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Ethical Frameworks and Ethical Modalities: Theorizing Communication and Citizenship in a Fluid World

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Scholars have long recognized that popular culture shapes our social and political lives. Popular culture's depictions of people, social relationships, and political issues affect how fans imagine themselves and the world around them (Enstad, 1999; Hunting, 2012; Jenkins, 1992; Palczewski, 2005; Radway, 1991). Indeed, the bestselling Harry Potter books are no different. The story of Harry's defense against the evil wizard, Lord Voldemort, depicts a range of social and political issues. For example, the books depict young people as capable and empowered: Harry and his friends regularly succeed at protecting the school and defeating Lord Voldemort when the adults around them fail to take action. The books also depict a commitment to equality. The villains in the books are wizards who aim to disenfranchise any nonwizard magical creatures

and any wizards born to nonmagical parents. However, Harry, the hero of the books, befriends Hagrid, a half-giant, Hermione, a witch with nonmagical parents, and Ron, a wizard who comes from a poor family. Popular culture like Harry Potter influences our discourses on social and political issues such as equality and gives fans an opportunity to reimagine themselves and others.

One group of Harry Potter fans uses these depictions of social and political issues to organize social justice campaigns. They have taken on issues such as same-sex marriage, fair trade, the Darfur genocide, and food stamps, among others. Calling themselves the Harry Potter Alliance (HPA), these fans take what they have learned from the books and apply it to the real world through online petitions, voting, phone-banking, donations, and protesting. While the HPA may appear like another example of how popular culture presents arguments about social and political issues or how fans use popular culture to navigate social and political issues, we may be overlooking a central component of the HPA's civic action.

Researchers have readily acknowledged that entertainment and politics are merging. A large volume of research on The Colbert Report and The Daily Show demonstrates that young people are increasingly getting their political information from these satirical and humorous news programs (see e.g., J. Jones, 2010; Xenos & Becker, 2009). But fan-based citizenship performances like those of the HPA take this merger one step further. As Andrew Slack, executive director of the HPA, explains, "[t]he truly radical thing we've done is show that fantasy is not an escape from our world, but an invitation to go deeper into it. By encouraging young people to be like the heroes they read about, this enthusiastic generation really can change the world" (Weiss, 2012). The HPA does more than present a political argument couched in play or humor. It is a political argument authorized and justified by a fictional story and a

commitment to that fan identity. Andrew Slack says in a separate interview, "If Harry were in our world, he would do more than talk about Harry Potter; he would fight injustice in our world the way he fought injustice in his" (Cartter, 2012). Members of the HPA choose to support same-sex marriage because Dumbledore, the headmaster of the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and Harry's mentor, was gay. In other words, for HPA members, popular culture serves as a guiding framework for civic action. This is what makes fan-based citizenship performances like the HPA's so difficult to study under current theoretical perspectives. Theoretical approaches such as public sphere theory, persuasion, agenda-setting theory, social movement rhetoric, or deliberation have difficulty accounting for civic action authorized or called for by popular culture media objects.

A handful of research projects have considered fan activism like the HPA's, but these focus on its growth from fan communities (Lucy Bennett, 2012, Cochran, 2012; Duncombe, 2012; Hinck, 2012; Jenkins, 2012; B. Jones, 2012; Yockey, 2012). In this article, I argue that a theoretical perspective that examines the complexity and depth of these fan-based citizenship performances must integrate research not only from fan studies, but from political communication, internet studies, and social movement studies, as well. This article seeks to offer a theoretical framework that would integrate fan activism research together with other subdisciplines of communication and would provide a theoretical grounding for new research on fan-based citizenship performances.

Such a theoretical development is desperately needed. Researchers across the communication discipline recognize that fan-based citizenship performances may play a critical role in changing citizenship practices, but remain unsure of how to approach such unusual cases of civic action. Ethan Zuckerman (2013), an internet studies scholar and director of MIT's

Center for Civic Media argues "civics is changing" in his Bellwether lecture at the Oxford Internet Institute. He points to instances such as Kiva.org, Indiegogo, Kony 2012, and the HPA's Hunger Games campaign. Media and cultural studies scholars Henry Jenkins and Sangita Shresthova (2012) call fan-based citizenship performances like the HPA's "a new mode of civic engagement" and call scholars to take up the project: "All of this suggests the urgent need for scholars to explore more fully the many different potential relationships between fandom and political life …" (paragraph 1.9). Like media and cultural studies scholars, political communication scholars including Lance Bennett (1998, 2008), Peter Dahlgren (2009), and Bruce Williams &Michael X. Delli Carpini (2011) have recognized that major shifts in political communication and civic practices are occurring. In response, Delli Carpini (2013) calls researchers to move beyond the old genres of news and entertainment to instead study the information that citizens find politically relevant. Delli Carpini posits that the major question for political communication researchers (and I would broaden this to communication researchers as a whole) in the future will be: how should we study these new forms of civic action based on new sources of political information? With this article, I seek to answer Delli Carpini's call to articulate how we can study a new form of civic action: fan-based citizenship performances.

