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Working the News: Preserving Professional Identity Through Networked Journalism at Elite News Media

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Working the news:

Preserving professional identity through networked journalism at elite news media

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Abstract

The concept of journalism as a profession has arguably been fraught and contested throughout its existence. Ideologically, it is founded on a claim to norms and a code of ethics, but in the past, news media also held material control over mass communication through broadcast and print which were largely inaccessible to most citizens.

The Internet and social media has created a news environment where professional journalists and their work exist side-by-side with non-journalists. In this space, acts of journalism also can be and are carried out by non-journalists. Through the new news distribution channels offered by social media, non-journalists are potentially able to disseminate their texts to wide audiences. In practice this means that journalism is no longer exclusively the domain of the journalist, and has led to the adoption of collaboration as a journalistic convention that presents opportunities but also serious challenges and risks for the professional community.

My research aims to contribute to the news discourse concerning emerging professional practices in networked journalism with a focus on how journalistic authority is reasserted within a collaborative news environment. Rather than looking at networked journalism as primarily participatory, this research explores collaborative newswork as a means to carry out professional boundary work and to articulate this to audiences. I argue that the act of collaboration in newswork at times becomes a quasi-ideological project to protect journalism as a profession that lays claim to ethics, norms and routines.

The research comprises three case studies of news stories covered by the BBC World Service and the English-language services of France 24 and Al Jazeera. Using quantitative and qualitative analysis methods, they explore how social media was mobilised in the newswork. The aim was to explore how sourcing practices affected the power relationships between primary and secondary definers, and how journalists create and articulate professional boundaries in collaborative newswork. These research findings were triangulated with interviews with social media editors at the three news organisations.

1. Introduction

The Internet has arguably thrown professional journalism into crisis not only by undermining its commercial business model, with dwindling revenue plaguing much of the industry, but by creating an environment that contests the notion of professionalism in journalism. Journalists as a professional community have had their exclusivity as news producers challenged in ways that have not only opened a space for non-professionals in newswork but that also in some ways come to rely on them. Collaborating with non-journalists has become an important part of almost all facets of journalism be it on breaking news, societal issues, or human rights abuses. A set of social newsgathering guidelines adopted by the members of the European Broadcasting Union illustrate the extent to which news organisations acknowledge the need to adapt to this deprofessionalisation of newswork.

> [It] is recognised that in order to provide a news service that is universal, relevant, and trusted the news content cannot just be restricted to that which is provided by professional news organisations and must include content from individuals, groups and entities who are witnessing and filming news events of interest. (EBU 2018)

With the new interdependence with non-journalists in the production of newswork, journalists have had to find new ways to assert and demonstrate their authority. This authority may be asserted in the form that interaction and collaboration take or in the news texts produced from interactive newswork. Therefore, network journalism can arguably be viewed not only as a relatively new approach to newswork with the aim to include non-journalists in the process of news production, but, paradoxically, as a means by which journalists conduct professional boundary work. This research seeks to investigate how three elite mainstream news

organisations -- BBC World Service, France 24 English, and Al Jazeera English -- mobilise collaboration through social media, and the role that boundary work plays in collaborative newswork.

In the early noughties, there was optimism about the democratic potential of what Jenkins dubbed "convergence culture" (2006, p. 2). Jenkins argues that barriers would be broken down between professionalism and amateurism in newswork, wresting control from power elites about who got to speak to a mass audience. An interconnected digital world was seen as blurring the lines between media production and consumption. As individuals participated in an electronic agora, they become "produsers" (Bruns 2006, p. 276) of news content of their own. Much was made of the supposed empowerment of news consumers, who were described by Jay Rosen (2006) as "the people formerly known as the audience" and Dan Gillmor (2004) simply as the "former audience". As interconnectedness of news consumers became a prerequisite for the distribution of news products, news consumers were no longer reduced to the silent passive masses on the receiving end of a predominantly one-way mass media. Exploring how the professional identity of journalists fits with convergence culture, Deuze (2008) advocated for the opportunities that interactivity and hybridity could present in fostering participation, inclusion, and higher standards in journalism. And yet, already then he cautioned about "the tendency of institutions to adapt to innovation and change in ways to primarily reproduce that what came before" (ibid., p. 112). At the end of his paper he concluded that journalists were "likely to respond nostalgically and defensively to disruptive change" while "media management tend to interpret such changes primarily in terms of their potential to 'depopulate' the profession" (ibid., p. 118). It is fair to say that the early euphoria from a section of academics, who predicted a democratising effect on the news media, has

since been tempered. Research explored in the following chapter has pointed towards professionals normalising the way in which they mobilise social media for newsgathering and reporting. But perhaps more poignantly, as concepts such as 'convergence' and 'hybridity' have faded into the past, they have been replaced with an intense focus on what journalism is and how it sets itself apart.

As I will discuss in the literature review, challenges to the notion of professionalism in the context of journalism have been present throughout its existence, and journalists have tried in a number of ways to claim the right to authority through their own interpretive community. From an industry perspective, the need to define journalism as the occupation of a professional community is today more pressing than ever. As a result, recent years have seen academia return to issues of professional journalism, such as in Carlson and Lewis's seminal work *Boundaries of Journalism* (2015). Boundary work has assumed an important role in professional newswork, given the need to defend journalism as a profession at a time when many acts of journalism can and are carried out by ordinary members of the public. My own research will argue that at times boundary work is the core meaning and pursuit of collaborative newswork, making news production a sort of discursive, quasi-ideological project to protect journalism as a profession.

At the same time as news organisations are formalising the integration of interactivity and collaboration in professional routines and practices of the mainstream news media, the value of the information shared by non-professionals, and the digital spaces in which they do this, have come under intense scrutiny. The alternative news environment of social media platforms, where audiences are concerned, have been heavily criticised both in the

mainstream news media as well as in academia. A technological determinism argues that the algorithms of social media platforms and search engines have led to 'echo chambers' and 'filter bubbles' that encase audiences in their own prejudices. This alleged balkanization in public opinion is perceived as anti-democratic (Piore 2018; Wells 2018) because, in the main, democracy is understood as striving for consensus. Moreover, the ability for anyone to publish has allegedly led to an epidemic of 'fake news' and 'misinformation' published by malignant actors and spurred on by algorithms. Therefore, the alternative news environment is perceived as a threat to deliberative democracy (Zuiderveen Borgesius et al. 2016), which (it is implied) must be upheld by the values of professional journalism. However, to what extent these fears are justified is debated. Evidence on 'filter bubbles' and 'echo chambers' is not clear cut. For one, the phenomenon is difficult to measure empirically (Knight 2017; Zuiderveen Borgesius et al. 2016). Where attempts have been made, the automated personalisation of news content by algorithms has not been found to be the main driver in creating 'information cocoons'. Rather, self-selection is that driver (Bakshy et al. 2015). This poses a much greater question about how much the human factor is undermining the deliberative democracy that news media strives to facilitate, or how news organisations can remedy this. But even the extent to which deliberate selection by individuals achieves filter bubbles is disputed (Hazard Owen 2018; Zuiderveen Borgesius et al. 2016). Nevertheless, the extent to which filter bubbles and misinformation are considered a threat to public discourse was made clear in a keynote address by Emily Bell (2018) at the 'News Assembly' of the European Broadcasting Union. Bell called for public service media to engage in "collective bargaining" with social media companies, that would see them threaten to leave these platforms if they did not address these issues. There is no doubt that Bell believed in the moral impetus for such a call to arms, but as she was speaking in front of an audience of more

than 100 editors from legacy news media, it was evident that what was also at stake was professional authority to define what is acceptable public discourse, and how such discourse should be conducted.

The widespread access to the Internet has dramatically lowered barriers to publishing and broadcasting, and social media have had a prominent role to play in this. Designed as conduits for information among the networks, or communities, of users these platforms host, they are a powerful tool for news distribution. More importantly though, they are a tool that has become decoupled from professional journalism. For better or worse, social media create a news environment that is outside the control of professional news media and can never be fully shaped by them. As audiences increasingly seek out information and upload their own original news content in this alternative new environment, professional news media must participate in it or risk becoming irrelevant. Unlike in the past, the media industry no longer controls the distribution channels, leaving journalists and non-journalists to both exist side by side in the same space. Non-journalists also report, comment, adapt and edit a stream of information that is constantly transformed by each new addition and alteration. In doing so they often seek to influence, debate or respond to the news coverage of professional mainstream journalism, which in most cases still informs the majority of this information stream.

As a practitioner specialised in social media newsgathering, my main area of interest is in how news organisations and my colleagues grapple with the collaborative nature of newswork today. Having joined social media news agency Storyful in 2011, I was involved in a small startup in Dublin that went on to be at the forefront of defining interactive

newsgathering as a professional practice. Over the subsequent seven years, I witnessed this new practice transform newsgathering in the industry. More importantly though, news media over time mobilised to define how collaboration with non-journalists takes place. In 2018, I took on a role as editor for the EVN Social Newswire at the European Broadcasting Union, where I have been involved in building a similar newsgathering service for public service media. The large volume of scholarly work that exists on networked journalism gives the impression that today's news media is plugged into social media and online communities in a sophisticated and well-established way. Yet, at industry level my experience is that for most journalists social media is still far more unfamiliar terrain than one might imagine. Although the idea of collaborative newswork is largely accepted – albeit sometimes grudgingly – the opportunities that this presents in newswork require journalists to rethink their role in a way that can appear paradoxical. This is especially true for those who have worked in this industry for more than half a decade.

