relation between stakeholders and academia in the area of media and audiences studies is essentially a normative one and not an instrumen-

tal one. By a normative relation we refer to the balance between stakeholders' intrinsic individual interests and organizational ones. This is opposed to an instrumental relation, whereby stakeholders, as a group, focus on the organization's interests. Stakeholder theory, in this context, has been mostly applied from an instrumental perspective[19], but stakeholder theory is descriptive, instrumental and more importantly, normative[20]. All these dimensions are relevant. Valorisation has been often regarded from a pure instrumental point of view and it should also be regarded as normative.

Our proposal is that this relation must be represented as containing a number of nested levels. At a macro-level, there are various systems framing the hierarchy of universities' external stakeholders. At the meso-level, there are relationships between key institutional actors (such as funding bodies) and academia, in which the system is funded in return for the delivery of outputs – the instrumental type of valorisation. At the micro-level, there are academics in specific contexts working to exploit new knowledge around the networked community stakeholders we have identified. It is important – when undertaking stakeholder research – to be clear which system level is being talked about. However, it is also important to respect the relationships between these levels, seeing them as part of a multi-level relationship system, and accept that a normative non-deterministic process is occurring while the relationships are being addressed by the different actors involved.

INDIVIDUAL TATS COST ACTION REPORTS

N. Carpentier, *The Significance of Participatory Research for Social Practice*, 2012.

M. Dufrasne, P. Geoffroy, *The Significance of Our Research on Citizen Participation for Social Practice*, 2012.

L. Hallett, *Individual Report*, titolo?, 2012.

N. Türkoglu, *Scholarly Research and the Stakeholders in the Field*, 2012.

B.D. Kejanlioglu, *How My Research Has Been Useful, or Could Be Useful, for which Stakeholders in the Field*, 2012.

S. Kotilainen, Sirkku, *The Usefulness of My Research for the Stakeholders in the Field*, 2012.

SUMMARY

The relationship between academia and stakeholders is a complex one with outcomes being influenced by the prevailing paradigms that, both in economic and political terms, mould academia's activities at a specific point in time. The relevance specific areas of study have for society, and more specifically towards identified constituents (i.e. the stakeholders) of society, are a key factor shaping society's expectations towards academia. In the particular case of media studies that relevance has apparently increased in the past decades, if for instance the total number of students enrolled in different European universities in this area of studies is considered, or the number of publications and dedicated journals is listed. This article examines various contributions to the enunciation of stakeholder theory when considering media and audience studies and draws upon 26 individual reports, written by members of Working Group 2 of the Cost Action Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies (TATS). The resulting paradigms are used to describe the relations between academia and stakeholders and the implications those have for all working in the field.

[19] T. Donaldson, L. Preston, "The Stakeholder Theory of the Corporation: Concepts, Evidence, and Implications", *The Academy of Management Review*, 20, 1 (1995): 65-91.
[20] *Ibid*.