

## **Theorizing Docile Bodies in Mediatized Spaces**

**<sup>1</sup>Ben Carlo N. Atim and <sup>2</sup>Michelle Anne N. Sto. Tomas**

**<sup>1</sup>De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde (Manila); Saint Paul Seminary Foundation**

**<sup>2</sup>University of the Philippines, Los Baños**

**Corresponding author: Ben Carlo N. Atim, email: [bencarlo.atim@benilde.edu.ph](mailto:bencarlo.atim@benilde.edu.ph)**

### **Abstract**

This inquiry investigates the media's role in shaping contemporary discipline practices, specifically the human body, in the context of how the exercise of power intensifies the practice of discipline today. Some authors argue that the human body is not just a cultural text anymore but a practical, direct place of control. Parenting is an archetype of this 'control.' The study asserts that the mobility of the parent's human body is being mediatized. In a mediatized space, media plays a pivotal role in reinforcing the docility of the human body. To prove this, semi-structured interviews were employed among Millennial Filipino parents to (a) narrate current social rules in parenting, (b) identify and categorize codes of mediatized spaces, and (c) demonstrate how these codes indicate aspects of a Foucauldian discipline.

**Keywords:** discipline, mediatization, Foucault, mediatization, communication, technology

## Introduction

A developing inquiry into mediatization exercises media power now that media has been entrenched in society. Media power may be understood in terms of how societies accommodate media logic. Altheide and Snow (1979) described media logic as the media's ability to organize systems, focus or emphasize characteristic behaviors, and develop and use the grammar of media communication. Stig Hjarvard considers it as “a particular *modus operandi* and characteristics (specificities of the media) that come to influence other institutions and culture and society in general as they become dependent on the resources that the media both control and make available to them (2013, 17).” Due to media permeation, he suggests investigating how cultural processes change character, function, and structure. The employment of logic encompasses almost all aspects of human activities, which requires a subtle systematic ordering and process of control and regulation. For Hjarvard (2013), studying media and culture requires understanding how media's omnipresence has acquired greater control of social reality and interaction. With control and regulation as a covert objective of disciplinary society (Foucault, 1995) and media communication as a staple social need, (media) inevitably regulate, affect, and transform socio-political and behavioral fabrics of societal life.

One of the loci of this transformation is the human body rendered docile to a certain degree due in part to the highly mediatized modes of social life, like time and space (Jansson, 2014). By human body, we do not refer to a static physical organic body of persons but a lived and embodied body (Lindemann and Schünemann, 2020; Merleau-Ponty, 1958). However, such a phenomenological rendering of the human body does not make sense without the pure intuitions of time and space (Kant, 1998) – the hinge by which the discussion of the lived and embodied body. Knorr-Centina (2009) observes that in mediatization, the time dimension is more prominent than space as an area of study. Kalin and Frith (2016) argue that space becomes an embodied space when such a space becomes a place of memory through some spatial practices such as using “wearable technologies” (p. 222) like smartphones. However, in the

study conducted by Keffe and Kerr, they show the place becomes a “nonplace” for teenagers in Dublin, Ireland, because “they felt economically, socially, visually, and aurally excluded” (2015, p. 3562). One can say that a space is transformed into something else closely attached or connected to the human experience of things partly due to technology. Jansson (2013) sees mediatization through the heightened use of media technology as one of its causes. He argues that social space, understood in the context of mediatization, is mediatized due to various reasons such as “mediated mobility, technological convergence, interactivity, new interfaces, [and] automation of surveillance” (2013, p. 280). With this tremendous effect and influence of media and technology, it cannot be denied that many aspects of human life have been gradually affected. Adams (2018) connects media transforming power with personal identity, which can be viewed in how a person interacts using various technological platforms such as virtual space and places. He says communication processes have fragmented or “modularized identity while extending agency in various ways” (p.41). While existing researches concentrate on mediatization as a process in transforming spaces and time, there is an implicit reference to human bodies and insufficient literature that tackles issues concerning bodies in space being mediatized. In this research, we look into the mediatization of space and how it affects the disciplinarity of the human body and its docility. The research does not simply take one dimension of mediatization, namely, cultural/social construction, but also a material view in that it explicitly emphasizes the material resource used in mediatizing the human body. Our theoretical research articulates it through an empirical archetype, such as parenting.

