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**- SUMMARY -**

**Cross-media and Transmedia Storytelling towards Effective Audiences**  
**The case of Television in the Social Media Era**

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## OBJECTIVES

The research analyzes the positioning of traditional media such as television within the context of social media and the potential role of social media to engage its audience. Television remains the preferred media for a medium high age group of male audiences, but there are more transversal virtuous examples. In this regard, *Propaganda Live*, an Italian television program, serves as a paradigmatic example of contemporary social media usage in synergy with traditional television media, aiming to enhance audience engagement and increase viewership.

The program, characterized by a mix of satire, current affairs and entertainment, has been able to exploit in an innovative way the potential offered by social platforms such as Youtube, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The analysis focuses on the way in which the program has integrated these digital tools in real time, creating a two way communication channel that stimulates interaction and active participation of viewers, strengthening the bond between the program and its audience. The work explores how the combination of television and social media not only allows for greater user involvement, but also contributes to increasing the visibility of the program, favoring its virality and, consequently, the number of viewers.

Methodologically, the research adopts a multiple-case study design to explore how different television programs leverage social media to engage their audiences. The current paradigm of television in the digital media environment is increasingly shaped by processes of convergence, interactivity, and participatory culture. Drawing on Henry Jenkins's concept of "Convergence Culture" television is no longer confined to linear, scheduled broadcasts. Instead, it operates as one component of a larger, networked media landscape in which

audiences routinely engage through multiple platforms streaming services, social media, and mobile applications—actively contributing to the creation and circulation of content. Max Giovagnoli’s work on transmedia storytelling further expands this view by illustrating how television narratives now often span multiple channels and interactive formats. In this paradigm, a single story world can be extended through video games, social media campaigns, and web-based content, inviting viewers to become participants rather than passive recipients. Such storytelling practices leverage digital technologies to deepen audience engagement and foster a sense of community among fans.

## **CHAPTER 1: MAIN THORETICAL CONCEPTS**

To fully understand the panorama of modern television, it is essential to consider its historical and cultural roots, in particular the phenomenon of seriality which has played a fundamental role in the development of multiple narrative forms. The concept of seriality has deep roots, dating back to the nineteenth century, a period characterized by the advent of the serial novel and the affirmation of an industrial model of cultural production. Already in this phase some of the founding principles of serial narrative emerge, such as the repetition of familiar characters and the creation of stories that develop over time.

"The media language is constantly evolving, shaped by the dynamics of mass communication and the growing complexity of the media landscape. Understanding these changes requires a theoretical analysis that identifies the patterns and functions of communication" (McQuail, 2010, p.151).

McQuail states that the language of the media is continually evolving, influenced by the dynamics of mass communication and the growing complexity of the media landscape. Understanding these changes therefore requires a theoretical analysis that identifies the models and functions of communication (McQuail, 2010).

With industrialization and the organization of fordism work fertile ground was created for the birth of serialized cultural products, capable of responding to a demand for mass consumption. This model not only adapted to the production needs of the time, but also profoundly influenced the contents themselves, reflecting the technological and economic reality of the time. It seems obvious that the transformative nature of serialized narratives in television is closely tied to the evolving cultural landscape, where social media now plays a crucial role in reshaping audience engagement and participatory practices, underlining the link between industrial innovation and narrative forms.

Umberto Eco has astutely described the pleasure that the public derives from seriality: not so much from the novelty of the stories, but from the presence of familiar elements.

“With a series one believes one is enjoying the novelty of the story (which is always the same) while in fact one is enjoying it because of the recurrence of a narrative scheme that remains constant” (Eco, 1979, p. 9).

Eco, in particular, maintains that meanings and interpretations are never fixed or definitive. Rather, they are the result of a continuous process of negotiation and change, in which individuals and cultures interact with signs in different ways. This approach challenges the idea of a rigid and universal structure, paving the way for semiotics as a dynamic and interactive field of study. We find the same thing for the rules in the media, which are changeable over time and are doing so. The birth of broadcasting introduced the need to produce large quantities of content at low costs, favoring the adoption of serial formats. The advantages of television seriality were many: recurring stories built audience loyalty, episodes could be easily segmented to insert advertising messages and the narrative universe of the series could be exploited to strengthen the effectiveness of advertising. Jenkins analyzes the way in which television seriality intertwines with the participatory culture of the audience. Fans of TV series such as *Lost* or *24* become co-creators, deepening the narrative plots through forums, fan fiction and speculative theories. Unlike Eco, who focuses on narrative structure and semiotics, Jenkins (Jenkins, 2006) focuses on the interaction of the audience with the content, demonstrating how television seriality evolves in response to ‘viewers’ feedback. “Fandom, after all, is born of a balance between fascination and frustration: if media content didn't fascinate us, there would be no desire to engage with it; but if it didn't frustrate us on some level, there would be no drive to rewrite or remake it” (Jenkins, 2006, p.247).

