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Reflexive Media Education

Exploring Mediagraphy as a Learning
Activity in Upper Secondary School

Thesis for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor

Trondheim, August 2015

Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Faculty of Social Sciences and Technology Management
Department of Education



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Daniel Schofield
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Sammendrag (Norwegian)

Denne avhandlingen fokuserer på kritisk refleksjon som en sentral del av media literacy. Media literacy forstås her som et sett av kompetanser som ligger implisitt i den nye mediebruken og i de nye medieformene, men som også er noe som kreves for å fullt ut kunne delta og kommunisere i dagens samfunn. Avhandlingen posisjoneres innenfor fagfeltet mediepedagogikk, og er basert på den empirisk case-studie som utforsker *mediografi* som læringsaktivitet i videregående skole.

I mediografi tar elevene rollen som forskere. De intervjuer individer fra tre tidligere generasjoner av sin egen familie om hvordan de har opplevd utviklingen i media, teknologi, samfunn, kultur og historie. Dette komplementerer elevene med informasjon om seg selv og sitt hverdagsliv, og skriver et mediografi-essay. Her diskuterer de likheter og forskjeller på tvers av generasjoner. Elevene kan også inkludere multimodale uttrykk. Det primære datamaterialet i denne avhandlingen er elevenes tekster og multimodale uttrykk, sammen med data fra klasseromsobservasjoner og intervjuer med utvalgte elever. Disse dataene tolkes som medierte handlinger, og læringsaktiviteten mediografi ses som et medierende verktøy. Den sentrale analysemetoden er narrativ analyse, eller mer spesifikt, analyse av narrativer. De ulike medierte handlingene analyseres som refleksjoner som igjen tolkes som deler av narrativer. Analysen søker å kategorisere og forstå elevenes narrativer ved hjelp av teori og begreper som i hovedsak er relatert til fagfeltene mediepedagogikk og media literacy.

Hovedmålet med studien er å utforske ulike uttrykk for elevers refleksjoner i læringsaktiviteten mediografi, og den overordnede problemstillingen er: *Hva kjennetegner videregående elevers refleksjoner og meningsskapning i prosessen med å gjennomføre mediografi?* De viktigste funnene presenteres i fire artikler. To av artiklene er publisert, én er i trykking og den fjerde er innsendt til et internasjonalt tidsskrift.

Den *første* artikkelen fokuserer på hva som kjennetegner elevenes refleksjoner på sine mediepraksiser. Artikkelen trekker frem to sentrale aspekter: For det første indikerer dataene at visse former for kritisk refleksjon er implisitte i deltakernes mediepraksiser, og for det andre ser det ut til at mediografi potensielt medierer kritisk refleksjon. Betydningen av kritisk refleksjon i et mediemettet og mediedominert samfunn diskuteres også. Den *andre* artikkelen omhandler elevenes refleksjoner på sin identitet, og hvordan de opplever mediene som agenter i deres sosiale praksiser. Det fokuseres på hvordan medieopplevelser kan være nært knyttet til identitet. Et viktig funn er at mediografi kan bidra til forståelse av ens identitet og gi innsikt i kultur, samfunn og media fra et personlig synspunkt. Den *tredje* artikkelen utforsker perspektiver på opplevd verdensborgerskap og kosmopolitanisme. Artikkelen utforsker hvordan deltakerne reflekterer over opplevelsen av tilhørighet til - og posisjon i - det globale samfunnet. Et sentralt funn er at få elever uttrykker at de etablerer og opprettholder faktiske sosiale relasjoner på et globalt nivå

gjennom sosiale medier. Likevel ser deltakerne seg selv som en del av verden og en global kultur, og det kan synes som mediegrafi kan mediere en bevissthet om og forståelse av det globale, multikulturelle samfunnet. Den *fjerde* artikkelen belyser elevenes refleksjoner på sine opplevelser av tid og rom. Her ses opplevd tid og rom som grunnleggende dimensjoner av vår livsverden. Et viktig fokus er hvordan opplevelsen av tid og rom har endret seg, og i artikkelen utforskes det hvordan temporale og romlige opplevelser spiller inn i hverdagslivet til individene i de fire generasjonene i elevenes familier. Det konkluderes med at mediegrafi involverer et tankesett som betegnes som 'global imagination', som innebærer at elevene ser for seg verden på en måte som gjør dem i stand til å plassere seg selv i verden og samtidig relatere seg emosjonelt til mennesker på et globalt nivå.

Det viktigste overordnede funnet i avhandlingen er at mediegrafi kan utgjøre en refleksiv læringsaktivitet innenfor mediepedagogikk. I avhandlingens konklusjon foreslås *refleksiv mediepedagogikk* som et begrep med visse kjennetegn:

Kritisk refleksjon fra elevene inkluderes og forutsettes. Data fra denne studien antyder at kritisk refleksjon er en integrert del av elevenes kommunikasjon, identitet og mediebruk, men også at læringsaktiviteter som mediegrafi kan mediere kritisk refleksjon. *Læringsaktiviteten relaterer til elevenes identitet.* Elevene får mulighet til å fortelle historier fra sine egne livsverdener. Dette blir sett på som et viktig pedagogisk utgangspunkt. Narrativ meningsskaping forstås som spesielt viktig i en mediemettet kultur. Gjennom å konstruere narrativer, kan elevene potensielt koble fragmentariske opplevelser sammen, knytte disse opplevelsene til vitenskapelige begreper, samt til en historisk tidslinje og en utvidet romlig dimensjon. Refleksiv mediepedagogikk *representerer en "dobbel åpning"*. Mediegrafi eksemplifiserer en slik dobbelthet, fordi elevene åpner seg for verden, og verden åpner seg for elevene. Videre kan mediegrafi også være et eksempel på en læringsaktivitet som medierer en dobbel åpning mellom de som underviser og de som lærer. *Multimodal refleksjon og multimodal forskning inkluderes og anerkjennes.* Mediegrafi-prosjektet illustrerer hvordan multimodale uttrykk kan komplementere skriftlige og muntlige uttrykksformer. Uttrykksformer fra de unges hverdagsliv utenfor skolen vektlegges og verdsettes i en pedagogisk sammenheng i skolen. *Kunnskap ses som noe som skapes i sosiokulturelle sammenhenger.* Deltakerne gjennomførte forskningslignende øvelser, noe som utfordrer det tradisjonelle synet på "hva som teller" som kunnskap. Kunnskapsutviklingen blir refleksiv, altså noe som kontinuerlig kan diskuteres og evalueres. *Refleksiv mediepedagogikk er knyttet til elevenes verdensbilde.* Læringsaktiviteter som mediegrafi kan mediere kritisk refleksjon over deltakernes posisjon og tilhørighet i verden. Dette innebærer å forstå og evaluere sitt ståsted i historien, i verden og i kulturen, og belyse og problematisere medienes rolle i hverdagslivet.

Summary

This thesis focuses on critical reflection as an important part of media literacy. Media literacy is seen as a set of competencies that are implied in the new uses and forms of media, but that also are required to fully participate and communicate in the present society. The thesis is positioned in media education, and is based on an empirical case study that explores the learning activity of *mediagraphy* in upper secondary school.

In mediagraphy, students are appointed as researchers. They interview individuals from three earlier generations of their own family about their experiences of the development in media, technology, society, culture and history. The students also provide information about themselves and their everyday lives, and write a mediagraphy essay, where they discuss similarities and differences across generations. The students can also include multimodal expressions. The primary data in the thesis are the students' texts and multimodal expressions, but data from interviews with selected students and classroom observations are also analysed. These data are interpreted as mediated actions, and the learning activity of mediagraphy is seen as a mediational means. The key analytical method is narrative analysis, or more specifically, analysis of narratives. The different mediated actions are analysed as reflections, which in turn are seen as parts of narratives. The analysis seeks to categorise and understand the students' narratives in terms of theory and concepts primarily from the fields of media education and media literacy.

The main aim of the study is to explore the students' reflections as they participated in the learning activity of mediagraphy, and the overarching research question is: *What characterises upper secondary students' reflections and meaning making during the process of conducting mediagraphy?* The key findings are discussed in four articles, where two are published, one is in press and the fourth is submitted. The *first* article asks what characterises the students' reflections on their media practices. Two important issues are addressed: The first is that it seems the students' media practices imply certain forms of critical reflection, and the second issue is that the data indicates that mediagraphy potentially mediates critical reflection. In particular, the importance of critical reflection in the media-dominated contemporary society is discussed. The *second* article concerns what characterises the students' reflections on their identity and how they depict the media as an agentive factor in their social practices. An important focus here is how media experiences can be related to identity. The article finds that mediagraphy can contribute to understanding of one's identity and insight into culture, society and media from a personal point of view. The *third* article explores perspectives on experienced global citizenship and cosmopolitanism. The article addresses how the students reflect on their sense of belonging to – and position in – the global community. A key finding is that few students express using social media to establish and maintain actual social relations on a global level. However, the students see themselves as a part

of the world and a global culture, and it seems that mediagraphy can mediate an awareness of the global, multicultural society. The *fourth* article deals with the students' reflections on their experiences of time and space. Experienced time and space are seen as fundamental dimensions of our lifeworld. An important focus is on how the experience of time and space have transformed, and the article explores how temporal and spatial experiences play into the everyday lives of the individuals in the four generations of the students' families. The article finds that mediagraphy involve a mode of thought that is termed 'global imagination', which implies that the students envision the world in a way that enables them to place themselves in the world and relate to people on a global level.

The main overarching finding in the thesis is that mediagraphy can constitute a reflexive learning activity in media education. In the conclusion of the thesis, a *reflexive media education* is proposed, a term that has certain characteristics:

It opens for and requires students' critical reflection. The empirical data suggest that critical reflection is an integral part of the students' communication, identity and media practices, but also that learning activities such as mediagraphy can mediate critical reflection. *It relates to the students' identities.* The students are given the opportunity to tell stories from their own lifeworlds. This is seen as an important pedagogical starting point. Narrative meaning making is understood as essential in the media saturated culture. Through constructing narratives, the students can potentially connect fragmentary experiences, and link these experiences to scientific concepts as well as to a historical timeline and an expanded space. *It represents a double opening.* Mediagraphy exemplifies such 'doubleness' as the students open up to the world, and the world opens up to the students. Moreover, a double opening seems to be mediated also between those who teach and those who learn. *It includes and acknowledges multimodal reflection and multimodal research.* The mediagraphy project illustrates how multimodal expressions complements written and oral expressions. Expression forms from young people's everyday lives outside of school are emphasised and appreciated in an educational context in school. *It acknowledges knowledge as something that is created in sociocultural contexts.* The students conducted research-like exercises, which implies that the traditional view on 'what counts' as knowledge is challenged. The construction of knowledge is reflexive, which means it is continuously discussed and evaluated. *It relates to the students' worldviews.* Learning activities such as mediagraphy can mediate critical reflection on the students' position and sense of belonging in the world. This implies understanding and evaluating one's standpoint in history, the world and in culture, and problematizing the role of media in everyday life.

Part 1: Extended abstract

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Part 2: Articles

Article 1:

Schofield, D. (2014b). Young People Exploring Their Media Experiences – Mediagraphy as a Reflection Tool in Upper Secondary School. *Nordic Journal of Digital Literacy*, 9(2), 112-127.

Article 2:

Schofield, D., & Kupiainen, R. (2015, in press). Young People’s Narratives of Media and Identity: Mediagraphy as Identity Work in Upper Secondary School. *Nordicom Review*, 36(1).

Article 3:

Schofield, D. (2014a). Reflexivity and Global Citizenship in High School Students’ Mediagraphies. In S. H. Culver & P. Kerr (Eds.), *Global Citizenship in a Digital World. MILID Yearbook 2014*. Göteborg: The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media/Nordicom.

Article 4:

Schofield, D., & Vettenranta, S. (2014). The media and global imagination: students’ experiences of time and space. *Manuscript submitted for publication*.

1. Introduction

The media plays an increasingly important role in contemporary society and culture. In line with developments in media, the practices of social institutions, communication and education have undergone fundamental transformations in recent decades (Castells, 2010a; Hjarvard, 2008). The media plays into people's everyday lives on multiple levels, and is thus closely related to learning, identity and social practices. The people experiencing these transformative conditions need to acquire a number of new competencies, but at the same time, new sets of knowledge and skills are implied in the new uses and forms of media.

Developments in and through the media have implications for how children and young people master various aspects of life, and how they grow up to become active citizens (Drotner, 2001; Jenkins, 2007b). A number of scholars emphasise how people growing up in a media-dominated, complex culture will need complex, reflexive knowledge and skills (Burn & Durran, 2007; Erstad, 2010a; Lankshear & Knobel, 2007; Qvortrup, 2004). Therefore, it is important for researchers to explore how young people understand and reflect on the surrounding culture, and also to see how reflection can play a role in learning activities in and outside school. This is apparent in the emergent interest in research on media literacy, a set of competencies that comprises such abilities as creativity, access, critical understanding and empowerment (Buckingham, 2003; Drotner, 2001; Kupiainen, 2013). However, there is still a need for research that captures young people's reflections on their media experiences, and for research on learning activities that have such reflections as the main objective.

In this thesis I explore a specific learning activity, *global mediagraphy*. Global mediagraphy was introduced as a learning activity by Vettenranta (2010), while it was originally coined by Rantanen (2005b) as a research method in the field of global media and communication. In the present study, the learning activity is referred to as mediagraphy.¹ The empirical study was conducted at an upper secondary school in Norway with 27 students attending the Media and Communication studies programme. The study has been conducted as an exploratory case study (Yin, 2014). In mediagraphy, students are appointed as researchers. They interview three earlier generations of their own family and provide information about themselves according to a number of factors relating to the development in media, technology, society, culture and history. The students wrote *mediagraphy essays*, discussed findings in the classroom and have been interviewed about their thoughts on the project. These different forms of meaning making are interpreted as mediated actions which are mediated through mediagraphy as a mediational means (cf. Wertsch, 1998). The mediated actions are viewed as reflections that are part of narratives.

¹ An explanation for omitting the prefix 'global' is given in section 1.2.

² VG3 is the third and final year of upper secondary school in Norway and qualifies students for tertiary

Thus, a key analytical method in this study is narrative analysis (cf. Savin-Baden & Major, 2013), and the analytical process can be described as a process of reflexive interpretation (cf. Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2008). The research is conducted with two main perspectives: seeking to understand how young people reflect on their own media experiences, and how learning activities such as mediagraphy play into the students' understandings, interpretations and reflections.

The thesis has two parts. Part 1 is the extended abstract, while Part 2 comprises four articles that report on and discuss the key empirical findings. In section 1.1 I give the grounds for the main aims and research questions of the study. Here I will also briefly introduce the articles. Section 1.2 presents the case study as well as a brief account of the context of the study. I tentatively position my research within what has become a distinct research field, *media education*, in section 1.3. In Chapter 2, I review the research that has been conducted on mediagraphy as a learning activity. Given that there is as yet little research on this recently developed learning activity, I also draw on research that has similarities with elements of mediagraphy: research on narrative teaching methods. I then move on to discuss similarities with digital storytelling as applied in educational settings, and application of 'students-as-researchers' and inquiry methods in media studies and social science.

In Chapter 3, I outline the theoretical framework for the study. The framework is focused primarily on theories on reflection and reflexivity as important components of media literacy. I also draw on some key sociocultural perspectives. The chapter also presents the main analytical concepts applied in the data analysis. Chapter 4 is dedicated to methodological considerations, where the research design and the different types of data collection methods are presented. I also describe the main analytical choices made under the umbrella of narrative analysis and explain the analytical procedures of the study. Additionally, such important aspects as research credibility and ethics are discussed. In Chapter 5 I summarise the findings reported in the articles. This is followed by a discussion of the key findings and an outline of the most important overarching perspectives. The chapter also includes what I consider to be the limitations and contributions of the study.

Part 2 of the thesis comprises the articles. All four articles can be described as empirical articles analysing data from the case study. The fourth article also includes data from a related study, which has been conducted by Soilikki Vettenranta, the co-author of the article. The articles are presented chronologically according to my analytical process. This reflects the development in my theoretical and methodological understanding. Articles 1 and 2 are thematically related to each other; similarly, Articles 3 and 4 have thematic links. The two first articles address primarily mediagraphy and reflection seen in relation to learning and identity. The last two articles deal

with mediagraphy in light of the students' reflections on their position in the global culture, and discuss such concepts as citizenship, cosmopolitanism, global imagination and experiences of time and space.

In section 1.1, I will present the aims and research topics for the study, and briefly introduce the articles.

1.1. Aims and research topics

The main aim of this thesis is to explore the students' reflections and meaning making as they participated in the learning activity of mediagraphy. The study is framed in media education and is based on an empirical, exploratory case study conducted over a period of five weeks in a class of 27 students attending the Vg3² General Studies Programme in Media and Communication at an upper secondary school in Norway. A secondary aim, which primarily is expressed in the discussion on the findings from the articles, is to understand more of the reflections characterising youth culture in relation to media experiences. Bearing this in mind, one objective of the study is to gain insight into what are the characteristic traits of learning activities that incorporate students' existing reflections on media experiences. The primary analytical focus is on the students' reflections as they are expressed in different ways, such as written essays, classroom discussions, multimodal texts and interviews. The overarching research question is: *What characterises upper secondary students' reflections and meaning making during the process of conducting mediagraphy?*

In four articles the main research question is examined within different thematic focus areas that emerged during the analytical process. Referring to the articles in the order they are presented in the thesis, the research question is answered in the following manner:

1. The key topic of the first article is *what characterises the students' reflections on their media practices*, as they are expressed in the students' texts, discussions and interviews. The article addresses both how young people's media practices imply certain forms of reflection, and how mediagraphy potentially mediates particular reflections. Additionally, the importance of critical reflection for people living in the media-dominated contemporary society is discussed.

The first article is published as:

Schofield, D. (2014b). Young People Exploring Their Media Experiences – Mediagraphy as a Reflection Tool in Upper Secondary School. *Nordic Journal of Digital Literacy*, 9(2), 112-127.

² VG3 is the third and final year of upper secondary school in Norway and qualifies students for tertiary education.

2. Article 2 deals with what characterises the students' reflections on their identity and how they depict the media as an agentive factor in their social practices. The article approaches how media experiences can be related to identity. It is argued that learning activities, such as mediagraphy, can be identity work. The students need to actively engage their agentive identity if they are to narrate their mediagraphies. The second article has been written in collaboration with Professor Reijo Kupiainen. I was the first author and had the main responsibility for data analysis, the theoretical and methodological choices and application of concepts. The article is in press as:

Schofield, D., & Kupiainen, R. (2015, in press). Young People's Narratives of Media and Identity: Mediagraphy as Identity Work in Upper Secondary School. *Nordicom Review*, 36(1).

3. In the third article, perspectives on experienced global citizenship and cosmopolitanism are explored. The article approaches *how the participants express their sense of belonging to – and position in – the global community*. The concepts of media and information literacy are addressed and problematized in this article. The third article is published as:

Schofield, D. (2014a). Reflexivity and Global Citizenship in High School Students' Mediagraphies. In S. H. Culver & P. Kerr (Eds.), *Global Citizenship in a Digital World. MILID Yearbook 2014* (pp. 69-80). Göteborg: The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media/Nordicom.

4. The fourth article, which also draws on data from a related project (Vettenranta, 2010), focuses on *what characterises the students' reflections on their experiences of time and space*. The article addresses experienced time and space as fundamental dimensions of our lifeworld. In particular, the article explores how temporal and spatial experiences play into everyday life, and the transformations that have occurred in this respect over the course of four generations in the students' families. Article 4 has been written in collaboration with Professor Soilikki Vettenranta. As in the second article I also in this case was the first author and had the main responsibility for data analysis, and the theoretical, conceptual and methodological choices. The fourth and final article is submitted as:

Schofield, D., & Vettenranta, S. (2014). The media and global imagination: students' experiences of time and space. *Manuscript submitted for publication*.

1.2. Background for the mediagraphy case study

In this section I will briefly introduce the case study that constitutes the basis of the thesis and examine some basic characteristics of mediagraphy as a learning activity. The research design, method and organisation of the classroom project will be elaborated on in Chapter 4.

The background for including mediagraphy in teaching has primarily been a response to the perceived lack of learning activities focusing on the challenges of coping with life in a media-dominated, globalized culture. Bearing this in mind, Vettenranta (2010) applied global

mediagraphy as a teaching method with Master’s degree students in a university course in Media Education. Global mediagraphy was originally introduced by Rantanen (2005b) as a method for researching the role of media and communication in the process of globalization. It should be noted that for Rantanen and Vettenranta, one of their main concerns was to research aspects of globalization, whereas the focus in my study is more directed on young people’s reflections as they work with mediagraphy. When referring to my study, the learning activity is thus referred to as mediagraphy, without the prefix ‘global’.

I have been a teacher in media studies in upper secondary school, and this has been an important basis and motivation for conducting this study. As a teacher I have experienced that reflection in learning activities is important, and my teaching background has also helped me to gain access to the study object. However, this background also can make me biased. Therefore, it is necessary to specifically discuss my researcher role and position in the field, which I do in Chapter 4.

The student assignment was to research one’s family by collecting information from family members over four generations, including the student him- or herself. The students carried out qualitative interviews and structured the key information according to Rantanen’s table (Table 1) of predefined globalization factors.

Table 1. Rantanen’s (2005b) Mediagraphy table.

	Great grandmother/ Grandfather	Grandmother/ Grandfather	Father/ Mother	Son/Daughter
Profession				
Home country				
Place				
Time				
Changes in lifestyle				
Education				
Changes in class				
Family				
Travel				
First overseas journey				
Languages spoken				
Media and communication				
Global media event ³				
Interests				
Ideology				
Resistance to				
Identity				

The basis for the students’ analysis is thus a structured overview of how individuals in different generations have been exposed to various factors related to the development in technology,

³ ‘Global media event’ was originally not used in Rantanen’s (2005b) research. In a discussion between the author and Rantanen in Trondheim, 21 March 2011, it was decided to add ‘Global media event’ to the mediagraphy table for the research project.

media, society and culture. The students chose one side of their family and carried out the practical work similar to basic scientific research. The main data-collection method was interviews. After being introduced to theory and concepts on traditional teaching methods, the students collected empirical data, developed a research question and conducted an analysis, and then wrote an interpretative essay. In this way, the students could shed light on how media developments are connected to the globalization process on the societal macro level and at the same time understand more of the individual experiences and identities on the micro level (Vettenranta, 2011).

In the sections below I will explain how the concepts of media and media education are understood in this study and position my research within an established research tradition.

1.3. The media's role in social practice

Communication is fundamental in human society. Humans have communicated with each other for as long as they have existed in societies (Drotner, 2011). Drotner (ibid.) describes the media as technologies that allow communication to be transported over distance and stored over time. Thus, the media is important as a means for forming a cultural and societal memory, and for the members of society to discuss and reflect on themselves and their surroundings (ibid.). In this thesis, the media is defined according to Drotner (ibid., p. 23, my trans.). Based on Carey (1989), she defines the media as:

concrete physical objects that have the special characteristic that they can store, shape and convey signs across time and space, so that these signs can give meaning about something for someone. Thus, the media are tools that convey meaning.

Although the starting point for the participants in this study is the contemporary media culture, mediagraphy has a historical perspective, as the participants' data material is from individuals over four generations. Thus, there is a need for a concept of media that includes what is often referred to as *traditional media*, as well as what is called *new media*. Influenced by Lull (2000), Rantanen (2005b) distinguishes between six historical stages of media and communications according to what was the predominant type of media. The oral period goes back to the origins of human society, the script period from around 3100 BC, the printed stage from about 1440, the wired electronic period from the 1830s, the wireless electronic stage from about 1920, and finally the digital stage from the 1990s. It is important to note that the different stages overlap; one can say media use accumulates, and that various types of media complement each other. In today's society, communication forms from all these periods are in use, although some types of media have declined, such as the telegram or the cassette tape. In this study, the concept of media includes all types of media, such as print media, mass media, audio-visual media, the cinema, radio, television, newspapers, the Internet and the mobile phone.

In this extended abstract, *new media* refers primarily to digital media, whereas *traditional media* refers to all other media types, i.e. it is a broad term encompassing all originally non-digital media. It is worth noting that today most types of media are produced digitally so that the term new media more specifically relates to the typical digital media, represented primarily by Internet-based media, and characterised by interactivity, participation, production and social practice.

1.3.1. *Media practices and experiences*

What is important in this thesis is, however, not the media, media technology, the media texts or media products per se. Rather, the focus is on how people experience the media and how they practice media; i.e. two key concepts are *media experiences* and *media practices*. The latter concept, media practices, relates to the fact that media can be analysed as an open set of practices that are oriented around, or otherwise related to, the media (Couldry, 2010). According to Couldry (ibid.), research on media practices foregrounds questions about what people *do* and *say* in relation to media. In order to examine the contemporary media culture, characterised by interactivity, participation and dialogue, such an approach appears to be more informative than the narrower study of media effects or media texts. A focus on practice also opens for studying how people understand and categorise the different actions that constitute a practice. Moreover, exploring media practices can give insights into the role of media in other social practices.

In addition to the concept of practice, in the present study it is important to explicitly emphasise the concept of *experience*. People's experiences of media representations, media events and media communication are in focus. Experiences are in this context viewed as something active and creative, and associated with intention and meaning rather than passive reception (Alvesson & Sköldborg, 2008). As it is interpreted here, media experiences can be researched through expressions in interviews with individual research participants or through individual products and stories. However, media experiences are also social, both because people are practising media together with other people, and because media texts and media communication are socially constructed and socially distributed. An important issue in the present data analysis is how the participants' expressed media experiences relate to their media practices and to the media texts. Lemish (2015) argues that the media contributes to shaping peoples' media experiences, both explicitly and implicitly, and both formally and informally. Similarly, Buckingham (2003, p. 3) underlines that the media enables communication, but also intervenes, and 'provides us with selective versions of the world, rather than direct access to it'. I employ sociocultural theory to conceptualise a connection between the media, practice and experience. A medium can be understood as an artefact, or a cultural tool that enables indirect communication

between people, and mediates meaning (Säljö, 2006; Vygotsky, 1986). In this view, artefacts are never neutral, but have implicit meaning potential.⁴

1.3.2. Media in everyday life

Today the media is integral in everyday life, and plays into people's social practices in multiple ways. Research on media consumption and media-usage statistics reveal a complex image. International research shows that media consumption, measured in time, remains high among youth (Livingstone, Mascheroni, Ólafsson, & Haddon, 2014; Ofcom, 2014; Vahlberg, 2010; Vaage, 2014). Although the number of hours spent per day on media usage varies in the different studies, one can safely say that a large part of children and young people's everyday lives somehow involves media use. This applies to activities in and outside school. The EU Kids Online survey (Lobe, Livingstone, Ólafsson, & Vodeb, 2011) studied Internet related media use among European children and youth aged 9-16 in 25 countries with 25000 participants. The study shows there are significant differences between countries and within countries regarding media use, depending on factors such as socio-economic background and access to Internet technology. The highest media usage is found in the wealthiest Nordic countries, the UK and the Netherlands, together with the countries with the most recent introduction of broadband technology. However, the general trend is that access to the Internet and media usage is increasing in Europe. Still, social background and technological access matters when it comes to media use, also in terms of what guidance and support children receive at home (ibid.). As such, inequalities within countries might be at least as important as differences across countries. In this respect it is important to point out that the present study is conducted in one of the countries with the most extensive media use. A further discussion of the context of the study and the participants is done in the method chapter.

Some recent research results can contribute to a somewhat more nuanced image of media use as something that is ever-increasing. For instance, Findahl (2012) suggests that in Sweden, media use is surprisingly stable. He argues that measured in time, people's total media use has actually *not* increased over the last twenty years. Norwegian research also shows that the total media consumption among young people is relatively stable, and that the time spent on such media as PC and TV is slightly decreasing (Vaage, 2014). However, measuring contemporary media usage in time units is a debatable approach. Today, one type of media is often used simultaneously with other media, and also in and adjacent to other social activity. As such, media use today is complex, and researching young people's media use therefore entails some

⁴ The concepts of artefacts and mediation are further examined in the theory chapter.

problematic issues with respect to capturing the actual amount of time spent on the media use. Nevertheless, in general, international research reveals that, among young people, time spent on media use is generally high, and is increasingly comprehensive. Particularly, the time spent on online activities and on mobile devices is increasing and new media have become the main media preferences of young people (Livingstone et al., 2014; Vahlberg, 2010).

There is a general trend where media use has been condensed; media is to a greater extent used alongside other activities, and the use of several types of media simultaneously has become commonplace (Findahl, 2012; Livingstone et al., 2014). Moreover, the *ways* in which media is used have changed very much in a short period of time. The various types of media are used in more social and participatory practices, and media use is becoming increasingly *personalised* due to more mobile media use through smartphones and tablets (Livingstone et al., 2014). Accordingly, media use is more connected to our other practices in most aspects of life. The media is not just a means for entertainment, but also for social practice, education, information and work.

Both research and the everyday discourse point to a number of challenges associated with such intensive media use. Some of the most frequently mentioned challenges are related to lifestyle, such as excessive media use leading to inactivity and obesity (Samdal et al., 2012), children and young people gaining access to adult content online and digital bullying (Livingstone et al., 2014). Challenges involved with identity and self-representation are also often raised (Davis, 2011). In an educational context, two particular points of interest are the ability to determine what is credible information (Jenkins, 2007b) and time issues when digital media is included in school (Blikstad-Balas, 2012).

1.3.3. Media and societal developments

The media is also an important driving force for developments on the societal level. Hjarvard (2008) argues that contemporary society is increasingly based on media, and that other social institutions are more and more based on the media's logic and communication forms. The media can also be highlighted as a fundamental factor in the process of globalization, which concerns the ongoing and increasingly intense mediation of cultural, economic, political and social relations in the world (Rantanen, 2005b).

One of the most important developmental traits on the societal level is *media convergence*. Basically, convergence is about different technologies blending together so that different systems can perform the same tasks. But if one observes how human interactions with the media have changed, it is apparent that our media practices are also converging. According to Erstad (2010a), media convergence occurs in three main ways. *Technological convergence* is when different technologies are merging together. For example, digitalization has made it possible to use the

mobile phone to perform such varied tasks as making phone calls, editing photos, surfing the Internet and streaming online movies. *Functional convergence* refers to the ways in which we use the new media possibilities: people have, and are, adapting to new ways of communicating. People use several media simultaneously, and the media are an integral part of social practices. *Cultural convergence* refers to structural changes, such as changes in ownership, in public sectors or in cultures.

The media contributes to complexity in society and culture, as well as in individuals' everyday lives and social practices. Qvortrup (2004) emphasises complexity as a basic trait of modern culture. We are witnessing and participating in a society that is becoming increasingly *hyper-complex*. Hyper-complexity in this context refers to the fact that in today's society, social, political and cultural relations are established and maintained through complex networks. The technical, cultural and social developments have contributed to fundamentally changing the way in which people communicate and exert their social practice. Thus, mastering life in such a context, Qvortrup (*ibid.*) maintains, will require more complex knowledge and skills from those living in this society.⁵ This and similar theoretical assumptions are constitutive for the field of *media education*, an umbrella term comprising the field in which I define my research. In the following I will provide a brief account of what I consider to be central ideas in media education, and thus important premises for my study.

1.4. Positioning the research project within Media Education

The project studies processes that are related to media and social practices together with learning, education and literacy. Bearing this in mind, I position my theoretical point of departure within the frames of *media education*, which is often defined as a research and educational field operating in the interface between media culture, school culture and children's and youth culture (Erstad, 2010c; Vettenranta, 2004). Buckingham (2003) has been influential in determining how media can be dealt with in educational settings. His understanding of media education is based on the many languages and forms of communications involved in media texts. Buckingham (*ibid.*) argues that in contemporary society we need a broad-based *media literacy*⁶ to be able interpret, understand and critically evaluate the multivariate media texts we encounter in everyday life. Media literacy refers to both reading and writing media, and both critical understanding and active participation are important. According to Buckingham (*ibid.*), media literacy is the goal of media education where he (*ibid.*, p. 4) states that media education

⁵ More on hyper-complexity in sections 3.3.1 and 3.4.

⁶ Media literacy is examined further in section 3.2.

enables young people to interpret and make judgments as consumers of media; but it also enables them to become producers of media in their own right. Media education is about developing young people's critical *and* creative abilities.

For Buckingham (ibid.), the media is today by far the most important means for communication and cultural expression. The media has become a major socialization factor, and has replaced some of the socialization traditionally situated in the family, the school and the church. In contemporary society the media is unavoidable and ubiquitous, and to be active participants in this society, people need to be able to use modern media in multiple ways. For these reasons, an essential goal of media education is to make the teaching and the learning activities relevant to young people's 'lives outside school, and to the wider society' (ibid., p. 5). Buckingham therefore maintains a broad perspective on media education, describing it as a generic term that includes a number of theoretical and practical perspectives at the interface between media and education. Nonetheless, he underlines that media education primarily is concerned with 'teaching and learning *about* the media' (ibid., p. 4). Christensen and Tufte (2010, p. 112) define media education as

a dynamic concept which constantly reflects upon the connection between children, young people, and media, during free time and in educational institutions, and which is developed in the tension area between media educational practice, empirical knowledge and theory

This definition highlights learning both inside and outside institutions, which is an aspect that has been emphasised by several researchers associated with media education (Erstad, Gilje, Sefton-Green, & Vasbø, 2009; Gee, 2013; Hull & Schultz, 2002; Sefton-Green, 2006). These researchers address the shortcomings education will have if students' media experiences from outside school are not taken into account. Although Christensen and Tufte (2010) emphasise empirical knowledge, practice and theory, their definition of media education seems to accentuate learning and teaching more than research. Similar to Buckingham, they argue that the outcome of media education primarily is related to the development of media literacy among children and young people. Thus, as I view it, research on more general aspects at the interface of media studies and educational science appears to be of secondary importance.

Vettenranta (2010) explicitly points out that media education concerns both research and teaching. She (ibid., p. 44) defines media education as a research *and* educational field where the key goal is to develop insight into the media culture in modern society in a global perspective. Vettenranta highlights both the acquisition of knowledge about the media field and skills in media use and communication. A key point in her perspective is that a global outlook and an ethical responsibility are essential in media education. Moreover, like other Nordic scholars, such as Drotner (2003) and Østerud (2009), Vettenranta has contributed to put the focus on media *bildung*, which is discussed in more detail in section 3.2.2.

Erstad (2010a) views media education as a broad field both in terms of content and the knowledge and skills that are emphasised. He (*ibid.*, p. 27) defines media education as the study of learning processes related to teaching the media, and to growing up in the media society. Erstad (1997, p. 25) argues media education has three main areas:

- *Socialization*, which particularly problematizes the role the media plays in childhood and adolescence
- *Teaching with the media*, which concerns the media as communication channels in teaching
- *Teaching about the media*, which is about the media as an object of study

These areas imply that equal value is assigned to competencies related to active production, critical insight and knowledge acquisition. I consider all the three areas as relevant to my project. The starting point for the students' work in mediagraphy is experiences from their own everyday lives and particularly experiences with the media. In other words, mediagraphy relates to the first aspect, the area of socialization. In the process, the students use media tools in different ways, for instance, they search the web for information, process their data in various computer programs and produce multimedia products. This leads to the second area, teaching (and learning) with the media. Finally, the media are also analysed in the mediagraphy project. By conducting interviews with individuals over three generations, the students collect information related to media development, but also about how the introduction of media technology is and has been experienced. Hence, the third aspect, teaching (and learning) about the media, is also in focus in the mediagraphy project.

All in all, media education is obviously a comprehensive concept.⁷ It refers to individual abilities, social and collective practices, both teaching and research, and both formal and informal learning. In this thesis I position my research close to Erstad's (1997, 2010a) definition of media education. As a learning activity, mediagraphy is based on children's and young people's everyday lives in and outside school, but it is conducted in a school context. As such, it has elements from both formal and informal learning. The object of study is phenomena related to learning, but the research questions are also aimed at finding out more about contemporary youth culture, young people's relations to the media and their reflections and meaning making as sociocultural phenomena. In this way, it is imperative to maintain a perspective on media education as a field that includes both research and teaching, as Erstad (1997, 2010a) and Vettenranta (2004) underscore. In addition, Vettenranta's (*ibid.*) emphasis on ethics and global awareness is reflected in this thesis.

⁷ For a more detailed discussion on how to differentiate between related concepts such as media pedagogy, media education, educational media and media socialization, see Erstad (1997); Qvortrup (2007).

2. Review of relevant research

This chapter reviews what is considered to be relevant research for my project. However, there is a limited amount of research specifically on mediagraphy. Therefore, educational activities that have similarities to mediagraphy are included. As I see it, mediagraphy has certain characteristics as a learning activity: the stories being told are an important basis for the students' work, it is based on the students' lifeworld and the students are appointed as researchers. Additionally, the present project opened for multimodal expression. For these reasons I find it important to review the use of narrative methods in media education, after which I will discuss digital storytelling as a learning activity and the use of the 'students-as-researchers' approach in media studies.

2.1. Global mediagraphy

2.1.1. Rantanen's research on globalization

Rantanen (2005b) introduced global mediagraphy as a methodology for researching the complex relationship between globalization and media and communication. Her work is framed within media studies with a particular focus on globalization. Rantanen analysed the individual life stories of four generations in three families across the world and highlighted the individuals' role in the globalization process. The participants' home countries were Finland, China and Israel. When including the home countries of the various family members, the research involved people from Russia, Finland, China, Japan, Latvia, Palestine, Israel and Great Britain. From a historical perspective, the oldest individual was born in 1881 and the data was collected in 2003. The research thus spanned well over a 100 years back in time.

It is important to clarify that the focus in this thesis is on researching mediagraphy applied as a learning activity, and less on mediagraphy as a research method on globalization. My research questions concern how students reflect and make meaning during their work with mediagraphy, i.e. the analysis is more closely related to Vettenranta's (2010) application of mediagraphy. It is nevertheless important to examine Rantanen's (2005b) research. The participants in her research also contributed by conducting interviews and by interpreting and analysing interview data. In two of the families, the youngest family member interviewed their parents and grandparents, and in one family the third generation interviewed the second and fourth generation. With reference to Ellis and Bochner (2000), Rantanen (2005b, p. 16) referred to the participants as 'complete member researchers', as their narrative interpretations were included in the research and thus could be juxtaposed with other interpretations. This approach is, however, not the primary focus in Rantanen's research. Critical accounts and comments upon the approach using participants as complete member researchers are thus limited. In the present

study, the research questions are more related to the participants' meaning making. As such, one of the goals of this research is to more explicitly analyse the implications of including participants as co-researchers and co-analysts in mediagraphy research.

Rantanen (2005b) aimed to study the increasingly intense globalization process taking place in the Western world, a process that several other social scientists have found to be fundamental in contemporary society (Beck, 2000; Castells, 2010b; Waters, 1995). One of Rantanen's key contributions is that the links between globalization and the developments in media technology and media use are made visible. Before Rantanen, few studies had explored *how* the evolution of globalization and the media world are connected (Rantanen, 2005b, p. 1). Another important aspect is that the globalization process, which is often perceived as an abstract, comprehensive concept on the macro level, was studied 'from below' (ibid., p. 157). As such, while not analysed by means of an educational rationale, Rantanen's research does touch upon important issues relating to education. For example, the reciprocal relationship between individuals' experienced lives and globalization that is explored in Rantanen's work implies a certain degree of reflexivity⁸ and learning. Rantanen's (2005b) focus is on a *mediated* globalization process. She argues that what characterises globalization in the modern world is that it increasingly is taking place in and through media and communication. She defines globalization as

a process in which worldwide economic, political, cultural and social relations have become increasingly mediated across time and space (ibid., p. 8).

