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Promotion culture and on-air promotion timing

Mira Moshe

Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Ariel University, ISRAEL

Abstract: Ongoing changes in the media landscape have led to ever-increasing levels of competition for viewers' attention and awareness. The profit to be gained by capturing the viewer's attention is automatically balanced by other players' failure to do so. Thus, nowadays consumer culture is engaged in consumption of a time interval rather than in consumption of a product per se. The following article portrays three features of on-air promotion time: zero-sum time, timeless time and the pro-future track. *Zero-sum time* refers to the sense of dichotomous time perception distinguishing 'In' (i.e., a viewer watching the program) vs. 'Out' (i.e., a viewer who prefers to watch something else); *Timeless time* relates to time as a flow being temporarily interrupted by on-air promos designed to generate anticipation; *The pro-future track* is a deterministic path (even though sometimes masquerading as free choice) by which on-air promo culture tends to denote the future as the preferred time choice. These time motives symbolize the intensifying struggle for power taking place within and between "old" vs. "new" media industries especially in the current era which the "here and now" declines "the future".

Keywords: Media Culture; The Zero-Sum Game; Media Competition; Media Attention; On-Air Promotion; Temporality

Introduction

Contemporary media culture encourages the production of programs whose sole purpose is to promote a forthcoming TV schedule. It seems as if some invisible hand is busily creating sequential content-related programs aimed at taking viewers to the next program − that is to say, the next product. Obviously, the formation and spreading of information and commercial features are related to changes in society, culture and economy as well as in media organizations (Williams, 2000). Still, this phenomenon of a planned flow of programs defines "*characteristic of broadcasting, simultaneously as a technology and as a cultural form*" (Williams, 2004/1974, p.86). One media configuration that simultaneously serves, both as a technological and a cultural form and which offer a sequence or set of alternative sequences of events, "*which are then available in a single dimension and in a single operation*" (ibid) is on-air promotions.

A promo's attentiveness is specifically relevant in a multichannel era in which each TV channel must sell not only its programs but also the entire channel (Gray, 2010a). As a result,

since the 1980s the line between entertainment, commercial promotion and self-promotion is constantly getting blurred (Gillan, 2014). Meaning, commercial television tends to treat advertisements and programs as part of the same kind of naturally continuous field (Fiske, 2004). However, promotion does not only involve a commercial act of selling but also involves advancing and developing a text (Gray, 2010b). Therefore, the purpose of this manuscript is to examine the characteristics of on-air promo time by decoding promo's frames.

Media Culture in Times of Neo-Liberalism

A promo serves to promote a medium while simultaneously constructing an image of it (Bainbridge & Bestwick, 2010). No longer is promotion a secondary tactical device. It is now a primary marketing function, a capitalist commodity, enabling competitive positioning of stations, networks and systems. The expansion of these capitalist commodities has been a basic premise of consumer culture (Featherston, 2007), especially within a neo-liberalist milieu. Neo-liberalism has empowered consumercitizens' perspectives (Schild, 2007) while instructing them that they can continually reinvent themselves through consumption (Jubas, 2007). At the same time, the ability of capitalist production to transform the material and social world which sustains it allows ordinary people to refashion their lives and lifestyles (Lee, 1993) in accordance with their freedom to choose (Botterill, 2007). Ergo, it is not surprising to find that the growth of neo-liberal societies and consumer culture is closely associated with the spread of the zero-sum game of 'winners' and 'losers' (Venn, 2009; Venn & Terranova, 2009).

Similarly to other industries, the media have been deeply influenced by the expansion of the zero-sum game. If an individual is exposed to specific content during a particular time interval, other options are 'sealed' and no alternative information can be consumed during that same period of time. Consequently, the profit to be gained by capturing the viewer's attention is automatically balanced by other players' failure to do so. Obviously, in such games it is rare to find mutual collaboration, since any player's benefit always comes at the expense of others. Thus, behind the scenes of this game, a tough and cruel battle is being fought between promotion departments, programming divisions and information technologies, while the need to find new stimuli has been greatly increased.