Fan-based citizenship performances question the assumed relationship between citizenship performances, civic groups, and ethics. Communication scholars have traditionally understood civic actions as deeply connected to social institutions, such as family and church, and civic groups, like the Democratic Party, Green Peace, or the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. I argue that economic, social, and political shifts since the late 1970s have made the membership in those social institutions and civic groups more fluid than ever before. In a fluid world, citizens may easily choose Harry Potter over the Republican Party to guide their civic

action on same-sex marriage. A fluid world that enables citizens to choose popular culture media texts to authorize civic actions demands new theoretical terms. I offer ethical framework and ethical modality as terms to enable researchers to investigate this shift and the civic actions it enables. Through processes of pairing and unpairing, fan-based citizenship performances combine noncivic ethical frameworks from popular culture with civic ethical modalities, civic actions such as voting, petitioning, and so on. These terms allow researchers to examine fully a wide range of fan performances of citizenship, including performances that are emancipatory and problematic, effective and ineffective, and grassroots and industry organized. In this article, I use the example of the HPA's "Not in Harry's Name" campaign to illustrate how these terms can be used to investigate fan-based citizenship performances.

While I argue that this fluidity makes fan-based citizenship performances easier than ever for citizens to enact, this does not necessarily mean that fan-based citizenship performances have not existed historically—only that they were more difficult and likely existed in smaller numbers.[1] As Delli Carpini (2013) points out, being confronted with new civic actions in a changing political landscape can call us to develop new theories or modify old ones, helping us to look back historically to see things we, as researchers, might have missed before. By articulating a context, theoretical terms, and methodological assumptions for research into fan-based citizenship performances, I hope to provide a theoretical foundation for other scholars across the communication discipline to consider the myriad ways (positive or negative) in which fan-based citizenship performances impact our public culture, deliberation, and civic identities.

A fluid world: Choice among institutions

Scholars have generally recognized that civic actions are deeply connected to social

institutions, civic groups, and religious organizations (see e.g., Chávez, 2011; Lucas, 1980; Skocpol, 2003; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). In social institutions and groups such as family, church, school, unions, and community groups, we learn how to participate in public culture. For example, during the civil rights movement, Southern black churches served as locations where citizens could be mobilized and learn civic skills (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995, p. 18). These social institutions and civic groups are locations for invitations for public participation, discussion of public issues, and guidelines for right action in the world, and as such function as entries to public culture. But the relationship between institutions, politics, and social organization began to change in the 1970s as major social, political and economic shifts occurred (W. Lance Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; Skocpol, 2003). Globalization, neoliberal policies, the privatization of public goods, services, and safety nets, and the diffusion of personal technologies such as computers and smart phones contributed to restructuring within government institutions and social organizations (Abbate, 1999; W. Lance Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; W. Lance Bennett, 2011). These economic, technological, and social changes have had a profound impact on social institutions. Participation in groups and associations such as unions, civic clubs, churches, class identification, and political parties has taken a significant downward turn (Asen, 2004; W. Lance Bennett, 2011; P. Howard, 2006; Putnam, 2000). Now membership in institutions that had traditionally provided economic security, social orientation, and ethical guidance, is anything but guaranteed or automatic.

A newly fluid world

Zygmunt Bauman, Anthony Giddens, and Ulrich Beck describe this shift in modern life as characterized by a sense of fluidity in which individuals easily choose between multiple

institutions, organizations, and groups, and fluidly move between those institutional and group frameworks, resources, and requirements.[2] Both institutions and individuals are liquid, changing quickly, and easily moving into new configurations (Bauman, 2007, p. 1). While in the past, individuals inherited membership within institutions through generations or by way of geographic limits, they now face choices among many institutions and groups.

A fluid society requires individuals to choose their own worldviews, activities, and ethical systems. The guidance that tradition, family structures, and other institutions or social organizations used to provide for individuals has been weakened (Giddens, 1991, p. 20). Giddens (1991) puts it this way: "In a post-traditional social universe, an indefinite range of potential courses of action (with their attendant risks) is at any given moment open to individuals and collectivities. Choosing among such alternatives is always an 'as if' matter, a question of selecting between possible worlds" (p. 29). Citing the decreasing influence of social groups, Bennett says, "Contemporary young people enjoy unprecedented levels of freedom to define and manage their self-identities in contrast with earlier generations' experiences with stronger groups (denominational church, labor, class, and party) that essentially assigned broad social identities to their members" (Bennett, 2008, p. 13). Building civic identities in a fluid world

One's choices among institutions, organizations, and groups are not inconsequential or random; rather, they comprise the building blocks of one's social identity and public subjectivity in a liquid world. Beck explains, "socially prescribed biography is transformed into biography that is self-produced and continues to be produced" (Beck, 2010, p. 135). By choosing membership in a Methodist Church, a volunteer firefighter association, a local gun club, and the Democratic Party, an individual builds her public subjectivity. We pick and choose from many

available social organizations and civic groups, living our identities across many "institutional settings of modernity" (Giddens, 1991, p. 14). Thus, in our fluid world, the agent chooses and constructs his/her own lifeworld from the vast array of options available in an increasingly globalized information society.

