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I. Introduction

I.1 Subject

The turn of the 21st century marked the eventual change into the digital age. “The net of networks“ (Internet) has finally succeeded to influence most aspects of life. This development has brought about a new paradigm called “Informationalism” that replaced the industrialist perspective of the 20th century (Castells 1996). The global village has become reality: people, information and labour can – at least theoretically - exchange worldwide.

While in the industrial age the main source of productivity lay in the introduction of new energy sources, our contemporary societies invest in the “technology of knowledge generation, information processing and symbol communication” (Castells 1996, p. 17). The main concern of functioning societies has shifted from an even distribution of resources to a balanced access to knowledge and information. Though, as in the industrial age there are winners and losers: nowadays the room for “under-communicated territories“ is shrinking (Castells 1996, p. 25) and the information gap does not just widen between the First and Third World countries but within the societies themselves.

In this “current era of revolutionary information changes” (Fuller 2004) access to communication and information is a precondition for participating in the democratic development of societies. However, with regards to the “digital divide' between information 'haves' and 'have nots’” (Arquilla 2001, p. 314), which has generated new social inequities, this is not guaranteed. The media landscapes are controlled by global players which are operating on a profit rather than an orientation towards generating valuable content for society.

Commercial activities of the leading mass medium, private television, are exclusively based on selling the service of catching attention for anything whatsoever (Franck 1999). This poses a situation of financially potent individuals and organisations which have exclusive access to information and communication channels. In this setting, the community media sector attempts to pose a complementary space to the “mainstream.” While corporate media

organisations, which are often operating on an international scale, dominate the creation of opinions, signs and meanings, community media plays the supplementary role of generating an additional value to civil society. It aims to foster a “critical mass” of citizens by educating, encouraging and cultivating people to become involved in the production of information, meaning and attention.

Nowadays, however, it is becoming more difficult for community media to pursue these goals. The effect of current budget cuts of many political institutions and foundations can not be underestimated as community media is to a considerable extent dependent on funding by these sources. The situation is characterised by a fierce struggle for scarce funds with other Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) and institutions of the nonprofit sector.

The core challenges for community media can be illustrated by expanding the concept of the information society to the assumption that contemporary societies are based on an “Economy Of Attention” (Franck 1999), meaning that the main asset is rather to attract attention than possess information. This view implies important strategic changes for community media. Most importantly, it effects its efforts towards a political and legal recognition. Community media's argument that they are a vital contribution to the development of democratic societies needs to be strengthened to reach these goals.

Hence, a main objective of the community media movement in Central Europe, which is the research topic of the paper, is to raise awareness, consciousness and, most importantly, “attention” of people and politics on a European level on the importance of community media. This becomes especially important in regards to the current shift of power within the political structures of the European Union. But it has to be emphasised that this is not a sufficient focus as the decision structures are subject to radical change in recent years: instead of a central authority like governments or legislative powers, policy nowadays is a result of a “process in which a multitude of public as well as private organisations are involved” (Mayntz 1996, p. 473, transl.). This suggests that its aims can only be reached by becoming part of this multitude through international cooperation, lobbying and exchange.

In the year 2003, a group of people has started an initiative which picked up all these challenges and has been trying to establish a network of individuals and organisations of the community media sector in the Central European area. This initiative has been particularly concerned with bringing together the interests of different media for exchange, cooperation and to push forward their common interests. This initiative is called “FMEDIA“.

1.2 Aims of this Work

The present work was written with regard to the people who could benefit from the research results. These are individuals and organisations working in the field of community media, as well as the broader field of civil society initiatives and NGOs. The research focuses on appropriate structures for inter-organisational, international cooperation and exchange. On the basis of the FMEDIA case, a useful knowledge basis for future collaborative efforts will be provided.

The main field of interest of this work is analysing the structural approach of the FMEDIA initiative. It was set up as an organisational network, enabling its affiliates to mutually support and strengthen each other. However, one central question that has to be asked is if the goal of setting up such a structural form has actually been achieved in the present case. Furthermore, can sustainable international cooperation be reached through the organisational network structure? Are there alternative set ups which are more adequate for cooperation purposes? Therefore, an analysis of different organisation structures that could be adequate for the present case, their weaknesses and strengths in different contexts and the experiences that have been made in the past, will be put through.

It is one aim of this work to decide if the organisational network is the most adequate organisational structure to serve the goals of the community media organisations in Central Europe.

Furthermore, the effects of an event (the FMEDIA Forum 2004, Prague/Freistadt June 10-13) in the process of creating an organisational network will be examined. The main point of interest is to see if the event drives the structure of interactions within the related community

media towards a network structure of organisations.

Answering all these questions becomes particularly relevant regarding the current vacuum of political representation in the field of European Community Media. To fill out this gap and find ways of connecting and organising NGOs, civil society initiatives and individuals of the same field on an international scale, organisational concepts are needed. The political sector requires a negotiating partner. Without a common international voice or network acting as such a partner the establishment of the Community Media sector besides commercial and state media can hardly be reached. Furthermore, such formations contribute considerably in creating a clearer vision of the sector itself.

1.3 Structure of this Work

The present thesis is divided into four main subjects:

The first part (Chapter II) discusses the topic of “cooperation.” This is induced by the fact that most of the efforts in the FMEDIA context are related to an intensification of cooperation. A historical outline of the view on organisational structuring and thinking will be given to provide a basic understanding of the diversity of approaches towards viewing organisational reality. An overview on potential organisational structures, which can be utilized for international cooperation, is given afterwards. The central focus will be on the network viewed as an organisational structure and its applicability.

Secondly, in Chapter III, the scientific approach and its methodologies for the empirical part of the study are presented. The data is collected through qualitative research according to a “grounded theory” approach to the subject.

In Chapter IV, the FMEDIA initiative is presented through the use of the collected empirical data. A profound insight, what this cooperation setting is about, what its aims and strategies are, through which methods and techniques these were tried to be reached and which persons and organisations were involved in putting it into effect, will be provided.

To understand the involvement of the diversity of organisations within the FMEDIA setting, an overview will be given on the Community Media sector, its aims, strategies and main features.

Furthermore, there will be a focus on the strategies of FMEDIA. Based on Chandler's "structure follows strategy" theory (1962), the structural features of FMEDIA will be put into relation with the strategic aims. The empirical data shall provide the basis to answer whether features of an organisational network existed prior to the event, how the event has influenced such structures and what an appropriate structure for an interorganisational co-operation on the international level is.

As a consequence, in Chapter V, the findings and results of the research carried out in the study will be put together, and therewith, relevant scientific questions that this paper is based on, will be answered.

Furthermore, in Chapter VI, a recommendation on an adequate structure for the present case will be provided. This recommendation shall be generalised for being applicable in similar contexts.

II. Organisation Theory – Cooperative Designs

This chapter discusses strategies of setting up organisational structures facilitating cooperation among organisations and individuals on an international level. It is illustrated which models organisation theory provides for establishing such a cooperative structure. Nevertheless, first there shall be a basic discussion on the topic of cooperation, followed by a presentation of general approaches towards organisational structuring which organisation theory has developed over the last century. This shall assist the reader in understanding the range of cooperation arrangements. Finally, a useful paradigm for understanding the nature of (inter-) organisational structuring will be presented. On this basis, structures are discussed which are applicable in the context of the FMEDIA system.

II.1 Cooperation

The term “cooperation” comes from the Latin word “cooperare,” meaning to work together or collaborate. Usually, it is understood as “every kind of social collaboration between persons, groups or institutions” (Grunwald 1981, p. 72, transl.). However, beyond this concept, the approaches towards the content and scale of cooperation diverge significantly.

Any economical field is characterized by organisations that are engaged in interaction to a certain degree. Cooperation is considered an important aspect and option of inter-organisational interaction. Individuals or initiatives agree to collaborate in a certain range of actions for a particular purpose such as reaching a common set of goals.

“Cooperation is unavoidable for all who are weaker and who are underdogs” (Wimmer and Neuberger 1981, p. 190, transl.). This is a popular approach towards the topic of cooperation, and it suggests that the need for cooperation only arises for disadvantaged individuals, organisations or institutions of a society. But the more relevant questions to be asked in this context are:

- whether cooperation can be a distinct concept of action;
- what the differences between cooperation and competition are; and
- which are the features inherent in cooperation?

This discussion delivers a framework for the cooperation phenomenon and allows for an analysis of structures applicable to setting up cooperative environments of inter-organisational interaction.

Basically, cooperation as well as competition are cases of social interaction; so is any reciprocal impact of persons that manifests in behavioural consequences. “Cooperation is that subset of interactive behaviour, where a requirement is approached concertedly and coordinated” (Wimmer and Neuberger 1981, p. 192, transl.) Often, competition is seen as its opposite, but researchers as Herzberg (Grundwald 77) underline that competition and cooperation are two different concepts. Thus, the respective opposites shall be approached by the categories “non-cooperation” and “non-competition”.

But this does not suggest that social actors have to decide between an exclusive engagement in cooperation or competition. Instead, features of both can be found in cooperative as well as in competitive settings. There are always competitive aspects in every cooperation agreement and vice versa (Grunwald 1981).

Literature, however, is generally lacking insightful and extensive discussions of the concept of cooperation because only an insufficient quantity and quality of approaches exists (Grunwald 1981). Some relevant ones are the following:

Wimmer and Neuberger (1981) state that the concept of cooperation has different branches. Grunwald (1981) discusses the viewpoints on cooperation characteristics of different authors. Even though these authors’ theories don’t reflect a common understanding, some principles which are mentioned universally become visible:

- goal-oriented behaviour (cooperation goals); and
- social and task coordination.

A frequently applied explanatory approach describes cooperation as the orientation towards reaching a common goal, though this concept is partly considered invalid as organisations might even pursue different goals but still try to reach a common result and act in a coordinated manner. Many cooperative arrangements involve partners who pursue different sets of goals (Wimmer and Neuberger 1981).

Consequently, other explanations are at hand, aiming to avoid the one-dimensional definitions. If, for example, cooperation is described by its inherent processes, one can witness a shift of the focus towards a discussion about “attitudes and intentions of the involved parties and the diverse qualities of their action” (Wimmer and Neuberger 1981, p. 192, transl.).

A transparent visualization of the basic processes of cooperation is provided in the following table:

The process of cooperation and its features:

Substitutability	Positive: willingness to let actions of another substitute one's own
Cathexis	Development of positive attitudes
Induceability	Positive: willingness to let oneself be influenced by others
Proxy, division of labour, role specialization	Positive
Economical employment of personnel and means	Positive
Fundament for stable relations	Positive
Communication	Open and sincere
Perception	Sensitivity for similarities and common interest, support of convergence and conformance
Attitude towards each other	Trustful, friendly attitude; inclination to react on hardships and requests of the other
Task orientation	Diverging interests become common problems; militating tendencies become restricted

Substitutability	Positive: willingness to let actions of another substitute one's own
Pathologies: Nepotism	Consequences: barrier for the fulfilment of tasks, source of inner conflicts, dwindling of generally binding rules, unduly alignment, suppression of differences

Table 1: Features of cooperation processes

Source: Wimmer and Neuberger (1981, p. 195)

Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview on the features of cooperation and their characteristics. Assuming the case of exclusively cooperative features, an interaction would take on the following shape:

Cooperation aims at maintaining an exchange of resources, information and support and setting up a sustainable structure. There is a willingness to let one's own actions be substituted by those of the partner. This may be the case if another organisation is able to fulfil a task more efficiently, hence make a positive contribution to the cooperation. The willingness to let oneself be influenced is closely related to this. While in competitive settings mutual influence is considered as a negative feature in cooperation influences are considered as potential sources of productivity. This leads to certain tendencies like division of labour, proxy, role specialization and economical deployment of personnel and means among cooperating units. The result of such interaction is a footing for stable relations.

To ensure such a stable cooperation, open and sincere communication is required. Common interests and similarities are perceived and, in contrast to competitive arrangements, convergence and conformance in subjects like procedures, means and aims is supported. Hence, diverging interests become common problems and militating tendencies restricted.

All this – in a case of “pure cooperation” – results in a trustful, friendly attitude, where an inclination to react on hardships and requests of the other can be observed.

But compromise and negotiation don't exclusively bear positive features. Hence, critical notes exist: Nepotism, considered as one tendency inherent in cooperation, can be a barrier for the

fulfilment of tasks and a source of inner conflicts. Generally binding rules disappear as the interacting partners might rather employ informal agreements. Conformance is also thought to be a source of stagnation as differences in opinions and approaches are more likely suppressed and nevertheless informal hierarchies dominate the direction of the cooperation.

(Wimmer & Neuberger 1981).

II.2 Organisation Theories – Historical Development

Organisation theory has always been a discipline with a variety of paradigms and approaches. Hence, when compared to other scientific fields, it is not considered a homogeneous discipline. The putative conflict resulting from that heterogeneity can be ascribed to the different traditions that exist in organisational science. However, this is not an indication of its immaturity. Rather, this understanding represents a feature frequently found in cultural sciences, reflecting a diversity of research paradigms. On the basis of these paradigms, scientists and also scholars have to decide which theory they use to lead their own research efforts (Schreyögg 2000).

Following, an overview on the diverse schools and streams of organisation theory is provided. This basic background knowledge is necessary for understanding of the organisational structures mentioned in the discussion of international cooperation arrangements. Different authors use diverse schemes of representation. Therefore the following presentation of the historical development of the discipline also allows the reader to understand the scientific reasoning in the empirical part of this work. The main development of organisation theory according to Schreyögg (2000) can be divided into three eras:

- Classic Organisation Theory;
- Neoclassic Organisation Theory; and
- Modern Organisation Theory.

II.2.1 Classic Organisation Theory

Classic organisation theory is rooted in the thinking of three prominent theorists of the 20th century: Max Weber, Henry Fayol and Frederick Taylor. Their names stand for the first approximations to the issue of organisational structuring. It is important to note that the theories don't just represent these scientists' own individual backgrounds but also reflect the different cultural settings they came from.

According to Schreyögg (2000), the classic theories share some central features. These are:

- Trust in the organisational regulation. The behaviour of the organisation's members is determined by rules. The model for a functioning organisation is the machine.
- Deviations from the rules are regarded as malfunctions. They are supposed to be minimized by controls.
- Stable working conditions are assumed. The resulting equable working requirements ensure a straightforward planning and set up of rules.
- The organisational arrangement is directed at optimizing the inner structures. External relations are not included.
- Order and obedience are the dominant relational patterns.

II.2.1.1 Bureaucracy Approach

The “father of organisation theory” (Schreyögg 2000, p. 32, transl.) Max Weber's central statement is that the bureaucratic organisation is the most efficient organisational instrument. He relates this to the big organisations typically for the turn of the 19th/20th century. Through bureaucracy, “complex situations of actions” can be directed and the “obedience of its many members can be secured” (Schreyögg 2000, p. 32, transl.).

The core element of the bureaucracy is the acceptance of the organisational structure, established through general rules, by the members of the organisation. The organisational complex can find its internal and external stabilisation through the members' respect of the established system of rules. In Weber's view, organisations are in the first hand “order and

obedience unions” (Schreyögg 2000, p. 32, transl.).

The main features of the bureaucracy are:

- strict rule ligation of the leaders;
- precise delimitation of authority and responsibility;
- a set system of hierarchies including a detailed description of authorities;
- documentation of all proceedings: fixation and registration;
- neutrality, personal feelings and emotions have to be kept out of business; and
- the application of rules has to be done by specially educated specialists.

(Schreyögg 2000)

These principles imply a view of the organisation as a closed system. A main critique towards Weber's bureaucracy approach is that due to strict rule ligation a such closed system is incapable of reacting to environmental changes.

II.2.1.2 Administrative Approach

With the administrative approach, the French Henry Fayol developed a system similar to Weber's bureaucracy. The main difference is that Fayol lays the stress on the management process itself. Within his system, five distinct elements of “good company management” (Schreyögg 2000, p. 36, transl.) are important. These are planning, organisation, order, coordination and control.

Organisation itself is regarded rather as an “engineer task” than an interdisciplinary job, and the organisation is understood exclusively as formal. This implies that the relations in the company are not between individuals but positions. Hence, the integration of the organisation's members is carried out by command and obedience (Schreyögg 2000).

Generally, this approach does little explanatory work but provides a list of principles that are supposed to support the organisation reaching its goals. Despite the overall acceptance of this approach, the “idea to practice the organisation teachings as a principles doctrine” (Schreyögg

2000, p. 39, transl.) has not sustained the scientific criticism it has been confronted with over the years.

II.2.1.3 Scientific Management Approach

In contrast to the previously mentioned theorists, Frederick W. Taylor (US) was less interested in the whole organisation than in the analysis and configuration of concrete working processes. This scientific management approach focused on rationalizing division of labour and optimizing the work execution (Schreyögg 2000).

“Taylorism,” as Taylor's approach is known nowadays, had proved to be successful in times of industrialisation and revolutionised the work processes in the industry sector. Three features highlight the new direction Taylor had turned to:

- division of manual work and brain work;
- introduction of the piece work wage; and
- first systems of personnel selection.

A substantial rise of the organisation costs was an important effect of the adoption of the Tayloristic organisation practices. Another – negative – consequence of scientific management was the estrangement of the workforce.

II.2.2 Neoclassic Organisation Theories

The Hawthorne-experiments, which were carried out between 1924 and 1932, started a shift in thinking about organisational phenomenons. The turning away from the concepts of the classic teachings was spurred by the release of Chester Barnard's book “The Functions of the Executive,” (1938) bringing totally new perspectives into organisation theory (Schreyögg 2000).

Generally, the most important novelty of the neoclassic stream is its recognition of the “integration of individual and organisation” (Schreyögg 2000, p. 47, transl.).

II.2.2.1 Human Relations Approach

The Hawthorne experiments of the 1930s were based on the classic approach of measuring workforce productivity by the variation of a certain set of working conditions. This research delivered results that could not be explained by the common theories. After extending the research area and consulting other scientists, the ground-breaking result was that the reason for the rising workers' productivity could not be found in the variation of the wage system or the outside working conditions, but in the socio-emotional area or human relations (Schreyögg 2000).

This realisation changed the view on emotionality. While it used to be regarded as an organisational malfunction, it was then believed to be a productivity factor. Consequently, leadership slowly began to be adapted from a task-oriented to a more personal-oriented approach. With this, the classic approach of command and obedience was finally disputed.

Another significant insight resulting from the experiments was the important role of informal relations in formal organisations. The emergence of these groups was considered unavoidable and furthermore identified as a major influence on work satisfaction and, consequently, performance. The classic paradigm was questioned for the first time (Schreyögg 2000).

As a consequence, the management perspective changed towards focussing on questions of behaviour in organisations. Control slowly began to be exchanged by motivation with the result that structural aspects of organisation were neglected. This observation was also regarded as a main weakness of the human relations approach.

II.2.2.2 Incentive Contribution Theory

Chester I. Barnard took up the findings of the Hawthorne experiments with particular interest in the informal processes going on in organisations. He viewed the organisation as a system of actions and interpreted them as “cooperative systems” (Barnard 1938, p. 65).

The central aim of the organisation according to Barnard's theory is ensuring a state of equilibrium between:

- formal and informal relations;
- internal and external approaches; and
- incentives and contributions.

(Schreyögg 2000)

Barnard (1938) discovered and underlined that, besides the formal organisation structure, informal relations within the company have a strong influence on the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation. For the first time, the border between the organisation and its environment was perceived as some fluid line, consequently transforming former “outsiders” of the organisation (eg. customers) and especially their actions towards the organisation to “inside” elements of the system.

This concept rests on the assumption of a “zone of indifference,” suggesting that for the system to be functional, it is necessary for the members of the organisation to provide an advance trust to the authority. This guarantees a certain degree of stability for the organisation.

All these points reflected the novelty of the approach: The classic inside orientation of the organisation was left behind and, for the first time, the organisation was viewed in its relations to the environment. All parties involved in cooperation were seen as participants in the organisation. This was a shift from the organisation exclusively seeking its optimization in the strive for inside coordination to cooperative systems (Schreyögg 2000).

