Global Media Journal
German Edition

Media Accountability Online in Israel.
An application of Bourdieu's field theory

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Abstract: Due to structural changes in journalism, such as deregulation, privatisation and the influence of new technologies, it has become increasingly important to study media accountability (MA). By applying Bourdieu's theory of social fields, this paper proposes a new approach to do so: MA is defined as a function of both journalistic autonomy and influence in the media field. Here, online communication potentially widens the scope of action for media's transparency, responsiveness as well as the articulation of media criticism by a variety of actors. In Israel, media criticism is driven by the agent's struggle for interpretive authority over public discourse in a politically polarized society. Semi-structured interviews with Israeli journalists, media activists and experts suggest that journalistic agents who have yet to earn credibility and reputation exploit online communication to its full potential, while agents in the field of power tend to dismiss online criticism. The influence of the audience's media criticism is not solely dependent on the technical ability of connecting and hearing the voices of the masses; it has to be in combination with symbolic or political capital. However, the demand for media's social responsibility is also related to being more careful and less critical, which is very evident in Israel. Thus, it is important to critically reflect on what happens when media accountability practices become more efficient and a stronger sense for "being watched" develops.

Keywords: Online communication, journalism, field theory, Bourdieu, Israel, media accountability

In 2006, the Israeli media critic Dvorit Shargal set up a blog and started to publish insider information relating to the journalistic field in Israel – in the beginning anonymously. Although she now thinks the impact of her media watch blog is limited, she recognizes the potential that the internet offers for a new type of media criticism. Shargal does not believe journalists who claim to be unaffected by online critique of their work, and states "the crowd can criticize everybody" (l. 366)[1]. The question of how online communication affects participation, interactivity and transparency in regulatory processes has reached media

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[1] The interviews conducted for this paper will be cited with the interview partner's surname and the line number in the interview transcripts (e.g. Shargal, l. 366). For the list of interview partners, see p. 10.

accountability (MA) research. One key project in this respect is the comparative survey "Media Accountability and Transparency in Europe" (MediaAcT, www.mediaact.eu), which has put a comprehensive exploration of online practices related to MA in European and Arab countries on the scientific agenda. This paper ties in with this agenda and has two objectives. Firstly, it fills an empirical gap that the MediaAcT project has left in the Middle East: the case of Israel. Secondly, this paper argues that Bourdieu's field theory is a useful heuristic tool to analyse MA in Israel and related online dynamics.

Israel as a test case for media accountability online

Considering the crucial role of media in modern societies, MA scholars raise the question of how to hold media accountable without restricting freedom of the press. In Israel, there is a particularly high tension between the need for independent media that monitors and criticizes political processes, and the demand that journalistic agents must not detach themselves from the collective interests of society. In 1948, the State of Israel was founded as a parliamentary democracy based on a Western model. However, Israel is the only democracy legally enforcing a press censorship by the military. Against the background of the country's internal and external conflicts, a lot of importance is attributed to journalism in shaping the public opinion (see Peri, 2004; Be'er, l. 266). Besides the military censorship and financial strains, Israeli journalism is confronted with an increasing "pressure on journalists to conform their activities to what is seen as appropriate professional conduct" (Peri, 2012, p. 34). At the same time, Israel has a tight and highly developed media market, where online communication has become essential for producers and users.

Israel offers a highly interesting environment in which to pose the question of how online communication is used to criticise journalists and their work, and how they respond to these claims. However, making Israel a testing ground for MA offers valuable insights beyond the national context. The global dynamics which journalism is going through "are being accelerated in the Israeli media market because it is very small" (Altshuler, l. 79ff). To analyse online dynamics related to MA, this paper suggests a theoretical approach that makes it possible to capture both historical continuity and change of MA: Bourdieu's theory of social fields.

Theoretical approach: Media as a social field

For Bourdieu, the production of meaning and the need for social distinction are central motives driving human beings, and these motives are pursued in different social fields. Semi-autonomous fields, e.g. religion, politics, economics or journalism, are the product of societal differentiation and are basically small worlds governed by their own logic, and their own "rules of the game" (Bourdieu & Wacqant, 1996, p. 127). In fact, the game analogy – which Bourdieu himself

frequently uses – highlights important assumptions of field theory: that the field's structure and dynamic are shaped by permanent struggles and competition among the players, who share a collective belief in the sense of the game, a common *illusio* that it is worth it to play (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 360). In the media field, the *illusio* is the shared sense of playing for participation in the public discourse. It is about public attention for the agent's topics and opinions, whereby power translates into communicative representation (Beck, Büser & Schubert, 2013).

Media capital

Fields are characterized by internal conflicts and struggle based on unequally allocated resources – capital – amongst the agents. Bourdieu (1983, p. 185) distinguishes between three basic forms of capital: *economic capital* (monetary and material property), *social capital* (social network, available contacts), and *cultural capital* (knowledge, skills, education). Moreover, in every field, a specific composition of economic, social and cultural capital is considered relevant and legitimate, which in this case is defined as media capital. Three forms of media capital can be identified: *incorporated*, *institutionalized*, and *objectified* media capital (Beck, Büser & Schubert, 2013, p. 248ff). Drawing on the concept of media competence, *incorporated* media capital describes the ability to use, assess, and critically evaluate ethical, political, and professional aspects of media content and production (ibid.). *Institutionalized* media capital refers to formal education (e.g. degree from journalism school) or a certain position in the media organization. Media ownership, control of the means of production as well as technical access to public communication are conceptualised as *objectified* media capital. Media agents such as journalists, individual media users, bloggers or NGOs occupy a certain position in the field according to their capital.

Media capital can unfold *symbolic power* in the media field (ibid., p. 245f). This so called *specific symbolic capital* becomes the "trump in the game" (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 10). In contrast to *objective power* that is derived from a certain amount of capital, *symbolic power* is based on being recognised by others as such. *Symbolic power* often correlates with prestige and creates the agent's legitimacy. In journalism, *symbolic capital* is at work when the credibility of well-respected media is naturally accepted and the quality of journalistic products is not questioned anymore.

Journalism as the field of power

Journalistic agents like individual journalists or collective agents (outlets, newsrooms, etc.) usually possess a higher amount of media capital than NGOs or the audience. Although located within the media field as a field of power, journalism is also subjected to specific rules and follows a distinct logic. It is thus defined as a semi-autonomous field within the media field. Journalistic agents professionally dedicate themselves to producing public discourse and struggle to have their suggested meanings and principles "recognized as legitimate categories

of the social world." (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 37). In the journalistic field, the interpretive authority over public discourse and the monopoly of information are at stake. The "product of news" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 105) or exclusive news in the sense of scoops (Meyen, 2009, p. 336) are assumed to be of special relevance in journalism, but even more so the perceived legitimacy and credibility as symbolic capital.

Figure 1: Media as a Social Field
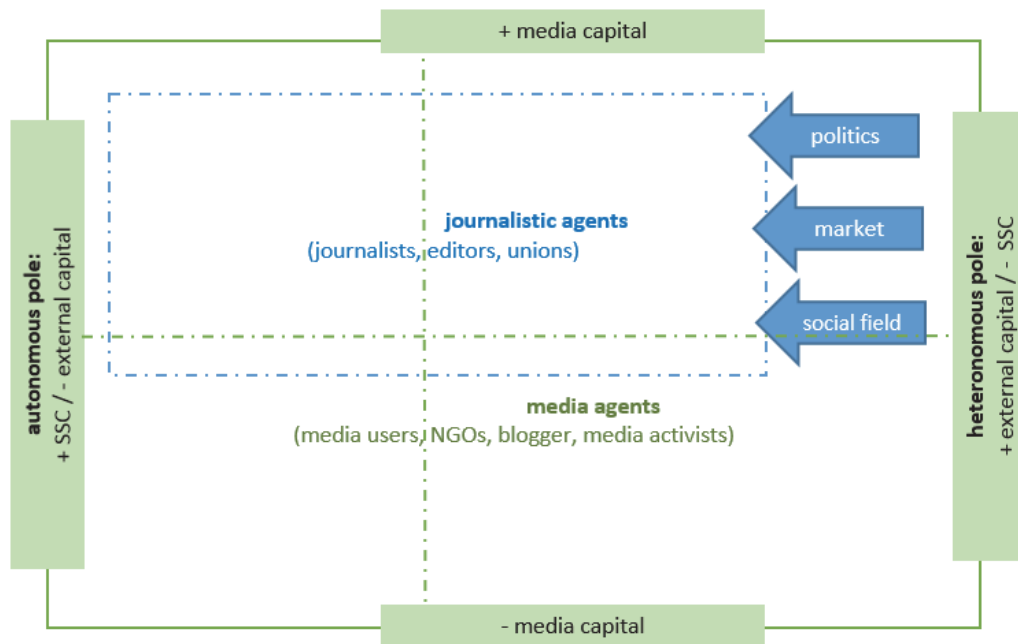
MEDIA FIELD
Specific Symbolic Capital (SSC): prestige, reputation, credibility / legitimation: internal / stakes: independence, journalistic quality standards, societal functions (criticism, control etc.)
- _Indicators:_ mixed financing, critical/investigative editorial line, prestige and reputation among journalists, journalistic awards

External capital: economic or political capital / legitimation: external / stakes: wide reach and/or external collaboration
- _Indicators:_ dependence on advertising/political subsidies, commercial or political editorial line, wide reach

Media capital
- _**Incorporated**_: media use and ability to asses media content / distribution of own content
- _**Institutionalised**_: formal and professional media education
- _**Objectified**_: material resources or technical access

Own representation based on Bourdieu, 1999, p. 203; Meyen, 2009, p. 329; Beck, Büser & Schubert, 2013, p. 244/250.