Media competition

One of the most salient factors in the emergence of new stimuli is the expansion of neo-liberalist ideology and practice. According to the neoliberalist perspective, all economic sectors, including broadcast media, benefit from removing barriers to the entry of new players and the development of new services and policies that promote greater competition, including foreign contenders (Flew, 2006). As a result, Western liberal societies have adopted a socio-democratic approach to media policy, which supports the introduction of greater market competition (Flew, 2006; Lund & Berg, 2009; Fowler, Hale & Olsen, 2009 et al.). In addition, the accelerated development of various technological innovations and applications has reshaped media use and audience habits (Ursell, 2001) and ensured media competition. Media competition can take place in many institutional forms:

a) television vs. radio (Browne, 1992);
b) private/commercial TV broadcasts vs. state/public television broadcasts (Statham, 1996; Padovani & Tracey, 2003; Oates & Roselle, 2000; Wheeler, 2004; Lund & Berg, 2009);

    c) private vs. public journalism in the same sector (radio broadcasting for example, Purdey, 2000);

    d) broadcast networks vs. cable and satellite TV (Jaramillo, 2002; Born, 2003);

    e) competition between local TV stations (Fowler, Hale & Olsen, 2009);

    f) competition between new digital online media and traditional media (Chalaby & Segell, 1999; Dimmick, Kline & Stafford, 2000; Moe, 2008; Trappel, 2008);

    g) industrial competition between global television program producers in the entertainment industry (Hoskins & McFadyen, 2004) and

    h) competition among telecommunications firms (Collins, 1998; Kim, 2009).

On the bright side, media competition contributes to diversity and original programming (Jaramillo, 2002; Lund & Berg, 2009) and generates continuous innovation as well as the improvement of information quality and professional norms as part of an attempt to comply with audience demands (Cohen, 1989; Van der Wurff, 2002; 2004). On the darker side, competition in broadcasting leads to downgrading of political information and even worse, to a crisis in political communication highlighted by the increasing reliance of television news media on entertainment formats (Brants, 1998; Liebes, 1999). Intensive media competition dissolves the characteristics of traditional jobs and threatens occupational conditions (Thomass, 1994), while also calling into question the core values of cultural identity (Wheeler, 2004). However, lately the term 'media competition' has become associated with 'niche theory' (Dimmick, 2003; Feaster, 2009), which proposes that the new media compete with traditional, established ones (in order to meet users' needs). The niche of a medium derives from its pattern of resource use, represents its strategy for survival and growth and ultimately determines its position in a multi-dimensional resource space (Ramirez, Dimmick, Feaster, & Lin, 2008). In situations of high competition or overlap, two media attempt to fulfill the same role or niche for users (Feaster, 2009) by making an on-going effort to capture audience attention.

Media attention

Attention is the cognitive process of selectively concentrating on one aspect of the environment while ignoring others. Attention can be directed voluntarily, but there are also factors that attract attention automatically, principally the sudden appearance or movement of abrupt onset. Another way to attract attention and prominence is to modify the quality of a stimulus, for example, its color, intensity, angle, etc. Cognitive systems recognize various stimuli in a pre-attentive way and draw attention to it. Therefore, the distribution of attention acts according to economic principles of cost benefit and competition for limited resources. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising to find out that in today's 'information society' attention has become a rare commodity, as both individuals and organizations seek publicity in information-attention markets (Franck, 1998; Davenport & Beck, 2001).

    For media managers, public attention is seen as a 'fringe benefit' because they are interested in maximizing awareness of their products (Fengler & Ruß-Mohl, 2008). However, human attention somehow still represents an abstract, elusive and intangible product (Napoli, 2003). Furthermore, attention is often replaced by exposure, which is considered to be the closest proxy that can be quantified (Bermejo, 2009). In broadcast media, the audience is regarded as the main commodity produced by the advertiser. The information, entertainment and 'educational' material transmitted to the audience are an inducement (a gift, a bribe or a 'free lunch') to recruit potential members of the audience and maintain their loyal attention (Smythe, 1977). The media produce blocks of time during which it is possible to communicate with audiences, which are then sold to advertisers (Gandy, 1990). in this manner, competition

for the attention of potential audiences, and the problem of audience appeal, have become an increasingly important aspect of television broadcasting (Ekström, 2000).