Barnard's main merit is the establishment of the behavioural approach in the organisation theory. This can be considered the final change from the previous classic concepts.

II.2.3 Modern Organisation Theories

Modern organisation theory opened up the field of organisation theory. It introduced a variety of new concepts with diverse approaches. Often criticized for not being scientific, modern organisation theories have lost some of their initial impact, but their validity can still be reasoned well. Many of their features could be maintained in contemporary thinking about organisational structuring.

II.2.3.1 Human Resources Approach

The human resources approach is considered as a further development of the human relations movement. It merges the more classic structural perspective with the neoclassic behavioural perspective. The organisational configuration – neglected by the human relations approach – was again included in the planning processes (Schreyögg 2000).

This can be explained by the human resource approach's focus on a new picture: the individual striving for personal growth and maturity. Consequently, the interest shifted towards converging the individual's goals and the organisation's goals. An implication of that is that the organisational structures and processes had to be reconfigured from scratch. The challenge of the new organisation models was to be effective and human simultaneously (Schreyögg 2000).

II.2.3.2 Structural Approach: Comparative Structure Analysis

Unlike human resource theory the structural approach again links to the thoughts of classic theory. It focuses on explaining the organisation structures which are existent in the practice. To facilitate this, measuring instruments capable of empirically capturing the organisation structures in usage were developed. This marked the introduction of a totally new instrument of organisation theory.

Here, in contrast to classic theory, the bureaucratic structure was not seen as the ideal type but rather as the one most commonly found and as such, the most realistic form of organisational structuring. Empirical research, especially that of the "Aston Group," tried to develop instruments which were in the position to picture "organisations of different kinds in a standardized mode and depict the central differences in organisational configuration" (Schreyögg 2000, p. 55, transl.)

The structural approach lead to the contingency theory. The outside influences environmental situations, technology and size were considered as sources for inner organisational change, hence for the structure of organisations (Schreyögg 2000).

Later, more context factors were added to this and an “organisational fit” to these factors considered as the decisive variable for the success. However, this approach was criticized because of the view of organisations being the dependent variable and thus a body of mere adaptation to outside factors (Schreyögg 2000).

II.2.3.3 Organisational Decision Research

Organisational decision research is interested in the rationality of organisational decisions. Several ways were developed within this approach.

Empirical theory researches the influence of organisational regulations on the decision behaviour of its members. Taking decisions is regarded as a linear process with several phases going from the formulation of the problem until the realisation and its control. However the depicted phases have not proven to be descriptive for the actual decision processes within organisations. This can be ascribed to the fact that organisational structures and processes are no shaping power but depend on the context (Schreyögg 2000).

Mathematical approaches try to optimize the organisations' configuration by the application of mathematical methods. This approach is based on the assumption that organisations are systems of networked decisions. “Though, the transferability of such model analysis on practical questions of the organisation configuration is an unsolved problem [...]” (Schreyögg 2000, p. 71, transl.).

Microeconomic organisations analysis bases its organisational view on the theories and approaches coming from the field of economics. A company is regarded as a system of actions requiring economic explanation.

Within this analytic system, the development of three main approaches had been witnessed. All these share the common basis of assuming that individuals generally strive for benefit maximization, that there is a situation of imperfect information and that all relevant alternatives of action are considerable (Schreyögg 2000).

The *transaction cost approach* assumes that the market is not the perfect system for economic

coordination and hence hierarchical structures in large organisations have to be installed in order to minimize transaction costs, which are mainly information and communication costs. As this theory also assumes omnipresent individual opportunist tendencies the hierarchy is regarded as the best coordination mode to minimize these tendencies. This approach mainly faced criticism due to its mechanistic picture of organisations (Schreyögg 2000).

The *property rights approach* views the relations within organisations like contracts. It suggests that all relations between at least two individuals are based on a contract. The relations persist until one of the partners decides to abandon it. Hence, there is no action of organisations but a “sum of actions resulting from the single contracts”. (Schreyögg 2000, p. 77, transl.)

The *principal-agent theory* is again based on the assumption of an inherent opportunism of the organisation's members. A principal engages an agent to fulfill a certain set of actions and goals for the organisation. Due to the agents strive for individual profit maximisation, the principal has to apply certain techniques – like setting incentives – for maintaining the agent's loyalty. This view is criticized for providing a pessimistic picture on the organisation's members and a paranoid vision on the relations in organisations.

II.2.3.4 Cognitive-Symbolic Approach

Another new school of organisational thinking was developed in the recent decades. It abandoned some of the main features of previous organisational thought. The novelty of the cognitive-symbolic approach can be described by using three core themes, illustrating its difference to classic but also other modern organisational theories.

First, the viewpoint on the traditional concept of rationality changed profoundly. It was then considered as a “myth” and the common previous idea of a “control of the organisational reality” (Schreyögg 2000, p. 85, transl.) has been dismissed.

Second, the organisational environment was no longer limited to tangible or obvious objects but extended to a symbolically constituted concept. Diverse cognitive patterns of the

organisational members were discovered as the main source for organisational concepts. Symbols prevail and this is reflected by a symbolic community of meaning governed through symbolic management (Schreyögg 2000).

Third, the objective understanding of organisational processes was abandoned “in favour of a subjective relative process of understanding” (Schreyögg 2000, p. 88, transl.). The perception of the organisational reality was no longer considered to be objective but related to the concepts of every single individual. Hence, many truths exist.

The background philosophy of the cognitive symbolic approach is constructivism. It postulates that what is called “reality” is a process of creative cognitive construction. (Schreyögg 2000).

II.3 New Impulses for Organisational Questions: System Theory

In recent decades organisational thinking has witnessed the emergence of new concepts based on what can be called “system theoretical approaches.” One merit of the system theory is that it has broadened the view on organisational problems by providing general scientific findings that are applicable in many contexts of business research (Schreyögg 2000).

The present work regards these concepts as the richest, hence most adequate for understanding the organisational phenomena in question. The following chapter will argue this assumption, provide a basic insight into the system theory's influence on organisational thinking and hence assist in comprehending the latter discussions of cooperative organisational structuring. Particularly, the question about the self-regulation capacities of a system is very important in the context of the analysis of an organisation structure.

II.3.1 The Whole is more than the Sum of its Components

Since its beginning in the ‘70s, system theory has gone through various stages (Schreyögg 2000). During that time, system theory was never claimed as an organisation theory itself but, nevertheless, it always had an indirect influence on the discourses of organisation theorists. Its functionality has proven to be the possibility to theoretically observe and delimit

organisations (Stünzner 1996).

A system is an entity composed of different interconnected parts, whereas the whole is supposed to be “more than the sum of its components” (Schreyögg 2000, p. 90, transl.). In the beginning, the theory exclusively took an inside view on the organisation analysing the composition of its constitutive parts without regard to its environment. Such structural logic was regarded as a relatively static approach and consequently abandoned due to its inability of providing a holistic view on organisational processes.

Later, cybernetics enriched system theory by introducing the control loop scheme and thus shifting the focus to control processes within systems. In this changed perspective, systems - operating according to a scheduled value – initiate processes in cases of variations from such a set value. These reactions are evoked by constant feedback loops delivering information about the system's status. Thus, systems – or organisations - are able to react instantly to environmental changes through feedback mechanisms. To go into more detail, it works with a control loop that can function autonomously due to its pre-programmed premises. Its predetermined procedures are launched in case of deviations from the system's conditions (Luhmann 1984). However, this approach faces criticism: Its mechanistic view on social systems appears to be a questionable concept in the light of new cognitions.

The cybernetic system theory set out to discuss the relation between the system and environment as “a problem of consistency and change” (Schreyögg 2000, p. 91, transl.). According to cybernetic theorists the stability of the system can be maintained through the feedback mechanisms (Luhmann 1984).

Functionally oriented system theory took these thoughts one step further by viewing the organisation structure as a “problem solution” (Schreyögg 2000, p. 92, transl.). It suggests that structure is one means to solve the system's problem of existence. A main function of the structure is to cope with complexity, which is a precondition for the system to be able to act spontaneously within the system/environment setting. An incline of complexity between the system and its environment is a basic condition for the functioning of organisations (Baecker 1999).

This difference between the system and its environment is the basis for the recognition of the inner organisation structures. Only with that knowledge functioning systems come into existence. Such inner structures are subject to constant re-formulation and re-arrangement according to the impulses, perceptions and interpretations from outside of the system. In this system theoretic view the constant problem of organisations is the preservation of its existence (Schreyögg 2000).

Further reconsiderations of system theoretic thought lead to the theory of open systems. Its novelty was the explicit introduction of the concept of interaction between the system and its environment into the discourse: Systems influence and do have effects on their environment and vice versa (Schreyögg 2000).

Subsequently, the theory of “border preserving systems” (Schreyögg 2000, p. 95, transl.) highlights the borders between the system and the environment as socially constructed. This is to some extent a constructivist process as the system – through the selection of its relevant environment – creates its inside and outside structure somewhat autonomously.

This reconsideration is labelled the “self-referential transition” of system theory. The marking of borders is seen as a creation of difference between system and environment (Luhmann 1984; Schreyögg 2000). Besides the constitution of system appropriated elements, the construction of boundaries is an important feature of refined systems (Luhmann 1984).

II.3.2 Implications for Structuring Organisations

The comprehensive concept of system theory and its many branches constitute a relevant background for solving problems of organisational structuring. However, it shall be emphasised that in the context of this work its usability shall not be argued scientifically but rather pragmatically. Concepts of system theory are applied in the field of organisation science and following the main contact points for organisation theory are drawn:

- the view on the organisational reality;
- description of new organisation forms; and
- the problem of boundary definition (difference), organisation/environment boundary

II.3.2.1 The View on the Organisational Reality

Naturally, a general concept of reality constitutes the basis upon which all further decisions and strategies of organisational planning and administration are based. Thus, with regard to the availability of different paradigms, a broad range of actions are on display. System theory provides a comprehensive concept here, assisting in comprehending the nature of organisations, their environment and the actions that originate in them.

Any result and action originates “in a reciprocal context and has to be interpreted and understood in reflexive references” (Stünzner 1996, p. 220, transl.). The distinct view of organisations engaged in a continuous process of re-invention and re-determination of its goals, processes and communication can be understood under this precondition. Environmental interferences – viewed as problems as well as resources – provide the impetus for organisational change (Baecker 1999).

Every organisation is constantly confronted with decisions. At every point in time it has to “conceptualize itself towards the future and a prearranged perspective” (Stünzner 1996, p. 224, transl.). In this context, Stünzner (1996) also highlights the organisations' necessity of developing a strong conscience of self-responsibility and a future orientation. Based on the knowledge of its self-responsibility, an organisation cannot wait for environmental influences directing its change but needs to make its own decisions for the optimal structuring of its processes.

II.3.2.2 Beyond the Usual - New Organisation Forms

System theory provides useful models for understanding the emergence of new organisations or new organisational forms. The concept of self-referential systems, which was discussed in *II.3.1* delivers some valuable explanations.

Different elements only constitute a meaning in relation to “their” systems and can consequently relate and contribute to new systems (organisation). This thought poses the basis of the image of a “self-referential-systemic re-grouping” of given elements. Such an emergent process happens in the context of self-organisation: Through the generation of “self-referential circles that link themselves in a way that they build elements of a new system” (Teubner 1996, p. 538, transl.).

This concept of self-reference is the central feature marking the transition towards autonomous organisations. The emergence of networks falls into this research. Through the re-arrangement and re-definition of already existing elements, they emerge to autonomous actors and systems of the third order (Teubner 1996).

For the denomination of this process, Maturana and Varela suggested the term “autopoiesis” (Luhmann 1984). Social systems and organisations in this sense determine their reality through reflections. This is necessary in order “to regulate which units of sense internally facilitate the self-reproduction of the system and as such have to be reproduced continually” (Luhmann 1984, p. 61, transl.).

II.3.2.3 Creating the Difference: Organisation - Environment

Organisations in the system theoretic view are engaged in a constant interplay with their environment. This interactive approach has given a boost to discussions about the reasons why organisations are established and maintained. The focus of analysis shifted towards exposing the problems of “connections’ possibilities of coordination, mutual tuning, collective action and openness being inter-subjective and generated in a social context” (Stünzner 1996, p. 221, transl.). This leads to the conclusion that in a networked environment it becomes ever more important to establish “collective, inter-subjective systems of regulation and communication” (Stünzner 1996, p. 225, transl.)

System theory uses the concept of “difference” (Luhmann 1984) between the system and its environment for marking the border of organisations to their environment. Such is the result of the difference between self-reference and external reference. The organisation “determines

itself out of its difference to the environment” (Baecker 1999, transl.), and through these “difference experiences” (Luhmann 1984, p. 13, transl.), it gathers information about the external environment and simultaneously about its own internal structures.

External reference is a precondition for any system to be in the position to apprehend its own internal structures and identity. Without reference to the environment, the organisation becomes trapped in a self-referential circle resulting in an “overheat” of the system. Though, it has to be highlighted that the observations carried out in external referencing are still always interpreted according to the inherent assumptions of the system (Wittenbecher 1999).

This whole process of external and internal referencing results in the production of a certain degree of inherent complexity and consequently of an inner structure. This means that the difference is equal to the denotation “complexity incline” (Schreyögg 2000). The resulting boundaries or the delimitation to the environment of “systems of action are produced self-referentially through action, communication and the processing of sense” (Schreyögg 2000, p. 302, transl.). Organisations, in this understanding, select their own environments and strive for a stabilization of the difference.

The shift towards analysing organisations on the basis of the interplay with their environment can to a large extent be ascribed to the insights that system theory provides. The next chapter will show the influences of this view on the analysis of inter-organisational cooperation.

II.4. Cooperation Through Inter-Organisational Interaction

While deterministic approaches of relating environment and organisation are discussing adaptive strategies, the interaction approaches favour a more open view. Here, organisations are interpreted within their “reciprocal influencing process” (Schreyögg 2000, p. 363, transl.) to the environment.

Generally, organisations are viewed as competitive actors on the market. However, competition is only one option: In many social areas cooperative structures prevail and assist the involved parties in reaching common goals and pursuing common strategies. Structures

that can be adapted within such cooperative strategies will be discussed in the following chapter.

That is to say that the focus will lie on the network as one specific organisation structure. “Network” or “networking” are terms which have become quite “en vogue” in recent years. However, a rising tide of publications about the art of networking or the establishment of personal, professional and organisational networks led to a saturation of the topic. Nevertheless an open and creative approach to the topic still promises assistance for those seeking organisational success in network arrangements.

As a result, there will not be another description on the advantages of networks and their possibilities. Rather, an insight in the different concepts that network theory provides for solving organisational problems will be given. Viewed as an action, it just seems to be the most natural thing for people to do but “networking is not an end in itself” (Eade 1997, p. 4). From the organisational viewpoint, many important questions arise:

- Which features determine a network in the organisational understanding?
- How can organisations apply network structures and why should they do it?
- In which settings and areas are network structures useful?
- Which experiences of networked collaboration do exist?
- What is the philosophy that lies behind the logic of networks?
- What are the guidelines and strategies for setting up networks?

The approximation to the answers for these questions will help to classify, interpret and understand the inherent structural logic of networks and lay the basis for the reader to decide under which circumstances and provisions organisational networks are effective.

II.4.1 Collective Action

Organisations are no longer analysed as singular but as cooperating bodies. This extension of any traditional view perceives strategies, actions and relations beyond the borders of the single organisation, and therefore analyses cooperative set-ups between several organisations or

initiatives. This reflects the system theoretical view of social systems (or collectives, networks) constituted by elements (or organisations) which can have different meanings (or functions) in different contexts (or arrangements) (Teubner 1996). According to Luhmann, such elements are “not people but communication, in particular decisions” (1984, p. 199, transl.).

This leads to a new level of organisational thinking, especially with regards to the relation of the organisation to the environment (Schreyögg 2000). Instead of immediately reacting to the environment, organisations have the chance to handle the problems that arise by forming collectives - inter-organisational coordination and collective strategy. Such collectives determine themselves “out of their difference to the environment” (Baecker 1999, transl.) that is subject to diversification and constant change.

Inter-organisational collaboration in this sense can be defined as a

cooperative, inter-organisational relationship that is negotiated in an ongoing communicative process, and which relies on neither market nor hierarchical mechanisms of control (Hardy et. al. 2003, p. 323).

Collaborating in the form of a collective is a significant characteristic of the inter-organisational view. The inside-outside differentiation becomes obsolete between organisations that are participating in the collective through reciprocal social expectation structures. This way, a distinct common environment is created that can be handled and controlled more easily (Mayntz 1996).

The central efforts of any collaboration is stabilizing the organisations and creating predictable patterns of actions and expectations. New social systems emerge where the actors have to give up a part but still maintain a relative high degree of autonomy. This voluntary retreat of autonomy is part of the collaborative strategy and consequently fosters “the evolution of self-organising processes” (Sydow 1992, p. 248, transl.).

According to system theory, processes of such self-organisation but also external organisation are as involved in any one organisation as they are among cooperating organisations. “Self

organisation processes complexity” and, especially within networked organisations, the relative high degree of autonomy supports the evolution of self organising processes. On the surface, a stability can be observed but this is only facilitated and ensured by processes of constant change, re-definition and re-formulation of strategies (Sydow 1992).

The effects of inter-organisational cooperation are diverse. Generally, it provides the collaborating organisations with a certain competitive advantage over their adversaries, inter-organisational learning is facilitated and – probably most importantly – power and influence can be extracted for the creation of better circumstances to secure their own existence (eg. through lobbying) (Schreyögg 2000).

According to Hardy et. al. (2003) the effects of collaboration are classified through three specific viewpoints:

- strategic effects;
- knowledge creation effects; and
- political effects.

“The strategic effects of collaboration are primarily about the pooling and transfer of resources of all kind” (Hardy et. al. 2003). A variety of activities can be included, like sharing resources, developing technological know-how, sharing knowledge, acquiring new distribution outlets and building a greater understanding of new markets. In sum, collaboration in this understanding provides the involved organisations with capabilities they would not have by themselves.

The contemporary information societies require organisations and networks that are able to “learn,” meaning to create and process knowledge (Castells 1996). Hence, knowledge creation effects of collaboration are of major importance. The collaboration arrangement assists organisations in learning new technologies and skills from their partners. This is in contrast to the previously mentioned strategic effect, as it is assumed that collaboration has served its purpose if “organisational knowledge has been successfully transferred” (Hardy et. al. 2003, p. 325). Though it has to be stressed that not only can existing knowledge be transferred but – as

one further effect – new knowledge “grows out of the sort of ongoing social interaction that occurs in ongoing collaborations” (Hardy et. al. 2003, p. 326).

From a political viewpoint, collaboration within inter-organisational relations can foster the “acquisition of power and influence” (Knights et. al. 1993, p. 982). As organisations are “embedded in networks of linkages that both facilitate and constrain their actions and shape their interests” (Hardy et. al. 2003, p. 327), the structural patterns of their interactions result in a certain position within the structure. A high centrality or a nodal position in a network has an impact on the capability of controlling its own actions and influence those of others. The nodal point is in the position to “control the flow of critical resources, and especially information, but also shape the meanings attached to those resources” (Hardy et. al. 2003, p. 327). As a consequence, collaborative arrangements can protect their own positions and disadvantage others.

II.4.2 Structural forms

There are several more or less structured forms that interorganisational cooperation can adopt. Following, an overview of those forms most frequently found in the NGO sector is presented. Table 2 represents the results of a conference where senior management team members of 13 major northern relief and development NGOs put down a representation of their views. It might not be entirely applicable for the sector that is the subject to this work but nevertheless provides a valuable basis for the discussion and presentation of structures that are applicable for such collaborations.