Key concepts in the research are hence relations, mediation, time and space. Rantanen accounts for the concept of mediation without reference to educational or learning theories, but in my case it is interesting to view mediation in light of sociocultural learning theory, represented primarily by Vygotsky (1986), Wertsch (1998) and Säljö (2006). Vygotsky (1986) described the physical and intellectual tools we make use of in our social practice as artefacts, which can refer to such things as language, the Internet or a mobile phone. Meaning is mediated through these various artefacts; the parties in a communication process do not have any direct physical link and therefore the mediating artefacts are what make communication between people possible. Hence, according to Säljö (2006), we do not experience the world in any 'real' sense. The mediating artefacts surrounding us can be seen as signs or symbols enabling us to interpret the world, to make decisions and thus act (ibid.). Technological, economic and cultural developments supply us with a growing number of different mediating artefacts that come into play in our social practices. This, in turn, has been found by several researchers to contribute to a transformation in how we

⁸ The concepts of reflexivity and reflection are examined further in the theory chapter.

relate to other people (Couldry & McCarthy, 2004; Köhl & Götzenbrucker, 2014) and how we experience time and space in everyday life (Gotved, 2006; Pink, 2012).

Rantanen's (2005b) theoretical framework is inspired by Appadurai's (1996) *theory of scapes*. He defined various specialised scenes or 'scapes', which refer to fluid, irregular shapes of landscapes that are the building blocks of what Appadurai calls *imaginary worlds*. These worlds consist of people and groups of people's historically situated imaginations spread around the globe through various globalization processes (de Block & Buckingham, 2010). In other words, Appadurai was interested in how humans experience and understand globalization on multiple levels through employing their imagination. Imagination is seen as a mode of thought, or as a way of making sense of one's existence. As I interpret it, the scapes can be a means of capturing an individual's experiences of particular aspects of globalization. Thus, globalization is reified and at the same time, social analysis on the micro level, represented by individual experiences, is connected to the macro level, represented by social, cultural and historical developments. Appadurai (1996, pp. 33-36) described five scapes which referred to various areas of life:

- **Ethnoscape:** the landscape of moving groups and individuals who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers and others
- **Technoscape:** the global configuration of technology, technology now moves at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries
- **Financescape:** the disposition of global capital constitutes a mysterious landscape involving the rapid exchanges and interactions in the markets of currencies, stocks and commodities
- **Mediascape:** the landscape of global distribution and production of information, and the images created by the media
- **Ideoscape:** the landscape of ideological, religious and political beliefs. This includes ideas, images and concepts, such as freedom, welfare, democracy and rights

Rantanen (2005b, pp. 151-154) added two new scapes to her theory:

- **Timescape:** which is based on personal experience of time, the construction of time and calendar time, including such concepts as generation time, personal time and media time
- **Linguagescape:** which concerns the role of language as a factor that both can unite and separate people

According to Rantanen, media and communication, both in terms of technological developments and changes in how people use the media, play an important role across the scapes, and also help to tie the scapes together. She describes the scapes as forming a multifaceted basis facilitating for insights into the globalization process both from a macro and micro perspective (Rantanen, 2005). Rantanen conceptualized the scapes into specific globalization factors, as shown in the mediagraphy table (see Table 1). The table was used for Rantanen's data collection.

The primary aim of Rantanen's research was to illuminate the role of media and communication in the globalization process and to provide a rich impression of what globalization has meant, and does mean, to individuals around the world. From the findings it

can be summarised that people do not primarily experience globalization in terms of homogenization or heterogenization. In this context, homogenization refers to people becoming more alike across cultures. Heterogenization refers to the opposite, that people become more different as culture is globalizing and becoming multicultural. Rantanen rather finds features of both homogenization and heterogenization in the families studied. The more subtle and multifaceted sides of ‘individual globalization’ are analysed through the concept of *mediated cosmopolitanism*, which illustrates the complex and often vague nature of globalization.

The media, particularly the new media, involves practices that take place on a global level. In media research, it has therefore been assumed that the global media texts, products and practices on some level will influence people’s identities and sense of belonging. A wide range of concepts and theories has been applied to try to conceptualize such influences. Here, I will primarily refer to the concepts Rantanen (2005b) emphasises as the key points. She argues that cosmopolitanism today is one of many identities the modern man juggles, mediated generally through the media, and increasingly through digital media in particular. Cosmopolitanism is, however, also debated and criticised for comprising an overly optimistic and elitist view of the outcome of globalization (Hannerz, 1996; Robertson, 2010). Here, however, I will primarily refer to an interpretation of the concept of cosmopolitanism that is related to how people experience and participate in meaning making practices on a global level through the media and related practices. In this respect, cosmopolitanism is considered an informative concept.

According to Beck and Sznaider (2006), a global, complex mix of cultures is now inevitably present in people’s social practices and worldviews. Beck (2006) contends that cosmopolitanism is a matter of *perspective-taking*, which is the willingness and ability to assume the perspective of ‘the other’. Cosmopolitanism is analogous with ‘world citizenship’ or having a sensation of belonging to the wider world, according to Tomlinson (1999). It is, as such, related to reflexivity, as cosmopolitanism presumes a ‘reflexive awareness of the world as one of many cultural others’ (ibid., p. 194). Rantanen does not focus particularly on the pedagogical aspects of cosmopolitanism. However, I find several interesting pedagogical points relating cosmopolitanism and reflexivity in this respect. For instance, Hannerz’ (1996) view of cosmopolitanism as a competence is interesting. He argues that cosmopolitanism is a ‘mode of managing meaning’ (ibid., p. 102) and hence something that is possible to learn and develop. These points are discussed in the present study, in particular in Article 3 and in the discussion chapter in this abstract.

Rantanen (2005b, p. 159) argues that doing exercises such as mediagraphies can lead to reflections on one’s own life and also on other people’s lives. An important issue raised here is

self-reflexivity, implying that the different family members were reflecting on their own experiences and on their relationships to other family members. Rantanen finds reflexivity to be one of the prominent outcomes of her research; the research participants developed an awareness of similarities and differences across families and across time and space. However, the educational aspects of reflection and self-reflexivity are not the primary focus of Rantanen's analysis. Therefore, reflection and self-reflexivity, emerging from the students' conducted interviews, comparative introspection, reflexive ethnography and self- and comparative reflection are issues that need to be further investigated in educational contexts.

2.1.2. *Global mediagraphy as a learning activity*

Influenced by Rantanen, Vettenranta (2010) developed a new approach to global mediagraphy. She applied global mediagraphy as a learning activity with Master's degree students in the course *Media Bildung and Media Education* in Norway. This research is positioned in media education, and the analysis employs theories from both media studies and education. Vettenranta argues that one of the key findings is that when carrying out research on their own families and writing an autobiographical essay, the students gained an insight into their identity formation process and their standpoint in the globalization process.

A key issue from Vettenranta's research is how global mediagraphy can contribute to incorporating the students' everyday knowledge into learning activities in school and formal education. Drawing on Vygotsky's (1986) distinction between everyday concepts and scientific concepts, Vettenranta argues that the students' thought processes benefitted from connecting concrete experiences and knowledge from their everyday lives to systematic, abstract and theoretical knowledge. She argues that mediagraphy contributes to insights that are related to *global media literacy*, a competency that involves an understanding of our global, multicultural society. Furthermore, Vettenranta finds that this competency has become a prerequisite for today's youth if they are to cope with the complexity of the current and future times. Conclusions from the student-evaluation indicate that most students found the method educational and rewarding, with several students even claiming that they gained knowledge about their family from an original, global perspective (Vettenranta, 2010, 2011).

Although Vettenranta positions herself in a sociocultural tradition, it remains somewhat unclear how media literacy is developed and analytically applied. Also, the term global media literacy could have been more explicitly defined with regard to what distinguishes such a global media literacy from a more general media literacy. Hence, I consider that further studies on mediagraphy will benefit from a closer connection to theories on meaning making and reflection, which I regard as central concepts in educational research.

2.1.3. *Pilot study*

In my Master's degree project (Schofield, 2010), which has evolved into a pilot study for the PhD project, a class of 30 students in the optional programme subject *Media and Information Knowledge I* at an upper secondary school in Norway wrote individual mediagraphies. The project was organised over four weeks with five school hours each week. This included an initial phase with various learning activities in which key concepts such as globalization, identity and mediation were in focus. The students' practical assignment was similar to that of Vettenranta's students. The analysis mainly focused on their mediagraphy essays. Additionally, two key participants were interviewed.

The aim of the analysis was to explore the students' conceptual understanding as expressed in their texts. The interviews gave insight into the students' reflections and their thoughts and reflections on their learning process. Several students, for example, expressed that they felt they had gained a 'new kind of knowledge' on a more personal level compared to what they associated with traditional teaching. The findings from the pilot project suggest that the key participants developed an insight into some of the important concepts of the projects' disciplinary content. The pilot project justifies further exploration into the students' reflections, and shows that a more in-depth analysis of their meaning making is needed, both in terms of what kinds of reflection that take place in the process and the contemporary phenomena that potentially are reflected on.

2.1.4. *Applications and reviews of mediagraphy*

Ponte and Aroldi (2013) analysed the data from a project inspired by mediagraphy, 'Digital Inclusion and Participation', conducted in Portugal with Masters' degree students. In this project, the students discussed media events and experiences across generations in 'focus-group simulations', and wrote individual papers on the same topic. Ponte and Aroldi (ibid.) informatively applied the concept of *sociological imagination* to describe some of the outcomes of the project. With reference to Huisman (2010, p. 114), sociological imagination is understood in the following way:

Hearing real stories [...] brings the readings to life. Students apply the sociological imagination by focusing on an individual's life story or biography and situating that story within a larger structural context. When students hear over and over again how individual lives are shaped by larger structural forces, it drives home the inextricable connection between history and biography. This experience deepens students' comprehension of social structure and agency and results in a majority of students reflecting about their own social locations and family histories.

Sociological imagination was originally introduced by Mills (1959) and has since been abundantly applied and analysed in research, particularly in sociology and social studies. This is a concept that is fruitful for the mediagraphy project as it constructs a theoretical link between the

micro and macro level in social studies. Moreover, in an educational perspective, the concept of sociological imagination might contribute to creating links between theoretical understandings and concrete experiences.

Mills (1959, p. 3) defined sociological imagination as ‘the vivid awareness of the relationship between personal experience and the wider society’. He underlined the importance of such a perspective and stated that ‘neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both’. As such, a sociological imagination can be used to shift between perspectives, from envisioning impersonal, remote features of society to intimate aspects of the individual self, ultimately seeing the relations between these perspectives. Ponte and Aroldi (2013) found that the students in their project developed both an awareness of the societal developments over the course of several generations, and self-reflexivity. This concurs with the ‘double-sidedness’ of sociological imagination. Additionally, Ponte and Aroldi claim that the students gained a stronger theoretical understanding of media science and research methodology. Imagination is also a key concept for Appadurai (1996) and is an essential principle in the theory of scapes. This is illuminated in Article 4 as well as in the discussion chapter in this abstract.

Mediagraphy has been reviewed and discussed by several scholars. One of the strengths most often referred to is that as a learning activity, mediagraphy has obvious transformative potential (Havrevold, 2011; Orgeret, 2012; Østerud, 2011, 2012). This applies for instance to the relationship between teacher and students and to the view on knowledge, as in mediagraphy the students are co-constructors of knowledge and providers of information. Other scholars (Gilje, 2011; Nyre, 2010) have pointed out that the methodological process and the research design need to be described more explicitly. Bearing this in mind, one of the objectives in the present study is to explore the relationship between theoretical concepts, analytical methods and analytical examples more rigorously.

2.2. Narratives and storytelling in learning activities

The students’ process in the PhD project consists of several sub-processes: they develop a basic understanding of concepts, collect data, and process and analyse the material. Ultimately, they prepare a written discussion in the form of an essay based on experiences from their everyday lives. Such personal stories are often referred to as self-reflective *narratives* (Almås & Gullestad, 1990). Being able to present oneself in the form of an autobiographic story is seen by such scholars as Giddens (1991) and Johansson (2005) as an essential and integrated part of understanding the culture and the self. After the ‘*linguistic turn*’ in humanistic and social science, social reality is regarded not as objective but more as linguistically or discursively constructed

(Johansson, 2005). We create our identities and relationships through language, as a social activity through stories, descriptions and explanations. This means that social life is structured as narratives and that it is through our narratives that we orient ourselves in the world (ibid.). The concept of narrative can refer to the specific act of constructing a story about yourself, but also to a central aspect of identity, related to self-presentation and representation, as pointed out by e.g. Giddens (1991) and Goodson (2000).

In an educational perspective, scholars have emphasised that learning is closely linked to identity, and that learning therefore should be based on the students' existing knowledge and self-presentation. Researchers also point out the importance of allowing students to tell stories as a part of learning activities (Drotner, 2008; Erstad et al., 2009; Kress, Jewitt, & Tsatsarelis, 2000). In the mediagraphy project, the narratives are a means for the students to analyse their data, but also for making meaning through composing narratives. In contexts related to media education and media literacy, I review a selection of narrative genres that have been applied in educational settings, *media autobiographies* and *digital storytelling*. The selection is based on similarities to the mediagraphy project. The students' narratives have their starting point in the students' lifeworlds, i.e. they have autobiographical traits, and the narratives are also based on the students' practices in everyday life, where they were free to include multimodal expressions, i.e. they have similarities to digital storytelling. Narratives and narrative analysis are further elaborated on in sections 4.2.3 and 4.3.

2.2.1. *Media autobiographies*

Media autobiography has occasionally been employed as a learning activity in media courses (Buckingham, 2003). The strategy entails students collecting and compiling data on their own media interests and tastes (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1994). Buckingham (2003) suggests the media autobiography can be a productive approach provoking a certain personal engagement amongst the students. Students' *social self-understanding* is given particular attention by Richards (1998), who says that this specific competence can be nurtured when students write or tell stories from their own, personal perspective. Social self-understanding concerns the students' ability to understand their standpoint in the broader social and cultural context. Buckingham (2003, p. 149) contends that autobiographical methods potentially can give the students 'a voice', as they express their reflections based on their personal experiences. However, an important ethical issue concerning introspection and autobiographies is raised by Buckingham (ibid.). The method can become intrusive and for some students verbalizing sociological categories might be challenging when the object of study is oneself. Buckingham suggests that the personal media stories should be linked with broader social factors, which is a key point in the mediagraphy project.

McMillan and Morrison (2006) analysed the autobiographical essays of 72 young adult college students. The essays concerned how Internet technology had influenced their lives. The participants, who were between the ages of 19 and 25, were asked to write personal narratives on their interactive media use. They were asked to recall how they had experienced growing up with the Internet and related technology. McMillan and Morrison (ibid.) underline the importance of providing young people with the opportunity of telling – in their own voices – about the influence of the Internet in their lives. The research as such moves beyond assumptions that may be made based on larger, quantitative studies, and ‘comes closer’ to the participants’ personal experiences of the Internet. A finding that is closely related to the mediagraphy project is that a ‘double window’ is opened when young people are encouraged to narrate about their experiences. On the one hand, the participants learn about their own past and present use of media. On the other hand, readers of the research can gain understanding about how new technology plays into young people’s everyday lives. Additionally, going back in time to tell about the influence of the Internet creates a historical perspective. In this way connections are made between the past, present and future, which can create coherence, both for the participants and for the researchers.

Sauter (2014) studied how people write about themselves on social media. By researching young people’s self-expressions on Facebook, she found that ‘self-writing’ (ibid., p. 836) can be a means for understanding oneself and how one relates to other people. Sauter argues this can be a way of making meaning of one’s existence and navigating in a complex modern world. Interestingly, she highlights the historical roots of the narratives written on social media. She argues these narratives have many similarities to historical ways of telling one’s story. Such writing can be a tool for ‘self-formation’, Sauter contends. Self-formation is described as a process where one understands oneself and develops guidelines for how to live one’s life.

The importance of including young people’s voices in research is emphasised by Sjöberg (2010), and writing and talking about a diary can be one such way, she argues. Children between 12 and 13 years of age wrote diaries about their media use, the type of media they used, what the content was, if they used the media together with someone else and other daily activities. They were later interviewed in groups about their diaries. Sjöberg found that diaries could be a way of becoming acquainted with children’s perspectives and learn about their experiences. Sjöberg makes an important consideration about her own research, which is important for my study. In retrospect, she considers that she could have benefitted from allowing the participants to freely choose a form of expression. If, for example, they had used multimodal and creative computer tools, they could have employed their existing skills, and thus reflected in other ways that are more suited to their own age and position. In the mediagraphy project the students had the

opportunity of adding such things as images and graphics. For this reason I have included *digital storytelling* in the review, an approach that emphasises multimodal expression and that allows young people to express themselves through means and genres they are familiar with from their everyday lives.

2.2.2. *Digital storytelling – multimodal narratives*

Over the last twenty years the interest in digital storytelling has been growing, both within media and education studies. A typical digital story is narrated as a short (often with a duration of less than five minutes) movie with still images. The story can be described as multimodal, consisting of images, speech, music and written text, and the stories are often personal and autobiographical (Lambert, 2009; Lundby, 2008). Digital stories have been used in learning activities, often with objectives encompassing a broad interpretation of literacy, such as bringing informal learning aspects into school, capturing students' out-of-school competencies, giving voice to young people or promoting participation and citizenship (Erstad & Silseth, 2008; Hull & Katz, 2006; Kaare, 2008; Silseth, 2013).

Kaare (2008) describes an experiment initiated by the Church of Norway where a group of young people between 16 and 18 years of age produced 'Digital Faith Stories'; self-representational digital stories. She remarks on the method's anti-hierarchical structure because of its principle that all voices are worth listening to, including the voices of children and young people. More than focusing on learning specific knowledge, the emphasis was on *bildung*,⁹ on identity and reflection, and Kaare concludes that the process of *bildung* was undoubtedly apparent during the project. Kaare describes *bildung* as a wider concept than literacy, entailing identity, competence, reflection, criticism and sense of community. The communication that took place was characterised by reciprocity between the supervisors and the students, and this aspect has, according to Kaare, important implications for a possible inclusion of the lifeworld of the young in education. The project was conducted in an outside-school environment, but deals with phenomena that can be beneficial for in-school activities. The aspects concerning *bildung* and the students' lifeworlds are vital in the mediagraphy project, and will be elaborated on in the discussion chapter.

Erstad and Silseth (2008) articulate the democratic potential of digital storytelling in educational contexts. Digital storytelling can be seen not only as a potential bridge between the activities in and outside school, but also as a process stimulating citizenship in terms of taking into account citizenship as it is developed in people's everyday practices. As such, digital

⁹ The concept of *media bildung* is discussed in section 3.2.2.

storytelling is based on a broad understanding of what ‘counts’ as skills and knowledge. Erstad and Silseth (ibid.) refer to a digital storytelling project called ‘Young today’, that was carried out with year eight students (aged 12-13 years) at a lower secondary school in Norway. The students made digital stories about being young nowadays and in earlier times, and gave important insights on democracy and agency in school. Erstad and Silseth found that the students’ personal and authentic voices were recognised as important in the school setting. An important finding concerns agency and epistemology, articulated in the concept of *epistemic agency*. Through constructing and telling a digital story, the students are able to create new knowledge. When the students in the project produced digital stories consisting of different and divergent expressions and sources, they are given an opportunity to create a dialogue about issues important to their identity. This represents a democratization of knowledge, and the students’ agency in constructing knowledge is emphasised.

Hull and Katz (2006) explored digital storytelling in an after-school program in West Oakland, USA, an area that Hull and Katz describe as characterised by poverty and educational and social inequalities. Adults and young people used digital storytelling to tell their stories with particular focus on important events and turning points in their lives. Hull and Katz (ibid., p. 47) argue that digital storytelling became a powerful tool for the participants, and crafted ‘agentive selves’. The agentive self can be interpreted according to Biesta and Tedder (2007, p. 6) who argue that people are able to ‘shape their orientations’ in the different sociocultural contexts they participate in, and in doing this they can actually ‘exert’ their agency. In this way, agency can be learned and developed. As I see it, this is an important point in an educational perspective. In the process of creating digital storytelling, or a narrative, people employ a number of cultural tools and relationships that together contribute to developing agentive identities (Hull & Katz, 2006; see also Ochs & Capps, 1996). On this point, Hull and Katz agree with abundant narrative research suggesting that narratives of self can play an important role in creating coherence from fragmented experiences, place the narrator in time and space and, not least, contribute to self-understanding (see section 4.3). All in all, the narrative aspect of the mediagraphy method has similarities with digital storytelling, and the analytical concepts reviewed above that relate to *bildung*, citizenship and agency are vital for the analysis of the mediagraphy essays.

2.3. Research on ‘students-as-researchers’

Research on learning activities where students are assigned as researchers has been conducted within a number of disciplines (Healey & Jenkins, 2009; Kincheloe, 2007), but has been particularly prevalent in science education (Elmesky & Tobin, 2004; Knain & Kolstø, 2011) and as inquiry learning through computer-mediated resources (Furberg, 2010; Kong & So, 2008).

Several projects have also been conducted with the aim of raising pupils' and students' democratic participation by involving them as researchers and co-researchers (Bland & Atweh, 2007; Leitch et al., 2007; Thomson & Gunter, 2006). What characterises this approach is that children and young people are regarded as competent citizens who are capable of producing knowledge, searching for information and analysing phenomena in the 'real world' (Thomson, 2008a). Objectives of such learning activities have typically been to develop the students' conceptual understanding, to empower young people or particular groups of students, to develop new methods by including students as co-researchers and to support democratization by giving the students a voice, for instance in the development of schools and learning environments. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1991) has also legitimated various initiatives aiming to involve students in their own education through participation and through researching their own learning (e.g. Roberts & Nash, 2009; Thomson & Gunter, 2006).

In media education research, inquiry methods and learning activities emphasising student activity and participation have been important (Buckingham, 2003; Erstad, 2010a; Erstad, Lange, & Gilje, 2007). However, recent research on teaching and learning activities in media education has focused more often on production and creativity rather than on critical insight, conceptual understanding or scientific explorations of media (Burn & Durran, 2007; Morrison, 2008; Thomson, 2008b). On the other hand, in more theoretical, scholarly texts related to media education, critical thinking and research skills are commonly emphasised as core components in media literacy. Jenkins (2007b, pp. 97-98), for example, highlighted *research skills* as a crucial part of '21st century skills'. He argued that

Beyond core literacy, students need research skills. Among other things, they need to know how to access books and articles through a library; to take notes on and integrate secondary sources; to assess the reliability of data; to read maps and charts; to make sense of scientific visualizations; to grasp what kinds of information are being conveyed by various systems of representation; to distinguish between fact and fiction, fact and opinion; and to construct arguments and marshal evidence.

Several scholars include similar critical competencies in their understanding of media literacy (Burn & Durran, 2007; Lankshear & Knobel, 2007). It is reasonable to suggest that such an understanding of research skills advantageously could be developed in students if they conducted research themselves. This is also advocated by Buckingham (2003), who refers explicitly to the approach of engaging students as researchers in media education. He emphasises the importance of media educators to respond to contemporary controversies and topics, and moreover, to the students' enthusiasm. For this reason, he recommends a classroom approach that engages the students in 'in-depth research' (ibid., p. 75). Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1996) attempted to 'bridge the gap' between the researchers' and the participants' interpretations of creative work by

providing possibilities for the students to adopt the role of researcher. Year 10 students (age 14-15) carried out research of media audiences as a means of conceptualizing abstract issues related to the media. After being introduced to different research methods, the students were given the assignment to construct and conduct either a qualitative or a quantitative piece of research, including evaluating findings. They were also encouraged to compare their findings with authoritative audience research. The students carried out various methodological strategies, some developed and conducted small-scale questionnaires; some made 'media diaries' aiming to find patterns in people's media usage, while others made observations or interviews with groups of audiences. Buckingham (2003) draws on Vygotsky's (1986) theory of conceptual learning and emphasises that by using such learning activities students can contribute to their acquisition of a scientific meta-language. For example, by acquiring the language specific for media studies, the students could describe and analyse the functions of media language. Furthermore, reflection and self-evaluation were seen as key elements.

The review suggests that involving students as researchers can be a significant learning activity in terms of conceptual development, critical reflection and 'research skills'. However, research on such learning activities in the fields of media education and media literacy are limited. As such, more insight is needed into the possibilities and challenges this approach entails in media education. Thus, an important subsidiary objective in this thesis is to explore mediagraphy as a learning activity with a 'students-as-researchers' perspective.

Extended abstract – Daniel Schofield, NTNU – 2015

3. Theoretical framework

This chapter presents the key theoretical perspectives and a discussion of the theoretical framework and the central concepts for the thesis. The theoretical perspective is framed within media education, as outlined in the introduction. More specifically, the analysis primarily focuses on the students' reflections and meaning making on issues related to their media experiences and the media's role in society and culture – issues that are important in media literacy theories. Media literacy is here placed in the sociocultural paradigm. This means, for instance, that the cognitive understandings of reflection and meaning making are not discussed in detail here; the focus is rather on the social aspects and functions. Firstly, the key sociocultural ideas on meaning making and mediated actions are outlined. Secondly, some important theories of media literacy are discussed, and ultimately the background for the applied analytical concepts is explained. These concepts are primarily related to reflection and meaning making.

3.1. A sociocultural view on meaning making

In sociocultural terms, concepts or words do not contain intrinsic meaning, they rather have 'meaning potential' and are open for interpretation and local application by agents in social interaction (Linell, 2009; Säljö, 2006). In our daily lives such material artefacts as computers and mobile phones, but also semiotic artefacts, such as language, enable us to interpret the world, to make decisions and thus act (Säljö, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978). In a sociocultural perspective artefacts are a prerequisite for communicating, thinking, learning and relating to other people, they mediate meaning (Frantzen & Schofield, 2013; Säljö, 2006). In this perspective, *meaning making* is thus an active process in social practice. With the mediation process in focus, Wertsch (1998) applied the term *mediational means* as analogous to artefacts. In the following, I will also apply mediational means, as I follow Wertsch's theory on mediation in the analysis.

The sociocultural understanding of learning is closely related to appropriation and mastery of artefacts (Säljö, 2012). Wertsch (1998) distinguished between appropriation and *mastery*. Mastery can be described as a conscious understanding of how to use a mediational means in scientific ways, in a particular sociocultural context, while appropriation means making the cultural tool 'one's own', a process that may be conscious or not (Haugerud, 2011; Wertsch, 1998, p. 53). As appropriation can be seen as a process of integrating a new mediational means into one's actions, it is a fruitful concept for grasping the sense-making processes taking place when students are working with mediagraphy. If mediagraphy is seen as a mediational means, appropriating mediagraphy would then mean to 'make it your own', or to 'pick up' (Lund & Rasmussen, 2008, p. 390) the various tools provided by the mediagraphy model and use them in solving the task at hand. Wertsch also pointed out that the process of appropriation always

involves some resistance, and that appropriation should be seen as a process never fully final but rather on a continuum in relation to mastery and resistance.

The notions of appropriation and mastery are applied in this thesis as analytical concepts that are sensitive to how the participants made sense of and managed to work with the mediational means of mediagraphy.

3.1.1. Mediated action and mediational means

When the aim is to understand how the students reflected and made meaning of concepts, theories and interview data, mediagraphy is hence analysed as a mediational means. According to Wertsch (1998), mediational means both constrain and stimulate meaning making. He (ibid.) argued that in sociocultural research we need to research the complex relationship between agent and mediational means. Applying *mediated action* as a unit of analysis would be the most potentially informative way to do sociocultural research. Mediated action refers to different kinds of real-time actions where mediational means, social actors and context intersect. Wertsch (ibid.) argued that all human action is mediated through mediational means, such as everyday objects, technologies and social institutions. The researcher can use mediated action to gain insight into the actions that take place between the agent (e.g. a student) and an artefact (e.g. a learning activity). In the present study, this means that the actions taking place between agents (i.e. the students) and the mediational means (mediagraphy) constitute the unit of analysis. Analysing mediagraphy in this way can help to see how mediagraphy constrains and stimulates meaning making and reflection in different social practices.

In correspondence with sociocultural theory, the aim of this research is not to capture people's inner thoughts or actual meaning making, but rather people's actions and statements as they interact with or use the mediational means of mediagraphy. This means, in other words, expressed reflections – what 'materializes' in the classroom, in the interviews or in the students' texts. Hence, as I see it, the theory of mediated action makes actions taking place in different practices observable and can thus be made the object of research. This view is something that is pursued in the text below, while the application of mediated action as a unit of analysis will be elaborated on in the analysis chapter.

When it comes to the mediagraphy project, I argue that mediagraphy is a learning activity with large meaning potential. In order to actualise some of this meaning potential, the students need to employ a range of different skills and knowledge. Mediagraphy can in this light be viewed as a collection of different mediational means that are 'inscribed with meaning potential' (Linell, 2009, p. 346), and which are selected and realised by their users and then implemented and understood in particular manners. An important part of the analysis is to observe and analyse the

actions and interactions that take place during the mediagraphy project, to understand the types of reflections and meaning making enabled by mediagraphy and also to determine which constraints mediagraphy possibly can have on the students' reflections and meaning making. This is closely related to learning. Säljö (2006, p. 63, my trans.) defines learning as 'a question of how individuals make use of the knowledge and skills they are exposed to'.

In the mediagraphy project, the concept of mediated action has a double meaning and function. On the one hand, the students explore media history and development over generations, in addition to their own media experiences. Thus, mediated action is a key concept for the students if they are to understand the significance of media in people's lives. On the other hand, mediated action is applied as an essential analytical concept for capturing how the mediational means of mediagraphy plays into the students' reflections.

Media development, and perhaps particularly digital development, over the last twenty years has made many scholars arguing that we need to look at learning and literacy in new ways. In the following sections I will consider some key theories and concepts within the generic term *media literacy*.

3.2. Media development and media literacy

The development within the media is closely related to such aspects as learning, identity, knowledge, competence and skills. In the field of education, scholars therefore have asked what the transformations in media mean for how learning occurs, what is important to learn, how media development changes texts and our relationship to – and sources of – knowledge (Kress, 2003; Kress et al., 2000). I particularly highlight three features that characterise many of the 'new' theories on literacy – or *media literacy*, which is the term applied in the following. *Firstly*, people increasingly relate to texts, messages and communication that combine visual, written, auditory and interactive expressions. In other words, multimodal communication is increasingly important as a basic form of communication.

The *second* feature is that literacy practices, i.e. what we do with different types of text (Barton & Hamilton, 1998), are largely *social* activities. The view that literacy is not primarily an individual, cognitive accomplishment but something constructed in social contexts has become more and more important in educational research. Related to this, in this thesis I endorse a sociocultural view of learning, based on theorists such as Vygotsky (1986), Säljö (2006) and Wertsch (1998), as I have discussed above.

The *third* feature emphasised here is the increasing *complexity* in society. The contexts in which texts are produced are significant for meaning and interpretation. Researchers such as Beck, Giddens, and Lash (1994), Qvortrup (2004) and Castells (2010b) have emphasised that

complexity is a fundamental trait of contemporary society. Both individuals and social institutions are characterised by a continuous reflexivity. Bearing this in mind, media convergence (cf. Erstad, 2010a) and the hypercomplexity of society (cf. Qvortrup, 2004), as discussed in the introduction, are important. Moreover, it is important to see that media is increasingly *global* in terms of content, scope and ownership (Hjarvard, 2008), and the media is a crucial driving force in the globalization process (Rantanen, 2005b). Here it is also important to consider that the production of content is ‘democratized’, which means that anyone can produce and publish content for the very many interactive, global Internet sites. This has obvious implications for how we understand and interpret knowledge. Hence, this third trait appears as an overarching, but nonetheless, key aspect for understanding the premises for literacy and learning in today’s society.

3.2.1. *Media literacy*

The term *media literacy* has often been associated with traditional media, such as print media, mass media and audio-visual media, while *digital literacy* has been used for the new media, primarily represented by digital media, particularly the Internet and Internet technologies (Kupiainen, 2013). Additionally, the concept of *new literacy* has become a frequently used concept (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Blikstad-Balas, 2013). In this thesis, it is important to include all types of media. Research confirms that the Internet definitely has changed our media use, and that mobile media has grown significantly in recent years (Livingstone et al., 2014). But it is also apparent that the use of traditional media like television, radio and newspapers is still important in everyday life – also among young people (Findahl, 2012; TNS Opinion & Social, 2013; Vaage, 2014). In my research, the students’ work with mediagraphy involves envisioning the development of media and information use in a historical perspective, looking some 100 years back in time. Such a perspective needs to include both traditional and new media. Hence, the broad term media literacy is here seen as the logical concept to apply. Nonetheless, theories and concepts from both the tradition of digital literacy and new literacy, as well as media literacy are used.

From a sociocultural perspective, literacy is about coping with the cultural techniques of one’s present time (Erstad, 2010b; Lankshear & Knobel, 2007; Østerud, 2007). Traditionally, literacy has been related to mastering the written word, i.e. being able to read and write, which have been the dominant cultural techniques in our culture (Østerud, 2007). But in line with developments in media, being able to read and write the written word is no longer considered to be sufficient in order to master daily life. The emphasis on the prefix ‘media’ in media literacy can be seen as an attempt to incorporate the mastery of media texts in such a basic competence. Scholars have seen that media texts are increasingly influential, and that citizens in today’s society must be able to understand and utilise media texts in order to fully participate in democratic

processes and everyday life (Buckingham, 2003; Kress, 2003; Østerud, 2007). Considering the current plethora of media types and ways of using them, literacy is today inevitably a complex and comprehensive term.

Media literacy has been defined both as an individual, primarily cognitive set of skills and knowledge and as a broader concept where literacy is seen as a contextually bounded social practice (Erstad & Amdam, 2013). W. J. Potter (2004) is an influential representative for the first-mentioned tradition. His understanding of media literacy is inspired by cognitive learning theories, emphasising the training of skills and specific knowledge. Potter views media literacy as ‘a set of perspectives from which we expose ourselves to the media and interpret the meaning of the messages we encounter’ (ibid., p. 58). The strength of Potter’s understanding of media literacy is that it is tangible and has a close relationship to practical application (Elf, 2009). One shortcoming is the narrow understanding of skills and knowledge, another is the neglect of the significance of social practice and context. Moreover, there is an overemphasis on the protective effects of media literacy and a corresponding devaluation of the creative and complex sides of media (Buckingham, 2003; Elf, 2009).

Leading official definitions, such as Ofcom’s (2008) definition of media literacy, can also be said to emphasise individual cognitive skills. According to Ofcom (ibid.), media literacy is ‘the ability to access, understand and create communications in a variety of contexts’. Although Ofcom’s definition includes context, it is from an individualised perspective (Kupiainen, 2013). The same applies to the understanding of digital literacy in Norway, where the present study is conducted. In an Official Norwegian Report (NOU, 2013), digital *skills* have replaced digital competence as the key term. Digital skills are here defined as

being able to use digital tools, media and resources appropriately and responsibly in order to solve practical tasks, collect and process information, create digital products and to communicate. Digital skills also include developing digital judgment through acquiring knowledge and good strategies for Internet use.

Here as well the individual skills are in focus and social aspects are less visible.

In this thesis, media literacy is regarded as closely related to social practice. As such, media literacy includes a wide range of knowledge, skills and competencies (Arnolds-Granlund, 2010; Buckingham, 2003). In a sociocultural perspective, media literacy also takes into account knowledge and skills in both formal and ‘informal’ or ‘out-of-school’ contexts (Christensen & Tufte, 2010). This includes the ability to understand and interpret media texts, but also the ability to interact and participate, with emphasis on such factors as media use, production and critical reflection. Buckingham (2003, p. 35) embraces both individual competencies and social practice in his understanding of media literacy that builds on ‘the knowledge, skills and competence

required to use and interpret media'. He emphasises the importance of participation as well as social practice and social responsibility. Two of the most important outcomes of being media literate are, according to Buckingham (ibid.), empowerment and citizenship.

An understanding of media literacy where the social context is imperative will necessarily be dynamic and transformative. Østerud (2007) views literacy as a set of social practices that includes the written language and other symbolic forms of mediation. Literacy is therefore functional; it is acquired and functions in particular sociocultural contexts. These contexts change continuously. Lankshear and Knobel (2006) argue that in reality we need a set of *literacies*. They argue that 'Literacies are bound up with social institutional and cultural relationships, and can only be understood when they are situated within their social, cultural and historical contexts' (ibid., p. 12).

3.2.2. *Media bildung*

Media literacy is, according to Vettenranta (2010), a crucial concept in mediagraphy research. She (ibid., p. 43) defines media literacy as 'the knowledge, skills and the proficiency necessary to interpret media and media texts through analysis, evaluation and critical reflection'. This definition of media literacy is interpreted in line with an understanding that society and culture are developing into being increasingly more media-saturated, globalized and multicultural. On this point a key point for Vettenranta is that such a type of media literacy is not developed solely on an individual basis, but also in a social and broad context. As such, she views media literacy as a competency that connects the individual with the social, and also the global with the local. She argues that young people need to become media literate in order to understand the multicultural society on the global level. This is a prerequisite for being participatory actors in democratic processes in local contexts. Hence, global mediagraphy is framed as a learning activity within a broad definition of media literacy.

This broad perspective, in addition to Vettenranta's emphasis on participation, social responsibility, globalization and ethics, connects her understanding of media literacy to the concept of media *bildung*. The concept has its roots in German-speaking countries (*medienbildung*) (Erstad & Amdam, 2013), but has also been important in the Nordic countries. This is related to an awakened interest in the media serving as arenas for identity formation, learning and socialization (Drotner, 2003; Løvlie, 2003). *Bildung* is an even wider concept than literacy, encompassing such aspects as identity, sense of community, competence, reflection and critical ability (Kaare, 2008), as well as complexity and solidarity (Klafki, 2011) and individual freedom, flexibility and autonomy (Løvlie, 2003). *Bildung* is, in other words, an open and a flexible concept. As a concrete example, Klafki's (2011) notion of *categorical bildung* has been

advocated by Østerud (2009) and others as particularly relevant for education in today's media society. This idea is based on the exemplary principle, where elementary phenomena from the students' lifeworlds are seen as the starting point of teaching, enabling the students to use their own experiences to develop concepts and categories through which they can understand the society and culture they are part of (Klafki, 2011). Complex phenomena in society, culture or history can in this way be comprehended through acquiring categories. In turn, this understanding enables the *double opening*; the individual opens up to the world, and the world opens up to the individual.

3.3. Reflection as part of media literacy

The term *reflection* has been used extensively within many different fields of social science, in particular in education and teacher education (Bengtsson, 1998). However, the concept of reflection is often vaguely defined and applied to a number of processes, actions and characteristics in people. According to Bengtsson (ibid.), the diverse uses of the term make it unclear what reflection really is. Thus, I agree with Bengtsson in finding it important to be specific as to what aspects of reflection are explored, and how it is grasped and made the object of research. In the present study the focus is primarily on reflection understood as a component of media literacy, where *critical reflection* often is highlighted.