Since the battle for viewers' attention is traditionally related to commercial television and advertising (Maxwell, 1995), producers of TV ads are especially aware of the need to attract attention (Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). It is obvious then, that commercials are full of devices designed to attract attention over and over (Lull, 1990). However, when dealing with media attention, the perception of the audience as a commodity is only one part of the equation. The other part refers to media gratification (Rhee & Cappella, 1997), media effects (Yanovitzky & Bennett, 1999), agenda setting (Kiousis & McDevitt, 2008) and of course, media framing (Nisbet, Dominique, & Kroepsch, 2003).

Competition for audience attention, in and between media, has given rise to a media zero-sum game in which each participant's profit is balanced by others' looses. When viewers watch a specific program they are in fact performing an economic transaction, generally as buyers. Yet, they will estimate the profit obtained from the program they watched − the product they purchased − in a different manner before and after viewing (i.e., performing the transaction). Media consumers decide to watch a particular program because they are convinced, before the transaction is carried out, that it is worth their while. In other words, they estimate that the profit to be derived from watching a particular program is greater than the profit they could derive from watching something else (i.e., by investing resources in another way). After completing the media consumption transaction − consuming the product − their perception is liable to change considerably, since the program is finished and is no longer apparent to the eye. Conversely, the value that media consumers attribute to a subsequent program may have decreased considerably.

On-air Promotion

As stated above, a new-liberal climate has resulted in an increase in the number of competitors in the television industry. Obviously, the fear of losing in the zero-sum game only intensifies the aggressive competition for the media consumer's attention. The inevitable consequence is an increase in the use of promos (Dillman, 2009). Onair promotion has become a big-budget item for the US television industry − occupying air time that could otherwise be sold for commercials − and the marketing of images has become one of the central concerns of program suppliers (Eastman, 2000). Thus, although drawing viewer's attention to on-air programs was never a simple matter, lately it has becoming a challenging and difficult task.

Promotion is an indispensable tool for creating and exploiting differences among competitors (Eastman & Klein, 1991). In a flash of revelation through promos, an entire process of de-subjectification and immersion is accelerated (Bratich, 2006). Eastman and her colleagues (Eastman & Newton, 1998; Eastman & Bolls, 2000; Perse, 2000 et al.) have articulated the view that certain structural factors, as well as some content factors, can increase or reduce the effectiveness of program promotion. In their view, salience theory can be applied in order to examine how associative mental models influence the decision to view television programs. According to this theory, the influence of structural and content factors on the determination to consume a specific broadest is performed by means of associative mental models of television programs. In other words, the viewer's life experience creates an associative mental model of programs and media messages. Promos arouse latent memories that are related to that mental model and change them into accessible memories. The widespread assumption regarding promos is that a high frequency of screening will positively influence the rating of programs that are promoted. Conversely, studies that were performed on

the frequency of on-air promotions have not so clearly indicated that this is the case. However, at the same time, it has been found that:

a) a large number of promos improves the rating of reruns, but not of new series (Walker, 1993);
b) a high frequency of promos has a negative effect on the rating of new series, but improves the rating of one-time broadcasts;
c) airing promos adjacent to program broadcasts improves rating;
d) creating promos relating to one program more positively influences rating that creating promos relating to a number of programs and
e) including promos in programs having a high rating positively influences the rating of the promoted program (Eastman & Newton, 1998, 1999)

In any case, it is quite clear that regardless of whether culture is branded as high or low, it is reconfigured for target markets based on its promotional value (Rectanus, 2002). However, shorter attention spans have created a new viewing style called 'dropping in', meaning that viewers choose to watch only a short sequence of a dramatic film that has been aired several times on television (Perebinossoff, Gross, & Gross, 2005). Hence, since the late 1980s, there is a general trend towards including graphic and written information known as *scrolling* in a television format (Caldwell, 1995). Although scrolling is strongly identified with reading strategies in new media technologies (Boiarsky, 1997), especially the internet (Schoenbach, De Waal, & Lauf, 2005; Knox, 2007; Daniels, 2009; Brügger, 2009; Carey & Elton, 2009; Rebillard & Touboul, 2010) and SMS services (Caldwell, 1995; Knox, 2007), various television shows scroll both textual and graphic information (Beyer, Enli, Maasø, & Ytreberg, 2007). In the broadcasting industry, scrolling sometimes relates to the broadcasting company's products and sponsors (Vered, 2002), nevertheless, scrolling is more and more taking the shape of a brief summary at the end of a program (Jaramillo, 2006).