Unlike social systems (Luhmann), fields are never entirely autonomous from external forces (Bourdieu & Wacqant, 1996, p. 134). The degree of a field's autonomy varies over time, between fields[2], and within a field. Journalism is generally considered a weakly autonomous field that is influenced by external

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[2] For instance, mathematics or poetry are almost completely autonomous fields – they have primarily their "peers as their clients" (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 48).

commercial and political powers (see Champagne, 2005), as well as by its publics in the media field. The position of agents in a field is hierarchically structured according to their *amount of capital* but also according to the *composition of capital* in between a heteronomous and an autonomous pole. At the autonomous pole, the specific *symbolic capital* of the field is at stake, and the field's specific internal logic shapes the agents' practices and perceptions. Here, agents play for independence and journalistic quality standards. Societal functions like the informative, monitoring and critical role become a source of distinction and symbolic capital. At the heteronomous pole the economic, the political and potentially other social fields exert influence on journalism and the capital of those fields becomes relevant.

Baisnée and Zombrano (2014) have previously suggested field theory to analyse MA. However, their comparative framework does not integrate the audience's role and the impact of online dynamics remains unclear. By defining MA from a Bourdieuian perspective and drawing on the concept of a media field in which journalists and media users interact (Beck, Büser & Schubert, 2013), this study addresses these theoretical shortcomings.

Media Accountability: a question of autonomy and influence

Striving for autonomy is a central dynamic of social fields (Benson, 2013, p. 40). However, autonomy also implies some kind of isolation and "can lead to an 'egoistic' closing-in on the specific interests of the people engaged in the field" (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 45). The more autonomous a field is the greater is the "tendency of professionals to look down on laypersons" (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 44), and the more agents follow their inherent field interests.

In democracies, the autonomy of journalism is a normative question. A certain degree of autonomy from the religious, political and economic field is a (desirable) precondition for the ability to criticize those powers, and essential for being a mediator of information in society. At the same time, the media are expected to not detach themselves from the needs of the society and to provide citizens with information that follow certain journalistic standards. MA poses the problem of enforcement: Freedom of the press limits political regulation, while the free market has proven to be insufficient to guarantee journalistic quality (i.e. "commercialisation"). How can processes like isolation, commercialisation and political interference be confronted without excessively restricting media autonomy? To answer this question scholars have referred to MA instruments (MAI) as "any non-state means of making media responsible to the public" (Bertrand, 2000, p. 108) or to "processes by which the media answer directly or indirectly to their society for the quality and/or consequences of publication" (McQuail, 2003, p. 207). This paper suggests defining ways to hold media accountable as social practices of agents in the media field, called MA practices.

Following the logic of the media field outlined above, MA practices can be distinguished according to the location of their initiation. *MA practices initiated inside the journalistic field* are practices that are set up by journalistic agents themselves and are widely controlled inside the field (self-imposed ethical codes, unions, complaint management). Their implementation depends on the autonomy of the field as a whole and on the positions of agents occupied in the field between an autonomous and heteronomous pole.

However, MA cannot be reduced to an attribute of journalistic agents or of the journalistic field. Given the tendency towards encapsulation of professional fields, MA is just as much a question of efficiency of external claims by media agents, as already acknowledged by Plaisance (2000): "The function of accountability, in reality, is an issue of influence" (p. 259). The influence of *MA practices initiated outside the journalistic field* (e.g. criticism and monitoring of media) is dependent on the agent's media capital, that is, the possibilities for participation in the public discourse based on incorporated, institutionalized, and objectified media capital.

Media accountability mechanisms

This paper interprets the four MA mechanisms (a) politics by regulation and laws, (b) market by demand and supply, (c) the public via discussion and dialogue, and (d) the profession via self-regulation (Bardoel & d'Haenens, 2004, p. 188) as different field logics. According to the conception of the media field the mechanisms can be reclassified as internal (c, d) and external (a, b) forces exerting influence on journalism. The dominance of one mechanism presumably operates against the effects of others. For instance, very strict political restrictions limit the scope for action of professional standards or audience critique to a minimum. In most liberal democracies, on the other hand, market mechanisms play a major role and can constrain autonomous MA mechanisms (Heikkilä et al., 2012, p. 18). For Neuberger (2009), online communication fundamentally changes the way public communication is regulated. He assumes that internal MA mechanisms ("self-regulation via a (meta) public sphere", p. 29) gain in importance in contrast to external political, legal, and economic control.

Media accountability online

The technically interactive and decentralised structures of online communication have the potential for amplifying participation of different agents in MA practices and for countering processes of journalistic insulation. Online communication potentially triggers a re-distribution of media capital that could empower the audience to enforce their claims towards journalistic agents. Increased meta-coverage facilitated by a variety of actors (users, journalists, bloggers) makes journalism more vulnerable to control and criticism, and thus poses a potential threat for the symbolic power in the journalistic field (Russell, 2013, p. 209). A redistribution of capital also seems feasible with regard to the different forms of

media capital: Costly means of production (objectified media capital) become less relevant while media literacy (incorporated media capital) tends to have more influence on the positioning of agents in the field. For Bivens (2008), "the growing organisation and effectiveness of citizens to influence opinions is enabled by new media and amplifies notions of accountability for news organisations" (p. 122). However, field theory reminds us that online communication is embedded in existing structures and that certain rules of the game might not drastically change. For instance, agents who already have accumulated a certain amount of capital are probably able to acquire new media skills easier and quicker (Beck, Büsler & Schubert, 2013, p. 248). Besides transferring "old" capital to the new communication environment, the convertibility of political and economic capital at the heteronomous pole endures. Finally, the possibilities for a relative empowerment of media users and NGOs to demand media accountability can be countered by strategies that are aimed at the retention of power (Plaisance, 2000, p. 267).

This article focuses on potentially new scopes of action for MA practices enabled by online communication in contrast to mass media communication, which are summarized in table 1.

Table 1: Potential of online communication for media accountability practices (MA practices).

Dimension	Potential of online communication	MA practices (Examples)
MA practices initiated in the journalistic field		
Social dimension: group of participants and repertoire of actions	*Interactivity*: flexible direction of communication: roles of communicator and receiver changeable	**(a) Responsiveness** responding to reader's criticism via comment function, online complaint function, SNS or e-mail
	Transparency between producers and users	**(b) Transparency of actors and of production** profiles of journalists, publication of ethical codes and/or ownership, links to external sources, media journalism and media watch blogs by journalists
MA practices initiated outside the journalistic field		
Social dimension: group of participants and repertoire of actions	*Participation*: possibility to participate in debates by publishing own content *Interactivity* (see above)	**(c) New formats of publication and interactivity** media watchblogs, websites of NGOs, criticism via comment function and SNS
	Networking among participants	**(d) "Crowd criticism" and aggregation** media criticism SNS (also groups); online petitions and online campaigns
Time dimension: speed, permanence of the connection	Synchronicity, *real time, simple detention of content for users*	**(e) Real time criticism** via SNS, comments, blog entries; monitoring in real time
Space dimension: range and flexibility	*Wide range (global)*	**(f) Range of criticism** via SNS, international media criticism

Own representation drawing on Neuberger, 2009, p. 25; Heikkilä et al., 2012, p. 42, Fengler, 2012, p. 184

The objectives of MA practices initiated inside the journalistic field can be specified by (a) *responsiveness* and (b) *transparency* (Heikkilä et al., 2012, p. 42). Responsiveness relates to practices where journalistic agents react, respond or engage in dialogue with media users. Online communication offers different channels that facilitate claims and responses: comment functions on websites, social network sites (SNS) like Facebook (FB) and twitter or e-mail. Transparency defines the disclosure of and access to information. In the light of an open access and (almost) unlimited room for publication online, transparency has been increasingly demanded of the political and economic elite[3]. It is argued that the claim for transparency is or should be increasingly transferred to journalists as agents in the field of power (Groenhart & Evers, 2014, p. 129; Vos, Craft & Ashley 2011, p. 11). Related to journalism, transparency can concern agents or the production process. *Actor transparency* can be enhanced by profiles of journalists, information about ownership, and the publication of a mission statement or professional standards (Evers & Eberwein, 2011, p. 252). *Production transparency* can be implemented by publishing background information on journalistic processes or linking to original sources (ibid.).