Reflection is often seen as an essential part of media literacy (Bélisle, 2007; Buckingham, 2006). Erstad (1997, 2007) describes media literacy as consisting of two main competencies: *communicative competence* and *analytical reflection*. *Communicative competence* is about being competent in expressing oneself through one's own media participation and production. *Analytical reflection* is the ability to reflect over both media content and expression and one's own media use. Although a critical stance to the media, media messages and influence has been emphasised in media literacy theories, the focus in recent years has shifted more towards production and creativity (Burn & Durran, 2007; Erstad, 2010c). According to Burn and Durran (2007), this shift is due to a number of factors, one of them being that digital authoring tools have become largely accessible and affordable, which has 'democratized' media production. Another point is that the mindsets of teachers, scholars and people in general have changed; creativity and production are no longer seen as subordinate analytical work. However, as Burn and Durran (ibid.) point out, critical understanding might very well emerge from creative production, and critical reflection should not be neglected even though a larger proportion of students' work is organised as participatory and productive learning activities. This is a point that is relevant for the present thesis, and which is pursued in the text below. In the mediagraphy project the students' work is also highly productive and creative, but the activities are organised in such a way that they must

be analytical and critical in solving the task at hand. The analysis aims to explore which kinds of reflections emerge from the students' work, and what these reflections are about. This means that reflection and critical aspects implicit in the students' creative work are illuminated, as well as the more explicit critical expressions found in texts, discussions and interviews.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the critical perspective has been important in media literacy and media education theories. Part of the reason for this is the historical background of these research fields, for example from cultural studies, that has informed the research of such scholars as Buckingham (2003; see also Buckingham and Sefton-Green, 1994), who argues that media literacy includes *critical literacy*. Analysis, evaluation and critical reflection are in turn important parts of critical literacy. In this context, Buckingham emphasises the acquisition of a so-called 'meta-language' (ibid., p.37) that enables people to describe and understand the structures of different communication genres, and also gives them a broad insight into social, economic and institutional contexts of communication and how individuals' practices and experiences are affected by this. Media literacy in this perspective includes creativity, active media use and interpretation, but also a broad analytical understanding and critical reflection. When discussing the content and meaning of digital literacy, Buckingham (2006) again turns to the importance of the critical perspective, with particular emphasis on adopting a critical stance towards sources and media producers, and towards the political, social and economic contexts and technological developments that characterise the media world.

For Bélisle (2007), critical reflection encompasses self-reflection and self-awareness. Through self-reflection we can establish distance to ourselves and to our social practice, and thus learn and make decisions about our own actions (see also Bengtsson, 1998). Jenkins (2007b) lists a number of areas of competence that constitute 'twenty-first century skills'. He highlights the importance of being able to evaluate information sources in terms of reliability and credibility, where the ability to navigate between different communities is emphasised. This means discerning and respecting different points of view, and understanding various sets of norms, and requires independent reflection and critical evaluation. Burn and Durran (2007) refer to research showing that children and young people are critical when, for example, they watch movies – they discuss and express their opinions. However, they do not always 'see through' all the layers of meaning and complicated intertextuality. This means, according to Burn and Durran, that while children and young people participate in critical practices, there is also a need for a media education that includes and emphasises critical reflection, together with creativity and cultural awareness.

3.3.1. *The distinction between reflexivity and reflection*

Contemporary society has in recent years been described as both complex and reflexive (Beck et al., 1994; Castells, 2010a; Qvortrup, 2004). Qvortrup (2004) articulates a link between complexity and reflexivity. He describes society today as hypercomplex, characterised by increasing uncertainty, and therefore requires more complex knowledge and reflexive competence from the people living in it. This is closely related to the technical, cultural and social developments that fundamentally have changed the way we communicate and practise our social selves. The Internet revolution is a key factor in this image (Castells, 2010b).

The perspective of contemporary society as fundamentally reflexive is found in the conceptualisation of reflexive modernisation, a term coined by Beck et al. (1994). In this view, reflexivity is a defining characteristic of society. Society is more complex due to a multitude of concurrent processes, such as traditions and authorities losing importance while the media gains importance, cultural and economic globalization, and multiculturalism. Beck (2000) argues that the reflexive characteristics of society require that people become knowledgeable and self-conscious of their position in a transformative world. Similarly, Qvortrup (2004) holds that we must be able to think reflectively in order to reduce complexity and uncertainty. Reflection enables us to critically distance ourselves to reflect on our actions and act reflectively, which in turn makes it possible to make choices and judgments.

The concepts of reflexivity and reflection are often applied as equivalent terms (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009). The two words also have the same origin, from late Latin *reflexio(n-)*, as in the act of bending or turning back, and Latin *reflectere* (Oxford Dictionaries, n.d.). As such, reflection and reflexivity both give associations to mirroring, as in thinking directed towards oneself, and to retrospection, as in thinking directed towards something in the past. However, there are some differences in reflection and reflexivity relevant to the present study that should be pointed out. Beck (1994) distinguishes clearly between the two conceptions. In his view, reflection is a conscious and intentional thought process involving evaluation and critical thinking. Reflexivity is more complex in his view as reflexivity includes reflection but is not necessarily conscious or intentional. Rather, it is seen as an inevitable trait of modern society. Beck (in Rantanen, 2005a)¹⁰ provides an example to illustrate why the reflexivity of contemporary society can be characterised as ‘new’. Cultural mix and social interaction on a global level are processes that have always been present in human societies, what is new is our awareness of them. This awareness is part of an unavoidable reflexivity that has emerged through the historical development, where media developments are particularly significant. This is relevant to the present study, as awareness of the

¹⁰ U. Beck was interviewed by T. Rantanen in 2005, published in *Global Media and Communication*, 2005, 1(3).

social conditions of one's everyday life is crucial to the participants' process. However, there is a need to include views on reflexivity more relevant to educational settings.

Temporality constitutes one important difference between reflection and reflexivity. Giddens (1991) defines reflexivity as a process that takes place over time, and connects the reflexive society to individual practices (see also e.g. Biesta & Tedder, 2007; Hibbert, Coupland, & MacIntosh, 2010). He argues that in the present, people's identities are not something stable but rather a reflexive process, an endeavour that people continuously reflect on. However, reflexivity is a more comprehensive process involving different meaning making activities and reflections, whereas reflection can be associated more with thought actions more directly related to the individual. In the present study, reflexivity and reflection are applied as interdependent concepts, but with significant differences. Individuals' reflections are primarily analysed through the concept of mediated action.¹¹ However, as the sociocultural concept of mediated action implies, the social and collective aspects of reflection and meaning making are also important. As such, reflection is regarded as having both individual and social dimensions. Mediated actions in a classroom and in interaction with mediagraphy as a learning activity inevitably involve both individual and social reflection, as I see it.

Bearing Giddens (1991) and Beck (1994) in mind, the most significant differences between reflection and reflexivity in this study are that reflexivity includes a time dimension and that reflexivity is seen as a more complex concept than reflection. Reflexivity is interpreted as a process that can involve reflections, but also other aspects, such as awareness, identity, attitudes and ways of relating to the world. Reflexivity is thus regarded as a process over some time, or a practice that is not necessarily easy to observe empirically. However, as a theoretical concept, reflexivity can be applied to help describe and analyse the overarching perspectives and general impressions from the research on the classroom processes and the practices that might be revealed in the present research. Thus, reflexivity can be a characteristic of a learning activity as a practice. Although a specific learning activity takes place over a limited period of time, it can be seen as a process with a temporal dimension. Therefore, a reflexive learning activity would typically involve constant negotiation and renegotiation between actors, continuous changes and evaluations, and reflective thinking from the actors throughout the entire process. In the concrete analysis, reflection stands out as the most important analytically sensitive concept. In the next section I will present an analytical framework for reflection.

¹¹ Mediated action is elaborated on in 4.3.3.

3.4. Approaching a framework for analysing reflection

There are several ways to delineate what reflection should mean in concrete empirical analysis. In the following analysis, descriptions of reflection and critical reflection from various theorists are included with the aim of capturing the complexity of the empirical data. Through the literature search, Reynolds (1998) emerged as a theorist who connects reflection to the ability to understand and act in society. In much the same way as critical theorists like Freire (2000) and Giroux (1988), he (*ibid.*, p.183) underlines the importance of critical reflection for identifying and questioning ‘the contextual taken-for-granted – social, cultural and political’. Similar to this, but more oriented towards self-reflection, Wahlgren, Høyrup, Pedersen, and Rattleff (2002) see reflection as the conscious considerations we make on our actions and the consequences of them. In their view, critical reflection also involves considerations of *why* we should act in certain ways in certain situations. Bengtsson (1998, p. 111) emphasises self-reflection, through which the individual can learn about one’s own actions, and self-knowledge also makes it possible to make decisions about these actions. The most important benefit of self-reflection is, according to Bengtsson, that we can distance ourselves from our social practice.

These dimensions of reflection are important in the following analysis, but to be able to analyse reflection taking place in relation to a concrete learning activity, more distinct analytical guidelines are needed. To apply an analytical framework for reflection, I therefore turn to Qvortrup’s (2004; see also Fritze & Haugsbakk, 2012) taxonomy of reflection. The different forms of knowledge *qualifications*, *competencies*, *creativity* and *meta-perspectives* are the basis for this categorisation. In the present study, the *qualification* level represents for example the knowledge the students had of the media and technical skills that benefitted them in solving the task. These skills could be used in the project, but that requires competence, the next level in the taxonomy. *Competence* involves understanding different concepts and understanding the task and the genre the mediagraphy text is to be written in. The *creative* level implies for example being able to approach a task independently and creatively, but also to use one’s competencies across different contexts. To make reflections on the *meta*-level means to see oneself from the outside and to be able to identify developments in media and technology in a societal and historical context.

Critical reflection can be seen as part of both the creative and the meta-perspective level and has not been ascribed an explicit dimension in Qvortrup’s framework. However, I see the need to explicitly emphasise aspects of critical reflection related to identifying and questioning the taken-for-granted in society and culture, as pointed out by Reynolds (1998). Moreover, critical considerations of *why* we should act in certain ways in certain situations are included, as emphasised by Wahlgren et al. (2002). These different aspects of reflection are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. A framework for analysing reflection (adapted from Fritze & Haugsbakke, 2012, p. 258; Qvortrup, 2004; Reynolds, 1998; Wablgren et al., 2002)

<i>Knowledge forms</i>	<i>Student production</i>
Qualifications	Different technical skills and everyday knowledge
Competencies	The use of skills and knowledge in a defined context – to be familiar with and able to apply concepts, genres and expressive forms
Creativity	Independent and creative approach to genres and expressive forms. Can be actualised through e.g. teaching that stimulates creative activities
Meta-perspectives	Seeing oneself from outside, and being able to place developments in media and technology in a societal and historical context
Critical reflection	Identifying and questioning the taken-for-granted, and critical evaluations of one's own choices and actions

The table constitutes a means to categorise the various contents of the students' reflections, and as such, this taxonomy is important for the analysis. In light of the concept of mediated action, I argue that expressions of these knowledge forms can be observed as the students in my study interact with the various activities of the mediagraphy project. The concept of mediated action implies that such expressions of reflection occur and are constructed in social practice. An essential analytical aspect is then to examine whether some mediational means mediated certain types of meaning making and reflection, and to ask if some activities have a greater potential of mediating e.g. meta-perspectives and critical reflection than others. In the next chapter, reflection and mediated action are further elaborated on in a methodological and analytical context.

4. Research design and methodology

In this chapter, the aim is to give an overview of the research design and the methodological choices made during the research process. Methods are also discussed in the empirical articles, hence, this chapter can be seen as a more comprehensive account of methodological issues concerning the entire PhD project, as well as an elaboration of the perspectives used in the articles. First, I will explain the context of the study and the data corpus before discussing the research design and the different data collection methods. Following this, I will reflect on the methodological choices made during the process, before discussing the quality and credibility of the research, which involves a focus on such issues as validity, reliability and generalizability. Finally, some important ethical issues will be examined, both in general terms and related to issues particularly relevant for my project.

4.1. Context of the study

The context was a classroom setting with a class of 27 students, 14 girls and 13 boys, attending the Vg3 General Studies Programme in Media and Communication in an upper secondary school in Norway. The study was conducted for a period of five weeks during five to ten lessons per week in the autumn of 2011, while the interviews were carried out in January/February 2012. The students were of Norwegian citizenship and ethnicity. Thirteen students, seven boys and six girls, were selected for interviews during the observation period. The aim in this respect was not to obtain a representative group of participants, it was rather to illustrate breadth and diversity in order to research key issues relating to the research questions in an in-depth manner. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the main research question was *what characterises upper secondary students' reflections and meaning making during the process of conducting mediagraphy?*

The interview participants were selected during the process as important common patterns and unique variations were observed among the students. This is in line with a *combination purposeful sampling*, where the main aim is to focus on a narrowed selection of participants and ensure depth and variation in the data (Patton, 1990). In retrospect it can be argued that the selection could have been even further narrowed down to optimise the in-depth approach. However, a strict selection also could lead to the risk of losing important data. The class was relatively homogeneous in terms of ethnicity and social status. The findings are thus not based on a varied selection of students with different origins and social backgrounds, and perspectives on multiculturalism are not easily captured with this group. One single group of students will not at any rate constitute a true representative selection, as I see it. The credibility and quality of the study is rather dependent on other factors, such as how transparently the findings are presented, how valid the study is, and whether the data material has been triangulated

This is discussed in section 4.4 below. Moreover, the limitations of the study are discussed in section 5.3.

4.1.1. The project school and the study programme

The project school is an older, traditional school that has been rehabilitated in recent years and is now well equipped with ICT and digital learning resources. The school primarily offers programmes for specialization in general studies, but also creative programmes like Media and Communication. As I see it, the programme in Media and Communication in Norway constitutes a context well suited for studying pedagogical issues relevant to my research objectives. The issues that are in focus are closely related to young people's experiences of media in their everyday lives and which involve aspects that cross boundaries between leisure, school and social practices. In many ways, the students in the Media and Communication programme often operate in the interface between in-school and out-of-school media practices. The first two years, the programme offers vocational media education, where most of the classes are devoted to practical, creative media use and production. The classes are often organised into different kinds of student-centred projects.

To date few studies exploring these students' media practices have been conducted, but a report by Erstad et al. (2007) describes the students attending the Media and Communication programme as 'heavy consumers' of media, Internet particularly (*ibid.*, p. 8), and a majority of them are experienced media producers. This means, it might be said, that this student group is in particular need of critically reflecting on their media practices. Moreover, as it can be assumed that these students have a plethora of media experiences to reflect on, they can give special insight into young people's reflections on the media's role in society and their own media practices. For these reasons and the fact that I had access to this school and class through my own background as a former teacher of upper secondary media studies, the choice of this context was particularly interesting for my research interest and research questions.

4.1.2. Researcher role and background

Approximately 18 months before the study was initiated I was a staff member at the school where the study was conducted, and I have previously been a teacher in the class. After my period of employment I have, however, had no commitment or active relationship to the class or the students. This inevitably involves some bias. I cannot escape the thoughts and assumptions I have established about the school, the subject, the teachers or the students. As an 'insider', accustomed to the local culture, vital perspectives that an 'outsider' would have captured also can potentially be missed (Tjora, 2010). However, this background also meant that the time it took to learn the students' and teachers' codes probably was shorter than it would have been without

such a background. An advantage of being an ‘insider’ can be that I might more easily adapt to and understand the particular context, the social language and actions. I consider the insider perspective to be appropriate for approaching the core of my research, which is largely about how young people reflect and make meaning about phenomena in contemporary society and in everyday life.

I did not have the role of teacher during the research, but rather adopted a withdrawn observer role. In the research process I attempted to maintain a critical distance to my role and background. At the same time I tried to take advantage of being somewhat familiar with the youth culture and the culture that prevails among media students in upper secondary school. In practice, observation researchers need to alternate between assuming an insider and outsider position, as both positions have their advantages and disadvantages (Fangen, 2010). A pure outsider is not able to recognise the meaning of observed patterns, whereas the pure insider is too deeply involved in the context to be able to acknowledge any patterns (ibid.). As such, the crucial point is that the researcher is aware of and critically reflective on the researcher role during the entire research process.

4.1.3. Organisation of the classroom project

The mediagraphy project was included as a part of the common programme subject in Media and Communication. The overarching subject area for the period was ‘media in society’, and several of the competence aims, as outlined in the subject curriculum, were relevant for the project. Two such competence aims are:

- The aims of the studies are to enable pupils to
- discuss how new media can influence the development of content, forms of presentation and publication in traditional and new media, and consider how this affects society
 - consider the media as a socializing factor and the media’s ability to influence individuals and society (Udir, 2008)

Given that this was the first study on mediagraphy in upper secondary school, the assignments were not graded. However, the teacher evaluated the students’ work in light of the curriculum and evaluated how well the assignment responded to the competence aims and other subject criteria. It is conceivable that as the task was not graded, some students might not have made a full effort. However, this group of students is used to participating in several activities that are not graded, and it was not experienced as a problematic issue, neither in the observation nor by the teacher. Potentially, avoiding grades could even be considered an advantage in terms of capturing the participants’ experiences, meaning making and reflections. All in all, the fact that the assignment was not graded is considered not to be a shortcoming of the research findings.

4.1.4. Mediagraphy in practice

In practice, an individual mediagraphy is a structured overview of how individuals in different generations have been exposed to various globalization factors, such as education, lifestyle, media or travel. In the project, each student researched their own family and gathered information from individuals over four generations, including him- or herself. They chose one side of the family, and conducted qualitative interviews using Rantanen's (2005b) mediagraphy table with predefined thematic globalization factors (cf. Table 1) for their data collection. The students then wrote *mediagraphy essays* based on the empirical data. The students used primary sources where possible, and secondary sources when family members had died or were difficult to contact. Material was also obtained from other sources, such as parish records or photo albums. Subsequently, the students found a relevant approach and formulated a research question based on tendencies in their mediagraphy schedules. When formulating a research question, the students looked for tendencies in their data; the mediagraphy table thus became the basis for comparing the generations according to various globalization factors. It was possible to analyse developments in individual's lives or across generations, and one could assume both a macro and a micro perspective.

The teacher, Elisabeth, led the project. Although my role can be described as relatively withdrawn, I was open about my presence and adapted to and participated in the established practices and routines. Additionally, I was an advisor to Elisabeth, as she had no practical experience of mediagraphy prior to this project. I gave a general introduction to the mediagraphy project and my research and then Elisabeth introduced the student assignment. Elisabeth gave the students an assignment guide that suggested an essay structure. She expected the students to explain concepts in the introduction, formulate a topic and a research question, and then summarise the biographies of each family member with emphasis on aspects related to their research question. It was suggested that the students should make use of their textbooks and subject terminology, theories and concepts when they explained and analysed their data. Finally, the essays were expected to consist of a discussion and a conclusion. The suggested length of the essay was 1500-2500 words. The students were given several smaller tasks during the project period, for example individual and group presentations, tests and a practical-aesthetic task related to the topic. They were also offered the opportunity of having a midway assessment talk with the teacher.

4.2. Research design

The research is designed as an exploratory case study (Yin, 2014), which typically investigates a contemporary phenomenon broadly in its real-life context. The case is conducted as a singular

case in a class of 27 students. According to Gudmundsdottir (2004), case studies usually focus on a small, relatively homogenous and geographically limited field, for example a group of students, a teacher or a class. The research has similarities to intervention studies, as the present study is based on the introduction of the learning activity of mediagraphy. Educational intervention studies often have the implementation of a certain teaching method or an educational tool as their starting point. Such studies typically aim to intentionally influence particular individuals or groups, and the outcome of the intervention is often of key importance (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). In educational contexts, intervention studies are characterised by an aim to change the actors' (such as teachers or students) practices, to solve concrete, 'real' problems or meet 'real' needs (ibid.). Although all types of research to some degree involve intervening with existing practices, as entering a field as a researcher in itself is an intervention, I have chosen to term the present study as an exploratory case study rather than as an intervention.

Usually, an exploratory case study explores various situations with a more open-ended perspective than an intervention, and often has no clear, single set of outcomes (Yin, 2014). Moreover, this study is not based on solving a clearly defined problem or meeting some specific need. As such, the purpose of this study agrees more with what Cohen et al. (2007, p. 85) claim is typical for exploratory case studies: 'To portray, analyse and interpret the uniqueness of real individuals and situations through accessible accounts'. Merriam (2009) argues that the case study makes it possible to investigate complex social settings in 'real-life' made up of a multitude of potential sources to understand the phenomenon in focus. The design therefore is particularly useful for studying educational innovations.

The case study is also related to, and sometimes referred as similar to ethnography (Yin, 2014). However, ethnography is often associated with lengthy observation periods, where the intention is to understand or uncover a culture. In case studies the focus is on the phenomenon and the design usually involves collecting different data material with the aim of triangulating it (ibid.). Thus, in the following I will refer to my research design as a case study, even though several characteristics of ethnography also apply to my study. One such characteristic is that ethnographic studies often aim to study cultures and activities on a day-to-day basis in their naturalistic settings (Baker, Green, & Skukauskaitė, 2008). I also aim, in accordance with many ethnographic approaches, to obtain an *emic* insight of the participants as they act in the settings of the classroom. Emic in this context encompasses a research ambition to grasp the participants' points of view, their conceptual categories and the meaning of their behaviour and actions (Gobo, 2011).

The case study design can be defined as the basic framework for the present research, which means that the starting point was quite open and flexible. However, the focus was narrowed as the research and preliminary analysis progressed. The focus of the research came to be primarily on the narratives, meaning making and reflections from this group of students. This focus emerged during the process, which means that I toned down the emphasis on the teacher and her actions, and the students' actions and interactions not directly related to the mediagraphy project. In other words, the main analytical units were the mediated actions connected to mediagraphy. Phenomena related to media use, globalization, identity and learning were important in the project. It was imperative to view these aspects from different angles and with different lenses. This involves collecting data material in different ways, with different focus and at various times in the process. Thus, the study includes data from observations, written material, multimedia texts and interview data. The data corpus is given in Table 3.

Table 3. Data corpus

<i>Data type</i>	<i>Source</i>
Participant observation	A total of 32 sessions (each 40 min.). 5 hours and 42 min. video recordings, plus observation notes, including joint sessions, midway assessment talks, group and individual work
Interviews	13 students, 1 teacher. Semi-structured, 'focused' interviews. From 20 min to 52 min. Total: 8 hours, 42 min.
Logs	Individual weekly logs, distributed to Fronter (LMS system)
Mediagraphy essays	24 essays with mediagraphy tables. From 1 to 8 pages
Multimedia products	Voluntary assignment. 18 submitted products

The mediagraphy essays, the interviews and the multimedia products gradually emerged as the most important data. The logs were excluded from the analysis. There was considerable variation with regard to submission of logs, which made this data source unsuitable for further analysis. In the first part of the project period, the majority of students wrote logs, but the number of submitted logs declined sharply during the last part of the project. This is believed to be because the teacher did not specifically emphasise the logs, and because the students could express their thoughts in other ways. I consider that omitting the logs has not harmed the research process, as most of the students' reflections concerning the process have been captured through observations and not least through the interviews.

The observations were analysed specifically in the first article, but beyond that they have mainly served as background data. For the observations, the observation notes have been the primary source, whereas the video recordings mainly have been used to document student presentations and group discussions. Elements such as the participants' activities, movements,

gestures or body language have rarely been included in the analysis. Video as a data source has immense potential in this respect, and can be a means of grasping multiple aspects of the participants' culture and their experience of everyday life (Baker et al., 2008). As such, video observation is a data source that could have been used more extensively in this study, especially with a view to capturing non-verbal actions and interactions between actors. However, the essays, interviews and multimodal products were defined as the main data sources. The scope of this project therefore did not allow for extensive use of video. Furthermore, as the video recording was planned and set up it was not optimal for exploring non-verbal activity or incidental interactions. In retrospect, video is a data source that can advantageously constitute a potential further development of this research. The main conclusion is, nonetheless, that the data is rich enough for exploring the research questions in depth and breadth, and that additional data sources would not necessarily enhance the focus and coherence of the present study.

The number of essays noted in the table should also be mentioned. Twenty-four of 27 students submitted a final product. The teacher confirmed that this was not surprising, and quite common in this class. Conceivably, the fact that three students did not submit their final assignment could be related to the task not being graded and thus not prioritised by all the students. However, this is not considered to be a shortcoming in the research, but rather represents a common outcome in this class. Moreover, the research focus of this study is not dependent on all students submitting their products, and the data is considered to be adequately extensive and varied with regard to obtaining a realistic and representative image of the class.

4.2.1. Participant observation

The student project lasted for five weeks with five to ten lessons a week. In this process the research was conducted through *participant observation*. I primarily used field notes as the data-collection method, but I also conducted some video observations of what I assumed to be key activities in the process, such as student presentations, mid-way assessment talks with the teacher and joint discussions. According to Gobo (2011, p. 17), participant observation has five main characteristics:

1. the researcher establishes a direct relationship with the social actors,
2. staying in their natural environment,
3. with the purpose of observing and describing their social actions,
4. by interacting with them and participating in their everyday ceremonials and rituals; and
5. learning their code (or at least parts of it) in order to understand the meaning of their actions.

However, as Gobo (*ibid.*) underscores, there are different ways of approaching this type of role, and there are several intermediate perspectives between the 'non-participant observation' and a full 'participant observation'. In my case the research stay was relatively short, and although I

participated in the classroom practices, I found it most advantageous to be quite withdrawn most of the time in an attempt to not take leadership and thus a controlling position. My presence in the classroom was open, and the purpose of the research was presented to the participants and repeated when necessary. Endeavours were made to ensure that my presence as a researcher interfered as little as possible with the day-to-day activities (see e.g. Fangen, 2010).

4.2.2. Interviews

Retrospective interviews were conducted about eight weeks after the project was completed. Thirteen students were selected for interviews, seven boys and six girls, where the aim was to illustrate various characteristics, quality levels and efforts among the students. I also interviewed the teacher, as the intention originally was to analyse the teacher's involvement. However, during the analysis process the students' reflections have come more to the foreground and the teacher's perspective to the background. Hence, the data from the interview with the teacher is not analysed as primary data, but has served as background material.

The interviews were semi-structured and 'focused', which, according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), is a narrowed alternative to the semi-structured interview. The focus in the interviews was narrowed according to a tentative analysis of observations and student products. I prepared an interview guide based on this (Appendix 1). In practice, this means that the interviews were rather 'to the point'. The interview guide was slightly revised after the first two interviews, based on my experience of which questions seemed to get the participants to open up and reflect on relevant issues related to the research questions. The interviews lasted from 20 minutes to 52 minutes, i.e. a relatively short duration. Nonetheless, I consider that I was able to lead the conversations so that they were in-depth discussions, as I also had the observational data and preliminary analyses of the essays to build on.

The interviews were recorded digitally and supplemented with notes taken as they were being conducted. I listened through the interview recordings several times and transcribed the first interview myself while a professional transcriber did the remaining ones. I found that with the other data material from the essays, multimodal products and observations, I could not prioritise transcribing all the interviews myself. However, in general, researchers could find it useful to transcribe video and audio data as transcribing involves analysis and is a way of becoming familiar with the data (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). By allowing others to transcribe the interviews, the researcher might lose important information (Tjora, 2010), but I find that this was not an issue in this case. I have listened through all the interviews and I was well acquainted with the participants after five weeks of observation and through the other data material.

Before the transcription phase I had a relatively clear idea about what was important information. The focus was the students' reflections and meaning making, not so much on such things as their mimics, body language or other subtle signs. Nonetheless, I chose to have the interviews transcribed in detail, perhaps more detailed than I initially thought was necessary. The interviews have not been transcribed in the students' dialects, but in *bokmål*, one of the two official Norwegian written standard languages. However, I had to be aware that dialectal phrases could impart a distinctive meaning. Such phrases have been transcribed in the dialect form. A 'normalization' of the informants' dialect can also contribute to maintaining anonymity (Tjora, 2010, p. 127). All in all, the transcribed interviews constitute approximately 192 pages in Microsoft Word A4 format with 11 pt. text size, Calibri font, and 1.5 line spacing.

The main aim of the interviews was to find out more about how the students experienced their participation in the project. The interviews centred on the students' thoughts about what they had learned, their considerations of the implementation of the project and views on the topic. It was also important to try to get the students to elaborate on particular themes, concepts and issues from their narratives. I interpret the interviews as meaning making processes where the meaning was constructed in a reciprocal relation between the interviewer and the participant (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This means that neither the questions nor the answers represent the 'truth' – the aim was rather to grasp the students' meaning making through a variety of expressions, wherein the interview data represent one of several data inputs.

4.2.3. *Mediagraphy essays*

I view the mediagraphy essays as responses to a school assignment, but as they are based on reflections on life experiences in the lives of the students and their families, they also have the characteristics of personal stories and self-reflective, subjective narratives (Almås & Gullestad, 1990). Seen in this way, the essays share several characteristics with *life stories*. People's lives as a whole, or in part, have become important data for many researchers when studying the complex reciprocal relations between the self and the social context (Goodson, 2013; Harrison, 2009). Critics may ask if there is any way to generalize findings from one or a few individuals' life stories. As I see it, life stories can provide unique insight into and knowledge about aspects of people's lives and those aspects can make people's lifeworlds visible (Johansson, 2005).

Events, or turning points, are key elements in understanding mediagraphy. Turning points are events or moments in time perceived as particularly important by and for the individual. In practice they may be dramatic events, like war or divorce, or other aspects that contribute to changes in lifestyle, class or residency. In the words of Webster and Mertova (2007), critical events are often unplanned and unstructured when they occur and only in

retrospect can these events can be identified and interpreted as *critical* events. Such events can transform people's perceptions of their own actions, and their understanding and view of the world. Events and turning points are key concepts both in Rantanen's (2005b) work and in Appadurai's (1996) theory of Scapes (see Chapter 3), on which Rantanen bases her theory. Thus, in the analysis, turning points are seen as crucial for understanding individuals' experience and interpretation of their existence. This is also emphasised by such researchers as Bruner (1991, 2004) and Goodson (2000).

4.2.4. *Multimodal expressions*

The students were free to use visual expressions in their essays, such as photos or graphics. Additionally, the students had a voluntary task: to make a multimodal product comprising the same subject area (media in society). The voluntary project was made by 18 of the students. These products are included in some parts of the analysis, particularly in the fourth article. Multimodal texts involve several sign systems and thus have an increased meaning potential (Kress, 2003). In my analysis, I turn to Baumann and Brigg's (1990) tangible analytical concepts. They argue that authors exercise agency when they compose various types of text. If, for example, images are used in a montage, they are *decontextualized* from their original context and *recontextualized* as a reflective process. In other words, the use of images is not merely a detached representation but also a new reflection and meaning making. Meaning from the original context is still present, but the text should be interpreted as a new form with new functions and meaning (Hull & Katz, 2006).

4. 3. Narrative analysis and analytical procedures

In the social sciences, individuals' and groups of people's stories have gradually become more accepted as representations of social reality and as a form of knowledge (Bruner, 1991; Johansson, 2005). The most important aspect of the data material in this study is, in this light, not its potential status as 'facts'. The data can, however, give insight into how social reality is constructed, and help to broaden the existing understandings of different phenomena. The students in this study not only provide reflections and narrative accounts, but also contribute by collecting data from their interviews of family members. The students are thus not only informants, but also observers, participants and analysts in the study. For a comprehensive analysis of the students' essays I therefore need to become the students' co-analyst, and place their mediagraphies in my theoretical framework, compare the students' stories and form a total image of the class's mediagraphies.

Narrative inquiry includes many different approaches to analysis. It was therefore necessary to delimit the type of approach I have intended to follow. Polkinghorne (1995, p. 5, my emphasis) identified two main types of narrative inquiry:

1. **analysis of narratives**, that is, studies whose data consist of narratives or stories, but whose analysis produces paradigmatic typologies or categories; and
2. **narrative analysis**, that is, studies whose data consist of actions, events and happenings, but whose analysis produces stories (e.g. biographies, histories, case studies)

The mediagraphy essays are important data sources in this study – stories told by the students' and their interviewees, whereas the analysis aims to categorise the stories and together with the other data material explore the participants' reflections and meaning making. The final research product will thus reflect what Bruner (1991) terms a paradigmatic mode of thought. According to Polkinghorne (1995), paradigmatic knowledge focuses on the common traits in actions, while narrative knowledge rather has a focus on particular features of individual actions. In other words, I am conducting an *analysis of narratives*, as I move from the participants' stories to general themes, as opposed to a narrative analysis approach where I would have gone from some general themes to stories (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

4.3.1. Reflexive interpretation

The analysis requires that I interpret the students' interpretation of reality. Moreover, the students have interpreted their family members' interpretations of their lives. This kind of analysis can be referred to as *reflexive interpretation*, as the analysis in reality involves multiple layers (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008). Reflexive interpretation can be placed in the hermeneutic research tradition, which has three key characteristics, according to Alvesson and Sköldberg (ibid.). The interpreter is in a special position (neither dominant nor submissive), the text, or the object of study, has a special character and importance, and there is a dialectic relationship between interpretation of the research parts and the whole. The interpretation is typically open for multiple meanings, and according to hermeneutic research traditions there are no given rules for interpretation.

The data in my study are analysed with my presuppositions as the background, including my theoretical assumptions and my professional background as a teacher. What is important is to avoid letting the presuppositions dictate the interpretation of data. This means the researcher should be aware of his presuppositions and background, aim to be open to the data and be prepared to change his existing assumptions and position (Cohen et al., 2007). When interpreting and analysing the data, I have looked for underlying meaning making in the participants' reflections on aspects related to the research questions. By drawing on the different types of data, from different participants, several different narratives can potentially emerge as findings. It is

characteristic of reflexive interpretation that the researcher makes several cycles of interpretations and explores the uniqueness of each different layer at the same time as he sees the layers in relation to each other.

4.3.2. *Analytical procedures*

The data material was read through several times, the first times to grasp the quintessence of the content, then the details were analysed and subsequently I returned to my attempt to obtain an impression of the whole picture. The analysis was not initiated with predefined categories, but gradually an insight and an overview of the material was developed. When working through the empirical data, the topics from the interview guide were applied as a starting point, and the structure of the students' task descriptions served as the foundation. The material was coded according to themes that were interesting in relation to my research question. In this phase, the software QSR NVivo was a useful tool, but was not used extensively. I therefore consider the use of the software to be of minor importance when it comes to possible influence on the interpretation. The preliminary findings from the interviews and the essays gave me an overview of the data material. In this way, important thematic areas and patterns were developed (see Creswell, 2014). This was in turn the basis for identifying categories. Related categories were then combined into main categories. Based on the existing theoretical understanding and presuppositions, concepts were linked, and gradually definitions of categories developed. In practice, the phases were revisited several times as the development of my theoretical insight and understanding of data opened new possibilities for interpretation.

The analysis process is thus characterised by *abduction* (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2008). Such a process typically involves a continuous interplay between theory and data, and a reflexive development of research questions, categories and concepts. In the first three articles I refer to the analysis process as analytical induction. Erickson (2012) describes analytical induction as a recursive process where the researcher reviews the findings with assertions in mind, revises the assertions and reviews the findings again. Such a description of analytical induction has many similarities to abduction. Nevertheless, in this extended abstract I have applied the concept of abduction, mainly because I have come to the conclusion that it harmonizes better with reflexive interpretation, and that analytical induction may be associated with research starting with empirical data without any theoretical considerations. Abduction has empirical data as an important basis as well, but it also explicitly includes theoretical preconceptions (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2008). The process in the present study is thus, as I see it, best described as abduction.

4.3.3. *Mediated action as a unit of analysis*

In the analysis I have specifically focused on *mediated action* as the unit of analysis. As explained in the theory chapter, Wertsch (1998) emphasised mediated action as the preferred unit of analysis in sociocultural research, as all human action is seen as mediated through mediational means. In the analysis, mediational means refers to the various tools, concepts, assignments and so on that were facilitated by the learning activity mediagraphy. Mediated action then refers to the actions taking place as the students as actors, the mediational means of mediagraphy and the context of the classroom intersect. In the analytical process, mediated action has been the key to opening up the analysis and to capturing what the students *did with* mediagraphy. In this way it has been possible to draw on students' reflections as they were expressed in oral discussions, written assignments and multimodal expressions. As such, it has been possible to explore similarities and differences in these various forms of meaning making, and in addition I could shed an analytical light specifically on what sorts of meaning making the mediagraphy facilitated. I see the meaning making, reflections and narratives that were expressed during the project as mediated by the learning activity mediagraphy.

Wertsch (1998, p. 25) has pointed out the close and multifaceted relationship between mediational means and mediated action. He claimed that mediational means typically constrain as well as enable mediated action. Moreover, an important point is that new mediational means are seen as something that transforms mediated action. As I see it, employing mediated action as the unit of analysis allows for both an in-depth and a specific analysis of mediagraphy as mediated means.

4.4. The credibility and quality of the research

Quality in qualitative studies, and how to evaluate it, is an active topic of debate, particularly because the criteria for assessing research quality is not as clear-cut as in quantitative studies. Historically, various concepts have been used, but there is an increasing consensus on the concepts of credibility, validity and reliability (Tjora, 2010). Additionally, generalizability is a means to analyse the benefits of the research, where transparency is an overarching aspect that can say something about the quality of the research process and research texts. The goal of qualitative research is that it should be transparent, which means that the logic of the research is made explicit (Denzin, 2009). In the articles, but particularly in this extended abstract, the aim is to explain the entire research process, including the data collection, the analysis and the underlying theoretical perspectives so that the reader can consider the credibility of the research (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006). This means that the aim of the extended abstract is to provide an in-depth account of the various phases of the research process. This includes an account of my

background, my scientific and theoretical positioning and my methodological choices, which are all significant for how the data material is analysed, interpreted and represented textually.

4.4.1. Reliability

Yin (2014, p. 240) argues that reliability concerns the consistency and ‘repeatability of the research procedures’ in a study, which corresponds to a traditional view on quality assessing research (Denzin, 2009). I would, however, argue that it is difficult to replicate an exploratory, qualitative study. In a study such as the present one, where individual narratives and people’s meaning making are explored, I contend that reliability needs to be assessed in other ways. Although the mediagraphy approach includes quite a few structures that enable other researchers to conduct similar studies, it will not be possible to conduct the same project in the same context. Moreover, in an exploratory, interpretative study, other researchers cannot easily replicate the researcher’s reflexive interpretations and understandings.

Fangen (2010) points out that standardization cannot be the aim for all qualitative interpretations. Tjora (2010, p. 201) suggests that qualitative research is reliable if there is a distinct connection ‘between empirical data, analysis and results in a study, and this is not led by personal, political or other factors that are not accounted for’. As such, transparency is crucial to research reliability. In my case I have attempted to provide detailed accounts as well as rich descriptions of data. Additionally, resources, such as the interview guides, are attached to the extended abstract so that the readers can consider at least parts of the data-collection process. In qualitative research it is, according to Seale (2007), generally important to explain which information comes from data generation and which is from the researcher’s own analysis. In the empirical articles I have sought to do this in a distinct and open manner by separating out excerpts of participant data, and by textually expressing how certain excerpts are interpreted and how theories and specific concepts are applied in my interpretations.

4.4.2. Validity

Validity refers to whether the study investigates what it intended to investigate (Tjora, 2010). I would argue that also this is a complex task when it comes to qualitative research, particularly in interpretative studies such as the present study. An exploratory study often includes observing and analysing day-to-day activities or naturally occurring situations. As such, it is not always possible to predefine which phenomena or actions one is supposed to investigate. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) rather suggest *communicative validity* as an appropriate concept in qualitative research. This involves testing knowledge claims in the scientific community. As Tjora (2010) points out, this is in practice a way of maintaining a dialogue with relevant theories, concepts and perspectives, and moreover, with other research on the same or related fields, and with related

methods. In my case, the research has primarily been conducted by me, but various phases of the research have been completed in dialogue with various scientific communities that represent different knowledge practices.

Two of the articles have been written together with co-authors, which is significant in terms of validity. In such a process, different views on the interpretation of data, theoretical backgrounds and presuppositions will converge. In this way the involved researchers' perspectives are potentially expanded, and the process can thus strengthen the research validity. In the fourth article, data from two studies are included. Including data from different studies will increase complexity and perhaps lessen coherence. At the same time, the validity in both studies can be strengthened, as the variety of data and research participants is expanded. This will then expand the interpretation potential and the communicative validity, as the researcher's knowledge claims and interpretations are tested against other data material and other researchers.