A more recent technique for capturing attention involves *pop-out*s. Several cognitive models view pop-out effects as the result of early visual processing prior to attention (Laeng, Svartdal, & Oelmann, 2004). Humans are affected by trial-to-trial changes in stimulus features and target location (Bichot & Schall, 2002). For example, pop-out targets (defined by unique color) are judged more quickly if they appear at the same location and/or in the same color as on the preceding trial, in an unpredictable sequence (Kristjánsson, Vuilleumier, Schwartz, Macaluso, & Driver, 2006).

Furthermore, recent research has demonstrated that what observers attend to at a given time, affects how their attention is deployed in the few moments that follow. When an observer searches for a discrepant target, repetition of the target feature from the previous trial speeds the search, an effect known as priming of pop-out (PoP). PoP speeds engagement of attention to the selected target (Yashar & Lamy, 2010). The result, in consumption terms, is that products 'pop out' from the shelf display and lead to an 'unconsidered' selection based largely on attention latency and visual familiarity (Calder, Robertson, & Rossiter, 1975). Shelf displays, shelf 'talkers' and off-location displays are all ways to help a brand 'pop out' and capture our attention (Sutherland & Sylverstone, 2008). Since pop-outs create visual salience, they integrate well with various promotion strategies. Thus, it is not surprising to find that the pop-out has become a complementary tool devised to supplement to the promotion of TV programs by heightened promotional push (Avery & Dickson, 2006).

On-air Promotional Timing

The multiple forms of on-air promotion illustrate the dominance of the promotional culture beeing generated in the twenty first century. Nowadays, it appears that promotion is everywhere, and at the same time, its presence is no longer noticed (Davis, 2013). The promotion of a brand, for instance, depend on previous promotion as well as competitive promotion activity (Liu & Balachander, 2014). Within the media industry, a central component of the growing promotional culture internal promotions constitute. An internal promotion is defined as: "*any television message that may promotes the broadcasting station, network, other programing or any other assets owned by the network's parent company - including television channels, radio stations, print holdings, websites, mobile applications, or even Twitter accounts*" (Asquith & Hearn, 2012, pp. 342-343).[1]

Methodology

The symbolic production of on-air internal promotional time was decoded through framing analysis of internal promos of the (only) two Israeli commercial channels − *Keshet 12* and *Reshet 13* − between August 2019 and October 2019.[2] The promos framing analysis was performed with regard to prime time programs (20:00-23:00).[3]
Inspired by Gillan's (2014) work on the hybrids of television content and promotion and Gray's (2010, b) ideas that the "*promotional material that we consume set up, begins, and frames many of the interactions that we have with the text*" (p. 48), promo analysis was conducted with regard to the following on-air promotion apparatus:

a) promoting future programs just before taking a commercial break from on-air program;
b) promoting future programs just after taking a commercial break from onair program.

On-air promos framing analysis indicate that similar to title sequences which promote a corporate image (Cecchi, 2014) and /or to music, post-faces played a part in end-credit sequences in contemporary television serials (Davison, 2014), TV promos −just before and just after taking a commercial break from on-air program − act with the economic intent of channels self and cross-promotion. Those self and cross-promotion was carried out via:

a) the usage of a next in line program logo;
b) audio-visual referral to the channel prime time schedule;
c) audio-visual invitations to track all prime time programs and stars;
d) visual slides of the future program sequence;
e) syncs or short trailer from following programs;
f) syncs or short trailer from various weekly programs.

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[1] Internal promotions come in the form of on-air promo spots (ranging from 10 seconds to one minute); short "bumpers" that identify the broadcaster (typically five seconds or less); onscreen watermarked network logo "bugs" that frequently appear for the duration of shows; "lower third" graphic animations superimposed on the bottom portion of the screen that promote upcoming shows, contests, or special events; or "credit squeezes" that literally squeeze a program's end credits to the side so the remaining screen real estate can be used to promote other programming or media assets. Internal promotions are also increasingly working their way into television shows themselves" (Asquith & Hearn, 2012, 342-343).
[2] Since November 2017 only 2 free-to-air commercial TV channels are legally allowed to broadcasts in Israel – Keshet 12 and Reshet 13.
[3] More about the importance of prime time see Gitlin (1979)

Following the framing analysis, three features of on-air promotion time:

a) zero-sum time - the sense of dichotomous time perception distinguishing 'In' vs. 'Out' ;
b) timeless time – the notion of time as a flow being temporarily interrupted by on-air promos designed to generate anticipation; and
c) the pro-future track - a deterministic path (even though sometimes appearing as a free choice track) by which on-air promo culture tends to denote the future as the preferred time choice.