Online communication provides a series of tools for MA practices initiated outside the journalistic field. New forms of publication, e.g. watchblogs, can be used in order to raise public attention for problems of journalism and to expose bias or mistakes in reporting (c). A field study on media watchblogs suggests that although direct influence on journalism might be limited, the exposure of bias and inaccuracy in media coverage can improve the media competence of the audience (Mayer et al., 2008, p. 591) and thus reduce asymmetry of capital.

The term "crowd criticism" (d) refers to an infinite group of agents who can use a "plethora of fast, low-cost options to (if you want, anonymously) 'voice' criticism and protest – via email, chats, commentary functions, Twitter, Facebook, and the like" (Fengler, 2012, p. 184). Here, the possibility of the crowd to connect in order to increase pressure is emphasised. The relation of the (time) resources users have to invest and the symbolic capital that can be at stake implies a relative empowerment of the audience: it might take only a minute to tweet about "a journalist's lapse" but if it spreads, "this might have an impact on the journalist's reputation" (ibid., p. 186). The potentials of synchronicity for real time criticism (e), and the potential to increase the range of criticism (f) are supposed to achieve effects mainly in combination with (c) and (d).

Research questions

By applying Bourdieu's theory of fields, more specially by defining MA as a function of heteronomy/autonomy of the journalistic field on the one hand, and as

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[3] For instance by open government initiatives, and other civil society agents like Transparency International, Wikileaks, or Anonymous.

a function of influence of agents in the media field on the other, this article suggests a new perspective for analysing MA online. Bennett (2007, p. 226) has explicitly called for analysing MA related to national dilemmas in empirical case studies instead of relying on pure theoretical explorations. Taking this demand into account, the first research question (RQ) of this paper is:

RQ1: How can the media field and media accountability be characterized in the context of Israel?

The second goal of this study is to explore the impact of online communication on MA in the given context, asking how agents in the media field use online tools for MA practices:

RQ2: How are the potentials of online communication for MA practices used and assessed by relevant agents in Israel?

For journalistic agents, online communication offers a set of options to easily react and respond to criticism (responsiveness) and to make themselves and journalistic processes more transparent (actor transparency and production transparency):

RQ2a: How are the potentials of online communication for MA practices initiated inside the journalistic field used and assessed by relevant agents in Israel?

The second sub question addresses the assumption that online communication provides the potential for a relative empowerment of non-journalistic agents in the media field. They are given a set of tools to articulate and enforce their claims:

RQ2b: How are the potentials of online communication for MA practices initiated outside the journalistic field used and assessed by relevant agents in Israel?

Methodology

The scholarly interest focuses on the agents in Israel's media field asking how they use and assess MA practices. To approach this new and unmapped field an explorative method is chosen that directly targets the research objects: semi-structured expert interviews with relevant agents in the Israeli media field. The sample of interview partners combines a selection of *extreme* and of *typical cases* (Brosius, Koschel & Haas, 2008, p. 84). The following groups of agents were considered to be *typical cases,* as they are typically engaged in MA processes: journalists, representatives of MA institutions within the journalistic field, media critics and activists, and academics/media experts (Heikkilä et al., 2012, p. 15). Within these typical groups *extreme cases* were selected (see table 2).

Table 2: Sample

Journalists (4)	MA institutions within journalism (1)	Media critics / activists (4)	Experts / academics (2)
Raphael Ahren, *Times of Israel*	Dedy Markovich, *IBA* Ombudsman*	Yisrael Medad, *Israeli Media Watch*	Dr. Tehilla Shwartz Altshuler, *MA expert, IDI***
Uri Blau, *Haaretz*		Shuki Tausig and Oren Persico, *The Seventh Eye Journal*	Ido Liven, *freelancer, blogger, social media expert*
Haggai Matar, *freelancer, activist, blogger*		Dvorit Shargal, *media watchblog Velvet Underground*	
Tal Schneider, *freelancer, activist, blogger*		Yizhar Be'er, *Keshev*	

*Israel Broadcasting Authority **Israel Democracy Institute

Extreme cases highlight dynamics and indicate potential changes of still unexplored fields of research; in this case of how online communication can change MA. The criteria for extreme cases were an extraordinary usage of online communication (especially affinity to SNS), high engagement in media criticism or activism, and special expertise regarding media and MA in Israel. As media criticism turned out to be highly politicized, agents from different positions in the polarized political spectrum were included. A selection of typical and extreme cases, however, does not claim to be representative – neither regarding the Israeli media landscape nor the political views. Quotes will be cited with the interview partner's surname and the line number in the interview transcripts (e.g. Ahren, l. 78). The interviews were conducted between April and December 2013 in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

The sample's categorisation required the conception of three interview guidelines: for journalists, media critics/activist, and experts/academics. For the representative of an internal MA institution, the guideline for journalists was slightly adjusted. All guidelines included five sections: (I) Introduction, (II) National Context and MA Institutions, (III) MA practices online: Transparency and Responsiveness, (IV) MA practices online: External Critique, and (V) Conclusion, Summary and Outlook. The specifications of transparency, responsiveness, and external media critique for the questions were inspired by the MediaAcT survey (Heikkilä et al., 2012). The complete transcripts of the interviews were analysed with the software MAXQDA. The interviews were applied to both the question of *MA practices* online (RQ2) and the portrayal of the media field[4].

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[4] For instance, statements and perception of the interview partners essentially contributed to reveal informal influences. Furthermore, explanations of the interviewees were adduced for topics where scholarly literature, at least non-Hebrew, was poor, for instance related to the practice of gag orders.

The media field and media accountability in Israel

The analytical framework to study MA online in Israel consists of four elements: (a) the historical development of journalism, (b) a sketch of relevant agents in Israel's online journalism, (c) an outline of external influences and (d) internal MA practices applied in Israel.

Historical development and the impact of intractable conflict

When and how has journalism emerged as a field in Israel? Since the Zionist movement for the foundation of the state started in the end of the 19th century, journalism has played a crucial role for Israel. Journalists themselves, with Theodor Herzl leading the way, actively contributed to the foundation process (Brenner, 2002, p. 32). Therefore, it is not surprising that from its emergence, Israeli journalism has been subjected to the reason of the state. Only in the 1960s, especially after the Six-Day war was won in 1967, a professional field of journalism has gradually developed out of a political parallelism and often in coexistence with it (Peri, 2012, p. 30ff). In the 1990s, the accelerated and radical process of economic and political liberalisation was the driving force for journalistic professionalism. The journalists' detachment from political agents increased and even escalated to a "disdain for politicians and politics" (ibid., p. 31). However, the ongoing conflict with the bordering Arab states, especially the territorial conflict with the Palestinians, has been restraining the processes of detachment, political de-ideologisation and liberalisation. On the one hand, journalistic agents reflect the political polarisation of Israeli society, which is divided over the struggle for a collective identity of the state, the settlement policy, and the two-state solution. On the other hand, the constant perception of external threats

> "(...) undermines the readiness for pluralism, tolerance, and liberalism and amplifies public expectations that the media will exhibit more 'social responsibility' – be less critical, more committed to collective endeavor, and more supportive of the national leadership" (ibid., p. 22.).

From a Bourdieuian perspective, social change takes place constantly but always on the basis of previously established, historical premises embodied in both the field's structure and the disposition of its agents. In this regard, wars and violence may pose a threat to physical security but they also create a certain disposition in a "society with memories" (Be'er, l. 78ff).

A sketch of the Israeli online journalism: Relevant agents and their positions

The position agents occupy in a field shapes their dispositions towards perceiving, thinking, sensing, and acting – their *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 101). A field suggests a certain amount of room to manoeuvre for the agents who simultaneously determine, change or reproduce the field's logic and structure

(ibid., 1999, p. 361). A sketch of Israel's dominant agents and their relations is thus considered crucial for understanding the media field. The arrangement of the field (figure 2) draws on information about ownership, financing, editorial line, and range/ranking of Israeli news media in Hebrew. The ranking is based on the overview on Israeli online journalism by Caspi (2011), the survey by Teleseker Internet Monitor (TIM, table 3), the range of the national newspaper (table 4), and observations of the interviewees about dominant agents and their relations.

The sketch of the journalistic field of power, comprised of the dominant Hebrew news media, shows that agents at the heteronomous pole dominate Israeli online journalism. Political and commercial forces - that have to be differentiated from each other - shape the heteronomous pole. The commercial logic seems even more striking considering the dominance of the web portal *Walla!* (walla.co.il) and the websites of the private broadcasting stations (*Channel 2/Mako*, *Channel 10/nana*). The following paragraphs highlight central arguments for the arrangement.