Increasing choice among social organizations and civic groups has implications for collective action and public formation. Fluidity among organizations and groups enhances choice but increases individual responsibility (Beck, 2010). The implication for civic action is that this new individualism cuts away at solidarity in community formation and collective political action. This produces a world "where few if any people continue to believe that changing the life of others is of any relevance to their own life" (Bauman, 2007, p. 24). Indeed, neoliberal policies reinforce this individualism; individuals are called to assume responsibility for responding to risks and fears themselves.

Civic actions in a fluid world

So if our world is characterized by a fluidity that enables some degree of choice among political, religious, and social institutions and groups, how has this affected the ways in which citizens engage in politics? In this section, I argue that communication scholars from across a variety of subdisciplines have begun to answer this question.

By putting them in conversation with one another, we can recognize that their research projects are examining similar phenomena, even as they articulate different aspects of that phenomenon from different angles. By putting them together, we can build a more complete picture of the characteristics of shifting citizenship practices and their relationship to a fluid world.

First, the fluidity among institutions, organizations, and groups and its resulting individualism enables individuals to adopt a politics that is more personalized and privatized than ever before.

Bauman (2007, pp. 24–25) argues that individuals experience a lack of connection and apathy toward collective social change. Similarly, Papacharissi (2010) argues that individuals are increasingly frustrated with their inability to affect political institutions within representational democracies. Papacharissi finds that citizens are rejecting traditional institutional political acts, turning instead to privatized and personalized civic actions. Signing a petition online or watching a subversive YouTube video occurs in a private online media landscape, based on personal concerns about civic issues. W. Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg (2013) find evidence of this kind of personalized politics during the 2009 G20 Summit in London. A group called Put People First used broad action frames that allowed citizens to insert themselves into the protest in a variety of ways and offered protesters many ways to enact the protest and share information digitally, including a #G20 hashtag on Twitter, Facebook groups, e-mail lists, signing petitions, and more.

One form of personalized politics is what Giddens (1991, p. 214) calls "life-politics" and most others call "lifestyle politics." In lifestyle politics, citizens take political action out of a personal sense of self, living their civic ideals through everyday choices. For example, a citizen might make global warming a personal, lifestyle issue by choosing to buy a Prius. Indeed, such consumer or commodity activism (Mukherjee & Banet-Weiser, 2012) is often at the center of lifestyle politics. But such lifestyle politics are not restricted to conservative or neoliberal causes or logics. In her ethnographic study of anarchism, Laura Portwood-Stacer (2013) found that by dressing, eating, and consuming in a particular way, anarchists work to dismantle hierarchies, including capitalism, racism, and the state. Even as personalized politics and lifestyle politics has opened up possibilities for civic action, it has also "further eroded group memberships and loyalties to parties and political institutions" (W. Lance Bennett & Segerberg, 2013, p. 23),

contributing to the further privileging of personalized politics.

Second, a fluid society also encourages fluid organizational patterns within institutions and groups. These loosely organized civic groups allow individuals to easily join, move, pause, and exit the group: membership is fluid. Bennett and Segerberg (2013) identify two types of loosely organized groups.One type provides citizens with many different ways to take action on a set of issues, allowing citizens to personalize their civic actions. Citizens might tweet support and make a donation, but choose not to contact their representatives. Here digital media are used to notify citizens of possible actions to take and is used to enable those personal actions. In the second type of loosely organized groups, digital media play a more central role as "organizational hubs," organizing and integrating the communication from many contributors all at once (W. Lance Bennett & Segerberg, 2013, p. 13). Bennett and Segerberg found this loosely organized crowd enabled connective action at play in tweets utilizing the #COP15 protesting the 15th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2009. Even without central actors or organizations leading the #COP15 Twitter stream, tweets protesting the Copenhagen conference maintained organization and coherence. Indeed, preferences for fluid organizational styles are a central difference between the Baby Boomer generation and the Millenials. Stephen Coleman (2008) and W. Lance Bennett (2008) argue that citizenship performed by young people is less institutionally based and more individually focused. Youth seek out unestablished spaces to practice citizenship, like the internet, forming grassroots civic groups of their own. Youth adopting this style of politics reject the obligations of government institutions in favor of finding a sense of individual purpose in loose and fluid social networks. Indeed, it makes sense that Baby Boomers accustomed to doing politics in a less fluid world would favor clear institutional boundaries, organization, and direction, while Millenials,

confronted with learning to do politics in a fluid worldwould adopt fluid organizational styles. Fluid organizational patterns and personalized politics are the resulting characteristics of a fluid world that offers radical choice between institutions, groups, and organizations. Of course, not all institutional membership, for all individuals, all the time is liquid. Indeed, I may still inherit membership in a local, family church even as I also choose to enact personalized politics by buying a Prius and participate in a fluidly organized social movement campaign by tweeting #COP15. The point here is not that institutional choice is newly universal; rather, the point is that institutional choice is newly possible.