Zero-Sum Time

Despite the tendency to emphasize the economic aspect of the Zero-Sum Effect, over the years, this concept has also found its way into other fields, such as military conflicts (Levin, 2003; Howlett & Glenn, 2005), tourism and culture (Shepherd, 2002), power and race (Macey, 2009) and even areas such as identity, belonging, nationalism (Trentmann, 2007) and time. Time has a 'zero-sum' property that allows one to identify the trade-offs in daily life (Robinson & Martin, 2009). Basically, an hour spent can never be reclaimed (Thompson & Bunderson, 2001) and, as a result, the tempo of other activities and tasks is systematically being affected (Farmer & Seers, 2004; Lair, Sullivan, & Cheney, 2005). Furthermore, if consumers spend more time on some new activity or technology, then this must necessarily displace time spent on some other activity or technology (Robinson & Kestnbaum, 1999; Robinson & Martin, 2010). Namely, the addition of one activity necessitates the substitution of another (Robinson & Godbey, 1997).

In our case, the Zero-Sum Time principle can be demonstrated by *Keshet 12* promotion of its future programs just before taking a commercial break from its on-air program "*First Date*" (broadcasted on October 1st, 2019 from 8:15 to 9:17 p.m.). Self and cross-promotion was carried out by audio-visual referral to the next day's prime-time channel program: "*Tomorrow - you have a ticket for The Adi Ashkenazi's Show - a holiday gift - from us*" followed by a short trailer from the show; its schedule; an audiovisual invitation to track all prime time programs and stars, visual slides of the future program sequence and a short trailer from forthcomig programs.

Thus a zero-sum game takes place between the *Keshet 12* TV channel and its viewers. If the viewers accept the "*holiday gift*" and watch *The Adi Ashkenazi's Show* (featuring a leading Israeli stand-up comedienne) they will, apparently, benefit from *Keshet 12*'s loss (as a result of purchasing broadcasting rights). However, if the viewers does not accept the "*holiday gift*" and does not watch *The Adi Ashkenazi's Show* then *Keshet 12* loses while the viewers benefits by choosing an alternative entertainment option.

Similar to the Zero-sum game theory that describes a situation in which one party's profit is balanced by the other's loss, thus the closed circle of profit and loss for all viewers and broadcasters amounts to zero. In the media industry the zero-sum game is conducted by the rating measurements system. The rating measurements system "..*measures exposure to advertising through individual ratings of television programs. A rating is an estimate of the size of the television audience relative to the total television audience. .. It is customary for the advertising industry to sum rating points for a program over a specified time interval ...* " (Szczypka, Emery, Wakefield, & Chaloupka, 2003, p. 8). However, unlike zero-sum game, in Zero-Sum Time, there is, sometimes, a conflict of interest among all parties. That is, according to Zero-Sum Time the promotion of a future viewing advance a dichotomous time perception of 'In' vs. 'Out'. 'In' vs. 'Out' is basically a binary notion. The viewers, who are 'In' will watch future program. The viewers who are 'Out' will not watch it but rather prefer watching something else. At the same time, a TV channel whose future programs are watched is 'In' whereas a TV channel future programs are not consumed is 'Out'.

In other words, the Zero-Sum Time construct a sense of dichotomous time perception distinguishing 'In' vs. 'Out', TV shows who are culturally acceptable vs. TV shoes that are culturally unacceptable vs. Those that are not. Similarly to previous research suggesting that in-group vs. out-group memberships is influencing the willingness to purchase products (Wang & Chen, 2004; Josiassen, Assaf, & Karpen, 2011 et al.) it appears that the Zero-Sum Time draws a clear line among variuos mass audiences. Practically stated, the Zero-Sum Time calls for highlighting brand uniqueness, to the level of distinctive audience' cultural identity.