The fact remains that evolution has led to the definition of two main narrative models in television series, the serial and the series. The serial is characterized by a continuous and interdependent narration, in which the episodes constitute fragments of an open plot. This model is typical of soap operas and telenovelas, where the events develop over a long and intertwined narrative arc. Miniseries, on the other hand, represent a hybrid form while maintaining an interrupted narration, they are distinguished by a limited duration and a clear narrative conclusion. The series, on the other hand, is composed of self-contained episodes, each with its own plot. Classic examples include sitcoms and anthology series, in which each episode focuses on a different story, often united by a common theme or genre. This model has the advantage of allowing the viewer to follow the episodes in a non-sequential way,

making the product accessible even to those who do not follow it regularly.

Furthermore, television has benefited from the ability to receive immediate feedback from the public, encouraging a continuous evolution of its products. This direct dialogue with viewers has allowed for experimentation with new narrative formulas and for stories to be adapted to the public's preferences. As a result, television series have developed highly flexible production dynamics, which have helped redefine the boundaries between genres and create increasingly complex and stratified products. A fundamental element of television series is its ability to build lasting narrative universes, which accompany the viewer over time. This phenomenon is not limited to narration, but also extends to the cultural industry as a whole, favoring the birth of cult phenomena and a strong sense of belonging among fans. Modern television series is also distinguished by its tendency to cross-fertilize between genres, which has led to the creation of hybrid products capable of attracting different audiences.

Serialism has (Eco, 1985) profoundly changed the way we watch television. Not only has it enabled a deeper connection with characters and stories, but it has also encouraged more flexible consumption, adapting to the needs of an increasingly connected audience. Today, thanks to connected TV and social media, serialism has acquired an interactive dimension: viewers don't just watch, but actively participate, commenting, sharing and creating content related to their favorite programs. Social media play a crucial role in promoting series, amplifying word of mouth and creating communities of fans that fuel the success of television products. Television is no longer just a passive medium, but a space for constant dialogue and interaction, in which serialism intertwines with digital dynamics to offer an increasingly engaging and personalized experience. Even writing a television program is today's challenge for authors, producers and journalists to make television and its content in line with the times. This is a complex and creative process that requires technical, narrative and organizational skills. The ideation (Data Reportal, 2024) starts from the concept, that is, the central idea that will define the content and format of the program. This must answer fundamental questions such as the main theme, the target audience and how it differs from existing content. Preliminary research is crucial to understand the television market and identify current trends, analyzing successful programs and studying audience data. Once the concept has been identified, it is essential to create a well-structured pitch to present the program to producers and television networks, including a brief description, genre and strengths.

The program structure is the next step, with the format development that must include

the overall length, the segmentation and recurring elements such as games, interviews or sketches. The outline details the order and content of the segments, ensuring that each part contributes to the overall flow of the show (Di Giuseppe, 2008). The structure must also be adapted to the target audience, to attract and maintain the attention of the specific audience, such as children or adults. Script writing becomes the heart of this process, as the screenplay must be clear, concise and oriented to the visual medium, including dialogues, scene descriptions and technical instructions for directing and editing. The language and tone must be appropriate to the genre of the program and the target audience: a talk show might have an informal tone, while a documentary will use more formal language. The screenplay must be subjected to multiple revisions to ensure coherence, pace and clarity, involving the creative team to gather feedback. Visual and audio elements play a crucial role. The visual component includes scenography, lighting, photography and visual effects, all designed to capture the attention of the audience. The soundtrack, including music and sound effects, creates the atmosphere of the program and must be consistent with the tone and genre of the show. Advanced technologies such as augmented reality or interactive screens can add innovation to the project. In the production and recording phase, it is necessary to organize all the logistical elements such as the shooting schedule, the recruitment of the cast and crew, and the preparation of the set. During the shooting, the director ensures that each scene is realized in line with the creative vision and the script, while the collaboration between the various departments is essential to ensure a smooth execution. Post-production includes video and audio editing, the addition of visual and graphic effects, color correction audio mixing.