During the entire PhD process I have been associated with the Norwegian National research school NATED. This has also contributed to discussions on and elaboration of my assumptions, preliminary interpretations and theoretical understandings. Moreover, at the time of writing, three of the empirical articles have either been published or are 'in press' in international, peer-reviewed journals. This means that the articles have been through many phases: dialogue, revisions of the texts and ultimately reading of the texts, they have an audience. This is also a way of participating in social and scientific communities. Such a process of participation and dialogue helps to strengthen the validity of the study, as I see it.

Triangulation can also be an important means of strengthening the validity of a study. According to Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2008), triangulation is about applying a variety of methods to more safely determine how to understand a phenomenon. By exploring a phenomenon through several methods, the researcher can achieve a number of potential interpretations and gain broader insight into the area in focus. Triangulation can also contribute to clarifying meaning and to identifying different realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). My research has been conducted by collecting data from observation, interviews and written and multimodal student products. However, I do not assume that I have obtained a comprehensive image of the total activity in the classroom during the project period. Neither do I assert that one data-collection method verifies another method (cf. Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2008). Rather, triangulation helps me to gain a rich and multifaceted impression of the students' reflections in order to more credibly grasp what they were concerned about. Given that data from different sources are obtained from each student, I consider the material to be rich and thus sufficient for finding patterns, developing categories and applying concepts and theory. As such, in-depth and broad data material from one group of

students has been collected. In this way the study is a case study that can, in line with Merriam (2009), be well suited for research on educational innovations, such as mediagraphy.

4.4.3. *Generalizability*

In qualitative research, generalizability has been a debated issue. The question has been whether qualitative research at all can be generalized, as it is often context-bound, conducted with relatively few participants and the findings are most often local. However, it can be argued that researchers also generalize in qualitative research. They apply concepts, metaphors and theories, and point out possible implications or limitations. Becker (1998, pp. 128, my emphasis) argues that ‘concepts *are* generalizations’. Tjora (2010) emphasises how findings in qualitative research often are presented in terms of such things as typologies, models, concepts and metaphors not directly related to the specific case or empirical data at hand. Established theory and previous research are used to support validity and generalizations, ensuring the data are relevant outside the single research project.

Payne and Williams (2005) argue that there is considerable potential for generalizations in qualitative research, and thus problems of context-bound and local findings can be overcome. To enable a moderate generalization, as they term it, the findings should be related to the context of the research, the generalization should be time-limited and findings from outside the project should be elaborated on. A common term in qualitative research is therefore *analytical* generalization. This means that through confirmation or modification of theoretical concepts, or possible development of new concepts, it is possible to use the findings of this study to analyse other similar situations (Yin, 2014). As I see it, this may apply, for example, to how the analysis of students’ reflections in my study provide new and deepened insight into how young people reflect on contemporary culture, and what they are concerned with in that respect. Moreover, the analysis can give new insights into nuances and critical points on the application of mediagraphy in a new context.

4.5. Ethical considerations

The research has been approved by NSD (Norwegian Social Science Data Services), and follows the ethical guidelines described by the Norwegian national research ethics committee for the social sciences, law and the humanities (NESH, 2006). One of the most important guidelines is that the research should be based on fundamental respect for human dignity. The researcher should ensure that the research shows respect for the participants’ integrity, freedom and self-determination. The researcher is responsible for ensuring that the research participants are not exposed to any harm (ibid.).

The principle of informed consent was followed, and an information letter (Appendix 2) was handed out to the students before the project was initiated. The students signed the information letter, and as they were over 16 years of age, and no sensitive information was collected for use in the analysis, permission from parents was not required. The participants gave an information letter to their interviewees (Appendix 3) when they conducted their data collection. Similar information letters were given to the teacher (Appendix 4), the supervisor (Appendix 5) and the principal (Appendix 6) at the project school. In the process I was prepared to negotiate the students' consent (Thagaard, 2009), especially because of the information that potentially could emerge from the students' work process. As my aim was to establish a relationship of trust with the participants, I could elaborate on and repeat the information from the information letter during the time I was present in the classroom. I could also answer any questions that arose.

Although the aims and methodology are in line with official ethical guidelines, the project does have ethical challenges. The students collected information about people in their own families, and therefore it was important to build a relationship of trust with the participants. In this project, it was necessary to find practical solutions, as one student actually did not want to conduct the mediagraphy assignment for personal reasons. The student discussed this reluctance both with the teacher and me, the researcher, and was given an alternative task. Researchers in media education have pointed out the importance of teachers being aware of the potential problematic issues of including students' personal experiences in learning activities (Buckingham, 2003; Drotner, 2008). The teacher needs to ensure that the experiences that are shared with the student community do not infringe on their private boundaries. In the case of implementing an assignment such as mediagraphy, which is based on personal and family aspects, it is important that the involved teachers are flexible and that they carefully listen to the students' thoughts on the project. In the present project the participants could withdraw from the study, also during the process. The participants were informed about this, both verbally and in the information letter. The obligation of confidentiality means that I have used fictitious names for the participants and anonymised any information that can be linked to their identity.

5. Summary of articles and discussion of findings

In this chapter I summarise the four articles that together constitute the main body of the thesis, as that is where the empirical findings from the study are discussed. In this summary I will not go into detail on the findings, rather I will focus on the research questions and the key findings that are addressed in the articles. Hence, I will be discussing the overarching issues that have emerged through the empirical findings and the possible general contributions of my research. By and large the thesis is about reflection, the data are students' mediated actions in the mediagraphy project, which, in the form of written and multimodal texts, oral discussions and interviews, are analysed as narratives. Article 1 explores which types of reflections took place in the mediagraphy project, Article 2 analyses the students' narratives as identity work, Article 3 addresses how the students' narratives are expressions of their relations and sense of belonging to the surrounding world, and the fourth article analyses their experiences of time and space in relation to their media practices in everyday life. The following discussion addresses the key overarching issues and the research contributions to theory and methodology. After this, some issues related to limitations and suggestions for further research is raised before moving on to the conclusion.

5.1. Summary of the articles

The main aim of this thesis is to explore the application of mediagraphy as a learning activity. The primary data material for all the articles is from the empirical, exploratory case study where a class of media students in the last year of upper secondary school in Norway conducted mediagraphies. The fourth article also draws on data from Vettenranta's (2010) study on mediagraphy with Masters' degree students. The overarching research question concerns *what characterises upper secondary students' reflections and meaning making during the process of conducting mediagraphy*. In the following, I will briefly summarise the articles focusing on the research questions and findings. They are presented in the order they were written rather than according to their publication dates.

5.1.1. Article 1

Schofield, D. (2014b). Young People Exploring Their Media Experiences – Mediagraphy as a Reflection Tool in Upper Secondary School. *Nordic Journal of Digital Literacy*, 9(2), 112-127.

The first article aims to explore what types of reflections are expressed in the students' texts, discussions and interviews. At the same time, the article can serve as an introductory article to mediagraphy applied as a learning activity in upper secondary school. An important premise for the article is that reflection and critical reflection are argued to be important components of media literacy. The analysis is centred on data from classroom discussions, mediagraphy essays and interviews. In other words, an important analytical goal is to obtain a comprehensive image

of the types of reflections made in the mediagraphy project. The article explores the data material in terms of two key research questions: 1. *What characterises upper secondary students' reflections on their own media practices while working with mediagraphy?* 2. *How do the students express their experience of mediagraphy as a reflection tool?*

To explore the students' reflections, I apply an analytical framework adapted from Qvortrup (2004) and supplemented with key conceptual aspects from Reynolds (1998), Fritze and Haugsbakk (2012) and Wahlgren et al. (2002). This framework comprises five knowledge forms or reflection types, which are termed qualifications, competencies, creativity, meta-perspectives and critical reflection. As to the categorisations of reflection types, it seems that the levels of creativity and critical reflections are most explicitly expressed in the essays and the retrospective interviews. The findings show that in the essays and interviews, the students were able to identify and also question 'taken-for-granted' characteristics of society and culture. Moreover, the data material shows that the students critically evaluated their own actions and choices. This indicates that the students' media experiences actually constituted a basis for the activities in the classroom, and also that many of the students were able to take a meta-perspective on their lifeworld, analyse the context and make critical evaluations.

I argue that reflection and critical reflection are competencies that are key issues in media literacy that is relevant to young people's media-saturated everyday lives. On the one hand, one can say that critical reflection is a prerequisite for completing the assignment, given that the mediagraphy assignment is demanding and to some extent requires analytical skills. On the other hand, however, in line with sociocultural theory, mediational means is a prerequisite for making meaning and reflecting (cf. Wertsch, 1998). As I see it, this means that reflection is also mediated by mediagraphy. The findings show that the students do not end up with universal facts about the media world or the globalization process. Rather, mediagraphy mediates certain reflections that are deeply rooted in the students' own everyday lives, their lifeworlds, and more specifically their media experiences. In this sense, in practical applications in school, mediagraphy needs to be supplemented with a variety of other learning forms and activities. Nonetheless, I argue that mediagraphy can constitute a learning activity that corresponds to Qvortrup's argument of reflexivity as an important competency for mastering the complexity of contemporary society.

5.1.2. Article 2

Schofield, D., & Kupiainen, R. (2015, in press). Young People's Narratives of Media and Identity: Mediagraphy as Identity Work in Upper Secondary School. *Nordicom Review*, 36(1).

In the second article, written in collaboration with Professor Reijo Kupiainen, we address how the students' reflections are related to aspects of identity. Furthermore, the article discusses how

media use and experiences are important for identity in different ways, particularly from the perspective of young people. More specifically, we explore how mediagraphy contributes to knowledge about the links between the construction of identity and media practices. A key issue is to see if the students gain insights into differences and similarities between generations in their family, and how they make meaning of changes and stability over time. The analysis zooms in on two students' processes and their mediagraphy essays and interviews. One of these students applied multimodal expressions in his essay. The key research question is: *What characterises upper secondary students' reflections on their identity during their work with mediagraphy, and how do they depict the media as an agentive factor in their social practice?*

The main analytical tool in the second article is Bamberg's (2011, p. 6) argument that identity narratives face three dilemmas. A claim of identity reveals (1) a constant navigation between continuity and change, (2) a concurrent connection between sameness and difference (between self and other), and (3) a reciprocal connection between agency as 'person-to-world' and as 'world-to-person'. The findings show that the students' reflections touch upon all these dilemmas, and that constructing a narrative can be a powerful exercise for young people in order to understand more of their identity. The students also gain insight into culture, society and media from a personal point of view.

The identity dilemmas are interdependent and overlap each other. However, the third dilemma concerning agency emerges as a particularly significant dimension for grasping how media practices play into people's everyday lives and worldviews. We view agency as an essential aspect of identity, but also as inextricably linked to social and cultural contexts. In a sociocultural perspective, we interpret agency as something that is possible to learn and 'exert' in certain situations. In a personal narrative such as a mediagraphy, the 'agency dilemma' entails asking oneself who constructs the world as it is experienced – am *I* as a person constructing the world, or is *me* being constructed *by* the world? We find this to be an important pedagogical question with particular potential in contemporary culture.

The second article shows that the students' work with mediagraphy involves self-reflection and introspective contemplation over one's own choices, values and other identity-related aspects. As one of the student examples shows, the quality of student products varied. Nonetheless, we argue that mediagraphy constitutes a type of identity work. The multimodal expressions reveal that by including various student voices, such as oral, visual and written expressions, different reflections and meanings appear. This implies that the students exercise their agentive identities when they create and develop their narratives in the mediagraphy project.

As such, we claim that mediagraphy can contribute to self-understanding and interpretation of one's identity.

5.1.3. Article 3

Schofield, D. (2014a). Reflexivity and Global Citizenship in High School Students' Mediagraphies. In S. H. Culver & P. Kerr (Eds.), *Global Citizenship in a Digital World. MILID Yearbook 2014* (pp. 69-80). Göteborg: The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media/Nordicom.

The third article approaches the question of how the participants reflect on their relationship to the world, and also how they position themselves in the world in their narratives. As such, the article explores the different ways in which the students express a sense of belonging when there is scholarly consensus that the world is increasingly media saturated and globalized. Thematically, this article is hence more oriented towards globalization and cosmopolitanization than the two first articles. In an early analysis phase, I found that many of the data concerned identity and sense of belonging, and concerns about extensive media consumption and the growing global information flow. In the analysis in this article I concentrate on in-depth exploration of expressions in the essays and interviews that concerned a sense of belonging and personal media use. The research question is: *How do high school students who conduct mediagraphies express their sense of belonging to – and position in – the global community?*

The key concept is cosmopolitanization, which is viewed as analogous to global citizenship. I see cosmopolitanization as a reflexive part of identity, in line with Rantanen (2005b). In essence, the concept of cosmopolitanization concerns the experience of 'being part of the world', as Tomlinson (1999) expressed it. Two features of cosmopolitanization are particularly important here, and they also became visible in the students' reflections: Beck's (2006) emphasis on perspective-taking, i.e. the ability and willingness to assume the position of 'the other', and Hannerz's (1996) view of cosmopolitanization as a matter of competence, or a 'mode of managing meaning' (ibid., p. 102).

In this article, I argue that the mediagraphies reflect that the students lead everyday lives where they have access to, interact with and experience a wider world than their physical surroundings. In comparison with the older generations of their families, the participants' generations seem to have expanded opportunities to understand global cultures and issues. One of the main findings is however that the majority of the students expressed that they primarily used social media to establish and maintain local relations. Although social media can connect people to global networks, few students expressed that their media use mediates relations on a global level. This corresponds to recent research on people's use of social media. However, the data also show that the participants see themselves as a part of the world and a global culture, to

a larger extent than previous generations. I argue that the students as such are able to take the perspective of others – they are aware of the global contexts of which they are part. This is an important component of being a global citizen.

The data analysed here introduce some important nuances. According to this data, I cannot claim that mediagraphy in itself mediates global citizenship. However, I would argue that there is considerable learning potential in listening to, interpreting and retelling the narratives of individuals from different generations and other cultures. When the students shared stories and knowledge in the classrooms, the learning potential was further expanded. As such, mediagraphy potentially is a learning activity that mediates awareness of the global, multicultural society.

5.1.4. *Article 4*

Schofield, D., & Vettenranta, S. (2014). The media and global imagination: students' experiences of time and space. *Manuscript submitted for publication.*

The fourth article has been written together with my supervisor, Professor Soilikki Vettenranta. We draw on data from two studies; my PhD project on mediagraphy as applied in upper secondary school, and Vettenranta's project (2010, 2011) on mediagraphy with Masters' degree students. The thematic focus is on the students' reflections on experiences of time and space. Time and space are viewed as fundamental dimensions of the human lifeworld. A premise for this article is the theoretical argument that the ways in which we experience time and space are under transformation, in step with the development of digital media as an integral part of people's everyday lives. Different examples of concrete temporal and spatial experiences are explored through the students' narratives. Through the data, three topics were particularly interesting: how the students navigate different concepts of time, how the conditions of relationships are changed in light of media development and how photos and visual tools have become important artefacts in people's everyday lives. The main research question is: *What characterises Masters' and upper secondary school students' reflections on their experiences of time and space in written and multimodal narratives?*

The analysis is guided by conceptualizations from Schütz and Luckmann (1974) on experiences of space, and from Gotved (2006) on experiences of time. As such, the most important *spatial* dimensions are the *primary* and *secondary* zones of operation, whereas time is analysed as (1) an active factor in communication and *meaning making*, (2) a means of *orientation* and control, and (3) a key dimension for *regulating* and interpreting social interaction. The data shows that the students are accustomed to and navigate a temporal and spatial complexity in their everyday lives.

We find that the narratives produced when students conduct mediagraphies involve a mode of thought that we interpret as *global imagination*. Global imagination means that the participants envision the world, are able to place themselves in it and also relate emotionally to other people on a global level. Global imagination can be seen as a characterising feature in people's mindsets in contemporary culture, latent in social practices, but also as something that one can be made aware of as part of a pedagogical activity. We argue that global imagination can be observed and understood through the mediagraphy project. This can be related to sociological imagination, as applied by Ponte and Aroldi (2013) on the findings in their study inspired by mediagraphy. As the students collect stories from people in three earlier generations, they can gain insight into different times and spaces, and different lives. The students applied their imaginations by connecting history with new developments in media and technology, individual with society and media with everyday life. In this way, global imagination can be an important issue in learning activities, and a key feature of media literacy.

In this article, the importance of including a variety of student expressions in learning activities becomes apparent. We include student examples of multimodal expressions, in the form of graphics, photos and digital montages, and interactive texts. We argue that these types of expressions provide reflections and interpretations that are not accessible to the same extent in written texts.

5.2. Discussion of the findings

In this part of the thesis I will discuss the most significant findings from the study. While the main findings are analysed in the articles themselves, here I will examine them from an overarching perspective. This means that some new perspectives also appear. The discussion is for the most part based on theory and research findings mentioned in the review and theory chapters.

5.2.1. *The double meaning of mediagraphy*

Reflection has been a recurring theme in this PhD process. In a sense, reflection was a key issue as right from the initial phase, and continues to be in the final stages as the thesis is brought to its conclusion. However, it was Qvortrup's (2004) taxonomy of reflection that opened the data up and made reflection and reflexivity the main analytical concepts. In many ways Qvortrup's theory connects the societal and the individual, as the basis for his theory is the conceptualization of the hypercomplex society, whereas his taxonomy concerns how individuals can cope with the challenges of the complexity in society. The first article is thus an important starting point for understanding the findings from this project. The ways in which the students reflected are

analysed in the first article, while the content and meaning of the reflections are the focus of the other articles.

Reflexivity is, in Qvortrup's interpretation, a process that provides a way to relate to the world and oneself. This involves a double perspective – to actively reflect on both one's own choices and one's context. In the mediagraphy project, I argue that another double perspective comes to light. The *first* perspective concerns the students' learning and meaning making. As a mediational means (cf. Wertsch, 1998), mediagraphy seems to mediate certain reflections and meaning making. As discussed in the first article, the students tend to reflect critically and assume a meta-perspective as they evaluate their actions and the global media culture. In the other three articles, various aspects concerning both the personal and the societal perspectives are discussed.

The *second* perspective is related to mediagraphy mediating insights into the students' everyday lives, their lifeworlds, and the younger generations' experiences related to the media world. I argue there is significant pedagogical value in this, and as I see it, this point corresponds with findings made by researchers reporting on the students-as-researchers methodology (cf. chapter 2, and e.g. Roberts & Nash, 2009; Thomson & Gunter, 2006). An important point in this educational perspective is to learn from the research participants and to involve them in such things as democratic processes. I claim that the students 'exerted' their agency (cf. Biesta & Tedder, 2006), and that they participated in defining the conditions for their own learning and learning situation. Moreover, a parallel can be drawn to such learning activities as digital storytelling (Lambert, 2009), where a goal often has been to give voice to certain individuals or groups of people. Even though it was not directly relevant in this project, mediagraphy can be a means of giving voice to students or other participants.

A sense of doubleness is necessarily always present in school settings where students, teachers and other actors inevitably learn from each other. Nonetheless, I contend that doubleness is an important point that needs to be made explicit. A similar 'double window' was found by McMillan and Morrison (2006). They argued that, on the one hand, the participants in their study on young people telling stories of Internet experiences learned about their past and present media use. On the other hand, the research gave insights into the role of new technology in young people's everyday lives. As I see it, the double meaning of mediagraphy can be connected to Klafki's (2011) double opening, which I discussed in the theory chapter. Klafki's double opening implies that in using learning activities that are based on the students' own experiences, the individual opens up for the world, and the world opens up for the individual. In this way, mediagraphy can be an example of a dynamic and open learning situation. The involved

actors are participating in continuous learning processes, where the crucial point is to understand the world and oneself through exploring experiences from the students' lifeworlds.

Hence, I argue that for the participants, the mediagraphy project mediated insights into their own media practices and experiences. This also provides insight into the 'media world', media history and societal and cultural developments. As discussed in Article 1, mediagraphy became a reflection tool opening for multifaceted reflections concerning media experiences and the media-related and societal context in which these media experiences take place.

5.2.2. Reflection and media education

Bearing the findings from this project in mind, I argue that research on mediagraphy contributes to the understanding of reflection as part of media education. On the one hand, it seems that the students in my study already had an existing reflexive approach to themselves, their choices and the world. While this point is perhaps not surprising, it is nevertheless important with respect to contributing to a more nuanced view of young people and reflection than what has been prevalent in some media literacy theories. For instance, Jenkins (2007a) argued that it is a misconception to assume that children and young people actively reflect on their media experiences. Jenkins claimed that even though children and young people's skills are steadily improving when it comes to using media for things like social activity and creative expression, their abilities to understand and examine the media are often limited. Of course this is age-dependent, and the participants in my study are 17 to 18 years of age. Nonetheless, all the students demonstrated what I would call reflection skills, also in the initial phases of the project, which can indicate that actively reflecting on one's media experiences was an existing practice in this group of students, both on the individual and social level.

At the same time, I find that mediagraphy mediates certain modes of thought, analytical perspectives and concepts, and not least particular ways of expressing oneself. This is related to the sociocultural conceptions raised in the theory chapter (Säljö, 2006; Wertsch, 1998). In sociocultural learning theory, learning is related to appropriation of mediational means. In the mediagraphy project, a number of mediational means became parts of the classroom practice, and were made available to the students. The concepts raised by the teacher, or the textbooks, the interviews that the students conducted, the essays and so on can all be seen as different mediational means that the students had at their disposal. These mediational means were to varying degrees 'picked up' (cf. Lund & Rasmussen, 2008, p. 390) by the students and appropriated to make meaning and reflect so they could complete the mediagraphy assignment.

In itself this does not provide any completely new contributions to research on media education or media literacy. However, what I argue is a contribution, particularly to research on

media literacy and practical application in media education, is the multifaceted approach that mediagraphy represents. As a learning activity, mediagraphy is based on the students' own media experiences; they explore phenomena in the 'real world', provide narratives and include creative and multimodal expressions. In this way a number of important dimensions of learning and media literacy are brought together, as I see it. Several theoretical models can be used to illustrate this. The 3 c's of Burn and Durran (2007) are one example – mediagraphy involves creativity, as well as cultural and critical awareness. Furthermore, Erstad's (1997) emphasis on communicative competence and analytical reflection corresponds to the skills that the students exercised in the mediagraphy project. These different dimensions are all important as I see it, and they are interdependent.

The students' process stands out as an important contribution to research in media literacy and media education. As I acknowledged in the review chapter, appointing students as researchers has been a frequently used approach in several disciplines (Healey & Jenkins, 2009; Kincheloe, 2007), particularly in science education (Elmesky & Tobin, 2004; Knain & Kolstø, 2011) and computer-mediated inquiry learning (Furberg, 2010; Kong & So, 2008). The review shows that research on such learning activities in the field of media education and media literacy has been limited, although research skills and critical thinking is emphasised by media education scholars (Bélisle, 2007; Jenkins, 2007b). As such, research on mediagraphy potentially provides insights into different sides of employing students as researchers in media education. In the present study, the students were relatively free to define their own approach to research. They were given some guidelines by the teacher,¹² and were required to apply relevant theory and concepts, but other than that there were few strict methodological requirements. Nonetheless, the data show that mediagraphy can be a means for contributing to a focus on scientific concepts from media education and other related disciplines, media theory and media history. Moreover, as the students complemented the research approach by providing written and multimodal narratives, reflectively and creatively, the concepts and theories are critically applied and connected to the students' lifeworlds and media practices.

To mention specific challenges that mediagraphy in a way responds to, I highlight two challenges formulated by Buckingham (2003) and Jenkins (2007b). I argue that the research on mediagraphy responds to Buckingham's (2003) emphasis on engaging students in in-depth research. He points out the importance of conceptual learning and argues that learning activities wherein the students conduct research can contribute to the development of a meta-language, which in turn can scaffold an expanded understanding of such things as media experiences and

¹² See Chapter 4 and Article 1 for more details on the teacher's guidelines.

media texts. In the analysis in the first article, I apply Qvortrup's (2004) taxonomy as a tool for exploring the student's reflections. This shows that an important prerequisite for the students to be able to analyse their data and provide mediagraphy essays is that they learn key concepts and theories within media studies and related subjects. Moreover, the other three articles illustrate that the majority of students, at least to a certain extent, manage to creatively and critically apply these concepts and theories in discussions, interviews and narratives. This reveals that they developed some kind of meta-language and exercised their analytical skills.

Jenkins (2007b) argues that in addition to 'core literacy' (reading and writing), students need to acquire *research skills*. Research skills can be seen as a crucial component of media literacy. These skills have come to be important as young people live in a world where the amount of information constantly increases, and authorship is more and more blurred. Students thus need a set of skills to help them consider the reliability of data, understand how research is presented, distinguish between facts, fiction and opinion, and also construct arguments and present findings themselves. Not least, Jenkins claims it is important for students to be able to understand how media presentations contribute to shape our perceptions of the world. All in all, according to Jenkins (ibid.), a media education that includes research-like approaches can contribute to developing *judgment* – an ability to assess various sources' credibility and validity, *transmedia navigation* – an ability to meaningfully navigate between different modalities and 'flows of stories', and finally *networking*, which is about mastering the ability to search for, synthesize and disseminate information. In a complex student-oriented project such as mediagraphy, the learning outcomes among the students will inevitably vary. But as the articles illustrate, I find that the students exercised their research skills, as defined by Jenkins. One could argue that not all students managed to develop new skills, but the research skills were brought into focus in the classroom activities, and the students were exposed to research discourse and work methods. Moreover, Articles 2 and 4 show that combining multimodal student products with an analytical approach may evoke different and perhaps somewhat surprising types of reflections and another genre of meta-language. I will discuss this point more closely in the next section.

5.2.3. *Insights through multimodal texts*

As the articles illustrate, in particular Articles 2 and 4, mediagraphy as it was organised in this project, entails a number of different ways of making meaning and different expression forms. These expression forms in turn provide different types of reflections. As Qvortrup's (2004) taxonomy indicates, opening for a variety of expression forms gives an expanded potential for different types of reflections. As shown in Articles 2 and 4, several students reflected in the form of multimodal texts. The student example in Article 2 shows a student who included a selection

of well-known images with particular value as symbols of national identity in Norway. This is interpreted as the student using this to express both implicit and explicit critical reflection, and he complemented his interview with these reflections. In Article 4, several types of multimodal texts are included as student examples. Illustrations of how the students used photos, video clips, interactive texts and graphics were given. I argue that such types of texts are not qualitatively *better*, but they provide *different* kinds of reflection than what is possible in written texts. If these different student products are viewed as different mediated actions (cf. Wertsch, 1998), they also provide different potentials and limitations. In Article 4 I argue that certain modes of thought became visible in the students' reflections, particularly in the multimodal texts.

The multimodal expressions show that such forms of student work not only constitute creativity, but also include critical reflection and a certain mode of thought that we connect to the concept of global imagination. As described in section 5.1.4., this concept captures an ability to envision the world, place oneself in it and also to have a sense of relationship to other people in the world. Although the written word also employs the imagination, the use of such mediational means as images adds something else. In Article 4 I refer to Wyller (2011), who points out that the special properties of photography make it a particularly interesting mediational means in terms of reflection. Through photography, the imagination can work in a way that mediates an experience of 'cutting into life'. As such, photographs have the potential of 'coming closer' to certain realisations and knowledge, such as catching a glimpse of other times and places. The article therefore argues that photographs can provide an in-depth insight into special moments in time, as if the person observing the photo and reflecting on it 'is there' himself.

In Article 2, we also saw how students used a well-known strategy in the digital world: the 'sampling' of famous works, or a cut-and-paste strategy. We apply the concepts of decontextualization and recontextualization from Bauman and Briggs (1990), and argue that such a strategy may involve new reflection and meaning making, and not just a detached re-use of others' work. In this view, when the students sample and assemble individual components into a new expression, they reflect and conduct independent work. Article 4 analyses students' graphics and interactive products. We interpret that these expression forms represent meaning making and also the students' views and opinions on various contemporary issues. These products also allow for the students to visually place themselves in time and space and history. The students using video clips can additionally experiment with chronology and the actual sense of time. As such, these types of texts add considerably to the meaning potential. I argue that the student examples of multimodal products are also connected to the students' identities in another way than written texts, and in themselves are forms of self-reflection.

The application of activities such as digital storytelling has become fairly widespread in some educational milieus (Lambert, 2009; Silseth, 2013). However, although digital work processes have a considerable potential to relate to young people's identities and interests and thus have important pedagogical promise, this aspect of digital work is largely overlooked in educational settings (J. Potter, 2010). Such kinds of expression have been given low priority in school, even though digital expressions undeniably have become a pivotal way of expressing oneself and making meaning in young people's everyday lives. Hence, I argue that mediagraphy has the potential of enhancing the stature of digital work processes in school. The digital processes in this study allow the participants to use their existing competencies in such areas as image processing, video editing and general computer use. But additionally, these processes are complemented with analytical and research-like approaches and by the final product being a narrative. Allowing the students to employ digital skills can, particularly for some students, give a sense of confidence and comfort. This represents a reinforcement of the point of basing learning activities on the students' standpoint and their existing knowledge and skills, which is emphasised as generally important in educational activities by a number of scholars (e.g. Buckingham, 2003; Klafki, 2011).

As to the existing research on mediagraphy (Rantanen, 2005b; Vettenranta, 2010) and related projects (Ponte & Aroldi, 2013), the multimodal dimension represents a contribution to further development of mediagraphy as a learning activity. A more distinct creative element is thus introduced, and as mentioned, the link to students' existing knowledge and skills is reinforced. As I see it, this is an interesting and perhaps necessary step if mediagraphy is to be applied with students in upper secondary school or with younger students, and also if it is applied in other creative subjects.

5.2.4. Ontological aspects of mediagraphy

The students' reflections in the mediagraphy project concern, at least to some extent, fundamental questions, such as sense of belonging, identity and basic beliefs. These are aspects of the lifeworld, i.e. the ways in which people experience the world (Schütz & Luckmann, 1974). As such, these are beliefs and reflections about *ontology*. Ontology involves the nature and characteristics of reality (Creswell, 1998), and concerns what exists and the understanding of how the world is composed and what it looks like (Sohlberg & Sohlberg, 2009). As I view it, the participants encountered ontological issues as they conducted their mediagraphies. A core question they asked both their interview objects and themselves was how they relate to their surroundings, in a broad sense. This means asking how one understands one's media experiences, identity and sense of belonging, but also about societal and cultural factors, such as global media

events, economic developments and ideologies. I will not provide a detailed conceptual discussion of ontology here, but rather raise some crucial aspects that emerged as particularly interesting in the analysis.

I argue that the factors of identity and media are crucial in this sense, as they potentially can bridge individual aspects and aspects concerning the macro level. This is covered in the second article, which discusses how the participants provide narratives on the relationship between their media practices and identity. In itself, narrativity is a means of making sense of the world (Bruner, 2006), or of reality. Moreover, I claim that the identity dilemmas (cf. Bamberg, 2011) treated in Article 2 are also ontological dilemmas. When narrating their mediagraphies, the students touched upon the understanding of change and stability, feeling equal to and different from other people, and interpreting the world as constructed by oneself or the opposite – oneself as constructed by the world. As with other educational exercises, these issues will need a special structure, organisation and pedagogical interactions from the teacher for them to become significant learning. Nevertheless, it is in my view apparent that ontological questions such as these are relevant in media education; the media is present in such a large part of young people's time (cf. chapter 1, and Livingstone et al., 2014; Vahlberg, 2010; Vaage, 2014), and since the advent of mass media, questions have been asked about the media's influence on people's identity and way of life. Not least, the agency dilemma is relevant in this context, basically as a question of influence and control over one's own life.

The students' reflections also have a historical perspective. One of the basic characteristics of mediagraphy is the generational perspective. The students interview three earlier generations of their family in addition to collecting information about themselves. This implies there is a potential for getting to know historical developments and gaining insight into changes in individual experiences of well-known historical events. In the present study, conducted with media students, there was a special focus on media history. In Article 4, the participants' experiences of time and space were in focus. As pointed out by Schütz and Luckmann (1974), the experience of time and space are fundamental dimensions of our lifeworld. Several student examples are presented in the article to illustrate how the students were able to place themselves in a historical image. As I see it, through the personal viewpoint, the students came 'closer' to some historical events, and they became aware of how events have been experienced. As such, these narratives and reflections concern the participants' identities and their worldviews. The concept of global imagination as explained in Article 4 is also related to ontology. Global imagination, which we argue is a mode of thought that to some degree is implicit in people's

identities in the digital age, is also a way of thinking that can be mediated and brought into focus through mediagraphy.

As discussed in the third article, the process of conducting mediagraphy is a mediated action that mediates an awareness of the global, multicultural society. As such, mediagraphy can potentially contribute to understanding oneself and the position one has in the world. The question of cosmopolitanism can be an ontological question, as it deals with a way of understanding or interpreting oneself and the world simultaneously. Cosmopolitanism is seen as a part of identity or an ability to take the perspective of other people. I found in the third article that only a few participants express that they use digital media to actually interact and relate to people from other cultures or in distant locations. However, the majority of students define themselves as world citizens or cosmopolitans. On the one hand, this can indicate that cosmopolitanism is a way of interpreting one's position in the world that does not necessarily require actual multicultural social interactions. On the other hand, this way of defining oneself can indicate that mediagraphy mediates and allows for a certain way of interpreting oneself and the world, and also that certain concepts and theories have been appropriated through mediagraphy. All in all, for the students, mediagraphy mediates a concretization and a reflexive interpretation of one's identity and context, with media use as the starting point. As such, mediagraphy can potentially contribute substantially in terms of providing narratives and reflections about young people's experiences of their own lifeworlds, and also in terms of being a learning activity that mediates a reflexive awareness of a number of ontological aspects concerning the media, identity and imagination. Mediagraphy does not provide any 'conclusions' or 'facts' in this respect. Rather, the importance of knowledge from people's narrative accounts is highlighted. This aspect is further elaborated in the next section.

5.2.5. Epistemological aspects of mediagraphy

Epistemological questions are relevant as the students collected data and analysed this in order to provide texts about experiences and events in their own and their family members' lives. Epistemology concerns knowledge – how claims about knowledge are justified and also what can be said to count as knowledge (Creswell, 1998). Compared to traditional learning activities where the teacher essentially predefines the process, the tasks and perhaps also the potential answers, the mediagraphy project exemplifies new ways of both representing and acknowledging what should count as knowledge. In Article 2, I argued that the balance of power to some extent is put to the test. The teacher relinquishes some of the control and responsibility for the knowledge produced, the way it is constructed and what forms of expressions are to be applied. The students were co-constructing the project together with the teacher, the researcher, teaching

material and teaching methods. Thus, the students participated in deciding what should count as knowledge. In this way, mediagraphy is based on a social constructionist concept of knowledge (Delanty & Strydom, 2003). This means that knowledge is seen as something that is constructed in social practice and in an interaction between different actors and contexts.

As explained in the introduction and in the analysis chapter, individuals' narratives are essential to this study. The students collect narratives when they interview family members, and the students provide narratives as they tell their story and create their mediagraphy essays. Scholars like Bruner (1991), Johansson (2005) and Goodson (2013) have argued that such narratives can represent important knowledge. The knowledge from narratives is not presented as objective, or as 'facts' in this research. The important aspect of narrative knowledge is rather the aim of contributing to insights into how social reality is constructed and experienced, and for the students in this project –to expanding their existing knowledge and understandings of various societal, cultural and personal phenomena.

As such, mediagraphy can be viewed as a learning activity that challenges the view on knowledge that dominates in school and other associated institutions. This is a point Østerud (2011, 2012) emphasises in his reflection on mediagraphy, where he claims that mediagraphy can potentially represent a transformation of learning and education, on several levels, from students' and teachers' roles and knowledge views to methodological choices. In his view, mediagraphy is a didactic innovation (Østerud, 2012, p. 50), and an activity in school where knowledge is not *reproduced*, but *created* through the students' interviews and analysis. In other words, the students are included as members of a practice wherein knowledge is constructed. This is a point highlighted also by researchers reporting on the activity of 'students-as-researchers' (Kincheloe, 2007; Thomson & Gunter, 2006).

Several aspects of mediagraphy thus resonate a perspective on knowledge as something constructed in social practice, but also knowledge as something people have a personal relationship to; a student-oriented perspective. As mentioned above, when the students are asked to provide and collect personal narratives, the knowledge and knowledge construction are closely related to the students' agency. This is highlighted also in work with digital storytelling (Erstad & Silseth, 2008), and in Article 2, where the concept of agentive identity is applied. I argue that this is a crucial point of mediagraphy as a learning activity. In the media-saturated, information-rich culture, it is, in my view, essential that students gain a broad insight into the process of knowledge construction. Similar ideas are promoted by Vettenranta (2004) – students should gain insight into how knowledge and meaning are constructed, and Jenkins (2007b) – research skills

are essential as part of twenty-first century skills. As I see it, an in-depth and practical insight into knowledge construction is a crucial component of media literacy.

5.3. Limitations and suggestions for further research

All research studies have limitations that are important to take into account, and which also can be of help when pointing out directions for further research and development of the research. The present study also has some points that represent limitations.

One limitation concerns the group of participants. The class in which this study was conducted was relatively homogeneous in terms of ethnicity and social status. For this reason it could be said that the research findings do not reflect a broad-based impression of what mediagraphy could have meant for students from different backgrounds. In this sense, an important dimension is therefore lost; the potential mediagraphy has to capture information and stories about multiculturalism. However, Vettenranta's (2010) study included students with multicultural backgrounds, and the research of Ponte and Aroldi (2013) had participants from Portugal. As such, these studies represent reference points for my study and can help to substantiate the findings from the present research. An advantage of a relatively homogenous group of participants is that the teaching and organisation of the learning activity are likely to have roughly the same meaning for the participants. For my study this means that I could focus more on the students' meaning making, their products and reflections rather than exploring teaching strategies or teacher choices. However, I would recommend that further research on mediagraphy include groups and individuals with varied backgrounds. Mediagraphy has some obvious and exciting potential for capturing phenomena that cut across culture, economic status, and historical and social backgrounds.

Another limitation is my role as a researcher. As mentioned above, I have previously been a teacher in this class. Although I did not have the role of teacher in this project, but adopted a more withdrawn role as an observer, I will inevitably have some bias. This means I was not neutral, but entered the field with some thoughts and assumptions about the participants, the school and the subject. I nonetheless chose to conduct research with these participants because it also provided me with some advantages. Other than the pilot study, the present study represents the first time mediagraphy was researched on and taught at this educational level. As I considered it, it would be advantageous to be familiar with the context, the social atmosphere, daily routines and local discourse. I also considered that in this case it was an advantage to be an 'insider', as it probably would be easier to 'get' the participants' reflections and meaning making. All in all, it is argued that in the case of studying the introduction of a novel learning activity it was an advantage being an 'insider'. In retrospect, it is also evaluated that I managed to establish and

maintain an analytical distance to the participants and the classroom practice. Moreover, as the role as a researcher was performed in such a manner, it is found that I did not interfere with the participants' activities in an inappropriate manner. However, I recommend further research to be conducted in more neutral settings.

In Article 1 I suggested that comparative studies on mediagraphy should be conducted. This study has been a singular, non-comparative study. Exploratory, qualitative studies can hardly be replicated, but comparing the findings on mediagraphy this far with studies of mediagraphy where participants are in other age groups and from other backgrounds would still be decidedly interesting. It would also have been interesting to see the whole, or parts of the structure of the learning activity mediagraphy implemented within other subjects or in other contexts. Another suggestion for further research is that more specific learning objectives, concepts or theories could be established as goals for the learning activity. In this way, it would be possible to reflect on mediagraphy seen in relation to other forms of teaching. This is something that has not been the focus of this study, as there has not been room for this with my research questions.

