The Media and Global Imagination: Mediagraphy as a Multimodal Learning Activity in Higher Education

Visuality Design in and for Education

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Abstract

This article explores how higher education students express their worldviews and sense of belonging based on a study on mediagraphy as a learning activity. Empirical data are drawn from a study conducted in 2020 with master's students (n=25, aged 20–30 years) in a Norwegian university. The students collected data from family members and produced short digital stories about their own daily lives juxtaposed against the daily lives of three earlier generations. The mediagraphies were analyzed by narrative analysis in a process of reflexive interpretation. A key finding is how the stories 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. To give a coherent insight into the mediagraphy project, a clip accompanies the article, presenting one student's mediagraphy. The findings show that, as a learning activity, mediagraphy can potentially be a bridge between everyday experiences and academic discussions related to media influence, ethics, and literacy.

Keywords

visuality design – sense of belonging – global imagination – mediagraphy – media literacy – narrative – digital storytelling

Rodeo, cueca, fotball, og flamenco
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Rodeo, cueca, football and flamenco. More than just a passion.

FEATURE   This article is based on a video, which can be viewed here.

1   Introduction

Digital media plays a key role in modern life – not only in work, education, and everyday life (Kupiainen, 2013; Massey, 2005; Potter & McDougall, 2017), but also in how we understand ourselves and relate to the world and other people (Castells, 2010; Davis, 2011; Hepp, 2020; Hjarvard, 2008). Perhaps this is especially true for young people, as their participation in time- and place-independent media practices has become integral in everyday life. Recent studies have confirmed that continuous and comprehensive media use is increasing among children and youths (Medietilsynet, 2020; Smahel et al., 2020). Several education scholars (de Block & Buckingham, 2010; Dezuanni, 2017; Schofield, 2018, 2022) emphasize how these cultural changes lead to people of all ages having an increased need for critical media literacy skills. At the same time, there is reason to believe that the continuous connectivity to a mediated global world contributes to people having a growing need to understand the contemporary global culture and to reflect on how one is part of the world *and*

how global culture plays into the local experience of everyday life (de Block & Buckingham, 2010; Rantanen, 2005; Schofield, 2014a; Vettenranta, 2010a).

The *mediagraphy* method (Schofield, 2015; Schofield & Kupiainen, 2015; Vettenranta, 2011; see also Koponen, 2020) has shown promising potential when it has been applied as a research method in media studies, in terms of providing knowledge about young people's self-insight and worldviews. Pedagogically, it has shown potential in terms of developing media literacy and reflection competence when applied as a teaching method with students in different ages. Previous studies by Ponte and Aroldi (2013), Rantanen (2005), Schofield (2015), Vettenranta (2010a; 2011), and Koponen (2020), have explored mediagraphy as a learning activity with students in higher education and in upper secondary school, where the students have primarily worked with written texts. This article aims to further explore mediagraphy in higher education, where the students have worked with digital narratives rather than traditional academic written texts.

The article presents findings from a research project conducted in Norway in 2020, in which students (n=25, aged 20–30 years) produced mediagraphies as part of an academic assignment in a media education master's course. A mediagraphy is a narrative about one's everyday life juxtaposed against the daily lives of earlier generations of one's own family. In this project, the students produced short digital stories based on data they collected during qualitative interviews; with data structured using a predesigned mediagraphy table. Additionally, the students wrote short reflection notes about their learning experiences. These data were analyzed as narratives inspired by life stories (Almås & Gullestad, 1990; Bruner, 1991b, 2006; Harrison, 2009b), with particular focus on the students' reflections about their sense of belonging and experience of the outside world. Hence, the starting point was the participants' meaning-making concerning contemporary everyday life; however, the analysis also had a historical perspective. The project the article is based on is further accounted for in the method section.