Parenting is an archetype of this ‘control.’ It is a social rule where the manner and style of parenting may impede some. There is various content about parenting information across media platforms. Modern parents turn to the media for parenting information and advice. Sanders & Calam (2016) claim that popular culture does not facilitate parenting advice. According to Sanders & Mazzucchelli (2018), broadcast media has the advantage of evidence-based parenting support. As of the writing, the hashtag #parenting on TikTok has 44.9 billion views, with 19.9

million posts on Instagram. Spotify also provides topic-specific podcasts on parenting. Websites also become a source of information. Barkhuus, Bales, and Cowan (2017) named WebMD, Babycenter.com, and Mayo Clinic as new moms prefer. Media undeniably has become indispensable for building relationships and acquiring information or knowledge, especially digital media. As Thimm (2023) points out, “digital media have not only changed within family communication, but have also influenced parent-child relationships and intergenerational contact” (p. 38).

Many parents turn to the media for information about setting rules and limits and punishing and rewarding (Fierloos et al., 2002). Potty training, as well as listening and obeying, were some of the themes found, too. In the UK, parents, specifically new mothers, use new media to connect with other new mothers for information and support (Baker and Yang, 2018). Specifically, during the COVID-19 lockdown, TikTok became a space for parents to share and get information about parenting. Hako (2022), in an article, claimed that “TikTok parents” are cultivating a generation of gentle parents.

Parents’ use of new media to guide their parenting does not only determine the impact it makes on their children and society. Because parenting is now mediatized, parenting interventions found in new media create a form of discipline for parents to behave within more acceptable rules in society and live within its confines. As Thimm (2023) argues, “the process of mediatization significantly changes the communication environments in all of society, and it is particularly the exchange with a global public on social media that has reshaped family communication” (p. 39).

Mediatization provides a critical analysis of the interrelations between the changes in culture and society on the one hand and media and communication on the other (Couldry and Hepp 2013). In other words, it refers to “an experience everybody is acquainted with in his or her everyday life” (Hepp 2020, p. 4). For Jansson and Lindell (2018), mediatization is “a form of social structuration,” which addresses the function of media in social production and change. In a more sophisticated manner, Strömbäck & Esser (2014) said mediatization is “a social change process in which media have become increasingly influential in and

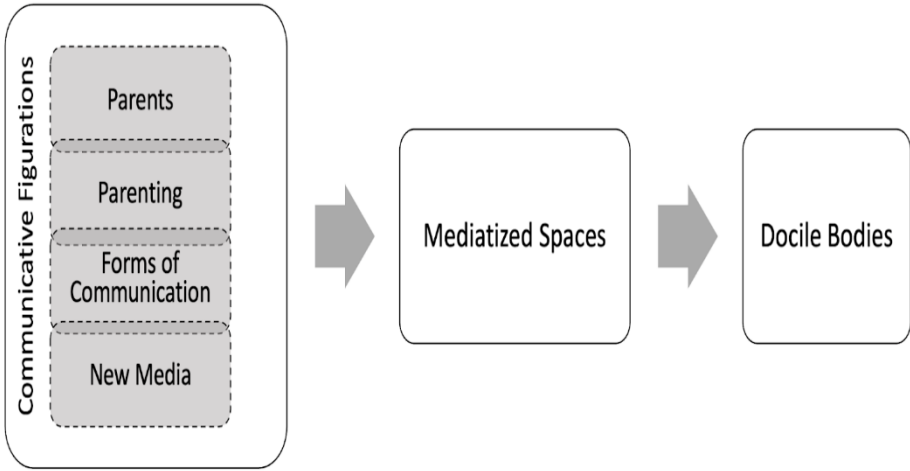
deeply integrated into different spheres of society (376).” Hence, mediatization theory asserts the need to study how society increasingly submits to and becomes dependent on media and its logic.

The inquiry directs its attention to the mobility of the parent’s human body in mediatized spaces at home and how such mobility demonstrates a deceitful mode of disciplinarity that leads to the body’s docility. Unlike before, parents navigate through new media to identify social rules and where the body exercises new ways of behaving subject to the rules defined in media. For this study, the researchers wanted to explore how the parent’s body not only associates itself with media technologies but embodies them, leading to a “disciplinary” submission through the exercise of power in a Foucauldian sense. In other words, the embodiment of new media indicates an unconscious “internalization” (Foucault, 1995) of information and prescriptions, say, about parenting, and the articulation of such internalization is demonstrated through ordinate following of social practices and norms. Hence, in algorithmic culture, according to Ted Striphas (2015), information is highly organized and sophisticatedly targets specific needs and desires of users, complex social structures “become increasingly interdependent, making social power relations at once more fluid as well as technologically dependent (Jansson and Lindell 2018, 1).” The docility of the human body is due to a new state of control, more subversive and subtle, which is potentially and powerfully infected, affected, and reinforced by the media. It is exemplified in an emerging mediatized space. To borrow from Lindemann and Schünemann (2020), space refers to “an interaction of lived bodies in a ‘social resonance space (p. 628).”

