

POLIS V12: The Complete Communication & Media Series – 12 Giants

Jorge Batista Alves Pereira

Independent Researcher, Sabugal, Guarda, Portugal

[ORCID: 0009-0000-6385-7245](https://orcid.org/0009-0000-6385-7245)

May 2026

*This document combines two companion papers:
“Tensional Reinterpretation of Six Founders of Communication Theory”
and “Tensional Reinterpretation of Six More Media Pioneers”.*

DOIs: Main treatise [10.5281/zenodo.19618276](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19618276) – POLIS Bible
[10.5281/zenodo.19836226](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19836226)

Abstract

Within the POLIS V12 tensional ontology, every communication system is a polis constituted by three meshes (solid, liquid, gaseous) and governed by the closure condition $\epsilon = \sum K_m(2+K_m) = 0$, with $T = K_{\min}$ as the tensional origin. This paper applies the framework to six foundational figures of communication theory: Claude Shannon (information theory), Harold Lasswell (model of communication), Paul Lazarsfeld (media effects), Theodor Adorno (culture industry), Marshall McLuhan (the medium is the message), and Walter Lippmann (public opinion). Each classical contribution is reinterpreted as a tensional configuration: Shannon's bit as minimal K ; Lasswell's "who says what in which channel to whom with what effect" as five K elements; Lazarsfeld's two-step flow as liquid mesh mediation; Adorno's culture industry as Phase 3 saturation; McLuhan's medium as K environment; and Lippmann's stereotypes as pre-normalised K shortcuts. The universal equations remain unchanged; no free parameters are introduced.

1 Introduction

POLIS V12 is a closed, parameter-free tensional conservation theory built on four axioms (Tensional Ontology, Harmonic Ground $H = 1$, Tensional Conservation, Data Origin $T = K_{\min}$). The governing equation, after normalisation, is

$$\epsilon = \sum_{m=1}^n K_m(2 + K_m) = 0,$$

with $K_m = (v_m - T)/(v_{\max} - T) \in [0, 1]$. The disequilibrium index is $\text{IDT}^* = \epsilon/(1 + \epsilon)$. All real communication systems reside in Phase 4 ($\text{IDT}^* \geq 0.70$) unless artificially uniform. The Rolling Law $2\pi r_p = V_{\text{orb}}T_{\text{rot}}$ applies fractally at all scales.

This paper reinterprets six key communication contributions within this tensional ontology. No classical primacy is assumed; tension is the primitive.

2 Claude Shannon – Information Theory and the Bit

Shannon defined the bit as the unit of information and entropy $H = -\sum p_i \log_2 p_i$. In POLIS V12, a bit is a two-state system with $K = 0$ or $K = 1$ (binary). Entropy is the average $\langle x \rangle$ over the distribution of K : $x_i = K_i(2 + K_i)$. Shannon's source coding theorem states that the minimal number of bits to encode a source is H – a tensional limit. The noisy channel capacity $C = \max_{p(x)} I(X; Y)$ is the maximum rate of K transmission with error ϵ bounded.

Shannon's "communication model" (source, transmitter, channel, receiver, destination) is a tensional polis: each component transforms K (source to transmitter to signal to receiver to destination). The binary symmetric channel flips bits with probability p – a Phase 4 noise.

3 Harold Lasswell – Model of Communication

Lasswell's formula: "Who says what in which channel to whom with what effect?" In POLIS V12, these five elements correspond to five K nodes: Communicator (K_{sender}), Message (K_{content}), Medium (K_{channel}), Audience (K_{receiver}), Effect (K_{impact}). The complete communication act is the closure $\epsilon = \sum x_i = 0$ for an ideal transmission. Lasswell's content analysis (quantifying message features) is a tensional measurement of K_{message} .

His work on propaganda (World War I) used tensional framing: presenting K to shape opinion. The "Lasswellian tradition" influenced political communication.

4 Paul Lazarsfeld – Two-Step Flow and Opinion Leaders

Lazarsfeld discovered that media effects are often indirect: information flows from media to opinion leaders (liquid mesh) and then to less active followers. In POLIS V12, the two-step flow is a tensional cascade: $K_{\text{media}} \rightarrow K_{\text{opinion leader}} \rightarrow K_{\text{public}}$. Opinion leaders have higher $K_{\text{attention}}$ (they consume more media) and intermediate $K_{\text{influence}}$. The "limited effects" model (minimal media influence) showed that personal networks (liquid mesh) filter K . Lazarsfeld's Bureau of Applied Social Research used surveys (empirical K measurement).

His concept of "narcotising dysfunction" (overexposure to media reduces action) is a Phase 3 saturation: K input exceeds capacity to respond.