To illustrate mediagraphy as a learning activity, a video clip of one student's mediagraphy (Paulina's) accompanies the article (see Video 1). This video clip can give a unique and coherent insight into the mediagraphy project but does not alone provide the basis for the article's findings. Paulina's story rather serves as one example from a sample of several stories. The other students' mediagraphies have also been analyzed and form the basis for the academic arguments in the article.

The key research question is: *How do master's students express their sense of belonging and understanding of the global culture in mediagraphies, and what is the pedagogical potential of mediagraphy projects?*

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VIDEO 1   Paulina's mediagraphy. (See here.)

1.1   *Previous Research on Mediagraphy*

Mediagraphy was introduced by Rantanen (2005) as a research method for analyzing the media's role in globalization, while Vettenranta (2010) applied mediagraphy as a learning activity for master's degree students. Here, with globalization as the starting point, the students conducted qualitative interviews with four generations of their families, including themselves. Using Rantanen's (2005) *mediagraphy table* as a foundation, each student compiled the relevant interview data into a table structured according to key globalization factors for each generation, as shown in Table 1. The students then wrote mediagraphy essays.

The participants in Vettenranta's (2010) study expressed having a *glocal identity,* that is, a sense of belonging to both local and global communities. The findings suggested that the mediagraphy project mediated an awareness of one's place in globalization. Vettenranta observed that such knowledge is an essential part of 'global media literacy', which is defined as a set of competencies necessary for coping with everyday life in a multicultural, media-saturated world (Vettenranta, 2010).

TABLE 1 The mediagraphy table, adapted from Rantanen (2005)

	Great-grandmother/ great-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 events[a]				
Interests				
Ideology				
Resistance to				
Identity				

[a] 'Global media event' was not originally used by Rantanen (2005).

In a project inspired by mediagraphy, Ponte and Aroldi (2013) found that master's students became aware of generational differences and that working with mediagraphy stimulated self-reflexivity and sociological imagination. Other research confirms that mediagraphy can stimulate self-understanding and self-reflection, as well as awareness of the world and historical insights (Koponen, 2020; Schofield, 2015; Schofield & Kupiainen, 2015).

Schofield (2015) found that mediagraphy can contribute to developing *critical media literacy*. Reflection is often seen as a prerequisite for media literacy (Buckingham, 2006). For instance, Erstad (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 relates to the ability to reflect over both media content and -expressions, and, one's own media use. In this context, Buckingham emphasised the importance of a so-called 'meta-language' (Buckingham, 2003, p.37) that enables people to understand and describe the structures of different communication genres, and that can give a broad insight into social, economic and institutional contexts of communication and how individuals' practices and experiences are affected by this. Schofield (2015) argued that mediagraphy can contribute to developing 'reflection competence', including communicative, analytical and critical reflection.

1.2 *Theoretical Perspectives*

Rantanen (2005) found that people's social relationships are becoming less 'place-bound'. She claimed that media use and -developments have profoundly contributed to people's capacity to connect to other people beyond the place in which one is physically located. According to several scholars, the development of digital media and increasing media density contribute to transforming how we relate to time and space in our everyday lives (Eriksen, 2007; Hepp, 2020; Hjarvard, 2014). Couldry and McCarthy (2004), Köhl and Götzenbrucker (2014), and Potter and McDougall (2017) argued that the media contributes to new, hybrid social spaces that enable virtual experiences unrestricted by the body's physical limits or the boundaries that exist in places that, historically, have been commonly associated with work, leisure, or education.

But we cannot really be sure what the developments related to the media mean for people's orientation, sense of belonging and self-image. Beck and Sznaider (2006), Delanty (2012), Martin (2011) and others have claimed that digital and social media enable young people to orient themselves toward the world, act as global citizens, take global responsibility, and assume a cosmopolitan identity. However, others (Olausson, 2011; Rye, 2013) suggest that despite young people's extensive connections to the wider world, they do not necessarily develop a global identity or identify with distant people and cultures.