Generally, Lindenberg (1999) suggests a continuum of five main structures for interorganisational collaboration. These are:

- independent organisations;
- Independent organisations with weak umbrella type coordinating mechanisms;
- confederations;
- federations; and
- unitary organisations.

Table 3. Bellagio Conference Participants' Views of Alternative Associational Structures: Northern International Relief and Development NGO Service Providers

	Separate Independent Organizations Plus Coalitions	Weak Umbrella Coordinating Mechanisms	Confederations	Federations	Unitary Corporate Models
Locus of decision making	Individual members	Individual members	Center has weak coordinating capacity with strong individual members	Center has stronger authority over system-wide decisions than members	Central
Who sets global norms	No one	Individual members	Members with central coordination	Central headquarters and board	Central headquarters and board
Central enforcement mechanisms	None	Weak moral suasion	Moral suasion plus limited sanctions like expulsion	Stronger sanctions like withholding resources	Strong central enforcement and incentive system
Resource acquisition methods	At member level	At member level	Primarily at member level but some common acquisition	Primarily at member level but some common acquisition	Centrally and globally acquired
Resource allocation decisions	Member level	Member level	Largely member level with some central allocation	Largely member level with even more central allocation	Central allocation
Common systems	None	None	A few primarily financial and programmatic quality	More common systems	Common systems
Common name	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Common logo	No	Sometimes	Sometimes	Often	Often
Franchising	No	No	Sometimes	Sometimes	Yes

Note: Participants found Young's (1989) work particularly useful.

Table 2: Alternative Associational Structures

Source: Lindenberg (1999, p. 157)

First, there will be a description of the two types that are situated on the extremes of the structural continuum. According to Lindenberg (1999), these play a minor importance and are rarely found in the researched sector. This assumption is also valid for the organisations that are the subject to this work.

After that, the remaining types which play a more important role are described. Their order of appearance reflects the relative spreading in the researched sector.

II.4.2.1 Independent Organisations and Unitary Organisations

Independent organisations function – like the name suggests – independently and decisions are taken at the individual member level. Their autonomy is not restricted and coalitions only take place on an irregular basis. Such collaboration may be initiated around a certain topic but decision making is never handed over to some governing or coordinating body.

Unitary organisations can be found on the other end of the structural continuum and are organised around a central decision making body. They are relatively formalized and operate on the basis of common systems.

II.4.2.2 Independent Organisations with Weak Umbrella-Type Coordinating Mechanisms

Umbrella-style coordination is one way to work in a partnership in the community but avoid a long-term commitment. The involved organisations stay independent but – via formalized statutes – ascribe certain powers to a central organisation or umbrella group. Usually, such power might be limited to information sharing and the function to serve as a post office (Lindenberg 1999). This would be the case when, for example, the central coordination unit collects and disseminates information which is relevant for the strategic goals and acts as a outside representation of the umbrella group .

The strengths of this organisational structure are its flexibility, speed and strong identity that can, for example, enlarge fund raising capabilities. In this arrangement, it is also possible to utilise the skills and resources of the umbrella group, even though there is usually no long-

term commitment.

As the independent members don't need to accord their actions with the central unit, the organisations can still move quickly (Lindenberg 1999). The information and coordination doesn't get lost in the communication channels of the hierarchy but can be put through instantly.

The major weakness of this kind of coordination is that different organisations with similar programmes and aims, but all with their own proper logistics and support structure, don't provide a coherent picture for e.g. the fund granting institutions or the public. This way, they might stand in their own way (Lindenberg 1999).

II.4.2.3 Federations

In comparison with the independents with umbrella-style coordination, federations are located on the other side of the structural range. They have a central management of authority, power and resources.

According to Lindenberg (1999), the strengths of this relatively formalized structure of interorganisational cooperation are its:

- efficiency through central support services;
- strong global identity and scale;
- abilities for rapid response; and
- capability of fund allocation through its more globalised structure.

Still federations include negative features such as:

- rigidity;
- blocking the creativity of the partners; and
- difficulty of finding unifying principles.

(Lindenberg 1999)

Generally, it is a very stable structure but, due to the difficulty for partner organisations to find unifying principles, it is only an option that very few can realistically pursue.

II.4.2.4 Confederations

The confederation is the most probable model for ensuring coordination within an interorganisational group without religious background. This is argued by the difficulty of any other groupings to universally agree on the same objectives.

The organisational structure of confederations includes an international secretariat that acts on the top level as a coordination capacity and standardization body. The subordinate units are semi-independent organisations with autonomous boards that agree on a loose set of common rules and a high level of self control and discipline (Lindenberg 1999).

Apart from these agreements, the key decisions, identity and authority are located on the level of the subordinated units. In case of strong violations against the common set of rules, the different units have the possibility to sanction the members of their confederation or even expel them (Lindenberg 1999). But the member organisations will not fall back on such measures unless the violations are severe. This is based on the thought that, generally, the costs of the violations have to be higher than the costs of the sanction (Wilkesmann 1995).

All in all, this setting has a high potential of conflict and non compliance. There are neither sufficient enforcement mechanisms of common rules nor a strong coordinating capacity of the center. The success of the confederation strongly depends on the discipline, self-containment and will for cooperation of the members (Lindenberg 1999).

II.4.3 Networks: the Alternative Structure

Until now, there has been a presentation and discussion of several views on the topic of interorganisational cooperation and structural alternatives that can be applied. Generally, the analysis subject of this work is a multitude of individuals, initiatives and organisations which need to agree on some kind of structuring of their actions and relations. Therefore, the present chapter discusses the network structure, which – along with the information revolution – has

gained more and more attention as an alternative for the facilitation of structuring efforts. “Organisational design is the decisive factor” (Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001, p. 320) and “network’ has become perhaps the most pervasive metaphor to describe a range of phenomena, desires and practices in contemporary information societies” (Rossiter 2004). Therefore, the relevance of this structure for the present case shall be argued in a detailed manner.

II.4.3.1 Part of the interactive, communicative and cooperative Societies

Classic interpretations of the world as a big machine functioning according to fixed rules where all processes are rationally organizable and predictable by some kinds of authorities, have become rare. The dominant paradigm of contemporary theory regards societies as interactive, communicative and cooperative (Huber 1989).

The information revolution fostered by technological developments like the Internet has considerably changed thinking about organisational structures. A substantial number of researchers in the field of organisational science conclude that this notable development generally “favours the rise of network forms of organisation” (Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001, p. 311) and Castells even talks about the rise of a “network society” (1996, p. 469) where

presence or absence in the network and the dynamics of each network vis-à-vis others are critical sources of domination and change in our society (Castells 1996, p. 469).

Ronfeldt and Arquilla (2001) support this line of arguments, stating that networks are the organisation form or “crucial design” of the information society.

The two most important sources of network thinking are organisational research and the new social movements. Organisational research discovered that behind the formal structures of organisations, there are the much more important personal relations and, most importantly, decisions (Huber 1989).

In contrast, the social movements talk about the establishment of a network for the fulfilment

of certain purposes. Such thought is Anglo Saxon inspired where traditionally no big expectations exist towards the state or bureaucracies on development matters. Rather, issues like self organisation and self assistance play a crucial role within the social movement (Huber 1989).

II.4.3.2 The Network – a Set of interconnected nodes

Generally, “a network is a set of interconnected nodes” (Castells 1996, p. 470). Networks “are defined by their organisation of relations between actors, information, practices, interests, and socio-technical systems” (Rossiter 2004). However, nodes cannot be defined universally but must be determined in the context of a concrete network. They can be “national council of ministers and European Commissioners in the political network that governs the European Union” (Castells 1996, p. 470) or different NGOs all over the world struggling for the survival of the rain forest, hence representing a sphere of the environmentalist movement.

Distances between two nodes that belong to a network are shorter than the distance between two nodes which are not interconnected in the same network. In this context, distance can be physical, social, economic, political or cultural (Castells 1996). One observation about networks is that within a certain network, access to efficient and reliable information through the communication dimensions is easier and better. The information that is passed on within networks is “thicker” than that of the market and “freer” than that in hierarchies (Powell 1996).

The inclusion/exclusion in networks and the architecture of relationships between networks configure dominant processes and functions in our society. Networks are open structures, able to expand without limits, integrating new nodes as long as they are able to communicate within the network, namely as long as they share the same communication codes (for example, values or performance goals) (Castells 1996, p. 470).

However, for reasons of clarity, a distinction has to be made between formal networks and informally linked activities. Eade states that the former “starts out with a clear purpose, while

the latter are essentially open-ended” (1997, p. 1). Furthermore “networks are semi-formal groupings in which each participant remains autonomous, but where enough common ground exists to establish shared concerns” (Eade 1997, p. 1).

In this context, Lovink and Schneider add the point that, for example in the new media sector, “in the past decade collective work on ideas has been replaced by informal networking, a move away from politics towards culture and the arts” (2004, p. 6). This statement stresses the consciousness of the difference between these two concepts. Networking activities don't automatically result in a structural network and should not be regarded as an end in itself (Eade 1997). Unstructured networking efforts in this understanding can but don't necessarily have to result in the creation of a network in the organisational sense.

However, in the following, the focus is on the structural aspect of networks and how they originate. Generally, there are several options: an external agent puts people in touch with each other and/or provides funds; they may grow spontaneously out of contacts made at a conference or meeting; or an initiative can convene others to work on a shared concern (Eade 1997). Beyond that, networks can come into being by coincidence.

A precondition for the establishment of a network is that potential members are clear about the purpose, objectives, structure, method of communication and the membership criteria. Furthermore, these should be kept under constant review. A network can only prevail if it bears a good system of internal communication and accountability, as well as the capacity to attract new members (Eade 1997).

Once set up, these networks may be literature-based (e.g. newsletters or journals), topic-focused, revolve around exchanges, training workshops or other encounters (Eade 1997).

II.4.3.3 Cooperation - the dominant Logic of Networks

“The network logic is increasingly the normative mode of organising socio-technical relations in advanced economies” (Rossiter 2004). The network perspective shifts the focus from the observation of units to the analysis of the relations between units (Dederichs 2000).

In contrast to other structure models that equally foster self organisation the network constitutes a form of cooperation between autonomous units (Klein 1997). This is a poly-centric net of partly autonomous units that have reciprocal relations and require and imply each other (Huber 1989). A central quality of interorganisational networks is that they can deliberately produce collective outputs through interaction, regardless of the diverging interests of their members (Mayntz 1996). A standard condition for that is the creation of long-term commitments and trust (Powell 1996). Semlinger argues that “cooperation is the dominant – and distinct – coordination model of the diverse forms of network relations” (Sydow 1992, p. 90, transl.).

Reciprocity constitutes a central issue: The logic of networks can be analysed by viewing networks as transactions within networks of individuals who are involved in reciprocal, mutually favouring and supporting contexts of action. The cornerstones of successful networks are complementarity and interests equalization (Powell 1996).

As a matter of fact, networks imply a relatively distinct logic. Castells derives that they function through transferring “signals into commodities by processing knowledge” (1996, p. 172). Rossiter extends the view by shifting the focus with the statement that “at a very basic level the logic of networks is the process of connectivity” (2004).

Besides, with regard to the observation that its activities typically aim at a common result, a dominant feature of the logic of networks is negotiation. The structural reason for this lies in the “limited number of autonomous actors that constitute networks by definition” (Mayntz 1996, p. 481, transl.). It represents a form of interaction fitting into inter-organisational networks.

Hence, it can be summarized that its logic is de-centrality, informality, self-organisation and a net of feedback loops (Huber 1989). These features are very closely related to the concept of system theory which was discussed in *II.3 New Impulses for Organisational Questions: System Theory*.

II.4.3.4 Social Network Analysis vs. Organisational Network Analysis

Networks can be analysed from different points of view; most frequently this happens from a social network and a organisational network perspective. Based on the same paradigm, they express distinct approaches that are applicable for different purposes.

II.4.3.4.1 The Basis: Social Network

Social network analysis “is based on the assumption of the importance of relationships among interacting units” (Wasserman 2001, p. 4). Some basic issues in this context are:

- Actors and their actions are viewed as interdependent.
- Relational ties (linkages) between actors are channels for transfer or “flow” of resources.
- The network provides opportunities for or constraints on individual action.
- Network models conceptualize structure as lasting patterns of relations among actors.

(Wasserman 2001)

Hence, the unit of analysis in social network analysis is not the individual but an “entity consisting of a collection of individuals and the linkages among them” (Wasserman 2001, p. 5) or “the network in which the individual is embedded” (Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001, p. 317). Consequently, “the presence of relational information is the critical and defining feature of a social network” (Wasserman 2001, p. 20).

While “social capital“, indicating interpersonal or relational properties, is nowadays considered as the main asset in a network, the analysis was originally concerned about the development of sociograms and directed graphs to be able to “chart the ties among different actors in particular contexts” (Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001, p. 316). Generally, these relations are depicted in the form of dyads, triads or larger systems (e.g., entire networks).

The relations within a given network are represented in three basic shapes:

- chain or line networks;

- hub, star or wheel networks; and
- all channel or fully connected or full-matrix networks.

(Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001; Bauer 2002)

In chain or line networks members are linked in a row and communication must flow through an adjacent actor before getting to the next. They are simpler structures as information or goods move in a linear direction from one node to the next. Each contact knows his or her next contact, but can identify no one beyond that next contact (Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001).

In a star network members are tied to a central node and must go through it to communicate with each other. The "star" employs a central node to coordinate communication among members, but not to control them. As with other networks, nodes function fairly independently (Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001).

In all-channel or full matrix networks everyone is connected to and can communicate directly with everyone else. They are regarded as the most highly-developed (Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001).

The communication roles within such network structures can be:

- star / center;
- liaison / articulation point;
- bridge;
- gatekeeper; and
- isolated.

(Dederichs 2000)

The star or center is the actor or node that keeps the network together and where the communication has to flow through to reach the other nodes.

Between two bi-connected components of a network, there can be an overlap. A vertex in the

overlap is called an articulation point or cut-point. “A node in a graph is an articulation point if removal of this node breaks the graph into more than one bi-connected component” (Scott 1991). Articulation points belong to more than a single bi-connected component and can therefore be considered as a next-order in the hierarchy.

The bridge is an important network node as it connects one network with the other, hence a potential for further networking.

The gatekeeper is a node that possesses information or other network resources which puts it in the position to control the entrance of outsiders into the network. They function as human way stations on critical pathways between parts of an organization or between centers. When information must funnel through one node on the way to another, there is a gatekeeper who acts as a valuable information broker or on the other hand withhold information.

The isolated node does not yet have links and is, as the denomination suggests, isolated from the remaining network nodes and consequently lacks access to the network resources.

The relational ties among all these actors, a subject that social network analysis has ever since been interested in, constitute the primary information. The focus is on any relationship that might be existing: “for example, kinship, material transactions, flow of resources or support, behavioural interaction or affective evaluation” (Wasserman 2001, p. 8).

This leads to the assumption that power and influence depend less on one's personal attributes than on one's interpersonal relations, the location and character of one's ties in and to the network. As such, “location” within a network is a decisive attribute: centrality or location in a structural hole represent an important advantage. Furthermore, the “links,” being strong or weak, and the questions about connectedness, reciprocity and mutuality are central issues in any social network discussion (Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001).

Basically this means that “a social network analyst searches for the formal and informal networks that undergrid the subject of research and emphasize their roles in making that social organization or system work the way it does” (Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001, p. 317). The focus thereby is on the interactions among group members. Their influence on the decision making process shall be extracted through observation (Wasserman 2001).

Network analysis aims at modelling

these relationships to depict the structure of a group. Subsequently, the impact of this structure on the functioning of the group and/or the influence of this structure on individuals within the group (Wasserman 2001, p. 9)

can be studied. Such structures may be behavioural, social, political or economic (Wasserman 2001).

The central point that distinguishes social Network analysis from the organisational network analysis is that it is not evolutionary. This means that networks are not viewed as a distinct form of organisation that emerges, but considered as naturally existent, surrounding all human life and relations (Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001). The difference of these two approaches shall become clear in the following section through the depiction of the organisational network.

II.4.3.4.2 Organisational Network

The approaches that are counted as part of the organisational network view are a valuable starting point for the analysis of the problems of this work because of the insights it provides into the possibilities of structuring inter-organisational cooperation.

Organisational network analysis makes use of many methods that are also applied in the social network analysis. While in the social network view any set of nodes that have ties amount to a network, an organisational network analyst requires more information: for example, if an actor recognizes or is committed to a certain network (Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001). Lovink and Schneider write – and this shows the difference between the social and the organisational network perspective relatively well – that

“either they [remark: networks] transform into a body that is capable to act, or they remain stable on a flat-line of information exchange, with the occasional reply of an individual who dares to disagree” (2004, p. 5).

Being capable to act means making decisions. Flat information exchange, as Lovink and Schneider describe it, is an expression of a lack of commitment or mutual dependence of networked organisations. There is obviously no need to act on a common basis in a certain area.

The thinking about organisational networks first appeared to some extent in the business-oriented analysis of Burns and Stalker (1961) that distinguished between mechanistic and organic systems. The organic form was regarded as more suitable for dealing with rapidly changing conditions and non-predictable contingencies because of its network structure of control, authority and communication, along with a lateral rather than vertical direction of communication (Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001).

Years passed by without much discourse on the matter until the discussion about organisational networks revived in the beginning of the 1990. When Powell started arguing that a distinct design was coming up a currently still continuing discussion about “whether network referred to certain characteristics of any organization or whether it referred to a particular form of organisation came up” (Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001, p. 319-320). Over the years, two clearly distinguishable and opposing main lines of approaching networks emerged:

II.4.3.4.2.1 Hybrid Structure between Market and Hierarchy

Starting with the continuum concept of two poles, discrete market transactions are located on one side of the continuum and centralised organisations on the other. In between, there are intermediate forms or hybrids like the network (Powell 1996).

Wolf and Neuburger (1995) argue that the market is an adequate transaction/organisation form for the standardized exchange of goods and services, while hierarchical or centralized coordination of services is efficient in the case of highly specific and strategically important problems. In the case of decreasing specificity, strategic importance and high variability,

neither a hierarchic and stable framework nor a transaction on the market is efficient. This case results in the creation of alternative, “hybrid” forms of structuring that have market and hierarchical characteristics simultaneously. The network is considered as one form located somewhere between market and hierarchy (Wolf and Neuburger 1995).

This is confirmed by Bauer, stating that the network “describes a system of more than one networked organisations acting like one organisation” (2002, p. 312, transl.) For one particular case Mayntz (1996) confirms the argumentation that networks are situated between the two extremes. It is assumed that the network is based on coupled market and hierarchical characteristics. Then, markets are characterized by the non-existence of structural coupling and hierarchies by the existence of solid coupling between the elements. Consequently, the third type, networks, combines elements of both and is loosely coupled by definition.

II.4.3.4.2 Networks – a distinct form of organisation

Mayntz states that “networks can be more than an intermediate stage between market and hierarchy” (1996, p. 477, transl.). Through the combination of elements of “both worlds” (Sydow 1992, p. 91, transl.) – a high number of autonomous actors and coordinated action for reaching goals – networks constitute a synthesis of the former systems (Mayntz 1996).

Castells extends this argument for the network as a distinct form of organisation stating that “dominant functions and processes in the information age are increasingly organized around networks” (1996, p. 469). He also draws the delimitation to social networks: “While the networking form of social organization has existed in other times and spaces, the new information technology paradigm provides the material basis for its pervasive expansion throughout the entire social structure” (Castells 1996, p. 469).

Powell (1996), along the same line, says that the continuum concept is not sufficient to explain alternative organisation models like the network, emphasising simultaneously that networks are clearly delimited coordinating forms of economic activities. It is impossible to delimit one actor from the other due to the complexity of relations in which organisations stand. It follows that their exchange is neither a market transaction nor a hierarchical control and regulation structure but a distinct and specific mode of exchange - the network (Powell 1996).

Teubner (1996) supports the argument of a distinct form criticising forces of economic thinking interpreting any social phenomena as hypothetical contracts between rational actors. He views networks as social systems of a third order, which differentiate from society, the social system of the first order, and those social systems that have developed an own identity, hence of the second order.

