

ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND CIVIL SOCIETY

BARBARA BECKER, JOSEF WEHNER
GMD, Germany

In contrast to mass media, which established a kind of global public opinion, interactive media seems to support the development of *Teiloöffentlichkeiten* (“partial publics”), which are discourses characterised by context-specific argumentation strategies and special themes. We assume that interactive electronic media will not substitute for the traditional mass media, but will be useful for pre-institutional forms of public opinion, as they can be found in non-governmental organizations, community pressure groups, local activities and so on. Following this, electronic media will probably support movements of the so-called civil society.

The question remains still open, whether electronic media might help to find a more global political consensus within a society, by overcoming the discourse specific perspectives.