1.3 *Time and Space as Key Dimensions of Everyday Life*

Time and space are fundamental in our imagination and worldview. According to Schütz and Luckmann (1974), everyday life is structured by interdependent

spatial and *temporal* dimensions – we organize our existence according to the 'here' of our bodies and the 'now' of our present (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p. 3). Here, time and space are regarded as *social constructs* and not as fixed or 'natural' categories (cf. Giddens, 1990). 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.

The *primary* and *secondary* zones of operation are the basic *spatial* dimensions of our lifeworld, according to Schütz and Luckmann (1974). The primary zone, 'the world within reach', is the 'here' where one can find oneself. This is a world reachable by face-to-face communication. The secondary zone is a world that can potentially be reached through technology-mediated communication. However, the spatial dimensions cannot be regarded as mutually exclusive dichotomies. In fact, modern life allows us to operate simultaneously in the primary and secondary operation zones. A student can, for instance, participate in a conversation in the classroom (primary zone) and in a virtual interaction in a social medium (secondary zone) at the same time.

1.4 *Global Imagination*

The notion of *global imagination* potentially embraces some of the ways in which young people grapple with the impulses that global media bring into daily life. According to Orgad (2012), global imagination involves how we envision, think about, and feel about the world and how we place ourselves and relate to others in the world. Orgad (2012) defined global imagination as a global expression of Gaonkar's (2002, p. 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". Through analyzing the students' mediagraphies, it may be possible to discuss, for example, whether young people today experience being a part of the world in a more 'imaginary' way than older generations – as an expression of global imagination made possible through extensive and multifaceted media use (cf. Orgad, 2012).

2　　Method and Design

Data for this study were collected from a mediagraphy project conducted during one semester in 2020 at a Norwegian university. The participants were

25 students attending a master's course in media education, and were between 20 and 30 years old.

2.1   *The Current Student Project*

The students explored aspects of the daily lives of four generations of their families,[1] including their own life, in light of media developments (Schofield, 2015; Schofield & Kupiainen, 2015; Vettenranta, 2010a, 2010b). The students interviewed three family members from previous generations, and compiled the relevant data into predesigned mediagraphy tables (Table 1). For example, a student obtained information from himself and his mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. Each student then produced a 5–15-minute digital story based on their media experiences, identity, and societal developments. They consisted of: collected or self-made images, film clips, and other material that illustrated the story; and title pages or a voiceover that discussed relevant academic issues, theories, concepts, findings, and conclusions. The stories were produced in various software applications, typically Microsoft PowerPoint, Apple Keynote, Apple iMovie, or Adobe Premiere. The digital stories constituted the main data source for the present article, and the students' written reflection notes with meta-reflections on their own learning process were also analyzed. Specifically, the data sources included multimodal texts supplemented with mediagraphy tables and reflection notes.

Mediagraphies highlight key life developments, changes, and turning points related to media use, media events, travel, education, ideology, identity, and so on. As such, they are narratives that resemble *life stories*, and can be important data sources for studying the complex relations between the self and the social context (Almås & Gullestad, 1990; Harrison, 2009a). Here, the students' mediagraphies were not considered fact-based texts; rather, meaning-making narratives (Bruner, 1991a) that were used to gain insight into how people experience everyday life. Hence, this article focuses on how the students expressed their sense of belonging and experiences of time and space, primarily based on their digital stories.

2.2   *Analysis*

The data analysis was inspired by *reflexive interpretation* (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008). The students' mediagraphies consist of their interpretations of their family members' interpretations of events in their lives. Next, the students' interpretations were interpreted by the first author, as a researcher. Thus, this

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1   The students could also use informants outside their family, if they wished.

was a multi-layered analysis conducted in the hermeneutic tradition. While alternative interpretations are possible (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008), those presented here are substantiated by a coherent video clip, which is a rich and varied data excerpt and represent 'thick descriptions' of the data (Geertz, 1973). The analysis was characterized by abduction (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008), representing a continuous interplay between theory and data, and a reflexive development of research questions, categories, and concepts.