Promotion and distribution are equally important. An effective marketing strategy can include TV spots, social media campaigns, and influencer collaborations. Distribution should extend beyond traditional TV broadcasts to incorporate digital platforms, such as YouTube and streaming services, in order to reach broader and more diverse audiences. Analyzing audience data and feedback is essential for evaluating the success of the program and identifying areas for improvement. (Giovagnoli, 2017). At an international level, "The Voice" uses a well-defined structure and a transmedia approach to engage the public on different platforms. Writing a television program is a multidimensional process that requires creativity, planning and effective teamwork. Compelling storytelling, combined with technological innovation and audience interaction, can ensure success in an ever-changing television landscape.

## CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

An excellent starting point for a critical analysis of social media is the famous statement by Umberto Eco reported by all the newspapers in June 2015:

*"Social media gives the right to speak to legions of imbeciles who previously only spoke at the bar after a glass of wine, without harming the community.....It is the invasion of the imbeciles"* (from Umberto Eco, 2015, during the honorary degree ceremony in 'Communication and Media Culture' at the University of Turin, quoted in La Stampa/Umberto Eco: Social media gives a voice to legions of idiots (La Stampa, 2024)).

This sentence, pronounced in an interview following the already known lectio magistralis, has sparked a heated debate that continues to resonate in the media and academic landscape. On the one hand, it has highlighted the risks of the indiscriminate democratization of information; on the other, it has raised questions about how to educate the public to a more conscious use of digital tools.

Eco did not limit himself to a generic critique of social media. His reflections arose from a profound observation of the cultural and technological dynamics of our time. He stressed the need for a critical and philological approach to information, a process that requires comparing different sources and developing analytical and synthesis skills. Eco's phrase is often quoted out of context, fueling the perception of a contrast between intellectual elitism and a generalized mass. However, the deeper meaning lies in the invitation to collective responsibility in the management of information and in the recognition of the importance of "cultural mediation" and digital orality.

The contemporary media ecosystem is characterized by a complex interaction between traditional and digital media, where crossmedia and transmedia narratives play a crucial role. This integration is not only technical, but also cultural and political, redefining the ways in which information is produced, distributed and consumed. In this context, understanding the functioning of a hybrid media system is essential to analyze how different actors — media, institutions and audiences — interact and mutually influence communication flows (Chadwick, 2017).

Most critical aspect of social networks is the confusion between orality and textuality. Digital platforms mix characteristics of oral communication with those of writing, creating a hybrid form that amplifies both the potential and the risks of communication. The "fixity" of the written word online contrasts with the ephemeral nature of bar chatter, giving rise to a permanent archive that can be taken up and reinterpreted in different contexts.

This feature has profound implications. On the one hand, it allows for greater accessibility to information and participation in public debate. On the other hand, it facilitates polarization and the creation of "echo chambers", where users tend to surround themselves with opinions similar to their own.

With the advent of the Internet, the production and dissemination of information has become increasingly decentralized. This has led to an unprecedented expansion of available voices and perspectives, but has also created new challenges related to source verification and content quality.

Eco stressed the need for "information literacy" to address these challenges. Users must develop skills to critically evaluate information, distinguishing between reliable and unreliable sources. This requires not only technical skills, but also an awareness of the psychological and social mechanisms that influence the perception and dissemination of information.

One of the areas where the impact of social media is most evident is politics. Digital platforms have transformed the way politicians communicate with the public, offering new opportunities to mobilize the masses and spread messages. However, they have also facilitated the spread of fake news and the manipulation of public opinion (Tucker et al. 2018).

The logic of algorithms, which favors the most engaging and divisive content, has contributed to accentuating political polarization. This phenomenon has been exploited by populist leaders and extremist movements, who use social media to bypass traditional media and reach voters directly.

At the same time, the personalization of political messages, made possible by user profiling, raises ethical and political questions. The ability to target specific messages to groups of users creates a fragmentation of public discourse and makes open and transparent debate difficult.

In this context (Chen & Lin, 2017), narrative emerges as a crucial tool to counter polarization and promote constructive dialogue. Stories have the power to capture the imagination, build empathy and stimulate critical reflection. However, narrative is also a double-edged sword, as it can be used to manipulate emotions and distort reality.

A notable example is represented by "narrative communicators" who use social media to construct engaging and persuasive stories. These storytellers can play a positive role, challenging dominant narratives and promoting diversity of opinion. However, they can also fuel conspiracy theories and spread disinformation.