A fluid world necessitates new terms

Fan performances of citizenship represent a radical expansion of institutional choice enabled by a fluid society. Citizens not only freely choose among civic worldviews like the Democratic or Republican Parties but also can now choose between civic and noncivic worldviews and apply them equally easily to civic action.[3] Both fan and industry discourses articulate the preferred uses of popular culture media objects, like Harry Potter, as noncivic. Fan-based citizenship performances grow out of fan experiences with popular culture. Fan experiences are characterized by a strong feeling of affect for the fan object, extended knowledge of and deep engagement with a media text, and participation in and belonging to a fan community (see Abercrombie & Longhurst, 1998; Busse & Gray, 2011; J. Gray, Sandvoss, & Harrington, 2007; Hellekson & Busse, 2014; Hills, 2002; Jenkins, 1992; Sandvoss, 2005). This grounding means that fan-based citizenship performances are connected to noncivic worldviews. By creating websites centered around sharing the latest news about the Harry Potter media object and writing fan fiction which extends and rewrites the lives of their favorite characters, fans invite audiences to use Harry Potter for entertainment purposes. Industry actors like JK Rowling,

Scholastic, and Warner Brothers also frame the preferred uses of Harry Potter as leisure and escape.[4] Rowling, Scholastic, and Warner Brothers together invite fans to engage Harry Potter as entertainment by encouraging fans to buy movie tickets, preorder books, attend book release parties at book stores, rewatch the movies aired on television, buy merchandise, visit the Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal Studios, and to join the official Harry Potter website and social network site, Pottermore. Fans and industry actors position the noncivic uses of Harry Potter as the preferred uses. Applying a noncivic framework like Harry Potter to civic action like phone banking in support of same-sex marriage, rather than traditionally civic frameworks like the Democratic Party's platform, represents a significant expansion of choice among institutions. Such a radical departure from our traditional notions of ethics and civic action requires new theoretical concepts: ethical framework and ethical modality.

New terms: Ethical framework and ethical modality

An ethical framework is a worldview or a frame of understanding based on an ethic that is theoretical and all encompassing. An ethical framework could potentially be applied to any action, while an ethical modality is more specific. An ethical modality is a way of meeting an ethical obligation. It is a particular mode of action that falls under an ethical framework. Based on an ethic that is practical, an ethical modality is specific to particular actions, topics, or themes. Ultimately, ethical frameworks and ethical modalities are defined by their relationship to each other: an ethical modality is used to satisfy one's obligation to an ethical framework.

Imagine, for example, an ethic of "sharing with others." If I believe in an ethical framework of sharing with others, I may use an ethical modality of contributing my tools as part of a neighborhood tool-sharing program. Sharing with others is a broad theoretical framework, an ethic that can guide many types of actions. Sharing my tools with my neighbors is a more

specific ethic. The ethical modality is a way of satisfying the obligations of the ethical framework. Clearly there are many ethical frameworks that could be used for many ethical modalities. I might enact the ethical modality of sharing tools using a different ethical framework, like neighborly generosity. I might also enact my ethical framework of sharing with others through other ethical modalities, like donating old clothes to Goodwill.

Philosophers such as Aristotle (1999), Mill (2001), or Kant (1993) give us ethical systems that incorporate both ethical frameworks and ethical modalities into one, producing an all encompassing system establishing right ways of acting. Varela (1999) draws attention to this in his book Ethical Know-How: Action, Wisdom, and Cognition. Varela seeks to tease out what he sees as the implied and understudied aspect of ethics: "know-how." Varela defines "know-what" as ethical obligations based on prescriptive principles (where Western philosophers have directed much of their attention) and defines "know-how" as ethical action taken on a daily basis in situations that are infinitely unique. While Varela's terms capture a dynamic I seek to draw attention to with ethical framework and ethical modality, Varela's terms are overly burdened with the critical aim of his project. Varela seeks to reverse the privileging of "know-what" against "know-how" and thus to place "know-how" at the center of any program of ethics. Differently from Varela, I seek to draw attention to both aspects of ethical action: both the framework (prescriptive principles) and the modality (everyday actions). I draw my inspiration for ethical modality from Daniel C. Brouwer and Robert Asen's deployment of modality to understand publics and their rhetorical actions (Brouwer & Asen, 2010). Beginning from the Oxford English Dictionary's definition of mode as "a way or manner in which something is done or takes place; a method of proceeding in any activity" (Brouwer & Asen, 2010, p. 16), Brouwer and Asen use modality to draw attention to public engagement as a process and argue that the

choices made during that process matter. In my own term, ethical modality, I want to emphasize that the manner in which an obligation to an ethical framework is met matters. Ultimately, I argue that both the broad ethical framework (moral principles) and the ethical modality (everyday action taken to enact that ethical framework) are important.

In my use of ethical framework and ethical modality, I seek to identify the ethics invoked by particular rhetors, social groups, or social movements, not to endorse their chosen and performed ethics as good or desirable. Brouwer and Asen make a similar argument in regards to public modalities writing,

> The critical character of this project does not arise from an inherent quality of a modality per se, since processes of public engagement may advance praiseworthy or censurable ends. Rather, the critical character of public modalities arises from the intervention and judgment of the scholar, who discerns the values implicated in particular engagements and judges their progressive or regressive qualities. (Brouwer and Asen, 2010, p. 21)

I understand an ethic as a particular right way of acting, a particular understanding of morality, right and wrong, or the good. Communication scholars can identify various ethics deployed in communication, but identifying ethics does not endorse such ethics as correct or good. Scholars need theoretical terms to talk about civic action emanating from ethics that are both praiseworthy and problematic. I believe ethical framework and ethical modality serve that function.