“Contract” and “organisation” are distinct social systems of the second order. While organisations are formalisations of social cooperation relations, contracts (market) on the other hand are formalisations of social exchange relations. Thus, the two concepts represent totally different types of action: cooperation versus exchange. The central feature of the third order is a further specialization of the communication within and between these systems of the second order. With all these arguments, Teubner (1996) fosters the opinion that networks are no intermediate but an enhanced form of a special kind.

From such thought, a relation can be drawn to Luhmann's and Förster's theory of autopoiesis and the theory of self-referentially-constituted units. This theory gives the notion “emergence” a central significance. It stands for the development of self-referential circles, which in the present context emerge in the form of networks or social systems of the third order. According to his theory, “networks arise as real emergence phenomena not “between” but “beyond” contract and organisation” (Teubner 1996, p. 537, transl.). The theory of self -organisation highlights that “emergence comes into play when self-referential circles emerge, that are connected with each other in a way, that they constitute elements of a new system” (Teubner 1996, p. 537, transl.). Such is a gradual process that leads to the generation of new and autonomous systems and communication.

The final elements of these systems are communication. The network gets its strength out of advances in communication (Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001). In the process of the emergence of networks, the crucial point is the process of becoming independent of social processes and becoming autonomous in the social phenomena sphere. In detail, the new, emerging communication systems become independent of the previous ones (Teubner 1996). The communication system of a network needs to be able to describe itself and direct itself (Baecker 1999).

“Networks are not mere ‘hierarchies’ between autonomous actors but are corporate actors of a distinct kind,” or “poly-corporative collectives” (Teubner 1996, p. 539, transl.). Huber denominates such a structure “heterarchy” and confirms that it reflects the network philosophy (1989).

Powell strengthens the reasoning for networks being a distinct form, stressing the self-reliance of network organisations. This is argued by the following inherent attributes:

- reciprocity as exchange criteria;
- more efficient information exchange; and
- long-term perspective of a collaboration that is based on trust and cooperation.

(Sydow 1992)

The emergence of the organisational network can be detected by identifying the social double attribution of action. Every communicative event is simultaneously attributed to one of the autonomous contracting partners as well as the whole organisation. This way the network does not act through a unitary central body but a multitude of nodes who don't just act for themselves but at the same moment for the whole network (Teubner 1996).

Rossiter (2004) introduces another relevant differentiation: organisational networks and networked organisations. While the first are what has been discussed in this chapter, the latter involve “traditional institutions that have become networked through their use of new ICTs (Internet and Communication Technologies)”. This process is happening increasingly as companies, organisations and institutions have become networked “in an attempt to recast itself whilst retaining its basic infrastructure” (Rossiter 2004, ch. 34). Furthermore, Rossiter writes about such organisations being

motivated by the need to organise social relations in the hope of maximising 'creativity' and regenerating the design of commodity forms that have long reached market saturation (2004, ch. 34).

To sum it up, the concept of organisational networks views networks as an emergent form of

organisation that can be deliberately established between collaborating organisations. This is in contrast to the social network view that describes the network as a ubiquitous phenomenon of social life. That is why preliminarily it can be concluded that the concept of organisational networks, in the sense it was discussed in this chapter, is a structural approach that offers an appropriate framework for analysing the FMEDIA initiative. Therefore, the following section will focus on such networks and their characteristic features.

II.4.3.5 Networks in the Organisational Field

Another question that this paper asks is if a self-regulation of an organisational network in the sense of system theory can happen without central coordination units. Generally, this might be one option for international cooperation arrangements, but in the present case, with its special circumstances, it is assumed that a centre is necessary to coordinate and facilitate network action. Such conclusion is the starting point of the concept of the “organisational network,” which will be presented in this chapter.

II.4.3.5.1 Features

Basically, “an organisation is a system of means structured around the purpose of achieving specific goals” (Castells 1996, p. 171). Differently formulated, it is about the organisation of either economic, technological, juristic, political, religious or ethnic resources and motives to establish a network-inherent behaviour beyond the usual propensity of networks to chaos (Baecker 1999). The concept of the organisational network, as it is used in this work, talks about a distinct form of organisation characterised by the following features:

1. Common intention of the network members
2. Voluntary limitation of freedom of member's action (autonomy) due to diverging interests
3. Orientation towards person instead of usual role or function orientation
4. Voluntary participation of network organisations
5. Voluntary, reciprocal and horizontal and fair patterns of communication and exchange
6. The network can be activated in case of current occasions and deactivated afterwards

(Boos et. al. 1994, Mayntz 1996, Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001)

Establishing a network is usually based on common needs, interests and mutual dependence of different actors. Due to this – despite of all the possible differences of these members – a selection and creation of similarity, which keeps the group together, is happening automatically (Huber 1989).

Consequently, formal rules and subordination procedures, naturally ascribed to formal organisations and hierarchies, are substituted in networks by common ideologies. This is a necessary precondition for the structure to create a homogeneity that constitutes the basis for strategic action (Powell 1996).

The actions of the network are oriented towards a common task or a practical goal (Huber 1989). Nevertheless, the partners are not exclusively interested in the common aims but also in parts that especially reflect their individual issues. Still, the common goals and interests, which are formulated through negotiation and compromise, constitute a value that motivates them to restrict the pursue of their individual goals. Thus, the reference point of all strategical efforts is shifted from the actor to the system (Mayntz 1996).

A network enterprise is a specific form of enterprise “whose system of means is constituted by the intersection of segments of autonomous systems of goals” (Castells 1996, p. 171). Thus, the components of the network are both autonomous and dependent vis-à-vis the network and may be part of other networks, and therefore, of other systems of means aimed at other goals (Castells 1996).

Furthermore, as “the logic of the organisational network is a compromise under the premiss of mutual respect” (Mayntz 1996, p. 485, transl.) network partners accept deviating individual opinions, aims and interests as long as everybody works according the common network interests and intentions. A direct result of this is that compromises have to be taken and a part of the organisations' autonomy given up. As a result, networks are in the position to produce collective outputs through interaction despite the diverging interests of their members (Mayntz 1996).

In contrast to hierarchies, the members of networks are not related to each other by their

functions but personally. The ones who are making decisions and those who are affected by them are usually identical. The identity between the group of members making decisions and the systems being affected is the core of horizontal cooperation in networks in contrast to hierarchical structures of task accomplishment (Mayntz 1996). This results in more personal ties, more open communication and trust. The social structure has a better basis in this context compared to functional relations in hierarchies.

The network members voluntarily participate in the inter-organisational cooperation, which makes it possible to act responsibly without force (Mayntz 1996). Hence, this form of collective action is only applicable in societies with a certain degree of modernisation as there have to be “corporative actors that are in the position to make strategic decisions, negotiate and make compromises with other corporative actors” (Mayntz 1996, p. 476, transl.).

Reciprocity is another central feature in the international context. This issue is connected with “benefit equivalence.” This means that in order to stabilize the network, the benefit balance has to be equal. However, reciprocity can be considered as consistent with the pursue of personal interests in case a long-term commitment is ensured. Then, reciprocity and trust result in the respect of diverging interests (Powell 1996).

Furthermore, due to direct and indirect relations, permanently extensible networks can bear special inner-systemic dynamics. Its strong and weak ties lead to a constant dither between homogeneity, heterogeneity and the ability of multiplex relations to integrate multiple interests. This makes them adequate structures for the integration of a relatively broad range of motives, interests and approaches of participating organisations (Dederichs 2000).

This inherent heterogeneity of organisational networks result in special kinds of behaviour: As the organisations are mutually dependent on each other (features: complementarity) and engaged in cooperative or competitive behaviour, the coherences between the organisations automatically result in a control structure. This is not necessarily a negative feature of networks as the extension, re-definition and re-invention of links, relations, interactions is permanently fostered. Because communication and interaction within networks are reciprocal processes, the inequalities of control potential among the different partners are usually subject

to continuous change bearing chances for shifts in such a control structure (Baecker 1999).

Cybernetic theory supports this assumption advising to “let yourself be controlled if you want to control!” (Baecker 1999, p. 363, transl.).

Networks are uneven, heterogeneous passages and combinations of communication in and through which translation is intrinsic to the connectivity of information as it encounters technical, social, political, economic and cultural fields of articulation, negotiation and transference (Rossiter 2004).

This translation logic is again closely related to system theory, which stresses that (existing) elements can be (re-)arranged for the constitution of a new system. “With mobility came all sorts of connections between people, organisations, localities etc. Elements previously without relation are combined in such a manner that something new is invented” (Rossiter 2004). This combination of elements is translation at work conditioning the possibilities of communication, transduction, intensity and individuation between different systems. At the basic level, the logic of networks is the process of connectivity (Rossiter 2004).

Because networks consist of contacts which can be current or revived a logic of inconsistent activity can be deduced (Baecker 1999). They evade regularity and can be activated, function temporarily, dissolve and reappear later, possibly with a different set of goals, strategies or intentions (Boos et. al. 1994). A current occasion may be required that re-activates the existing relational capital of networks. A network appears if the following conditions are given:

- basic intention – anticipated reciprocal “exchange”;
- relational potential; and
- current occasion.

(Boos et. al. 1994)

Basic intentions are common interests that lead in case of a current occasion – due to the existing relational potential between network members – to the activation of the network. In this contrasting view, the networks are predominantly de-activated and don't represent a sustainable structure.

The high number of actual and actualisable contacts puts pressure on the organisation to treat their boundaries as expandable output (effort, achievement) and to define identity criteria that make visible where the organisation starts and where it ends (Baecker 1999).

The performance of a given network will finally strongly depend on two attributes:

- Connectedness
- Consistency

Connectedness means the structural ability to facilitate a noise-free communication between its components and consistency to extent to which the interests between the network's goals and the goals of its components are shared (Castells 1996).

II.4.3.5.2 Relations / Communication

The most striking characteristic of networks are the informal relations and ties that hold them together: as a matter of fact, not the strong ties of established relations but weak ties of potential contacts to third parties are the main evolutionary chances (Baecker 1999).

In this context communication analogous to the concept of feedback in the system theoretic view can be understood not as a uni-linear channel of transmission but rather a non-linear system of relations. The way it is suggested in many publications, it is not an instrument but a social system (Rossiter 2004).

Generally, communication within networks can take place through meetings or via a central coordination point. Information technology has assisted this field as it is nowadays more easily possible to share information, build common strategies and interact in other ways (Eade 1997).

However, one opinion is that in order to organise mobile information a certain degree of hierarchisation or centralisation is required in networks. This occurs within the medium of communication (Rossiter 2004). Networks are dependent on an existing hierarchy in the organisations that it connects as it constitutes the only clue for the accountability of decisions (Baecker 1999).

Hierarchy can be considered as one communication technique for the reduction of the organisation's complexity on simple complexity (Baecker 1999). But it basically restricts communication: between equal members it is free but without consequences, between superiors and subordinates it is strongly restricted and with strong consequences. The result is that such communication appears very rarely. Hence, hierarchies have problems acknowledging that decisions also go from bottom up. In cases where this happens, communication is comprehended as “information,” implying that only information is passed on and nothing decided (Baecker 1999). To sum it up, within hierarchies there is an unconditioned communication horizontally and a conditioned communication vertically (Baecker 1999).

This explanation reflects the reason why hierarchies in networks are kept at the lowest level as the relatively free communication structure within networks allows the nodes of the network an effective and high degree of information exchange. As they are technically predestined on creating possible communications between nodes, common strategies and tactics imply the chance of shifting power structure. In this sense, practices will have to focus less on the characteristics of the nodes but more on the quality of the interactions between nodes (Galloway and Thacker 2004). This is particularly important and/or relevant as networks usually organise around the common purpose of changing their common environment for the better.

II.4.3.5.3 Functions of Networks

Generally, networks have proved to be functional in case of turbulent conditions as they are a possible answer to chaotic situations (Boos et. al. 1994) and for situations which require efficient and reliable information (Powell 1996). The organised network is in the position to

“imbue information with strategic potential” (Rossiter 2004) and it has the ability to act responsibly without force (Mayntz 1996). Through the combination of resources, advantages can be achieved. Corner pillars of successful networks are “complementarity” and “interest offset” (Powell 1996). The existence of networks can also be considered as an “indicator of societal modernization” (Mayntz 1996, p. 476, transl.).

Networks are gametes of new communication and new organisation forms (Burmeister & Canzler 1989) in societies. Because they are by definition self-emergent, they are the self-organised answer to the failure of states or the incapability of common coverage of crisis (Teubner 1996). Their action is directed at a purpose, and they have proved to let insufficiently regarded interests participate in political and economic decision processes. The intention of an active future configuration can be put into reality with networks (Burmeister & Canzler 1989).

There are several reasons why a network structure might be an option for collaborative action. However the main functions that it can offer are:

- know-how exchange;
- speed (reactivity); and
- trust.

(Powell 1996)

Trust is a central point as a basis for the maintenance of all network relations (Dederichs 2000) as the quality of exchange is more important than quantity. Reliability on the partners is a precondition for effective collaboration. The main function of trust is that aspects that normally would appear insecure become secure. “It reduces complex realities much faster and more economical than authority or negotiation” (Powell 1996, p. 226, transl.).

Furthermore, trust within networks doesn't only play a role on the personal level but also towards the system, which in the “context of network relations is directed on technical or social systems” (Dederichs 2000, p. 14).

As the boundaries between organisations vanish multi-party action becomes a requirement with many of the issues organisations are facing. Networks can facilitate the practicability of

collective action as cooperation between partners is enabled through “structures that facilitate discussion, promote shared understandings [...] and enable coordination where joint action is needed” (Brown & Kalegaonkar 2002, p. 243).

In the context of the constitution of an internal and external organisational collaboration the network can offer the following functions: It helps to transcend borders and compensate the handicap of a clear delimitation between internal and external through the connection of different organisations. Within the organisations, the restrictions of the hierarchy can be overcome (Boos et. al. 1994).

The pitfalls of networks can be:

- Networks are resource-led rather than inspired by purpose and vision
- Mis-match between formal structures and purpose
- Unclear or inappropriate membership criteria
- Weak, outdated or inappropriate system for communicating with and among members
- Over-dependence on, or domination by, individual members or leaders

(Eade 1997)

This is contrasted by the functions that networks can at best fulfil:

- link isolated groups or people who would not otherwise interact;
- raise awareness of specific issues;
- build confidence among members or participants;
- strengthen the capacities of NGOs;
- create a critical mass for action leading to policy change and other improvements;
- bring greater weight to advocacy and lobbying – reduce duplication of efforts and share skills;
- increase cooperation and regional coordination;
- 'scale up' activities and create synergy;
- motivate and generate solidarity with people who confront seemingly overwhelming problems at a local level; and

- coordinate support and funding from donors.

(Eade 1997)

To sum it up, the possibilities of networks depend to which extent the members are able to follow their individual goals through the flexible, communicative and cooperative adaptation to the respective context (environment). This does not suggest a one-sided subjection of one or the other member but shall be seen in the sense of a common result optimisation (Huber 1989).

Networks are a special form of collective action where:

- Cooperation can be preserved as an effective arrangement over a longer time span
- Incentives for learning and for the spread of information are generated
- The openness regarding its purposes is useful, if the environment is insecure and variable
- Effective means for the application and extension of such intangible resources like implicit knowledge and technological innovation are offered.

(Powell 1996)

II.4.3.5.4 Design of Networks

The effectiveness of networks is strongly dependent on the design of the network relations, communication and the general structure. Ronfeldt and Arquilla (2001) suggest an analysis of five relevant levels:

1. organisational design;
2. narrative (story);
3. doctrine (collaborative strategies and methods);
4. technology (information systems); and
5. sociology (personal ties assuring loyalty and trust).

II.4.3.5.4.1 Organisational Design

The type of organisational design that is used to structure the network is an important issue. If and how members can act autonomously, where leadership resides and/or is distributed and

how hierarchical dynamics are mixed with network dynamics constitute the major questions for the set up.

One optimal example for a network design is described by Ronfeldt and Arquilla:

A pattern of constant, open communication and coordination among a network of national campaigns that worked independently but coordinated constantly with each other on behalf of their common goal held together by shared ideology and philosophy (2001, p. 327).

Questions of coordination problems need to be solved in advance. Usually there is an effort to have a leaderless design or a design with many leaders who are diffused throughout the network and are trying to act in coordination. This is a typical weakness of network designs. However, Ronfeldt and Arquilla note that organisational networks can operate without a “great man” leader but instead need a doctrinal leadership. Such is

the individual or set of individuals who is in charge of shaping the flow of communications, the “story” [...] and the doctrine guiding its strategy and tactics (Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001, p. 327).

The central problem with a leader or central coordination unit is that it may develop its own interests away from those of the network affiliates.

II.4.3.5.4.2 Narrative

Networks are held together by narratives or stories. These should be an expression of people's experiences, interests and values and give the network a sense of identity and belonging. It is necessary to “keep people connected to the network whose looseness makes it difficult to prevent defection” (Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001, p. 328). Stories can also assist to build bridges across different networks.

II.4.3.5.4.3 Doctrine

Doctrines communicate the guiding principles and practices of a network. Such can be shared

principles and practices that span all nodes and to which the members subscribe in a fundamental way (Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001). “A doctrine can enable them to be 'all of one mind' even though they are dispersed and devoted to different tasks” (Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001, p. 333). This can provide a central ideologic, strategic and operational coherence that allows for tactical decentralization.

Herby, Ronfeldt and Arquilla (2001) see two options. The network can operate with multiple leaders instead of a single one. This can be facilitated by using consultative and consensus-building mechanisms for decision making. The second way is to work with swarming strategies and tactics. This can be done through small units being normally dispersed. In an instant, they might turn to converge on a target from all directions, conduct an “attack” and then re-disperse to prepare for the next operation (Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001).

II.4.3.5.4.4 Technology

The higher the bandwidth and the more dispersed the means of transmission, reception, storage, and retrieval, the better the prospects for success with network-style organization (Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001, p. 339).

II.4.3.5.4.5 Sociology

The degree to which and in what ways members are personally known and connected to each other determines the strength and effectivity of a network. They require a higher degree of interpersonal trust than other forms. Trust is something that all social architectures require in order to be efficient: “in a sense, all these concepts reflect the ancient, vital necessity of belonging to a family, clan, or tribe and associating one's identity with it” (Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2001, p. 342). However, the enforcement of loyalty is difficult. This is a central weaknesses of the network form which lacks a “centre of gravity” as an organisation.

III. Scientific Approach and Methodology

III.1 Qualitative Research

In social research, empirical data is collected either by quantitative or qualitative research methods. The present work applies the latter, a more recent development in social sciences. As quantitative methods have become increasingly subject to critique, it is now respected as a valuable research approach in the scientific field.

Results of qualitative research don't stem from statistical analysis or other kinds of quantification of data (Strauss and Corbin 1996). Rather, this kind of analysis aims to understand social reality in all its genuineness. This is in contrast to the quantitative methods, which, according to Lamnek (1995), comprehend the variety of the social field only partially and fail to display its structures in all its complexity.

The quantitative methodology is reproached for being less interested in the reality itself and in how its perception by the person is affected, but instead focuses on the examination of pre-formulated theories and hypothesis (Lamnek 1995).

Strauss and Corbin support Lamnek's arguments, stating that “qualitative methods can give information on related details of phenomena, which are difficult to show with quantitative methods” (1996, p. 5, transl.).

Qualitative research is regarded as a methodological counter outline. This assumption is illustrated by a few basic principles which were extracted by critically reflecting quantitative methods, as explained in the following section.

III.1.1 Principles of Qualitative Research

Mayring (1996) argues that qualitative thought is based on five postulates. These are:

stronger subject orientation, emphasis on description and interpretation of the research

subjects; the claim of conducting research in the subject's natural and everyday environment (instead of the laboratory); and the concept of the generalization of the results as a generalization process.

