

Carmel Vaisman (Jerusalem)

Bloggers as Early Adopters of Public Opinion: Ethnography of Influencing Networked Publics

For half a century communication researchers have been putting to the test theories of mass media effects on public opinion. However, the blogosphere's ability to influence public opinion is not yet backed by consistent empirical evidence or an account of the relevant practices.

Similar to the situation in Austria, Israeli political blogging is ignored by national commercial mass media. As a result, case studies from the Israeli blogosphere provide us with a rare opportunity to isolate the resulted influence of blogging efforts and learn about the ways that blogging shapes public opinion. The research presented in the talk is based on an ongoing ethnography of the Israeli blogosphere conducted as a participant observer since 2004, observing the formation of the Israeli „A-list“ political blogs as a discourse that emerged from scattered personal journals, and tracing the activities during two election campaigns (municipal and national).

Carmel Vaisman is a communications scholar and freelance journalist based in Israel with a research focus on Internet culture and digital folklore. She explored issues of identity and agency in her PhD thesis entitled „Israeli girls and digital subcultures: language, gender and playfulness on blogs“. Institutionally, Carmel Vaisman is affiliated to the Department of Communication at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

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