The expertise that I gathered in my work were based around applying journalistic practices such as discovering and sourcing social media material that was of importance to news audiences, setting professional best practice for verification of this type of material, and contextualising it. Therefore, my professional work involves a strong gatekeeping component with regard to sourcing, selecting and framing social media texts based on a journalistic logic. I have been in the role of the journalist that manages collaborative newswork, and, therefore, also have first-hand experience of its limitations within the professional news environment. Throughout my career, I have witnessed (and participated in) what I perceive as a normalisation of collaboration and a rhetoric concerning the professionalisation of the practices around it.

Journalists' claim to an exclusive professional community has arguably always relied on their role as experts in relaying information to non-experts (Carlson 2015, pp. 8-9). They translate information from elites, and probe them on behalf of their audiences but also act as stand-in citizens under the guise of being the everyman. They consider it their role to uncover and report news and opinions from one group of citizens for another. In the past, there was limited scope for non-journalists to publish outside the mainstream news media, but as this limitation crumbles away, journalists are forced "to confront how it is they differ from other social actors – if at all" (ibid., p. 9). Where Deuze (2008) urged news media to embrace collaboration, journalists remain resistant, which, I argue, is down to the lack of a shared discursive language and conception about their place in today's news environment. As the mechanisms by which the professional community previously functioned – that is, almost exclusive access to mass media – have become less ubiquitous, it has become apparent that the ideological discourse around the profession that was taken for granted is in fact weak and easily contested. Unable to return to a time where the technology for mass communication is in the hand of the media industry alone, it can be argued that professional journalism now relies more than ever on a robust ideological raison d'etre.

Hujanen (2016) explores the radical transition that journalists have been asked to make from a discursive perspective. On the one hand, the discourse of professional journalism creates clear boundaries that grant journalists the exclusive right to produce journalism. Based on the premise of autonomy, the journalist is "represented as gatekeeper towards economic and political spheres of influence and citizens" (ibid., p. 878). Today, this role of authority is being challenged not just by practical realities but, arguably, also ideologically. Meanwhile,

the discourse of citizen debate gives a physical expression of democracy, and acts as a sub-discourse to professional journalism. The term 'Fourth estate' is characterised as a pillar of democracy, and deemed essential to inform and facilitate public discourse. As social media created an alternate news environment, a news discourse centred around interactivity between journalists and non-journalists emerged, where audiences "provided an additional workforce to pursue better journalism" (ibid., p. 876). Accepting the interdependence on non-journalists in newswork, journalists share their professional knowledge with amateurs and incorporate them into their logic of professional journalism. However, I believe, traditional journalistic conventions are central to shaping this interactivity as journalists 'initiate' the amateurs in order to integrate them into their work. In fact, as collaboration is adopted as a new convention, it can be mobilised and managed to offset the risks that non-journalists pose to the notion of professionalism. By problematising the inclusion of non-journalists and then integrating them into professionalism, existing conventions are made visible in a way that was previously not explicit. Therefore collaborative newswork should not necessarily be explored as a means to fostering greater inclusion or better journalism, but perhaps as a way to carry out professional boundary work.

The Guardian's editor-in-chief Katharine Viner offered an illustration of the ambiguous relationship professional journalism has with the opportunities and challenges posed by extra-media voices and non-journalists to publish and broadcast. Giving the A.N. Smith Lecture in Journalism at the University of Melbourne in 2013, Viner made a strong case for a mutual and reciprocal relationship between professional journalists and news audiences that appears to be underpinned by the ideology of convergence culture. Quoting a Tow Center for Digital Journalism essay on post-industrial journalism, she framed mainstream media's new

role as bringing together professional journalists and citizens as equals. While stressing that "there is more a need than ever for the journalist as a 'truth-teller, sense-maker, explainer'" (Viner 2013) she argued for a much more fluid and reciprocal relationship with news audiences. For example, she criticised those journalists on Twitter who choose to set themselves apart from others with the blue tick of personal verification, to lend their words a greater air of authority. With the two-way flow of information, she argued, journalists have to be prepared to climb into the pit with everyone else.

> What if we were to embrace the ecosystem of the web and combined established journalistic techniques with new ways of finding, telling and communicating stories? Opened ourselves up? Put the people formerly known as the audience at the heart of everything? Combined the elite and the street… and the tweet?
> Not gut instinct or data: both.
> Not the phone or Twitter: both.
> Not neutral journalists or politicised journalists: both.
> Not original reporting or verification,
> journalists or bloggers,
> journalists or activists,
> journalists or readers.
> The future of journalism, with humility, is all of the above. (ibid.)

A few years later and, while still stressing the importance of working with citizens in a mutual and reciprocal manner through technology, Viner shifted emphasis on the need to fight for a "strong journalistic culture" (Viner, 2016) and traditional news values. She described the open forum of the Internet where all information is seen as of equal value, as having created a struggle that involves the "diminishing status of truth". At the centre of her argument lies the assertion that shared norms for finding truth have been lost but are essential for an environment where public consensus can be built. In her view professional journalism must be preserved and reinvigorated in order for it to deliver a public service. This shift took

place in the space of just three years and coincided with other evidence of an ideological

shift from the idea of convergence during this period with the publication of Carlson and

Lewis' (2015) work on professional boundary-formation in journalism.

In Viner's 2016 'Long Read' feature, journalism is seen to serve a deliberative democracy

that must facilitate debate that strives for consensus, and the only way to achieve this is

through a shared way of looking at the world. It is a view that is common to mainstream news

media and is underpinned by the idea of the Habermasian public sphere (Habermas 2003),

where citizens engage in a rational debate to seek the truth. In journalistic terms this

translates into news routines that follow established methods that are presented as natural and

which audiences have been trained to read in certain ways. It can be argued that as it became

apparent that non-journalists published without deferring to these same rules, the journalistic

profession recognised their threat. So within a few short years, the rhetorical embrace of the

levelling of hierarchies turned into a stark warning about the alleged dangers this posed to

democracy and audiences were called on to accept the authoritativeness of journalists. But if

professional journalism sees it as its role to build consensus through a shared way of seeing,

then journalists are not likely to deviate significantly from how they construct news as a

community.

The research presented here deals with how news organisations have adapted their routines

and processes to integrate social media news content, and how their journalists position

themselves in this interaction. It investigates the use of interactive newsgathering and

collaborative newswork by journalists across three elite international news organisations that

are on the one hand similar in their global reach, and on the other emerged from different

media cultures. These are the BBC World Service, and the English-language services of France 24 and Al Jazeera. I examine the sourcing and gatekeeping routines exclusively with regard to information sought through social media, with the aim to explore how these affect power relationships between sources and journalists. The research was conducted through the analysis of three separate case studies between summer 2015 and the end of 2016. All of them comprised news events that had a strong social media component and were headline news across all three news organisations. These were the Greek referendum during the economic crisis, coverage of the EU migrant crisis, and coverage of the final battle for Aleppo. All three stories were at or near the top of the news agenda across the three news organisations during the period examined, generating numerous news texts, which relied on social media-sourced content. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis of these texts was conducted to investigate what social media-sourced content was used and how it was presented. In addition, I interviewed social media editors at the organisations to triangulate some of the findings and test them against the editors' own rationale for collaborative newswork. These are presented in a chapter broken down by themes addressed in the interviews, including the outlet's formalised approach to the use of social media, agenda-setting, differences among social media platforms, verification processes, and the editors' attitude towards professional guidelines for collaborative newswork.

When I set out to do this research, it was not my intention to explore boundary work in networked journalism, but rather to explore citizen participation in mainstream news media. However, as the findings began to present themselves, it soon became apparent that the issue at stake for the news organisations was their justification and continued relevance in this drastically changed news environment. Professional boundary work became the common

thread that tied the data together and, therefore, presented itself as the inevitable theoretical framework to underpin the discussion of my research. Firstly, the data from the case studies was examined with consideration to each news organisation's own cultural logic. This meant considering if and how the norms of that media culture were applied to collaborative newswork. Secondly, the spread of news organisations had the effect of revealing a range of evidence about the consequences of collaborative newswork with regards to whether it was binding the global professional community together or diffusing it. I hope the findings presented here will contribute to understanding of journalists have been adapting their routines, practices and professional discourse to offset the challenges posed by non-journalists' ability to carry out own journalistic work. Specifically, it approaches the collaborative newswork not necessarily as a means to foster participation but to carry out professional boundary work.

2. Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of some of the key ideas that have evolved in understanding news production, dissemination and consumption in a networked news environment. It aims to explore two often separately treated areas of media research: the news environment of social media platforms, and the news environment and rationale of legacy news media. A separation of these two areas – both in research and theory – can have the effect of downplaying the journalist's participation in the first as well as the second. It is my aim to bridge this gap by bringing two different logics together; that of the professional news environment on the one hand, and that of the user-driven, collaborative news environment of social networks on the other. By combining different methodological approaches, I aim to investigating how traditional news media and journalists deal with the disruption caused by the demands for interactivity with users.

The need to assert authority in order to preserve the idea of professionalism in journalism is discussed through boundary work, which forms the theoretical framework of this research. This section discusses journalists' claim to their own interpretive community and the mechanisms by which they define their boundaries, before further delving into the evolution of the role of the journalist, and different conceptions of what a journalist's responsibility to the public are. In Chapter 3, I explore the media models relevant to the news organisations investigated in this research and examine the online news strategies defined by each of the organisations in order to help contextualise the research. The specific media culture of a news organisation can be assumed to be a contributing factor in how journalists at each

organisation might define professionalism. Therefore, they might affect the way that journalists perform boundary work.