Pairing and unpairing

While the multiple ethical frameworks and ethical modalities in my earlier examples about sharing with others, neighborhood tools programs, and donating clothes to Goodwill may make their connection to one another seem random, institutions influence which ethical modalities we use to enact which ethical frameworks. This is a process I call pairing.

Pairing occurs when ethical frameworks are matched to ethical modalities in institutionally preferred ways. For example, Republicans express an ethical framework of operating small government with few social programs. One ethical modality a Republican could employ to act according to this framework would be donating money to the local food bank, thus enabling local charities rather than government programs to help struggling individuals. The ethical modality is a specific ethic that allows one to meet one's obligations to a broader ethic. Through a process of pairing conducted by institutions and community groups, ethical modalities and ethical frameworks are linked and mutually reinforce each other. This pairing of an ethical framework with an ethical modality is based on one's participation in these institutions and communities. The ethical framework is an ethic which matches the institution or group's ideology, and the ethical modality is an institutionally enabled, recommended, and preferred way of enacting the institution or group's ethical framework.

Because individuals belong to overlapping communities and institutions, they also have overlapping ethical frameworks. Citizens choose which ethical framework and modality pairing to enact based on context, cues, and other factors. For example, a member of a Catholic Church community might enact an ethical framework of a church member who helps the downtrodden paired with an ethical modality of a volunteer at the church's soup kitchen. The ethical framework of a church member helping the downtrodden could be potentially applied to wide-ranging situations, offering a number of potential ethical modalities, including supporting universal healthcare, donating money to United Way, or volunteering for a charity drive at work. Yet, membership in a political community may call up a different pairing of an ethical framework and modality and thus, may require different action than supporting universal healthcare. Membership in a local Republican Party may trump membership in a Catholic

Church community as the ethical framework most applicable to the ethical modality of universal

healthcare. Ultimately, different communities operate with different pairings of ethical

frameworks and ethical modalities. Citizens move easily between their multiple pairings, relying

on context, cues, and other factors to decide which pairing to enact.

What I have sought to do with the examples above is demonstrate how ethical

frameworks and ethical modalities work in our everyday lives. I sought to demonstrate how,

even though we are not accustomed to distinguishing between ethical frameworks and ethical

modalities, both are always at play. In a civic world more clearly dominated by institutions, there

would be little need for understanding ethical frameworks and modalities as separate entities

because they would almost always be clearly paired, occurring together. Some political

worldview (Democrat, Republican, independent, nonprofit, etc.) would lead to political actions.

But radical choice between institutions disrupts such automatic and guaranteed pairing between

ethical modalities and ethical frameworks, making these terms essential to understanding new

forms of citizenship in a fluid world. Today worldviews that lead to political actions are no

longer limited to political institutions. Harry Potter, Husker football, and the Justice League are

all worldviews that could lead to political actions. It is this shift that has necessitated new terms:

A fluid world has made it increasingly possible and easy to choose among political institutions

and nonpolitical institutions when engaging in civic actions. For the first time, scholars must

consider civic and noncivic ethical frameworks applied to civic modalities. Ethical framework

and ethical modality help scholars do just that. In the next section, I offer a brief example of how

these terms can be used in scholarship to investigate fan-based citizenship performances.

A brief example: "Not In Harry's Name"

Founded in 2005 and growing out of the Harry Potter fandom, the HPA is a nonprofit

organization that uses parallels from the Harry Potter story to do social justice activism. The HPA has conducted more than 30 campaigns on issues such as same-sex marriage, independent media, literacy, economic justice, bullying, hurricane relief, mental health, climate change, healthy body images, and fair trade (About the HPA). The HPA takes on a liberal political agenda focused on social justice, although it refrains from endorsing political candidates in elections. While the HPA is most active in the United States with chapters in 38 states, the HPA also has chapters in 16 other countries, including Brazil, India, Spain, and Vietnam (Find a Chapter). In all, more than 1 million Harry Potter fans have taken up the HPA's call for fan-based civic engagement (For Press: About the Harry Potter Alliance). The HPA is one of the most established and well-developed fan activist organizations, making it a particularly clear illustration of how ethical framework and ethical modalities can be used as theoretical terms to investigate fan performances of citizenship.

The HPA's 2013 campaign "Not in Harry's Name" called for Warner Brothers to use fair trade chocolate in their Harry Potter candy. In 2010, the HPA asked Free2Work to conduct a study of Warner Brothers' chocolate, and Warner Brothers received an F in the human rights category. After the HPA asked Warner Brothers about its human rights guidelines, Warner Brothers asserted that it had its own report that stated that it did not violate human rights with its chocolate. But Warner Brothers had refused to make the report public. The HPA's "Not in Harry's Name" campaign worked to get Warner Brothers to make their report public and to show proof that they use ethical sourcing practices in the making of their Harry Potter chocolate. The "Not in Harry's Name" campaign consists of a website, a petition, a Huffington Post article by HPA executive director, Andrew Slack, and a series of YouTube videos made by Harry Potter fan community members as well as well-known vloggers.