5 Theodor Adorno – Culture Industry and Standardisation

Adorno (Frankfurt School) argued that mass culture is standardised, formulaic, and manipulative. In POLIS V12, the culture industry is a Phase 3 saturated polis: K (creativity, originality) is suppressed; products are interchangeable (low K variance). Adorno's critique of the "star system" (celebrity as false K authority) shows how media elevates superficial K over substance. His analysis of popular music (twelve-bar blues, standardisation) demonstrated tensional repetition: the same K patterns recycled.

Adorno's concept of "pseudo-individualisation" (pretence of uniqueness) is a low- K variation on a high- K formula. His retreat from empirical research (preferring dialectical theory) kept ϵ high between him and social science.

6 Marshall McLuhan – The Medium is the Message

McLuhan argued that the form of a medium (its K structure) is more important than its content. In POLIS V12, the medium itself sets T and v_{max} for the message. The "global village" (electronic media) reduces distance to near $K = 0$. "Hot" media (high definition, e.g., radio) saturate one sense (high K), while "cool" media (low definition,

e.g., telephone) require participation (liquid mesh). McLuhan's "tetrad" (laws of media) asks four tensional questions: what does it enhance? obsolesce? retrieve? reverse?

His famous "the content of a new medium is an old medium" is a tensional recursion: the K of the previous medium becomes the message of the next.

7 Walter Lippmann – Public Opinion and Stereotypes

Lippmann argued that citizens rely on simplified mental pictures (stereotypes) to navigate a complex world. In POLIS V12, stereotypes are pre-normalised K shortcuts: $K_{\text{stereotype}}$ approximates the true K of an event but introduces bias (systematic ϵ). The "phantom public" (disengaged majority) has low K (inactive). Lippmann's concept of "manufacture of consent" (elites control K flows) anticipates propaganda. He called for a "bureau of intelligence" (expert analysts) to provide accurate K to decision-makers.

Lippmann's "The Phantom Public" (1925) argued that the public cannot achieve $\epsilon = 0$ on complex issues; it must rely on experts. His debate with John Dewey (public as capable) is a tensional clash (Phase 4).

8 Conclusion

The six foundational contributions to communication theory are coherently reinterpreted within the POLIS V12 tensional ontology. Information theory, Lasswell's model, two-step flow, culture industry, medium theory, and public opinion all become natural consequences of the closure condition $\epsilon = \sum K_m(2+K_m) = 0$ and the fractal hierarchy of communication polises. No free parameters are added.

Zenodo references

- Main treatise: [10.5281/zenodo.19618276](https://zenodo.org/record/19618276)
- POLIS Bible: [10.5281/zenodo.19836226](https://zenodo.org/record/19836226)

Abstract

This paper extends the POLIS V12 tensional reinterpretation to six additional media giants: Harold Innis (time-space bias), Umberto Eco (semiotics), Stuart Hall (encoding/decoding), Neil Postman (technopoly), Manuel Castells (network society), and Jürgen Habermas (public sphere). Each is re-read as a tensional configuration: Innis's bias as dominant K ; Eco's sign as K carrier; Hall's decoding as local K interpretation; Postman's technopoly as Phase 3 saturation; Castells's network as liquid mesh; and Habermas's public sphere as ideal $\epsilon = 0$ discourse. The universal equations remain unchanged; no free parameters are introduced.

9 Introduction

As in the companion paper, POLIS V12 rests on four axioms. After normalisation the mother equation is

$$\epsilon = \sum_{m=1}^n K_m(2 + K_m) = 0,$$

with $IDT^* = \epsilon/(1 + \epsilon)$. All real media systems are in Phase 4 ($IDT^* \geq 0.70$) unless artificially uniform. The Rolling Law $2\pi r_p = V_{orb}T_{rot}$ applies fractally.

This paper reinterprets six more foundational contributions to media studies.

10 Harold Innis – Time and Space Bias

Innis (teacher of McLuhan) argued that media have a "bias" toward either time (duration) or space (extension). In POLIS V12, time-biased media (stone, clay) have high $K_{durability}$ (low K change), preserving tradition (low ϵ). Space-biased media (paper, broadcasting) have high $K_{diffusion}$ (cover large area), enabling centralised control (high K hierarchy). The "monopoly of knowledge" occurs when one media type dominates, increasing ϵ (excluded groups). Innis's "The Bias of Communication" (1951) is a tensional analysis of media ecology.

His work on the fur trade (Canada) linked transportation K to political power.

11 Umberto Eco – Semiotics and the Open Work

Eco studied signs (signifier/signified) and the "open work" (art that invites multiple interpretations). In POLIS V12, a sign is a K unit where signifier (gaseous mesh) and signified (solid mesh) are coupled. The "open work" (opera aperta) has low $K_{determination}$; the reader (interpreter) supplies additional K (meaning). Eco's "A Theory of Semiotics"

(1976) is a tensional taxonomy of sign K (iconic, indexical, symbolic). His detective novel "The Name of the Rose" uses medieval library as a polis where forbidden K is hidden.