Figure 2: The field of power in Israel's online journalism – agents and positions
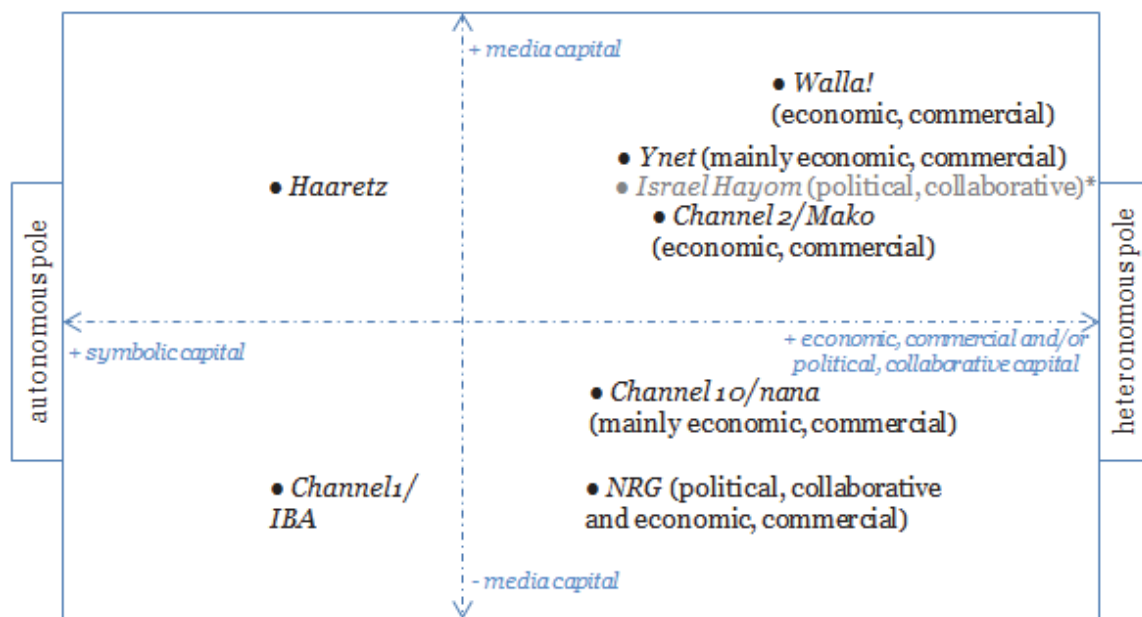
*not part of the TIM online-ranking

Table 3: Ranking of online media outlets (TIM, 2012); Table 4: Range of newspapers in Israel 2013 (TGI, 2013)

1	Walla!
2	Ynet/ Yedioth-Gruppe
3	Channel 2/Mako
4	Channel 10/nana
5	NRG/Maariv
6	Haaretz
7	Channel1/IBA

National Newspapers	Percentage of Exposure 2013 (Weekdays)
Israel Hayom	38.6 %
Yedioth Ahronot	38.4 %
Haaretz	6.1 %
Maariv	3.5 %

Heteronomous pole

The web portal *Walla!* occupies the highest position because of its dominance among all websites, and is closest to the heteronomous pole due to a commercial orientation including internet services like e-mail.[5] *Mako* (mako.co.il), which is the website of the private broadcasting *Channel 2* and *Ynet[6] (ynetnews.com),* the online offshoot of the newspaper *Yedioth Ahronoth* (*Yedioth*)*,* are two "main players" (l. 185) in the field: "because of high rating and a lot of influence on Israeli content market" (ibid.). The observation of *Ynet* and *Mako* being direct competitors illustrates their struggle for the same position in the field: "[T]hey are huge enemies. They fight like cats." (ibid., l. 188). Also the journalist Matar sees *Ynet* as "the biggest, strongest, most powerful news website in Israel" (l. 85), and Caspi (2011, p. 352) ascribes *Ynet* a hegemonic position as online news provider that attracts readers with consumer-oriented multimedia content. For a long time, *Yedioth* has been regarded as "the state's newspaper" (Gilboa, 2008, p. 68). However, it has increasingly developed a commercial and partly government-critical line, (ibid.) which has become even more apparent online, in *Ynet*. *Ynet* is placed closer to the autonomous pole than *Mako* because it is assumed that *Ynet* has obtained symbolic capital from the print paper *Yedioth[7]*. *Channel 10/nana* is seen as critical towards the government and since 2008, has ongoing severe financial problems (Liven, l. 59ff). Therefore, it occupies a rather low position and slightly shifted to the autonomous pole.

Maariv, which had been one of the most read newspapers in Israel (Gilboa, 2008, p. 90), and its online offshoot NRG occupy the lowest position at the heteronomous pole. In 2012, the financial crisis of *Maariv/NRG* led to a wave of firings and public protests (Grunzweig & Weisberg, 2012). It is assumed that the following series of owner changes also contributed to a loss of symbolic capital. First, Nochi Dankner's IDB group became *Maariv/NRG's* main shareholder who according to Tausig "bought *Maariv* to fight *Haaretz*" (Tausig & Persico, l. 571f), which is Israel's left-liberal newspaper. Subsequently, *Maariv* was sold to Schlomo Ben-Zvi, publisher of the right-religious newspaper *Markor Rishon*. In 2014, the US-American millionaire and Netanjahu-sympathizer Sheldon Adelson acquired both the news website NRG and *Markor Rishon[8]*. The case of *Maariv/NRG* represents more than simply a financial struggle. It highlights how the loss of economic capital makes journalistic agents completely vulnerable to external political influences and how political agents fight for the control over public discourse in the media field.

The engagement of Sheldon Adelson in the Israeli media field is noteworthy. He finances the free tabloid newspaper *Israel Hayom* (israelyahom.com) that has become the most read newspaper in Israel (table 4). While the external influences

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[5] It should be noted that in contrast to most other web portals, for instance the German *msn*, *Walla!* has a stronger focus on reporting and has an own content production.
[6] *Ynet* has an independent editorial department.
[7] Despite its tabloid character, *Yedioth* also employs renowned journalists, like Nahum Barnea.
[8] The publisher of *Jerusalem Post*, Eli Azur, bought the print product *Maariv*.

on *Yedioth/Ynet* are seen as a net of commercial and political interests, the aggregation of interests of the government and *Israel Hayom* is mainly political (Tausig & Persico, l. 508ff). It can also be assumed that *Israel Hayom* filled a void at the heteronomous-political pole that was left by the increasing commercial orientation of *Yedioth/Ynet*. This illustrates that although commercial and political powers are closely intertwined, they follow distinct field logics.

Autonomous pole

Only two agents of the journalistic field of power are located at the weaker autonomous pole: *Haaretz* including its Hebrew and English online version (haaretz.co.il/com) and the Israel Public Broadcasting Authority (IBA, iba.org.il/bet). Despite its financial struggle[9], it is argued that *Haaretz* still keeps a relatively high position at the autonomous pole. *Haaretz* is the only agent in the journalistic field of power with a mixed finance model for its online content (advertising and subscription). With the slogan "newspaper for thinking people" (Gilboa, 2008, p. 90) *Haaretz* tries to appeal to an elite audience and is staking symbolic capital in order to distinguish itself from the heteronomous pole as a journalistic agent with national and international prestige.

The special role of *Haaretz* at the autonomous pole is further validated by a vehement detachment from political collaboration, a primary example being its refusal to take part in the meetings of the Editor's committee, the union of media outlets that collaborates with the Israeli military censor (see Benn, 2013). During the second intifada, *Haaretz* was criticised harshly by both the audience and politicians for publishing information that was considered sensitive or too critical of the authorities. The critical line in times of crisis translated into a loss in sales and economic capital for *Haaretz* (Peri, 2004, p. 99). This can be interpreted as a rejection of the commercial logic and political antagonism at the autonomous pole. However, while some see *Haaretz* as a vital asset to Israel's democracy, the severe criticism of being an "enemy of the state" or even "anti-semitic" (e.g. Muravchik, 2013, p. 31), especially in conservative circles, also deprives *Haaretz* of symbolic media capital.

As a publicly financed institution, symbolic capital is the central source of legitimation for the IBA. According to Limor & Gabel (2002, p. 149), the IBA has tried to prove its autonomy from the political field without success. Be'er describes it as an outdated "dead body" (l. 243) that is "deeply influenced by politicians" (l. 247) and that has lost its once dominant position with a share of 80 to around 8.6 percent today. In 2014, the communications minister announced the plan for completely replacing the current organisation of the IBA (Tucker & Teig, 2014).

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9 In 2006, 25 percent of *Haaretz* were sold to German publisher DuMont Schauberg due to financial problems. In 2010, for the same reason, the *Haaretz*-group sold *Walla!* to the leading telecommunications group Bezeq.

The influence of external fields: politics, military and market

With a focus on dynamics related to online communication, the next paragraphs will outline the formal (laws, institutions) as well as the informal impact on Israeli journalism by politics, the military, and the market. There are concrete indicators for also analysing the informal influence of an external field: agents moving from one field to another, commonalities of the agents' social origin (e.g. education), the gap between the agents' "reciprocal perception of each other", and the agents' perceived autonomy (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 349).