5.4. Concluding remarks: Proposing a 'reflexive media education'

Extending the findings discussed above, I propose a concept of a reflexive media education. This study has been conducted in line with the field of media education, as defined, for example, by Buckingham (2003), Erstad (2010a) and Vettenranta (2004). Bearing the findings in mind, I argue that mediagraphy suggests what a reflexive media education could be about:

It opens for and requires students' critical reflection. As I interpret it, critical reflection is not something that is separate from creative knowledge or technical competencies. Such skills and knowledge are rather crucial components of a reflexive way of dealing with the world and one's identity, as it was defined in Article 1. Also, mediagraphy serves as an example of a learning activity that can mediate critical reflection. Using Qvortrup's (2004) taxonomy, reflexivity includes analytical and creative reflection, meta-perspectives, competencies and qualifications.

It relates to the students' identities. The students are given opportunities to tell their stories. In the media-saturated culture, narrative meaning making is essential. Still, the information density and the fast flow of digital media can be experienced as fragmentary. Through providing narratives, in different genres, students can potentially create coherence between seemingly isolated events. The students can in this way connect experiences in their own lives, but the mediagraphy project shows that narratives also can help connect personal experiences to scientific concepts, to an extended historical timeline and an expanded space.

It represents a double opening. The reflexive aspect implies a 'doubleness', or a double opening, as Klafki (2011) termed it. This is about the students opening up to the world, and the

world opening up to the students. As discussed above, such openings are made possible through the mediagraphy approach. Moreover, there is a double opening between those who teach and those who learn, i.e. a reflexive media education involves teachers who are open for learning about their students' media experiences, and students who are open for learning from each other and from the teacher. This double opening also means that reflexive media education includes both research on children and young people's media culture in a learning perspective, and learning and teaching with children and young people related to media in a broad sense. This corresponds with media education as defined by Erstad (2010a) and Vettenranta (2004). The double opening connects a reflexive media education to media bildung, or to categorical bildung, in the words of Klafki (2011).

It includes and acknowledges multimodal reflection and multimodal research. This indicates that expression forms and content based on young people's everyday lives are emphasised and appreciated. The mediagraphy project suggests that multimodal expressions can complement written and other forms of expression. In an educational perspective, this includes different and innovative types of meaning making and imaginations. From the research viewpoint, research on multimodal expressions can give researchers abundant insights into how young people navigate and experience their everyday lives.

It acknowledges knowledge as something that is created in sociocultural contexts. Based on my research, but also on evaluations from Østerud (2011, 2012), I argue that a reflexive learning activity such as mediagraphy can challenge the traditional view of knowledge. The mediagraphy project illustrates that research-like exercises can also mediate rewarding learning in media education. Knowledge is seen as reflexive; continuously discussed and evaluated.

It relates to the students' worldviews. Actively reflecting on one's position in the world is an important exercise in the globalized world. The present data shows that such reflections are mediated by mediagraphy. The students discussed, wrote and made multimodal expressions about their place in history, in the world and in culture. At the same time, mediagraphy mediates possible reflections on the meaning and significance of the media on one's everyday life and personal choices. This point relates to Erstad's (2010a) emphasis on the inclusion of socialization as a dimension of media education, a dimension that problematizes the role media plays in children and young people's everyday lives.

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Extended abstract – Daniel Schofield, NTNU – 2015

APPENDIX

7. Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview guide

(Translated by the author. Interviews were conducted in Norwegian)

Interview Guide: Mediagraphy as a learning Activity in Upper Secondary School

Daniel Schofield - Department of Education – 2012 - daniel.schofield@svt.ntnu.no



(Main structure: From 'general'/open topics to more specific. Ref Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009)

Note: Some details in this interview guide is revised and changed after the first two interviews.

INTRODUCTION:

- Thank you for your participation
- Start the recorder (audio test)
- Confirm confidentiality and anonymity (and explain limitations regarding anonymity)
- Explain interview with tape recorder

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS:

- In general, what do you think about the mediagraphy project?
- Have you written about yourself in similar ways before?

2. ORGANISATION OF THE PROJECT

- The organisation of the project; can you describe it as you remember it?
- What are your thoughts about the instructions the class was given in advance of the project, and underway? (too detailed, too little details, etc.)
- Midway into the project, the teacher gave you some verbal feedback. Can you say something about that?
- Can you tell me a little about your participation in discussions in the class?
- Do you have any other comments on the organisation of the project?

3. THE PROCESS

- Can you tell me about your process, how did you go about to solve the task?
- What do you think about interviewing family members?
- What did you think about the assignment when it was introduced?

- What were your thoughts during the interviews?
- Can you tell me what you think is the most interesting with this process?
- Can you tell me what you think were the main challenges during the process?
- Were there any questions you were uncomfortable with, or that were difficult to ask?
- Was there something that surprised you in the interviews?

4. ANALYSIS

- What are your thoughts about your choice of topic / research question?
- Did the mediagraphy table help you in any way?
- Can you explain how you worked with the analysis / discussion?
- What you think about working with such an analysis?
- Can you tell me about your challenges with the analysis / discussion?
- Did the feedback from the teacher help you in this respect?
- Did you get any help during the process, for example from peers or others?
- Did anything new or surprising about the family emerge from the interviews?
- Can you say something about what you have learned from the analysis?

INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ANALYSIS:

** Here individual questions related to the individual students' essays are asked. The students are asked to elaborate different aspects from the analysis in the respective essays. An example of one such question: 'You have written a lot about traveling in your essay. What made you chose this topic?'*

5. SUBJECT MATTER/KEY CONCEPTS

Now in retrospect of the project, what are you thinking about:

- Your family's development?
- You and your everyday life compared to the others in the family?
- Globalisation
- "The Media Society»
- Identity

Is there any difference in what you think about this now, compared to before the project?

INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS:

• *Here individual question related to the individual students' essays are asked. The students are asked to elaborate interesting topics and concepts from their respective essays. For instance; "You write about "mediated experiences." Do you have any examples of that? Can you say something more about how you understand this concept of mediated experiences?"*

6. THE SOCIETAL PERSPECTIVE/THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROJECT

- What do you think, is it knowledge, what you have come with through this project?
- Have you learned anything about yourself through this project?
- What are your thoughts about the importance of knowledge and thoughts about globalization in our media society?
- What are your thoughts about your relationship with the media, compared to the previous generations' relationship with the media?
- What do think about your relation to the 'media society'? What does 'criticism of the sources' mean to you?
- What do you think the media has meant for you and your childhood?
- In your opinion;
 - What are the good and bad sides of social media?
 - What do you think is challenging with living in a globalized society?
 - What do you think are positive sides of living in a globalized society?

7. GENERAL POINTS ON MEDIAGRAPHY IN UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL

- Can you highlight something you have learned from this project?
- Did you learn anything from the other students' stories?
- Can you highlight something you think worked well in this project?
- Can you highlight something you think did *not* work well in this project?
- Can you think of anything that was not included in the project that perhaps should have been included?

Finally; is there anything you would like to bring up, that we have not yet talked about?

Appendix 2: Information letter to the students

(Translated by the author)

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT 'MEDIAGRAPHY AS A LEARNING ACTIVITY IN UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL' (STUDENT EDITION)

As part of my PhD study, I am conducting a project concerning media education in upper secondary school. The main topic of the project is the new learning activity of mediagraphy. The purpose is to gain insight into the processes in the classroom when the project is implemented and to examine whether the activity can provide the students with insights into the globalized media society. The aim is to contribute to the understanding of what should be emphasized in media education. In addition, the study aims to give a broad insight into the processes that take place when the learning activity is based on the students' own media experiences and their data collection.

As the other students of your class in Media and Communication, VG3, you receive this request to participate in the research project. The project will be conducted as a class project with the overarching topic 'media and globalization'. The students will be given an assignment that implies that you conduct interviews with members of their own family. Each student will then fill out a predefined 'mediagraphy table' and complete a written assignment with the collected data as a basis.

I will be present in the classroom during the project period to observe the process. I will write notes and record videos. I also want to conduct interviews with some students. The questions will be about experiences the students have had with the project, what kind of expectations they had, and what they learned during the project. I will use a digital recorder and take notes while we talk. In addition, the students' written texts will be used in my analysis. In the final research text, some excerpts from interviews, observation and student texts can be cited. All collected data will be processed strictly confidentially, and will be anonymised in the research text. All data (including audio recordings, video recordings, observation- and interview notes) will be deleted when the research period is ended. Only I have access to the personally identifiable information.

Participation in the project is voluntary, and you have the opportunity to withdraw your task from further use. This means that in such a case, I will not use any information regarding your participation in my research. You can do this at any time during the process, and you do not need to give any reasons for withdrawing.

The classroom project will be conducted from 1st November 2011 to 2nd December 2011. The interviews will be conducted after the project is completed, expected time during January 2012. The PhD project, which the classroom project is part of, is expected to be completed in late 2014. The project is funded by the Department of Education, NTNU, and is advised by the Data Protection Official for Research, Norwegian Social Science Data Services. If you agree to participate in the project, I would appreciate if you sign the statement of consent. If you have any questions related to this inquiry, please feel free to contact me via the contact information below.

Sincerely Daniel Schofield,
PhD student in Media Education
Department of Education,
Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)
E-mail: daniel.schofield@svt.ntnu.no, Phone: 73 59 18 97

Statement of consent:

I (Name) have received information about the project
"Mediagraphy as a learning activity in upper secondary school" and agree to participate in the project

Signature..... Date..... Phone/Mobile nr.....

Appendix 3: Information letter to family members

(translated by the author)

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDENT PROJECT 'MEDIA AND GLOBALISATION'

As part of the project "Media and Globalisation" I plan, as a student and participant in the project, to conduct interviews with members of my own family. The task we have been given is that each student should fill out a predefined mediagraphy table and write an essay with the collected information as a basis. In the essay, I compare globalization factors from four generations in my own family and discuss similarities and differences.

The project is a research project that is part of a doctoral study based on media education in upper secondary school. Daniel Schofield, PhD student in Media Education at the Department of Education, NTNU, leads the project. The main theme of the project is a new learning activity called Mediagraphy. The learning activity is based on the media experiences of the students, and an important part of the activity is that the students themselves collect information. The aim of the project is to see if students understand more of today's media society and media history when the instruction is organized in this way. As a possible interviewee, you receive this request to participate in my student project.

Only Daniel Schofield and I will have access to the information about you while the project is ongoing. All personal data and recordings are stored in a safe place, and will be deleted when the PhD project is completed. When the findings are published, excerpts from interviews, observations and student texts can be used. But the information will be anonymised so that no one can recognize you in the text.

Participation in the interview is voluntary. If you agree now, you have the opportunity to withdraw your consent at anytime without giving any reasons. You decide what information you want to give under the interview, and also if there is any information you want to exclude from further use. If desired, questions can be answered with general terms, such as 'politically active' rather than specifying a specific political party or ideology.

The classroom project will be conducted from 1st November 2011 to 2nd December 2011. The interview will be conducted during this period.

The PhD project, which the classroom project is part of, is expected to be completed in late 2014. The project is funded by the Department of Education, NTNU, and is advised by the Data Protection Official for Research, Norwegian Social Science Data Services. If you agree to participate in the project, I would appreciate if you sign the statement of consent. If you have any questions related to this inquiry, please feel free to contact the researcher Daniel Schofield via the contact information below.

Daniel Schofield,
PhD student in Media Education
Department of Education,
Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)
E-mail: daniel.schofield@svt.ntnu.no
Phone: 73 59 18 97

.....
Statement of consent:

I (Name) have received information about the project "Media and globalization" and agree to participate in an interview related to this project.

Appendix 4: Information letter to the teacher

(Translated by the author)

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT 'MEDIAGRAPHY AS A LEARNING ACTIVITY IN UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL'

As part of my PhD study, I am conducting a project concerning media education in upper secondary school. The main topic of the project is the new learning activity of Mediagraphy. The purpose is to gain insight into the processes in the classroom when the project is implemented and to examine whether the activity can provide the students with insights into the globalized media society. The aim is to contribute to the understanding of what should be emphasized in media education. In addition, the study aims to give a broad insight into the processes that take place when the learning activity is based on the students' own media experiences and their data collection.

As the teacher in the class XX in Media and Communication, VG3 at the school XX, you receive this request to participate in the research project. The students are informed in a separate information letter. The project will be conducted as a class project with the overarching topic 'media and globalization'. The students will be given an assignment that implies that they conduct interviews with members of their own family. Each student will then fill out a predefined 'mediagraphy table' and complete a written assignment with the collected data as a basis. I will be present in the classroom during the project period to observe the process. I will write notes and record videos. I also want to conduct interviews with the involved teacher(s). The questions will be about experiences the teacher(s) have had with the project, what kind of expectations you had, and what you think about the students' learning during the project. I will use a digital recorder and take notes while we talk. In addition, interviews with selected students and the students' written texts will be used in my analysis.

In the final research text, some excerpts from interviews, observation and student texts can be cited. All collected data will be processed strictly confidentially, and will be anonymised in the research text. All data (including audio recordings, video recordings, observation- and interview notes) will be deleted when the research period is ended. Only I have access to the personally identifiable information. Participation in the project is voluntary, and you have the opportunity to withdraw from further participation. This means that in such a case, I will not use any information regarding your participation in my research. You can do this at any time during the process, and you do not need to give any reasons for withdrawing.

The classroom project will be conducted from 1st November 2011 to 2nd December 2011. The interviews will be conducted after the project is completed, expected time during January 2012. The PhD project, which the classroom project is part of, is expected to be completed in late 2014. The project is funded by the Department of Education, NTNU, and is advised by the Data Protection Official for Research, Norwegian Social Science Data Services. If you agree to participate in the project, I would appreciate if you sign the statement of consent. If you have any questions related to this inquiry, please feel free to contact me via the contact information below.

Sincerely Daniel Schofield,
PhD student in Media Education
Department of Education, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)
E-mail: daniel.schofield@svt.ntnu.no
Phone: 73 59 18 97

Statement of consent:

I (Name) have received information about the project
"Mediagraphy as a learning activity in upper secondary school" and agree to participate in the project

Signature..... Date..... Phone/Mobile nr.....

Appendix 5: Information letter to the supervisor

(Translated by the author)

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT 'MEDIAGRAPHY AS A LEARNING ACTIVITY IN UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL'

As part of my PhD study, I am conducting a project concerning media education in upper secondary school. The main topic of the project is the new learning activity of Mediagraphy. The purpose is to gain insight into the processes in the classroom when the project is implemented and to examine whether the activity can provide the students with insights into the globalized media society. The aim is to contribute to the understanding of what should be emphasized in media education. In addition, the study aims to give a broad insight into the processes that take place when the learning activity is based on the students' own media experiences and their data collection.

The project will be conducted in the class XX in Media and Communication, VG3 at the school XX. The project will be conducted as a class project with the overarching topic 'media and globalization'. The students will be given an assignment that implies that they conduct interviews with members of their own family. Each student will then fill out a predefined 'mediagraphy table' and complete a written assignment with the collected data as a basis. The teacher(s), the students and the students' interviewees are informed separate information letters. Before the project starts I will also meet the students and inform them about the project. I will be present in the classroom during the project period to observe the process. I will write notes and record videos. I also want to conduct interviews with the involved teacher(s) and students. The questions will be about experiences they have had with the project, what kind of expectations they had, and about the students' learning during the project. I will use a digital recorder and take notes while we talk. In addition, the students' written texts will be used in my analysis.

In the final research text, some excerpts from interviews, observation and student texts can be cited. All collected data will be processed strictly confidentially, and will be anonymised in the research text. All data (including audio recordings, video recordings, observation- and interview notes) will be deleted when the research period is ended. Only I have access to the personally identifiable information. Participation in the project is voluntary, and all the research participants have the opportunity to withdraw from further participation. This means that in such a case, I will not use any information from them in my research. Participants can do this at any time during the process, and they do not need to give any reasons for withdrawing.

The classroom project will be conducted from 1st November 2011 to 2nd December 2011. The interviews will be conducted after the project is completed, expected time during January 2012. The PhD project, which the classroom project is part of, is expected to be completed in late 2014. The project is funded by the Department of Education, NTNU, and is advised by the Data Protection Official for Research, Norwegian Social Science Data Services. If you agree to participate in the project, I would appreciate if you sign the statement of consent. If you have any questions related to this inquiry, please feel free to contact me via the contact information below.

Sincerely Daniel Schofield,
PhD student in Media Education
Department of Education, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)
E-mail: daniel.schofield@svt.ntnu.no, Phone: 73 59 18 97

.....
Statement of consent: As supervisor at (school),

I (Name) have received information about the project
"Mediagraphy as a learning activity in upper secondary school" and agree to participate in the project

Signature..... Date..... Phone/Mobile nr.....

Appendix 6: Information letter to the principal

(Translated by the author)

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT 'MEDIAGRAPHY AS A LEARNING ACTIVITY IN UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL'

As part of my PhD study, I am conducting a project concerning media education in upper secondary school. The main topic of the project is the new learning activity of Mediagraphy. The purpose is to gain insight into the processes in the classroom when the project is implemented and to examine whether the activity can provide the students with insights into the globalized media society. The aim is to contribute to the understanding of what should be emphasized in media education. In addition, the study aims to give a broad insight into the processes that take place when the learning activity is based on the students' own media experiences and their data collection.

The project will be conducted in the class XX in Media and Communication, VG3 at the school XX. The project will be conducted as a class project with the overarching topic 'media and globalization'. The students will be given an assignment that implies that they conduct interviews with members of their own family. Each student will then fill out a predefined 'mediagraphy table' and complete a written assignment with the collected data as a basis. The teacher(s), the students and the students' interviewees are informed separate information letters. Before the project starts I will also meet the students and inform them about the project.

I will be present in the classroom during the project period to observe the process. I will write notes and record videos. I also want to conduct interviews with the involved teacher(s) and students. The questions will be about experiences they have had with the project, what kind of expectations they had, and about the students' learning during the project. I will use a digital recorder and take notes while we talk. In addition, the students' written texts will be used in my analysis. In the final research text, some excerpts from interviews, observation and student texts can be cited. All collected data will be processed strictly confidentially, and will be anonymised in the research text. All data (including audio recordings, video recordings, observation- and interview notes) will be deleted when the research period is ended. Only I have access to the personally identifiable information.

Participation in the project is voluntary, and all the research participants have the opportunity to withdraw from further participation. This means that in such a case, I will not use any information from them in my research. Participants can do this at any time during the process, and they do not need to give any reasons for withdrawing.

The classroom project will be conducted from 1st November 2011 to 2nd December 2011. The interviews will be conducted after the project is completed, expected time during January 2012. The PhD project, which the classroom project is part of, is expected to be completed in late 2014. The project is funded by the Department of Education, NTNU, and is advised by the Data Protection Official for Research, Norwegian Social Science Data Services. If you agree to participate in the project, I would appreciate if you sign the statement of consent. If you have any questions related to this inquiry, please feel free to contact me via the contact information below.

Sincerely Daniel Schofield,
PhD student in Media Education
Department of Education, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)
E-mail: daniel.schofield@svt.ntnu.no, Phone: 73 59 18 97
.....

Statement of consent: As principal at (school),

I (Name) have received information about the project
"Mediagraphy as a learning activity in upper secondary school" and agree to participate in the project

Signature..... Date..... Phone/Mobile nr.....

Appendix 7: Application form for the Norwegian Social Science Data Services

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES**MELDESKJEMA**

Meldeskjema (versjon 1.4) for forsknings- og studentprosjekt som medfører meldeplikt eller konsesjonsplikt (jf. personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter).

1. Prosjekttittel		
Tittel	Global mediegrafi som pedagogisk metode i videregående skole	
2. Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon		
Institusjon	NTNU	Velg den institusjonen du er tilknyttet. Alle nivå må oppgis. Ved studentprosjekt er det studentens tilknytning som er avgjørende. Dersom institusjonen ikke finnes på listen, vennligst ta kontakt med personvernombudet.
Avdeling/Fakultet	Fakultet for samfunnsvitenskap og teknologiledelse	
Institutt	Pedagogisk institutt	
3. Daglig ansvarlig (forsker, veileder, stipendiat)		
Fornavn	Daniel	Før opp navnet på den som har det daglige ansvaret for prosjektet. Veileder er vanligvis daglig ansvarlig ved studentprosjekt. Veileder og student må være tilknyttet samme institusjon. Dersom studenten har ekstern veileder, kan biveileder eller fagansvarlig ved studiestedet stå som daglig ansvarlig. Arbeidssted må være tilknyttet behandlingsansvarlig institusjon, f.eks. underavdeling, institutt etc. NB! Det er viktig at du oppgir en e-postadresse som brukes aktivt. Vennligst gi oss beskjed dersom den endres.
Etternavn	Schofield	
Akademisk grad	Høyere grad	
Stilling	PhD-stipendiat	
Arbeidssted	NTNU	
Adresse (arb.sted)	Pedagogisk institutt	
Postnr/sted (arb.sted)	7491 Trondheim	
Telefon/mobil (arb.sted)	73591897 / 93040095	
E-post	daniel.schofield@svt.ntnu.no	
4. Student (master, bachelor)		
Studentprosjekt	Ja <input type="radio"/> Nei <input checked="" type="radio"/>	
5. Formålet med prosjektet		
Formål	Prosjektets formål er å utforske undervisningsmetoden global mediegrafi i videregående skole. Forskningen gjennomføres som en kvalitativ case-studie i en klasse med ca. 30 elever på Medier og Kommunikasjon på videregående skole. Hovedproblemstillingen er: "Hvilke prosesser finner sted når elever i videregående skole arbeider med global mediegrafi som undervisningsmetode?". Målet er å finne ut mer om elevenes refleksjoner i forhold til identitet og det globale mediesamfunnet underveis og i etterkant av prosjektet, hva som karakteriserer elevenes refleksjoner, innsikt og begrepsforståelse i deres skriftlige essay, og hva lærerne vektlegger i forhold til elevenes læring om det globale mediesamfunnet når de ser tilbake på prosjektperioden.	Redegjør kort for prosjektets formål, problemstilling, forskningsspørsmål e.l. Maks 750 tegn.

6. Prosjektomfang		
Velg omfang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enkel institusjon ○ Nasjonalt samarbeidsprosjekt ○ Internasjonalt samarbeidsprosjekt 	Med samarbeidsprosjekt menes prosjekt som gjennomføres av flere institusjoner samtidig, som har samme formål og hvor personopplysninger utveksles.
Oppgi øvrige institusjoner		
Oppgi hvordan samarbeidet foregår		
7. Utvalgsbeskrivelse		
Utvalget	Case-studie med skoleklasse bestående av 30 elever på vg3 i videregående skole. Elever ved programområde Medier og kommunikasjon. Hele klassen vil observeres og alle elevenes produkter vil analyseres. Innvolvert lærer (1) og et utvalg av elever (10) vil bli intervjuet.	Med utvalg menes dem som deltar i undersøkelsen eller dem det innhentes opplysninger om. F.eks. et representativt utvalg av befolkningen, skoleelever med lese- og skrivevansker, pasienter, innsatte.
Rekruttering og trekking	Klassen er valgt pga. programområdet, samt at elever på vg3 er å foretrekke i forhold til mine forskningsspørsmål. Klassen og læreren er rekruttert gjennom eget nettverk. Elevene som velges til intervju velges strategisk i forhold til forskningsspørsmålene og studiens teoretiske perspektiver.	Beskriv hvordan utvalget trekkes eller rekrutteres og oppgi hvem som foretar den. Et utvalg kan trekkes fra registre som f.eks. Folkeregisteret, SSB-registre, pasientregistre, eller det kan rekrutteres gjennom f.eks. en bedrift, skole, idrettsmiljø, eget nettverk.
Førstegangskontakt	Jeg oppretter førstegangskontakt selv, og gjøres muntlig ved oppmøte i klassen. Det vil også gis en skriftlig beskrivelse av prosjektet. Det vil også gjøres en skriftlig henvendelse til ansvarlig ledelse ved skolen, dvs. rektor og avdelingsleder ved skolen.	Beskriv hvordan førstegangskontakten opprettes og oppgi hvem som foretar den. Les mer om dette på våre temasider.
Alder på utvalget	<input type="checkbox"/> Barn (0-15 år) <input type="checkbox"/> Ungdom (16-17 år) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Voksne (over 18 år)	
Antall personer som inngår i utvalget	30	
Inkluderes det myndige personer med redusert eller manglende samtykkekompetanse?	Ja ○ Nei ●	Begrunn hvorfor det er nødvendig å inkludere myndige personer med redusert eller manglende samtykkekompetanse.
Hvis ja, begrunn		Les mer om Pasienter, brukere og personer med redusert eller manglende samtykkekompetanse
8. Metode for innsamling av personopplysninger		
Kryss av for hvilke datainnsamlingsmetoder og datakilder som vil benyttes	<input type="checkbox"/> Spørreskjema <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Personlig intervju <input type="checkbox"/> Gruppeintervju <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Observasjon <input type="checkbox"/> Psykologiske/pedagogiske tester <input type="checkbox"/> Medisinske undersøkelser/tester <input type="checkbox"/> Journaldata <input type="checkbox"/> Registerdata <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annen innsamlingsmetode	Personopplysninger kan innhentes direkte fra den registrerte f.eks. gjennom spørreskjema, intervju, tester, og/eller ulike journaler (f.eks. elevmapper, NAV, PPT, sykehus) og/eller registre (f.eks. Statistisk sentralbyrå, sentrale helseregistre).
Annen innsamlingsmetode, oppgi hvilken	Elevtekster, videoobservasjon, lydopptak under intervju.	
Kommentar	Når det gjelder videoopptak er det klasseromsprosessene som vil analyseres på et gruppe/klassenivå, ingen individuelle data registreres fra videoopptak. Se under "Informasjonssikkerhet" for informasjon om databehandling/anonymisering.	

9. Datamaterialets innhold		
Redegjør for hvilke opplysninger som samles inn	Elevenes skriftlige tekster (oppgavebesvarelse), intervjudata med elevenes refleksjoner som kommer frem under intervju, feltnotater og videoopptak fra observasjon av klasseromsaktivitet. Globaliseringsfaktorer i elevenes familie (fra elevenes egne undersøkelser).	Spørreskjema, intervju-/temaguide, observasjonsbeskrivelse m.m. sendes inn sammen med meldeskjemaet. NB! Vedleggene lastes opp til sist i meldeskjema, se punkt 16 Vedlegg.
Samles det inn direkte personidentifiserende opplysninger?	Ja • Nei ○	Dersom det krysses av for ja her, se nærmere under punkt 11 Informasjonssikkerhet.
Hvis ja, hvilke?	<input type="checkbox"/> 11-sifret fødselsnummer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Navn, fødselsdato, adresse, e-postadresse og/eller telefonnummer	Les mer om hva personopplysninger er NB! Selv om opplysningene er anonymiserte i oppgave/rapport, må det krysses av dersom direkte og/eller indirekte personidentifiserende opplysninger innhentes/registreres i forbindelse med prosjektet.
Spesifiser hvilke		
Samles det inn indirekte personidentifiserende	Ja • Nei ○	En person vil være indirekte identifiserbar dersom det er mulig å identifisere vedkommende gjennom bakgrunnsopplysninger som for eksempel bostedskommune eller arbeidsplass/skole kombinert med opplysninger som alder, kjønn, yrke, diagnose, etc.
Hvis ja, hvilke?	Elevene samler inn informasjon om globaliseringsfaktorer i egen familie og seg selv. Elevene som brukes i forskningen vil bli anonymisert, og data som kan identifisere personer indirekte vil utelates i dataanalysen.	Kryss også av dersom ip-adresse registreres.
Samles det inn sensitive personopplysninger?	Ja • Nei ○	
Hvis ja, hvilke?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rasemessig eller etnisk bakgrunn, eller politisk, filosofisk eller religiøs oppfatning <input type="checkbox"/> Helseforhold <input type="checkbox"/> Seksuelle forhold <input type="checkbox"/> Medlemskap i fagforeninger	
Samles det inn opplysninger om tredjeperson?	Ja • Nei ○	Med opplysninger om tredjeperson menes opplysninger som kan spores tilbake til personer som ikke inngår i utvalget. Eksempler på tredjeperson er kollega, elev, klient, familiemedlem.
Hvis ja, hvem er tredjeperson og hvilke opplysninger registreres?	Elevene intervjuer familiemedlemmer om globaliseringsfaktorer i egen familie. Opplysninger om f.eks. ideologi, utdanning, migrasjon kan komme frem. Familiemedlemmene har full reservasjonrett og opplysninger vil anonymiseres i avhandlingen og slettes når forskningsprosessen er over. Tredjepersoner informeres med eget informasjonsbrev, se vedlegg.	
Hvordan informeres tredjeperson om behandlingen?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Skriftlig <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Muntlig <input type="checkbox"/> Informeres ikke	
Informeres ikke, begrunn		
10. Informasjon og samtykke		
Oppgi hvordan utvalget informeres	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Skriftlig <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Muntlig <input type="checkbox"/> Informeres ikke	Vennligst send inn informasjonsskrivet eller mal for muntlig informasjon sammen med meldeskjema.

Begrunn		<p>NB! Vedlegg lastes opp til sist i meldeskjemaet, se punkt 16 Vedlegg.</p> <p>Dersom utvalget ikke skal informeres om behandlingen av personopplysninger må det begrunnes.</p> <p>Last ned vår veiledende mal til informasjonsskriv</p>
Oppgi hvordan samtykke fra utvalget innhentes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Skriftlig <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Muntlig <input type="checkbox"/> Innhentes ikke	Dersom det innhentes skriftlig samtykke anbefales det at samtykkeerklæringen utformes som en svarslipp eller på eget ark. Dersom det ikke skal innhentes samtykke, må det begrunnes.
Innhentes ikke, begrunn		
11. Informasjonssikkerhet		
Direkte personidentifiserende opplysninger erstattes med et referansenummer som viser til en atskilt navneliste (koblingsnøkkel)	Ja <input checked="" type="radio"/> Nei <input type="radio"/>	Har du krysset av for ja under punkt 9 Datamaterialets innhold må det merkes av for hvordan direkte personidentifiserende opplysninger registreres.
Hvordan oppbevares navnelisten/koblingsnøkkelen og hvem har tilgang til den?	Navneliste er nødvendig for å kunne gjennomføre intervjuer med elever i etterkant av tekstanalysen. Navneliste oppbevares skriftlig (ikke på PC) i låsbart arkivskap som kun jeg har tilgang til.	NB! Som hovedregel bør ikke direkte personidentifiserende opplysninger registreres sammen med det øvrige datamaterialet.
Direkte personidentifiserende opplysninger oppbevares sammen med det øvrige materialet	Ja <input type="radio"/> Nei <input checked="" type="radio"/>	
Hvorfor oppbevares direkte personidentifiserende opplysninger sammen med det øvrige datamaterialet?		
Oppbevares direkte personidentifiserbare opplysninger på andre måter?	Ja <input type="radio"/> Nei <input checked="" type="radio"/>	
Spesifiser		
Hvordan registreres og oppbevares datamaterialet?	<input type="checkbox"/> Fysisk isolert datamaskin tilhørende virksomheten <input type="checkbox"/> Datamaskin i nettverkssystem tilhørende virksomheten <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Datamaskin i nettverkssystem tilknyttet Internett tilhørende virksomheten <input type="checkbox"/> Fysisk isolert privat datamaskin <input type="checkbox"/> Privat datamaskin tilknyttet Internett <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Videooptak/fotografi <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lydoptak <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notater/papir <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annen registreringsmetode	<p>Merk av for hvilke hjelpemidler som benyttes for registrering og analyse av opplysninger.</p> <p>Sett flere kryss dersom opplysningene registreres på flere måter.</p>

Annen registreringsmetode beskriv	Digitale lydopptak av intervju og videoopptak av klasseromsobservasjon. Alle videodata og lyddata slettes etter endt transkripsjon, men må lagres midlertidig på PC av hensyn til lagringskapasitet. Ingen personidentifiserbare data vil brukes fra lyd eller videoopptak. Datamateriale som lagres manuelt/på papir oppbevares i låsbart skap som kun jeg har tilgang til. Ingen sensitive opplysninger vil brukes fra lyd eller videoopptak. Når det gjelder videoopptak er det klasseromsprosessene som vil analyseres på et gruppe/klassenivå, ingen individuelle data registreres fra videoopptak.	
Behandles lyd-/videoopptak og/eller fotografi ved hjelp av datamaskinbasert utstyr?	Ja • Nei ○	Kryss av for ja dersom opptak eller foto behandles som lyd-/bildefil.
Hvordan er datamaterialet beskyttet mot at uvedkommende får innsyn?	PC er beskyttet med brukernavn og passord. PC står i låsbart rom, og kun jeg har tilgang til denne PC-en. All skriftlig materiale som fremvises til andre vil være anonymisert. Dvs. at navn byttes ut, og at andre opplysninger som kan føre til identifisering utelates eller omskrives til det ugjenkjennelige.	Er f.eks. datamaskintilgangen beskyttet med brukernavn og passord, står datamaskinen i et låsbart rom, og hvordan sikres bærbare enheter, utskrifter og opptak?
Dersom det benyttes mobile lagringsenheter (bærbare datamaskin, minnepenn, minnekort, cd, eksterne harddisk, mobiltelefon), oppgi hvilke	Alle prosjektdata vil lagres som sikkerhet på en ekstern harddisk. Dette for å sikre seg mot tapte data (backup). Ekstern lagringsenhet er passordbeskyttet og oppbevares i låsbart rom. Videoopptak og lydopptak lagres/spilles inn på minnekort, da dette er standard på digitalt lyd og videoutstyr. Video og lydopptak overføres til PC for mellomlagring før transkripsjon. Alle data vil da slettes fra minnekort.	NB! Mobile lagringsenheter bør ha mulighet for kryptering.
Vil medarbeidere ha tilgang til datamaterialet på lik linje med vanlig ansvar/student?	Ja ○ Nei •	
Hvis ja, hvem?		
Overføres personopplysninger ved hjelp av e-post/Internett?	Ja ○ Nei •	F.eks. ved bruk av elektronisk spørreskjema, overføring av data til samarbeidspartner/databehandler mm.
Hvis ja, hvilke?		
Vil personopplysninger bli utlevert til andre enn prosjektgruppen?	Ja ○ Nei •	
Hvis ja, til hvem?		
Samles opplysningene inn/behandles av en databehandler?	Ja ○ Nei •	Dersom det benyttes eksterne til helt eller delvis å behandle personopplysninger, f.eks. Questback,

Hvis ja, hvilken?		Synovate MMI, Norfakta eller transkriberingsassistent eller tolk, er dette å betrakte som en databehandler. Slike oppdrag må kontraksreguleres
12. Vurdering/godkjenning fra andre instanser		
Søkes det om dispensasjon fra taushetsplikten for å få tilgang til data?	Ja <input type="radio"/> Nei <input checked="" type="radio"/>	For å få tilgang til taushetsbelagte opplysninger fra f.eks. NAV, PPT, sykehus, må det søkes om dispensasjon fra taushetsplikten. Dispensasjon søkes vanligvis fra aktuelt departement.
Kommentar		Dispensasjon fra taushetsplikten for helseopplysninger skal for alle typer forskning søkes Regional komité for medisinsk og helsefaglig forskningsetikk
Søkes det godkjenning fra andre instanser?	Ja <input type="radio"/> Nei <input checked="" type="radio"/>	F.eks. søke registreier om tilgang til data, en ledelse om tilgang til forskning i virksomhet, skole, etc.
Hvis ja, hvilke?		
13. Prosjektperiode		
Prosjektperiode	Prosjektstart:01.11.2011 Prosjektslutt:01.01.2015	Prosjektstart Vennligst oppgi tidspunktet for når førstegangskontakten med utvalget opprettes og/eller datainnsamlingen starter. Prosjektslutt Vennligst oppgi tidspunktet for når datamaterialet enten skal anonymiseres/slettes, eller arkiveres i påvente av oppfølgingsstudier eller annet. Prosjektet anses vanligvis som avsluttet når de oppgitte analyser er ferdigstilt og resultatene publisert, eller oppgave/avhandling er innlevert og sensurert.
Hva skal skje med datamaterialet ved prosjektslutt?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Datamaterialet anonymiseres <input type="checkbox"/> Datamaterialet oppbevares med personidentifikasjon	Med anonymisering menes at datamaterialet bearbejdes slik at det ikke lenger er mulig å føre opplysningene tilbake til enkeltpersoner.NB! Merk at dette omfatter både oppgave/publikasjon og rådata. Les mer om anonymisering
Hvordan skal datamaterialet anonymiseres?	Alle navn vil bli byttet ut med uidentifiserbare navn. Opprinnelige navn slettes/destrueres etter endt transkripsjon. Informasjon som kan føre til identifisering av projektskole eller personer vil bli endret/anonymisert eller slettet.	Hovedregelen for videre oppbevaring av data med personidentifikasjon er samtykke fra den registrerte. Årsaker til oppbevaring kan være planlagte oppfølgingsstudier, undervisningsformål eller annet.
Hvorfor skal datamaterialet oppbevares med personidentifikasjon?		Datamaterialet kan oppbevares ved egen institusjon, offentlig arkiv eller annet.
Hvor skal datamaterialet oppbevares, og hvor lenge?		Les om arkivering hos NSD
14. Finansiering		
Hvordan finansieres prosjektet?	4-årig stipendiat fra NTNU	
15. Tilleggsopplysninger		
Tilleggsopplysninger		
16. Vedlegg		
Antall vedlegg	5	

ARTICLES

Article 1

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PEER REVIEWED ARTICLE

Young People Exploring Their Media Experiences

Mediagraphy as a Reflection Tool in Upper Secondary School

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ABSTRACT

This article explores how upper secondary students reflect on their media practices while participating in the learning activity of mediagraphy. Mediagraphy involves researching four generations of one's own family with respect to e.g. media use, identity, and education and then writing an essay based on this information. A case study is presented, in which mediagraphy was implemented in upper secondary school for the first time. The data sources are classroom observation, student essays, and interviews. The analysis is guided by a categorization of reflection types: qualification, competence, creativity, meta-perspectives, and critical reflection. The findings show that the students identify and question implicit characteristics of culture and society, and critically evaluate their own choices and actions in a media-saturated everyday life.

Keywords

Media education, media literacy, mediagraphy, critical reflection

INTRODUCTION

A reflective and critical viewpoint of one's everyday media experiences and the general media context has become an essential prerequisite for active participation in society (Buckingham, 2007; Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2011). Scholars therefore argue that learning activities developing media-literate students, defined as independent, critical and reflective media users and participants, should be emphasized in school settings (Arnolds-Granlund, 2010; Erstad, 2010; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011). However, the current most common teaching methods are, to a large extent, inadequate for such purposes (Gee, 2013; Kellner & Share, 2007; Østerud, 2012), and few studies have examined reflection as part of media literacy in school settings. In other words, we need to know more about what characterizes young people's reflections on their everyday media experiences and how such reflections can play a part in actual learning activities.

This article reports on an exploratory case study of 27 media students in a Norwegian upper secondary school where *mediagraphy* for the first time was


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implemented as a learning activity at an educational level other than tertiary education. In mediagraphy, students research four generations of their own families, looking for factors such as: media use and experiences, identity, lifestyle, education, and attitudes. The aim is to explore the students' reflections during the mediagraphy project, with a particular focus on how they reflected on their own media practices and how they understood these practices in light of historical-, cultural-, and media-related developments.