To address these challenges, it is essential to develop a critical perspective that combines logic and narrative. This approach requires going beyond the dichotomy between rationality and emotion, recognizing that both are essential components of human communication. The ability to tell meaningful stories and decode others' narratives is a critical skill for navigating the complex information ecosystem of social media. This includes the ability to recognize rhetorical techniques, identify sources of bias, and assess the reliability of information.

A crucial aspect of Eco's reflection concerns the role of education in addressing the challenges posed by social media. Schools and universities must take a central role in promoting digital literacy and the development of critical thinking. This requires a change in the way media education is taught. Students must be trained not only to use digital technologies, but also to understand their cultural, social and ethical implications. They must be encouraged to explore different perspectives, to ask questions and to question the information they receive.

Looking to the future, social media will likely continue to evolve, profoundly influencing society and culture. Technological innovations, such as artificial intelligence and augmented reality, will provide new opportunities for creativity and self-expression, but will also raise new ethical and social questions.

For example, the growing use of algorithms to personalize content and automate interactions raises questions about who controls these technologies and how they are used. At the same time, the emergence of new forms of digital participation could transform the way people organize and mobilize to address global challenges.

Umberto Eco's reflections on social media offer a valuable starting point for exploring the complex dynamics of digital communication. They highlight the importance of a critical and responsible approach to the use of technologies, recognizing both the opportunities and the risks they entail.

To navigate effectively in the digital world, it is necessary to develop skills that combine logic and narrative, rationality and emotion. This approach allows us to exploit the positive potential of social media without being overwhelmed by it, promoting conscious and critical participation in public life.

The critical analysis of social media is a complex but essential task. It requires looking beyond appearances and questioning the deeper implications of digital technologies for society, culture and politics. The digital media has distorted the paradigm, the communication that comes from above the omniscient and that does not allow replicas. On

the contrary, the new world of the media seems to be opening up to an unprecedented experience in history and the first to realize it is the public, which was looking forward to it.

### **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The methodological structure of this thesis is based on the indications of Robert K. Yin and Robert Stake, two reference authors in case studies. Yin argues that multiple-case studies, that is, the in-depth analysis of several cases observed in parallel, allows data to be collected with almost "experimental" rigour. "The evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust" (Yin, 2014, p. 57). This means that using multiple cases strengthens the validity of the results, giving the case study experimental rigor. Stake, on the other hand, emphasises the interpretative side: a case is not only a "data source", but a micro-world full of meanings that participants - hosts, editors, spectators (Stake, 1995). By combining these two perspectives, the research aims to be both empirically sound and sensitive to the cultural and symbolic nuances that characterize contemporary media.

The heart of the studio is Propaganda Live, a political infotainment program broadcast in prime time on La7 (Barra et al., 2021), known for mixing traditional television languages with a strong component of satire, live music and social interaction. to understand whether its hybrid formula really represents an anomaly - or even an exportable model - the thesis compares it with three strategically chosen cases. Porta a Porta, a historic political talk conducted by Bruno Vespa on Rai 1, represents the paradigm of institutional television: the same macro genre (information and politics) but a classic structure, with formal study, frontal debate and passive audience. Quarto Grado, broadcast on rete 4 in the same time slot as propaganda live, instead introduces the direct competition factor. By sharing Friday evening as a schedule slot, it allows you to verify how different programs compete for the attention of viewers in identical weather conditions. Finally, Chiara Ferragni - a personal brand with millions of followers on Instagram and Tik Tok - serves as a "digital native" counterpart: it is not a television program, but competes on the same attention market, demonstrating how engagement can move from the small screen to social networks.

To photograph these media ecosystems in all round, a triangulation of mixed methods is used. on the one hand, auditel listening data provides the classic measure of linear television audience (share, average contacts, permanence). On the other hand, audiweb surveys record online traffic and on demand consumption, allowing you to see how many

people follow the programs in streaming or enjoy them through clips on digital portals. These quantitative indicators are flanked by semi-structured interviews with hosts, authors, social media managers and members of fan communities: their words illuminate motivations, strategies and experiences that escape numbers alone. The cross-comparison between television ratings, digital metrics (reach, impression, engagement rate) and protagonist narratives makes it possible to understand, for example, if the high social interaction of Propaganda Live also translates into fidelity in front of the screen, or if online conversations run on separate tracks from traditional television consumption.