Much of networked journalism among mainstream news media is based on a heavy reliance on Twitter as a newsgathering tool. Therefore, the following literature review also entails a discussion of how the microblog functions as a social network. It investigates how information is shared by users; how networks of users interact with each other; and how communication differs from the one-to-many broadcasting style of traditional news outlets. It then goes on to discuss some of the factors contributing to the emergence of elite users in the blogosphere and how this can be applied to social media platforms relied on for newsgathering in the research. An overview of historical media traditions seeks to explain the roles of news organisations in the research and the considerations, responsibilities and obligations of their journalists in that context. The following sections discuss the discourse surrounding 'ambient journalism' and 'affective news streams', which envisioned the journalist in the role of 'gatewatcher' rather than gatekeeper. I aim to show how greater egalitarianism and plurality in newswork, which often accompanied these concepts in the early 2000s, is balanced with the reality of a saturated news environment and attention scarcity among audiences. The difficulties faced by non-journalists in achieving visibility through social media, are covered by the literature review to return to mainstream news media as playing an enduring role in providing a public sphere. It is this continued reliance on mainstream news media in shaping news discourse that prompted me to focus the research on the interactive and collaborative nature of today's professional newswork.

Drawing boundaries around journalism

As journalists face huge challenges through the widespread availability of technology that enables almost anyone to record, publish and broadcast, boundary work has become integral to protecting it as a profession. Ascribing professionalism to journalism in the classic sense is fraught, however, given that there is no definitive path of entry into the profession – such as through a particular education or license to practice. Nevertheless, journalists have long sought to build their own "interpretive communities" that strive for "internal cohesion and the right to enforce its own exclusivity" (Carlson 2015, p. 8). Journalistic professionalism, articulated through a set of norms and routines is the mechanism that legitimises journalists as exclusive providers of knowledge and meaning. (Carlson 2017) Integral to this is the understanding that the activities of journalists are a public service, typically couched in the belief that journalism is essential to democracy.

Online news production must perhaps be studied separately to other types of news production as it comes with its own culture as Deuze (2009) has argued. In it the journalist has taken on a greater role as "individual meaning makers" and the hierarchical structures of more traditional news formats gives "way to new practices and ways of working under the influence of current social and technological trends" (p. 84). However, as this text is already 10 years old, and online news has become ubiquitous, I argue that these practices and routines now form a core part of the newswork overall. While Deuze discusses the "individualization of labour" (p. 90) -- meaning the precariousness of journalism through individualised contracts and multi-skilling, where workers are expected to act as entrepreneurs -- he argues that these types of journalists are no longer initiated into the profession in the conventional

apprentice model but rather form their understanding of a professional community in a way that is more removed from the traditional newsroom. This is an important argument to this research in that it acknowledges the precarity of the journalist as a wage labourer amid the break-down of traditional ways of socializing young journalists, and the emergence of new ways of forming and articulating boundary work in order to lay claim to an interpretive community. Therefore, I argue that precarity in a collaborative news environment and new articulations of boundary work may be interlinked, and may lead journalists to perform boundary work as a type of self-promotion. Moreover, the fear of loss of livelihood feeds directly into how boundary work is performed, perhaps putting survival of the profession above the more esoteric norms and conventions of journalism. As such boundary work may be taking place, particularly in relation to factors that are seen as a threat to the exclusivity and authority of professional journalists rather than all aspects of practices such as sourcing and agenda-setting equally.

Perhaps provocatively, Hanitzsch and Vos say journalism has "no 'true' essence" (Hanitzsch & Vos 2017, p. 127). They argue it is an institution that is shaped by the discourse of internal and external actors, and that defines normative roles and ideas which evolve and drastically change over time. Moreover, norms differ according to location and context. For example, research on climate change journalism showed Philippine news media to deviate from norms embodied in Western news media (Evans 2016). Therefore, professional ideals of journalism are a site of struggle for authority in shaping this discourse while the community is primarily held together by its functioning as an institution. However, a growing trend of universalisation of norms was observed in the early 2000s (Hafez 2002). And many Western normative ideas about journalism have resonated with professional communities in other

societies, especially in regards to truth-telling, objectivity and independence (Pintak &

Ginges 2009). In fact, I believe, the nature of networked journalism has contributed to a

transnational journalism culture that is yet to be fully understood. It has prompted new

analytical models to study how norms are shared or not in this culture (Hellmueller et al.

2017). This research analyses news texts from organisations from different media systems or

cultures (discussed in Chapter 3), attempting to explore differences and similarities in the

news output of networked journalism through empirical and textual analysis. Deuze and

Witschge (2017) argue that to understand present-day journalism requires looking "beyond

boundaries" (p. 177). Journalists often carry out newswork away from the newsroom (the

former locus of professional journalism) which, nevertheless, continues to define the

perception of what journalism looks like. Journalists today are often entrepreneurs without

the security of permanence at an organisation, collaborating with non-journalists in

newswork, and are required to constantly adapt their skills in a permanently evolving and

changing news environment. Despite the extreme precarity they face, journalists continue to

adapt in what may only be described as dogged devotion to a set of ideals and values they

attach to their work. It is argued here that this normative ideology fostered in journalism is

perhaps the most persistent form of boundary work there is. It is consistently underpinned

with public discourse about a range of professional norms and routines that takes place not

only inside the professional community but is increasingly expressed outwards by journalists.

This makes a case for further exploring boundary work not only as a set of pseudo-norms,

which only have the appearance of normative behaviour and ideas, but as a persistent

coherence to professional journalism. However, it appears that what those norms and

practices are remains difficult to pin down in any definitive way. The hybrid nature of

networked journalism (Bruns 2006; Bruns & Highfield, 2012; Chadwick 2011a; Hermida

2010a; Papacharissi 2015) has undermined the very concept of newswork as a professional

occupation in academia. With so many actors involved in newswork, the questions, 'What is

journalism?' and 'Who is a journalist?' seem to become increasingly impossible to answer.

Yet Witschge et al. (2018) argue "the norms that govern journalism practices and theories

transcend the interactions between actors in a way that deserves more scholarly attention:

they are powerful in structuring relationships because they are shared references that connect

present, current practices with ideals, old and new" (p. 5). However, today's news

environment has also arguably given rise to new normative behaviour and ideas, perhaps

belying the notion of norms that remain constant and transcendental. For example, the

long-standing norm of objectivity has been contested through the emergence of transparency

as a "discursively constructed" journalistic norm (Vos & Craft 2017, p. 1514). The authors

argue that transparency has not been presented as an additional norm but is inherently placed

in opposition to objectivity. This arguably suggests a fundamental shift in normative ideas

taking place and suggests boundary work can be explored as a set of shifting and maleable

norms and practices.

At a time where the news media no longer holds the monopoly on speaking to a mass

audience "[t]he survival of journalism as an occupation depends on its credibility, which is

gained through the collective behavior of its practitioners" (Singer 2015, p. 22). Certainly,

among the major news organisations studied here a significant crossover in norms can be

reasonably assumed due to the arguably disproportional influence of Western news media on

the global news flow. However, the extent to which boundary work is performed in a

monolithic way is debatable as different logics are coming up against each other. Earlier, I

referred to how journalists themselves have begun to play a greater role in defining practices

away from the newsroom. However, this is not to say that control over what is published and how does not still often rest with news organisations and therefore with the institutions of journalism. And Deuze also maintains that institutions continue to play a central role. For example, Palmer (2015) describes how two freelance war correspondents were delegitimized by American news networks, when their reports did not match the dominant narrative on the conflicts they reported. The cases described by her describe a conflict between the boundary work of the reporters, which was found in practices and values such as to bear witness and speak truth to power, while the networks ultimately distanced themselves from the journalists, describing them as freelancers (in other words, outside the trusted circle of professional staff), and even framed them as potential activists (falling foul of the journalistic norm of impartiality). So the boundary work of specific journalists was not paramount but secondary to what was admissible as news reporting for the news organisations. However, I believe that Singer's argument that journalism is increasingly dependent on collective behaviour warrants exploration, specifically in how this ties in with journalists interdependence with news organisations. My point is that between the claim by the institutions of journalism to be able to define the parametres of boundary work in order to maintain their dominance in a much more diversified news environment, and the more self-directed approach to defining practices and routines by a workforce in precarious employment, a space may be opened up where boundary work is driven by survival rather than ideals. Pivotally, I suggest that survival and ideals may not necessarily be as interlinked as Singer suggests.

Carlson (2015) draws on Gieryn (1983) to describe the three types of boundary work journalists collectively carry out – expansion, expulsion, and protection of autonomy – and the three areas that these are enacted upon – participants, practices, and professionalism

(2015, p. 9). For example, expansion can mean widening access to journalism to non-journalists, incorporating new news production routines, and extending journalism to new types of media. Expulsion may mean expelling actors, practices or values that are considered deviant. Protection of autonomy refers to the ability to keep out actors that may conflict with the values and practices of the profession, such as public relations professionals, management, and to define the accepted practices of the profession. Since digital media assumed a prominent role in news in the early 2000s, journalists have been increasingly expressing the importance of their work through professional norms. One of the characteristics of this discourse is an 'us versus them' dichotomy, that seeks to discredit the authoritativeness of the non-journalist information producers through these norms (Singer 2015). However, what shape this dichotomy takes and to what extent it excludes non-journalists from newswork sanctioned by professionals is continually changing as journalists try to find ways to include information produced by non-professionals. Networked journalism, that is the collaboration between journalists and citizens (Jarvis 2006), is still governed by a hierarchy of influence, as Reese and Shoemaker (2016) argue. In the context of this research, networked journalism may be better understood as collaboration between journalists and extra-media actors. Van der Haak et al. (2012) describes it as "networks of various professionals and citizens collaborating, corroborating, correcting, and ultimately distilling the essence of the story that will be told" (p. 2927).