Politics

Israel does not have a formal constitution.[10] Instead, there are several decisions of the Supreme Court forming the legal basis for press freedom, which is assumed to be generally respected in Israel (Nossek & Limor, 2001, p. 1; Freedom House, 2013). Based on literature and the interviews conducted for this paper, licensing[11], military censorship, the libel laws and gag orders are relevant regulations related to press freedom.

The military censorship is based on the "Defence (Emergency) Regulation" that was already enacted during the British Mandate in Palestine and adopted into Israeli legislation (Nossek & Limor, 2001, p. 16). The authority of the chief military censor, currently Sima Vaknin-Gil, is anchored in law. Although the legislation requires that *any* publication – books, newspapers or articles for websites – must be submitted to the military censor prior to publication, the procedure is in practice based on a mutual agreement between the media, the military and governmental authorities. Hence, only publications that deal with security-related issues listed in a catalogue are handed to the military censor for examination (ibid.).

Gag orders, instead, can be applied to prohibit reporting on a variety of topics. "Gags" are typically applied to restrict reporting on criminal investigations or scandals that involve Israeli authorities. Tausig from the Seventh Eye Journal (7th Eye) criticises the gag order procedures as opaque and arbitrary:

> "You go to the judge, and you say: 'I need this, stop the protocols, I will show you some secret information'. And the judges, most of the time, give the gag; and there is no one on the other side" (Tausig & Persico, l. 848ff).

Gag orders seem to be applied to compensate for a relatively liberal military

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[10] According to the Supreme Court, the assembly of "Basic Laws" should resemble a normative force similar to a constitution (Peled, 2012, p. 741). However, there is no legal basis for freedom of the press comparable to Article 5 of Germany's Basic Law or the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

[11] Licensing in the telecommunications sector is no longer conducted by the state but by the now private company Bezeq since 1982 (Ministry of Communication, 2006). By law, publishers of print products are also required to have a license. The authority for print licensing rests with the Ministry of the Interior which is also authorised to shut down media organisations. However, in practice neither plays much of a role (Liven, l. 338; Freedomhouse, 2013).

censorship (Tausig & Persico, l. 824ff/834f; Altshuler, l. 276ff). The fact that the censor usually follows the liberal interpretations of the Supreme Court[12], and that the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) increasingly draws on gag orders, has even led to the thesis of the Israeli military censor being a guardian of freedom of the press (Nossek & Limor, 2011, p. 124). Besides the informal procedure and a broader area of application, it might contribute to the extensive use of gag orders that they also ban citation, for example, links to blogs or foreign sources[13] (Altshuler, l. 300). However, the effectiveness of gag orders is also limited, at least ultimately, since online information easily spreads (ibid., l. 307). Online content is systematically monitored by the military censor (Krupsky, 2012). However, chief censor Vaknin-Gil states that the monitoring focuses on agents with symbolic capital: "Obviously an article by a correspondent who has good connections with senior sources is not the same as something published somewhere by the man in the street" (Vaknin-Gil cited in Blau, 2008).

In 2011, the attempts of the Netanyahu-government to tighten libel law[14] (higher fees, lower barriers for the claimers; Bicom, 2011) were followed by a lot of criticism that this would damage freedom of expression (Kesveh, 2012; Liven, l. 232; Schneider, l. 283). The far-reaching encroachment of the mentioned political MA mechanisms is the reason for journalist Tal Schneider to state that it is not a question of media accountability but of autonomy that should be posed in Israel (l. 281ff).

However, the picture of a journalistic field that is restricted and dominated by politics is not adequate or, at least, incomplete. Several observations point to the influence of journalism on the political field, for instance, the journalists' perception that media has a decisive impact on politics and politicians (Meyer & Cohen, 2011, p. 15). Compared to other countries, Israeli journalists see themselves less as objective observers but rather as "agenda setters" (Hanitzsch et al., 2011, p. 282). Altshuler implies that as a consequence of the high level of politicisation of the society as a whole, and the parallel need to detach themselves, journalists complained that they were becoming "cynical" and even "too sceptical" (l. 64ff). Besides the engagement of political agents in the media field, which is most obvious in the sponsoring of *Israel Hayom* by Sheldon Adelson, it is worth mentioning that journalists also move into politics. Former journalist Yair Lapid rose quickly to political prominence as minister of finance, the journalist Shelly Yachimovich became leader of the Israeli Labor Party.

Media critics (Medad; Tausig & Persico) stress that Israeli journalism is a very insular field. Thus, for Peri (2004), it is even the political autonomy that is threatened by media influence and not the other way around. To describe the

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[12] An important decision of the Supreme Court (no. 680/88) was made already in 1989: It limits the censorship to topics that excessively put security in danger with a high probability (Nossek & Limor, 2011, S. 119; also Tausig & Persico, l. 824-826; Altshuler, l. 278).

[13] The phrase "according to foreign sources" that is commonly used when a censored topic is published in foreign news media cannot be applied when a gag order is imposed on the issue.

[14] Libel law is anchored in criminal law and is based on the "Defamation Act" of 1992 (see Peled, 2012).

Israeli "mediapolitik" he explicitly refers to field theory: "To borrow from Bourdieu, the mere intrusion of the journalistic field into the political arena is the problem" (ibid., p. 5). The relationship between politics and journalism is shaped by a tension between antagonism and mutual influence. This tension can be ascribed to two field dynamics: Firstly, to the detachment of journalists from the political field as social distinction and accumulation of symbolic capital, and, secondly, to the consensual collaboration of political and journalistic agents in the common struggle for interpretive authority in the media field.

Military

This study argues that it is necessary to distinguish political and military influence on Israeli journalism, since the military has never played a purely functional role for the country. Maman et al. (2001, p. 109) describe the security ethos as "a meta-value" that is a constitutive element of the Israeli society. Peri (2007) claims that the status of the military as a "sacred cow" (p. 79) has only vanished superficially. Therefore, the media only raises instrumental but no fundamental criticism of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) (ibid.).

The military influence on journalism begins in education. A significant number of journalists spend their military service (36 months for male, 21 for female Israelis) within the army radio station *Galei Zahal,* which is said to be Israel's biggest journalism school (ibid., p. 88). This leads to a high degree of conformity in the journalistic field, a fact that Medad, member of the executive board of "Israel's Media Watch" (IMW), criticises as one of the main problems of Israeli Journalism: "Coming out of the same school, school of journalism in a very broad sense" (l. 126ff) leads to a constant reproduction of mistakes and interpretative models that shape editorial styles and views. Another particular characteristic that strengthens media-military ties is the obligation of military correspondents to be accredited by the IDF, which often leaves the IDF with the information monopoly concerning military operations (Peri, 2007, p. 79). The close ties between the fields elucidate the nature of the military censorship in Israel: reporting is not censored in an authoritative or repressive manner but rather on the basis of collaborative self-censorship. As journalist and activist Matar claims, "the vast majority that isn't being told isn't being told for self-censorship" (l. 293)[15].

The IDF has a symbolic power that exerts its influence on all fields of the Israeli society. The relationship between journalism and the military is – much more than with the political field – based on collaboration. This means that journalism loses autonomy but not for nothing. As collaborators of the military, journalistic agents become a "special class of citizens with a special stake in the state's success" (Christians & Cooper, 2009, p. 207), and guardians of information who ultimately contribute to the state's security.

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[15] Matar (l. 296) criticises that journalists write in a conformist and self-censored manner not only about military issues but also about the Arab world, specifically about the Palestinian Territories, and the Israeli occupation.

Economy

Related to the question of responsibility and the general problems of Israeli journalism, the interviewees highlighted financial pressure and the influence of the economy (Shargal, l. 113ff; Matar, l. 50ff; Altshuler, l. 91; Be'er, l. 208ff): "Even in a society in crisis like in Israel, I think ideology influences the media even less than economy" (ibid.). This is not surprising against the background of the financial crisis including massive firings, and frequent change of ownership. According to Altshuler, several phenomena contribute to the economic trouble of Israel's media. The traditional business models of journalism are failing online. Simultaneously, media outlets are suffering from the migration of advertising budgets to the internet.[16] In Israel, the internet's central economic merit, which is the possibility to open up to new and different markets, is limited due to the narrow boundaries of the country, geographically and in terms of language. The success of the free newspaper *Israel Hayom* is another factor that has aggravated the financial problems of Israel's media*:*

> "The fact that a major competitor who doesn't need to proof any business model but is rather being kept by a foreign millionaire or billionaire is something that gets the system as a whole out of its equilibrium" (Altshuler, l. 102ff).

With *Israel Hayom* entering the journalistic arena it becomes evident how a strong player can change the whole economic and symbolic power arrangements within a field (see also Tausig & Persico, l. 582; Be'er, l. 256ff).