Sonia Livingstone (2009) argued that the product of mediation is not technological determinism but man-made. This also seems to be true, according to Silverstone’s (2002) observation, which states that participants in mediation are willing participants who are actively engaged. In 2005, Silverstone proposed to look not just at the influence of media on culture but also at the relationship between the participants in the mediation process. Hepp (2020) further explains that the first step in researching deep mediatization is exploring the social domains, followed by the role of media in its production.

## Methods

Couldry and Hepp (2013) verbalized a theoretical definition of mediatization: the critical analysis of the interrelations between the changes in culture and society on the one hand and media and communication on the other. According to Hepp (2013), “the starting point of the social-constructivist tradition is more rooted in symbolic interactionism and the sociology of knowledge, but also integrates some fundamental considerations of media theory” (p. 617). Furthermore, Hepp (2013) explained how mediatized worlds could be understood within four changes in communication configurations: (1) the *constellation of actors* which serves as the structural basis, (2) the *thematic framing*, that is, the action-guiding topic, (3) *forms of communication* or the patterns of communication, and (4) *media ensemble* or the media through which the figuration exists. Mediatization underscores that agents are actively engaged in cultural production and reproduction. According to Hepp (2013), these four instances help describe how institutionalization and reification of media reveal “an influence on the communicative construction of a mediatized world” (p. 624). In the context of this study, the parents willingly accommodate media in their parenting preferences, consequently manifesting mediatized spaces that shape docile bodies. Specifically, it answers the objectives of the study explicated in the conceptual framework : (a) narrate current communicative figurations in parenting, (b) identify and categorize codes of mediatized spaces, and (c) demonstrate how these codes indicate aspects of a Foucauldian discipline, particularly of the docility of the body (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Docile Bodies in Mediatized Spaces: Conceptual Framework**

The researchers conducted personal interviews using messaging applications through their personal networks. The informants must be within the following criteria: a new parent with a child of 0 to 10 years of age, male or female, living with the child under the same roof, a Filipino citizen, and having a social media presence. The criteria were chosen to illuminate the synchronous approach in studying mediatization, which focuses on the present with what was called “media waves” or the “eruptive” moments in media and digitalization (Hepp, 2013). The participants were, therefore, new parents during the height of new media, where new forms of online communication platforms were also made available.

The informants willingly participated in the data collection process by signing the informed consent. All of them were aware of the objectives of the study. They were assured of the confidentiality of their personal information, which was not to be disclosed in the research, its presentation or publication, and the narrations used only for the undertaking.

The researchers' initial interviews garnered four parent informants. The data only reveals the study's initial findings and does not intend to generalize. Analysis was organized according to the themes of mediatization, and then we will present how these are indicative of a Foucauldian discipline.

## **Results and Discussions**

### **1. Current Communicative Figurations in Parenting**

#### **1.1 Expansion of Media Use**

Some informants said that they utilize new media because of the useful information on parenting they find in it. Respondent A (2023) shares how new media has offered more parenting tips today than before. She added, "External factors such as social media and smartphones affect parenting now more than how it was years ago."

One of the reasons why new media is deemed important in the informants' parenting journey is its growing role in the parent. Features of mediatization surfaced from the data. For instance, Rachel expressed the ability of the media to extend human communication by allowing her kids to connect through music and suggested activities she found in the media. According to Winfried Shulz (2004), this is the extension of the role of media to society since human communication is limited in terms of space, time, and expressiveness. Media acts as a 'bridge' in spatial and temporal distances.

The informants also expressed a second level of mediatization where, according to Shulz (2004), media becomes a substitute for traditional forms of communication. While the parents are the children's first teachers, one informant narrated how media is used to assist her in teaching her child the English language (Respondent C, 2023). It was also revealed that an informant used media to substitute human presence and interaction. Joey (2023) explained that "Nakakagawa ako ng mga gawaing bahay since wala naman kami helper ako lang din lahat sa bahay [I am able to do the household chores since we don't have a helper, and



it's just me doing everything at home].” Respondent C also shares that with the media around the house, she can rest while her son utilizes the media.

## **1.2 Habitualization**

Findings reveal certain parents' communicative practices with new media. The different forms of new media technologies they use display the wide variety of available media they use according to their needs. For example, Respondent A (2023) shares how she uses media for arts and crafts, while Respondent B (2023) says she uses it for social support. So, while the informants narrate their use of media every day and everywhere, Respondent A notes that she uses different media forms at different times, such as podcasts during leisure, websites during time to research, and SMS/Mobile daily.

## **1.3 Managing the Parented Parent**

With the numerous information about parenting found in different media, parents are now more informed about new ways of parenting. Respondent C (2023) shares, “Fortunately, I took advantage of the advent of new media in bringing up my child. There are new tips and pieces of advice that can be found in scholarly articles on websites and podcasts.” Respondent B (2023) says she also often saves these contents and shares them with her circle of friends who are also parents.