Although the news environment has been restructured, hierarchical power is in many places reasserting itself through the relationships formed between actors in these networks (Reese & Shoemaker 2016). Therefore, networks do not necessarily undermine hierarchy as "relationships are still conditioned by larger systemic factors" (ibid., p. 406). For example,

while journalists are joining networks that collaborate on news production, their participation in these relationships is shaped by their understanding of their role as journalists. As journalists are resorting to employing non-journalists in news production, their "'second-order' newswork still maintains a professional ethos, distant from the eyewitness field-reporting professionals have always valorized, yet still holding that ethos as an aspiration" (ibid., p. 400). Their networks are shaped by the relationships they seek out and nurture, but also how they interact with different actors in it and what position they take. One study found journalists would apply their professional norms and roles, as providers of information, and agenda-setters and gatekeepers of public discourse, to their use of Twitter hashtags (Enli & Simonsen 2018). Journalists were found to take considerable initiative in producing original content for Twitter and took a lead in shaping discourse in their own networks. Their use of hashtags was mainly designed to propel their original newswork to audiences beyond their immediate follower network.

Although impartiality (if understood in terms of not opining) has in many places lost importance as a professional norm, as a value it continues to be of utmost relevance in almost all journalistic work that incorporates social media news content and is most evident in the practice of verification. Verification of social media-sourced material, especially videos or photos, is often presented as only relaying the hard facts about this type of material. It involves determining bias of a source, verifying claims made by the producer and determining authenticity (Middleton 2016), all suggesting a strong emphasis on impartiality. To a great extent journalists continue to lay claim to exclusivity as news providers through promising reliability, accuracy and authenticity (Hermida 2015). In a real-time 24/7 news environment this can present huge challenges. Therefore, routines are being adapted to

networked journalism that can withstand inaccuracies. Verification becomes a quest for reliable information, with accuracy as its end goal. Trust in the journalist is primarily fostered through transparency. The journalist is a "trusted professional who is transparent about how a news story comes together, with accounts and rumors contested, denied or verified in collaboration with the public" (ibid., p. 47).The hot button issue of what was first referred to as 'fake news' -- and more recently 'misinformation, or 'disinformation' -- has been used extensively for boundary work as mainstream news media has problematised misinformation through deviant practices in news production by non-journalists, framing it as a threat to the proper functioning of democratic societies[1]. Misinformation has dominated industry conferences and been used to leverage the emergence of new specialist journalistic roles focused on sourcing and verifying social media news content[2]. Tech giants such as Facebook and Google have come under heavy criticism for enabling the spread of so-called 'misinformation' and research has looked at how news outlets have tried to label Facebook as a news organisation, drawing it into the boundaries of journalism, in order to then criticise it as deviant (Johnson & Kelling 2017).

Despite the disruption that social media as publishing platforms have caused, journalists' persisting ability to define professional boundaries is shown in the way that sources' continue

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[1] In Western societies, almost all journalistic roles are typically framed by the normative ideology that journalism facilitates democracy (Carlson 2017; Christians et al. 2010; Haak et al. 2012) though this has been argued to be too limiting to understanding journalism in the 21st century (Josephi 2013).

[2] Three examples of companies or news departments specialised in sourcing and authenticating social media content are social media news agency Storyful, the BBC's UGC Hub, and the European Broadcasting Union's Eurovision Social Newswire.

to struggle for the attention of journalists. They do this through long-established means, such as press releases, press conferences, easily appropriated multimedia material and availability to answer questions for journalists (Domingo & Le Cam 2015). In other words, actors looking for publicity continue to speak to journalists in the 'language' most likely to grant them access to their institutions, and deem representation in the mainstream news media as important. This can be argued to show that professional journalism continues to be seen as a vital medium to reach the wider public, while other channels are considered less influential. Nevertheless, these practices have also come to be coupled with news production that takes place outside the mainstream news media such as on social networking sites. In addition to this alternative news production, popularity on social media can feed back into the mainstream news narrative.

While boundary work is core to ring-fencing journalism as an occupation, journalists also engage in straightforward self-promotion by cultivating their social media personas. Research shows that journalists' Twitter activity mixes private and professional information, which means boundaries between what are deemed sanctioned professional practices and non-professional practices blur (Molyneux et al. 2018). And this too, I argue, can be understood as evidence of a kind of boundary work, albeit one that is not based on professional norms per se, but on celebrity status. Journalists perceive themselves as professionals engaging in public relations activity with their audience, where they create a more personal feel and look to engage audiences, while at the same time their occupation plays an important role in their image-building. This is to say that the act of branding shows they understand themselves as members of an exclusive professional community and engage

in some form of self-promotion that always implicitly has their professional work at the centre of their social media persona.

This section has attempted to provide an overview of the concept of professionalism in journalism and how this may be defined. I argue that the norms and routines that govern the professional community are very fluid. However, this does not prevent the use of a range of practices by which boundary work is conducted to produce an 'othering' of non-journalists. Perhaps the most enduring form of boundary work is the ideology of journalists as an autonomous interpretive communities that defines its own standards. This community is in part centred around the idea of the newsroom although for many journalists it is arguably more of a nostalgic concept than a lived reality, perhaps contributing to the formation of a type of imagined community.

The journalist

To explore some contrasting perceptions of an ideal of the journalist, theorist Geraldine Muhlmann (2010) has referenced Charles Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin to offer differing views of the personas that embody the journalist. I want to describe these as they reveal some of the discursive and ideological conflicts at the heart of journalism, and also add to the historical context that runs through the profession. This section is attempting to contextualise the boundaries, norms and values that journalism claims to give it authority and legitimacy.

First, the notion of the impartial observer, typically conceived of as a cornerstone of good journalism (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2007), is eloquently described, as Muhlmann suggests, in

Baudelaire's 1864 essay 'The Painter of Modern Life'. In describing the 'perfect flâneur',

Baudelaire seeks to sketch out the characteristics of an artist who is able to distill the essence

of contemporary life in their work.

> For the perfect flâneur, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite. To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world – such are a few of the slightest pleasures of these independent, passionate, impartial natures which the tongue can but clumsily define. (Baudelaire 1995, p. 9)

Applied to the journalist, Baudelaire describes a person, who both actively participates in the

world, but through a lense of disinterest. Far from being 'blasé' though, he has an enthusiasm

for what he observes and is driven by the desire to condense it to its most essential

characteristic and elements.

> He is looking for the quality that you must allow me to call 'modernity' for I have no better word to express the idea I have in mind. He makes it his business to extract from fashion whatever element it may contain of poetry within history, to distill the eternal from the transitory. (ibid., p. 12)

Once applied to social media, the designation of the journalist as a disinterested observer

might envisage them as seeking to "separate the noise from the news of social conversations"

(Little 2015), as the founder of social media news agency worded it. The aim is not to

represent the full array of voices in all their conversations, but to capture that which is

considered newsworthy by the journalist. Through monitoring and engaging with users on

social media platforms, the networked journalist filters information from the multitude of

voices competing for attention and seeks to make sense of them. This suggests that if done in

the vein of the 'perfect flâneur', they participate in this space by being at the centre of it while also acting as a spectator. In short, there is an independence of spirit. This kind of sense-making can be seen in action on many journalist's Twitter streams, as they pick out information, contextualise and comment on it. At the same time, there is also a collaborative sensemaking taking place between journalists, laying bare an interdependence between them to share knowledge and sources in order to arrive at a version of the truth. Journalists are bound together in a way that runs counter to the independence and remove that Baudelaire describes.

Baudelaire makes it clear that the character he describes is not indifferent but a 'moral' person[3]; someone who seeks to reveal a fundamental truth. His essay reveals an idealised view of what an observer of the world should be. Therefore, he preempted an important quality found in the professionalisation of journalism in the first half of the 20th century that elevated the quest for objectivity. This professionalization created prestige for journalists as reporting began to be seen as a quasi scientific pursuit with well-defined techniques and methods, deemed to arrive at a truthful and comprehensive version of events. The claim to objective reporting, for example, illustrates the desire to legitimize journalism in a scientific manner. It was not the journalist who was required to be objective in their view but rather the aim was for him or her to apply objective methods to reporting (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2007, p. 88).

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[3] "The dandy is blasé or pretends to be so, for reasons of policy and caste. Monsieur G. has a horror of blasé people" (ibid., p. 9). Baudelaire goes on to compare this idealised character to a philosopher, hampered by his distaste for the abstract.

German critic Walter Benjamin argued that this aim for disinterest and remove is precisely what prevents the press from challenging power relations in society. As a Marxist, he argued that the intellectual bourgeois writer at best only feigns allegiance with the working class. Unless he is prepared to convert his words into actions, the writer is described as parasitic, benefiting from the hegemonic order that sustains existing conditions.