The following two key research questions guide the analysis and discussion:

- 1 *What characterizes upper secondary students' reflections on their own media practices while working with mediagraphy?*
- 2 *How do the students express their experience of mediagraphy as a reflection tool?*

MEDIAGRAPHY – A THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Global mediagraphy has been developed relatively recently; thus, there are only a few studies on its application. It was introduced by Rantanen (2005) as a method for examining the media as a driving force in the process of globalization. She studied this through the individual life stories of four generations in three families across the world. A 'mediagraphy table', which consisted of specific globalization factors, such as media use, sense of identity and belonging, lifestyle and education, was the main analytical tool. In this way, complex macro processes were connected to concrete experiences in the participants' individual lives. This table is presented in more detail in the method section. Rantanen (2005) remarked that exercises such as mediagraphy can lead to *self-reflexivity*. She found that when the research participants reflected on their own experiences and relations to other family members, they developed an awareness of similarities and differences across time and space. The potential pedagogical implications of mediagraphy were, however, sparsely described in Rantanen's (2005) study and require further investigation in pedagogical contexts.

Vettenranta (2010) applied the concept of global mediagraphy to higher education. Master's degree students were appointed as researchers studying four generations of their own families, including themselves. The students interviewed family members, and wrote a discussion based on the factors in Rantanen's mediagraphy table. Drawing on Vygotsky's (1986) distinction between everyday and scientific concepts, Vettenranta argued that the students' understanding benefitted from connecting concrete experiences and knowledge from their everyday life to systematic, abstract, and theoretical knowledge. This is a crucial point for media education – school is emphasized as an essential institution for developing young people's concrete media experiences into more conceptual knowledge (Buckingham, 2003; Burn & Duran, 2007; Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2011). The students gained insight into the

relationship between the media and globalization on the macro level and individual media practices on the micro level. Additionally, Vettenranta (2010, 2011) found that the students practiced self-reflection. Similar findings were reported from the pilot project for the present study (Schofield, 2012). It should be noted that for Rantanen and Vettenranta, a major concern was to examine aspects of globalization, whereas the focus in this article is more directed at young people's reflections as they work with mediagraphy. The method is thus here referred to as mediagraphy, without the prefix 'global'.

Ponte and Aroldi (2013) conducted a project similar to mediagraphy as part of a study titled 'Digital Inclusion and Participation'. Students at Master's level participated in 'focus group simulations' (p. 170), where they discussed media events and experiences over several generations. Additionally, the students wrote individual essays on this topic. Ponte and Aroldi (2013) found that the students developed a generational consciousness and a stronger theoretical understanding of media science and research methodology, which in turn empowered a sociological imagination and self-reflexivity.

Scholars commenting on mediagraphy have emphasized the method's potential for transformative educational implications (Havrevold, 2011; Orgeret, 2012; Østerud, 2011, 2012), but they have also pointed out a need to strengthen the methodological aspects of mediagraphy (Gilje, 2011; Nyre, 2010). With this background, an objective of the present study is to substantiate a more rigorous methodological and theoretical basis for the pedagogical implications of mediagraphy. In the following section, I will apply an analytical framework for reflection from a media education and media literacy perspective.

FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYZING REFLECTION

Qvortrup (2004) described today's society as a hypercomplexity made up of intricate networks and characterized by increasing uncertainty. This complexity is closely related to the technical, cultural, and social developments that have fundamentally changed the way we communicate and practice our social selves. Therefore, more complex knowledge and competence are required from the people living in this society. According to Qvortrup (2004), if we are to reduce complexity and uncertainty, we must be able to think reflexively. Through reflection, we can improve our ability to adopt a critically distanced perspective, reflect on our actions and act reflexively; and it is in this way that we are able to make choices and judgments.

Qvortrup's (2004) taxonomy of reflection allows for an analysis that takes into account both different types and levels of reflection (see also Fritze & Haugsbakk, 2012). The basis for this account is the different forms of knowledge, *qualifications*, *competencies*, *creativity*, and *meta-perspectives*. In the present study, the *qualification* level represents the knowledge that the students had of

the media and the technical skills that helped them to solve the task at hand. These skills could be used in the project, but this requires competence, which is the second level in the taxonomy. *Competence* involves learning about different concepts and understanding the task and genre that the mediagraphy text is to be written in. On the third, *creative* level, a task, for example, is approached independently, and competencies are used across different contexts. In the mediagraphy project, this corresponded to providing an individual angle to both form and content. As the participants are students in a practical-aesthetic programme, one could expect that they would include some creative elements in their assignments. On the *meta-perspectives level*, to reflect means that you see yourself externally and that you are able to identify developments in media and technology in a societal and historical context. In the mediagraphy project, an analysis of society and a form of self-understanding became equally important prerequisites for making such reflections; e.g., when a student wanted to articulate what significance social media has had in his or her everyday life.

Media literacy scholars have often explicitly emphasized the *critical* aspect of reflection (Burn & Durran, 2007; Jenkins, 2007). In this study, I view critical reflection in line with Reynolds (1998, p. 183), who defined it as an ability to identify and question 'the contextual taken-for-granted – social, cultural and political'. Similarly, but more oriented towards self-reflection, Wahlgren, Høytrup, Pedersen, and Rattleff (2002) argued reflection is the conscious evaluations we make on our actions and the consequences of them. The critical aspect adds considerations of *why* we should act in certain ways in certain situations. Critical reflection is not included in Qvortrup's framework, but it can be seen as part of both the creative and meta-perspective levels. However, I see the need to explicitly emphasize critical reflection as an analytical aspect. These various aspects of reflection are summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1. FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYZING REFLECTION

Knowledge forms	Student production
Qualifications	Different technical skills and everyday knowledge
Competencies	The use of skills and knowledge in a defined context – to be familiar with and able to apply concepts, genres and expressive forms
Creativity	Independent and creative approach to genres and expressive forms. Can be actualized through e.g. teaching that stimulates creative activities
Meta-perspectives	Seeing oneself from outside, and being able to place developments in media and technology in a societal and historical context
Critical reflection	Identifying and questioning the 'taken-for-granted', and critical evaluations of one's own choices and actions

(Adapted from Fritze & Haugsbakk, 2012, p. 258; Qvortrup, 2004; Reynolds, 1998; Wahlgren et al., 2002).

In the following analysis, I specifically focus on *mediated action*, which was advocated by Wertsch (1998) as the most informative unit of analysis in sociocultural research. According to Wertsch (1998), all human action is mediated through *mediational means*, such as everyday objects, technologies, and social institutions. Mediated action refers to different kinds of real-time actions where social actors, mediational means, and context intersect. I see the classroom discussions, the student texts and the interviews as different mediated actions that were made accessible to the students as they participated in the mediagraphy project. In other words, I analyze mediagraphy as a mediational means, which allows me to assign the different mediated actions with equal value in the analysis. In this way they can be taken into consideration to understand the various expressions for reflection that took place during the mediagraphy project.

Qvortrup's knowledge forms can be seen as something that can potentially be achieved through various learning processes. However, as Dalsgaard (2007) points out, a weakness in Qvortrup's taxonomy is that the relationship between the knowledge forms and learning processes is unclear. Therefore, I apply Wertsch's concept of mediated action to analyze how the students' interactions with mediagraphy as a mediational means are significant for their reflections. As such, Qvortrup's model represents a theoretical framework for categorizing the students' reflections, while Wertsch's concept of mediated action is the unit of analysis. Mediated action makes the students' different activities visible, each of them involving different types of reflections, and potentially different forms of knowledge.

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted for a period of five weeks during five to ten lessons per week in the autumn of 2011 in a class of 27 students attending the Vg3 General Studies Programme in Media and Communication at an upper secondary school in Norway. The gender distribution was 14 girls and 13 boys, all of Norwegian citizenship and ethnicity. Interviews with 13 selected students, 7 boys and 6 girls, were conducted in January/February 2012. The selection was made to illustrate a variety of characteristics, quality and work effort levels among the students. The project school offers primarily programmes for specialization in general studies, but also creative programmes like media and communication.

The Media and Communication Programme in Norway is a somewhat unique case for studying learning and teaching in the interface between in-school and out-of-school media practices. For the first two years, the programme is basically a vocational media education programme, and most of the classes are related to practical, creative media use and production. To date, few studies have explored the media students' media practices. A report by Erstad, Gilje, and de Lange (2007) described these students as 'heavy consum-

ers' of media, particularly the Internet, and as experienced media producers. Hence, on the one hand, this student group might have a particular need for skills to critically reflect on their media practices. On the other hand, they can provide special insight into how young people reflect on their media practices, as it can be assumed that these students have a plethora of media experiences to reflect upon.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

The study was conducted as an exploratory case study, which implies that a contemporary phenomenon is broadly investigated in its real-life context (Yin, 2013), in this case a classroom setting. Data was collected from a combination of several sources: participatory observation, interviews and an exploration of student products. The purpose of the research was presented to the participants and repeated when necessary, and endeavours were made to ensure that my presence as a researcher interfered as little as possible with the day-to-day activities (see e.g. Fangen, 2010). The student products are referred to as 'mediagraphy essays'. They are responses to a school assignment, but as they are based on reflections on experiences in the lives of the students and their families, they also have the characteristics of self-reflective subjective narratives and *life stories*. Life stories can serve as important data for studying the complex, equivocal relations between self and social context (Almås & Gullestad, 1990; Harrison, 2009). The interviews were semi-structured and 'focused', an interview type that, according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), resembles the in-depth interview, but is a narrower alternative. In this case, the interviews were based on the preliminary analysis of observations and the student products.

The reliability of this study is a matter of coherence between empirical data, analysis, and findings (Tjora, 2010). I have sought to achieve this through transparency, by explicating the analysis process and the underlying theoretical perspectives so that the readers can consider the credibility of the research (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006). An important step towards strengthening the study's validity – that the study investigates what was intended – was done through triangulation. A variety of methods was used to achieve several potential interpretations and to gain broad insight into the area of focus. Triangulation can also contribute to clarify meaning and to identify different realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The depth and breadth of data from one group of students can be considered as a strength of this study, as it reports on the introduction of a learning activity. This corresponds with Merriam's (2009) emphasis of case study as a design well suited for research on educational innovations. At the same time, this represents some of the limitations of the study: A relatively small sample was used and a singular case study does not allow comparisons with other student groups or other teaching methods. This is also related to the extent to which

the findings can be generalized. The findings cannot be statistically generalized, but they can be *analytically generalized*. This means that through confirmation or modification of theoretical concepts, or possible development of new concepts, it is possible to use the findings of this study to analyze other similar situations (Yin, 2013).

The analysis process made some data more relevant than others, which helped to 'open up the field', while certain concepts and theories enhanced the understanding of the phenomena that were observed and interpreted in the case study. This type of approach, which is characteristic of *analytical induction* (Erickson, 2012), involved a process where, on the first level, I coded the material according to themes and then framed tentative assertions. The relevant research questions and interpretations of the data then emerged. I gradually recognized common themes that were developed into analytical categories. The actual coding was conducted using the qualitative software NVivo 9/10.

THE STUDENT ASSIGNMENT

The practical task given to the students was to research one side of their family by collecting information about events and experiences in the lives of individuals from four generations, including the students themselves. This information was collected according to Rantanen's mediagraphy table, as shown in Table 2. This table is a conceptualization of various factors in the four individual lives, structured to allow both an understanding of each individual and a comparison across generations. After an introduction to the pertinent theory and concepts, the students collected the data, developed a research question and undertook an analysis; they then wrote an interpretative essay. The data collection included conducting qualitative interviews, for which the students used primary sources when possible and secondary sources when family members had died or were difficult to contact. Material was also obtained from other sources, such as parish records or photo albums. Each student then analysed his or her table data in the light of their own media experiences from everyday life. As such, the media and media development became the pivotal point for the students' further analysis.

TABLE 2. MEDIAGRAPHY TABLE

	Great-grandmother/Grandfather	Grandmother/Grandfather	Father/ Mother	Son/Daughter (the student)
Profession				
Home country				
Place				
Time				
Changes in lifestyle				
Education				
Changes in class				
Family				
Travel				
First journey abroad				
Languages spoken				
Media and communication				
Global media event*				
Interests				
Ideology				
Resistance to				
Identity				

* 'Global media event' is originally not used in Rantanen's (2005) research, but was added by the author and Rantanen in 2011 (adapted from Rantanen, 2005).

The following sections include analysis of the empirical data. Excerpts that illustrate the various mediated actions of the process are analysed in the following order: Classroom discussions, student texts, and interviews.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS: 'DECODING' EVERYDAY MEDIA EXPERIENCES

The observation data suggest that the class talks were most often based on the students' relationships to various phenomena in their everyday lives. As I interpret it, the students' everyday experiences became central for two reasons. First, it seems that this was more or less a conscious move by the teacher. Second, many of the topics obviously motivated the students to connect personal experiences with the issues that were raised in the classroom. The students familiarized themselves with relevant theory, and media use and events experienced in and through the media were associated with relevant scientific concepts.

The classroom activities show that the mediagraphy method includes not only individual reflections, but also collective meaning-making processes. An excerpt from Martin, Lars, and Sandra's group presentation midway into the project illustrates such collective processes where theories and concepts and personal media experiences are connected. This presentation was part of the preparation of their mediagraphy research; their task was to interpret media development in the time period of 1990 to the present date and the possible consequences of this. The group prepared a visual presentation and a graphic timeline. The audience was their classmates and their teacher.

- 1 Sandra: What we have chosen to do is to first make a timeline that you can use as you read about this
2 later. Then afterwards we'll talk a bit about what are like ... the consequences of what has
3 happened in this period. [...]
- 4 Martin: Right now we're living in a society where access to information is taken for granted, and
5 through the Internet, mobile phones and PC, we can be online almost everywhere and at any
6 time. [...] This free access probably makes it more open, and we have the possibility to lead a
7 more democratic and fair political life where the government isn't trying to keep things hidden.
8 [...] However, what is important to remember is to be critical of the sources because no matter
9 how credible things might appear, there are many who misuse their opportunity of publishing
10 information. And this brings us to the negative sides of this general access because it's more
11 and more difficult to edit and control expressions of opinion on the net. This is basically a
12 good thing if you think about democratic principles, but if users, for example, have the option
13 of being anonymous, then they often have the tendency to express somewhat stronger opinions
14 than usual. [...]
- 15 Sandra: Yes, I'm going to talk a little about [...] how social media changes our communication because
16 it has been very important in what we have talked about [...] Social media is very big, and
17 Facebook had 100 million new users in less than nine months, while radio used as much as 38
18 years to reach 50 million users. [...] Really, you could say that the Internet and traditional
19 media have developed from being a monologue into being a dialogue. Social media stands out
20 because it is less formal, more user-controlled, and is simply not controlled by the sender.
21 Several people describe this as a democratization of the freedom of speech because we have a
22 new voice and participate actively instead of passively, and the distinction between the sender
23 and receiver has in many ways faded. So, yeah ...

In Sandra's first statement, she was commenting on a graphic illustration (a timeline) of the media development from 1990 to the present. The illustration was designed by the group, and was thus a creative interpretation and an adaption of the theory they read in order to accomplish the task. In this case, the theory was taken from their syllabus literature, but online sources like Wikipedia were also important, as they were for the entire presentation. Martin gave a rather broad account of what he had learned about the last twenty years of media and technological development. At the same time, he discussed various aspects of the debate regarding the freedom of speech. The arguments were not necessarily something Martin had developed autonomously, as they could have been obtained from various sources, but he presented the arguments as if they represented his own opinion. His reflections were related to contemporary means of communication, such as the Internet, mobile phone, and PC, which Martin obviously interacts with every day. However, he connected his experience with these devices to theoretical considerations. He drew in, for example, democratization and the freedom of speech, which were topics covered in the students' syllabus. But Martin's statements here also fall under what we can call participation theories, although he did not use the concept of 'participation' explicitly. He captured both some negative aspects of general access to the media and positive aspects related to being able to contribute in society as citizens. This touches upon the point made by Kupiainen (2013, p. 117) that participation is not 'self-evident', even when participation is emphasized as an integral part of the media.

Lastly, Sandra discussed social media. She analysed the prevalence and characteristics of Facebook, and described it in relation to different communication models and democracy. She used acquired knowledge to analyse her own media use. As such, the application of scientific concepts became a mediated action (cf. Wertsch, 1998) that enabled Sandra to describe and interpret the significance the media has to her and others. Sandra's description of the growth of social media (lines 16–18) is information that can be found through Internet searches. Sandra used this information to make reflections about the Internet's rapid growth and linked this to key aspects in media studies, like user control, young people's 'voice' in the media and the freedom of speech.

These participants were, as I see it, in a process of decoding their media experiences, as they were attempting to understand them in the light of concepts and theories from media studies (e.g., lines 4–8, 18–20), and also from other fields of knowledge and general issues (e.g., lines 21–23). They were tentatively interpreting their thoughts about media in terms of some generally accepted ways of thinking within the discourse of media studies and were using concepts that were focused on during the mediagraphy project. This was confirmed in the interviews, although the degree to which the participants valued the significance of the joint sessions varied. Additionally, both Martin (lines 9–14) and Sandra (lines 18–20) reflected on a meta-level, as they articulated and placed developments in media and technology.

The classroom discussions can be said to mediate (cf. Wertsch, 1998) a more complex imagery of historical events and concepts. Mediagraphy can thus be described as a method to visualize theories and to link personal stories and experiences to scientific concepts. The students were using knowledge on the qualification level (cf. Qvortrup, 2004) in a defined context while they were trying to explain and apply various concepts. This characterizes knowledge on the competence level and corresponds with Vettenranta's (2010) findings in the sense that the students associated concrete experiences with abstract theories.

MEDIAGRAPHY ESSAYS: META-PERSPECTIVES AND IDENTIFYING THE 'TAKEN-FOR-GRANTED'

In this section, I have chosen to examine the mediagraphy essay of one student, Martin. Even though Martin can be described as a high-achieving student, I consider his essay to be representative of the class, because many of the participants used scientific concepts and ways of thinking to reflect on a meta-level on complex issues concerning both society *and* themselves. Martin's essay was titled 'Mediated Experiences Through a Globalization Perspective'. Experiences in 'real life' and as mediated through different media were the recurring theme in his story.

Through his great-grandmother ‘Kari’, grandfather ‘Hans’, mother ‘Jane’, and ‘Martin’ himself, he reflected on how increased media use and a more media-saturated society have made global media events less ‘shocking’ and easier to forget. Martin’s great-grandmother has never forgotten Fridtjof Nansen’s public speech about ‘the new Norway’, which he gave in her hometown in 1928. Grandfather Hans was deeply affected by apartheid, and Jane had nightmares because of the TV images of starving children in Biafra. Bearing such examples in mind, Martin discussed his own media experiences and claimed that the contemporary abundance of global media events has gradually made him more indifferent to dramatic incidents portrayed in the media. He outlined these ideas against the larger backdrop of globalization and media development. In the introduction, he provided a background for his research question: ‘Do mediated events affect us as strongly as they used to?’

1 In this assignment, I will try to find an answer to how mediated experiences have changed over time,
2 how the experiences in themselves have changed and how the impacts of the experiences have changed.
3 Subsequently I will link this to the much-discussed concept of globalization. All this is based on
4 interviews conducted with my mother, my grandfather and my great-grandmother.

In this excerpt, Martin created a basis for meta-perspectives (cf. Qvortrup, 2004) and critical reflections (cf. Reynolds, 1998) related to ‘mediated experiences’ and ‘globalization’. He wanted to analyse some type of cultural and historical development (‘how mediated experiences have changed over time’). Moreover, he attempted to understand how the experiences have changed (lines 2–3), which required an effort to gain insight into media and technological development as well as social and cultural developments. Like most of the participants, Martin used a number of different information sources in addition to the information from his family members. He made use of sources such as *Store Norske Leksikon* (the *Great Norwegian Encyclopedia*), Rantanen’s *Media and Globalization* (2005), Wikipedia, and other Internet services and information from other school subjects’ textbooks. Through this, Martin found that concepts like globalization are not one-dimensional; on the contrary they are controversial and have different interpretations and applications. This can be seen in line 3, where Martin wrote about ‘the much-discussed concept of globalization’. Line 4 shows that Martin used his interpretations of specific experiences to understand and reflect on phenomena such as globalization and mediation. The external perspective involves the meta-perspective, while the identification of societal and cultural traits involves critical reflection.

The conclusion in Martin’s essay could be understood as a comment intended for the reader or for himself. He reflected on the research process, his struggles in understanding concepts and his own work.

1 Throughout this period, I have researched and tried to understand concepts such as globalization and
2 mediation, and I have tried to link them to my own family. I have found parallels, and I clearly see how
3 globalization increases in strength from one generation to the next.

This can be seen as a type of self-reflection that requires the ability to see one-self externally (cf. Wahlgren et al., 2002). Moreover, the statement on line 3 suggests firstly that Martin gained some kind of understanding of the concept and the phenomenon globalization and secondly that he identified a feature of society that, to some extent, is taken for granted (Reynolds, 1998).

The process of writing mediagraphy essays was a mediated action where the students indulged in detailed work with data from interviews as well as with theories and concepts. They also employed knowledge and skills from other areas and subjects. As such, a more complex understanding of society, globalization, the media and themselves was mediated, making more complex and multifaceted reflections possible.

INTERVIEWS: INCIPIENT CRITICAL REFLECTION

The interviews with a sample of participants were conducted about eight weeks after the project was completed. The participants reflected on various aspects of the project, such as their own learning, their thoughts about the project and their sense and understanding of themselves in the present time. The reflections became more personal and incipient critical perspectives were more apparent than in the other phases of the project. An example of such reflections can be seen in the interview with Frank, who reflected on identity and media development. In the interview, he discussed values and ethics and described his own personal stance.

- 1 Frank: Yes, I wasn't really that ... what should I call it? – Absolutely certain ... when I talked about
2 my identity before I had gone through and got into it through this assignment. It's first after the
3 assignment that it has become something that I ... bring up and that I'm really interested in.
4 [...]
5 Daniel: [...] The enormous media developments, if we can call it that, [...] what do you think about
6 that, in relation to this project? [...]
7 Frank: In relation to identity and things like that? [...] Yes – well, it's- if you think about Facebook
8 and stuff, it's like a cry to show off who you are ... this in turn has to do with identity.
9 Daniel: Yes...
10 Frank: People feel like telling about what they are up to and what they do... and it's like some of it –
11 which I write about – that's the new version of identity. [...] Is that people ... are tired of
12 generalizations and stigmatization and stuff, and they rather want to tell their life story and
13 what they do and stuff and let people decide from *that* who they are. [...] This kind of
14 reflection, it can be drawn into a lot of different things, like... that has a lot to do with
15 prejudices, and ... today racism, homophobia, and things like that.

Different societal issues that were articulated during the mediagraphy project are the basis for Frank's reflections here, and specific self-perceived concerns are mirrored with his own attitudes and judgments. Frank reflected on his own work process, took a meta-perspective and evaluated his own choices (lines 1–2), possible outcomes of the project, and his own learning process (lines 2–3), which implies some level of understanding of a sociocultural practice. At the same time, the concept of 'identity' was brought into the discussion as a notion that he had learned about and had started to apply in different situations outside this project. In lines 7–8, Frank drew his understanding of identity into an analysis of a social medium. This can be understood as asking

critical questions about traits in his immediate societal context. To some extent, he also considered a practice he himself was part of.

Lines 10–15 illustrate that Frank had actively investigated situations in his own lifeworld as well as in a larger context, suggested conclusions and made judgments. Moreover, he added a further understanding of the concept of identity to this and took a critical position on how people he knew were performing their social practices in social media. In this, I also read an inherent critical consideration of his own choices (cf. Wahlgren et al., 2002). As can be seen in lines 13–15, Frank mentioned general topics like racism and homophobia. These are concepts that, to some extent, contain implicit critical perspectives, and he used them to ask critical questions about phenomena he has identified and reflected on during and after this project. It seems that for Frank, both the mediagraphy method and the interview are tools that mediate critical reflection in the sense that the reflections include contemplations on the purpose and possible consequences of one's own and others' actions. He also identified and questioned characteristics of his own social and cultural contexts (cf. Reynolds, 1998).

DISCUSSION

In a complex environment such as a classroom, there will inevitably be considerable variations among students when it comes to commitment, invested effort, performance, and learning outcomes. This was also the case with this study. Nonetheless, some trends could be identified regarding reflection and critical reflection. Analysis of the classroom discussions, texts and interviews as different mediated actions indicates that mediagraphy mediates reflections that link the students' everyday media experiences to a broader sociocultural and historical context. Through Qvortrup's (2004) taxonomy, an account of the findings according to the research questions is possible. The first research question was: *What characterizes upper secondary students' reflections on their own media practices while working with mediagraphy?*

As shown in excerpts above, the students' media experiences were included as a starting point for the classroom activities. The teacher encouraged this, but the students also spontaneously based their reflection on their own media experiences and applied their existing media-related knowledge and skills. This corresponds to the *qualification* level. As the project progressed, many of the students applied certain scientific concepts and ways of thinking to their reasoning. This was the case with the excerpt from the group presentation. As such, classroom activities like joint talks and prepared presentations are mediated actions that include reflections on the *competence* level; a knowledge form that, in line with Qvortrup (2004), has a potential general value beyond the specific situation through the use of scientific concepts.

The *creative* level in Qvortrup's framework entails taking an independent approach to the task and to the involved genre. This characterizes the reflections in many of the students' essays. This group of students seemed to be familiar with practical project work and was able to apply the mediagraphy method to their own lifeworlds; they investigated and tried to understand a variety of issues in an independent way. As such, mediagraphy mediated reflections on the creative level when the students explored the 'real world' from a personal perspective. As Martin's example illustrates, in their mediagraphy essays, the students took an outsider's point of view on themselves as well as on more general, societal issues. A special feature of mediagraphy seems to be that the articulation of individual life experiences in specific contexts is coupled with the analysis of the larger general context. As such, the essays were also characterized by *meta-perspectives* directed both on the students themselves and on the general, societal, historical and media-related contexts. As I see it, the written form of the essay and the time involved in the research process mediates such kinds of reflections.

Critical reflection became an important aspect of the interviews. The students reflected on issues they had identified in their process and questioned aspects they had, at least to some extent, taken for granted prior to the project. The example of Frank shows a student who evaluated the contexts surrounding him and that he was a part of. He also explicitly took a stand on an issue and judged it. As such, the interviews in themselves became meaning-making processes. In this way, they mediated both self-evaluation and the evaluation of the project in addition to reflections on the significance of the learning involved. In a sense, this underscores the importance of retrospective reflection of such a process, particularly with respect to potential learning outcome.

The interviews involved several types of reflection, including evaluation, self-reflection and reflections on a *meta*-level. The second research question (*How do the students express their experience of mediagraphy as a reflection tool?*) was illuminated here. The mediagraphy project was based on personal experiences, and it therefore had different meanings for different participants. The way the students reflected emerges as a common outcome, which is something that many of the participants also emphasized in their interviews. The students stated, for instance, that mediagraphy made them 'think of something' in a 'new' way; they applied concepts they did not know – or familiar concepts in a new way. Several also expressed, like Frank, that the concepts in some way mediated 'seeing' something in themselves or in society. In sum, this indicates that mediagraphy does not have a one-dimensional learning outcome. A somewhat more complex picture must be drawn to capture what comes out of such a complex project.

As described in the method section, there are certain limitations associated with a singular case study such as this. In these limitations, some guidelines for further research on mediagraphy in education can be found. Research on

mediagraphy applied in different groups of students in different disciplines, as well as at different ages, is welcome. Attention can also be directed to potential learning outcome of the method set against specific learning objectives, concepts or theories by comparing mediagraphy with other ways of learning.

When applied in upper secondary school with students who are experienced media users and producers, mediagraphy can be a project that mediates reflections that are rooted in the students' lifeworlds and that touches on their concerns and interests. Insight into media development and media use seems to be essential both for analyzing the social context and for a reflexive understanding of oneself. In this way, the media can be seen as a link between the individual and society, and in accordance with this, insight into the media can be seen as a key to understanding the interdependence between media use, identity and social context. As such, mediagraphy can potentially be a response to media literacy scholars who express the need for learning activities that develop media literate, reflective citizens who master the complexity of today's and tomorrow's culture.

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Article 2

Schofield, D., & Kupiainen, R. (2015). Young People's Narratives of Media and Identity: Mediagraphy as Identity Work in Upper Secondary School. *Nordicom Review*, 36(1).

Young People's Narratives of Media and Identity

Mediagraphy as Identity Work in Upper Secondary School

Daniel Schofield & Reijo Kupiainen

Abstract

The article explores how upper secondary students use the learning activity mediagraphy to reflect on their identity and on media as constraining and enabling factors in their social practice. In mediagraphy, the students research four generations of their own families, including themselves. They write a mediagraphy essay on the differences and similarities across the generations in media use and turning points in individuals' lives, in addition to societal and media-related developments. Data from student products and interviews are analysed through three "identity dilemmas" that any identity claim faces: the constant navigation between 1) continuity and change, 2) sameness and difference with regard to others, and 3) agency as "person-to-world" and "world-to-person". The findings suggest that mediagraphy is a type of identity work that can potentially help students develop an agentive identity in a time of insecurity, with rapidly shifting social and cultural conditions and increasing media density.

Keywords: mediagraphy, identity, agency, media use, media education, media literacy

Introduction

Young people's everyday lives are, at least in the media-saturated Western world, full of connections with various media devices and contents, from early morning to late evening – and sometimes also throughout the night. Media innovations continually make new types of social practice possible, but the media can also limit young people's social conduct, for example by determining where and how communication takes place, and especially by placing restrictions on use of time. Many everyday routines and rituals are developed alongside media use, and at the same time the media provide material for negotiating and defining social identities. As Stuart Hall (1996:4) puts it, identities are "constituted within, not outside representation", but also within different media practices and uses. Hence, in the context of media education, several scholars claim it has become crucial to reflect on one's own media use and one's relations to the media culture (Buckingham 2007; Burn & Durran 2007; Jenkins 2007). Consequently, we need educational initiatives that can foster an understanding of how media-dominated everyday life plays into young people's identity (Gauntlett 2007; Kaare 2008; Lankshear & Knobel 2007).

Mediagraphy has been used as a learning activity in media education to help students reflect on their own media relations (Schofield 2014; Vettentranta 2010b). Students are

appointed as researchers and study four generations of their own families, including themselves. They write a mediagraphy essay on the differences and similarities across the family's generations in, e.g., development of the media, media use and turning points in individuals' lives, in addition to societal developments. Daily media use is an important starting point for the students' reflections (Schofield 2014). As such, the method renders everyday life visible, and sheds light on the individual's own media connections. Through the students' cross-generational research, their personal media histories are connected to an extended timespan. From this perspective, the meaning of media goes beyond practical function, and becomes more a matter of social practices and identity work.

The present article aims to explore how upper secondary students reflect on their identity, and on the media as a constraining and enabling factor in their social practice. A case study of a class with 27 students attending Vg3¹ General Studies in Media and Communication in an upper secondary school in Norway forms the basis of the discussion. Mediagraphy was implemented as a learning activity for the first time at an educational level other than tertiary education. The key research questions are:

What characterizes upper secondary students' reflections on their identity during their work with mediagraphy, and how do they depict the media as an agentive factor in their social practice?

Mediagraphy as a Learning Activity

Vettenranta (2010a, 2010b) developed Rantanen's (2005) global mediagraphy into a teaching method with master's degree students. The aim was to understand the connections between globalization, identity and the media. Vettenranta shows how Rantanen's mediagraphy table (Table 1) – consisting of different globalization factors, such as sense of identity, media use and experiences, lifestyle and education – became a framework for understanding how individuals have experienced globalization across cultures, generations and locations. Vettenranta claims that the students gained insight into media developments and the globalization process on the societal macro-level and individual experiences and media practices on the micro-level. Moreover, they learned about their identity in terms of being able to identify how the media has played an essential role in their life conduct, social practice and communication. One of the most significant pedagogical implications is that the students exercised and developed competencies such as self-reflection and evaluation (Vettenranta 2010b). The latter point is supported by findings from the present study (Schofield 2014).

We seek to investigate whether mediagraphy can also provide knowledge of how identities are constructed by and through a number of factors in individuals' social, cultural, historical and, especially, media-related contexts. We aim to discover whether the students gain insights into differences and similarities between generations and individuals in their family, and see changes and stability over time. As globalization is not a key issue for the present analysis, the learning activity is simply referred here to as "mediagraphy".

In the following, we will, in the context of media education and media literacy, apply an analytical approach to how identity and narratives are connected.

Identity and the Media

From a cultural studies perspective, the concept of identity is strategic and positional, not essentialist, nor does it refer to the stable core of the self. On the contrary, it is fragmented and fractured, “constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions” (Hall 1996:4). Identity arises from the narrativization of the self, but this formation has some practical dilemmas when people navigate their identity narratives. From a sociocultural perspective, Bamberg (2011:6) argues that any claim of identity faces three dilemmas. One has to:

(1) Constantly navigate between continuity and change. The starting point of mediagraphy is not only an individual's own media relations but also the social life of different generations and their relations to the media. Mediagraphy then can be a basis for students to understand the changes in media use and the meaning of the media in the lives of older generations, but also what is consistent over time.

(2) Deal with a concurrent connection between sameness and difference (between self and other). The comparison between oneself and others comes into play both when the students research other individuals and when they discuss findings in the classroom context. Potentially the students will be able to identify traits that are similar to other people while also seeing what is unique in themselves.

(3) Manage the reciprocal connection between agency as “person-to-world” and as “world-to-person”. Agency can be seen as a crucial notion for understanding the active engagement and control actors have in different contexts; the way people understand their past, future and present makes a difference for how they act (Emirbayer & Mische 1998). According to Emirbayer and Mische (1998), agency is constructed temporally as actors engage in different structural environments, and is both reproduced and transformed through habit, imagination and judgment in interactive response to the various problems related to changing historical situations.

From our point of view, agency is an essential aspect of identity, but nevertheless inextricably linked to social and cultural contexts (see Ahearn 2001; Holland, Lachicotte Jr., Skinner, & Cain 1998; Wertsch, Tulviste, & Hagstrom 1993). Biesta and Tedder (2007:6) argue that people in certain sociocultural situations actually “shape their orientations”, and thus “exert” their agency. In other words, agency is something that is possible to achieve, and hence learn and develop. To create a narrative, one uses sets of cultural tools, resources and relationships that can help in the development of agentive identities (Hull & Katz 2006; Ochs & Capps 1996). In this light, narratives can potentially create coherence from fragmented experiences, place the narrator in time and space and, not least, contribute to self-understanding.

Context of the Study

The article is based on an empirical case study conducted in a classroom setting. Mediagraphy was implemented as a learning activity in a class of 27 students attending the Vg3 General Studies Programme in Media and Communication in an upper secondary school in Norway. The project was conducted over the course of five weeks, five to ten lessons per week, in October/November 2011. Elisabeth, the teacher, mainly led the class

project while the first author, as the field researcher, assumed the role of a participant observer. Additionally, he was an advisor for Elisabeth, as she had no practical experience of mediagraphy prior to this project.

The class consisted of 14 girls and 13 boys of Norwegian citizenship and ethnicity. In January/February 2012, 13 students, seven boys and six girls, were selected for interviews. They were selected with a view to obtaining a broad insight into student types, quality of student products and work effort levels. The school primarily offers programmes for specialization in general studies, but also creative education programmes such as Media and Communication.

In the Media and Communication programme in Norway, most of the classes during the first two years are related to practical, creative media use and production. Erstad, Gilje, and de Lange (2007:8) describe these students as “heavy consumers” of media, particularly the Internet, and most of them as relatively experienced media producers. As such, this education programme potentially offers a unique case for studying the interplay between media development, media use and identity. As we see it, the main objective of the programme is to enhance students’ media literacy skills. For example, a key goal in the curriculum for the common core subject at the Vg3 level is that students should be able to “evaluate the media as a socializing factor and the media’s ability to influence individuals and society” (Udir 2008:2).

Method

Here, we mainly focus on data from student products and interviews. The student products, called “mediagraphy essays”, are responses to a school assignment, but as they are also based on reflections on actual experiences in the lives of the students and their families, they resemble life stories, or personal, self-reflective and subjective narratives (Almås & Gullestad 1990). According to several social scientists, life stories can be important data for studying the complex dualistic relations between the self and the social context (Giddens 1991; Goodson 2000; Harrison 2009). The interviews are semi-structured and “focused”, which, according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), is a narrower version of the in-depth interview. In this case, we created an interview guide based on a tentative analysis of observations and student products.

We zoom in on mediated action when analysing the data. Wertsch (1998) argues that this is the most informative unit of analysis in sociocultural research. Mediated action is a real-time action where mediational means, social actors and the sociocultural environment intersect. Wertsch (1998) claims that all human actions are mediated through such cultural tools as everyday objects, technologies, social institutions and so on. In the present study, this will apply to the student products as actions taking place between the students and the learning activity of mediagraphy. The interviews are seen as a mediated action where the interviewer (the first author) and the students are social actors in a particular meaning-making context, i.e. the interviews are not seen as a means of grasping “true experience”.

In the analysis process, some aspects emerged as more relevant than others and “opened up the field”. In turn, certain theories and concepts enhanced our understanding of the phenomena that the case study revealed. Such an approach is characteristic of analytical induction (Erickson 2012). We coded the material according to themes

before tentative assertions were framed, after which emerging research questions and interpretations of the data became apparent. Progressively, common themes were recognized that developed into analytical categories. The qualitative software NVivo 9/10 aided in the practical coding process.

Several essays contained other modalities than the written word, for example images, graphics and illustrations. Multimodal texts involve several sign systems and thus an increased meaning potential (Kress 2003). In our analysis, we turn to Bauman and Brigg's (1990) tangible analytical concepts. They argue that authors exercise agency when they compose various types of text. If, for example, images are used in a montage, they are decontextualized from their original context and recontextualized as a reflective process. In other words, the use of images is not merely a detached representation but also a new reflection and meaning-making. Meaning from the original context is still present, but the text must be interpreted as a new form with new functions and meaning (Hull & Katz 2006).

Epistemology and Mediagraphy

Important epistemological issues are raised when students are asked to conduct their own research. In many ways the balance of power in the classroom is put to the test – the students become agents who co-construct the concept of knowledge in interaction with the teachers, the researcher, the teaching material and teaching methods. As such, the present study rests on a social constructionist concept of knowledge (see e.g. Delanty & Strydom 2003), and focuses on the students' meaning-making as an active process in social practices. Different types of information do not have intrinsic meaning, but rather have "meaning potential" that is open to interpretation (Linell 2009). Knowledge is thus not generated in isolation by the teacher or any other actor, but is created in the interaction between different actors and is highly contextually dependent.

Individuals' narratives are at the centre of the students' research. Although the ideal in modern science has been absolute, objective knowledge, it has in recent decades gradually become more accepted to draw on people's stories as representations of social reality and as a form of knowledge (Bruner 1991; Johansson 2005). The most important aspect of the data collected by the students is, in this light, not their potential status as "facts". The data can however contribute to insight into how social reality is constructed, and to broadening the students' existing understandings of different phenomena.

The Student Assignment

The practical student assignment was to research individuals from four generations on one side of their own family, including the students themselves, with respect to different events and experiences in their lives. Rantanen's mediagraphy table (Table 1) was used for the data collection; it conceptualizes a number of factors in four individuals' lives and puts them in relation to each other. The data were then analysed in light of today's media society and the students' everyday media experiences.

The teacher introduced the theory and concepts before the students started their data collection, where qualitative interviews were the main method. Whenever possible, the students used primary sources, but when family members had died or were difficult to

Table 1. Mediagraphy table (adapted from Rantanen 2005)

	Great-grandmother/ Grandfather	Grandmother/ grandfather	Father/ mother	Son/Daughter (the student)
Profession				
Home country				
Place				
Time				
Changes in lifestyle				
Education				
Changes in class				
Family				
Travel				
First journey abroad				
Languages spoken				
Media and communication				
Global media event				
Interests				
Ideology				
Resistance to				
Identity				

contact, secondary sources were important. Some students used additional material, such as photo albums, videos or parish records. The students developed a research question, undertook an analysis and wrote an interpretative mediagraphy essay. An assignment guide that proposed a structure for the essay aided the students. The students were expected to make use of their textbooks and supplementary sources to employ subject theories and terminology. Length was set at around 1500-2500 words.