Despite this, the informants are exposed to the fact that they wait to adapt the information they find to their own children. Respondent C (2023) said she “reflects” on what she observes in the media and compares and contrasts it with her own parenting style. Respondent A (2023) says she reads more about it (parenting style) before applying it. Respondent C (2023) adds that they are not easily swayed and, most of the time, would not conform. She states, “Actually wala. Hindi ako masyado nasunod sa mga nababasa ko sa media. Kung ano nakasanayan ko stick lang ako doon kasi para sakin oka pa naman anak ko [Actually, none. I didn't follow what I read in the media. I stick to what I'm used to because, for me, my child

is still okay].” The same perception was revealed by Respondent B (2023), “Yes, as a parent, I have my own style like I always try to be a positive/playful parent for my child in that way we are always connected, and we have created a system of open communication within our family.”

## **2. Codes of Mediatized Spaces**

The codes are based on Andre Jansson’s model of *regimes of mediatization* in social space. Drawing from Don Ihde’s phenomenological understanding of technology and *Lebenswelt*, Pierre Bourdieu’s socio-cultural analysis, and Henri Lefebvre’s triadic model of space (perceived, conceived, and lived), Jansson identifies three regimes: material indispensability and adaptation, premediation of spatial experience, and normalization of social practice. Alongside these regimes are three other indicators reinforcing Jansson’s conceptual scaffolding: territoriality, interpersonal distance, and space arrangement (Drag, 2020). Combining these indicators helps categorize codes that emphasize the mediatization of space.

### **2.1 Material Indispensability and Adaptation**

A “key feature of mediatized society is that certain tools and systems are seen as necessary, or indispensable, for leading a comfortable and socially integrated life” (Jansson, 2014). Its indispensability is measured by “the general social acceptance of literally buying into a particular way of communicating, and to the restructurings through which the material presence of these things are naturalized in people’s day-to-day lives” (Jansson, 2014). The implications are palpably evident in various aspects of life, such as parenting. When the respondents were asked about the forms of new media they often use, most responded, “SMS mobile applications,” “Podcast, Websites, Online Forums,” and “Spotify, YouTube, Netflix.” Another support to the indispensable character of new media is when and how they are used, respondents’ opportunities to establish and enhance interpersonal relationships with their child/ren, learn parenting tips, and personal and career development

growth. In terms of use, most answered “every day,” that is, either in any period of the day (morning, afternoon, or/and evening). While on interpersonal relationships, one said that it establishes a “connection with my kids through music and suggested activities,” which supports another respondent’s view that “social media and digital technologies lead to an effect in the parents’ ability to connect with their children.” These media help parents with their parenting role and style, strengthening interpersonal closeness or relation with their children. One respondent said, “Yes, as a parent, I have my own style like I always try to be a positive/playful parent for my child. In that way we are always connected and we have created a system of open communication within our family.” While that is the case, another parent finds new media information useful: “These forms of media provide me with wider information on the specific content I would need.” In other words, the new media provide “Useful information and as a one parenting tool /resource.” The advent of new media also “opens a lot of tips for parents to do their parenting in a more advanced way.” Another argument supporting the material indispensability and adaptation of new media is the affordances they provide users, such as valuable content that ushers independent learning. One respondent said, “Yes. Kasi marami natutunan si Fold (child) sa panood ng mga educational na videos. Doon din sya natuto magsalita ng English language” [Yes. Because Fold (child) has learned a lot from watching educational videos. That's also where he learned to speak the English language.]” It is as well an opportunity for parents to do other activities outside parenting, such as “At the same time nakakagawa ako ng mga gawaing bahay since wala naman kami helper, ako lang din lahat sa bahay [I am able to do the household chores since we don't have a helper, and it's just me doing everything at home].”

## **2.2 Premeditation of Spatial Practice**

According to Jansson (2014), media do not only “shape our expectations and anticipations of future events and experiences,” but they also “generate particular forms of action and interaction that are performed, or staged, to become mediated within a certain

representational register.” The new media cater to independent learning, such as language learning, parenting tips, and updating “to hone my skills and social support” (Respondent, 2023). Some respondents show a certain degree of resistance or skepticism regarding media content related to parenting. Some believe that one has to “Read more about it before applying it to my parenting,” while another finds media information or content irrelevant to one’s parenting style or role “Ayun nga since di ako masyado nagpapadala sa mga nababasa ko, wala ako sinsunod sa mga yun [That’s it since I don’t really get influenced by what I read, I don’t follow any of those].” What these responses show, hence, is how users manage their engagement with the media in a manner that some do not simply succumb to media influence but take a critical mode when taking and processing information.