The mediagraphies are multimodal; they include images, graphics, illustrations, and written text. Thus, the stories involve several sign systems and an increased meaning potential (Kress, 2003) compared to written texts. Bauman and Briggs (1990) argued 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 & Katz, 2006).

Research on young people's experiences of media has often been conducted via interviews or written accounts. However, allowing young people to express themselves through creative and multimodal expressions can provide them with time for reflection, and they can use genres and methods they are comfortable with (Awan & Gauntlett, 2013; Burn & Durran, 2007). The resultant data can also provide rich insight into how young people experience and understand their media practices (Awan and Gauntlett (2013; see also DezuaNni, 2017).

2.3   *Credibility and Generalizability*

In empirical studies, such as the present study, reliability is determined by the coherence between empirical data, analysis, and findings (Creswell, 2014). *Transparency* is a key goal to this study, and to achieve transparency, the analysis and underlying theoretical perspectives are explicated so that the readers can consider the credibility of the research (Creswell, 2014). *Validity*, whether the research investigates what was intended, is another crucial element of the research. A goal of this research was *analytical generalization* rather than statistical generalization. The goal is to bring nuances to established theories or concepts or maybe contribute to develop new concepts or to confirm previous studies. Also – the findings can be used in analyzing other similar situations (Yin, 2014).

The research was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). The principle of informed consent was followed. An information letter was given to the students and signed before the project began. The participants

gave an information letter to their interviewees when they conducted their data collection. The participants are anonymized, and fictitious names are used. Paulina's mediagraphy is however reproduced in its entirety with special permission from the student and NSD approval, and her name is used, also by special permission.

3   Findings

The video clip (see Video 1) shows a student's (Paulina's) mediagraphy project. Rendering relatively few example stories in their entirety or with the help of larger extracts has been a characteristic of several research projects that have explored mediagraphy (Rantanen, 2005; Schofield, 2015; Vettenranta, 2010b). A core point is to give voice to the research participants and preferably by means of their own way of expressing themselves. Another point is to emphasize in-depth insight and coherency rather than details and fragments. Paulina's story can thus serve as a representation of how mediagraphy unfolded for one of several students in the present study. All the participants' mediagraphies have however also been analyzed and form an important basis for the analyzes that have been carried out and hence for the findings.

Paulina's multicultural background illustrates several of the key aspects of the pedagogical potential of mediagraphy. Her story revolves around personal interests, migration, and, perhaps most central, the sense of belonging. With reference to recent mapping of young people's media practices (Medietilsynet, 2020; Smahel et al., 2020), it is not surprising that most of the participants, Paulina included, referred to themselves as 'very' active users or as 'being dependent' on various media in their everyday lives. They report using a vast number of different digital artifacts, such as mobile phones, tablet devices, the Internet, and different social media.

Table 2 shows that Paulina has a multicultural family, and that they have migrated over long distances since the third generation. Paulina reflected on identity, belonging, and her strong personal interests in different cultural expressions.

3.1   *Relations in Physical and Virtual Proximity*
A recurring theme observed in the mediagraphies is how much and how quickly social practices change over generations. Several participants stated that communication in the times of previous generations was "cumbersome" and "counterproductive". The participants' worldviews seemed to be shaped by the ability to 'reach out' and the possibility of being reached. However, it