> For we are confronted with the fact […] that the bourgeois apparatus of production and publication is capable of assimilating, indeed of propagating, an astonishing amount of revolutionary themes without ever seriously putting into question its own continued existence or that of the class which owns it. (Benjamin 1998, p. 94)

Benjamin outlines an alternative to this in his description of the 'operative writer', who, through his work, actively counters the conditions he denounces. "His mission is not to report, but to struggle; he does not play the role of spectator, but actively intervenes. He defines his task through the statement he makes about his activity" (ibid., p. 88). Unsurprisingly then, Benjamin disagrees with the professionalisation of journalism that he argues turns it into an exclusive club. Instead, he lauds the press that breaks down the "the distinction between author and public" and where "authority to write is no longer founded in the specialist training but in a polytechnical one, and so becomes common property" (ibid. p. 90). More than 60 years after Benjamin's death, the Internet has finally produced the means by which this deprofessionalisation in mass communication is a genuine possibility. Professionalism today is the dividing line drawn between journalists and non-journalists, designed to elevate the journalists' voice above others, giving it a claim to authority in and of itself, rather than those who previously laid claim to this status. Therefore, the journalist is also engaged in a struggle that is mainly focused on the interests of his own group; professional journalists.

Reverting back to the claims of impartiality and objectivity, Glasser and Marken (2005) elaborate on the way by which professonalisation of journalism has structurally limited diversity in the news media, without denying access to any particular group. They write that "professionalisation means standardization, it accounts not for differences among individuals but for what individuals have in common" (ibid., p. 270). Therefore, a byproduct of common professional codes, norms and routines is the reinforcement of a universal process to arrive at the Truth that tends to underscore rather than challenge the status quo. With journalists required to remove themselves from their reporting and apply standardized norms they are limited in how they can account for differences and alternative views, undermining efforts to diversify the voices that are heard.

> The recent and long overdue move to diversify American newsrooms [...] rests on the premise that different kinds of people, experiencing the world, in different ways, will bring to the newsroom new and different interests. But this runs foul of the premise of professionalism, which in the United States posits a disinterested newsroom whose staffers must steer clear of even the appearance of partiality. (ibid., p. 271)

Stuart Hall et al. (1978) discuss how professional routines structurally allow power elites to maintain their hold on how news is framed. It provides a reference point for exploring how these practices have changed or stayed the same in networked journalism. Hall et al. argue that professional ideology and routines "give rise to the practice of ensuring that media statements are, wherever possible, grounded in 'objective' and 'authoritative' statements from 'accredited' sources. This means constantly turning to accredited representatives of major social institutions " (ibid., p. 58) While some of these sources are called upon for their representativeness, others – specifically the 'expert' – are granted an elevated accredited

status precisely because they represents noone and, it is assumed, have a total disinterested in the information and views they provide.

> These two aspects of news production – the practical pressures of constantly working against the clock and the professional demands of impartiality and objectivity – combine to produce a systematically structured over-accessing to the media of those in powerful and privileged institutional positions. The media thus tend, faithfully and impartially, to reproduce symbolically the existing structure of power in society's institutional order. (ibid., p. 58)

These are the sources that Hall et al, describe as 'primary definers' of news events. Rather than journalists defining the news agenda, it is these voices that are given the opportunity to frame news. Therefore, the news media is in fact the 'secondary definer', mainly facilitating such sources' access to a mass audience.

> The media, then, do not simply 'create' the news; nor do they simply transmit the ideology of the 'ruling class' in a conspiratorial fashion. Indeed, we have suggested that, in a critical sense, the media are frequently not the 'primary definers' of news events at all; but their structured relationship to power has the effect of making them play a crucial but secondary role in reproducing the definitions of those who have privileged access, as of right, to the media as 'accredited sources'. From this point of view, in the moment of news production, the media stand in a position of structured subordination to the primary definers. (ibid., p. 59)

This crucial distinction between secondary and primary definers is what this research attempts to explore by analysing whether these roles have shifted through the engagement and reliance on social media by mainstream news media. As elites and major institutions arguably no longer rely on the media to proliferate their message how is professional journalism adapting to a news environment where their exclusive right to mediate these messages and its position, even as a secondary definer, is threatened? Moreover, has the ability to becoming a 'primary definer' by unaccredited extra-media voices been broadened

through the use of social media in the case studies under investigation in this research? Some research (Reich 2015) has shown no substantial increase in the use of ordinary citizen sources in news coverage over the last decade overall. One question posed by this research asks whether social media sources reflect a departure from the norm that may indicate an increased share of ordinary citizens in journalistic sources with an increased reliance social media, as was anticipated by some theorists (Allan 2013; Bruns 2010; Gillmor 2004; Rosen 2006). As eyewitnesses to news events, and citizen journalists or activists are able to share their own texts on social media, have these types of sources also been able to set and frame the news agenda? Whereas, primary source, such as eyewitnesses, were called upon to give accounts of what they saw when a news event unfolded, they were less likely to define how this news event was framed. Allan (2013) has argued this power imbalance has changed with the autonomy of non-elites to publish and share their own material. Therefore, what evidence is there that ordinary citizen voices have been able to assume the role of primary definer in the coverage of the news events studied here?

First, though, it is important to define who might constitute sources who are not typical primary and secondary definers as Hall et al. defined them — meaning accredited routine sources and the media. For the purpose of this study, these are ordinary citizen sources, though this is not an entirely unproblematic term. Afterall, journalists are also ordinary citizens, as are many individuals that for the purpose of news coverage could be deemed authoritative and accredited. One study of journalistic sources (Reich 2015), defined these as typically 'non-elite' and comprising private people without any "organizational affiliation, or [...] regardless of such affiliation" (p. 2413). This suggests that anyone speaking in a private

capacity, rather than as a representative or professional, may be deemed an ordinary citizen source.

While this may be a starting point for a definition it is not truly fit for purpose for the hybrid nature of how many interact on social media, often mixing the private with the professional and public. Firstly, journalists as well as some accredited sources are often careful to state that their social media activity reflects their own views and not those of their organisation. Moreover, journalists and news organisations are often ambiguous about whether they view their or their employees' social media activity, respectively, as professional or private conduct (Plunkett 2012; Posetti 2009). This could then mean that such users are expressing themselves within a personal capacity and as private people. However, their identity as journalists, experts, spokesperson, etc, and their professional affiliation, also frequently means that they are acting at least partly in a professional context, which is implicitly understood and taken for granted by their followers.

Since all social media activity involves some kind of publishing or broadcasting to a public, ordinary citizen sources involve an element of the amateur that should be incorporated in the definition of citizen sources for the purpose of this research. Bowman and Willis (2003, p. 9) describe citizen journalism as "the act of a citizen, or group of citizens, playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information." Therefore, their social media activity is not only performed in a private capacity but at times resulting from a personal or collective cause rather than a professional interest. Amateurism is often mentioned alongside citizen journalism (Allan 2013; Johnson & John III 2017; Schmieder 2015) as a defining characteristic. Stebbins (1977) seminal work *The Amateur:*

Two Sociological Definitions ties the amateur into a professional-amateur-public system. Here, the amateur is guided by professional norms, skills and techniques, that he tries to acquire without necessarily aiming to become a professional. "[As] a special member of the public, [he] knows better than the run-of-the-mill member what constitutes a creditable performance or product" (ibid., p. 587). However, unlike the professional, he does not receive the majority of his income from this pursuit. As does the professional, though, the amateur also aims to serve the public rather than just himself.

Where Reich's definition is very broad, Stibbens' definition would clearly only account for a very small fraction of social media users, who publish and broadcast as dedicated amateur or citizen-journalists. Ordinary citizen sources incorporate both of these definitions to varying degrees. In one study discussing amateur photographs in news coverage (Schmieder 2015), an interviewee working in the professional news media, argued that there needs to be "intentionality around the notion of photojournalism" (p. 589). Many ordinary citizens using social media clearly do not intend to produce journalism with their social media activity. Rather, they may unintentionally, spontaneously or sporadically perform "acts of journalism", as Allan (2013) describes it. Others show an ongoing commitment to producing journalistic work as non-professionals, therefore echoing Stibbens' idea of amateurs. Therefore, there are different types of ordinary citizen sources with varying perceptions of themselves in relation to professionals. This is important to bear in mind when analysing ordinary citizen sources. For example, it poses questions around the relationships professionals build with citizen-journalists and other ordinary citizen sources. Do they treat them differently; concede more authority to the output of the one or the other? Schmieder (2015) argues that amateur photographs are 'visual quotes', much in the same way that eyewitnesses to news events

would provide quotes. Those who produce them are treated primarily as sources, creating a hierarchy that casts professionals in a more authoritative role.

What is Twitter and how does it work?

The quality of offline social networks is often measured in terms of how reciprocal relationships are between its members. For example, in social networks in organisations, trust and collaboration is characterised by high levels of reciprocity (Kilduff and Tsai 2003) Reciprocity has also been a popular subject of research in online social networks. While power law distribution, meaning the tendency to follow popular users, was applied to the blogosphere in Shirky's seminal work (2003) *Power Laws, Weblogs, and Inequality*, complementary, and at times contradicting, research made the case for applying social exchange theory to online social networks (Faraj and Johnson 2010; Surma 2016). In this conception, networks gain sustainability not through preferential attachment to popular users but when users enter reciprocal relationships with one another based on two-way communication.