Ultimately, the campaign succeeded. On January 13, 2015, Warner Brothers announced that all Harry Potter chocolate would be fair trade.

In this campaign, a Harry Potter ethical framework is paired with a fair trade ethical modality. The HPA draws two main parallels between the Harry Potter books and fair trade. First, they draw a parallel between workers rights in the real world and the rights of house-elves in the books. In Dan Brown's (2013) video, he asks, "What would Dobby think?" In the Harry Potter story, Dobby is a house elf who was forced to work as a kind of indentured servant. When Hermione finds out about the condition of house elves, she forms an activist group to earn house elves basic workers rights like breaks and holidays. Harry, frustrated with Dobby's particularly abusive (and evil) owner, tricks the owner into freeing Dobby from service. When Dan asks, "What would Dobby think?" he invites Harry Potter fans to be like Hermione and Harry and work toward guaranteeing that all people have fair workers rights. The HPA also draws a parallel between Harry's activism when Voldemort returns and fans' own fair trade activism. Addressing Warner Brothers, the HPA says, "As reasonable people who love the Harry Potter movies and want to work with Warner Bros as partners, we want to believe them! We really do. But Harry Potter would not simply take the Ministry on their word, and neither will we" (Show Us the Report, italics in original). The HPA points to a part of the Harry Potter books in which the governing body of the wizarding world in Great Britain, the Ministry of Magic, was lying about Lord Voldemort's return. Choosing to deny the signs of his return to power and the threat it posed, Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge, worked with the newspaper, The Daily Prophet to restrict citizens' information and failed to take any substantive action. Harry had seen proof that Voldemort was returning to power and tried to wake the rest of the wizarding world up to Voldemort's return, despite the misinformation spewed by the Ministry

and The Daily Prophet. The HPAcalls fans to be vigilant citizens, just like Harry. This comparison asks fans to recognize that sometimes companies and governments like the Ministry and The Daily Prophet cover up mistakes. But good citizens, like Harry, seek proof, agitate other citizens, and don't give up.

The HPA combines this Harry Potter ethical framework (workers rights and skeptical activism) with signing petitions and buying alternative products as ethical modalities. The HPA invites fans to sign a petition to get Warner Brothers to show the report and to buy an alternative, Harry Potter chocolate frogs made from fair trade chocolate. Buying alternative candy and pledging one's support with a petition signature tells Warner Brothers where fans and citizens stand on the issue. While the ethical modality that matches the Harry Potter ethical framework in the books relies on wands, house elves, and an evil wizard, in the "Not in Harry's Name campaign" the HPA unpairs the Harry Potter ethical framework from its corresponding Harry Potter modality. Instead, the HPA pairs the noncivic Harry Potter ethical framework (workers rights and skeptical activism) with a fair trade ethical modality (petitions and alternative products).

While the HPA's "Not in Harry's Name" campaign was only a short illustration of the ways in which ethical framework and ethical modality can be used to understand fan-based citizenship performances, I hope it made clear how ethical framework and ethical modality can enable us to investigate these fan-based citizenship performances. Indeed, without ethical framework and ethical modality, it would be difficult to articulate the dynamics of the HPA's "Not In Harry's Name." Of course, not all fan-based performances of citizenship look exactly like the HPA's—indeed, not all fan-based citizenship performances oppose media industries. Some fan-based citizenship performances occur in cooperation with media industry actors and

some fan activism campaigns are organized and led by media companies. The usefulness of ethical framework and modality as terms is the ability for these terms to allow researchers to analyze any of these types of fan-based citizenship performances.

Methodological underpinnings: Popular culture as resource

Theory and method are hardly ever separate and unrelated. Recognizing the presence of increased choice in a fluid society and adopting ethical frameworks and modality as theoretical terms requires scholars to consider questions of methodology. What is the meaning of a popular culture artifact? How can we know? How are ethical frameworks extracted from popular culture objects? What is the relationship between popular culture and political action? Can one cause the other? What is the relationship between ethical frameworks and ethical modalities? These are methodological concerns relevant for communication scholars using both social science and humanities-based approaches and across communication subdisciplines. Thus, in this section, I identify the methodological underpinnings necessary to analyze discourses that unpair and re-pair varying ethical frameworks and ethical modalities. Integrating perspectives from both popular culture research and citizenship research, I argue that we need to approach fan-based citizenship performances by recognizing that popular culture media objects function as resources for citizens. Popular culture artifacts have multiple meanings Scholars ought to recognize that popular culture texts have multiple meanings, but that interpretive communities and rhetors influence fans' interpretations of the text (see e.g., Hall, 2012). For example, the Harry Potter story points toward tolerance, as Harry defends his friend Hermione against prejudice and ridicule because she is not a "pure blood" witch, and thus not a witch worthy of attending Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. But the story also points toward intolerance, as the goblins that run the wizarding bank are problematically imbued with characteristics reminiscent

of Jewish ethnic stereotypes. As this brief example demonstrates, multiple and contradictory meanings exist within media objects, and fans emphasize and deemphasize these meanings in varying ways.