### **2.3 Normalization of social practice**

Jansson (2014) defines this regime as “the ways in which the appropriation of media changes social norms, conventions, and expectations at the level of everyday practice. These normalizations, which operate through *common sense* and thus contribute to maintaining shared value systems and mythologies, pertain to the timing and spacing of people’s life activities.” For instance, territoriality and space arrangement contribute to normalizing a specific practice involving the spatialization of concrete objects. When respondents were asked where they use new media, they identified the “home” as a place and space for new media activities, while others answered “nothing. Strike anywhere.” These responses show how spaces function in developing social norms, conventions, and expectations. Spaces like those allow users to technologize and, thus, spatialize the place for internalization of or resistance from media use and content consumption. Another striking observation in the normalization of social practice is how parenting evolves due to digital technology. A respondent said, “Because as the world evolves and adopts in the age of digital technology, the behavior and nature of parenting also do,” which is affirmed by another respondent who said, “External factors such as social media and smartphones affect

the parenting now than how it was years ago.” Routines and behavior patterns are some ways we indicate signs of changes. For instance, before the advent of streaming platforms, household members used to get together in one place to watch movies or TV shows/series together. Now, this may not be the case. For instance, a respondent shared the use of new media for entertainment, like listening to music and watching movies. However, the difference is that they do not share the same territoriality and space arrangement. “For entertainment also dahil mahilig din ako making ng music. Pag weekends naman, hinahayaan ko manood si (child) ng movie sa Netflix tapos ako papahinga, [For entertainment as well, because I also enjoy making music. On weekends, I let (child) watch a movie on Netflix. At the same time, I take a rest]” according to another respondent. It is true that as technology evolves, “the behavior and nature of parenting also do.” It is also the case with normalizing norms and practices that adapt to the evolution of technology.

However, it is also interesting to note that some respondents show a degree of resistance and negotiation in using new media. Some of these are evident in how the respondents engage and consume media content or information. When asked: “Have you ever done anything on your parenting journey that is non-conforming with what you see in new media?” One respondent does not succumb to assimilate the content right away, said, “Read more about it (parenting tips) before applying it to my parenting.” Another respondent, sternly believing in personal-style parenting, said, “Actually, wala. Di ako masyado nasunod sa mga nababasa ko sa media □ kung ano nakasanayan ko stick lang ako doon kasi para sakin ok pa naman anak ko. Basta talaga babantayan mo lang ano pinapanood at pinapakinggan niya [Actually, none. I didn’t really follow what I read in the media I stick to what I’m used to because, for me, my child is still okay. You really need to monitor what they’re watching and listening to].” A similar view from another respondent shows similar degree of resistance “Ayun nga since di ako masyado nagpapadala sa mga nababasa ko, wala ako sinusunod sa mga yun [That’s it, since I don’t really get influenced by what I read, I don’t follow any of those.]” But others would still acknowledge the positive benefits of new media but are a bit resistant to a degree, “I am a person who does not

conform to what is new and popular. That is why apart from what I get from those in the new media, I still have the ‘pamahiin’ or what the oldies advised me to do as a parent.” Some forms of resistance lead to strengthening connections or interpersonal distance (closeness) between individuals. For instance, one respondent finds personal style a key to building a natural connection with the child and family, said, “Yes, as a parent, I have my own style like I always try to be a positive/playful parent for my child in that way we are always connected, and we have created a system of open communication within our family.

### 3. Aspects of a Foucauldian Discipline

Central to Foucault’s discourse on power as practice or activity is his *Discipline and Punish*. In this work, Foucault constructs a genealogical account of power through its various manifestations from the classical age until the later centuries. One of these manifestations of power exercise is discipline. In the chapter “Docile Bodies,” Foucault offers some salient characterization of the use of power through its dynamic interplay with various mechanisms such as discipline and forms of correct training (military, schools, monasteries, workshops, hospitals, etc.). He opens this chapter with a scathing observation regarding the soldier, who, in the late eighteenth century, “has become something that can be made; out of a formless clay, an inapt body, the machine required can be constructed; posture is gradually corrected, a calculated constraint runs slowly through each part of the body, mastering it, making it pliable, ready at all times, turning silently into the automatism of habit” (Foucault 1995, 135). The statement sets the tone for Foucault’s analysis of the processes and dynamics involved in making human bodies docile. To be sure, according to Foucault, the body as “an object and target of power” is not new, that “in every society, the body was in a grip of every strict powers, which imposed on it constraints, prohibitions or obligations” (p. 136) because since the classical age the body has been an object of examination and regulation. Such practice is seen in two registers: the “anatomico-metaphysical register” (submission and use) and the “technico-political register” (functioning and explanation), which

described the body as an object to be “manipulated, shaped, trained, which obeys, responds, becomes skillful and increases its forces” (p. 136). From these two registers, Foucault defines docility as “A body...that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved” (p.136). However, Foucault argues that there are new things in the “projects of docility” in the eighteenth century and these are seen in various techniques employed by several institutions such as (1) the “scale of control”; (2) “the object of control”; and (3) “modality.” The ‘scale of control’ pertains to the retailing of the human body as an object of “subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of the mechanism itself – movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity: an infinitesimal power over the active body” (p.137). The ‘object of control’ refers to the “economy, the efficiency of movements, their internal organization” (p.137).