Similarly, Lamnek (1995) describes the notions of valuable qualitative research by extracting six main principles. This division appears to be a reasonable orientation point for the qualitative researcher.

III.1.1.1 Openness

Quantitative methods are criticised for using standardised research instruments and pre-formulated hypothesis, and hence can just process information that was not withheld previously by its restrictive filter system.

Therefore, qualitative research scientists plead for widening the perceptual scale so that unexpected, but also more valuable information, can be collected. This is reflected by a general openness towards the research subjects (individuals), situation and the applied methods.

The consequences of the approach's openness are diverse. The most important consequence is the „explorative function of qualitative social research and the renunciation of a formation of hypothesis 'ex ante'" (Lamnek 1995, p. 22, transl.). This suggests that the theoretical structuring and finalization of a study's hypothesis is not done before the end of the research period. This stands in direct contrast to other research approaches where the hypothesis build the framework for the methodological processing.

III.1.1.2 Research is communication

Communication and interaction between the subject of research and the researcher are regarded as an interruption of the research process in quantitative research. In contrast to this view, qualitative analysts regard this interaction as one constitutive part of the „research act."

An independence between the scientist and his/her subject is not regarded as a realistic

assumption. The view on the reality always depends on both the point of view of the scientist and that of the subject. This means that the definition of the common reality is negotiated in a mutual discussion. Such a communicative interaction requires a natural communication situation. Hence, it is an central necessity to establish an open atmosphere which can hardly be reached by standardisation characteristic for quantitative studies (Lamnek 1995).

III.1.1.3 Processing Character of Research and Subject

All social phenomena are process-like. This assumption can be applied for the subject of the research as well as for the mere act of research.

The patterns of acting and interpreting in the social world are neither given nor fixed. The social actors are engaged in continuous change and modification. Thus, reality is constructed. Qualitative research is interested in documenting, reconstructing and explaining this process of reality constitution.

The assumption that a communication between the scientist and the research subject is happening, implies his/her involvement in the research process; hence it is also a result of it. Both parties are involved in constructing reality and agreeing on the interpretation of certain situations (Lamnek 1995).

III.1.1.4 Reflectivity of Subject and Analysis

Human behaviour can only be understood if it is analysed in its present context. Every meaning a researcher encounters during the research process is related reflectively to the whole. In order to understand a single action, it is necessary to grasp its context. This contextual dependence also applies to different meanings; they are related to each other as well.

This leads to the assessment that the “constitution of sense” and “understanding of sense” is a circular process. Such a process is comprehended in the sense of the “hermeneutic circle” (Lamnek 1995). The “reflectivity of the research subject finds its equivalence in the circularity of the accomplishment of understanding” (Lamnek 1995, p. 26, transl.).

III.1.1.5 Explication

One demand towards qualitative research is that the individual steps of the research process are disclosed transparently and openly. This is also applicable to the rules of interpretation that are used. The result of this explication is a better comprehensibility of the interpretations done in the work and an inter subjectivity of the results (Lamnek 1995).

III.1.1.6 Flexibility

Quantitative research assumes that the “researched sphere of social life is already sufficiently known and, as such, a special openness and flexibility is not required any more” (Lamnek 1995, p. 27, transl.). Such a view is opposed in qualitative thought by emphasising that research is an explorative process.

Changes are frequently made and new directions are adopted. The continuous reconsideration of what is relevant data for the underlying research questions leads to a flexible application of methods, data and findings. The research starts with a broad angle on the subject area and narrows it down in the course of the project as new findings lead to specific, possibly non-anticipated directions.

Because of their flexibility qualitative methods are often referred to as “soft methods” (Lamnek 1995, p. 27, transl.).

III.1.2 Qualitative Research Data: Collection Methods

Qualitative research aims to extract valuable theory during its research process. The needed data is collected by the participant observer. Such persons participate in the research setting and carefully observe what is happening. The observer, in this case, is no outsider but understands the language, phrases and particular vocabulary of the researched situation. Only with this background it becomes possible to derive valuable theories from qualitative data collection (Vockell 1983).

For this purpose a set of collection methods are applicable:

III.1.2.1 Interviews

The interview is a very important data collection method in the field of qualitative research. It has gained popularity because of its easy handling in the social field. Another reason is the extensiveness of analysis methods which are available for the interpretation of such interview data. Generally, such data provides a “status *nascendi* recording, unbiased authenticity, inter-subjective understanding and arbitrary reproduction” (Lamnek 1995, p. 35, transl.).

While interviews can usually resemble ordinary conversations, those in this work are carried out in a somewhat more structured manner. The researcher already is well-informed “about the areas and people of which information is wanted” (Vockell 1983). Through a set of questions, key persons are asked to talk freely and unrestrictedly about their opinions, experiences and knowledge in the subject areas in question.

These persons are selected because of their involvement in the processes that are the subject of the present analysis. Their insights are supposed to deliver valuable information, which is necessary for the formulation of the subject-related theories.

In fact, the interview is considered a core instrument of data collection in the present work. Three individuals that have been involved in the FMEDIA initiative were questioned about several aspects before and after the FMEDIA Forum, which took place June 13-15, 2004. They were selected according to their differing degrees of involvement. One was an initiator, another joined the initiative before the start of the second phase and the third person got involved shortly before the event. Also, the questioned individuals come from three different countries. This selection should guarantee a relatively balanced perception of the structure.

In detail, the first round of interviews set out to research the perception of the (organisational) structure by these key persons and their own organisation's background. More specifically, opinions and experiences in the field of communication, relations between individuals, organisations, decision making, perception of external environment and the aims/goals within the FMEDIA structure were supposed to be delivered. These interviews were conducted between the June 3 and 9. The medium duration of the interviews was 35 minutes.

After the event, the second round of extensive interviews on the perception of the organisational structure were designed to indicate shifts in the perception of relations, communication and aims, hence the structural aspects of FMEDIA. These interviews were conducted between September 10 and 11. The medium duration of the second round was 15 minutes.

Furthermore, interview data gathered from the Internet or from researchers who work on relevant topics are used for the purpose of this thesis paper. In detail, this was one interview with Christopher Dawes, Head of Broadcasting Policy Division at the Department for Media, Culture and Sport (UK) in London and another interview with Steven Buckley, president of AMARC, the world association of community radio broadcasters organisation, both conducted on September 5, 2004 by Tassilo Pellegrini.

As the interviews had an open semi-structured style the resulting data was analysed with regards to key issues that were addressed by all the interview partners. These were extracted from the entire body of interview data and researched for similarities and conformity. In the empirical part of this work the findings are composed in a way that it provides insight into the FMEDIA structure and consequently have an impact on the formulation of this work's hypothesis.

III.1.2.2 Texts (Documents, Records, Newspaper Articles)

Another method of qualitative data collection is the composition and use of texts which are related to the research subject. Such data can be composed of “current information” or “archival information” (Vockell 1983). Text in this context is the “written product of verbal communication” but also documents, records and newspaper articles (Lamnek 1995).

The texts which are used in this work mainly come from mailing lists, personal email communication and other documents such as meeting minutes. They all originate in the present field of research: organisational theories, community media or network theories.

The use of these materials is justified by its containment of papers, manifests and exclusive

crucial data assisting the extraction of theories on the development of structures, communication and relations among individuals and organisations.

The used electronic channels of communication, such as the website <http://fmedia.ecn.cz> and the mailing list will be analysed. Based on the communication in the mailing list, it is expected to be able to extract important information about the:

- degree of participation of different network members;
- issues that are discussed / shift in issues over the time; and
- extension of the relations and identification of ties etc.

The website as another means of communication provides articles, updates and other documents that are produced during the interaction of the FMEDIA initiative. These papers constitute another source of analysis for the processes within the structure.

Other documents such as grant applications, minutes of meetings and gatherings, documentation reports and other manifests will be used to document the processes, discussions and results of the different units of analysis as a whole.

III.2 Research Method: Grounded Theory

The grounded theory is a qualitative research approach developed by Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser. The task is to understand what is happening there, and how the players manage their roles within a certain research situation (Dick 2002). Thus, theory is created from observation.

Such a theory is “grounded” in the subject of the research. Contrasting the traditional deductive scientific approach, findings and theories are derived inductively. There is a strong emphasis on the “systematic survey and analysis of data” (Strauss and Corbin 1996, p. 5). The data analysis remains in a “reciprocal relation” (Strauss and Corbin 1996, p. 5) to the theory.

The striking difference between this methodological approach and other research is emergence. In contrast to hypothesis testing it sets out to “find what theory accounts for the research situation as it is” (Dick 2002). This difference is important for understanding the methodology.

In order to evaluate the applicability of the grounded theory for a research phenomenon, it is suggested to apply two seemingly simple criteria: “that it fits the situation and that it works” (Dick 2002).

Strauss and Corbin (1996) apply another more extensive approach towards its evaluation. They underline that four main criteria are relevant:

- conformity theory – reality;
- comprehensibility
- abstraction; and
- action control.

First, in regards to the conformity of a theory with the everyday reality of the subject area, the theory has to be derived meticulously from the diverse data of the researched subject.

Second, in regards to the comprehensibility, the theory is supposed to provide a picture of the reality and as such needs to be comprehensible for the researched persons as well as for the practitioner.

Moreover, all the results of the grounded theory method need to have a sufficient degree of variation and a level of abstraction in order to be applicable in a “vast number of contexts, that are in relation with the researched phenomenon” (Strauss and Corbin 1996, p. 8).

At last, it needs to be explained that during the research process the hypotheses are derived from concrete data. This implies the theory's function as an action control (Strauss and Corbin 1996). To measure if the actions that are undertaken during the research are reasonable the constant deduction of hypothesis provides a valuable orientation.

Generally, creativity plays an important role in the research process of the grounded theory. It encourages the researcher to ask relevant questions and, by constant comparison of data and theory, discover new theoretical formulations (Strauss and Corbin 1996).

This whole research process is carried out by note-taking, constant comparison, coding of material and generation of categories for the gathered data. In this context literature, is regarded as equal to other data. This feature reflects this method's difference to others applied in social sciences.

IV. Empirical part:

FMEDIA – Organisational Network of Community Media

The previous theoretical chapters of this work aimed at providing a basis for understanding the structuring and organisation of international cooperation. The framework of network theories was applied for explaining one option to structure cooperation and action on an international level. The organisational network was discussed in detail as one concept where a rather loose network is combined with organisational elements like hierarchies, organised communication and exchange.

The following empirical section will provide an insight into the actual subject of analysis, the FMEDIA project. It will be researched to what extent features of such an organisational network actually exist. Furthermore, the analysis of the communication, the collaboration, intentional and narrative structure will be researched to draw a detailed picture of the actual FMEDIA system.

The empirical data of Chapter IV provides the argumentative framework for answering the questions:

- Do features of an organisational network exist in the case of FMEDIA?
- How does the development of the network look like and what is the special impact of an event like the FMEDIA Forum?
- Is the organisational network the most adequate structure for the strategies that the FMEDIA system pursues?

By answering these specific questions there shall not only be made conclusions for the current case (FMEDIA) but beyond that. For any structuring effort that is made on an international level in similar fields, such as NGOs, where cooperation arrangements play the main role, a valuable analysis and usable recommendations will be provided.

FMEDIA itself was initiated by a relatively small group of individuals with the aim of creating a cooperation platform for community media in Europe. Potential partner organisations and individuals were identified as parties that share an interest in organising a conference (FMEDIA Forum) aiming at the creation of a basis for sustainable cooperation and linking of projects and contacts in the respective field.

This chapter will present methods that were applied in the process of establishing such a platform and talk about the target group which was addressed during the time span of October 2003 to November 2004. Community media as the generic name for this collection of organisations and initiatives will be presented as the framework. Afterwards there will be a shift, focusing on the organisations that actually joined the initiative and took part in the FMEDIA system. These are presented from different perspectives.

Finally, an analysis of the structural characteristics that are inherent in FMEDIA shall help to understand the dynamics and processes of international cooperation. The actual development of the network will deliver a basis for answering the question about the optimal structures for the kind of collaboration that is subject to this work and what the role of an event like the FMEDIA Forum is in the process of setting up a sustainable cooperation structure.

IV.1 Overview FMEDIA

The idea for the FMEDIA network came into existence in summer 2003 thanks to a small group of individuals representing two organisations of the community radio sector. These two, Radio FRO and Radio Jeleni, are situated in Prague (Czech Republic) and Linz (Austria) and were initially interested “in setting up a Czech-Austrian collaboration” (Steinert 2004, p. 4) of different media initiatives in the region.

However, the scope had grown beyond this area so that the concept of the FMEDIA initiative finally included a focus towards creating “a functioning platform for better collaboration” (Steinert 2004, p. 4) of initiatives in the post communist states with those in other European regions (Website <http://fmedia.ecn.cz>).

In the course of the first concept drafts until the end of 2003, the initialising group was extended to an organisational team of six people, including a representative of the Federation of Austrian Free Radios, that took over the role of the main organising body (Peissl 2004). This core group of three organisations has since then been the backbone of the FMEDIA structure as they provided the personal and financial resources and the infrastructure together with the other organisations for establishing the basis structure. The main focus point of this group was gathering contacts on a broad basis that could assist in organising the main future activity, a conference in June 2004.

In the course of the core team constitution some more organisations showed interest in the project. Finally, in February 2004, the organising board consisted of several bodies from Central, East and South Europe, who were all engaged in the community media and new media culture (from Austria, Czech Republic, Germany and Slovenia) and its operations (Vojtechovsky 2004). The starting point of this body was a first personal encounter during an organised meeting in Nürnberg (Germany).

IV.2 FMEDIA Aims and Strategy

In order to attract members and participants for ensuring a sustainable cooperation that goes beyond informally linking activities, the FMEDIA organising board set up a clear concept containing its strategic aims. The concrete aims of this core group find their expression in a grant application for the European Cultural Foundation (ECF), which was filed on March, 15, 2004 (Vojtechovsky 2004).

15 years after the fall of the East -West Political Blocks the stratification of independent and community media along the former borders is still separated and divided in the national or bilateral contexts. Relationships and sustainable cooperation in this field are rather scarce and short termed, especially due to the awareness of the necessity to work in wider and cross-border networks and the lack of funding and fund raising (Vojtechovsky 2004).

Generally,

activating and intensifying mutual communication and collaboration between different regions, languages and cultures is the aim of the FMEDIA (Vojtechovsky 2004).

Furthermore, the mission of the FMEDIA project is to “discuss, establish and strengthen the field of new media culture as integral part of cultural field” (Vojtechovsky 2004). Simultaneously, it shall be made more accessible to the wider public as usually only professional circles participate. Affiliates of a network shall be educated in new practices and promotion of both local and international work from this field. Also, international experience and expertise of organisations and initiatives shall be made accessible and shared on the regional level and contacts with other relevant fields like the non-profit sector, academia, computer industry and the broadcast media shall be established (Vojtechovsky 2004).

In the ECF-application it is also mentioned that solidarity and awareness of diverse media and cultural activities, which are working in a new politically and socially structured Europe, shall be promoted. The aim is to provide opportunities for further development of already existing and newly emerging initiatives.

All these strategies are especially relevant for the field of technological channels which are not entertainment and commercially oriented (Vojtechovsky 2004). More specific, the FMEDIA network strategic aims are:

- Providing face-to-face encounters of people from Eastern and Western Europe who haven't met earlier
- Interlinking similar initiatives from different regions
- Supporting the inter regional collaborations
- Promoting Pan European solidarity and knowledge sharing
- Connecting the local initiatives with transnational networks
- Strengthening the community and civic activities opposed to commercial and governmental structures

- Collaborative negotiation concerning the growing separation between social groups and their inhibited access to media and technology
- Encouraging inter-cultural engagement in information, training, creation and presentation

(Vojtechovsky 2004)

The picture drawn in the following section represents a comparison of these previous FMEDIA aims and those of some organisations which have become affiliated and/or belong to the organising board. It shows to what extent these goals are corresponding and the central body is acting accordingly.

This data stems from the interviews with three core persons. Even though they put into the network special and different organisational aims and strategies, some main areas, where corresponding issues exist that are transferred to the FMEDIA initiative, are presented.

- **Self-legitimation (public, political)**

On a national and international level, the legitimisation of the organisation and its goals is important. “We are in an Economy of Attention and thus have to demand, purchase, negotiate and demonstrate our legitimacy” (*Interlocutor 1*). The same issue is addressed by *Interlocutor 2* stating that the aim is for the organisation to establish itself in the local area.

- **Professionalising structures and practices**

An important issue would be to think in investments and “not restrict oneself to the administration of the inventory.” Another intention directs the organisation to become more professional (*Interlocutor 1*). Likewise, *Interlocutor 3* talks about creating some kind of better organisational brand.

For the purpose of organisational evolution, the development of relevant political and social structures and future scenarios are a crucial issue. Furthermore, in this context it would be important to understand the developments in the environment, be prepared and react adequately (*Interlocutor 1*).

Also, organisational goals need to be formulated more coherently (*Interlocutor 1*). The creation of a better organisational structure, which barely exists at this point, adds to this issue (*Interlocutor 3*).

In contrast, the aim to find contemporary means of reaching long-term goals is considered part of the strategic planning process (*Interlocutor 1*).

- **Networking**

One argument and motivation for international collaboration is that in spite of the different contexts in the different countries of origin the results one encounters are very similar (*Interlocutor 2*). Currently, however, there is a lot of international cooperation happening on the personal level but not very much on an organisational level (*Interlocutor 3*).

In this situation, a recognised challenge is the current shift of political power towards the European Union. The emerging clearance poses opportunities that need to be taken advantage of. Thus, networking has to become stronger. However, to be effective on this international level, every action needs to be in accordance with affiliate organisations that share the same goals. The problem is that international networking does not happen without a certain amount of friction, so a lot of time and energy has to be invested to accord common efforts (*Interlocutor 1*).

- **Financial safeguarding**

Moving away from the dependence on limited sources of income, one goal is to establish manifold sources to secure the future financial basis of the organisation (*Interlocutor 2 & 3*). Likewise, financial issues are generally considered a core theme in the framework of organisational aims (*Interlocutor 1*).

- **International cooperation**

A long-term goal on the European level is to develop a lasting commitment out of the informal talks that have been held so far (*Interlocutor 1*). A European political framework that is

beneficial for Community Media should be formed. Therefore, media initiatives need to be put in the position to formulate common goals and to exchange themselves. That is difficult because of the past collapse and the crisis of diverse models of interest-representation and federations internationally (*Interlocutor 2*).

These issues address the will to generate pressure on political structures pushing, international cooperation for the future benefit of their respective organisations (lobbying). For this purpose, it would be important to make things relevant on a broader basis, to integrate many parties in the discussion processes, to work on common criteria to guide an international media-related policy. Another goal is to encourage opinion-forming processes on the European level to strengthen the establishment of community media (*Interlocutor 2*).

The establishment of new contacts for cooperation and the engagement in international networking, cooperation and common projects is a basic necessity for the attainment of these aims (*Interlocutor 2*).

- **Continuation of self-organised, self-responsible work (“ideals”)**

Another central issue is the maintenance of a self organised and self-responsible practice of action or the pursuit of ideological aims. This means that all these initiatives are usually connected to some ideals, and this is something “that doesn't seem to fit into contemporary societies any more” (*Interlocutor 2 & 3*).

IV.3 'Community Media' as the FMEDIA Target Group

The target group of FMEDIA comprises cultural workers, organisers and users of community media, professional and non-professional radio creators, artists, students, media activists, teachers and representatives of minority groups (Vojtechovsky 2004).

As Lindenberg argues in his article about the globalization of the not-for-profit sector, “global public fiscal crisis and the end of the cold war left many community needs unfilled” (1999, p. 151). In this situation, many NGOs moved to fill the resulting vacuum. Community media

organisations, driven “by social objectives rather than the private, profit motive” (Crisinfo 2004), face an increasing necessity of fulfilling these needs.