Martha and Frank: Two Students as Examples

We focus our analysis on two students' essays and interviews. They do not constitute a representative selection of the class, but illustrate different ways of approaching the mediagraphy project and ways of making sense of the topic. We intend to use Martha's and Frank's examples to present a rich exploration of the types of reflections and narratives produced during the project. A broad analysis of the data from the whole class creates an imperative background for the discussion that follows.

Martha solved the task by adhering quite closely to the teacher's suggestions. In the interview, she states that she has an "instinct-like" approach to school tasks, in the sense that she wants to achieve good results in school and that she generally makes a great effort. Frank's process has a different point of departure. Frank explicitly stated in the interview that initially he was opposed to the task, and displayed overt resistance during the project. Observational data show that he went through a process of change involving a somewhat unexpected turn, as it seems he was one of the students with the most pronounced learning outcomes. Moreover, Frank's case sheds light on other ways of making sense of identity and different kinds of expression than in Martha's case.

Martha's Mediagraphy: Mediated Social Practices and Physical Activity

Martha's mediagraphy essay addresses how her family members' social practices have changed in step with general developments in society and in the media in particular. She reviews her family members' biographies relatively thoroughly before comparing the generations and reflecting on differences and similarities. Martha has not been able to go further back than to her grandfather as it was difficult to find information on her great-grandparents' generation. She writes about a family that has lived relatively stable lives, and the generations have largely been settled in the same region of the country. Martha's essay stretches back to the forties, and thus media history, from the radio era to the Internet age, has a central place.

From media history through the family's media relations Martha turns to her concern to the decline in physical activity among young people today, herself included. In her eyes, this development is due to the media-dominated everyday lives young people lead. How time is spent seems to be an important issue for many of the students in this class. Several students turn to self-reflection and "see" that they spend a lot of time in and through the media – social media in particular, which has become one of the main ways to communicate and socialize, contrary to previous generations. This finding is hardly surprising, as most students probably are well aware of the trend towards more intensive media use in the Western world. What is perhaps special here is the articulation of the life experiences that they encountered. This made it possible to compare with other individuals in other generations, which seems to facilitate reflections on what the differences and similarities actually consist of, and how quickly the changes have manifested themselves in social and cultural patterns. The excerpt below illustrates how Martha expresses some of the differences between herself and her mother.

Martha: Excerpt 1

I see a clear difference between me and my mother. Mum had one Barbie doll as a child, no TV, no Internet and no mobile phone with games. She had to get out of the house to entertain herself, and often she ended up with bumps, fractures or sprains. [...] I, on the other hand, who grew up in the nineties and early two thousands, never hurt myself besides some slivers and bruises. I think this is because I have had more access to indoor entertainment. First and foremost, I had a lot more toys because mom and dad were working and earned good money. Later I was also allowed to play video games on Dad's mac.

When Martha reflects on differences and similarities between herself and others (here primarily her mother), she is orienting herself to Bamberg's dilemmas (1) and (2). She navigates between continuity and change, not only between generations but also in herself in the media-saturated world. In fact, her essay emphasizes reflection on how she has undergone change at the same time as she "is herself". Dilemma 3, the agency dilemma, arises when Martha addresses access to media, toys and leisure. She writes about "being allowed" to play video games, and touches on the question of who decides over her media use, indicating that special rules apply to computer gaming. As Bamberg (2011) writes, the question of agency begins by asking whether "I" construct the world as it is or if "me" is constructed by the world. From the perspective of media education,

this is usually a question of “media effects” in the individual’s life, and media use within families involves continuous negotiation over use and time spent with the media. But as we see, this is also a question of agency and identity.

In Excerpt 2, Martha reflects on her own actual use of media and how her media use constrains and enables social actions. While her mother did not have any easy or convenient access to modern media during her childhood, Martha’s early years and her present are both characterized and dominated by a wide range of different types of media.

Martha: Excerpt 2

When it comes to media use, I use my computer and the Internet a lot, TV and iPod for music, and of course my mobile phone, which is most important. I’ve become addicted to Facebook, which I feel is necessary to keep up with my group of friends, and I can’t leave the house without my mobile phone. I use TV mostly for watching entertainment programmes and movies, but lately my interest in news has grown. I’ve also started reading newspapers, but mainly read the comic strips. I prefer reading news on Internet newspapers, as the articles there are shorter and more to the point.

Martha has many reference points to different types of media use, and her narrative comprises broad and extensive media use. A recurring issue is precisely how her life is framed and partially structured by her media use, and thus by developments within technology and in the media world. On the one hand, Martha writes about media use limiting her leisure activities and social actions; on the other, her media use opens up a wide range of opportunities for social practice, learning, communication and so on. Media use is hence portrayed both as a powerful facilitator for and as a constraint on Martha’s sense of agency, so these reflections are accounts of how Martha experiences the dilemma of being an agent. Martha depicts the Internet as something that has opened her eyes to new interests and also as a space where she can develop and maintain a variety of interests. At the same time, our interpretation is that Martha is concerned that her interests outside the media world have lost ground compared to technology-mediated experiences. In the discussion section, Martha elaborates on this by comparing findings from the different generations:

Martha: Excerpt 3

In the forties, people didn’t have anything but radio and newspapers. For extra enjoyment they went to the cinema in the city. At this time people were much more active than today. Children, for example, didn’t sit in their rooms all day staring into a screen, they were outside playing [...]. Really this sounds like a much healthier childhood than what we see today, although it’s difficult to do anything about it. [...] When the children’s TV channels came to Norway many parents were relieved because their children could sit and watch cartoons while they could take a nap or get some work done in peace and quiet. [...] Today children have so much to occupy themselves with, and thus they can easily opt out of activities such as football, “hide and seek”, tag, skipping rope and such, and rather choose to sit inside playing with toys, playing computer games, or watching cartoons.

The agency dilemma is an overarching theme here, as Martha describes how our social practices to some extent are constrained by such factors as media use or our financial situation, factors that also give us options for social action. Thus, for Martha, everyday media use and media developments have powerful influences on how she is able to conduct her life, in combination with other sociocultural trends, such as economic growth in Norway, and technological advances that have given children and young people more toys, more technical appliances and more recreational activities. In Excerpt 4, Martha is concerned with the consequences of the media on a societal, global level.

Martha: Excerpt 4

Another negative point about the media's enormous development is that most people are not as socially active as they used to be before. [...] Today everything that is social happens through Facebook, the largest social media we have. [...] The development within the media might be contributing to the growing obesity problem we are facing today. Obese children were a rarity in the forties, but today, with the mass production of unhealthy food and the growing "sofa lifestyle", overweight children are becoming more and more common.

Martha identifies traits both on an individual level, which in some way constrains her present in a quite direct way, and on a macro-level, which also sets limits on her sense of agency, however, in a more implicit, subtle way.

Martha's Process

Martha evaluates the significance of the project in her interview. She expresses that the process of conducting research through interviewing family members meant acquiring a new type of understanding of both her present life and the past, but also her future.

It's actually kind of important to remember that things were not that easy before, like they are now. 'Cause I have an iPhone that I can use for taking pictures and for going on the Internet and everything is possible, really, anytime. [...] it's like history, right – it's important that we know our history so that we're able to develop further, and so that we're able to avoid mistakes being made again. [...] It's not until now I sort of see how helpful these texts really are, because the more we write down and think about history and think about where we are now, the more we come to understand it later. [...] And I think that's very important.

As we see, Martha argues that her findings are important for her now, but also for future choices and challenges. We interpret that the mediagraphy project has had actual value for her because it revolves around her on a personal level, and makes her media relations explicit for her. The theory she used and the analysis she conducted also connect these personal discoveries to something general.

Frank's Mediagraphy: Nationality, Identity, Globalization and Social Media

Frank's essay does not follow the structure given by the teacher, and the genre in which he writes is both more critical and ironic than the genre chosen by most of the class. His writing style is compact and he expresses himself using concise sentences. Although the students were expected to gather information from four generations, Frank has only interviewed his father and he has not filled in the mediagraphy table. Nonetheless, he makes reflections based on the lives of several generations. The essay deals with nationality, identity and globalization, discussing how these aspects are changing in step with the changes in how people use and communicate through the media, social media in particular. He draws on sources from the specific project and other subjects, as well as from Internet sources. Frank's headline is an open, but yet somehow critical and curiosity-provoking question: "Where did our sense of nationality go?"

The starting point for Frank's text is an account of his understanding of the causes and consequences of the globalization process. He recognizes a number of social, historical and cultural aspects as influencing factors for who we are and how we conduct our lives, but he primarily elaborates on the media that surround us nowadays. He wonders about what has happened to our identity and sense of belonging, and specifically our national identity. He defines his identity as a "rebel", and both in the essay and in the interview he explicitly expresses that he wants to stand out from the crowd. An excerpt from his essay illustrates this:

Frank: Excerpt 1

Change in lifestyle from the teenage years to adulthood: Recently I moved to my own apartment. Student, I want higher education. [...] Addicted to the Internet, active on social media, web designer and developer. I am somewhat politically active, liberal; I want a free flow of information and to reject censorship. [...] Identity: Rebel, tired of doing as others.

It seems that Frank refers to himself in this way (as a rebel) after seeing his life story juxtaposed to the previous generations of the family, and also by reflecting on his individual development and experiences. He argues that a clear difference has manifested itself between today's youth and other generations, focusing on identity, as many young people do not see themselves as particularly "Norwegian". Bamberg's (2011) second dilemma is touched upon in this reflection, dealing with similarities and differences between oneself and others: the self is constructed in the narration in opposition to others. The first dilemma concerning continuity and change is a concrete focal point for Frank's reflections, as he considers himself a person who has felt a persistent resistance to being the "typical" Norwegian. He writes for instance that he never quite has identified with Norway's national day (17 May), not even as a child, and that this feeling has intensified in step with cultural disintegration and media development. Frank writes that he does not experience himself as typically Norwegian, and portrays a general development among adolescents in which national identity has undergone profound change. In this way, he depicts identity aspects he recognizes in others, and likewise aspects he does not want to acknowledge. In his ironic style Frank writes:

Frank: Excerpt 2

[...] the younger generation [...] losing their sense of nationality and don't feel particularly typically Norwegian – for what is it really, being a typical Norwegian? The sense of nationality less than 200 years ago was sky high; Norwegians were the best, no protest. When we sat on the mountaintop and looked out over the fjord, opened a packed lunch with sandwiches and cheese, then there was no one else who could match us.

Multimodal Expressions – Ambiguous Reflections

What is lost with Frank's economical form of expression is gained in his use of images and metaphors. He inserts three classic Norwegian paintings in his product, all three of which can reveal analytical clues to help us understand Frank's reflections and ways of thinking. As such, a closer look at Frank's use of images can give some interesting insights into the identity work Frank is actually doing in his essay. As we interpret his use of the images, Frank associates them with the traditional or historic Norwegian national identity. Additionally, this says something about what Frank distances himself from, what he is not – or what is not part of his identity (cf. Dilemma 2).

Image 1. *The Adventures of the Ash Lad (Kittelsen 1900)*



In a section called “Me in relation to globalization”, Frank uses a traditional work in Norwegian art history; “Askeladdens eventyr” (“The Adventures of the Ash Lad”) by Th. Kittelsen (1900). The picture was originally an illustration for a folk tale collected and written down by Asbjørnsen and Moe, depicting a young man travelling to a faraway shimmering castle, “Soria Moria”. The Ash Lad can be said to have significant symbolic value for Norwegian identity as a straightforward, fortunate and charismatic young man

Image 2. *The Birkebeiners* (Bergslien 1869)



who overcomes all obstacles and eventually wins. Image 2 shows the painting “Birkebeinerne” by Knud Bergslien (1869). The Birkebeiners were a rebellious people, but also a political party. Nowadays the Birkebeiners are mostly associated with a traditional long-distance cross-country race in Norway, and our interpretation is that this image represents what Frank thinks of as being typically Norwegian. Frank uses both images in his product without reference, but apparently gives them implicit meaning in the text. Frank has decontextualized the images from their original context and recontextualized them in his reflective process (cf. Bauman & Briggs 1990). His use of images represents the creation of a new reflection and meaning-making; it is not merely a detached representation. His montage contains some of the paintings’ original meaning, which tells of the traditional Norwegian, about the folk tales and legends that many of the Norwegian national narratives are based on. But when used in Frank’s ironic and argumentative text, new meaning concerning Frank’s identity is applied – his resistance to the classical Norwegian image and his defence of the new generation.

Frank’s Process

Martha is quite explicit when it comes to learning outcomes, while Frank’s thoughts on this are more implicit. Nonetheless, he also considers the project to be significant. He expresses in his interview that during the project he developed a personal viewpoint on the issues he wrote about, and that the project in some sense “forced” him to take a position on the information and knowledge he encountered in the process. Frank handed in his paper past the deadline and it was not completed; but Frank did not “stress” about it, as he expressed it. For Frank, this approach meant that he had time to make up his

mind about the findings, and that he could orient himself and process all the “facts” and information. He states that:

Well, I wasn't really that... certain... when I talked about my identity until I had gone through it and gotten involved in it through this assignment. It's only after the task it has become something that I... bring up and that I'm really interested in.

Frank seems to have come to a turning point during the process. He was initially critical, also to what types of outcomes could be expected from such personal research methods as mediagraphy. But, as Frank says in the interview, he eventually became fascinated by the topics he wrote about and also benefitted from this after the project, referring to the identity concept in projects in other subjects.

Discussion

Through Martha's and Frank's examples, we have seen how the students' reflections in the mediagraphy project encompass identity and media use. It seems as though mediagraphy constitutes both a means of sorting the data they found in their own research and a work method that nurtured certain types of reflection. In the discussion, we will look into what these reflections might have meant for the students.

In general it seems that the three identity dilemmas (cf. Bamberg 2011) are interdependent. The comparison with other individuals in other times and spaces is an important component of the types of reflection that were made in the mediagraphy essays. Martha's essay examines how her generation's media use has brought about a huge increase in social and cultural opportunities, on the one hand, and problems related to physical activity and social practice, on the other. Frank focuses on identity and changes in who we are and where we belong. Through the different generations, the students could capture individual experiences at different times and in different spaces as well as development over a time span of several decades, for some students even up to a hundred years. The students see that the development over time is connected to the lives of the other generations in their families.

Moreover, the work with mediagraphy involves self-reflection and introspective contemplation over one's own choices, values and other identity-related aspects. In our interpretation, the mediagraphy essays can be identity representations (Potter 2012). Through media production and the recontextualizing of media content, identity can be represented in more complex ways than in traditional forms – with the student in control. As we see it, in this way mediagraphy provides the opportunity to tell one's own history in one's own voice, using various media resources and materials. Furthermore, beyond the representation of an identity, students construct and reconstruct their identity through working with mediagraphy.

The social, cultural and historical analysis implied in the mediagraphy method is closely related to the agency dilemma. As such, mediagraphy can scaffold the students' reflections on their own sense of agency. As Martha's and Frank's essays imply, the question of how contextual factors constrain but also facilitate various social practices is a dilemma that is at the core of what identity is about. This dilemma involves asking who constructs the perceived world as it is, is it I as a person or is me being constructed by the world, and in this case especially by the media saturated world and “within [...]

representation” (Hall 1996:4). The students express that they have control over their own actions and choices, but at the same time they write and talk about contextual factors that both curtail and augment their social practice. Media use emerges as the single most important factor in this respect. This applies for instance to which arenas they communicate on, how they spend their time, what job and educational opportunities they envisage and ultimately how they perceive themselves, the community and the world.

It seems as if the data collected by the students have traits of the type of knowledge pointed out by Johansson (2005); people’s narratives can give insights into how general societal phenomena have, and have had, meaning in individual lives. Such knowledge is necessarily subjective and is mediated in the interaction between different actors in various contexts. The group of informants in the present study is composed of media students with extensive media use, who are relatively well acquainted with various aspects of the media. There is reason to question the extent to which findings from these informants can be generalized. In our view, the types of experiences mediated by the mediagraphy can help students to reflect on their media use and relations. As a method, it raises questions relevant for further discussion with others and in this way also helps to build knowledge collaboratively. As such, we argue that the method will be of value also when applied in student groups that are different from this particular group with regard to, e.g., demographic, ethnic, and socioeconomic background.

We find that, as a learning method in media education, mediagraphy is a type of identity work in which aspects of identity are exemplified through individual experiences and media relations over generations. Furthermore, we claim that mediagraphy can contribute to one’s understanding and interpretation of one’s own identity. In this way, the agency dilemma – the dilemma most directly connected to action – is a central element. Thus, we find that mediagraphy can play a role in exerting an agentive identity, which we believe is an important contribution in a time of insecurity, with rapidly shifting social and cultural conditions and increasing media density.

Note

1. VG3 is the third and final year of the upper secondary school and qualifies students for further education.

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Article 3

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Reflexivity and Global Citizenship in High School Students' Mediagraphies

Daniel Schofield

The article explores mediagraphy as a learning activity in a high school class in Norway. The students explored aspects of globalization in four generations of their own families, with media use and experiences as the starting point. The student product is a "mediagraphy essay" – a written reflection on differences and similarities across generations. The essays and interviews with key informants are analyzed here using an interpretative, hermeneutic approach. The mediagraphy essays indicate that the youngest generation has access to, interacts with, and experiences a wider world than the world in which they physically operate. More than the older generations, the youth therefore have the opportunity to gain insights into global cultures and issues. Mediagraphy is found to be a learning activity that mediates an awareness of the multicultural society. Conclusively, the article argues that mediagraphy is an example of a reflexive exercise that can contribute to an understanding of one's position in the world, and the responsibility that comes with that, which is an important characteristic of both mediated cosmopolitanism and global citizenship.

Keywords: mediagraphy, cosmopolitanism, global citizenship, media literacy, high school

Introduction

People today are continuously connected to the global flow of information. As such, a global, complex mix of cultures is constantly present in our practices and thus in our worldview (Beck & Sznaider, 2006). The global media's logic has become increasingly substantial for society and culture (Hjarvard, 2008) and for how we communicate and engage in social practice (Castells, 2010). In line with this, new social practices have gradually become well established, but the digital era is still novel; young people today are the first generation to grow up with digital media as part of everyday life since birth. If these young people are to become active participants in tomorrow's democracy, they need to develop a literacy that includes the ability to reflect critically on the media-saturated

society and on their own media use. Such competencies are included in the terms *media literacy* (Buckingham, 2003; Erstad & Amdam, 2013) and *media and information literacy* (Kotilainen & Suoninen, 2013). There is nonetheless still a need for research on learning activities that link the analysis of contemporary culture with young people's media experiences. However, *mediagraphy* is emerging as a teaching method that enables students to understand both the global context and their media experiences in everyday life.

Mediagraphy was established as a learning activity through Vettenranta's (2010) application of Rantanen's (2005) methodology. The basic feature of mediagraphy is that the students themselves explore globalization through interviewing members of three previous generations of their own families, with media developments and their own media experiences as a focal point. In this article, a high school class in Norway participated in a project where mediagraphy was carried out for the first time at this educational level. The key empirical data analyzed here are the student products, "mediagraphy essays," and interviews conducted with key participants eight weeks after the project was completed.

Aim and research question

The aim of this article is to explore how high school students conducting mediagraphies perceive and make meaning of their global and local relationships, in comparison with previous generations of their family. The main research question that follows from this is: *how do high school students who conduct mediagraphies express their sense of belonging to – and position in – the global community?*

Mediagraphy as learning activity

Vettenranta (2010) applied mediagraphy as a learning exercise with Master's degree students. The students studied the process of globalization in four generations of their own families, including themselves. Based on qualitative interviews and theory studies, the students wrote *mediagraphy essays* based on Rantanen's (2005) *mediagraphy table*. This table was used to assemble key data from the interviews, and consisted of the following key factors for each generation:

Work, home country, place, sense of time, changes in lifestyle, education, changes in class, family, travel, language skills, media use, experiences of media events, interests, ideology, expressed attitudes, and identity.

The findings in Vettenranta's (2010) study suggest that the students live their lives globally; i.e. they have a sense of belonging to both local and global communities. They also gained insight into aspects of their own identity and their

standpoint in the globalization process. Vettenranta argues that this insight is an essential feature of what she termed global media literacy, a literacy that contributes to an understanding of our multicultural, media-saturated world. In Ponte and Aroldi's (2013) Master's degree project "Digital Inclusion and Participation", which was inspired by mediagraphy, the students enhanced their theoretical understanding of media science. Moreover, the students became aware of generational differences, and with that, they developed self-reflexivity and sociological imagination. Thus, it seems that students who have conducted mediagraphies have expressed both a sense of belonging to a global community and a self-reflexive approach to their own media practices. This is in accordance with scholars such as Martin (2011), Delanty (2012), and Beck and Sznaider (2006), who maintain that digital and social media enables young people to orient themselves toward the world and act as global citizens, take global responsibility, and assume a cosmopolitan identity. However, other studies (Olausson, 2011; Rye, 2013) suggest that, in spite of young people's extensive connections to the wider world, they do not necessarily develop a global identity or identify with distant people and cultures.

Key concepts and theoretical perspectives

Globalization is not a 21st-century process; it has been ongoing for as long as we know (Waters, 1995). Nevertheless, it can safely be argued that globalization takes place at a different rate today than in earlier times. With the introduction of electronic communication and even more with digital media, globalization has accelerated (Rantanen, 2005), moving society toward a true "world society" (Giddens, 1990). In spite of the axiomatic aspects of globalization, there is no consensus on the meaning of the concept or which sides of the phenomenon should be emphasized (Beck, 2000). This article primarily applies Rantanen's (2005) understanding of globalization. She (Rantanen, 2005, p. 8) defines globalization as "a process in which worldwide economic, political, and social relations have become increasingly mediated across time and space". In other words, Rantanen draws attention to mediated globalization, arguing that what characterizes globalization in the modern world is that it increasingly takes place in and through media and communication.

Cosmopolitanism and citizenship

Globalization has often been studied as a macro phenomenon. However, as the globalization process obviously affects individuals' lives, a need for alternative concepts has emerged. Concepts such as *cosmopolitanism* and *global citizenship* have therefore frequently been used to capture how globalization

is experienced "from below", with individuals as the object of analysis. Here, cosmopolitanism is interpreted as having many similarities to global citizenship. For instance, Tomlinson (1999) claims that being a cosmopolitan means that one has an active experience of "belonging to the wider world". As such, cosmopolitanism is closely connected to identity; a cosmopolitan obtains a reflexive awareness of the features that unite us as human beings. This entails the ability to question one's own assumptions and prejudices. Identity is in this context not essentialist or stable; rather, it is fragmented and constructed and reconstructed across the different practices and positions in which one participates (Hall, 1996).

As with globalization, cosmopolitanism is a concept with a long history, which has been applied to tentatively describe the ongoing development in which people in the world gradually are becoming more closely connected to each other (Robertson, 2010). Beck and Sznaider (2006, p. 9) argue that cosmopolitanism is a defining feature of modern culture, as people all over the world are and have been living in "really-existing relations of interdependence". They view cosmopolitanization as unintended side effects of the actions taking place in global public spheres, such as discussion forums and social networks. Although media use in itself does not lead to a cosmopolitan identity, Rantanen (2005) emphasizes how the media offers global dimensions that can contribute to a cosmopolitan consciousness. In this way, it is in reality a question of *mediated* cosmopolitanism (Rantanen, 2005; Robertson, 2010). Rantanen (2005) argues that it is not possible fully to become a cosmopolitan; rather, cosmopolitanism is a reflexive project as a part of identity. In light of this study's approach, Beck's (2006) emphasis on *perspective-taking* as a constitutive principle of cosmopolitanism is interesting. Perspective-taking is about having the ability and willingness to assume the position of "the other". Another point that is essential in the following analysis is how cosmopolitanism is not an innate ability but a matter of competence (Hannerz, 1996). Hence, it can be viewed as a "mode of managing meaning" (Hannerz, 1996, p. 102) and something that is possible to learn and develop.

Research design and methodology

The article is based on an exploratory case study where a contemporary phenomenon is broadly studied in its real-life context (Yin, 2014), a classroom setting. The study was conducted in the autumn of 2011 at a high school in Norway in a class of 27 students in Vg3 General Studies in Media and Communication.¹ The class included 14 girls and 13 boys of Norwegian citizenship and ethnicity. After the project, in January/February 2012, 13 students were selected for qualitative interviews by the standards of *purposeful sampling* (Patton,

1990). The goal was to illustrate a variety among students with regard to essay thematics, work effort, and gender. At the same time, the sample size allows for an in-depth exploration of key aspects related to the purpose of the research.

Data collection and analysis

The students' mediagraphy essays and interviews are the main sources for data collection. In addition, participatory observation and an interview with the teacher serve as background for the analysis. The interviews were semi-structured and "focused" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), which implies that an interview guide with a narrowed focus was developed based on a tentative analysis of the mediagraphy essays. The students' essays are interpretations of experiences in the students' and family members' lives. As such, they resemble life stories, which are advocated by several scholars as important data to better understand the reciprocal relationship between the self and the world (Harrison, 2009). In the analysis, I was required to interpret the students' interpretation of reality. Moreover, the students interpreted their family members' interpretations of their lives. This kind of analysis can be referred to as double hermeneutics (Giddens, 1984) or as reflexive interpretation, as the analysis in reality involves multiple layers (Alvesson & Sköldböck, 2008). The analysis process was characterized by an ongoing interdependence between theory and data as a process of analytical induction (Erickson, 2012). First, I coded the material thematically and proposed preliminary assertions and interpretations. Gradually, I formulated relevant research questions. Subsequently, common themes emerged that were later developed into analytical categories. The coding was partly done using the software NVivo 9/10.

Unit of analysis

Mediated action constitutes the unit of analysis. Human action is, according to Wertsch (1998), mediated through *mediational means*, such as language, everyday technologies, and social institutions. Mediated actions are real-time actions where actors, mediational means, and the context intersect. As such, mediated actions are at the core of human activity and thus the most informative unit of analysis in sociocultural research (Wertsch, 1998). In the following, mediagraphy is analyzed as a mediational means that mediates actions such as writing mediagraphy essays and participating in the interviews.

The classroom project

The classroom project lasted for five weeks, with five to ten lessons per week. This included an introductory phase of teaching on the topic of "media and

globalization”, where key concepts such as globalization, identity, and mediation were discussed. The student assignment was to explore their own families by gathering information from family members in three generations, which they compared to information about themselves. A completed mediagraphy table was the basis for the students’ work and allowed for an analysis of each individual and a comparison between generations. The students analyzed their data in light of their experiences of media in everyday life. Hence, media use and media development became the crucial factors for further analysis. The final student product was a written essay containing brief biographies of each family member and a discussion and reflection on the topic. The practical work was carried out in collaboration with peers and with guidance from the teacher. Thus, the meaning-making and potential learning that took place is seen as a sociocultural accomplishment (Wertsch, 1998). In the upcoming sections, examples are drawn from student essays and interviews to illuminate the research question.

Findings

As the project’s main topic was globalization and media, the students’ essays were concerned with issues related to the increasing global flow of information and the extensive media use among young people. However, the students were free to choose their approach and on which factors to focus. As such, it is interesting to see what types of issues were raised by the students in the essays. A salient finding is that most of the students expressed that they primarily use social media, which all reported using on a daily basis, to establish and maintain local relations. To a lesser extent, the students expressed that the media mediate actual relations on a global level.

The possibility of global social practice

The students’ essays illustrate that how people relate to the global and the local has changed rapidly. Several of these changes have been and are experienced as dramatic. However, in the students’ eyes, the most important changes are perhaps those experienced on a more symbolic or *mediated* level. It is relatively clear in this data material that the students have developed an understanding of the *possibility* to communicate across borders through social media. An excerpt from Inga’s essay illustrates how many of the students viewed social media as a means that *enables* contact with the “outside world”. However, she did not express having gained any close relationships to people in distant or unfamiliar cultures through the media.

You can contact anyone as long as they have access to one or more media and then, most importantly, the Internet. [...] Now, communication con-

tributes to pushing globalization even more. The world becomes smaller and smaller for each year. National borders are not that strict anymore; people all over the world can communicate and develop links between people.

Inga's reflections are of a quite universal, abstract character, but they are nevertheless based on her own inquiries and use of literature from the syllabus and Internet searches. In general, the students emphasized the increased access to information and digital social arenas when attempting to describe today's culture. In their eyes, this leads to increased knowledge and thus tolerance and empathy. Martha, for example, wrote in her essay that, though she views herself as less social in a physical sense than the other generations, she is more enlightened and informed. In other words, she argued that certain forms of information and knowledge are mediated through the increased use of global media.

A positive side of the media development is that society has never been more enlightened than we are today. Through journalists in television, radio, and newspapers, we can see everything that goes on in the world. We can follow the development of the riots in Egypt, and we can follow the U.S. election, and we know the exact number of Norwegians who are affected in accidents happening all over the world. We have contact with people on the other side of the globe [...] I cannot deny that this development is enormously positive for the world community. Knowledge is, after all, the key to success, and if we ever are going to achieve a peaceful world society, we must first and foremost be able to control each other.

Martha was here concerned with the general aspects of knowledge and the role that knowledge plays in the development of society and the world community, which e.g. Beck (2006) points to as an important feature of cosmopolitanism.

Identifying with the world and the local

A common feature in the essays is that the students referred to development where the most important values for the oldest generation were primarily related to local communities: the farm, the family, the village, or the town. Gradually, most families have come to travel more, and media use has become more incorporated in the daily pursuits. In addition, it appears that national identity is not a particularly central part of the youngest generation's consciousness. Historically, the nation has been an important part of identity, especially during dramatic periods such as World War I and II (see e.g. Rantanen, 2005; Vetteranta, 2010). In some respects, the findings here are consistent with those of previous research implying that globalization challenges the importance of the nation (de Block & Buckingham, 2010; Rantanen, 2005). This does not imply that national states are no longer essential for a number of aspects in people's

lives, but in the mediagraphy essays, it is primarily the local and the global that emerge as the key zones for connectivity. Christina is one of the students who described a development in her family with clear changes in what and with whom the generations identified themselves.

Another thing I found out is that, when it comes to feeling like a part of the world and not just as a part of Norway, is that it is only I who feel that I am. The previous generations are very attached to the place where they grew up. And I can well imagine that I can live anywhere. While they would prefer to live exactly where they are for the rest of their lives. I believe this may have something to do with the fact that I have experienced more of the world and have been in contact with people from other cultures than my own. And through TV and the Internet, you can be fed with information about cultures other than your own, even though you might not even think about it. I feel that I know a lot about different cultures because I like to watch documentaries about other countries.

Christina here wrote that she actually has “experienced more of the world”. This can be interpreted as primarily something that has been mediated through media such as TV and the Internet. However, Christina considers information and experiences mediated through contemporary media to be real sources of knowledge, the development of values, and as concretely expressed here, a sense of belonging. Lars also touched upon this topic in his essay. His main theme was how media development and media use play into people’s education and work. In the essay, he described his great grandfather as a Christian conservative focusing on family values. He wrote about his grandmother that she was a local patriot, a “woman of her village” and a family person. His mother became an academic and gradually more accustomed to everyday media use. In the interview, he reflected on how the family members viewed their relationship with the local and national community and with the outside world. His points are quite representative of the participants’ expressed reflections about the sense of local and global belonging:

Well, one thing is other people in Norway, in a way you have a lot more contact with... the Norwegian society, you might say. Much more insight into it. That is, my grandfather was probably quite isolated and knew little about how it was in Oslo [...] while I am able to know a lot about how it is in Bømlo, if I go in for it. But not least about how the rest of the world is doing. And I think maybe this is something that has influenced me more than the others in their childhood.

Lars here claimed that values have changed over time in his family; they have become more universal. He wrote about himself that he has grown up in a “media world” and is politically and culturally engaged. However, to an even

greater extent, he is concerned about his place in the world. He expresses a willingness to take the perspective of others (cf. Beck, 2006), as he claimed to have the ability to know “how the rest of the world is doing.”

Expressions about mediagraphy as a learning activity

In the interviews the students could reflect retrospectively on the project. In addition, the interview’s open form mediated meta-reflections concerning the significance of the mediagraphy as a learning activity. Most of the students emphasized general learning outcomes associated with values, self-reflection, and insight into society more than they claimed having reached any concrete, specific knowledge goals. Many reflected on prospects for their own future and opportunities in society that they had become aware of during or after the project. It seems that this applies both to students who can be called “high-achievers” and those who submitted products that were considered weak by the teacher. When asked to summarize his project period, Lars, a student that the teacher termed a “high-achiever”, stated:

During the process, I have – and with the assignment [...] learned a lot more about... about the Norwegian society, about the development, about how lucky ... many people in Norway are – or we all are, relatively speaking. [...] Now, maybe I am in the upper half, so to speak, of those who are doing well. I am extraordinarily lucky, but... there has been a positive development. And I think that is important to remember, as I said, and – and to reflect on. Not that I should have this in the back of my mind all the time, like “oh my god how lucky I am”, and I should think more about how lucky I am, sort of. But it is important to remember [...] the opportunities you have, that... that I take for granted, that ... my grandmother only could dream about.

This excerpt can be interpreted that Lars recognizes the privileged position he is in as a citizen of the Norwegian society through being exposed to media impressions from different parts of the world since early childhood. Anna expressed something of the same, albeit with a more “personal” choice of words. Anna’s essay was shorter than what was recommended in the task description and contained a very brief theoretical background. Nonetheless, the interview with her was one of the lengthiest, and Anna had many reflections on the meta-level, especially about her own learning.

I don’t know, like, what have I really learned from this project? Well, I have... I have in a way considered it a bit more... I am sort of able to put myself in a broader perspective [...] things that I take for granted... [...] a lot of things haven’t always been a matter of course for everybody. So I think – it’s very – I think it’s very interesting in a way, to imagine myself in a [...] time period and see what is the difference... and things like that.

In an indirect way, these excerpts from Lars' and Anna's interviews have to do with global citizenship as a part of identity. Neither Lars nor Anna mentioned the concept of citizenship, but as Beck (2006) argues, comprehending – and being aware of – one's own position in the world is a prerequisite to feel or experience solidarity and thus global citizenship.

Discussion

These particular students are global citizens in the sense that they are almost constantly connected to a global culture in and through participation in social media. They are also connected to the media during the majority of the school day, as they are studying practical media education. However, the findings show that they primarily are locally oriented in terms of who and what they relate to through their media use. The infinite potential of social media to enable global relations is as such not to any great degree achieved in this group of students. However, the media culture contributes to the students seeing themselves as part of the world. They also mirror their own situation against others in other situations.

In other words, the students are able to take the perspective of others (cf. Beck, 2006) and are aware of themselves as participants in something beyond the local arena, as global citizens. As Beck (2006) reasons, being aware of the global context that one is part of is in itself an important part of global citizenship. However, if global citizenship is defined also to include actual interaction with a wider world, the findings are more uncertain. Only a few of the students expressed having used modern media to actually establish and maintain global relationships over time. The participants expressed that they alternate between feeling like a part of the world and the local but also that different global and local connections exist simultaneously. This corresponds to Vettenranta's (2010) findings concerning young people living their lives *glocally*, as well as Rantanen's (2005) argument that mediated cosmopolitanism becomes part of our identity. In this way, the present study at least to some extent supports Delanty (2012) and Martin (2011) in that the new media mediates a lot of opportunities for people to act as global citizens.

According to the data from this project, it is not possible to claim that mediagraphy in itself builds global citizenship. However, what emerged in the data, particularly in the retrospective interviews, is that mediagraphy mediates certain concretizations of the different relationships that the students navigate in their everyday lives. In these concretizations, there is learning potential through listening to, interpreting, and retelling the experiences of individual family members, as well as through sharing stories and knowledge with other students in the class. Although there was variation in the level of nuance with

which the students expressed themselves, they all reflected on their place in the world and on the responsibility that comes with being part of a wider world. Mediagraphy seems to be a mediational means (cf. Wertsch, 1998) that mediates reflections on issues such as solidarity, empathy, and seeing one's own position in the world in a way that was not illuminated by e.g. Olausson (2011) and Rye (2013). As such, mediagraphy can be an example of a learning activity that actually challenges and "stretches" the students' ways of thinking.

How we relate to and interact with other people is crucial to who we are and what kind of society we live in (Castells, 2010; Giddens, 1990). The relations in the students' families are examples of how modern people have a reflexive way of connecting to and disconnecting from other people in physical proximity and at a distance. As already indicated, the mediagraphy essays illustrate how young people perceive themselves and take the perspective of others (cf. Beck, 2006). As such, mediagraphy serves a double purpose: First, "outsiders" can gain insight into young people's mindsets through the stories being told – in a historical and comparative light. The students' stories have learning potential within the classroom when students share stories as well as outside school – as snapshots of young people's experiences of being global citizens in the constant navigation between global and local impulses. Second, the mediagraphies can be a means for those producing them to gain insight into globalization and the media world and to understand how this is or is *not* significant for their lives and conduct.

The project was not completed in a socio-cultural vacuum but in a complex classroom, which involved various forms of cooperation, discussion, and knowledge sharing. The students' individual stories became parts of a collective knowledge building. Thus, together, many different issues became objects of reflection for the students in this class. In this way, mediagraphy holds the potential to contribute to awareness of the multicultural society, including for those who do not themselves have a multicultural background, as de Block and Buckingham (2010) emphasize as an important aspect of media literacy for the future.

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Note

- 1 Vg3 is the final year in upper secondary school and qualifies students for further education.

Article 4

Schofield, D., & Vettenranta, S. (2014). The media and global imagination: students' experiences of time and space. *Manuscript submitted for publication.*

The Media and Global Imagination: Students' Experiences of Time and Space

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Abstract

This article explores young people's reflections on how their media practices are related to the experience of time and space. Empirical data are drawn from two studies conducted with Master's (n=45, age 20-30) and upper secondary students (n=27, age 17-19) in Norway. The students provided narratives about their everyday lives juxtaposed against the daily lives of three earlier generations of their own family. Through a narrative analysis, three main categories related to time and space are revealed; the multiple concepts of time in everyday life, the changing conditions of relationships, and photos as important artifacts in everyday life. A key finding is how the narratives involve global imagination, a mode of thought that entails envisioning the world, placing oneself in it and relating to other people on a global level. The findings also show that the participants continuously navigate temporal and spatial complexities in their social practices.

Keywords

Time, space, global imagination, reflection, narrative, mediagraphy

Introduction

For young people, participation in social practices across time and space has become integral in everyday life. Recent studies confirm increasingly continuous and comprehensive media use among children and youth (Davis, 2011; Livingstone et al., 2011). As digital media has come to play a key role in most aspects of modern life, such as labour, education and entertainment (Castells, 2010; Hjarvard, 2008), the temporal and spatial dimensions of everyday life have attained new and altered conditions (Kupiainen, 2013; Massey, 2005). In this situation, basic human actions, such as how we communicate, relate to each other and organize daily activities, need to be resolved in new ways. In line with this, there is an emergent research interest in the temporal and spatial dimensions of young peoples' media-saturated everyday lives. However, little research has been done on how young people actually reflect on and make meaning of experiences related to media use, time and space.