Lastly, the ‘modality’ which implies an “uninterrupted, constant coercion, supervising the processes of the activity rather than its result and it is exercised according to a codification that partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement” (p.137). These compound interrelated techniques are made possible, according to Foucault, “the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility, (137)” which he calls ‘disciplines.’ These disciplines employed in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries are, for Foucault, “general formulas of domination” (p.137) quite different from other forms of disciplinary methods seen in relations with a slave, a vassalage, ‘service,’ and monastic formation. In such kind of discipline, it “produces subjected and practiced bodies, ‘docile’ bodies” (p.138). Hence, discipline is considered a “political anatomy of detail” (p.139). A meticulous observation of detail requires the following techniques or methods and knowledge as well as “descriptions, plans and data” (p.141). These are *the art of distributions*, *the control of activity*, *the organization of geneses*, and *the composition of forces*. These techniques are necessary for the practice of discipline where space (the art of distributions), time (the control of activity), segmentation or genetic (organization of geneses), and efficiency (composing forces) are the primary mechanisms of discipline made possible by the exercise of power. For Foucault, the combination of these

techniques creates a discipline that controls individual bodies as being “cellular,” “organic,” “genetic,” and “combinatory.” They operate by drawing up tables of serialization, prescribing movements, imposing exercises, and arranging tactics (p.167).

### 3.1 Art of Distributions

The *art of distributions* pertains to the use of spaces in various modalities like enclosure, partitioning, functional sites, and rank so that these spaces “provide fixed positions and permit circulation; they carve out individual segments and establish operational links; they mark places and indicate values; they guarantee the obedience of individuals, but also a better economy of time and gesture” (p.148). Spaces become “the base for a micro-physics” of what Foucault calls a ‘cellular’ power (p.149). For instance, Foucault sees the table of seriation and spatialization as a symbol of a “technique of power and a procedure of knowledge” (p.148). It is the table that spatializes the human body and, through it, puts the body to control, regulation, and normalization. The latter is “one of the great instruments of power” (184), which “compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes” (p.183) individuals. In short, “the power of normalization imposes homogeneity; but it individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialties and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another” (p.184). While the expansion of media use brings positive utility to those informed users, it can also be seen as a tool that instrumentalizes positive values as means of cultivating a ‘cellular’ power whereby users, through their use of new media provide information for further regulation of external forces and self-regulation through enclosure (use of particular apps or websites), functional sites (location where children watch entertainment shows using gadget), and partitioning of space (where a parent does work while a child watching movies or shows).



### **3.2 Activity Control**

The *control of activity* is characterized by using time as a means of discipline. To monitor behavior and avoid unnecessary unprofitable activities for producing goods, human bodies are being temporalized by regulating each activity according to the expected outcomes to be produced and, for instance, setting up a timetable to set well-coordinated and regulated routines in a day. Having this measure assures proper monitoring and surveillance and avoids using time aimlessly. This is what Foucault calls the “temporal elaboration of the act” (p.151), where controlling methods are properly orchestrated and synchronized with other related activities. Foucault explains that “it is a ‘programme’; it assures the elaboration of the act itself; it controls its development and its stages from the inside” (p.152). Another important point of this technique is the “*body-object articulation*” - an element of discipline within the technique of control which “defines each of the relations that the body must have with the object that it manipulates. Between them, it outlines a “meticulous meshing” (p.153). This temporal mechanism is called the “instrumental coding of the body,” where it “consists of a breakdown of the total gesture into two parallel series: that of the parts of the body to be used. ...and that of the parts of the object manipulated” (p.153). With this, a series of organized *modus* that uses time as a means of discipline finds the human body as a locus of “new forms of knowledge” (p.155). The human body reveals its vulnerabilities when such bodies are subject to several instrumental uses and regulations. We find such manifestation in how parents engage in various activities using new media. According to the data, frequent use of new media daily implies a regulated routine in consuming information or media content. The ‘body-object articulation’ is seen in the engagement of the parents’ activities and bodies with new media, either as a means for their parenting or personal development or growth. The attachment to ‘media things’ (Jansson, 2014) enhances the deepening relation between one’s subjectivity and the object, leading to a phenomenological experience of embodiment. An implication of this is the coding of the body concerning its object, which may lead to docility.