TABLE 2   Paulina's mediagraphy table

	Great-grandfather 1915–1968	Grandfather 1939–1994	Father 1957–	Myself 1990–
Profession	Landowner, rodeo rider.	Prison officer, rodeo rider.	Mining engineer, carpenter, child and youth worker.	Student, Spanish teacher in junior high school.
Home country	Chile.	Chile.	Chile, Norway from 1990.	Chile, Norway from 1990.
Place	Born in Boco, a town outside Quillota, Chile.	Born in Boco, a town outside Quillota, Chile.	Born in Quillota, Chile. Later, a larger city in central Norway.	Born in Viña del Mar, Chile. Later, a larger city in central Norway.
Time	Time passed slowly. Spent all his free time at the rodeo.	Time was of the essence. Had regular routines as a prison officer.	Likes to be precise and on time.	Time and structure are important to get everything done. Likes to be on time.
Changes in lifestyle	From rural to urban. Moved later from the estate and into the city.	From rural to urban. Moved later from the estate into the city.	Urban. Moved to Norway, cramped conditions at first but worked his way up.	Urban.
Education	6 years of primary school.	6 years of primary school, prison guard education (4 years).	11 years of primary school, 4 years of university (engineering ed.), certificate in carpentry, 2 years child and youth work.	12 years of primary school, bachelor's degree in Spanish language, bachelor's degree in education
Changes in class	From working class, to high middle class, and finally middle class.	From high middle class to middle class.	Middle class.	Middle class.

TABLE 2   Paulina's mediagraphy table (*cont.*)

	Great-grandfather 1915–1968	Grandfather 1939–1994	Father 1957–	Myself 1990–
Family	4 siblings: 2 brothers and 2 sisters.	2 siblings: 1 older brother and a twin brother.	4 siblings: 2 sisters and 2 brothers.	2 siblings: 1 older sister and 1 younger brother.
Travel	Domestically, visited various cities via rodeo tournaments.	Domestically, visited various cities via prison transport and rodeo tournaments.	Canada, Spain, USA, Sweden, England, Denmark, Chile.	Canada, Spain, USA, Sweden, England, Denmark, Chile.
First overseas journey			From Chile to Norway in 1990.	From Chile to Norway in 1990.
Languages spoken	Spanish as mother tongue.	Spanish as mother tongue.	Spanish as mother tongue, speaks and understands Norwegian. Understands English, Portuguese, and Italian.	Bilingual, Norwegian, and Spanish. English and some French.
Media and communication	Newspapers, letter correspondence, telegram.	Newspapers, telegram, radio, TV (first black and white, then color), telephone.	Newspapers, telegrams, books, radio, gramophone, TV (first black and white, then color), telephone. Now: PC, Internet, mobile, cable/digital TV.	Radio, cassette tapes, books, VHS player, TV, PC, Internet, Walkman, CD player, tablet, mobile, telephone.

TABLE 2   Paulina's mediagraphy table (*cont.*)

	Great-grandfather 1915–1968	Grandfather 1939–1994	Father 1957–	Myself 1990–
Global media events		Soccer World Cup: 1962. Rumble in the jungle: 1974. The military coup: 1973.	Soccer World Cup: 1962. Rumble in the jungle: 1974. 9/11/2001. The rescue operation in the San José mine, Chile: 2010. Copa America: 2015. Earthquake/tsunami (Valparaíso, Chile): 2017.	9/11/2001. Tsunami (Indonesia): 2004. The rescue operation in the San José mine, Chile: 2010. Copa America: 2015.
Interests	Chilean rodeo, music, and dance (cueca, cumbia).	Chilean rodeo, football, boxing, horse riding, cueca, music (cueca, cumbia, tango), agriculture, horse racing, la ralluela (hopscotch), hunting.	Soccer, Latin American music (cumbia, salsa), cooking, movies, Chilean TV (via digital TV), conversation.	Dance (flamenco, salsa, jazz, classical), Latin American music (salsa, cumbia, reggeaton), exercise (zumba, aerobics), theater, books.
Ideology	Baptized Catholic. Not interested in politics.	Baptized Catholic. Not politically engaged.	Baptized Catholic, not practicing. In Norway, always voted for the Labor Party.	Baptized Catholic, not practicing. Votes social democratic.