Adopting a multiple-case design in this context offers two key advantages. Firstly, it reinforces the internal validity if a certain pattern (e.g. the increase in engagement when the host comments live on the tweets of the viewers) manifests itself not only in propaganda live but also, *mutatis mutandis*, in a different environment like that of Chiara Ferragni, it could mean that the mechanism is not the result of chance. Second, it expands analytical generalisability: instead of drawing conclusions on a single format, research develops propositions that touch the entire spectrum of television and social information, showing how different platforms influence each other.

Ultimately, the Yin Stake inspired methodological choice, supported by auditel, audiweb data and a substantial body of qualitative interviews, allows us to return the complexity of a media ecosystem in which broadcast and digital are not watertight compartments, but dimensions in constant interaction—sometimes complementary, sometimes competitive that redefine the ways in which the public builds their own information and participatory consumption.

The adoption of a multi-case design is not an ornamental choice, but the logical premise for any research that aims to explain television in the fragmented social media ecosystem. If we were limited to just observing propaganda live, we would undoubtedly capture the liveliness of a format that mixes political talk, satire, live music and digital interaction; however, we would risk confusing its idiosyncrasies with a general rule. It's the same Robert K. Yin to remember that, in the face of complex phenomena "a single case is rarely enough to test the goodness of a model", because it does not allow replication, that is, the possibility of verifying whether the same mechanism manifests itself elsewhere or under different conditions. Robert E. Stake, for his part, reiterates that knowing a case means placing it in a horizon of relationships, since the meaning of what happens, editorial decisions, engagement strategies, even the emotions of the public, is always built in dialogue with other media practices.

Hence the need to support propaganda live with three poles of comparison that represent as many directions of the system: *Porta a Porta*, a paradigm of institutional talk that preserves broadcasting logic; *Quarto Grado*, a direct competitor who shares evening and audience, therefore useful for measuring the impact of simultaneous competition; and the personal brand of Chiara Ferragni, a "digital native" case that demonstrates how attention can be catalysed by extra-television subjects. It is only in the continuous rebound between these four realities television and social, traditional and experimental, linear and on-demand—that it becomes possible to test cross-cutting hypotheses: for example, to what extent the use of second-screen stimulates permanence in front of the screen, or if the visual irony adopted on Instagram acts as a semantic bridge between heterogeneous television segments.

Multiple-case design also responds to a need for modelling that every PhD is called upon to satisfy: not just describe an object, but provide a theoretical framework that other scholars and professionals can use to interpret and design cross- and trans-media languages. This is where methodological triangulation unfolds its full potential. Auditel metrics quantify linear fidelity (Auditel.it, 2024), Audiweb measures digital circulation on different platforms, while semi-structured interviews with newsrooms, guests, social media managers and community members reveal the logic of meaning that underlie those figures. The well-known Italian author Fausto Colombo, who has been studying the web for over 10 years, describes Audiweb as "the tool (like Auditel, Audipress and Audiradio) to detect and calculate the users of the media, and, therefore, the value of its advertising spaces" (Colombo, 2015). Crossing these plans, the researcher can identify recurring patterns and distill operational principles: for example, the need for a "narrative pre-condensation" that makes the arguments modular for asynchronous consumption, or the effectiveness of a coherent discursive tone on all platforms, capable of slipping from the debate in the studio to the user-generated meme without losing recognizability.

A single case would hardly make it possible to understand whether such solutions depend on the charisma of a conductor, the time slot or more general market conditions. Systematic comparison which Yin defines as literal replication when conditions remain constant and theoretical replication when assumptions change allows us to isolate variables: if a peak of engagement occurs both in propaganda live and in Chiara Ferragni's ecosystem (Barra et al., 2021), even in the absence of a television study, then the driver probably resides in a specific social grammar, not in the "television" nature of the content. If, on the contrary, the interaction collapses in the fourth degree while sharing time and target, the difference will be sought in the language or in the cross-media strategy.

The added value of this device is double. On a scientific level, it allows to formulate an integrated model of development of cross-media and transmedia language that accounts for the dynamics of the platform, editorial practices and participatory cultures of the public. At the application level, it offers broadcasters, digital creators and policy-makers evidence-based guidelines: how to orchestrate narrative seriality so that it works both on the long television life and in the short loop of social media; how to distribute the same story on different touchpoints without fragmenting the brand identity; how to measure success not only in terms of share, but of symbolic circulation and community relationships. Ultimately, the thesis shows that a television analysis conducted in the era of social media can no longer be limited to the perimeter of the small screen: it needs a plural orchestration of cases, data and voices that reflects the porosity of the boundaries between media and the continuous migration of content from one medium to another.