Timeless Time

In many commercial television channels "*the characteristic organisation, and therefore the characteristic experience, is one of sequence or flow*" (Williams, 2004, p. 86). Moreover, ".. *in both commercial and public-service television, a further sequence was added: trailers of programmes to be shown at some later time or on some later day..*" (Ibid. p.91). Moreover, the new information technology paradigm promotes new forms of social time and space - 'timeless time' and 'a space of flow': "*Timeless time appears to be the result of the negation of time, past and future, in the networks of the space of flow*" (Castells, 2010. p, 507). Castells closely follows Leibniz in conceptualizing time as synonymous with 'sequence': "*In other words, "time" equates to the sequence in which events happen*" (Jones, 2010, p. 60). Whereas in 'old time' one thing succeeded another, in timeless time there is no succession - the sequencing of things is constantly interrupted. To a great extent, promo culture acts according to the timeless time approach.

Every few minutes, the broadcasting flow is temporarily interrupted by on-air promos. Breaking and compressing timeless time in this way is enthusiastically encouraged by promo culture; things happen instantaneously, and linearity is broken in the discontinuity of the process by which we use information (Hamilton, 2002). Just as in timeless time where everything interacts with everything else (Hassan, 2003), promos encourage 'linkage' among totally unrelated programs. Nonetheless, what typifies more than anything the connection between promo culture and timeless time is the anticipation. Similarly to timeless time which '*belongs to the sphere of the anticipated future*' (Ylijoki & Mäntylä, 2003, p. 64), the on-air promotion incentive to consume the next, forthcoming, program.

An illustration of the Timeless Time notion can be seen in the *Reshet 13* TV channel's promotion of its future programs just before taking a commercial break from its on-air program " *The Wonderful Journey of Aharoni and Gidi*" that was broadcast on October 16th, 2019, from 9:10 to 10:15 p.m.. Once again, self and cross-promotion was carried out via audio-visual referral to the next day's prime time program: "*What is hidden beneath the cloche? The Chef's Games. Auditions are starting soon*". In an era of Timeless Time the '*anticipated future*' is much more important than a specific, concrete, future. Moreover, in promotional cultures anticipation stands for and propels other circulating entities forward (Wernick, 1988).

The concept of anticipation in human behavior was originally based on the principle by which the greater the number of possible alternatives at a certain point, the higher the information value of the alternative that is chosen (Chernov, Setton, & Hild, 2004). The '*two mechanism depending on anticipation, surprise and curiosity are deeply involved in the autonomous cognitive development of action*' (Pezzulo, Butz, & Castelfranci, 2008 p. 40). Hence, anticipation guides the viewer's attention and eagerness to ensure that motion is not missed and meaning is not lost.

The Pro-Future Track

When discussing anticipation and attention, one should bear in mind that prefiguration in shaping modes of reception and that highly anticipated adaptations and sequels are frequently intextual (Michelle, Davis, Hardy, & Hight, 2017). Promos, then, are framed as '*structures of meaning for textsto-come*' (Gray, 2008, p. 38). That is, on-air promos are just as much about creating textuality and promising value addition; they exploit text as an act of consumption (Gray, 2010). Moreover, since the television industry presents several shows within the same spot and even within the same break (Eastman & Bolls, 2000) textuality become more and more challenging and the notion of Pro-Future Track is the result of such complicity.

On October 1st, 2019, the *Keshet 12* TV channel promoted its future programs just before taking a commercial break from its on-air program "*First Date*" broadcasted from 8:15 to 9:17 p.m. a multiple spot promoted: *a)* a show titled "*The Economic Minute*"; *b)* "*The Adi Ashkenazi Show*"; *c)* the channel program sequence; *d)* "*Nicole Raidman's New Life*" and *e)* "*One In A Million*". These, as well as other multiple spots portray a Pro-Future Track. Meaning, on-air promotion is not about a specific program, but is rather a latent promise for a televised future.