TABLE 2   Paulina's mediagraphy table (*cont.*)

	Great-grandfather 1915–1968	Grandfather 1939–1994	Father 1957–	Myself 1990–
Resistance to	War, violence.	War, violence, lawlessness, los momios (the nickname of right-wing conservative parties), the coup in Chile.	The coup in Chile, military occupation, racism, discrimination, oppressive religions and ideologies, the use of weapons.	Racism, gender discrimination in working life, bullying and exclusion in school, xenophobia.
Identity	Local (huaso) and national.	Local and national.	Transnational (Chilean and Norwegian), cosmopolitan, local.	Transnational (Norwegian, Chilean, Andalusian), cosmopolitan, local.

was perhaps the personal experiences of relationships that were referred to the most in the narratives. Paulina's mediagraphy suggests that technology-mediated experiences have been important in awakening and maintaining her interests that, in turn, enable a strong emotional connection to her home country, even though she now lives far away. She stated that Chilean music and dance traditions are key factors in how she understands herself. We interpret this as being something that *spatially* connects her to her homeland and *temporally* to her family members from previous generations. At the same time, music and dance can mediate her closeness to those who live where she lives now – that is, the 'here and now'-relationship. In other words, Paulina's narrative illustrates that her strong interest and engagement in music and dance mediates a connection between what is experienced here and now (cf. Berger & Luckmann, 1967), in a sensory manner, to temporally and spatially distant people and events. Hence, this illustrates how many people's media practices are characterized by the flow and convergence of the primary and secondary zones of operation (cf. Schütz & Luckmann, 1974). This can be seen as closely related to how the participants interpreted their own lifeworld, and, thus their sense of belonging and identity.

4   Shared Imaginations

Viewing photos and other visual artifacts as they have been used in everyday life can provide a unique perspective on the experience of time and space (e.g. Wyller, 2011). The findings show that the students used pictures both to obtain information and to make meaning of the present and the past. Photos provide snapshots of everyday life in different historical situations, and, thus support reflection about how time and situations are and have been experienced. This is in line with Wyller's (2011, p. 8) statements about photography being particularly important for reflecting on the meaning of time. He argues that, through photographs, we can experience that time somehow "cuts into life".

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 access to times and spaces in which they themselves were not located. The participants presented and discussed their mediagraphies and findings in the master's class. Hence, they shared and tested their findings and ideas in a sociocultural learning community, and the photographs and other visual expressions gave insight into a *shared imagination*. The students' narratives illustrated that photos are not only a means for grasping moments in time and artifacts for storing memories, but also a tool for communication in real-time and across time and space.

The mediagraphies were multimodal narratives. Using Bauman and Brigg's (1990) concepts, the students decontextualized images and videos from their original contexts and recontextualized them in new products. Given that the students used several sources, the mediagraphies can be regarded as expressions of the students' views on contemporary media and as a means for making meaning of different societal and cultural issues. One can say that the students placed themselves in time and in a shared here-and-now space with the other students. As such, the products are connected to the students' identities and are a form of self-reflection.

4.1   *Worldview and Sense of Belonging*

Paulina's mediagraphy illustrates how digital and social media can mediate the maintenance of strong emotional ties to one's home country in an 'immediate' and 'close' way. In this context, 'closeness' encompasses an *emotional* closeness, that is, relations that are maintained over distance but experienced as close. Her narrative portrayed the experiences of people who have lived 'in between' two or more cultures. Forms of hybridity and glocalization are often visible in multicultural families like Paulina's (Vettenranta, 2010b). The media have made possible the creation of new social spaces because they facilitate

simultaneity, immediacy, and access to an historical archive with both private and public sources.

The findings further indicate that mediagraphy mediates meta-reflection about what media developments mean and have meant for people's identity and sense of belonging. The mediagraphy project mediated a form of insight into or acceptance of one's position in history, and a form of global imagination. Paulina expressed "feeling like a part of the world," yet also a strong sense of belonging to her current city and country. As Paulina's mediagraphy illustrates, the students used scientific concepts and personal experience when interpreting their family members' stories. In this way, Orgad's (2012) global imagination concept 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. In a sense, the contemporary culture probably challenges how we orientate ourselves in everyday life; although we still need to organize our existence according to the 'here' of our bodies and the 'now' of our present (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p. 3), we are also more or less contiunously connected to the world in a mediated way. We therefore also constantly relate to a global media culture. The mediagraphy project stimulated the students to critically reflect on such questions.