### 3.3 Organization of Geneses

The *organization of geneses* uses time to segmentize and isolate human activities of different kinds. For instance, the training period is separated from the practice period. In short, Foucault explains, “break down time into separate and adjusted threads” (p.158), a “disciplinary polyphony of exercises.” (p.159). What is emphasized in this technique is the value of exercise – a technique “by which one imposes on the body tasks that are both repetitive and different, but always graduated” (p.161). Hence, a possibility of a “detailed control and a regular intervention (of differentiation, correction, punishment, elimination) in each moment of time; the possibility of characterizing, and therefore of using individuals according to the level of the series that they are moving through,” according to Foucault, shows the “ultimate capacity of an individual” (p.160). In this form of activity, “power is articulated directly onto time; it assures its control and guarantees its use” (p.160). Relating this to parenting as an activity using new media, we find the value of time and how time segments the activities of both parents and children. The data show that the frequent use of new media (every morning, afternoon, and evening) and the child's activities (entertainment, learning, and so on) are means of training in a way that those segments correspond to various assigned tasks or activities. It establishes a routine that regularizes and automatically enacts activity for parent and child.

### 3.4 Composition of Forces

The *composition of forces* is the last of the ultimate conditions of control, and domination refers to gathering various forces to subjugate the body to obtain an “efficient machine” (p.164). Foucault explains that the “individual body becomes an element that may be placed, moved, articulated on others. Its bravery or its strength are no longer the principal variables that define it; but the place it occupies, the interval it covers, the regularity, the good order according to which it operates its movements” (p.164). For instance, a combination of various rules and regulations in a class or school reduced the school into a “machine for learning, in which

each pupil, each level and each moment, if correctly combined, were permanently utilized in the general process of teaching” (p.165). Such kind of practice is not too distant from how individuals regulate their behavior, actions, and routines when using new media. Such a technique of training, places the “bodies in a little world of signals to each of which is attached a single, obligatory response...training” (p.166). Foucault situates this technique in training of school children where “signalization...of perceiving the signal and reacting to it immediately...prearranged code” (p.166) and so “few words, no explanation, a total silence interrupted only by signals – bells, clapping of hands, gestures, a mere glance from the teacher, or that little wooden apparatus used by the Brothers of the Christian Schools” (p.166). Similar training codes can be seen in various fields of normative activities, such as using gadgets for media use, where one is trained to respond immediately to signals that prompt immediate response. In the case of using new media, several forms of coded behaviors can be connected to what Foucault identified as a product of a combination of forces by which individuals who are targets of these forces may unconsciously succumb to such regulation or control. While there is resistance from the parents in terms of regulating their parenting styles, some of them still find the new media content useful and important. We can infer from this that habitual use of the new media and the same sites leads to mechanical activity on the user's part, whose dependence reduces self-regulation and self-control.

For Foucault, these techniques are a product of science, particularly military science. He said, “Tactics, the art of constructing, with located bodies, coded activities, and trained aptitudes, mechanisms in which their calculated combination increases the product of the various forces are no doubt the highest form of disciplinary practice” (p.167). But the main point of Foucault is a societal vision akin to a military structure; rather than drawing from a state of nature, it drew inspiration from intricately interlocked components of a machine, eschewing the primal social contract for continual enforcement, overlooking fundamental rights in favor of perpetual training methods, and disregarding the notion of general will in favor of fostering automatic compliance. Such “automatic

docility” is evident in mediatizing spaces and other social dimensions of human life.

## Conclusion

Findings suggest that media is gradually saturating the bodies (of the parents). Although media is used in parenting, such as extension and substitution (Shulz, 2004), parents reveal their agency or their own preferences, beliefs, and attitudes towards absorbing what they see in media into their own parenting. Interestingly, findings revealed media’s penetration to human bodies where parents are also “parented” by information in the media.

## Literature Cited

- Adams, Paul C. 2018. “Mapping Geomedia: Charting the Terrains of Space, Place and Media.” In Karin Fast, Andre Jansson, John Lindell, Linda Ryan Bengtsson, and Mekonnen Tesfahuney (eds.), *Geomedia Studies: Spaces and Mobilities in Mediatized World*. Routledge.
- Altheide, David L and Robert P. Snow. 1979. *Media Logic*. Sage Publications.
- Baker, Brenda., and Irene Yang. 2018. “Social media as social support in pregnancy and the postpartum.” *Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare* 17(September 2017): 31–34. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.srhc.2018.05.003>
- Barkhuus, Louise., Elizabeth Bales, and Lisa Cowan. 2017. “Internet Ecologies of New Mothers: Trust, Variety and Strategies for Managing Diverse Information Sources.” *Proceedings of the 50th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences* (2017): 2283–2292. <https://doi.org/10.24251/hicss.2017.276>.