The NGO sector by definition involves organisations that

provide useful (in some specified legal sense) goods or services, thereby serving a specified public purpose ...; (2) are not allowed to distribute profits to persons in their individual capacities; (3) are voluntary in the sense that they are created, maintained, and terminated based on voluntary decision and initiative by members or a board; and (4) exhibit value rationality, often based on strong ideological components (Lindenberg 1999, p. 150).

Community media is regarded as special kind of organisations belonging to this sector. The match between these archetypal NGO characteristics and those of community media shall be argued briefly in the following sections.

IV.3.1 Role of Media in the Society

In the present work, the assumed main role of media in contemporary societies is its capability to make a vital contribution to the democratisation of societies. As Raboy argues, this can be done by

“creating a public sphere through which people could be empowered to take part in civic affairs, in enhancing national and cultural identity, in promoting creative expression and dialogue” (2003, p. 102).

Hence, the provision of a certain degree of public access to communication is the central issue: “the possibility for individuals, groups of individuals, organisations and institutions to share society's communication resources” (Van Cuilenburg 1999, p. 185). In its purest form public access operates non-hierarchically, produced by artistic, advocacy-oriented volunteers.

Certainly, between different logics, the concept of media varies considerably. For example, while the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) views

media as “cultural institutions, part of the process of human development” (Raboy 2003, p. 110), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) reduces media to “value free containers of information” or “technical systems for information delivery” (Raboy 2003, p. 110). These two contrasting perceptions show the broad room that exists for policy makers, media advocates and the general public to interpret the necessity of media which explicitly aims at fostering democratisation.

Advocates of a broad access to communication channels fear

the increasing concentration of information and opinion in the hands of a few powerful media conglomerates; the shrinking of public space as areas formerly open to and sponsored by the public become corrupted by escalating commercialisation; and the resultant decline in public discourse as these formerly public spaces yield to commercial speech, in short the decline of public democracy (Fuller 2004).

IV.3.2 Interplay State – Commercial – NGO Media

Conventional thinking about mass media in the 20th century focused on the capacity of media institutions to play a role in the democratisation of societies. With the rise of the information society, the questions of a transparent and egalitarian communication society have confirmed their importance (Raboy 2003).

History has shown that in many cases the social function of media could only be pursued through government interventions, by providing the necessary funds and infrastructure for such media to operate (Raboy 2003). Through diverse measures like awarding broadcasting frequencies or selected awarding. the policy makers were originally trying to ensure a minimum quantity of social responsibility.

In the 1960s, one other development could be observed: often tied with political, social and youth movements, alternative and oppositional media or third-sector media began to emerge. While involved in “bringing down the Soviet system, democratising parts of Asia, Africa and

Latin America [...]” (Raboy 2003, p. 104), in other parts of the world like Germany or Canada, they succeeded in being recognised in legislation and regulation.

However, in the course of the rise of new communication and information technologies, the policy makers have become less willing and less able to intervene in the sphere of media activity. This can be ascribed to new mechanisms and agreements that have emerged, providing the basis for the expansion of commercial activities in the media sector. The power of setting rules and standards has shifted from policy makers to the media producers trying to fulfill their particular needs (Raboy 2003).

Hence, the early 21st century witnessed the increasing concentration of media ownership, “loose minimal regulation regarding the most basic elements of social responsibility for commercial mass media” (Raboy 2003, p. 105), funding and legitimacy crisis for public broadcasting and recognised legal status and financial support for alternative community-based media in some parts of the world. But global media nowadays seems to be ever more market-driven leading to a lack of access to communication and technologies in many geographical areas (Raboy 2003).

This and other issues are on display within the triangle of state – market and NGO or community media leading to the power struggles as every sector tries to legitimise itself. Considering media policy as a subset of cultural policy (Raboy 2003), the community media sector sets out to make its standpoint clear, affirming that “effective participation in the information society and the mastery by everyone of information and communication technology constitute a significant dimension of any cultural policy” (Raboy 2003, p. 108). This way, they try to establish their legitimacy, viewing communication resources as part of the global commons. Policies would have to be enacted in a way that they help to assure a plural media space.

IV.3.3 What is Community Media?

IV.3.3.1 Characteristics

Holland and Stappers state that “community communication is a form of public communication of making public and creating a public within the context of a specific community (geographical and/or community of interest)” (1992, p. 19). Because communication is a basic right and a necessary condition for social and economic development, community media can make a contribution to that development (Crisinfo 2004).

Generally, community media has the following characteristics:

- owned and controlled by people in the community;
- usually smaller and low cost;
- provides interactive two-way communications;
- non-profit and autonomous, therefore, non-commercial;
- limited coverage or reach;
- utilizes appropriate, indigenous materials and resources;
- reflects community needs and interests; and
- its programmes or content support community development

(Maslog et. al. 1997)

IV.3.3.2 Aims and Challenges

What is the role of community media within the process of revolutionary information exchanges that are going on currently? Mainly, “issues and concerns central to local communities are brought to the forefront and democratically resolved through discussion and dissemination” (Fuller 2004).

In media otherwise dominated by advertisements, canned programming and audience-tested news casting, public access offers possibilities to probe and address topics and concerns under-represented in mainstream media (Fuller 2004).

Hence an important goal of community media is the extension of the open access to means of media communication.

One strategy for community media to strengthen its position in the media landscape is through cooperation with other media initiatives. For the NGO-sector Brown and Kalegaonkar state that “networks, alliances or coalitions provide structures that facilitate discussion, promote shared understandings [...] and enable coordination where joint action is needed” (2002, p. 243). For community media, exchange and collaboration is one optional strategy. According to the *Crisinfo Issue Paper*, a current trend which can be observed is the formation of regional, national and transnational networks that support local communications initiatives and facilitate political and social participation.

The world association of community radio broadcasters (AMARC), a representation of community media interests, states that current efforts go towards the recognition of a “third space for community media” (Buckley 2004) establishing a sector between state and the market for communities to express themselves.

Community media currently faces problems on the political and global governance level (Buckley 2004). Politically, the interests tend to be dominated by the corporate media organisations and manufacturers of technology. The content development is supply-oriented rather than based on the interests of citizens concerned with its usability (Buckley 2004).

As global trade relations become increasingly governed by international institutions like the World Trade Organization (WTO), the privatisation of the media landscape has led to a “corporatization of control even over the existing technologies” (Buckley 2004). States and policy makers are increasingly losing their capabilities and interests to counter these commercialisation tendencies and intervene for public interests.

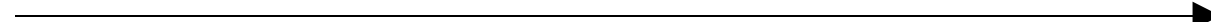
This situation challenges community media to work together with other organisations as it becomes impossible for individual organisations to act on their own in such a heavily contended space. Partners are those organisations which are equally committed to “communication rights and public interest in communications” (Buckley 2004). The aim is to

find a means of confronting the hegemony of major corporate players and to defend citizens' interest against the increasing control of the market and global trade rules over the communications environment (Buckley 2004).

IV.4 Organisations involved in FMEDIA (Org. Board, Affiliates, etc.)

Following, an overview of the different organisations, mainly community media organisations, involved in the FMEDIA project is provided. Those organisations, who have participated in the physical encounters in the period between autumn 2003 and autumn 2004, are counted.

1. Prague Nov. 03 | 2. Nürnberg Feb. 04 | 3. Prague June 04 | 4. Halle Nov. 04



The column “Community Media” features those organisations that fit the description given above. “Other Media” are such initiatives which are either profit-oriented, don't provide an open access or don't fit into the community media section for other reasons. Organisations counted as “NGOs” are those which work on other activities related to the community media field. “Cultural Initiatives” are such which share similar goals as “Community Media” but don't necessarily run a medium or produce content. “Institutions” are organisations that have institutional character, for example, authorities. The last column reports the organisations' countries of origin.

1. In the initial phase (September 2003 – February 2004) of the FMEDIA initiative, only a low quantity of individuals representing the interests and aims of their organisations was involved.

These were:

Organisations altogether	Community Media	Other Media	NGO	Cultural Initiatives	Institutions	Countries
4	3		1			Czech Republic (2), Austria (2)

2. The actual planning phase for the FMEDIA Forum started with a working meeting in Nürnberg (Ger), February 13-15, 2004. The people/organisations, which had been involved before and actually gathered there, are considered as those closest to the organisation efforts and constitute the organisational board.

Organisations altogether	Community Media	Other Media	NGO	Cultural Initiatives	Institutions	Countries
10	9		1			Czech Republic (3), Austria (2), Germany (2), Slovenia (1), Serbia (1), International (1)

3. At the following FMEDIA Forum, which took place on June 10-13, 2004, more than 100 people gathered. Representing 57 different organisations from many European countries, they are subsequently described as “FMEDIA Network Affiliates”.

Organisations altogether	Community Media	Other Media	NGOs	Cultural Initiatives	Institutions	Countries
57	28	6	9	9	5	Austria (10), Belgium (1), Belarus (1), Bulgaria (1), Czech Republic (11), Denmark (1), Estonia (1), France (1), Germany (6), Hungary (4), International (4), Italy (4), Netherlands (2), Romania (1), Russia (1), Slovenia (2), Serbia (2), Slovakia (3), United Kingdom (2)

IV.5 Means of Interaction/Communication

In a de-centralised setting like the FMEDIA initiative, communication constitutes a core element. Everything rises and falls with the quality and effectiveness of information dissemination. Thus, an analysis of the different means of communication provides valuable insight into the processes and structures of the whole system. The means of interaction/communication that are analysed in this work are:

- website;
- mailing list;
- events, meetings and other gatherings; and
- other means.

IV.5.1 Website

According to the grant application which was filed to the European Cultural Foundation, the FMEDIA website (<http://fmedia.ecn.cz>) was set up to provide a long-lasting platform for information distribution and exchange (Vojtechovsky 2004). A main feature is that actual and potential affiliates of the network have constant access to relevant information, concepts and updates and that there is a public voice for the relevant external environment.

In detail, the website's functions are:

- Communication and presentation to the relevant environment (sponsors, public, institutions, etc.)
- Internal information platform on current processes within the network
- Database and resources for collaboration and exchange

IV.5.2 Mailing List

A mailing list is a relatively recent tool, rooted in Internet technology, that enables quick communication with a wide range of individuals. It is a broadcasting technique where a

message can be sent automatically to large numbers of network subscribers.

Hence, information that is distributed on a mailing list reaches a high number of recipients but these channels often lack sufficient moderation or concept. Subscribers may be overwhelmed by the wave of diverse information, a phenomenon inherent in the information society and as such, a key challenge to be tackled by organisational information and communication channels.

The purpose of the FMEDIA mailing list is described as the following:

“This mailing list of the FMEDIA Forum 04 has been established to provide a space for communication about topics related to the meeting and to provide a communication space for people and initiatives involved in the preparation process of this event. Posting should be limited to organisational matters, like meeting co-ordination, exchange of research and content related discussions etc.”

IV.5.3 Events, Meetings and other Gatherings

In contrast to the previously mentioned electronic formats of encounter, meetings could be considered as somewhat old-fashioned. Nevertheless, they constitute a central occasion of communication and negotiation as face-to-face contacts create trust, commitment and friendship more than any virtual form of communication can offer. This appears to be especially important in international networks where members get the chance to establish contact with partners they have not met before. However, in the international context, cost represents a decisive factor that might be used as an argument against meetings.

Events such as conferences, parties and gatherings are another way of formal and informal interaction between network members. In the case of FMEDIA, the FMEDIA Forum is considered as the central occasion for the creation and establishment of a potential network of affiliates. It is also regarded as a space for forming and formulating a common vision based on a broad consensus of the participating organisations. The participation in certain events is a main indicator of the affiliation to a certain set of ideals, organisations and networks

(Wasserman 2001).

From the perspective of social network analysis, the concept of affiliation or membership networks is useful for describing these processes. Events are the kind of social encounter that are one mode of analysis in affiliation or membership networks. They are a special type of a two-mode network with a set of actors and a set of activities, social occasions or events. The relations are measured according to the actors joint participation in the event. Observations about attendance provide information about affiliations (Wasserman 2001).

IV.5.4 Other Means

Telephone, virtual peer-to-peer-communication and informal personal meetings are other very important means of communication in any network-like structure. However, it is not possible for this thesis to document and analyse anything other than written and at least internally published material. This lack of data may be considered when interpreting the findings of the empirical research that was conducted.

IV.6 Structure Follows Strategy: FMEDIA

After the depiction of strategic implications for the FMEDIA system, a turn of focus towards the actual structural shape of FMEDIA will be happening in this chapter.

Based on the collection of empirical data (protocols, interviews, reports and further documented communication), an analysis of the FMEDIA structure will be provided. With the assistance of the extracted findings, the questions concerning the elements the structure consists of, whether the structure fits to the FMEDIA strategy, how the system/structure develops and what could be good models of inter-organisational cooperation will be answered.

Chandler formulated the thesis that “structure follows strategy and that the most complex type of structure is the result of the concatenation of several basic strategies” (1962, p. 14). The background of this theory evolves around organisational structuring: in the face of external changes, organisations adapt their strategies to employ their resources more economically.

Such a new strategy results in administrative problems that can only be tackled by redesigning the organisational structure and fitting it to the new strategy (Galbraith and Kazanjian 1986).

However, the change from one structure to another usually occurs only after provocation, because the strategy formulator and the organizational innovator are different types of people (Chandler 1962). This hypothesis was extended by Franko and the Harvard Group (Galbraith and Kazanjian 1986) who observed that “structure apparently follows strategy only when structure makes a difference.” This is the case, for example, in competitive environments.

After the preceding analysis in *Chapters IV.1 - IV.4*, further information extracted from the inherent strategies of the FMEDIA network and the findings of the collected empirical data, in the next chapter Chandler's thesis allegorises the basic understanding for the connection of these strategies and adequate organisation structures, as well as the extent to which there is a fit between the two.

IV.6.1 Communication Structure

To a certain extent, mobile information is organised within the media of communication. Considering communication a social system and a non-linear system of relations, the communication structure of a network-type shape like FMEDIA is supposed to give considerable insight into its inherent processes, relations and interactions.

In the FMEDIA case, communication takes place in irregular meetings (work groups and conferences) and through a central coordinating body (organisational board). Besides constituting an organisational capacity, this central node or hub enables virtual communication through the use of different techniques. This is especially important for the dissemination of relevant information from one node to the others.

IV.6.1.1 Mailing List

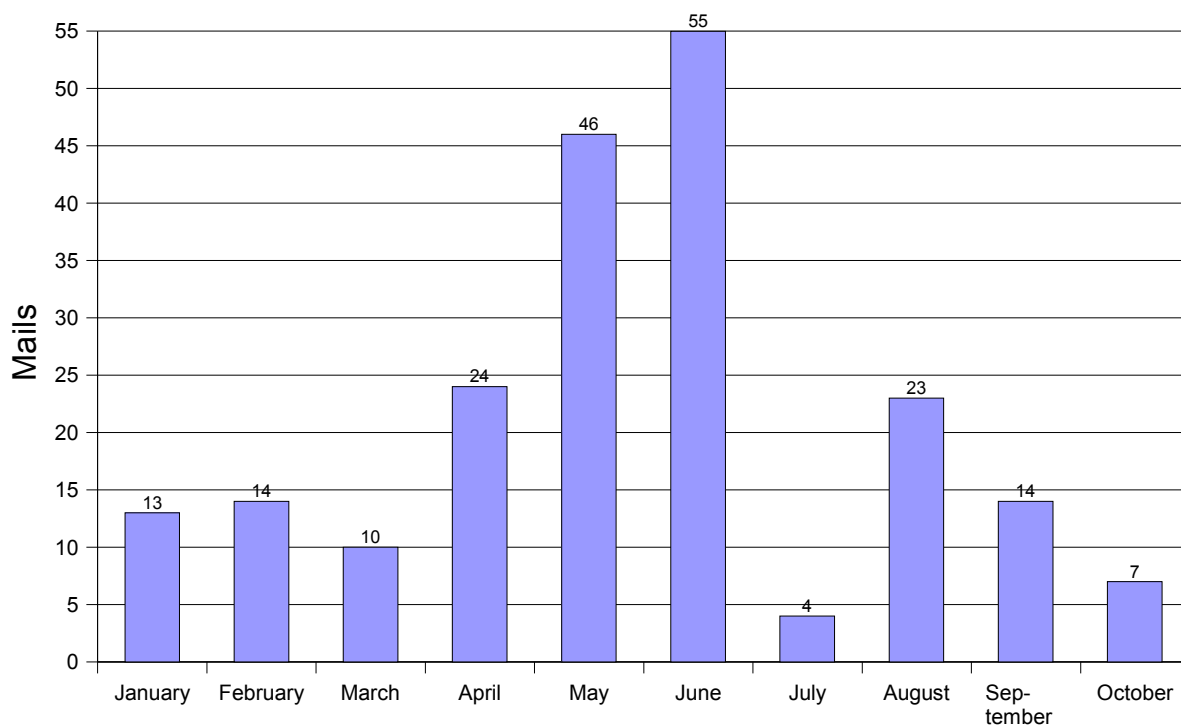
Mailing lists constitute a rather informal way to spread information, exchange views and collaborate on a virtual basis. The mailing list “FM-Connected” was set up at the beginning of January 2004. Up until the FMEDIA Forum in June 2004, 99 individuals had subscribed to

this service. Generally, emails which are posted to the mailing list, are disseminated to all subscribers. This mechanism results in a high capacity for fast and direct communication but lacks sufficient direct (or personal) approach in comparison to physical or telephone interaction.

The following analysis of the mailing list communication provides the main insight into the communication structure of FMEDIA. It is observed from three different angles:

IV.6.1.1.1 Degree of Communication

The following chart represents the development of the email exchange within the FMEDIA mailing list. That is the number of actual emails disseminated during the observed time span.



Description: There is a relatively stable development in the first three months, followed by a constant rise of communication as the actual FMEDIA event in June is approaching. The peak level is reached in the month of the event due to the increased need for communication in the time of event preparation. Afterwards there is a sharp decline, possibly due to exhaustion and the usual “summer break,” followed by a recovery and a renewed decline of communication towards autumn 2004.

IV.6.1.1.2 Organisations Involved in the Mailing List Communication

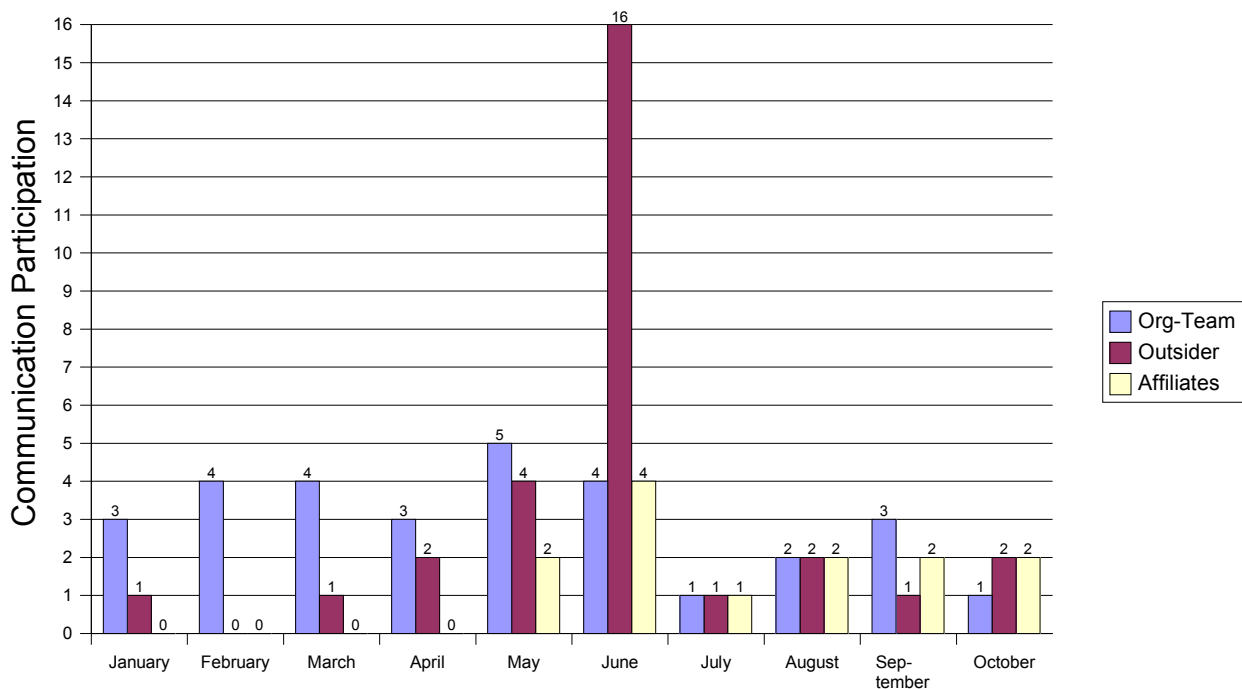
Organisations involved in the communication are vary according to their roles in the structure:

Organisational team (board): Initiators and project partners who have joined the preparation and organisation efforts of the FMEDIA Forum 2004 (preceding meetings including the Nürnberg preparation meeting).