Internal MA mechanisms: Self-regulation and the role of the audience

Ideally, internal MA mechanisms prevent external influence and counterbalance dependence on the political and economic field (Bardoel & d'Haenens, 2004, p. 173). The following autonomous MA practices were identified in Israel: the Israeli Press Council, ethical codes[17], ombudspersons, and media journalism. The often-described problems of journalistic self-regulation practices, the lack of publicity and a lack of awareness even among journalists, also apply to Israel. This concerns especially the institution of ombudspersons that was appreciated by the interviewees but of low prominence (Liven, l. 71; Blau, l. 90; Medad, l. 181). Internal MA practices seem to be more prominent at the autonomous pole. *Haaretz* and the *IBA* are the only journalistic agents located at the autonomous pole and the only institutions with an ombudsperson or public editor. The evaluation of journalistic MA mechanisms by media expert Altshuler implies that indeed MA practices can serve as a source for symbolic capital: "If you have any kind of organisational accountability culture such as *Haaretz* is very proud of or

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[16] The comparison of advertising budgets according to media types shows that the printed press' share decreased from 50 percent in 2004 to 31 percent in 2010. In the same timeframe, the share of the online sector increased from three to 16 percent (Caspi, 2011, p. 343).
[17] For a detailed overview of the so called "Nakdi Guide" and its different versions see Limor & Gabel, 2002.

the Public Television [IBA] is very proud of, then you can be lucky. Otherwise they do whatever they want" (l. 207ff). The ignorance of the Press Council by the strong players *Ynet* and *Channel2/Mako* at the dominant heteronomous pole is a practice that influences the whole field, states Altshuler (l. 207). Field theory makes this claim plausible, as dominant agents can have a definatory power that shapes the understanding in a field of what is legitimate and what not (Rudeloff, 2013, p. 144).

More than 70 percent of the Israeli society have access to the internet, and the broadband connection in Israel is at EU or US level (Internetworldstats, 2012). The high relevance of online news for users in a "highly wired society" (Manosevitch, 2011, p. 423; OpenNet Initiative, 2009) is in line with the high degree of the online journalism's institutionalisation (see Caspi, 2011). National, Hebrew online media plays a leading role in the Israelis' internet use (Dror & Gershon, 2012, p. 4), which corresponds with the journalistic field of power. Related to user generated content, Israeli blogs play a minor role compared to other countries while the intensive use of the comment section is even seen as characteristic for Israel (Caspi, 2011, p. 353). About 20 percent of all internet users claim to be active "talkbackistim", that is to talk back, i.e. to write online comments (Manosevitch, 2011, p. 430). More than 50 percent of internet users use facebook (FB) as the most popular SNS (ibid). Accordingly, Schneider acknowledges that FB is relevant "to talk to the public" while twitter is the "cosmos of journalists", and relevant if one wishes to "discuss with elite players" (l. 107ff).

The results of the MediaAcT survey suggest that the degree of trust in media or media legitimacy is an important indicator of the users' perceived need to engage in MA practices[18]. In Israel, trust in the media has two remarkable characteristics. First, it is rather surprising that Arab Israeli's have slightly more trust in the media than the Jewish population (table 5) because the "Israeli mainstream media generally represent the majority (the Jewish population)" and there is "a blatant inequality as the media do not represent the need of Israeli Arabs, who see themselves as a minority" (Katz, 2007, p. 390). As most Arabs in Israel use Palestinian and foreign Arab media (ibid.), it remains unclear to which media the Arab's trust refers.

Secondly, trust in media is notably higher among Israelis who are considered to belong to the "moderate left" in the political spectrum (table 5). Given that trust in the media is shaped by the media agents' position in the political spectrum it does not come as a surprise that all interviewees mentioned without being prompted that the audience's feedback is politically motivated.[19] Many times, journalists or articles are claimed to be "too leftist" and "too rightist" at the same time (e.g. Shargal, l. 251). Besides the political principle of vision and division "left/right",

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[18] The MediaAcT survey suggests: "attempts to establish practices to hold the news media accountable are most numerous in countries where the lack of media legitimacy seems most articulate" (Heikkilä et al., 2012, p. 70).

[19] See Ahren, l. 287; Altshuler, l. 248f; Blau, l. 66f; Schneider, l. 66f; Shargal, l. 251ff; Tausig & Persico, l. 377f; Liven, l. 207f.

the partly related dichotomy "for/against Israel" becomes relevant when the audience measures journalistic quality. Especially when it comes to journalistic behaviour which is perceived to stand in opposition of the collective interests of the country: "(...) then what is most important is not whether the media, or the government in its relation to the media, acted properly or transparently, or ethically – but whether or not you are hitting on Israel or not" (Medad, l. 500ff).

Table 5: To what extent do you trust each of the following individuals or institutions?

Trust in institutions and public figures to a large extent or to some extend*	Jews	Arabs
IDF	90.9	34.9
President of Israel	78.7	41.7
Supreme Court	62.7	49.7
Police	61.9	43.5
Government	57.9	33.3
Knesset	54.5	38.5
Prime Minister	51.7	31.0
Media	**47.2**	**48.1**
Chief Rabbinate/Religious leaders	43.0	43.3
Political Parties	36.7	43.2

Political orientation	Trust in the media to a large extent or to some extend
Right	35.0
Moderate right	37.0
Center	56.0
Moderate left	70.4
Left	63.7

*percentagewise. Source: Israeli Democracy Index 2013 in Hermann, 2012, p. 42.

The political frame of media criticism bears the risk of increasing withdrawal and a "bunker mentality" (Domingo, 2011, p. 11), which is confirmed by the experience of Medad (IMW):

> "More than the half we are getting from media people is: if I get criticized from the right, and I get criticized from the left, I must be doing something correct (...). The possibility that the left is right, and the right is right, and 'perhaps we are all wrong', this they would never say. They are not accountable because they push it off" (l. 268ff).

Also Tausig (7th Eye) criticises mixing up field logics: "Politically motivated journalism is corrupting journalism, and politically motivated criticism of the journalism is corrupting criticism" (Tausig & Persico, l. 388). Persico, instead, insists on the value of all kinds of criticism:

> "When I write about a newspaper ignoring what is happening in the West Bank: They are maybe politically motivated or commercially motivated not to write about that. I am maybe politically motivated when I criticize them but it is also a professional problem when they decide to ignore something like that. When someone says: 'the article you printed you got the story from someone who hates Israel'. So what? If it is true, if it is a fact, if critique has value by itself than it doesn't matter if the motivation in the beginning was politically motivated or not" (ibid., l. 407ff).

In the Israeli media field, a range of collective agents were identified who have dedicated themselves to monitoring, criticising, researching and influencing journalism (table 6).

Table 6: Collective MA agents in the Israeli media field

NGO (URL)	Political alignment
Israel Democracy Institut (IDI) (en.idi.org.il)	liberal think-tank
The Seventh Eye Journal (7th Eye) (the7eye.org.il)	media journal published and financed by the IDI
Keshev (keshev.org.il)	Left-liberal mediawatch organisation
Israel's Media Watch (imw.org.il)	Right-conservative mediawatch organisation
Presspectiva (presspectiva.org.il)	Conservative mediawatch organisation
Tadmit (tadmit.org.il)	National-religious mediawatch organisation
I'lam (ilam-center.org)	Palestinian, leftwing mediawatch organisation

Accountability practices initiated in the journalistic field

In the following section the interviewees' perception and their application of transparency and responsiveness in online journalism are interpreted on three levels that field theory suggests: (a) national field, (b) journalistic field, and (c) positions within the field.

National field

"[T]he Israeli public definitely cherishes secrecy", explains Liven (l. 101f). In Israel, the notion of transparency is generally rather problematic. For Altshuler (l. 317ff) the preference for loyalty to the community and for secrecy over the disclosure of information is connected to the Jewish history. Whistleblowing has been "always used or referred to someone who would be talking about Jews to the Gentiles" (l. 315f). Persico, instead, thinks that a certain legitimacy of secrecy has to do with the "sense of a military state, and that you're living in a bunker surrounded by enemies" (l. 708f). The societal preference for secrecy may explain why a transparency and open government movement is just in the early stages in Israel (Altshuler, l. 358ff). The demand for journalists to be transparent is a new idea for most interviewees (e.g. Liven, l. 99; Matar, l. 222ff). Thus, it is not surprising that the interviewees do not agree with the assumption that civil society's demand for transparency from the political power field is applied to journalism (e.g. Liven, l. 99f; Matar, l. 22ff). While the idea of production transparency in journalism is generally appreciated, the demand for journalists to be transparent about themselves also provokes concerns (ibid.).

Since Haggai Matar has a background in both journalism and political activism, he is aware that actor transparency has a negative aspect, which might especially show up in the national context: "many people in Israel would not read things I write about the violation of worker rights in the municipality because I support the end of the occupation" (l. 246f). Actor transparency could aggravate a tendency to only read those journalists who share the reader's world view, a process of "niche-in" that makes inter-society communication harder in an already polarized society (ibid, l. 139f). The more transparent and well-known the journalist's background is, the more the content might be (only) assessed according to a person's view on the Arabic-Israeli conflict. The political affiliation of media criticism is also a

challenge for the media's responsiveness. Interviewees claimed to never respond to criticism in the comments section or on SNS because it was "ideologically rigid" (Ahren, l. 287) and mainly directed at the person or institution rather than media content (Blau, L. 67f). This manifests especially with *Haaretz,* where comments first of all criticise "this institution *Haaretz*, and its approach, and its legacy rather than the facts being right or wrong" (ibid.). Shargal, media critic and former journalist, observes that:

> "Haaretz is the most leftist newspaper and most of the commenters are people from the right. Because, you know, the people say the media is leftist (…) All the people from the right they feel they have no other way to have their voice published" (l. 263ff).