At stake here is how an ethical framework is developed from a popular culture artifact. If popular culture artifacts have multiple and even contradictory meanings, how do fans agree on an ethical framework? Media scholars and fan experts Kristina Busse and Jonathan Gray argue that fan communities are not just imagined communities (W. Lance Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; R. G. Howard, 2008), but are also literal instantiations of Stanley Fish's interpretive communities. Interpretations and strategies for interpretations get worked out and reinforced through community discourse, social norms, and creative acts like writing, art, and music (Busse & Gray, 2011). Thus, fan communities develop a set of dominant interpretations for their text, which serve as the foundations for ethical frameworks. Of course, fan communities, like any community, are not monolithic. Even while the community develops dominant interpretations of the Harry Potter story, not all Harry Potter fans will subscribe to those dominant interpretations. Fan community leaders or celebrities (Hills, 2002; MacDonald, 1998; Thornton, 1996; Tulloch & Jenkins, 1995) may also play a role in supporting particular interpretations of popular culture artifacts over others. For example, in the case of the Harry Potter fandom, the dominant interpretation is that the Harry Potter story supports equality. This particular interpretation gains traction when Harry Potter fandom celebrities like Paul DeGeorge and Andrew Slack subscribe to that interpretation and argue that others should too. DeGeorge formed the first band to perform songs about Harry Potter, and Slack formed the HPA. Such a position makes DeGeorge and Slack remarkably influential and makes their interpretations attractive to other fans.

When scholars are investigating fan performances of citizenship, they ought to note

which textual interpretations are invoked when, how, by whom, and with what implications. But I caution scholars against getting too distracted by determining if the text or the fan community's interpretation of the text is emancipatory or not. This point is a significant point—but it answers a different question, one about the media text, not about the use of that media text for civic purposes. In investigating fan performances of citizenship, we ought to be concerned with how those popular media objects are deployed in communication toward civic ends. That is—scholars must ask, how do rhetors/creators/communicators encourage fans to adopt a particular interpretation of a media object and how is that interpretation deployed in civic contexts?

The political use of popular culture artifacts is not automatic

Even with dominant interpretations of popular culture artifacts emerging from communities, there is still nothing guaranteeing that fans will apply a Harry Potter framework to a particular ethical modality. Popular culture does not directly lead to political activism or citizenship performances (Enstad, 1999, p. 13). It provides the resources. Thus, it is also important to recognize that popular culture's use as a political and rhetorical resource is not automatic or guaranteed. Citizens must choose Harry Potter from the many other choices available in a fluid world. For example, just because one of Harry Potter's central themes is tolerance for others does not mean that every Harry Potter fan will see that as a reason to enact tolerance in their everyday lives. Simply being a fan of Harry Potter is not enough to guarantee that I, as a fan, will apply Harry Potter to the real world. Nor is it enough to guarantee that I, as a fan, will apply Harry Potter to a particular civic issue, like public health care. Citizens must choose which ethical framework to pair with which ethical modality, sometimes choosing between contradictory ethical frameworks like the Catholic Church, the Republican Party, and the HPA on issues like fair trade. We must view fans and media audiences as agents who use

popular culture resources toward civic ends.

Rhetors can assist in this choosing by persuading fans that their ethical framework is applicable and desirable. This may mean persuading fans to not only choose Harry Potter as an ethical framework, but also persuading them to choose a particular Harry Potter ethical framework. Recognizing that Harry Potter supports equality, we might utilize an ethical framework focused on same-sex marriage because Dumbledore, Harry's headmaster and mentor, was gay. Or we might utilize an ethical framework focused on eliminating racial microaggressions because Harry's best friend, Hermione, was Muggle-born, and thus faced considerable bullying from other students. When applying an ethical framework to an ethical modality, rhetors must first invite fans to adopt a particular interpretation of a popular culture object, and then secondly invite fans to apply that interpretation to the real world in a particular way. This perspective allows us to emphasize the role that communication plays in citizenship performances utilizing popular culture. The questions for communication scholars are: How do fans invite others to adopt a particular ethical framework and apply it to an ethical modality? What strategies do rhetors/communicators use?

Access to popular culture artifacts varies with one's social location and power

Critical and cultural communication scholars have long recognized that power and social location affect our ability to access particular civic identities or institutional membership (see e.g., Chávez, 2010; M. L. Gray, 2009; Zaeske, 2002). This is certainly true of popular culture media objects and fan communities. Indeed, as with any resource, access to and belonging in fan communities varies with an individual's social location and power (Busker, 2013). Being a fan often requires some minimal degree of leisure time and money to access popular culture artifacts and participate in fan communities. A Harry Potter fan could check the books out from the

library, download free podcasts, and follow the Leaky Cauldron website online. But a Harry

Potter fan could also spend more than $3000 on a weekend trip to LeakyCon, a yearly fan

convention. Additionally, access to particular popular culture artifacts varies with fans' social

locations. For example, women comic book fans often face barriers to access and community

participation, including hostile environments in comic book shops and gatekeeping discourses

like the "fake geek girl" (Hinck, 2014; Thomas & Ellis, 2012). Ultimately, we must understand

that popular culture functions as a resource that is not universally available and requires power to

exercise. Communication scholars must ask: Who has access to popular culture media objects

and communities? Who is permitted to use particular popular culture media objects? Whose

access is policed? Who is permitted to use popular culture as an ethical framework and who is

not?