Couldry, Nick and Andreas Hepp. 2013. "Conceptualizing Mediatization: Contexts, Traditions, Arguments." *Communication Theory* 23(2013):191-202.

Fierloos, Irene., Dafna A. Windhorst, Yuan Fang, Yuping Mao, Matty R. Crone, Clemens M.H. Hosman, et.al. 2022. "Factors associated with media use for parenting information: A cross-sectional study among parents of children aged 0–8 years." *Nurs Open* 9(1): 446-457. DOI: 10.1002/nop2.1084.

Foucault, M. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.1991. Translated by Alan Sheridan. Vintage Books.

Hako, Nasi. 2022. *How the growing Tiktok parenting trend is cultivating a new generation of gentle parents*. Retrieved from News24: <https://www.news24.com/life/archive/how-the-growing-tiktok-parenting-trend-is-cultivating-a-new-generation-of-gentle-parents-20220110>.

Hepp, Andreas. 2013. "The communicative figurations of mediatized worlds: Mediatization research in times of the 'mediation of everything.'" *European Journal of Communication* 28(6): 615–629.

Hepp, Andreas. 2020. *Deep Mediatization*. Routledge.

Hjarvard, Stig. 2013. *The Mediatization of Culture and Society*. London: Routledge.

Jansson, Andre and Johan Lindell. 2018. "Media Studies for a Mediatized World: Rethinking Media and Social Space." *Media and Communication* vol. 6, issue 2: 1-4.

- Jansson, Andre. 2014. Indispensable Things: on mediatization, materiality, and space. In Knut Lundby (ed.), *Mediatization of Communication*, 273-322. Mouton: De Gruyter.
- Jansson, Andre. 2013. "Mediatization and Social Space: Reconstructing Mediatization for the Transmedia Age." *Communication Theory* 23: 279-296.
- Kalin, Jason and Jordan Frith. 2016. "Wearing the City: Memory P(a)laces, Smartphones, and the Rhetorical Invention of Embodied Space." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* vol. 46, no. 3: 222-235.
- Kant, Immanuel. 1998. *The Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. Cambridge University Press.
- Keeffe, Linda O., and Aphra Kerr. 2015. "Reclaiming Public Space: Sound and Mobile Media Use by Teenagers." *International Journal of Communication* 9: 3562-3582.  
[https://www.pure.ed.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/79599744/reclaiming\\_public\\_space.pdf](https://www.pure.ed.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/79599744/reclaiming_public_space.pdf)
- Knorr-Centina, K. 2009. "The synthetic situation: Interactionism for a global world." *Symbolic Interaction*, 32(1): 61–87.
- Lindemann, G. and Schünemann, D. 2020. Presence in Digital Spaces. A Phenomenological Concept of Presence in Mediatized Communication. *Human Studies* 43: 627-651  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10746-020-09567-y>.
- Livingstone, Sonia. 2009. "On the Mediation of Everything: ICA Presidential Address 2008." *Journal of Communication* 59(1): 1-8.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 1958. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Colin Smith. Routledge.

Sanders, M., & Mazzucchelli, T. 2018. *The Power of Positive Parenting: Transforming the Lives of Children, Parents, and Communities Using the Triple P System*. Oxford University Press.

Sanders, Matthew R. and Rachel Calam. 2016. "Parenting Information and Advice and the Mass Media." In Kevin S. Durkin and H. Rudolph Schaffer (eds.), *The Wiley Handbook of Developmental Psychology in Practice: Implementation and Impact*, 100-120. Wiley Blackwell.

Schulz, Winfried. 2004. "Reconstructing Mediatization as an Analytical Concept." *European Journal of Communication* 19(1): 87-101. DOI: 10.1177/0267323104040696.

Silverstone, Roger. 2002. "Complicity and Collusion in the Mediation of Everyday Life." *New Literary History* vol. 33, no. 4: 761-780. DOI:10.1353/nlh.2002.0045.

Silverstone, Roger. 2005. "Mediation and Communication." In C. Calhoun et al. (eds.), *The International Handbook of Sociology*. Sage.

Striphas, Ted. 2015. Algorithmic Culture. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 18(4/5): 395-412.

Strömbäck, Jesper and Frank Esser. 2014. "Mediatization of Politics: Transforming Democracies and Reshaping Politics." In Knut Lundby (ed.), *Mediatization of Communication*. De Gruyter.

Thimm, Caja. 2023. "Mediatized Families: Digital Parenting on Social Media." In Nina Dethloff, Katharina Kaeslin, and Louisa Specht-Riemenschneider (eds.), *Families and New Media: Comparative Perspectives on Digital Transformations in Law and Society*, 33-58. Springer.