These observations are in line with the idea that it is about access to public discourse in the media field and that online communication provides new channels for that. However, it is conceivable that actors react to the flood of comments by walling-off themselves and rather with increased control mechanisms instead of responsiveness. On *Haaretz* online, for instance, only 50 percent of the comments are published at all, claims its editor in chief (Friedmann, 2011, p. 8).

Journalistic field

Altshuler attributes (l. 372ff) the rejection of transparency in journalism to a general phenomenon that is characteristic of fields with a public mission and a normative claim for autonomy that "forbids them [from] being transparent" (ibid.). The common feature of institutions like the media, universities or courts is that they demand transparency from others but claim the right to secrecy for themselves (ibid., l. 380). Medad's criticism of journalists for not engaging in accountability points to their monitoring role: "they [journalists] say we are off, you can't do this because we are the critics of society, so we have to remain outside" (l. 150f). Also according to Matar "the old notion of journalists that should be objective, cold, and detached, and just like a name under the story, not actual individuals" (l. 222ff) prevails and therefore, journalist are not even expected by the audience to be "upfront about their own interests and believes" (ibid.). Medad questions the translation of the online potential for transparency into practice because the field was "very insular" (l. 283):

> "The media claims they don't want interference. Don't come into our field. (…). That is an aspect of the media in terms of what is digital or not of protecting itself and not open up despite the fact that digitalization could technically open up" (l. 283ff.)

Tal Schneider disagrees with a demand for transparency in journalism, distinguishing herself from elected representatives: "I don't like the way people put journalists at the same level as politicians. It is not the same: I was not elected, and I never pretended to represent anybody. It is mixed up" (l. 233f). Blau, instead, concludes that the journalist's decision of being a public person creates a certain need for transparency and public scrutiny (l. 116ff).

Positions in the field

According to Persico, transparency and responsiveness are less a question of "online or offline" but rather a question of the organization's "culture" or "pulse" (l. 358) – and thus its position. Almost all collective actors in the journalistic field of power have an integrated comment area and contact form on their websites, and have a FB profile (see also Manosevitch, 2011, p. 434ff). Yet only on the website of *Haaretz,* authors have a profile with a photo and a short biography; and can be approached directly via e-mail by the audience. *Israel Hayom*, in contrast, is the only website without feedback possibilities for the readers on the website's articles. This is in line with Altshuler's claim of a stronger MA culture at the autonomous pole, which may also apply to online practices. External links, which can enhance production transparency, lead the audience to other sites while internal links contribute to search engine optimization. Following this logic, media must be able to forgo clicks and views in order to validate articles with foreign sources: "because we are not commercial we don't care if they [the readers] leave to another site" (l. 164ff), claims Tausig.

Two cases clearly illustrate that if agents strive for symbolic capital, online communication can foster responsiveness and transparency if agents strive after symbolic capital. The first describes accumulation of symbolic capital at the autonomous pole. The ombudsman of the public broadcasting channel IBA, Dedy Markovich, started to use SNS to discuss audience's complaints and ethical questions relating to media. The IBA homepage directly links to his profile on FB. In contrast to an e-mail or letter, online comments or tweets are not considered official complaints. However, Markovich initiates and moderates discussions on twitter and FB that are in the aftermath dealt with by the institutionalised committee in the aftermath: "after I talked about it [the marriage of an IBA journalist with a high ranked politician] in the web, the ethics committee of the IBA decided to discuss it. And the ethical board, it has the power to decide" (l. 156ff). Markovich also appreciates that the public begins to understand what his job is about, and suggests these actions should contribute to the symbolic capital of the IBA: "I am doing it for the IBA, for the organization, and for the credibility and transparency and all other kinds of things public broadcasting has to be or to do" (l. 243ff).

The second example describes the accumulation of capital outside the journalistic field of power. After the blogger and journalist Tal Schneider lost her job at the newspaper *Maariv,* she started to use her blog and SNS to push herself "back to the stage" (l. 84). She claims to use everything she can to make herself and her work more transparent (l. 271), and to respond to every comment (l. 123ff). In contrast to all other interviewees, she perceives the comments to be "usually well put" (l. 112) and "very eloquent" (ibid.), although criticism is not be "purely professional" but comes "with a mission" (l. 60). For Schneider, the crowd is a fast and corrective force: "The public is really fast with catching, that if you lie, or if you are unreliable, or if you are shallow – you get a really quick public response. Really quick" (l. 74f). Responsiveness and transparency are the stakes in a serious

struggle for credibility:

> "I think reporters and bloggers, all they have is their reputation for being honest and credible and they can lose it 'like that'. (...). Everything I do, being transparent putting myself out there or telling you about myself, I do it for the purpose of my readers to believe me that I am honest. (...) This it what drives me, it serves this purpose, it is not a game for me" (l. 259)

Also for Matar, production transparency is a matter of symbolic power:

> "(...) this [links to external sources] is where blogs and proper mainstream media really differ. Bloggers make immense effort to do that because they don't have the prestige of being inside the media establishment, whereas the media establishments kind of enjoy their own prestige for just having a name and not have to link to sources. And also the independent journalists have the time, and the will" (l. 259ff).

Although the two case examples (Schneider, Markovich) might be rather exceptional, they illustrate how the technical potential of online communication can be put into practice to enhance responsiveness and transparency – and finally foster MA. In contrast to these cases of agents at the autonomous pole, who possess a relatively low position in the journalistic field, agents in the field of power clamed up even more in the light of a more open communication environment:

> "(...) because the atmosphere is open and mistakes are more easily discovered they are closing their gates even more. They are not giving interviews, they are not showing their faces, they don't respond to articles about them. It is like they are in a bunker. So it goes in an opposite direction to the general atmosphere. You can see it in politics also. Sharon started with it, and now Netanyahu who has his own paper. So you can see it in politics, in media, in every field: the feedback from the people in power to the new media age is eliminating themselves from the public" (Tausig & Persico, l. 307ff).

Accountability practices initiated outside the journalistic field

Based on the interviews, case examples of MA practices initiated outside the journalistic field were selected and matched with the identified technical potentials. The objective of the next paragraphs is to highlight how those online MA practices can work or fail in practice. This article only 'phenomenologically' analyses the influence of MA practices on journalism, by interpreting the interviewees' perception and their observed reactions by agents in the field using four case studies.

New forms of publication: The media watch blog "Velvet Underground"

In 2006, the media watch blog "Velvet Underground"[20] rose to prominence after the then anonymous blogger published the salaries of journalists working for newspapers like *Maariv* or *Yedioth* (Carmel, 2006). The film and media critic

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[20] Hebrew: אנדרגראונד ולוט

Dvorit Shargal, who now writes her blog full time and under her real name, set up the blog in "an instant rage, a frustration" (l. 5) because she had "hit the glass ceiling" in her journalistic career and because criticism is "one of the main characteristics" of her personality (l. 15). Thus, her watch blog was born out of a certain position in the field in combination with her critical habitus, and online she found the right form of publication in this context online: "it's impossible to write it [the criticism] in the printed media. Nobody would let me" (l. 386f). There are different opinions on the blog's impact. For Tal Schneider, Shargal's blog is "more effective" (l. 355) than any other MA practices in Israel. Persico appreciates the possibility for users to anonymously comment in her blog without regulation, and states that "some stories started there" (Tausig & Persico, l. 675). Shargal frequently publishes the audience's feedback in her blog posts: "[P]eople like it because they want to be in the penthouse, not in the cellar" (l. 485ff). Shargal herself is modest about the influence of her blog that would only show up "in single cases. Because I understand that there are economic situations; that people have to earn money" (l. 401ff).

Crowd Criticism: empowerment or "a tree falling in the wood that no one hears"?

The interviewees often related channels for increased interaction and connection – like comments, groups, petitions, and online campaigns – to agents on the right of the political spectrum, whose trust in media is statistically low. Their engagement in online MA practices can be explained on the grounds that they lack representation and chances of articulation. "You [the journalists] never give me the microphone" (l. 206), claims Medad from the right-wing watchdog IMW. In Israel, there are several online campaigns in which users connect via the petition platform *Atzuma* (atzuma.co.il) or in FB groups (Tausig & Persico, l. 487). The interviewees were presented with two identified examples to comment on.[21] Although one of the examples was familiar to most of the interviewees, the general impact of user campaigns and FB groups was assessed as marginal or non-existent: "It is like a tree falling in the wood that no one hears – it can be 35.000, it can be 30 million. If the papers don't write about it, nobody knows it" (ibid., l. 660ff). This point of view contrasts with the assumption that journalistic agents in the field of power cannot control criticism anymore in the light of online communication.