Affiliates: Organisations which have got in contact (FMEDIA meetings) or have taken part in some collaborative interaction with one of the organisational board members.

Outsiders: Organisations and individuals which have shown interest in the project and interacted in some way with the organisational board. This was done either through email contact or phone, not via physical participation in the meetings which are counted as part of the network.

The figures in the chart represent the actual number of participating organisation in the observed time span:



Description: A relatively stable number (4.5 average) of organisations participate between January until April. In May/June, the preparation months and actual time of the FMEDIA Forum, the average rises to 17.5. After the event, from July to October, a small increase (5 average) of participating organisations, as compared to the time span January – April, can be observed. After the event in June, the decline in the number of outsiders participating in the communication can be attributed to the fact that many outsiders became affiliates through their participation. Also, it can be observed that the balance between the three groups becomes more equal after the event in June.

IV.6.1.1.3 Kinds of Communication in the Mailing List

The following distinction reflects the different degrees of involvement in the FMEDIA structure. The figures in the chart show the actual number of themes that were discussed. Starting from 'Organisational Communication' it is assumed that 'Communication,' 'Info Exchange' and 'Collaboration' – in this order – represent an emergence of communication, thus a rising degree of involvement or commitment of the participating organisations. External info is somewhat outside of this order and regarded as a supplement communication assisting and supporting the interaction among network affiliates.

This segmentation is borrowed from Teubner's theory of the emergence of social systems (1996), suggesting that the process of the emergence of communication drives the whole structure closer to the network design. Taking a system of relations or communication the point where such a system becomes autonomous in its capability to act.

Organisational: basic communication within the preparation process of the FMEDIA Forum. The information flows from the center to the other nodes, thus from organisational board to other organisers, affiliates or outsiders.

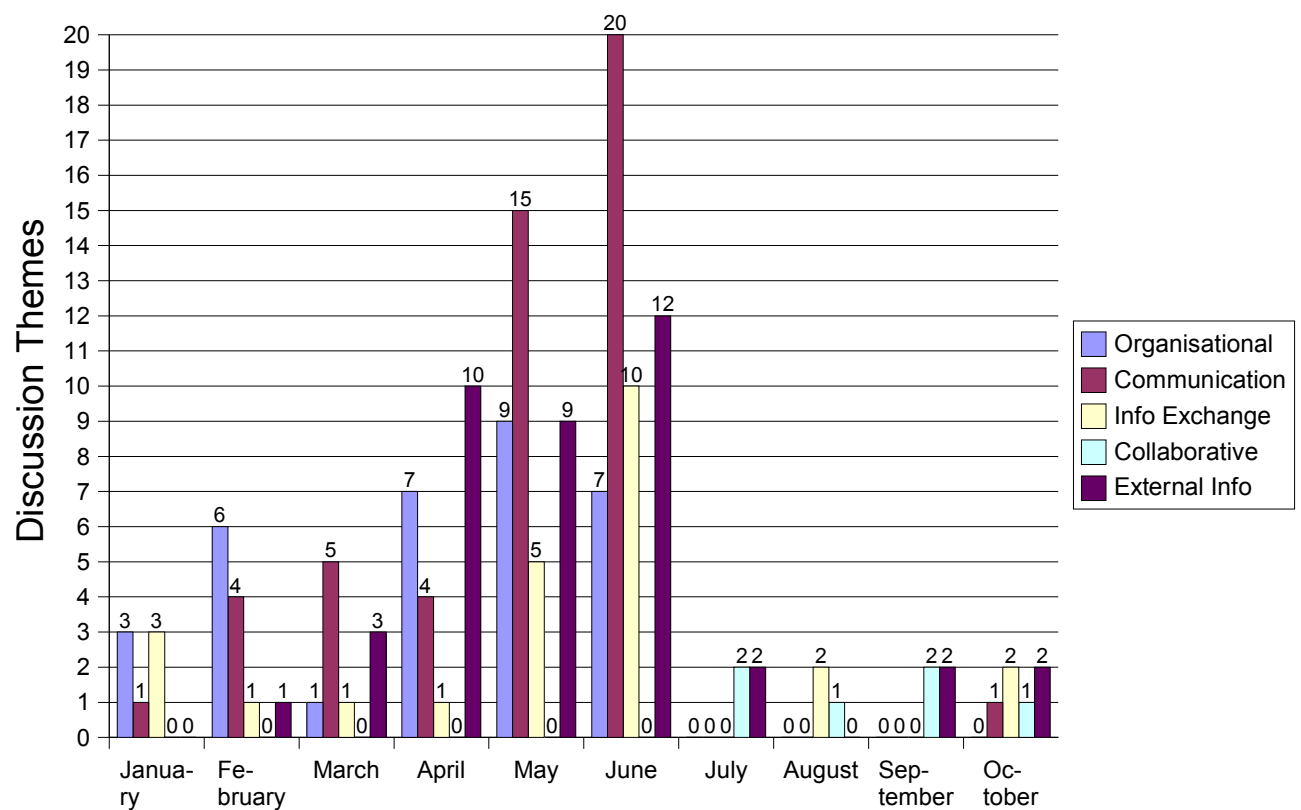
Communication: dissemination of information that is FMEDIA project related characterized by a low degree of interaction. It still represents a rather informal way of communication.

Info Exchange: communication among FMEDIA affiliates. Information on processes and actions where affiliates are involved are exchanged. This is not necessarily FMEDIA related

and poses a basis for future collaboration. Generally, this type of communication involves a higher degree of interaction.

Collaboration: communication about projects and actual, on-going collaboration in preparation beyond the FMEDIA Forum but within the FMEDIA structure. This communication represents a relatively high degree of involvement and commitment.

External Info: information and communication about processes which either are or are not related to FMEDIA and where no immediate involvement of affiliates exists.



Description: As an expression of the preparation efforts for the FMEDIA event in June, “organisational” discussion themes have the highest share in the mailing list communication until April, when more “External Info” starts to go through this communication channel, and May, when “Communication” rises to a higher degree of involvement as the different organisations share issues that are relevant for the coming gathering. Also, themes related to “Info Exchange” experience a substantial rise from April to May and June, suggesting that

networking becomes more evolved and the basis for future cooperation is created. “Collaborative” themes only come into existence after the actual event, suggesting that a physical encounter generally constitutes the basis for the start of collaborative action. Generally, the discussion and information dissemination is cut back considerably after the event.

IV.6.1.2 Website and Documents

From the different protocols and minutes of the meetings organised in the analysed time span, a relatively good picture on the communication structure or hierarchies within the FMEDIA system can be drawn.

In fact, there are only two organisations that were represented in all four meetings, three organisations which joined three of the meetings, three which joined two meetings and many which joined only one meeting. This provides a relatively clear insight into the involvement of the different organisations in the FMEDIA system, defining the central nodes of the network and consequently the gatekeepers and power holders.

Such role division also suggests that there is a certain degree of informal hierarchy even though no hierarchy was officially determined and external involvement desired and fostered (see Minutes Prague, Nürnberg, Halle, Documentation FMEDIA). This can be ascribed to the fact that these organisations are closer to the information sources and consequently to the power.

The consequences of this structure or setting are to a certain extent reflected by the indications of the network affiliates. They were interviewed on their perception of the FMEDIA communication structure.

IV.6.1.3 Perception Affiliates

IV.6.1.3.1 Delimitation of Competencies and Responsibilities

The FMEDIA system is criticised for lacking sufficient structures and missing a clear

delimitation of responsibilities and authorities of the organisations and individuals involved in some organisational efforts (*Interlocutor 2*).

As the organisations that participate in the network act on a voluntary basis, the sole assignment of different tasks doesn't necessarily result in a commitment. Therefore, “responsibilities should be assigned and a mechanism evolved that if somebody comes up with an initiative it would have to be clear that it is that person's responsibility to carry it out and, if not, the whole organisation would suffer” (*Interlocutor 3*).

Another undesirable development is the “delegation of responsibilities to a few persons and simultaneously to the whole group,” as such a setting is prone to result in conflicts. It becomes difficult for the actors to legitimise their deeds. As a consequence, they are easier to be put into discussion and certain processes disrupted more easily (*Interlocutor 1*).

However, de-central organisation structures like FMEDIA generally have difficulties formulating responsibilities but demand responsibilities. The initiative to act depends on a small number of people who are confronted with high responsibilities as they are officially responsible. Simultaneously, these are interrupted by the other network members who are demanding to be involved in the decision making process as well. Such a contradiction occurs in the FMEDIA case also (*Interlocutor 2*).

Generally, “only authorities can make decisions” and consequently only agreements on goals that are elaborated on in the future can be made. The best solution for a structure like FMEDIA would be for some people to be “coordinating the effort and specific people from different organisations contributing; then you have personal responsibility and these people feel committed” (*Interlocutor 3*).

To sum it up, the “division of responsibilities including competencies for decisions have to be clear, otherwise there are diffuse results” (*Interlocutor 2*).

IV.6.1.3.2 Commitment to the Network

Basically, it can be observed that there are only a few persons within FMEDIA that drive the

whole process in a certain direction. But, due to the non-hierarchical design, difficulties have come up for those who are officially responsible to achieve the desired results,. In detail, this roots in the double delegation of responsibilities to some organisers and the whole network at the same time (*Interlocutor 1*).

Arranging meetings of a smaller circle of people who are actually working on the proposals of the network could be one way to approach this problem. This would result in a structure where the whole network has the function of elaborating on concepts or proposals that some “experts” or committed people are working on. Another possibility would be that people suggest activities and look for other committed people of the affiliated organisations to participate (*Interlocutor 3*).

The missing cohesion of the whole structure is the result of a lack of commitment. This can be ascribed to a situation where “organisations that pursue similar goals but are working at the same time in different networks have a lack of resources and time to define common goals and a common appearance” (*Interlocutor 1*).

IV.6.1.3.3 Broad Focus of Action

The structure lacks a sufficiently narrow focus on some topics. If it was narrowed down to more concrete actions, the results would not only be those of a certain pressure group within FMEDIA but of the entire network (*Interlocutor 1*).

Especially for the achievement of changes within legal frameworks, which is an ambitious aim, focused action is needed. “The only way to do this is being extremely politically organised, very much disciplined and basically play the game along with the politicians and this cannot be done in an informal way” (*Interlocutor 3*). Particularly for legal issues, a well organised cooperation is perceived as very important (*Interlocutor 2*).

IV.6.1.3.4 Mutual Communication

The representatives of the organisations that were chosen for the interviews all expressed that usually their communication happens with other representatives who will relay the information

to their respective organisations. Hence, concrete persons are necessary to build sustainable contacts. Generally, worse experiences were made when communication was through organisations instead of individuals because of less resulting output (*Interlocutor 2,3*).

Basically, much of the communication of the organisations happens coincidentally and from case to case and is related to some occasion. Continuous communication just happens where there are adequate structures and frameworks in place (*Interlocutor 1*).

Due to FMEDIA's focus on fostering communication, a higher degree of mutual involvement in projects (networking aspect) was achieved and this is considered beneficial for the organisation (*Interlocutor 3*). As a result of the event, there are many bilateral, trilateral or multilateral direct contacts and, with that, projects are happening. This means that collaboration between diverse organisations can now happen more easily because it is clear where the potential of common interaction can be found. For example, the existence of corresponding variants of dissemination and production places in the different countries has become clear and these can be extended and supported much easier for further work and collaboration (*Interlocutor 2*).

Mailing lists, like they are used by FMEDIA, are considered as a good medium to exchange information, but the personal meetings happening every once in a while are crucial because of the importance of personal interaction. Not simple virtual exchange but meetings are fundamental because communication in the end needs to be done through direct contacts (*Interlocutor 1,3*).

IV.6.1.4 Multi Directive Communication:

Analysing the previous three charts together with the interview and documented data, there are several observations for the communication structure and social structure of the FMEDIA system that can be summarized:

- The delimitation of responsibilities and authorities within the network structure constitutes a problem. Hierarchies are tried to be limited to the most basic form but emerge anyway.

Such informal hierarchies basing on initiative push the central unit of the network to a certain position. There, it has got a large share of the power that was originally supposed to be divided up among the whole structure.

- The main and most efficient/productive communication evolves around certain occasions like meetings or conferences. These offers install a certain cohesion between the communicating parties, and the more this interaction develops, the more concrete are the themes. This goes from informal knowledge exchange on the meta level to concrete network project action.
- The data also shows that it is difficult even for a loose and de-centralised structure like FMEDIA to keep the hierarchy on the most basic level. Naturally, those who are taking the initiative feel more responsible and authoritative than those organisations which are less active.
- Commitment to the network is only reached under the precondition that communication is transparent and organisations join voluntarily. There needs to be a clarity about the goals and ideals of the network. The organisational board tried to integrate as many interests and wishes as possible to get other organisations to be committed, but this lead to a situation where the responsible people felt overextended by the wishes and demands coming from outside. At the same time, outsiders were dissatisfied that their inputs could not be included sufficiently.
- In cases where there is a necessity to reach immediate solutions, communication needs to be very effective. At FMEDIA, direct and relevant information dissemination is a strong motivation for joining. Especially after the meetings, where people got into direct contact a basic level of trust among the affiliates was created that boosts long term relations.

IV.6.2 Collaboration Structure

IV.6.2.1 Website, Documents and Minutes

The first encounter of the FMEDIA Organisation Board with potential partners for organising

the conference had the characteristics of a bilateral project, as the participants came from the Czech Republic and Austria. Due to the early stage of the whole project, the discussion about a collaboration was limited to organisational matters in relation to the idea of organising a conference (Meeting Protocol Prague 2003).

The second major gathering of the organisation board took place February 13-15 in Nürnberg. Based on the communication of the aims and strategies of FMEDIA at that point of time, potential partners and organisers for the conference were invited to join the initiative. The extension of the scope to an international level was represented by the attendance of people coming from several European countries (Meeting Protocol Nürnberg 2004).

The discussions had developed a broader focus as a programme for the actual conference was set up and clearer visions formulated. The themes that were discussed were:

- International collaboration and organisation as the only option to survive
- European media policy / lobbying
- Networking and linking of different networks
- International projects

(Meeting Protocol Nürnberg 2004)

Later, at the FMEDIA Forum, the conference of the FMEDIA system, collaborative action was initiated and prepared in various working groups. The topics ranged in accordance to the cooperation effect (*see page 30*) were:

Strategic effects: Feminist Media Approach, Correspondent Systems, Multilingual Media Projects

Knowledge Transfer/Creation effects: EU Funding, Media Streaming, How to manage and organise media organisations, Open Archives and Technical Solutions

Political effects: European Lobbying Structures

(Steinert 2004)

After the FMEDIA Forum, the collaboration between network affiliates had split up into different projects and initiatives again. The only activity that was pursued on the FMEDIA network level was a working group on European lobbying for community media, which had already started its activities before the event (Baratsits 2004).

The following November meeting in Halle fostered the continuation of these activities leading to the foundation of a European label for the lobbying efforts of community media. Another discussion point and concrete network project was the organisation of the future conferences in the years 2005 and 2006. However, the basis that these activities rest on had remained as narrow as before (Meeting Protocol Halle 2004).

IV.6.2.2 Perception Affiliates

IV.6.2.2.1 Strategic effects

An effect of the FMEDIA Forum for the participating organisations was the gain of additional contacts in different countries for collaborative action (*Interlocutor 2*).

This reflects a main feature of the network: the possibility of identifying organisations which are of interest for future projects and collaboration (*Interlocutor 1*). Through new contacts within the network, a good basis has emerged for cooperation on projects that are connected to the aim of establishing a better financial basis for community media. Based on this positive perspective that can be fostered in the diverse countries, criteria for collaboration would have to be developed now (*Interlocutor 2*).

Furthermore, a range of contacts and interactions which have developed within the forum have resulted in concrete project collaboration. Examples of such action are an international editorial exchange and another one about correspondent systems (*Interlocutor 2*). *Interlocutor 3* confirms that his organisation has also started to work “on different projects with different

participants of the forum who we have met”.

A cooperation necessity that was detected on the international level would be the creation of an “intervention basis” of European Media Policy (*Interlocutor 2*) or an EU-wide lobbying group “for the cause of independent media and also to somehow achieve an EU-wide legislation that in every country the law should recognize independent media separate from commercial media” (*Interlocutor 3*).

International cooperation mainly happens in the context of socio- and media-political issues. In case of immediate problems, where mutual dependence occurs, immediate solutions can likewise be found. One advantage of networked action is that direct links to partner organisations can be established and solutions achieved more easily (*Interlocutor 1*).

IV.6.2.2.2 Knowledge creation/transfer effects

In contrast to these previous evaluations, there are doubts that it will be simple to identify and collaborate with concrete partners as the frameworks and experiences in the diverse countries are very different. Possible solutions would be adaptive strategies of convergence of the differing frameworks, a broader focus of action or the development of cooperation models that lead to a common basis (*Interlocutor 1*).

It is recognized that most of the cooperation in such a network is supposed to be, and is actually, done on the meta level.

So that you would discuss the issues, the successes, achievements that you have made and you would somehow learn from the other experiences and you would share yours with them. So that people would get some ideas from each other how to run their own organisation (*Interlocutor 3*).

IV.6.2.2.3 Political effects

A positive effect of the FMEDIA event was “that motives and interests were transferred into concrete actions and plans.” But it was criticized that the event was not able to create a broad

basis and that as a consequence there are just a few actors that are taking initiative. The network as a whole does not and can not act. The example in this context was action on the political level: The people who were interested in taking initiative used the occasion to discuss their strategies at the event. But the initiative should have been transferred from the group to the network level and should subsequently be taken as a concrete network offer, like: “we offer a political lobbying for our network affiliates!” This shall be viewed in the light of the incentive / contribution balance of a system (*Interlocutor 1*).

Summary

The establishment of the FMEDIA system had an impact on the affiliate organisations. Within the area of collaboration, but not on the network level effects can be observed. Most actions happen only on the bilateral or trilateral level, lacking the attribution of the activities to the entire network. Hence, there is only a small group of organisations that are taking initiative. Nevertheless, the basis has been created for collaboration on a broader range.

IV.6.3 Organisational Environment - Structure

IV.6.3.1 Website, Documents and Minutes

The protocols and minutes of the FMEDIA meeting provide the picture of a rather homogeneous group of organisations sharing a quite similar “horizon.” They have relatively similar interests even though their backgrounds in the respective countries of origin are different. Mainly, they all act with international partner organisations of the community media field, political institutions on the national and European level and funding agencies.

IV.6.3.2 Perception Affiliates

Basically, the organisational goals themselves remain the same over the time but the framework for the organisations is changing constantly and, along with this, the means and methods for reaching their goals (*Interlocutor 1*). Pushing socio-political issues forward is the basic mission of the organisation, and thus, it mainly cooperates with others that also have socio-political aims (*Interlocutor 1*).