Directions for future research

I hope that this article has laid the foundation for more research into fan-based citizenship

performances. By offering ethical framework and ethical modality as theoretical terms necessary

to analyzing fan-based citizenship performances in a fluid society, I hope scholars can begin to

answer some of the many questions associated with fan performances of citizenship. In this last

section, I articulate some of those questions and identify some directions for future research,

drawing attention to questions that reflect a range of communication subdisciplines.

First, rhetorical scholars might explore particular strategies fans use to pair popular

culture ethical frameworks with ethical modalities. In other words, what strategies do fans use to

connect an ethical framework based on a fictional world depicted in a popular media text to an

ethical modality based in real world civic action? Secondly, quantitative scholars, in particular

scholars of political communication, might investigate the relationship between fan

performances of citizenship and overcoming political apathy. Are fans who participate in fan-based citizenship performances already active citizens? Who participates in these civic practices, and who is excluded?

Third, public sphere scholars might investigate how the choice of a noncivic ethical framework based on popular culture artifacts might produce limited possibilities for publicity within the public sphere, limiting reach, circulation, and effectiveness. Scholars should investigate how fan performances of citizenship impact the public sphere, beyond a group of similarly dedicated fans. Fourth, scholars of digital media and networks might investigate how communication about fan-based citizenship performances circulates in online spaces. How might fan performances of citizenship find audiences and participants in other fandoms or outside of fandom altogether? What role do fan-based citizenship performances play in internet cultures? Fifth, scholars of deliberation and participatory democracy might investigate how fan performances of citizenship relate to political tolerance (Mutz, 2006, p. 46). If fans compare Dumbledore to gay people, a love and respect for Dumbledore might be transferred to tolerance for gay people. But we might also ask whether seeing other people through the lens of popular culture (like Albus Dumbledore) prevents us from seeing other people in their own right. Lastly, as fan studies scholars like Hills (2002) and Harrington & Bielby (1995) note, fans regularly play with the boundaries between fantasy and reality in fan fiction, music, art, and conventions, gaining pleasure in the process. Fan studies scholars might explore how this play might be particularly productive for fan performances of citizenship. How might these civic actions be pleasurable in ways that other civic actions are not? And what possibilities does that open up? These are only some of the important research questions fan-based performances of citizenship bring up for communication scholars. Understanding how fan performances of citizenship

function will require research from across the communication discipline.

Conclusions

In this article, I outlined a theoretical framework for understanding fan performances of citizenship. I argued that a fluid world enables individuals to easily choose among institutions. These fluid institutions enable personalized politics as well as fluid organization patterns. Needed because of the fluidity of institutional choice, I advance two new theoretical terms: ethical framework and ethical modality. I define ethical framework as a worldview or a frame of understanding based on an ethic that is theoretical and all encompassing. I define an ethical modality as a way of meeting an ethical obligation to the ethical framework. Institutions typically pair preferred ethical modalities with ethical frameworks. But with a fluid world's increased choice among institutions, such pairings can become unpaired. In cases of fan performances of citizenship, fans unpair typical political ethical frameworks from modalities (like Democratic Party ideology from same-sex marriage) and re-pair noncivic ethical frameworks (like Harry Potter) with civic ethical modalities (like same-sex marriage). The fluidity of modern society opens up many possibilities for new forms of civic engagement and social change. Indeed, ethical framework and ethical modality only touch the surface of the complex theorizing such social change and civic action will inevitably demand from scholars. As citizens continue to reimagine social movements and civic engagement, scholars will have to engage shifting citizen ideals, inconsistent logics of publicity, and unusual public sphere structures. I hope that the concepts of ethical frameworks and ethical modalities provide scholars with a much needed theoretical base to move beyond dismissing the unusual civic forms currently emerging (like fan-based citizenship performances), but instead engage in rigorous theorizing and analysis of the civic forms that will continue to emerge in a fluid world.

Notes

[1] Historian Nan Enstad (1999) offers an historical example of what we might call fan-based citizenship performances. In a study of early 20th century women factory workers, she found that dime novels, fashion, and film helped them imagine themselves as ladies, workers, and Americans. Through popular culture, these women established a radical politics and went on strike in large numbers, despite being excluded from typical labor discourses supporting the male worker.

[2] What Giddens calls late modernity, Bauman calls postmodernity.

[3] Here, my use of the term "worldview" is anchored in Geertz's conceptualization of "worldview" and its relationship to ethics, reality, and lived experience (Geertz, 1957, pp. 421–422).

[4] Critical-cultural scholars recognize that seemingly nonpolitical cultural objects or communication artifacts are often very political. Of course, Harry Potter is political in the sense that the story has implications for gender or race imaginaries. But my point here is that Harry Potter is not civic in the sense that it is not supposed to be used to justify public policy decisions or positions on political issues. However, this does not mean that media institutions never invite fans to view media objects as political. Indeed, during negotiations with Universal Studios, J.K. Rowling stipulated that Coca-Cola could not be sold within the WizardingWorld of Harry Potter, staking a clear position on the relationship between the Harry Potter franchise and public health (Nicholson, 2010).

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