However, the aggregation of audience criticism by Israel's Media Watch (IMW) offers a different picture, illustrating how the technical potential can increase the influence of MA practices in combination with social and political capital. Medad, a member of IMW's executive board and well-connected to the political establishment, explains how they campaigned with the help of an online complaint

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[21] The first example was a FB group called "smolbogdim" that is aimed at monitoring "the leftist mainstream media" with around 6,340 likes, which was unknown to all interviewees. The second example was a campaign on *Atzuma* directed against the journalist and anchor woman Yonit Levy, with 35,000 supporters. The claim was that Levy lacked objectivity by expressing too much empathy with Palestinians during the "Operation Cast Lead" in 2009 in Gaza. Most interviewees were familiar with this example.

function on its website and online banners.[22] The aggregation of criticism enhances the organization's credibility and legitimacy, explains Medad:

> "Online we are getting a lot of complaints that make us more powerful because instead of saying 'it is Mr. Medad, or Mr. Cohen, and Mrs. Schwartz in the office – and they are right-wing fanatics', we are truly representative of the public life. It is the people now who is talking. And that gave us enough power and we went back into the Knesset[23] Committee, or to media conferences. We are now not just hundreds of people from Media Watch but thousands of people" (Medad, l. 433)

Be'er of the media watch organisation *Keshev* also thinks IMW is successful with their "crowd criticism" approach: "to influence, to make terror on the editors by thousands of letters of complaints, and telephone calls (...). It is effective, I know it is effective, such work" (l. 407f).

Real time criticism: "An immediate response on the spot" (Keshev)

The media watch organisation *Keshev* was founded two years after the attack on Israel's Prime Minister Rabin in 1995, driven by the feeling "that the real threat on our society is not only from the outside, from Arab countries or the Palestinians but from the inside, the underground antidemocratic streams – and one big issue is the media" (Be'er, l. 11). According to Be'er, the website is the most valuable tool for media criticism because it provides the opportunity for making a direct reference to the criticised objects (l. 115). In 2009, during the outbreak of violence in Gaza, *Keshev* started to engage in real time media criticism:

> "What we did was an immediate response on the spot of the media coverage of every day. Every day we published a summary or conclusion from the last day of coverage and we showed cases of self-censorship and bias, and how journalists were based on only one source of information, the military spokesperson, and how they completely ignored other sources" (ibid., l. 83ff)

Especially circles of renowned journalists, explains Be'er, reacted to the critical analysis. The senior journalists saw their reputation as being independent from the military being brought into question, and began to justify themselves:

> "I got telephone calls from some senior journalists, some very honourable journalists, who (...) said: ,It is very important what you do, but look, I am not like the others, I was ok, if you take a look today at eleven o'clock in the news broadcast, I said that and this, I used several sources of information, I criticised the army. (...) For senior journalists it was very important to show that they don't belong to the military spokesperson, that they are not the loud speakers of the army" (ibid., l. 89ff.)

This example of journalists defending themselves illustrates how synchronic criticism on the spot can work especially on journalists for whom symbolic capital

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[22] As an example he mentions a campaign against the journalist Gabi Gazit who offended the ultraorthodox population of Israel. According to Medad, their campaign "drove him from one radio station to the other" (Medad, l. 416ff).

[23] The Knesset is the Israeli Parliament.

is at stake; and that "an institute, a kind of watchdog watching the media around the clock" (l. 98ff) can indeed benefit from online communication to increase its scope of action.

Range and symbolic capital: The Seventh Eye Journal

The Seventh Eye Journal (7th Eye; Hebrew: *Haayin Hashviit*) is defined as a "watchdog for Israeli media" (Tausig & Persico, l. 4) and a "non-profit organisation" (ibid., l. 7) by its editors Shuki Tausig and Oren Persico. The non-profit orientation allows them a "special perspective on the Israeli media" (ibid.). The journal is financed by the liberal think tank IDI and is aimed at "foster[ing] our [the IDI's] agenda" (Altshuler, l. 30ff).

In the context of MA or media criticism in Israel, almost all interviewees mentioned and valued the 7th Eye : "it definitely has a very good reputation among journalists and academics", says Liven (l. 192); it would be "sophisticated" (Schneider, l. 362) and "an important and interesting website that people should definitely follow" (Blau, l. 178). Editor Tausig claims that the 7th Eye was prestigious as a printed journal but that since they launched their website, its impact on the journalistic field has increased and its range has extended:

> "When we were a print magazine (…) people of the media business knew that this magazine exists and it was respected. But now I think they fear us. (…). But it is also a different audience. It used to be only academics and senior journalists (…). I think it is now the whole media industry and we want to address non-journalists also" (Tausig & Persico, l. 98ff)

This assumption is also shared by other interviewees (e.g. Shargal). Besides the facts that the ownership of means of production is not necessary anymore and publication has become easier (ibid., Tausig & Persico, l. 70), the 7th Eye editors point to the importance of SNS, especially FB, through which almost half of the audience comes to the site (l. 155). The 7th Eye's influence become manifest in the target's reactions:

> "Every big article we are publishing is followed – or even before the publication – by sue threats with a ridiculous amount of money. And they try to fight us in other channels also, by threatening our publisher which is the Israeli Democracy Institute. The media outlets threaten them that they will not cover them anymore if they won't force us to change the article" (l. 253ff).

The 7th Eye's MA practices are exerting power in the media field that even reaches the dominant agents at the heteronomous pole.[24] Online communication has enabled the 7th Eye to unfold its high amount of incorporated media capital and symbolic power that has been restricted when it was a print product.

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[24] As a concrete example, Tausig & Persico name a series of articles that criticised the bias of rating numbers that the big broadcasting channels publish based on the "Israel Audience Research Board" (IARB). The IARB threatened to sue the 7th Eye. However, the minister of communication reacted to the claims of the 7th Eye and announced to set up a regulation that rating numbers have to be published accurately (see Tausig & Persico, l. 46ff).

Conclusion

By applying Bourdieu's field theory as a heuristic research tool, the first objective of this article was to characterize the media field and MA in Israel. The second research question addressed the potential of online communication for MA practices.

Field theory highlights that Israeli journalism functions as an autonomous field that follows and sets its own rules, and has a tendency to become insular – despite restrictions on press freedom, intersection with politics and a dominance of agents at the heteronomous pole. In the light of a politically polarized society, the dynamics of isolation become even more distinctive. MA practices are driven by the agent's struggle for interpretive authority in Israel's media field. The background of the agent's engagement in media criticism is the perception that Israeli media has "a tremendous potency and power" (Medad, l. 231f) to shape the public opinion. In a conflict-laden society that has "very big questions on the public agenda – questions of peace and war" (Be'er, l. 266f) influencing media becomes "really a fight for the minds of people"(Medad, l. 231f).

Politically motivated media criticism is both a driving force and a challenge for MA in Israel. When (only) political criteria are cited to judge what is journalistically valuable, then journalists might be more likely to reject than to respond to criticism. Considering that websites' comment areas, SNS, and user campaigns are strongly used by citizens who feel underrepresented in the media, the tendency to withdraw from criticism could even be amplified by online communication – contrary to its potential for interactive dialogue. In addition, the online environment accentuates the journalists' perception of "being watched", which might cause journalists to be "more careful" (Tausig & Persico, l. 866ff). Considering the processes of self-censorship in Israel's society, it is important to critically reflect on the consequences of effective MA practices.

The efficiency of external MA practices seems to be bound to the amount of media capital. The prestigious 7th Eye appears to have improved its influence with the mere chance of unlimited publication on its website and distribution on SNS, while the audience's "crowd criticism" via talkbacks, SNS and online petitions seems to be a practice of limited influence, which is particularly used by those media users with less media capital. However, the interviews also suggest that "crowd criticism" may exercise influence on journalism when aggregated by more powerful agents with social and political capital. This paper has addressed the question of impact or influence from a theoretical point of view and related to the perception of relevant agents in the Israeli media field. Future research could explore MA as a question of influence by applying in depth case studies that also include media content.

This paper suggests that online communication amplifies the responsiveness and transparency of journalistic agents primarily when credibility and prestige (symbolic capital) are at stake. The observation that MA cultures differ according to the position in the field (heteronomous versus autonomous pole, field of power versus lower positions) may be an inspiration for further qualitative and

quantitative research on this nexus. The Bourdieuian angle helps researchers to understand – and to criticise – that also online users and journalists do not necessarily communicate on an equal level, as the technically decentralised structure of the internet implies. Online communication is imbedded in existing structures that can be changed but are also constantly reproduced.

The research conducted for this paper did not indicate an increased engagement of Arab Israelis in the media field, in contrast to active online criticism voiced by Israelis considered right in the political spectrum. This implies that the separate media use of Arab and Jewish Israelis continues online. However, more research needs to be done that addresses MA online related to Israel's specific ethnic, social and religious makeup. Field theory could help to shed a light on inequalities in terms of access to and representation in the media.

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