## **CHAPTER 4: MAIN RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH**

There are the results of the multiple case study, which investigated the interplay between television and social media through the analysis of several programs—most notably *Propaganda Live*, alongside comparative data from programs such as *Porta a Porta* and *Quarto Grado*, and the influence of digital personalities like Chiara Ferragni. By integrating quantitative metrics (TV ratings, on-demand views, and social media interactions) with qualitative insights (content analysis, expert interviews, and audience sentiment), we have developed an integrated model that explains how traditional TV and digital engagement interact to create a unified audience experience.

Data collected via Auditel indicate that while traditional TV viewership for *Propaganda Live* experienced fluctuations ranging from pre-pandemic share levels of 4–6% to temporary peaks above 7% during the pandemic the digital segment grew markedly. On-demand viewing and social media interactions increased by 26–40% over the same periods, suggesting that the program’s overall reach remained robust despite a decline in live ratings. The introduction of Total Auditel metrics combining both live and digital viewership further confirms that a substantial portion of the audience now consumes content across multiple platforms.

*Propaganda Live* employs a transmedia narrative that merges field reports, satirical commentary, and real-time social media integration (e.g., the “Social Top Ten” segment). This innovative approach has been shown to not only attract but also actively engage a

younger, digitally savvy demographic (with nearly 45% of viewers aged 18–34). In contrast, traditional formats like *Porta a Porta* and *Quarto Grado* tend to secure an older and more stable audience, with fewer social media interactions but sustained loyalty.

Analysis of digital platforms (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter/X, and TikTok) reveals that interactive features such as trending hashtags (#PropagandaLive), live commenting, and repurposed segments drive substantial online engagement. In many cases, spikes in social media interactions correlate with peaks in TV ratings. This suggests that digital conversations provide not only a parallel channel for audience participation but also serve as an amplifier for live viewership.

Interviews with industry experts, including journalists, TV directors, and communication scholars, consistently underscored the importance of integrating social media with traditional broadcast. The “second screen” phenomenon transforms passive TV watching into an interactive, participatory experience.

Transmedia storytelling where TV content is repurposed and expanded through digital platforms strengthens viewer loyalty and attracts new audiences.

Audience engagement on digital platforms often reflects the emotional and intellectual impact of key broadcast segments, confirming that digital interactions and TV ratings are intertwined.

Viewers now consume content via linear TV broadcasts and digital channels (on-demand and social media). Even as live ratings fluctuate, overall reach is maintained or enhanced through digital viewership.

Programs like *Propaganda Live* leverage interactive segments (e.g., live polls, hashtag-driven discussions, and user-generated content) to create a feedback loop. Engaging content not only boosts digital interactions but also drives increased TV viewership through viral effects and social proof. A significant portion of the audience is young, educated, and digitally active. This demographic shift is critical, as these viewers are more likely to engage across multiple platforms, thereby reinforcing the synergy between traditional TV and social media. Viral social media interactions generate a sense of urgency (FOMO), leading to spontaneous tuning into live broadcasts. This effect amplifies overall audience numbers and supports cross-platform integration.

The model emphasizes using combined metrics merging Auditel ratings with digital engagement statistics to provide a comprehensive view of a program’s performance. This dual approach allows for a more accurate assessment of viewer behavior and the true impact of cross-media strategies. The results confirm that the relationship between television and

social media is synergistic rather than competitive. Programs that effectively integrate interactive digital elements can maintain or even enhance overall audience engagement despite lower live TV ratings. The comparative analysis also demonstrates that different program formats appeal to distinct audience segments. For instance, while *Porta a Porta* appeals more to a traditional, older demographic, *Propaganda Live* captures a younger audience by fostering active digital participation.

This integrated model not only explains the observed phenomena in our case studies but also provides a replicable framework for future research. Broadcasters and advertisers can use this model to tailor their content strategies, ensuring that both TV and digital channels are leveraged to create a cohesive viewer experience.

## **CHAPTER 5: LIMITATION AND TOPICS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Future lines of inquiry should extend the analysis of television by explicitly incorporating the emergent technologies that are poised to reshape the media ecosystem. The present study was constrained by its reliance on two analytically distinct publics one centred on legacy media and the other on digital platforms a segmentation that inevitably narrows explanatory scope and under-represents the hybrid consumption practices now commonplace. Subsequent research must therefore adopt designs that integrate technological innovation with the evolving modalities of personal media use, recognising that audiences increasingly negotiate content across a continuum of connected devices. As human-media interdependence deepens, the field will also have to theorise the implications of technological literacy itself: computer languages are likely to coexist with, and gradually inflect, everyday human discourse. Investigating how these linguistic systems interact and what novel communicative forms may emerge from their convergence will be essential for capturing the next phase of sociotechnical change.

