

Chapter 3

Transmedia Storytelling Impact on Government Policy Change

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ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses the impact of transmedia campaigns aimed at achieving a certain level of government policy change. Transmedia campaigns comprise a series of coordinated activities and organized efforts designed to achieve a social, political, or commercial goal by means of multiple media platforms. The Great British Property Scandal and Food, Inc. transmedia campaigns are considered to introduce the argument that this kind of multiplatform campaigning can actually produce concrete results in the political sphere. Moreover, this chapter focuses on the in-depth analysis of the transmedia strategies of the Fish Fight campaign to demonstrate how exactly transmedia strategies collaborate to influence policy change. The research findings point to the effective role of transmedia storytelling strategies in raising awareness in the political sphere through public participation in supporting relevant issues, influencing policy change.

INTRODUCTION

Transmedia storytelling involves the unfolding of a storyworld (Jenkins, 2006) in which installments of the narrative are spread across multiple media platforms to engage the audience and offer a more meaningful experience. More specifically, a transmedia campaign comprises a series of coordinated activities and organized efforts designed to achieve a social, political, or commercial goal by means of multiple media platforms (Francoli, 2014). This chapter discusses the impact of transmedia campaigns aimed at achieving a certain level of government policy change. *The Great British Property Scandal* and *Food, Inc.* transmedia campaigns are considered to introduce the argument that this kind of multiplatform campaigning can actually produce concrete results in the political sphere. Moreover, this chapter focuses on the analysis of the transmedia strategies of the *Fish Fight* campaign. This campaign, initiated in 2010,

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was produced by the public service broadcaster Channel 4 in the United Kingdom (UK) and hosted by British chef Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall. The transmedia campaign was designed to:

1. Draw the public's attention to the reckless discarding of caught fish because of the quota system intended to conserve fish stocks in the domain of the European Union (EU); and to
2. Pressure the authorities to change the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

The in-depth transmedia analysis of *Fish Fight* demonstrate how transmedia storytelling contributed to:

1. Make the public aware of the wasteful discarding of healthy fish at sea under the EU fishing quotas; and
2. To amend EU fishing policies.

The theoretical framework contemplates the conceptualization of transmedia storytelling (Gambarato, 2013; Jenkins, 2003, 2006; Pratten, 2011; von Stackelberg & Jones, 2014) in the scope of participatory theory (Arnstein, 1969; Carpentier, 2011, 2015, 2016; Carpentier & Dahlgren, 2014). The methodological approach of the fully developed case study is based on the transmedia analytical model by Gambarato (2013) and applied to *Fish Fight* to depict, in great detail, how exactly transmedia strategies collaborate to influence policy change. The research findings point to the effective role of transmedia storytelling strategies in raising awareness in the political sphere throughout public participation in supporting relevant issues, culminating in policy amendment. It is not surprising that storytelling has become an important tool in facilitating change in society (Maas, 2012; Semetko, 2004) because the human species is addicted to story, and stories touch every aspect of our lives, even saturating it (Gottschall, 2013).

Today's complex media environment is changing audience expectations of how, when, and where information is consumed. Media convergence is driving the development of new forms of storytelling in which integrated narratives are presented across multiple media. Participatory engagement of audiences through games, remixing content, and original user-created content is increasingly common. (von Stackelberg & Jones, 2014, p. 58)

This is the scenario in which transmedia storytelling is inserted. Although transmedia storytelling remains under construction, there are solid indications of its conceptualization. The advent of convergence culture made people's daily contact with media more complex from the viewpoint of the media platforms involved in the process as well as the blurring boundaries between audience consumption and production. Convergence as "the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want" (Jenkins, 2006, p. 2) is closely associated with the idea of transmedia storytelling. "Thus, if convergence culture involves a multitude of mediums to provide the consumer with numerous ways of gathering communication and to enhance the participation and enjoyment of the audience, the use of TS [transmedia storytelling] seems the natural way to fulfill these expectations" (Gambarato & Alzamora, 2012, pp. 53–54). In this context, transmedia storytelling contributes to the increasing need for media projects that conform to the new multiscreen and multiplatform modes, content expansion, and audience participation. The transmedia approach pro-

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