Eco's critique of mass media (TV as "paleotelevision") shows how saturation (Phase 3) reduces critical K .

12 Stuart Hall – Encoding/Decoding

Hall's encoding/decoding model emphasises that audiences actively interpret (decode) messages based on their social position. In POLIS V12, encoding is the transformation of raw K into a media text; decoding is the reverse transformation. Hall's three reading positions: dominant (preferred K), negotiated (partial K adjustment), and oppositional (K inversion). The polysemy of media texts means that the same K can be decoded differently by different audiences. Hall's concept of "articulation" (linking K elements) is a tensional operation.

His work on "race" and media (mugging as moral panic) showed how K (threat) is amplified by news frames.

13 Neil Postman – Technopoly and Amusing Ourselves to Death

Postman warned that technology can transform culture into a "technopoly" where tools define values. In POLIS V12, a technopoly is a Phase 3 saturated polis: $K_{\text{efficiency}}$ dominates all other K (humanistic, moral). His "Amusing Ourselves to Death" (1985) contrasts Orwell (force) with Huxley (pleasure); the latter is more dangerous because high K entertainment conceals low K substance. TV's "now... this" format (disconnected segments) increases ϵ (lack of coherence). Postman advocated for "media ecology" (the study of media as environments) – a tensional analysis of K media.

He ended his career at NYU where he founded the Media Ecology programme.

14 Manuel Castells – Network Society

Castells analysed the rise of the network society, where power resides in connectivity. In POLIS V12, a network is a liquid mesh of nodes (people, organisations) linked by K flows (information). The "space of flows" (electronic interaction) competes with the "space of places" (physical locality). Castells's "information age" trilogy (1996–1998) described how K (knowledge, wealth) concentrates in connected nodes, leaving disconnected nodes at low K (poverty, exclusion). The concept of "timeless time" (real-time global communication) reduces Δt to near zero.

Castells's research on social movements (Indignados, Occupy) shows how low- K nodes can mobilise via social media (Phase 4 emergence).

15 Jürgen Habermas – Public Sphere and Communicative Action

Habermas theorised the public sphere (Öffentlichkeit) as a space for rational-critical debate. In POLIS V12, the public sphere is an ideal polis where participants set aside personal K (status, power) and engage in deliberation aimed at consensus ($\epsilon = 0$). The "ideal speech situation" includes equal chance to speak, no coercion, and truthfulness – tensional conditions for ϵ minimisation. Habermas's "structural transformation of the public sphere" (1962) traced its decline from literary salons (liquid mesh) to mass media manipulation (high K control). His "theory of communicative action" (1981) distinguishes strategic action (K oriented to success) from communicative action (K oriented to understanding).

Habermas's debate with Foucault (power vs consensus) is a tensional Phase 4 clash: is ϵ ever reducible to zero?

16 Conclusion

Six additional media pioneers are reinterpreted within the POLIS V12 tensional ontology. Time/space bias, semiotics, encoding/decoding, technopoly, network society, and the public sphere all become natural consequences of the closure condition $\epsilon = \sum K_m(2 + K_m) = 0$ and the fractal hierarchy of media polises. No free parameters are added; the same equations that describe a physical system or a social system also describe the circulation of meaning.

Zenodo references

- Main treatise: [10.5281/zenodo.19618276](https://zenodo.org/record/19618276)
- POLIS Bible: [10.5281/zenodo.19836226](https://zenodo.org/record/19836226)

References for the twelve media thinkers

- Shannon, C. E. (1948). “A Mathematical Theory of Communication”. *Bell System Technical Journal*, **27**, 379–423, 623–656.
- Lasswell, H. D. (1948). “The Structure and Function of Communication in Society”. In L. Bryson (ed.), *The Communication of Ideas*. New York: Harper.
- Lazarsfeld, P. F., Berelson, B. & Gaudet, H. (1944). *The People’s Choice*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Adorno, T. W. & Horkheimer, M. (1944). *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. New York: Social Studies Association.
- McLuhan, M. (1964). *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Lippmann, W. (1922). *Public Opinion*. New York: Harcourt.
- Innis, H. A. (1951). *The Bias of Communication*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Eco, U. (1976). *A Theory of Semiotics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hall, S. (1980). “Encoding/Decoding”. In *Culture, Media, Language*. London: Hutchinson.
- Postman, N. (1985). *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. New York: Viking.
- Castells, M. (1996). *The Rise of the Network Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Habermas, J. (1962). *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*. Neuwied: Luchterhand.