Speaking of new languages, we are at the dawn of a new linguistic era in which cognitive biases, algorithms and neologisms are increasingly gaining ground and will require a new cataloging. I therefore imagine a world in which specific research and fields of study that can be complementary to each other will be needed. Research methods that include emerging artificial intelligences will also be needed, both in terms of analysis and in terms of creating graphs, tables and integrated models to be superimposed on reality.

To stand out, in the future it will also be interesting to analyze what happens hour by hour, minute by minute, in real time when you watch television and at the same time you use

hashtags in social media; For example, you could create a heterogeneous group of viewers and see how they interact on the program. From this group you could analyze the behavior of the masses in front of cross-media products. A central methodological limitation of the study lies in its treatment of “the audience” as a homogeneous entity, overlooking the plurality of audiences that co-exist in today’s television–social-media ecosystem. Drawing on Jenkins’s work on participatory culture and the spreadability of content (Jenkins, 2006), viewers must be recognised as “produsers” who re-configure television texts through practices of remixing, commentary and circulation. Complementing this perspective, Boyd’s concept of “networked publics” (Boyd, 2010) highlights how the affordances of visibility, persistence and connectivity transform viewing into a relational and performative experience. In the Italian context, Giovagnoli’s theorisation of transmedia storytelling (Giovagnoli, 2013) demonstrates that serial narratives invite distinct audience segments, each mobilised by specific narrative “entry points” and engagement logics. By subsuming such heterogeneous collectives under a single label, the research introduces an aggregation bias that masks the differentiated ways in which fans, casual viewers and legacy linear audiences interact with programmes such as Propaganda Live, Quarto Grado and Porta a Porta. This homogenisation obscures, for instance, the role of fan-generated memes in reshaping political satire around Propaganda Live, the forms of participatory fact-checking that emerge within the networked publics of Quarto Grado, and the divergent reputational assessments attributed to Porta a Porta by linear viewers versus social-media follow-ups. Addressing this limitation requires a theoretical–empirical segmentation of audiences that integrates Jenkins’s categories of fans, casuals and lurkers with Boyd’s networked publics and Giovagnoli’s transmedia entry points, thereby constructing differentiated behavioural profiles. Methodologically, a mixed-methods design that combines big-data analytics such as hashtag tracking and retweet-network mapping with digital interviews and netnography would capture both the macro-flows of participation and the micro-grammars of individual engagement. Finally, examining practices of circulation as empirical indicators of audience differentiation focusing on what content travels, why, and within which platform contexts — would align the study more closely with contemporary theories of audience fragmentation and participation.

John Fiske (1992) notes that “fans create a fan culture with their own production and distribution systems that form what I will call a “shadow cultural economy”. In light of this definition, the public today which remixes-tweets content, produces memes, manages Discord servers and monetizes on TikTok fully embodies that same “shadow cultural



economy", a self-managed sphere in which user participation generates symbolic value and circulation of meanings outside (but in continuous dialogue with) official media industries.

It is also suggested to extend the work also to geographical areas other than the West, including emerging countries such as India or others, perhaps in the African continent where these researches are not considered in European universities. It would be important and relevant to try to sample also those markets where today, according to the literature in our possession, reference sources are lacking. In general, future research works will have to be interdisciplinary and include linguistics, engineering and sociology, experimenting with new models that are increasingly integrated.

To expand the research, it would be useful to delve deeper into the role of artificial intelligence in the creation and distribution of television and digital content. Beyond the convergence of old and new media, AI is transforming how content is produced and personalized, influencing not only consumption but also the creation of new interactive narrative forms. Analyzing how algorithms and machine learning impact content selection and audience engagement could provide innovative insights into the debate on social television and the evolution of media language.

A further expansion of the research could include a more in-depth analysis of the role of influencers and their relationship with traditional television and social media. Figures such as Chiara Ferragni, Fedez, and other digital creators represent a key example of the hybridization between traditional and digital media, demonstrating how their presence in television broadcasts can alter audience engagement dynamics. A detailed analysis could assess to what extent the participation of influencers in television programs generates a significant increase in social media interaction or whether, on the contrary, the effect remains marginal compared to already established audience dynamics.