Although Twitter has changed substantially over time towards a personalised algorithm-driven feed that grants different levels of exposure to different users, this was not always the case. Today, not just popular users' original tweets are given greater prominence, but also their retweets and likes as the Twitter algorithm edits one's feed. But at the time of writing the flow of tweets by the users one was following was still displayed only

chronologically.[4] In the present version of Twitter, the development of networks that is based purely on self-driven social exchange is undermined by focusing users' attention on a selection of popular users they are following. It also prompts users to follow accounts that other users they are connected with follow. Therefore, it is arguably trying to engineer a cohesive social network based on a) reciprocity, and b) transitivity. High reciprocity is where "two people tend to be symmetric", while high transitivity is where "ties between three people tend to be complete" (Kilduff and Tsai 2003, p. 32). For example, when Twitter user A follows Twitter user B and vice versa the relationship can be described as reciprocal, while transitivity means that Twitter user A will follow Twitter user C because C is followed by B. This forms a network of Twitter users that is shaped by each others relationships. While these structural changes on Twitter are recent, the literature discussed here shows how algorithms may be contributing to the formation of specific networks but are at best only accelerating the way that networks already formed previously.

The definition of Twitter as a social network rather than a new iteration of one-way communication mimicking mass media was explored in a relatively early study (Kwak et al. 2010) examining the microblog's structures and most popular users. A research question posed was whether Twitter could be defined as a social network if reciprocity was a required core characteristic. By crawling the entire microblog with its 41.7 millions users at the time, the study found a notably low level of reciprocity. 77.9% of user pairs with any link between them were connected one-way, while just over a fifth (22.1%) of users had a reciprocal relationship. The authors argued that Twitter retains some of the core characteristics of

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[4] However, 'promoted tweets', meaning advertising, had already become a feature of Twitter timelines.

traditional mass communication, allowing for its most popular users – mass media and

celebrities – to adapt it to their needs for a distribution platform. A Twitter user may gather

followers without ever following any of them back, and many of the most popular users

rarely responded to comments directed at them, leading the authors to argue that the ability to

speak to a wide audience, without necessarily engaging in a reciprocal relationship, favours

Twitter as a one-to-many platform. A user can choose to follow particular accounts, like

channels, to received their content but has no guarantee of being listened to or seen by those

behind those accounts.

Nevertheless, the nature of how content is spread on Twitter suggests a deeper engagement

than the passive consumption of a TV programme. An important feature of the microblog is

its retweet function that encourages sharing content from other users, while the @ mentions

are an open invitation to comment and engage in conversations. The ability to retweet set

Twitter apart from traditional news media in a very fundamental way as it is the function that

allows tweets to be spread far beyond the followers of the original author. The so-called

'million follower fallacy' (Avnit 2009) illustrates that up to a point there is no straight

correlation between the popularity of a Twitter user, measured in follower count, and their

influence.

> Up to about 1,000 followers, the average number of additional recipients is not
> affected by the number of followers of the tweet source. That is, no matter how many
> followers a user has, the tweet is likely to reach a certain number of audience, once
> the user's tweet starts spreading via retweets. This illustrates the power of retweeting.
> That is, the mechanism of retweet has given every user the power to spread
> information broadly. (Kwak et al. 2010, p. 598)

While the study found that the potential overall audience a tweet reaches once it is retweeted is not influenced by the number of followers the tweet's source has, this was only true for sources with fewer than 1,000 followers. Nevertheless, the study also compiles a ranking of the most popular accounts in terms of followers and the most retweeted accounts and found relatively little overlap. This finding was echoed by another contemporary study (Cha et al. 2010), indicating factors other than popularity affecting retweets. In this research, the number of followers of the users most highly retweeted is still far larger than that of the average user. So, while the size of the following of an account may not be the sole indicator of the likelihood of being retweeted, it does still play a significant role in increasing the chances of amplification through retweets. One conclusion drawn by Kwak et al (2010) is that users' behaviour around what to amplify and spread "shows the rise of alternative media in Twitter"[5] - meaning that media we may consider 'alternative' have a tendency to do well on the platform. These types of Twitter accounts achieved considerable reach by rallying audiences to participate in the distribution of their content. However, a closer look at these accounts also shows that they are not necessarily ordinary voices but appear to represent an 'elite' among Twitter users, who in everyday terms are often described as 'influencers'.

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[5] A look at the top 20 ranking of most retweeted accounts show 10 of them were classified as news sources or journalists that constitute professional journalism. The most popular Twitter user was a journalist for social media news site Mashable. Others included the Huffington Post and TechCrunch, perhaps indicating a greater engagement with online, technology and social media-related news sites. In addition, four sources were four Iranian bloggers. The study was conducted in 2009 coinciding with the so-called Green Revolution in Iran and where social media played a large role in generating international publicity.

Influence on Twitter has been defined "as the ability of a user to spread information in a network" (Pezzoni et al. 2013, p. 362). Considering that retweets are the main mechanism by which information spreads, several studies have tried to identify what factors, aside from popularity, affect retweeting. Two[6] of these have been described as visibility (Hodas & Lerman 2012; Pezzoni et al. 2013), as well as "name value" (Cha et al. 2010) or "user standing" (Pezzoni et al 2013). Visibility was measured by analysing the position a tweet had in a user's timeline and found that tweets further to the top were more likely to be retweeted. As already mentioned, today, visibility is no longer determined by the timing that a user logs onto their Twitter timeline but by an algorithm that pushes specific tweets to the top, hence reducing the equality among users in achieving visibility. Previously, including during the periods covered by case-studies in this thesis, visibility involved a greater element of chance whereas today it is more deliberately engineered. However, even in 2011/2012 visibility was influenced by retweets within a specific network. The more a tweet was retweeted among the Twitter users one followed, the greater the likelihood that it would be seen. 'Name value' or 'user standing' was linked to more subjective qualities such as celebrity, expertise, or credibility. Given that publicity is in the nature of journalism and access to the public is ensured through a whole array of media (broadcast, print, online) it is reasonable to assume that a Twitter users' perceived news value and reputation as a news source is likely to elevate their user standing among those interested in news content. Twitter communities themselves have a tendency to form around common interests (Java et al. 2007) and visibility and name value allow specific users to become influencers in these communities.

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[6] Additional factors affecting retweeting behaviour were the use of hashtags and links in tweets. (Suh et al. 2010)

Murthy (2013) also discussed how Twitter brings social networks and one-way broadcasting together to "maximizing audience reach" (ibid., p. 9). He provides a useful distinction in differentiating social media and social networks to help understand Twitter. Social media, he argues, "is mainly conceived of as a medium wherein 'ordinary' people in ordinary social networks [as opposed to professional journalists] can *publish* user generated 'news'/'updates'" (ibid., p. 8). Social media, therefore, is a medium to broadcast similarly to mass media, except it provides ordinary people with the tools to reach a wide audience.

For a contrasting definition of social networks, Murthy draws on Boyd and Ellison (2007):

> We define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site. (2007, p. 211)

This definition was created with social networks such as Facebook, Bebo and MySpace in mind. By applying both of these definitions, an overlap becomes clear between social media and social network that is inherent in Twitter. Murthy uses the term 'interactive multicasting' to capture how tweets spread through social networks:

> [A] key difference here between social media and social network sites is the design of the former to be explicitly public and geared towards interactive multicasting. Combine the two – as Twitter does – and you have real-time public, many-to-many broadcasting to as wide a network as the content is propagated by its users. (Murthy 2013, p. 11)

It can therefore be argued that the central function of the microblog's social networks is to act as conduits for the spread of information.

Huberman et al. (2009) makes the assertion that there were two co-existing types of social networks on Twitter: the first is the 'following' of a user, the second is the interaction between users through @ mentions. Unsurprisingly, the latter networks were significantly sparser than the former. In this latter network a user is highly selective about who they interact with. However, it is this network that also most affects tweeting behaviour. The larger the network that is centred around interactions, the more a user will tweet. By contrast, the size of a following only boosts the frequency of tweets to a point. In addition, the number of @ mentions directed at a user are also is considered one measure that contributes to the level of influence a user yields (Cha et al. 2010).

This section has shown that Twitter is a social media platform that provides any of its users with the ability to distribute information publicly. On an individual user basis, it operates as a one-to-many broadcasting medium that can be transformed into many-to-many broadcasting through the social networks it hosts. On the one hand there are loose social networks, and on the other a whole range of more tightly knit networks and communities, that thrive and sustain themselves through the reciprocity of social exchange, and that can be an effective tool to create influencers. Each user who retweets is a node that distributes a tweet to their social network, but the followings congregated around users vary in size depending on the popularity of that user. They are also able to overlap as each user has the ability to follow an unlimited number of other users and communities are likely to form around particular topics. Influencers are not determined through popularity -— meaning the size of their following – alone, but also affected by other factors such as visibility, user standing and @ mentions. However, these three factors have the potential to reinforce each other. The higher the user standing, the greater the visibility; the greater the visibility the more likely the @ mentions,

etc. Influencers, both have the ability to spread their own original tweets further, and it is logical to assume that their retweets also have greater resonance. This would lead to the conclusion that influencers are not necessarily formed primarily by a wide loose social network but can be formed by a much smaller but influential social network.

Power law and Elite users

Having discussed the existence of influencers on Twitter, what characterises these users in relation to news content and the power dynamics within which they operate warrants further discussion. Shirky's (2003) analysis of power law distribution in the blogosphere offers a starting point and puts forward the argument that "[d]iversity plus freedom of choice creates inequality, and the greater the diversity, the more extreme the inequality". Shirky's paper predates Twitter, and emerged when news media outlets' online presence was still in its infancy, but it does offer some explanation for the unequal power distribution found online with regards to social media users. He sought to demonstrate how some blogs attract more attention than others by arguing that individuals' choices naturally affect each other.