This article aims to explore how students reflect on their media practices, and more specifically how these practices are related to the experience of time and space in everyday life. Findings from two related research projects conducted in Norway are discussed, where young people were asked to provide narratives about their everyday lives juxtaposed against the daily lives of earlier generations of their own family. Hence, the starting point is young people's meaning making in contemporary everyday life, but the analysis also has a historical perspective. The empirical data are from Vettenranta's (2010b) project with Master's students (n=45, age 20-30) who wrote essays with scientific requirements and Schofield's (2014) case study with upper secondary school students (n=27, age 17-19).

In Vettenranta's (2010b) study, the essay was part of the examination in a Masters' degree course in Media Education. In Schofield's (2014) study, the students reflected both in the form of written texts and multimodal works, and the students were also interviewed about their thoughts

on participating in the study. These narratives are analysed as life stories, with particular focus on reflections that concern the experience of time and space.

The key research question is:

What characterizes Masters' and upper secondary school students' reflections on their experiences of time and space in written and multimodal narratives?

Time and Space Transformations in the Digital Age

The development of digital media and increasing media density contribute to transform how people relate to time and space in our everyday lives, according to a number of scholars (e.g. Couldry and McCarthy, 2004; Eriksen, 2007). Giddens (1990) argued, before the breakthrough of the Internet, that social relations over distance are possible in modern society. The argument is more relevant than ever. Following Giddens, time and space stretches out, and worldwide relations become more intense, as events 'out there' can and do impact what happens locally and vice versa. Rantanen (2005) found that people's social relationships today are less 'place-bound' than before. She claims that media developments and our use of media have profoundly contributed to increased connectivity or the capacity to reach beyond the place one is physically located (Rantanen, 2005).

A number of researchers have found that the media creates new, hybrid social spaces in our everyday lives (e.g. Couldry and McCarthy, 2004; Köhl and Götzenbrucker, 2014). Such spaces enable virtual experiences that are not restricted by the body's physical limits or the boundaries that exist in places that are commonly associated with work, leisure or education. In line with this, Pink (2012) highlights the media's duality. She argues that the media on the one hand are an inherent part of the places that constitute our everyday life. On the other hand, the media's social practices and forms of communication change how we experience temporality and spatiality in

daily contexts. Scholars such as Beck and Sznaider (2006), Delanty (2012) and Martin (2011) contend that media development contributes to people today being able to orientate themselves toward the world and act as global citizens. In accordance with this, Vettenranta (2010b) found that people lead their lives *glocally*. This indicates that they are experiencing a sense of belonging to both a local and a global community, often simultaneously (Robertson, 1995).

Some theorists have addressed the insecurity and vulnerability that may emerge in transformative times (Beck, 2000; Eriksen, 2007). A need for rootedness and 'fixity' may arise in a society that is characterized by complexity and fragmentation (Massey, 1994). The changes related to the time dimension can also be challenging in terms of how people experience themselves and their surroundings. Eriksen (2007) claims that everything is accelerating in the information society and that time, predictability, security and coherence have become scarce resources. Other scholars (Harvey, 1993) argues that a desire for fixity and stability can be reactionary and in opposition to the 'pulse' of our times. Massey (1994) states that changes regarding how we experience time and space produce neither insecurity nor development. Still, arguments in line with both these views can be seen in both popular and scientific discourse.

Theoretical framework

Time and space as key dimensions of everyday life

Time and space are here regarded as *social constructs* and not as fixed or 'natural' categories (cf. Giddens, 1990). Two key theories are applied; the theory of Schütz and Luckmann (1974) about the experience of the spatial dimensions of our lifeworlds, and Gotved's (2006) theory concerning the temporal aspects.

According to Schütz and Luckmann (1974), everyday life is structured *spatially* and *temporally* as interdependent dimensions. We organize our existence according to the 'here' of our bodies and

the 'now' of our present (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 3). However, phenomena that are not physically 'here and now' can also be important components of our lifeworlds. In media-rich societies, people have become accustomed to experiencing temporal moments and acting in virtual spaces that are mediated through various technological artifacts.

Spatial dimensions

The *primary* and *secondary* zones of operation are the basic *spatial* dimensions of our lifeworld, according to Schütz and Luckmann (1974). The first can be called 'the world within reach' and refers to the actual 'here', where one can find oneself. This is a world that is reachable by means of face-to-face communication. The secondary zone is a world that potentially can be reached through technologically mediated communication. TV and the Internet are examples of media that bring distant events within reach. We use a number of spatial descriptors in our daily discourse, such as *near*, *broad*, *long*, *deep* and *large* (Vettenranta, 2004), which indicate that we experience everyday life in terms of varying degrees of remoteness and closeness. In this context, Heidegger's (1996) concept of *existential space* is significant. He distinguished between physical and existential space. Physical space refers to geometrical space, that is, spatial dimensions that can be measured. Existential space is a matter of emotions, understandings and thoughts that can transcend the physical space. In line with this, the experience of something as close or as remote is dependent on the 'degree of availability' (Vettenranta, 2004: 57).

The spatial dimensions cannot be regarded as mutually exclusive dichotomies. Modern life is full of examples where people operate in the primary and secondary operation zones simultaneously. A student can, for instance, participate both in a conversation in the classroom as a primary zone at the same time as she participates in a virtual interaction in a social medium, which constitutes a secondary zone.

Temporal dimensions

The past, present and future make up the fundamental temporal dimensions of our lifeworld (Heidegger, 1996); the present is constituted by the past but also by the fact that we envision a future (Bakardjieva, 2005). According to Gotved (2006), our experience of time can be divided into three different dimensions:

1. Time as an active factor in communication and *meaning-making*, both individually and collectively
2. Time as a means of *orientation* and control
3. Time as a key dimension for *regulating* and interpreting social interaction

The first dimension refers to time as a constitutive part of how we communicate and make meaning. Meaning is in this sense patterns of memory that are constructed over time. These patterns are related to culture and the expectations and mindsets that are involved in the temporal aspects of communication and relationships. For example, in Internet practices such patterns of memory are found in the shared history of communities in social media, where particular language and communication patterns are developed over time.

The second dimension, concerning *orientation*, is about how time is structured. As we experience the organisation of everyday life, we are dependent on various sorts of 'time orientations'. In school settings, for instance, artifacts such as the clock and the calendar often strictly structures time. However, in leisure activities, time can be more loosely oriented and organized by the activity (Wyller, 2011) rather than by the clock. The influence of the Internet has made us accustomed to both synchronous and asynchronous communication. Synchronous communication is typically real-time communication in online communities and social media. Asynchronous communication is established as an important way of communicating through, for example, e-mail and comments fields. The communication occurs in shared spaces, but responses in a dialogue can be posted at different points in time.

The third dimension, regarding *interaction*, addresses the role of time in regulating our interaction with others and how we interpret interaction. We also use time to regulate ourselves when we interact with others. Moreover, time is important for coordinating the various interactions people make. Patterns of time enable people to navigate between and within different activities in everyday life. In addition, time is an inherent quality in itself in social processes. For instance, time is something we can experience having ‘too little’ or ‘enough’ of. It can be experienced as ‘fast flows or endless minutes’ (Gotved, 2006: 475).

Method: data and analysis

This article comprises data from two larger studies exploring *global mediagraphy*, inspired by Rantanen (2005). Global mediagraphy is characterized by the students exploring aspects of daily life in four generations of their own families, in light of media developments (Schofield, 2014; Vettenranta, 2010b). The students collected data by interviewing three family members from previous generations, and wrote a *mediagraphy essay*. The essays revolve around the students’ media experiences, identity and societal developments. These essays constitute the main data source for the present article. In specific, the data consists of written and multimodal texts, which are supplemented with retrospective interviews with selected participants.

In this article, the focus is primarily on how the students’ narratives and reflections concern the experience of time and space. Therefore, the methodology of global mediagraphy is not discussed in detail hereⁱ. The data from Vettenranta’s (2010b) study is collected from learning activities with Master’s degree students (n=45), which were conducted over several periods in the time between 2006 and 2009. Schofield (2014) explored upper secondary school students’ narratives (n=27). The data from this study are collected from a project conducted for a period of five weeks during five to ten lessons per week in 2011. Interviews with 13 selected students were carried out early in 2012.

The students' age varied. In Vettenranta's study, the majority of participants were between 20 and 30 years. The students in Schofield's study, was more homogeneous in terms of age, and all participants were between 17 and 19 years. 'Youth' is not a fixed age segment, but has traditionally been associated with a transitional period (Gootman and Eccles, 2002). It has become common to define this group in terms of phases of life, such as employment and education (UNESCO, n.d.). Hence, as both groups in the present studies still were in education, all the participants are here regarded as 'young people'.

The students had data from individuals in four generations in total, as they also collected data about themselves. As an example, a typical student obtained information from him or herself, his or her mother, grandmother and great grandmother. The mediagraphy essay is a reflection on the developments, changes and turning points over four generations concerning key factors like media use, media events, travel, education, ideology and identity. As such, they are narratives that resemble *life stories*, which can be important data for studying the complex relations between the self and the social context (Almås and Gullestad, 1990; Harrison, 2009). The students' narratives are understood as a way of making meaning (Bruner, 1991) and are applied as analytical means to gain insight into how people experience everyday life. In Vettenranta's study (2010b), the essay genre was a written, academic text. In Schofield's (2014) study, the students could choose to include multimodal expressions, such as photos, graphics or interactive products. In the latter study, key informants (n=13) were selected for retrospective, qualitative semi-structured interviews.

The data analysis is inspired by what Alvesson and Sköldberg (2008) refer to as *reflexive interpretation*. The essays consist of the students' interpretations of their family members' interpretations of events in their lives. In the next step, the students' interpretations are

interpreted by the researchers, as the following discussion will illustrate. The process thus involves multiple layers, and can be positioned in a hermeneutic tradition. The interpretations are open for alternative interpretations (ibid.), but are substantiated by rich and varied excerpts from the data and by ‘thick descriptions’ (Geertz, 1973). The analysis process is also characterized by abduction (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2008), which implies a continuous interplay between theory and data and a reflexive development of research questions, categories and concepts.

The student products in Schofield’s (2014) study include modalities other than the written word, for example, images, graphics and illustrations. Multimodal texts involve several sign systems and an increased meaning potential (Kress, 2003) compared to written texts. Bauman and Briggs (1990) argue that authors employ agency when composing texts. For example, when an image is applied to a text, the image is *decontextualized* from its original context and *recontextualized* in the new text as a reflective process. In other words, the image represents a new reflection and meaning-making, although the meaning from the original context is still present (Hull and Katz, 2006). Research on young people’s experiences of media, has often been done by interviews or sometimes written accounts. However, recent research has shown that allowing young people to express themselves by way of creative and multimodal expressions can provide the participants with time for reflection, and they can use genres and methods they are comfortable with (Burn and Durran, 2007; Awan and Gauntlett, 2013). Such data also can give rich insights into how young people experience and understand their media practices, according to Awan and Gauntlett (2013).

Credibility and generalizability

In empirical studies, reliability rests on the coherence between empirical data, analysis and findings (Tjora, 2010). As such, *transparency* is a key goal. In order to achieve a transparent research text, the analysis process and the underlying theoretical perspectives are explicated, so

that the readers can consider the credibility of the research (Tjora, 2010). *Validity* is also crucial for the quality of the present research. This concerns whether the research investigates what was intended. In this respect, *triangulation* is an important means that can help clarify meaning and identify different realities (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). The data in this article are triangulated, as the findings are drawn from two different studies, both of which involve various methods.

With data from two groups of students (total n=72), the analysis can be conducted both broadly and in depth. Additionally, it is possible to make even further selections to do an in-depth analysis of individuals or groups within the entire group. The goal of research such as the present is often *analytical generalisation* rather than statistical generalisation. If the study confirms or brings nuances to established theories or concepts or develops new concepts, its findings can be used in analysing other similar situations (Yin, 2014).

Multiple concepts of time in young people's everyday lives

The participants in both studies referred to themselves as 'very' active users or as 'being dependent' on various media in their everyday lives. In particular, this applies to interactive digital artifacts, such as mobile phones, tablet devices, the Internet and different social media. This corresponds with previous research finding that the media has come to play a key role in most practices young people participate in (Davis, 2011; Livingstone et al., 2011). What is discussed here can, however, complement these insights by illuminating how the presence of media in everyday life is *experienced*.

A substantial part of the students' reflections concerned *time* and *use of time*. For example, Christina from the upper secondary school study (Schofield, 2014) reflected on the changes in her own media use from childhood until now.

When I grew up, I mostly watched TV or watched movies. Now I am mostly dependent on the computer. That's because there I can do everything at once. I can talk to friends while listening to music or streaming TV series or movies.

Anna expressed similar thoughts about engaging in several types of activities in different spaces at the same time:

Well, of course [...] people say that there is multitasking. I mean, we are better at multitasking now than people was before. [...] People are so much better at doing a lot of things simultaneously that you sort of forget what originally was the work you were supposed to do. [...] Maybe it is a bit like that when it comes to multitasking and things like that – how I organize my time compared to how... my grandmother organized her time when she was younger.

Multitasking, as it is described here, is something many of the participants brought up. The concept of multitasking is interpreted as something that involves doing multiple tasks simultaneously, but it also refers to doing activities seemingly unrelated to each other at the same time and in the same space. Activities from different arenas become parts of the same social practice. In this way, digital media entails a transformation of space (Kupiainen, 2013) in that hybrid spaces and new practices are created. It seems the participants felt somewhat ambivalent about relating to multiple time concepts and simultaneity. Several participants expressed that they master the complexity of multitasking, but problematic sides to this, were also articulated. Typically, participants expressed difficulties with keeping focused, and feeling of stress.

Martine, one of the participants in Vettenranta's (2010b) study, also reflected on the omnipresence and complexity of time. She described how the personal sense of time has changed in her family over four generations. Her parents 'broke out' of the hectic big city life and returned to a life in the countryside. They had felt an increasing resistance against the 'time squeeze'. Martine wrote about the challenges of living in a world where things are constantly in a mode of change. Her great-grandfather and grandmother both grew up in rural areas, and according to Martine's interpretation, they did not experience time as a problem in everyday life. The situation is quite different for Martine and for her father. Martine concluded that the increasing time pressure eventually led to a turning point for her family.

Martine described the ‘time squeeze’ to be about experiencing the simultaneous presence of multiple concepts of time. Martine felt that it was expected of her to spend a lot of time on schoolwork, and she did not have enough time for family and friends. This was mixed with a general feeling of increased speed and media density. However, Martine and her parents came to know another side of the media. Through digital media, it became possible to live in the countryside *and* in an urban city at the same time. This can be interpreted as the media creating images, which in turn mediate imaginations that flow across time and space. For Martine and her family this meant that they could maintain certain aspects of their existing lifestyle, but also ‘pick up’ new practices and ideas. Ultimately, the choices Martine’s family made were of great importance with regard to their experience of time and space in everyday life.

The findings indicate that the participants manoeuvre a number of different concepts of time in their everyday lives, as experiences of different ‘time orientations’ (cf. Gotved, 2006) being present at the same time, often in the same place. ‘School time’ and ‘leisure time’ are examples of time orientations that the students navigate *between* but also experience *simultaneously*. For example, media use with mobile devices has made social practices that traditionally are associated with leisure part of classroom practices. ‘School-time’ is characterized by clearly defined norms, such as time for attendance and time limits for lessons and deadlines. ‘Leisure-time’ is characterized by flow, play and few rules and limitations. Additionally, ‘mediatime’ seems to be established in these young people’s day-to-day activities as a multifaceted category of time. Mediatime enables both synchronous communication in real time across distance and asynchronous communication through, for instance, e-mail or blogposts, as Gotved (2006) underlined. Mediatime is something shared; the media creates simultaneity (Vettenranta, 2010b) and collective imagination.

Relations in physical and virtual proximity

A recurring theme in the narratives is how much and how quickly social practices have changed over the generations. Several participants stated that they thought that communication in the previous generations appeared as ‘cumbersome’ and ‘counterproductive’. The participants’ worldviews seem to be shaped by the ability to ‘reach out’ and the possibility of being reached. However, it was perhaps the personal experiences of relationships that were most referred to in the narratives.

Many of the participants reflected on the emotional differences between relationships practiced through digital, virtual means and interactions that occur when people meet face to face. Scholars have asked what the consequences are for people’s social relations when the fundamental experiences of time and space are under transformation. It has been argued that there are quality differences between relationships in the primary versus the secondary operation zone; face-to-face communication has been emphasized as qualitatively preferable to other types of relations. For instance, Berger and Luckmann (1967) reasoned that as face-to-face communication is the original form of communication, all other types of communication attempt to mimic this. Recent researchers are concerned with similar issues, but are more careful to conclude that the relations we experience in actual physical proximity are better than the relations mediated through technology (e.g. Köhl and Götzenbrucker, 2014; Wyller, 2011).

Lars, from Schofield’s (2014) study, found that the relations mediated through discussion forums, online gaming and social media, had a quite different meaning than the relationships the older members of his family practiced. Lars wrote that he came across a letter that he said came to have special meaning as it helped him understand the significance of relations in everyday life. Lars’ great-grandfather Ole worked as a vicar in a vast parish with poorly developed

transportation options, so Ole often travelled long distances by foot or by rowboat. This was physically demanding and one can readily imagine that this affected his everyday life in many ways, a life that seems very different from lives today with rapid and immediate global communication. However, as Lars interpreted it, Ole established close emotional ties to the people he met. Lars told about his great-grandfather writing a letter to a former confirmand, which can be interpreted as indicative of these close connections. The quote below is an excerpt from Ole's letter about his health, God and love.

Yes, you cannot believe how delighted I was when I received a letter from you again. Indeed, it was long since I've received a letter that has felt that good. It is so good to see that you haven't been completely forgotten, you see. [...] my health is weak and the doctor says that there is no great hope for improvement. In his opinion I have for sure done my job, and if so, then so be it. However, I do not think that I am quite finished yet. But it will be as God wants it to be. I know that had I not had the faith in a living God and a loving saviour now in this disease of mine, it would have been hopeless. But hope to God that it not so.

In his essay, Lars explained why he chose to quote the letter.

The reason that I have chosen to include this letter here is that I feel this says a lot about the media in everyday life at that time. I think that it probably would be quite unreal to most people today to send a letter to someone you haven't met for a really long time [...] and narrate that personally about death. It was quite amazing to read this letter for the first time [...] and I never thought I would be so touched by a man I barely knew anything about just a few weeks ago.

In the latter quote, Lars expressed having learned something important about media developments and media functions. He wrote that he was quite surprised that such strong emotional ties can be developed by exchange of letters. This is a slow form of communication compared to today's digital interactions. Lars asked himself whether the slow form contributes to actors adding emotions to the communication, and if people in contemporary technology-mediated interactions express themselves faster, with less time for reflection, and perhaps with less emotional commitment to other actors. This can be associated with Gotved's (2006) third dimension concerning the role of time in interpreting social interaction. Also, this expresses a form of evaluation of the emotional significance of different types of communication (cf. Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Köhl and Götzenbrucker, 2014; Wyller, 2011).

Lars' example also involves reflections about distance and space. Lars was one of the participants who expressed that he actively maintained relations with people who are physically located elsewhere. Lars' great grandfather had to physically move to where others actors were located, or write letters. This is a telling example of the differences in communication in the primary and secondary zone (cf. Schütz and Luckmann, 1974). Lars expressed that for him it is difficult to establish close emotional ties 'through technology', and that he learned a lot about the emotional differences that are involved in different types of relationships.

Several students expressed a concern that an upbringing in a world of increasing media use means that they are less mobile in the physical sense. Kari, for instance, stated that maintaining a varied social life and physical activity requires a completely different awareness now than before mobile devices and social media became mainstream. One needs to make an active choice in order to be physically active and meet people face to face because to remain passive and sedentary is also an option, as Kari expressed it.

Maybe this about people being a little less social in the way that was usual before. And that's what you hear about – eventually you end up sitting in your house doing nothing. [...] but I wouldn't say that is quite true. It's not *that* bad. But I think that it's a matter of common sense really. [...] And, Yes, it is easy to just sit there not being social [...] talking to each other on the net, but – I think 'normal' people, you know, they get that ... you need to go out as well.

Lars and Kari conveyed a situation where, to a large extent, people today operate in the secondary zone of operation rather than in the primary zone (cf. Schütz and Luckmann, 1974). The data suggests that many students considered activities in the primary zone as qualitatively the most valuable. This is related to the points made by Berger and Luckmann (1967) about quality differences between technology-mediated relationships and face-to-face communication. The narratives indicate that the participants acquired insights into how time is important for regulating and interpreting social interaction (Gotved, 2006). The students expressed that they

were accustomed to navigate between different activities and relations in everyday life. But they asked themselves if this constant navigation compromises the quality of their relationships. This is closely related to how the participants interpret their own lifeworld and thus their identity.

Capturing time, remembering places: Photo as an everyday artifact

Seeing photos and other visual artifacts as they have been used in everyday life can provide a special perspective on the experience of time and space. The findings show that the students made use of pictures both for obtaining information from the family and as a way to make meaning of the present and the past. Photos render snapshots of everyday life in different historical situations and thus imply a reflection over how time and situation are and have been experienced. This is in line with Wyller's (2011: 8) emphasis of photography as particularly important for reflection on the meaning of time, arguing that through photographs we can experience that time somehow 'cuts into life'.

A recurring issue in the narratives was how taking photos or having your picture taken was more solemn for the previous generations than it is for the current generations. The participants expressed that the use of photos and videos as means of communication has become an integral part of everyday life, an important feature of social practice. The narratives convey that photo and video tools have become common properties due to technological and economic developments. For previous generations, taking photographs was more of a special event, while the events being photographed now can be called everyday depictions. The excerpts from Maria's work illustrate this.



Figure 1. The barn on Maria's great-grandfather's farm being built.



Figure 2. Family gathering where several generations met. The image illustrates that people have been prepared and positioned for the photographer.



Figure 3: Everyday depiction. The family felt a sense of belonging to the farm, but the car became common, which represents mobility and extended range.



Figure 4: The 1980s: Growing use of photos to depict everyday activities.

The participants selected images to use in their work, put them in context and assigned meaning to them by describing their significance. The photos seem to have provided the participants with a mediated access to times and spaces where they were not located themselves. Additionally, the

students presented their work to the class, and in so doing they shared and tested their findings and ideas in a socio-cultural learning community. Martin commented on this in his interview.

There were a lot of interesting things, really. [...] I think I remember a film in which Johan talked about World War II and that was a bit interesting. And then it was exciting with [...] photos from different time periods when – where you sort of saw how things had changed, both in appearance, and like... yes – socially.

The participants presented their mediagraphies in the learning community and discussed findings with their fellow students. As such, the photographs and other visual expressions gave insight into a shared imagination. These are also expressions of how the use of photos can mediate an understanding of time as an integral aspect of how people in general communicate and make meaning (cf. Gotved, 2006). The students' narratives illustrate photos as a means for grasping moments in time and thus as artifacts for storing memories, but they are also a tool for communication in real time as well as across time and space.

Creative and unconventional expressions were apparent in some of the student products in Schofield's (2014) study, which constitute examples of the development of the social use of photo and video over the last few years. Potter (2010) terms one of the new social activities involving photo and video 'photosharing'. With photosharing, interactive connections are made between both images and the people that share and view the images. Memories, places and moments in time are moved from a private sphere to the public sphere. Time becomes something global, shared and common, which are characteristic features of *cyberspace*. Cyberspace is experienced as a virtual community where time and space are compressed (Vettenranta, 2010b). Jonas is an example of a student who created a short movie as his final product. The movie combined video clips of himself with various clips from the Internet depicting media events, political leaders such as Silvio Berlusconi, Adolf Hitler and George Bush, and political symbols. Image 5 shows how Jonas positioned himself, and images 6–8 show some of the other content.



Figure 5. Jonas uses himself as a character in the videoⁱⁱ,



Figure 6. Controversial political leaders are recurring figures.



Figure 7. The movie can be interpreted as a critique of how events are portrayed in the media.

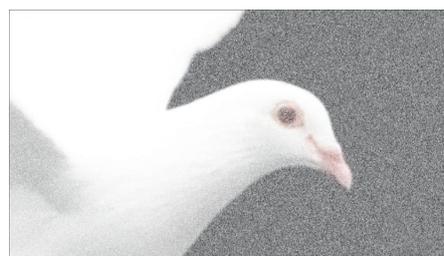


Figure 8. Jonas applies known symbols to express meaning.

Using Bauman and Brigg's (1990) concepts, Jonas decontextualized images and videos from their original contexts and recontextualized them in his product. The video is seemingly produced in a genre similar to amateur political videos that are shared in online communities. As such, it draws on several of the characteristics of Potter's (2010) description of photosharing. Photosharing contributes to self-representation, and by that it is a type of identity work. In light of this, Jonas' work can be regarded as expressions of his views on the contemporary media situation and also for him, a means of making meaning of the issues at hand. One can say that he places himself in time and history, as well as in a shared space. As such, the product is connected to his identity and is a form of self-reflection.

Being part of the world and a timeline

In Vettenranta's (2010b) study, which included several students with a multicultural background, the mix of cultures and social practices commonly associated with globalization is apparent in the participants' work. Several of the students argued that by using digital and social media it is possible to maintain connections to their home countries in an 'immediate' and 'close' way that was not possible before. In this context, 'closeness' encompasses an emotional closeness, that is, relations are maintained over distance but are experienced as close. Experiences of such a cultural mix are seen in Lisa's family (Vettenranta, 2010a). Her narrative portrayed the experiences of people who have led their lives in the midst of cultural mixes or 'in between' two or more cultures. Lisa's father Robert and grandmother Gabriela experienced a most dramatic journey in time and space as refugees fleeing from their war-stricken country of origin, Chile, to a 'safe' Norway.

Lisa has not herself experienced a physical migration from one part of the world to another, but she expressed having done a lot of virtual travelling. She argued, in line with other participants with similar stories, she has a sense of belonging to more than one culture. What becomes visible in families like Lisa's, are forms of hybridity and glocalisation (cf. Vettenranta, 2010b). The media have made possible the creation of new social spaces because the media offers simultaneity and immediacy.

The notion of *global imagination* emerged as significant during the analysis. In the abductive process, global imagination developed to constitute an explanatory concept. Potentially, it can grasp some of the ways in which young people grapple with impulses that global media bring into daily life. This concept is applied in line with Orgad (2012), who argues that global imagination concerns how we envision, think and feel about the world and how we place ourselves and relate

to others in the world. Orgad (2012) defines global imagination as a global expression of Gaonkar's (2002: 10) understanding of social imaginary, as a collective way of perceiving, interpreting and feeling at a global level 'who we are, how we fit together, how we got where we are, and what we might expect from each other in carrying out collective practices that are constitutive of our way of life'. In many ways, one can say that the last generation, represented by Lisa, experiences an 'imaginary' sense of being a citizen of the world as an expression of global imagination (cf. Orgad, 2012).

For Appadurai (1996), imagination is a key concept for understanding how we navigate in time and space in order to master social life. Imagination is often associated with something working within an individual's mind, but from the perspective of Appadurai (1996: 5), imagination is 'unleashed'. It is a shared, collective part of our everyday practices and a basic trait of modern society, with the media as a driving force.

The findings indicate that the act of narrating mediated certain meta-reflections about what media developments means and have meant for people's identity and sense of belonging. Christina from Schofield's (2014) study reflected on this in the interview:

Another thing I found out is that when it came to feeling like a part of the world and not just part of Norway, is that I am the only one feeling that I am that. The previous generations are very attached to the place where they grew up. And I can readily imagine that I can live anywhere. While they prefer to live exactly where are for the rest of their life. I believe this may have something to do with the fact that I have experienced more of the world, and have been in contact with people from other cultures than my own. And through television and the Internet you can be fed with information about cultures other than your own, even though you may not think about it. Because I feel I know a lot about different cultures because I like to watch documentaries about other countries.

Christina expressed 'feeling like a part of the world' and says she can 'imagine' living anywhere. She associated this with having 'experienced more of the world' and having 'contact with people from other cultures'. It seems that Christina, as Lisa in the example above, experiences a sort of global imagination. Lisa's imagination may very well be of a different 'texture', as Lisa has close

relatives existing in the 'cultural mix', but some of the same meaning can be read in their reflections. Thus, it is possible to see global imagination as something shared, not merely as an individual aspect.

When Anna from the upper secondary school study was asked to evaluate her own learning, she emphasized both seeing herself in a context and a 'timeline', that is, she drew on both temporal and spatial conceptions.

What I really learned from this project? I am in a way able to view myself in a slightly larger perspective now, than what was – like, stuff that I take for granted - it has not always been a given for everyone. [...] I think that it's very interesting, in a way, to put myself into a time - a time period, and how - what is the difference and ... stuff like that.

This quote can be regarded as an expression of reflexivity that enables a form of insight or acceptance of one's position in history. In this way, meta-reflections such as Anna's involve several of Gotved's (2006) dimensions of time experience, for instance, how time is and has been an important aspect of how people make meaning and interact with others. In Schofield's (2014) study, some students chose to create their own graphic illustrations. The increased meaning potential of such multimodal expressions also adds a reflexive dimension, as the act of positioning oneself in a temporal and spatial context is given a 'visual resonance'. This is seen in the products of Martin and Thomas.

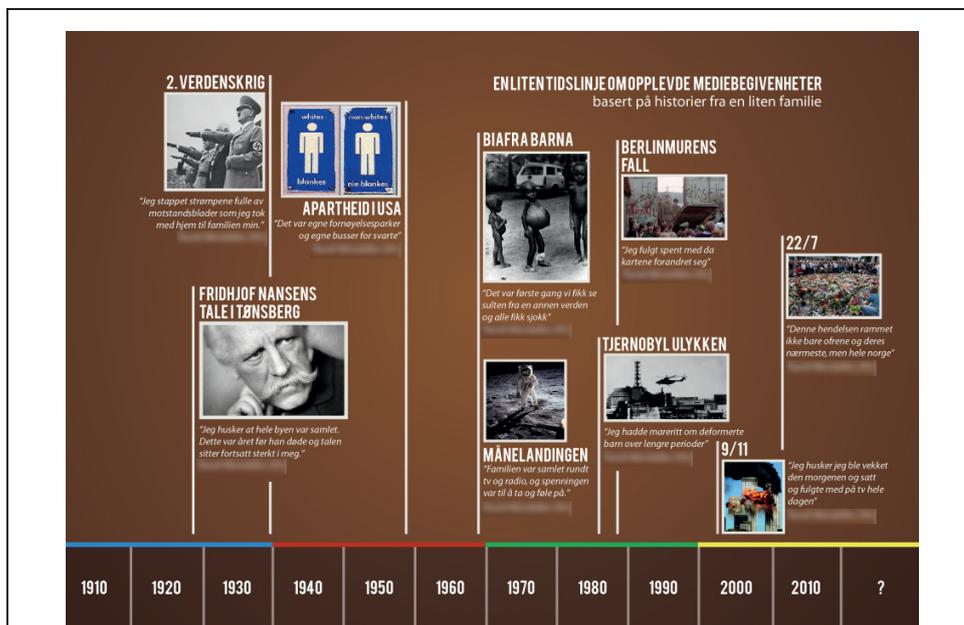


Figure 9. 'A small timeline of experienced media events': Martin produced a graphic timeline of important media events as experienced by himself and his family members.

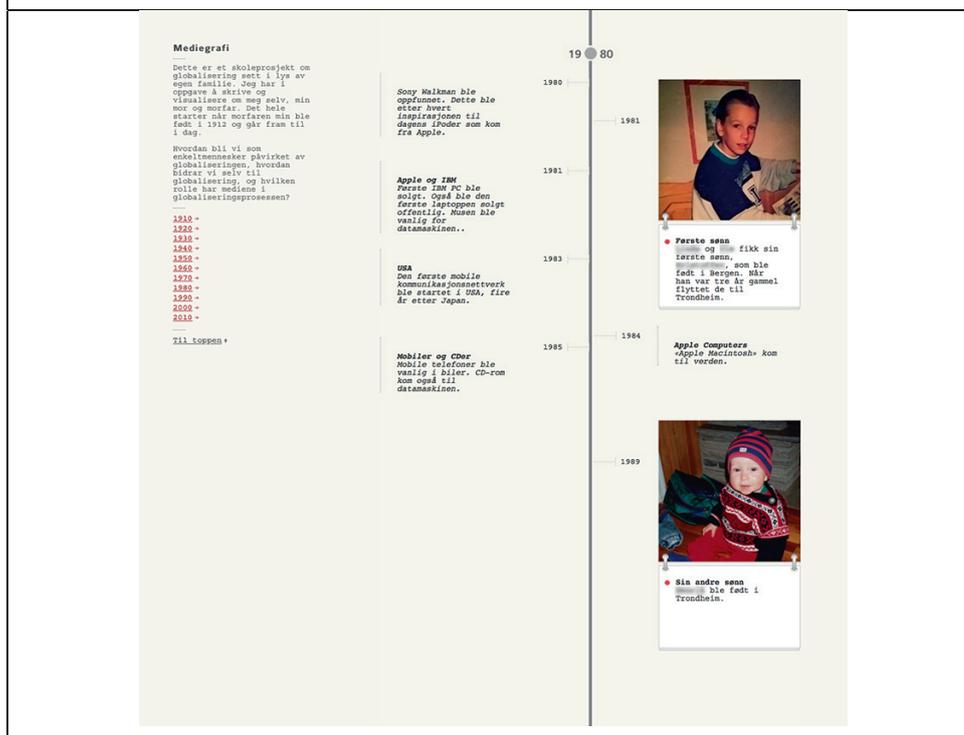


Figure 10. Screenshot from Thomas' interactive illustration of a timeline as experienced by himself and his family.

Thomas and Martin represent knowledge in a different way compared to written and verbal expressions. They have placed themselves visually in time and space. Thomas' interactive text contains added meaning potential, as the time dimension is made visible with the option of moving back and forth in time in that each decade has its own active hyperlink. These two examples are here regarded as illustrations of 'work of the imagination', which are combined with acquisition of knowledge and critical reflection on the data the students collected in the project.

The data indicates that in the students' narratives, scientific concepts are employed together with personal experience and interpretation of the stories the students heard from family members. In this way, Orgad's (2012) concept of global imagination is relevant; the students narrate about experiencing, interpreting and feeling who we are, and how we got to where we are at a global level.

Discussion

The spatial and temporal experiences of everyday life are inextricably linked together. The present data show that the students earned an insight into how people operate socially in different zones (cf. Schütz and Luckmann, 1974). This insight was particularly apparent when the participants reflected on relationships. Gotved's (2006) three dimensions of temporal experiences were applied in the analysis of the students' narratives. Through these dimensions, it became visible how the students reflected time as a pivotal aspect of meaning-making, orientation and regulation of social interaction.

The narratives indicate that the participants experience a temporal and spatial *complexity* in their social practices. They manoeuvre several different concepts of time and space in the activities and modes of thought that together constitute their experience of everyday life. All participants did

not articulate it clearly, but those who did, emphasized the increasingly complex experiences of time and space as an important difference when comparing their everyday lives to those of family members in previous generations. This complexity involves navigating between different time orientations (cf. Gotved, 2006). Some students came to know that counter-reactions are possible, as Martine's mediagraphy illustrated. Her family made a choice to withdraw from the texture and 'feel' of contemporary time pressure. This is in this article interpreted as an example of the meaning and significance of reflexivity. Through reflection and self-reflection, one can create a distance from one's own experiences and choices, which in turn facilitates action and reaction, and ultimately new choices.

As with other research (Köhl and Götzenbrucker, 2014; Wyller, 2011), this article cannot confirm whether there are any quality differences between operating socially in the primary versus the secondary zone (cf. Schütz and Luckmann, 1974). Nor can this research provide evidence of the students' actual experiences of insecurity or vulnerability (cf. Beck, 2000). The students' narratives, however, reflect that people in earlier times were able, to a larger extent than today, to focus on one activity at a time and to operate socially in the primary zone. The data indicates that the students are quite critical of their generation's dependence on social media, while they are similarly positive about the conditions characterizing earlier generations, when people typically experienced relations on a more physical level in the primary zone.

The data involved in the two studies indicate that the participants emphasize an emotional difference in technology-mediated relations versus the more physical relations — those who are 'within reach' (cf. Schütz and Luckmann, 1974). Lars' narrative, for example, illustrates how narration and reflection can contribute to an awareness of one's position in history and in the world as a certain 'work of the imagination'. Lars envisioned how his great-grandfather, a vicar, rowed a boat a long distance to reach out to church members. For Lars, an exchange of letters

between his great-grandfather and a confirmand became an eye opener. As such, there is important pedagogical value in the reflections of the participants. The reflections involve an understanding of the temporal and spatial dimensions characterising contemporary society, as well as a historical and social insight. In this way, the students gained insight into how time contributes in regulating and interpreting social interaction (Gotved, 2006).

The excerpts from a selection of students illustrate how photos and other visual tools have become important artifacts in everyday life. This is associated with Gotved's (2006) first dimension. Digital photo has become commonplace, and change one of the ways in which people make meaning, communicate and construct patterns of memory. In this way, the students get a glimpse of how individuals in previous generations presented and re-presented themselves and their activities. The participants compared the experiences of previous generations to the current culture characterized by increased visibility. In addition, the recent developments in image work, where trends such as 'photosharing' (Potter, 2010) and increasing personification have become explicit, are seen in some of the multimodal narratives. This way of applying photos is an example of how photos can function as reflection tools. In line with Wyller (2011), photos can be said to provide a special in-depth insight into certain moments in time and 'other' spaces, almost as if the observer 'is there' him or herself.

In many ways, the participants with multicultural backgrounds 'feel' in a physical sense the meaning of living in a cultural mix, in hybridity. However, also the participants without such a family background acknowledge an imaginary experience of being a part of the world. This is visible in the work of the students who produced multimodal works. The multimodal expressions imply a reflexivity that is articulated visually and interactively, and with added meaning potential. The perspectives on global imagination, framed by Orgad (2012) was significant in this respect. Orgad views global imagination as seeing oneself in the world, and emphasize how we feel about

the world, think about it and how we position ourselves in the world and relate to others on a global level.

As Appadurai (1996) saw it, imagination is a collective part of how we live our everyday lives. Global imagination can be regarded as something that characterizes us in the modern world and is latent in our practices, reflections and expressions. However, the present research shows that aspects of global imagination also can be grasped and made important issues in pedagogical conversations and activities. By collecting stories from individuals in previous generations and sensing the importance of these stories and of different events, the participants gained an insight into other lives, other times and other spaces. They applied their imagination and made connections that were not there before and reinforced those existing; between history and development, between the individual and society, and between media and everyday life.

This article illustrates that by creating historically informed narratives that revolve around their own everyday lives, young people reflect critically and creatively over two fundamental dimensions in our lifeworld: time and space. The findings do not give a coherent picture, but rather unfold a multifaceted and complex impression of what the narratives did express about temporal and spatial experiences. Complexity is in itself a finding; time and space, which are dimensions we use to orientate ourselves and to structure everyday life, seem to be dimensions that are experienced as increasingly complex, flexible and personalized. However, there are also many similarities across generations; the participants recognize, and feel like being a part of, their family stories – some even express that they long back to earlier times.

Conclusively, the narratives mediate insights into young people's life worlds. In this way, narratives can be important tools for people such as teachers or researchers to understand more of youth culture. For the students, the narratives mediate both retrospection and introspection,

but also insights into the present, and a glance to the future. Moreover, the narratives visualize how the participants relate to their contexts; the narratives become articulations of everyday spatiality. The media is essential for how both the temporal and the spatial dimensions are experienced. As such, narratives with historical perspectives can provide the participants with a special understanding of their media experiences, their media context and media history.

Endnotes

ⁱ Mediagraphy as a means of researching media and globalization is elaborated in Rantanen (2005), while mediagraphy as a learning activity is accounted for in Schofield (2014) and Vettenranta (2010b).

ⁱⁱ censor marks are reproduced as in the original

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