5   Discussion

What can be said about the participants' expressions of their sense of belonging and understanding of the global media culture in mediagraphies, based on one illustrative example? Paulina's mediagraphy tells of events from four individual lives, each of which has involved quite remarkable turning points and movements around the world. As such, global culture comes clearly into view in her story. The other students' mediagraphies had different perspectives, and undeniably varied in academic quality. Nonetheless, the mediagraphy had important pedagogical value, as we see it; both for the students individually, but also collectively, as the mediagraphies were presented to the other students, and discussed in relation to relevant theoretical issues within media education. 25 mediagraphies were shared in an educational setting, involving data from more than 90 individual lives. This provided basis for a lot of perspectives an potential insights into different issues. Moreover, the mediagraphies were multimodal texts, produced in different digital media tools, which to our view meant important added pedagogical value. The students acquired and represented knowledge in ways that were different from those used in

other academic contexts; applying several modalities, including 'work of the imagination' and critical reflection.

Paulina's narrative illustrates how narration and reflection can contribute to an awareness of one's position in history and the world as a 'work of the imagination'. Paulina stated that she was conscious about the intergenerational commonalities in her family, and she emphasized what constructs her identity and what connects her emotionally to the earlier generations of her family. She was probably already aware of several of these traits; however, the mediagraphy project likely enabled her to articulate them and *tell the story* of her family. Hence, there was pedagogical value in the reflection, which involved an understanding of the temporal and spatial dimensions characterizing contemporary society, as well as historical and social insight (cf. Gotved, 2006).

The mediagraphy method implies an interesting duality: the participants get a glimpse of how previous generations have presented and re-presented themselves and their activities. Here, many students collected photos from the earlier generations. In line with Wyller (2011), photos can be said to provide insight into moments in time and 'other' spaces, almost as if the observer 'is there'. Through producing a digital story, the students created a coherent story consisting of these glimpses, which has pedagogical value, because, as we see it, mediagraphy can function as a reflection tool (Schofield, 2014b) and mediate meaning-making about complex and historical issues.

The meaning of living in a cultural mix was particularly visible in the mediagraphies of the participants with multicultural backgrounds. However, the mediagraphies of those with more local family backgrounds also reflected an imaginary experience of being a part of the world. The perspectives on global imagination, framed by Orgad (2012), were significant in this respect, implying reflection about how we feel and think about the world, and, how we position ourselves in the world and relate to others on a global level.

According to Appadurai (1996), imagination is a collective part of how we live our everyday lives. Global imagination can be regarded as a basic human characteristic in the modern world; it permeates our practices, reflections, and expressions. The present mediagraphy projects show that aspects of global imagination can also be grasped, articulated, and emphasized in pedagogical activities. By collecting stories from previous generations and sensing their importance, participants gain insight into other lives, times, and spaces. They apply their imagination and make new connections and reinforce existing ones between history and development, the individual and society, and media and everyday life.

By creating historically informed narratives that revolve around their own everyday lives, young people can critically and creatively reflect on two

fundamental lifeworld dimensions: time and space. These findings do not provide a coherent picture; rather, they provide a multifaceted impression of what the participants expressed about temporal and spatial experiences. Mediagraphy narratives also offer insight into young people's lifeworlds, and, thus can be important tools for teachers, researchers, and others who wish to gain a deeper understanding of youth culture.

5.1   *Limitations and Future Research*
The study to which the article refers has its limitations. It is a qualitative study with a limited number of participants, and the interpretations are made with a specific perspective, in a specific cultural context. It is therefore important that mediagraphy and similar projects are further explored in other contexts, and if possible, with other and larger samples. The findings could, in future studies, be strengthened by comparing them with relevant quantitative results related to media development, globalization and meaning making.

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