While the first person to link to a blog does so without any outside influence, the probability of the blog being linked to by the second blogger is slightly increased, and the chances of a third link is again a little greater, and so on. Therefore, older blogs with large readerships gain readers more easily, provided the blogger remains active. "The system assumes that later users come into an environment shaped by earlier users; the thousand-and-first user will not be selecting blogs at random, but will rather be affected, even if unconsciously, by the preference premiums built up in the system previously" (ibid.). As a starting point, Shirky's

theory assumes total equality as it is based around the assumption that every blogger had an equal opportunity to become influential at the start but that over time a dwindling percentage of bloggers reach a mass audience. Shirky explicitly discounts any influence of qualities or characteristics of a blog on its appeal and likelihood to be linked to. "What matters is that any tendency towards agreement in diverse and free systems, however small and for whatever reason, can create power law distributions" (ibid.). This leads him to argue that though the blogosphere is an unequal terrain, the inequality seen is mostly fair, and not the result of a cliquish preference for any particular group of bloggers.

Shirky also argued that equality in the blogosphere existed on four grounds. Firstly, the barriers to blogging are not much greater than the barriers to getting on to the Internet in the first place, suggesting that there are no significant hurdles to becoming a blogger beyond getting online. Secondly, blogs require constant activity to maintain audiences. Thirdly, popularity depends on the preference of a large number of other bloggers that cannot be simulated. And finally, there is no reason to assume a qualitative difference between a popular and less popular blogger. He made this final point most forcefully, rejecting arguments about the concentration of readership on a small number of blogs.

> The largest step function in a power law is between the #1 and #2 positions, by definition. There is no A-list that is qualitatively different from their nearest neighbors, so any line separating more and less trafficked blogs is arbitrary. (ibid.)

However, in 2003, the internet was a different place to what it is today. The blogosphere that Shirky describes was not the terrain of professional communicators to the same extent it is today. News organisations were still coming to grips with new media as a means of reaching mass audiences. Still, the four claims made to illustrate the 'fairness' of the inequality are

clearly contentious and several arguments critiquing them have been put forward that will be explored at a later point in this chapter.

First though, how can Shirky's theory about power laws in the blogosphere be applied to Twitter? To start with there are parallels between hyperlinking and retweeting. Similarly to the number of hyperlinks determining the ranking of a blog, the rate a Twitter user is retweeted determines his level of influence. As already discussed this is broadly accepted in literature and used as a main measure in Twitter analytics tools to determine the 'social authority' of users (Bray 2013). Shirky identifies visibility, facilitated by bloggers' hyperlinking, as the key factor in driving audiences to the top bloggers. This also corresponds with findings on the correlation between visibility and retweets.

Power law distribution also characterised the Twittersphere, with studies (Bakshy et al. 2011; Kwak et al. 2010; Wu et al. 2011) showing a similar concentration of attention on a small number of Twitter users. For example, Wu et al (2011) found 20,000 accounts (less than 0.05% at the time) "attract almost 50% of all attention within Twitter" (p. 709). These elite users typically fit into one of four categories; celebrities, media, organisations and blogs[7].

> Within this population of elite users, moreover, we find that attention is highly homophilous, with celebrities following celebrities, media following media, and bloggers following bloggers. Second, we find considerable support for the two-step flow of information – almost half the information that originates from the media passes to the masses indirectly via a diffuse intermediate layer of opinion leaders, who

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[7] The methodology by which elite users were defined involved crawling user profiles on relevant Twitter lists for keywords. For the media category, only the terms 'news', 'media', and 'news-media' were searched leading to the potential omission of individual journalists from these elite users who might identify themselves with the terms journalist, correspondent, reporter, editor.

although classified as ordinary users, are more connected and more exposed to the media than their followers. (ibid., pp. 713-714)

The two-step flow of information, or word-of-mouth, showed that nearly half a million users acted as nodes that were better placed to facilitate the spread of information from elite users to other users. In regards to media content, the research makes no real distinctions between the ordinary users who best facilitated such information cascades from elite media users, thus offering little insight into how this group is broken down. However, it demonstrates that not every retweet is equal and that certain individuals have a greater ability to spread information. In a study on viral marketing, Bakshy et al (2011) showed that information cascades on Twitter, often referred to as 'going viral', are more likely to be sparked by Twitter users with many followers and that have been influential in the past. However, the virality of a particular tweet is difficult to predict when retweeted by exceptionally influential users alone. Rather, retweets by a larger number of reasonably influential users was more likely to start information cascades, so where a particular piece of content piqued the interest of several influencers it was likely to spread further.

There is a strong argument for homophily among social networks on Twitter (Barberá 2015; Conover et al. 2011; Wu et al. 2011). Numerous studies into engagement and behaviour among journalists and news media on Twitter have shown this same preference to largely limit interactions to other reporters of similar status (Lasorsa et al. 2012; Nuernbergk 2016) and Twitter users that conform to traditional journalistic norms of authoritative voices (Almgren & Olsson 2015). Although many journalists on Twitter are not among the most influential but nevertheless often possess above average influence, it is reasonable to hypothesise that where enough come together to amplify a particular tweet or hashtag they

are well placed to trigger information cascades. Given the high degree of homophily in elite journalists' interactions on Twitter, a piece of content may 'go viral' among journalists first, before spreading to news audiences sympathetic to their outlets.

Shirky separates the blogosphere from the mainstream media, the latter of which he defines as broadcasting instead of conversing. He emphasises the reciprocity that bloggers show each other through engaging with comments and hyperlinking to each others' blogs. Once a blogger becomes too popular to engage with all the comments and hyperlinking, he argues they no longer fit that definition and instead become a broadcast outlet. Having said this, Shirky's separation between broadcasting and conversing does not address how bloggers are able to alternate between the two communication styles and assumes a willingness to engage wherever possible.

Moreover, by reducing choices to mathematical equations, Shirky's analysis ignores other factors that drive the concentration of influence into the hands of a few elite bloggers- this also helps to illustrate hierarchies on Twitter. McChesney (2013) argues that subjective human decision-making and economic factors have been key to elevating some online news sources over others. Although focused on how the Internet has driven the concentration of media ownership, some of his core arguments are relevant to user behaviour on Twitter. Firstly, the largest mainstream media organisations have benefited in influence from the Internet as news audiences congregate around familiar news sources. The apparent abundance of choice has contributed to the shrinking number of news sources available, with overwhelmed news consumers seeking out trusted household names. Secondly, the unresolved dilemma of how commercial news media can survive online has led to further

media concentration with large media conglomerates better financially cushioned to survive, while medium-sized news organisations are forced into bankruptcy.

> There is a 'long tail' of millions of websites that exist but get little or no traffic, and only a small number of people have any idea that they exist. Most of them wither, as their producers have little incentive and resources to maintain them. There is also no effective "middle class" of robust, moderate-sized websites; that segment of the news media has been wiped out online, leading Hindman to conclude that the online news media are *more* concentrated than in the old news media world. (McChesney 2013, pp. 190-191)

In as far as Twitter can be considered a news source, these factors play into what Twitter users rise above the rest in influence, with professional journalists, and especially elite journalists, naturally attracting followers through their trusted and reliable reputation, which elevates their 'user standing'. In the blogosphere, Shirky and others (Cha et al. 2010; Goode 2010) highlight the need for bloggers to remain active to maintain their ranking. This in itself plays into the hands of media and communication professionals as they have the skills and are often encouraged, if not expected, by their employers to engage on social media platforms. Goode writes that "one of the major factors often overlooked [...] is the divide between the time-rich and the time-poor. An abundance of news sources to navigate and opportunities to 'join the conversation' [...] scarcely 'democratizes' news for the many citizens who work double shifts or have round-the-clock care responsibilities" (2010). Research findings into the most influential American bloggers (Hindman, 2009) substantiate this point. Less diversity in terms of education level, gender, and ethnicity, were found among the bloggers than staff in traditional newsrooms.

Moreover, neither a dichotomy between broadcasting and conversation, nor Shirky's early assumption of blogger's willingness to reciprocate, is found in the behaviour of journalists on

Twitter. This might be because journalists cannot be considered bloggers only because they also occupy the same space. However, there are also limitations to applying Shirky's power law theory with regard to the blogosphere to Twitter, as the microblog is structured differently and indexing of users and their tweets are not as opaque as the blogosphere in 2003. Therefore, visibility and user standing are affected differently. Yet, there has also been a normalising effect observed in how the microblog is used to maintain professional routines, especially with regard to elite professional journalists. Deuze (2008) anticipated that mainstream journalists would adopt an 'us vs them' mindset towards the apparent opening up of their professional field to amateurs through social media. While convergence culture potentially offered opportunities for collaboration, he predicted that journalists would react nostalgically, while media management would take it as an opportunity to lay off staff, and audiences would see it as a way to bypass journalism rather than foster closer ties. This analysis essentially predicted a fragmenting effect that social media would have on professionals and news audiences.

Indeed, the perceived emergence of a social media echo chamber has been supported by a number of studies of journalists' behaviour on Twitter. Lasorsa et al (2012) found that elite journalist were less likely to relinquish their gatekeeping role on Twitter than their less elite peers, meaning that those working for national news organisations did not link, retweet or engage in conversations with non-professionals as much as journalists at smaller news outlets. They were also significantly less likely to express opinions. Professional norms were therefore more strictly observed by those with a greater vested interest in them. Since, research into interactions by journalists and mainstream media has shed more light on how professionals have adjusted to norms and practices particular to Twitter while safeguarding

their authority as gatekeepers. Analysis of German political correspondents showed that this cohort of journalists was likely to "remain in a journalism-centered bubble and to mostly interact with one another" (Nuernbergk 2016, p. 877). Moreover, they also largely steered clear of retweeting political actors, perhaps for fear of being perceived as endorsing them. The findings indicate that journalists often operate in an echo chamber that largely consists of their peers. An investigation into Twitter use by Norwegian and Swedish public service broadcasters revealed a similar tendency towards elite interactions in their national election coverage (Larsson et al. 2016). The findings showed that news organisations were more likely to be @ mentioned by non-elite users, but more likely to respond to elite users, such as journalists and politicians. This was the case despite a stated desire by staff to use social media for greater engagement with the general public.