From this perspective, it would be useful to consider incorporating more variables into the analysis to determine whether differences in media interaction are statistically significant or if the crossover between television and social media occurs in a more nuanced and gradual manner. The use of predictive models and machine learning could provide more precise insights into the relationship between influencer presence and audience engagement trends on social networks.

This approach would also allow for a reassessment of McLuhan's (McLuhan, 1994) still-relevant hypothesis that media do not replace one another but rather coexist and influence each other. The coexistence of traditional television, social networks, and digital platforms demonstrates that media convergence does not necessarily lead to the

disappearance of older media but rather to their transformation into an increasingly integrated ecosystem. Studying how influencers, television programs, and social media interact could offer an innovative perspective for understanding how different media continue to adapt and redefine their functions in the contemporary landscape.

Another key aspect to consider is the growing globalization of media, which calls for a comparative analysis of television consumption models in both Western and emerging contexts. Countries like India and certain African nations are experiencing exponential growth in the use of connected television and social media, providing an opportunity to understand how different cultural contexts influence the use of digital platforms. Including case studies from non-Western markets would allow for the exploration of new dynamics, such as the impact of mobile networks and local platforms on the evolution of social television.

From a methodological standpoint, the research could benefit from a mixed approach that integrates quantitative and qualitative data with AI based predictive models. Real time analysis of social media and television interactions could be strengthened by using advanced tools to monitor digital conversations, enabling the tracking of a program's immediate impact and the prediction of future trends. A specific focus on the second screen experience, particularly the role of platforms like X (formerly Twitter), could reveal new forms of audience engagement that go beyond simple commentary, demonstrating how users become co-creators of the television experience. Building trust with audiences is essential to success in this new landscape. Transparency and authenticity become key elements to stand out in an increasingly competitive media environment. Traditional media must demonstrate their commitment to producing high-quality content and promoting ethical values that can inspire trust and loyalty in the audience.

Media convergence, transmedia storytelling and the integration of social media have transformed the television landscape, creating new opportunities and challenges. Television has demonstrated an extraordinary capacity for adaptation, evolving to meet the needs of an increasingly active and connected audience.

The future requires a flexible and innovative approach, balancing tradition and modernity, quality and accessibility. Through collaboration between traditional and digital media, the adoption of new technologies and a continued commitment to building trust, television can continue to thrive and play a central role in the global media landscape.

## CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the multiple case study analysis confirms that in today's media landscape, the integration of television and social media creates a powerful, unified audience experience. By embracing transmedia storytelling and interactive content, programs like Propaganda Live are able to bridge the gap between traditional broadcast and digital engagement. The proposed integrated model offers a robust framework for understanding and measuring the impact of cross-media strategies, paving the way for further research and practical applications in the evolving field of media convergence.

Today, television is no longer confined to traditional broadcasting, but presents itself as a constantly evolving medium, strongly influenced by social media. The example of Propaganda Live, a broadcast that has been able to exploit the integration between television and social platforms, clearly illustrates how TV can adapt to the dynamics of the digital age. This program, thanks to the use of hashtags, real-time interactions and transmedia content, has transformed the audience into an active and participating community.

Viewers don't just watch the program, they become an integral part of the narrative process, sharing opinions, reacting to content, and even influencing editorial decisions. This dynamic has led to greater loyalty and deeper emotional involvement. Propaganda Live is an example of "hybrid television" where the boundary between producers and audiences dissolves, creating a participatory media ecosystem.

Social TV has also redefined the success of a television program. In addition to traditional audience data, metrics such as the number of interactions on social media, the virality of content and the level of audience engagement are now considered. This paradigm shift has pushed television producers to rethink their strategies, integrating social elements right from the program design stage.

The methodological integration of quantitative engagement data analysis (through tools such as Talkwalker and Brandwatch) and qualitative insights from interviews proved to be a crucial step in understanding audience behavior. Interaction spikes around Porta a Porta were linked to moments of high political intensity, but their interpretation (whether as support, dissent, or sarcasm) was only possible through the analytical contributions of qualitative sources. Propaganda Live, on the other hand, displayed a more stable user base, oriented toward active and creative participation, capable of constructing a collective discourse around the program's content.

The analysis of the two case studies Porta a Porta and Propaganda Live confirmed the

existence of differentiated communication strategies and public perceptions. The former continues to be perceived by interviewed political figures as an institutional and authoritative platform, instrumental in building consensus during key moments of public debate. The latter, by contrast, is recognized by journalists as an innovative communicative experiment, albeit with concerns about its delicate balance between information and satire, and the simplification risks inherent in memetic language.

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