The consumer future is therefore designed by the promo culture which can be viewed as moving along a continuum, one end of which represents a determinist world view and the other end a free world view. The determinist world view is marketed mainly by on-air promos focusing on future dramayic series. Hence, the future is seemingly known in advance and dictated to the viewer. This means that promo culture is fueled by the determinist approach in which every human event, activity, decision or thought has been previously determined (Hoefer, 2010). The free-will track mainly typify promos for reality shows, in which the future is subject to change, as though the media consumers can determine it themselves and script the future as they wish (by sending an SMS for example). The principles of free choice or free will indicate that a person's actions and decisions are the result of free, independent choice. They are not determined in advance or dictated by determinist causality or fate, or by a higher power. According to this principle, we have the ability to decide and exercise free choice regarding our actions and the power to control them, thus determining to some extent the course of our lives. Namely, at the other end of the track we find the 'sales agent' who promotes the future as a platform for empowering the consumers. Yet, in any event, whether we are exposed to determinism or freedom of choice, on-air promo culture tends to denote the future as its preferred time choice.

Conclusion

The future of consumer culture tends to intrigue and challenge consumption researchers (Stillerman, 2004; Goldman & Papson, 2006; Watson & Shove, 2008; Arvidsson, 2010; Young, 2010). Several questions and doubts have been raised. Is it at all possible to predict the future of consumption? Does the fact that products that were considered to have asecure future have disappeared from the shelves making it impossible to predict future consumer choices? What will future generations of consumers be like (Tyler, 2009; Peterson, 2010)? Nevertheless, parallel to the desire to understand the principles according to which the future of consumption will be constructed, more philosophical questions have arisen in the research community. Will there be a place for free choice in future consumerism? Will it be possible to shape it as we wish (Wilson, 2005)? Does the future hold in store the chance to financially succeed (by means of lottery tickets, for example) (Husz, 2002)? Is it possible by means of consuming economic information, for example, to ensure such chances of success (Cetina, 2010)? Generally, will future consumerism guarantee us a better life (Therkelsen & Gram, 2008)? And finally, do the

dangers inherent in our future (Beck, 1992; 1995) even make it possible to predict consumer trends (Bauman, 2001; Gabriel & Lang, 2008)?

The temporal characteristics of on-air promotion, i.e., *zero-sum time, timeless time* and the *pro-future track,* suggests that commercial television solution to the challenges of future consumption is, in fact, to focus on the future. By Creating a sense of 'In' vs. 'Out', by generating anticipation and by paving a deterministic path, on-air promo culture identifies the future as the preferred time frame to act as a stimulant spice.

However, the wide spread of Video on-demand (VOD) distribution systems, Internet Protocol television (IPTV) which offers the ability to continously stream media, as well as binge-viewing pattern and of course the huge success of Netflix, indicate that on-air promotion based upon future's effectiveness, is about to expire. In the current era of ICT (Information and Communications Technology), which glorifies the "here and now", "the future" is becoming irrelevant. In other words, the current time motives which construct the symbolic production of time represent the struggle for power taking place within and among "old" and "new" media industries.

Thus, when dealing with promotional strategies, one must bear in mind that now days consumer culture is carried out not in terms of consumption of goods but in terms of consumption of time (Slater, 1997); that in the study of personal consumption, time preferences have an important effects on activities that the individual elects to engage in (Silver, 2000); that time is a limited resource and changing the way we utilize time does not increase the total number of hours per week that we exploit in any particular way (Steedman, 2001); that as an insufficient and infrequent commodity, time is subjected to the principles of economic law that assert the importance of optimizing the use of one's time (Linder, 1997).

Ergo, under capitalism, time became money as the rate of turnover of capital became a paramount form of profit-making. The faster you could secure your return, and the faster you could reinvest it, the greater the profits to be made (Castells, 2010). Relative importance of time has a direct impact on the nature of products as well as on purchaseing behavior (Samli, 1995). In an affluent society the value of an individual's use of time increases in relation to the value accorded to commodities. As a result, choice in the use of time becomes a significant factor in the economy of affluence (Johnson, 1997) and, of course, in the economy of promotion. Simply put, on-air promotion is about the promotion of time, however, poor time orientation of on-air promotion may diminish commercial television industry rather than strengthen it.

To sum up, in a time in which consumer culture is aimed at marketing the sense of a unique experience of time, the struggle for attention reflects the structure of power. Even though we cannot yet estimate the extent of these changes on the nature of symbolic time production, we are aware that the promo culture reveals a range of resources targeted at capturing attention, i.e. consuming time. Hence, in order to explore the time motif in promo culture, one must focus on the power balances and struggles within and among media industries.

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