The frameworks (legal, media policy) are relatively different in the various countries, which is why the organisations have diverse foci (Interlocutor 2).

The environment consists of the political sphere or the first sector, diverse funding agencies (institutions within administration or politics), the businesses which are only a small share and public institutions and facilities like cultural and educational facilities of the province and the municipalities (*Interlocutor 1*).

The organisation's environment is put together by agencies and authorities that are responsible for licensing and funding in the province (*Interlocutor 3*). The radio and television board, which is the controlling board for electronic media, constitutes another important part of the environment (*Interlocutor 1,3*).

Cultural and art institutions and organisations on the regional level (*Interlocutor 2 and 3*) and migrant organisations (*Interlocutor 2*) are also interacting partners.

IV.6.3.3 Summary

According to the empirical data, the organisations all operate in similar environments but face very different circumstances in regards to handling their proper environments. These consist of legal, financial and structural problems. However, very similar interests are a feature characteristic for the FMEDIA system.

The conclusion is also at hand that they may be fighting on different “fronts,” hence, even though their interests are similar, there might not be enough common ground and basis to cooperate in a long term-perspective.

IV.6.4 Narrative, Doctrine and Sociology – Structure

Doctrine, from the Latin word *doctrina*, (compare *doctor*), means "a body of teachings" or "instructions," taught principles or positions, as the body of teachings in a branch of knowledge or belief system (Wikipedia Encyclopedia).

IV.6.4.1 Website, Documents and Minutes

The narrative of the FMEDIA system becomes visible through the inspection of the released material. It can be framed through the collection of values and aims inherent in the FMEDIA initiative. The main values that are communicated are:

- *Opening up* the respective field and making it more accessible for outsiders
- *Educating* new practices and promoting work from the field
- *Sharing* experience and expertise, networking with other fields
- *Promoting solidarity* among the organisations which collaborate on the international level

(Vojtechovsky, 2004)

- *Promoting the right to communicate* for everybody
- *Motivating and encouraging* new initiatives, mutual communication and collaboration between different regions, minorities, languages and cultures
- *Empowering* people and fostering and developing local knowledge

(Baratsits et. al. 2004)

The main interests of FMEDIA are:

- “Facilitating the development of strategies which support a general appreciation of free media and secure their involvement in the policies of the European Union” (Press Info May 2004).
- “Discussing, establishing and strengthening the field of new media culture as integral part of the cultural field”
- Establishing relationships and sustainable cooperation, cross-border networking, increasing the inter-connectivity of organisations and activating and intensifying mutual communication and collaboration
- Creating general awareness of the field

(Vojtechovsky 2004)

On the doctrinal level, the following practices and principles can be detected:

- Establishing a common base and functioning platform for better collaboration
- Installing an organising board for pursuing its goals

(Vojtechovsky 2004)

The principles are that community media complement and correct information which is produced by mainstream media and are an essential component in the democratic development of societies (FMEDIA 2004).

Other principles that are emphasized are:

- freedom of speech and media plurality;
- public access to communication;
- open source;
- plurality;
- not-for-profit;
- self-determination;
- transparency; and
- media literacy.

(Baratsits et. al. 2004)

IV.6.4.2 Perception Affiliates

IV.6.4.2.1 Trust Between Network Affiliates

The event promoted a basis of trust among the affiliate organisations in many countries. This can be used for further de-central actions. “Such trust just emerges through experience, collaboration and personal contacts” (*Interlocutor 2*).

Interlocutor 2 and 3 both recognize networking as a main aspect of the FMEDIA event,

stating that “networking was the main benefit, to get in touch with people who work in similar organisations (*Interlocutor 3*)” and that there is a “more concrete approach for networking (*interlocutor 2*)”. Networking is fostered through direct contacts resulting in trust and the will for cooperation. With trust, social structures can developed further.

IV.6.4.2.2 Taking Stock

Generally, according to *Interlocutor 2*, the forum's main function was providing some kind of “stock check” and networking opportunity for the participants: The question was raised: Who are the other network affiliates and what are their motives, goals and strategies? Afterwards the activities would split up again into different projects and communication channels anyway. [This means that the network lacks means of keeping the communication together.] Consequently, the problem is that for the special interests of the different organisations it is not adequate to act permanently on such a broad level with so many organisations.

The problem that a network can face is that solutions are boycotted by some organisations. In such a situation, the solution could be to leave it up to the organisations to decide which initiatives they want to join. This could be some kind of physical result, a “tabernacle”, of the work done in pressure groups. The organisations could use this to group around and establish a lasting structure (*Interlocutor 1*).

V. FMEDIA: Towards an Organisational Network

V.1 Is an Organisational Network existent?

Teubner (1996) formulated a general principle that decides whether the conditions for an organisational network are fulfilled. He describes the emergence of social systems of the third order, which are characterized by a simultaneous double attribution on the organisational and the network level.

The main question that has to be asked a year and a half after the FMEDIA project started, is if a basis, or to what extent a structure resembling an organisational network, has been developed out of the interactions and meetings. The findings of the empirical research are categorised according to certain features. These are the characteristics which were presented and discussed in *Chapter II.4.3.3.1*. How close are those of FMEDIA to those of an organisational network?

V.1.1 Common Intention of Network Members

The intentions and aims of the network members show a relatively high degree of similarity. They go from efforts of self-legitimation, professionalising structures and practices, networking with other organisations and financial safeguarding to international cooperation. A common set of goals is the glue that holds a network together. Hence, it can be followed that this precondition is fulfilled.

Also, the intentions of the FMEDIA network, which were somehow imposed by the central coordination unit, show a high correspondence with those of the individual organisations joining the network in the course of the project.

V.1.2 Orientation Towards Person Instead of Usual Role or Function

Orientation

Within the FMEDIA system there is a strong orientation towards individuals rather than organisations. Even though the participating individuals represent the interests of their

organisations, they don't participate in the network with their functions (general manager, technical assistant, PR manager, etc.) but as equal members.

However, as the whole structure reflects certain tendencies towards the emergence of hierarchies, the orientation can not exclusively be described in personal but also functional terms. The general organisational function, which has emerged in the course of the project, is carried out by an organisational board and its participating organisations. Quite unequivocally, they are taking the decisions and consequently the power holders.

In this context, the system theory poses the question if a network can be kept together, in the absence of a central coordinating unit, solely based on the inherent dependency and motivations of the network members. In the case of FMEDIA, there are clear indications that without the central coordination, the activities would never have progressed to an organised network level.

V.1.3 Voluntary Participation and Limitation of Autonomy

All organisations within the system participate on a voluntary basis. Their motivation for joining the initiative stems from awareness of the gains that the network promises. Due to insufficient control mechanisms and the question to what extent all the members feel committed to FMEDIA, questions about opportunism and a lack of transparency of the structure arise. A limitation of the network affiliates' autonomy can be observed to a certain extent. On one occasion, the structure featured distinct options to join or not join an initiative. Apart from that, the conditions and requirements of joining the network are not formulated clearly enough.

Also, the dependencies and necessities of cooperation among the relevant organisations weaken the structure. The additional expenses of participation in the network are not justified by the incentives.

V.1.4 Voluntary, Reciprocal, Horizontal and Fair Patterns of Communication and Exchange

The communication structure unveils a certain hierarchy as some organisations are more active and involved in a vivid exchange (the organisational board). Others are grouped around this centre and consume information, know-how and other resources passively. There is no clear commitment to the network, which can be ascribed to a lack of transparency about the limits and boundaries of the structure.

Either way, within a small range of organisations (approx. 10), it appears to be true that an organisational network is at work. There is a commitment, defined purpose, vision and structure and their actions happen according to the double attribution which Teubner (1996) describes. It is a structure which can act deliberately.

The remaining organisations (approx. 40) are somehow affiliated to the network but remain rather passive. It appears similar to a consumer model, where the organisations enjoy the benefit and use of the network's information and exchange but do not actively contribute.

As FMEDIA is an open network, its power structure is not inflexible like in hierarchical organisations but subject to constant variations. Actually, from the beginning, there has been an attempt to integrate more interests from groups outside of the organisational board and give them a certain amount of responsibility. This resulted in a double delegation of responsibilities and turned out not to be effective because both “sides” felt overextended: one side by the responsibility and the requirement to integrate as many opinions as possible and the other side by the pressure from these organisers to voice their opinions etc.

Hence, it can be concluded that these processes of outside integration have to happen of their own accord or self-imposed (by the external organisations). Without a natural drive of the (potential) affiliate organisations to be involved in communication and make decisions, nothing can happen. Imposing responsibility in a top-down manner cannot work. Openness is needed which cannot be forced.

This situation may be the result of insufficient formulation of the concrete goals, strategies and visions of the FMEDIA system.

V.1.5 The Network can be Activated in Case of Current Occasions and Deactivated Afterwards

This network feature appears to be applicable for FMEDIA as well. As the gathered interview data suggests, sufficient trust and interaction was created that would make an activation of the network in case of an occasion relatively easy. Through the direct contacts during the event, direct and immediate solutions can be derived. However, this short-term cooperation is not in the sense of the sustainability of an organisational network.

FINAL CONCLUSION

Analysing the structure through the eyes of Teubner (1996) an emergence of a social system of the third order, hence, a new and autonomous system has not happened for the entire FMEDIA structure. But it can be stated that for the core group of organisers this can be confirmed.

The structure of the entire FMEDIA system with the broad range of affiliate organisations resembles to some extent a hub network as a central coordination unit directs and fosters the communication and information flows. However, as FMEDIA has one function to connect other networks many links from different networks have been established from the start of the project on.

From this perspective, a certain tendency towards the creation of a truly all channel network can be recognized. However, besides the organisational board which acts as the network hub, being in itself a fully connected network, it is by far too early to go away from the perception of the structure as a hub network.

V.2 Effect of an Event on Organisational Structures (FMEDIA Forum)

V.2.1 On Communication

Generally, the event was an occasion for the

- discussion of relevant issues;
- interaction among potential network affiliates and project partners; and
- exchange of views and information.

Thus communication was fostered and a certain impact on the development can be observed:

The approach of the forum lead to an increase in the total number of organisations involved in the communication. Still, the major part of communication originated at the organisational board. This suggests a certain inherent hierarchy. Nevertheless, to a certain extent, the centre was able to develop a broader foundation of affiliates that the entire network could rest on.

Furthermore, the types/kinds of discussions were modified with the event. As the organisations are given the chance to interact directly in the FMEDIA Forum, communication changes from the abstract level to more concrete themes. This can also be attributed to the clearer vision of the whole network that the organisations have got in the course of time. As mutual knowledge and more focused approach emerged networking evolved and a basis for further collaboration through the physical encounter was created.

This is confirmed as the composition of types of organisations involved in the communication (outsiders, affiliates, organisation) also changed into a more stabilised and balanced structure. The participation in the event reflects a certain degree of commitment. This raises the question if the hierarchy of the FMEDIA system has become more flat through the event, as outsiders declared themselves as affiliates. The other question that has to be asked is if organisations participating in an event and consequently becoming network affiliates actually feel committed to such a network or if this is only a theoretical assumption.

The event, an actual physical encounter with a programme, concrete persons, organisations and institutions participating, attracts considerable attention and discussion and exchange is fostered. This is represented in the charts, as in May, with the event coming closer, communication experiences a substantial increase.

However, after the event, the patterns of communication experience another substantial change. As the number of messages decreases, the topics change as well: Communication is reduced to actual concrete collaborative action in different areas (Baratsits et. al. 2004) and the other themes become minimised.

Also, the active communicators constitute only a relatively small share. The major part of the network consists of passive recipients. This leads to the assumption that communication needs to be focused on a concrete topic (event, project, common work); otherwise, the will and capacity for involvement leads to a stop in communication on a broad range.

“Organisational” communication lacks in the aftermath of the event. This means that the communicative backbone of the system is not present. From that point on, only the themes where different parties are really concerned about reaching common goals and where there is a dependence and need for communication are continued. This suggests that many of the other themes only emerged due to the involvement of the organisational board and didn't exclusively represent the interests of the affiliates. Hence, a certain top-down approach in communication is confirmed.

Basically, it can be observed that not only the event but also all the other physical encounters or meetings (Prague, Nürnberg, Halle) have had a strong effect on the communication structure of the FMEDIA system.

With the affiliates stating that communication in events when it becomes necessary to reach immediate solutions works, a certain short-term perspective can be deduced. Such would be a structure in the sense that the network can become visible in an instant and disappear afterwards. That kind of structure is certainly established by FMEDIA. But this is no sufficient feature of the organisational network as a sustainable exchange was not established this way.

V.2.2 On Collaboration

For cooperation and collaboration between network affiliates, the event offered an occasion to formulate and develop common approaches. While organisations usually work in different networks with different projects, the event brings together a range of organisations that would not have the chance to interact otherwise. This is a central quality as the activities usually disperse again after such a gathering.

In the case of FMEDIA, the event facilitated the development of projects and collaboration, driving the whole structure more towards that of an organisational network. However, to be able to call FMEDIA an organisational network, some further continuing action needs to be taken in order to keep the ties alive and active.

All this development is based on the contacts and links that have been established in the preparation process of the FMEDIA Forum and to the highest degree at the conference itself, where in a concentrated form many ties were established between organisations and individuals.

V.3 Most Adequate Structure for the Purposes (Structure Follows Strategy)?

Structure follows strategy. After the discussion of both the strategy and the structure of the FMEDIA system, it can now be judged if the discussed option of the organisational network, the way it is described in the theoretical section of this paper, is the most adequate. To start with, it can be said that this hypothesis is true for some but not all purposes of the FMEDIA system.

The aim to integrate a relatively high number of organisations all over Europe has led to a large network of dozens of participants. For a network to be capable to act, relatively well-formulated structures, practices and strategies would have to be available. However, this strongly depends on financial and personal investments. As such structures are not self-sustainable, continuous effort is needed. In the present case, the organisational network

appears to be a realistic form only for a small cohort of organisations but not all the affiliates. Trying to integrate all (theoretically) affiliated organisations into the structure would overwhelm the organising board.

Content-wise, the organisational network is the adequate option for certain purposes. Such purposes would require a minimal coordination unit which secures that the whole network remains on track for the purpose of keeping its goals in mind. However, there is the constant problem that such a centre acts separately from the network affiliates' interests.

Such network issues are:

- exchange of information (also on the meta-level);
- mutual support;
- encouragement of collaborations; and
- networking of initiatives and regions.

As in non-hierarchical organisations the information flow is better and more valuable than in bureaucratic ones, the organisational network is an adequate option. Mutual support is given when the necessity arises. Partner organisations can be contacted directly and support structures can be used. Collaborations are encouraged in this structure through the central coordination unit, which provides the funds for meetings, workshops and conferences and also the necessary communication facilities to enable continuous exchange. Generally, through the long-term commitment to a certain set of guiding principles and goals, a networking of initiatives and regions is fostered.

Still, there are other issues, where the findings of the empirical part of this work lead to the conclusion that the organisational network does not provide the necessary characteristics. In these cases, stronger, more formalised coordination is needed. Some kind of leadership or enforcement unit could fulfil that requirement. Responsibilities need to be made very clear and violations need to be subject to consequences. In short, accountability is key. Consequently, authorities who have the mandate to act in the name of the respective organisations have to be determined.

The issues in question are:

- lobbying purposes; and
- negotiation with political forces.

In the case of lobbying, only a long term strategy resting on a strong basis characterised by a functional division of responsibilities can lead to success. Network structures in this context seem to be the organisational structure where ideas and visions related to lobbying activities can be found, but the body that is capable of pursuing the long-term targets has to be a more formalised system providing an inherent stability.

The same goes for general negotiations with political forces. As networks operate on different ends with different actors, double structures may be the result. In case of a serious negotiation with political forces, such might lead to confusion. Hence, it would lead to inefficiency even though many activities are still taking place for the network. But the central question, how to coordinate these activities, remains unanswered for networks.

VI. Recommendation for Structuring International Cooperation and the Establishment of a Network

The conference served as the first encounter of the network affiliates and allowed for clarification whether a fit between FMEDIA and potentially participating organisation exists. This could happen through the communication of clear guiding principles and practices of the network. Based on that, organisations could decide if they want to join the network for the long run. Thus, for further contacts, the motto has to be to make clear in advance what the “deal” is and how the contribution/incentive balance can be kept.

For the first year of the establishment, the goal of forming a network on a broad range with a high number of affiliate organisations was too ambitious. Hence, the central coordination unit should advance slower in this respect. A more natural approach with a slower pace towards extending the network should be chosen. The basis of some organisations constituting an organisational network was successfully established in the case of FMEDIA and, therefore, through constant interventions (meetings, workshops, conferences), a natural mutual selection could be launched. Potential affiliates could decide on their own if the necessity and dependency exists to join FMEDIA.

This is closely linked to a clarification discussion considering the extent to which there are mutual dependencies, where there is a commitment by the organisations, how it is secured and what responsibilities are connected to it. At the moment, the narrative of FMEDIA appears too abstract, there is no clear visibility of the incentives for joining and a lack transparency. This situation can only be changed by structured, visible and transparent communication channels where the inherent principles and doctrines become instantly obvious to outsiders. The mediation of concrete network benefits to potential affiliates would assist in the ability to act more efficiently. This leaves the assumption that the doctrinal level or leadership structure (be it multiple leaders) needs to be well-formulated.

On the infrastructure level, an adequate and beneficial framework has to be provided instead of trying to bring in as many organisations as possible at any price. The empirical data shows a

high likelihood that many network topics were imposed by the centre and not really relevant to the affiliate organisations, or at least not relevant enough, and no common ground, interests or resources existent.

The guiding principle for the network has to be an open and transparent dissemination of information and a general transparency of structures, goals, successes and actions. This can be supported by slower and rather unhurried form of contact/communication. Taking time to choose the right partners that have mutual dependencies and commitment would draw better results in the long run. Outsiders and potential affiliates need to be able to see who act as the network gatekeepers and who communicates the doctrine. This would result in a slower development of the network but would therefore foster more involvement from organisations that feel committed and dedicated from the beginning. The problem that would have to be faced otherwise is the loss of the overview/control and capability to act. This danger exists especially in resource-strapped networks that are supposed to support the visibility of their internal structures and processes.

The communication strategy that continues this line of argument is one of activities, projects and collaborations of network affiliates. Constant communication and transparency to all other organisations is of fundamental importance. A feeling of togetherness and identity should be provided for the collection of organisations. This could be done via the website, newsletters or presentations.

In general, some actions require more structured organisation (these are lobbying, negotiation with political structures, etc.). In such a context, formalised roles and responsibilities for the organisational members are more vital than personal attributes - functions rather than characteristics play a more important role. In the end such responsibilities would have to be attributed to those network members taking the initiative and becoming active. The only realistic approach to the “problem of taking initiatives” is a combination of incentives and a clear guiding vision that can be pursued by these actions.

In the beginning, the coordination unit initiated the whole process of network creation. To be able to keep the structure open, an essential precondition is the openness and visibility of the

structure for outside organisations. As the basis for participation is initiative, those who take the lead can push the whole network in a certain direction. Under the condition that the interests and dependencies of the different organisations converge over time, the annulment of the central unit and an organisationa network regulating itself through communication structure becomes realistic. The network becomes a body that can be pro-active rather than just re-active.

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VII.4 Illustrations

Table 1: Features of cooperation processes.

Source: Wimmer, P. & Neuberger O. (1981). Das Organisationsklima im lichte kooperativen und konkurrierenden Verhaltens. In W. Grunwald & H.-G. Lilge (Eds.) Kooperation und Konkurrenz in Organisationen. (p. 195) Bern, Stuttgart: Haupt.

Table 2: Alternative Associational Structures

Source: Lindenberg, M. (1999, December). Declining State Capacity, Voluntarism, and the Globalization of the Not-for-Profit Sector. *Non profit and voluntary sector quarterly*. Retrieved September 15, 2004, from http://nvs.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/28/suppl_1/147?