Nevertheless, it would be disingenuous to argue that mainstream journalism has been able to simply shut out non-professionals by closing rank (although it may have created a mechanism to minimize their impact on professional news production). While Deuze (2008) predicted that professional journalists would begin to compete with those Bruns (2006) dubbed "produsers", professional journalism has also undoubtedly been adopting and appropriating amateur-produced content. The term "produsers" was used to describe the blurring of boundaries between the consumption and production of content online, with individuals distributing content that they altered, added to, or commented on in some way.

Describing the distribution of news about the Arab Spring in Cairo, Murthy (2013) wrote that the Twitter conversation was dominated by a relatively small group of activists in Egypt, and the platform's biggest strength was in reaching international audiences, including

international journalists. By framing the role Twitter played within the context of activism, he separated Twitter 'activists' from journalists, though both participated in the same medium, carrying out at least some of the same activities. He acknowledged that Twitter had relatively little impact in mobilising protesters in Egypt but rather showed its strength in raising global awareness, writing that "much of Twitter's prominence [...] arose from individuals in the West tweeting and retweeting" (ibid. p. 112). Therefore, western Twitter users' participation in raising global awareness and, by extension, action by the international community can be understood as a form of activism.

The idea of information being widely shared and retweeted as being activism is an interesting one, because much of the same information was being shared both by activists and journalists. So what distinguishes a journalist on Twitter retweeting information from any other member of the public doing the same? A main difference is possibly intention. It is argued that a journalist is expected to adhere to professional journalistic practices and an ethical framework that set both impartiality and accuracy as important values (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2007). In a time where everyone can potentially publish, this ideological emphasis on professional norms and practices to set themselves apart has perhaps become increasingly important to professional journalists. As I will discuss in more detail later in this chapter, a form of activism or implied advocacy arguably and ironically also becomes part of the role of the journalist. This activism is not primarily focused on a cause such as toppling an authoritarian regime but rather on promoting the value and routines of professional journalism. Mainstream media is no longer simply engaged in reporting the news while taking the practices it adheres to for granted, but involved in an ongoing process of self-validation. This comes at a time when the overlap between the activities of amateurs and

mainstream journalists is growing, complicating efforts to set professional journalism apart in the eyes of news audiences. McNair (2005) argued that "as the information marketplace has become more competitive in recent years, the commercial value of reliable accurate information increases, not decreases, and old fashioned objectivity remains a key marketing tool for global news brands like the BBC and CNN" (p. 34). Given the radical shift from information scarcity in the past to a news environment characterised by information overload, "[t]he sense-making, interpretative functions of journalism are enhanced, not made redundant in the era of real-time and online news" (McNair 2005, p. 40). Yet, interpretation of news events is also a main feature of citizen commentary (Bruns 2010). Therefore, it may be that professional journalists seek out reciprocal validation from peers to raise their profile and thus potentially create a filter bubble or echo chamber among themselves.

By exploring power law, I have sought to explore some of the early assumptions around equality in the blogosphere and dispute that these can be translated or applied to Twitter. Influence on Twitter can be affected by a number of factors that can work in favour of communication professionals, including their reputation and skills in speaking to large audiences, their networks of other journalists and their ability to amplify their voices collectively. As a community they are arguably able to increase their visibility to their wider networks (or audiences) but also inside their networks of peers.

'Ambient' journalism and 'gatewatching'

An analysis of the nature of news production and distribution on Twitter may be found in Hermida's (2010b) description of "ambient journalism". He argues that social media has

created an environment that "enable[s] the former audience to become part of the news environment as it has the means to gather, select, produce and distribute news and information" (Hermida 2010a). He describes 'ambience' as an awareness-system that is always switched on but shifts between background and foreground in news audience's consciousness. The ambient news environment in the TV era was all-pervasive, with audiences dipping in and out of focusing their attention on news products as consumers. Within an environment of ambient journalism, there is the option to contribute to the news environment as producers and distributors. Hermida argues that the collage of fragments, or tweets, is a form of journalism in its own right. Instead of applying norms of professional journalism, Twitter creates its own journalistic environment with its own logic that empowers non-professionals to engage in news production. He writes: "Micro-blogging can be seen as a form of participatory or citizen journalism, where citizens report without recourse to institutional journalism" (Hermida 2010b, p. 300).

Citizen journalism emerged in the 1970s and was characterised by small, hyper-local and alternative media, conceptualizing public communication as an intersubjective discourse, where meaning is created in the interaction of subjective social beings. Through it "[d]ialogue has emerged as a centrepiece of contemporary communication theory" that is now a significant contribution to the media landscape (Christian et al. 2009, p. 60). Citizen journalism may be considered a dated, and somewhat narrow term, to describe collaboration in newswork by non-elites. Especially in a globalised world, the normative concept of citizenship is challenged as it is tied to the nation-state's ability to confer rights (Siapera 2017). Citizens' rights and responsibilities are understood within territorial boundaries. This is problematic with regards to networked journalism because participation in newswork can

come from individuals who are citizens of geographically remote locations and without an obvious stake in a news event, or are outside of the definition of citizen but with a substantial stake in a news event (ie. refugees and migrants). This is not to say that this definition of citizenry, if applied to citizen journalism, is always without merit but that it is not broad enough to capture the full range of participants or type of participation in this research. Therefore, I will apply Siapera's idea of digital citizenship to non-elite users participating in newswork. In this conception, the citizen can be outside the boundaries of the nation-state while trying to achieve change within it.

Hermida's analysis neatly separates Twitter users between mass media and citizens and feeds into the early hypothesis that the Internet is leading towards the democratization of mass communication (Benkler 2007; Jenkins 2006; Shirky 2008a). It also fed into the prediction that professional journalism, embodied by the press, would become increasingly displaced by the activities of amateurs thanks to diminishing revenue in a commercial news environment. However, the democratization of news was envisioned to offset the negative implications of this trend (Shirky 2008b). Yet, the rise of Twitter as a tool and publishing platform for journalists shows that the line between citizen and mass media is much more difficult to identify. The activities Hermida identifies as carried out by citizen journalists are also the activities of professional journalists participating on Twitter and vice versa.

Bruns (2010) responded to Hermida criticizing the theoretical binary between 'para-journalism' and journalism that casts the former in a communitarian ethic and the latter

as a 'gatewatcher'[8] in the interest of corporate media. Much of what was described as citizen journalism, he renamed 'citizen commentary', in which "news curation is the core practice" (Bruns & Highfield 2012). As Bruns pointed out, news curation relies heavily on the abundance of available information, including mainstream media reporting. "[T]he politicization of mainstream journalism and the relatively low cost of producing commentary" (ibid., p. 8), Bruns argued, had led to the increase of op-eds in the mainstream news, which in turn fuelled efforts by alternative media to source their own independent information. In short, the internet produced a news environment where the practices of mainstream and alternative media increasingly overlap, to the point of a cross-pollination of contributors, leading to a more heterogeneous news environment. Bruns and Highfield saw the uptake of Twitter as having 'turbo-charged' gatewatching and collaboration between professional journalists and non-professionals. He described it as a "flat and open network structure" (ibid., p. 10), where news production and curation becomes malleable and fluid. News curation is shaped by a multitude of voices as they congregate around specific hashtags. "[T]he process of news curation [...] is further decentralized and shared; no one individual Twitter user is now responsible for compiling, collating, and curating the available information on any given topic. Instead, it becomes a thoroughly collaborative exercise."

However, the news collage produced on Twitter, as Bruns described it, can only be apparent to anyone who follows all of the information emerging around a particular news event. While it might be feasible for the news pastiche to be appreciated in its entirety for less prominent events, it becomes a practical impossibility for events that generate widespread interest.

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[8] Given the information abundance, 'gatewatchers' would replace gatekeepers, organising and ordering valuable information.

Given the abundance of information, hierarchies become necessary, if not inevitable and at

the time of the research in 2015 and 2016 Twitter automatically ordered tweets searched by

'keywords' according to popularity rather than chronology. Therefore, a discussion of power

dynamics on the Internet provides further insight into how hierarchies emerge and are shaped.

More recently, Hermida (2017) looked at how professional norms can be adapted whereby

the journalist "acts as a forum organizer guided by both traditional journalistic principles and

emerging values of collaboration and co-creation," securing the "role of the social media

reporter as a key node in a networked and hybrid media environment" (p. 189). Bringing

professional norms to the ambient journalism environment means that the journalist then also

participates in it but inspires trust and authority.

Chadwick (2011a; 2011b; 2013) also echoed this emergence of a collaborative approach to

news production that he called the 'hybrid media system'. Analysing the political news cycle

in Britain, he argued, political news production as "a tightly-controlled, even cozy game

involving the interactions and interventions of a small number of elites: politicians, officials,

communications staff, journalists, and, in a small number of recent studies, elite bloggers" is

being contested. "While these elite-driven aspects of political communication are still much

in evidence, the hybridization of old and new media requires a rejuvenated understanding of

the power relations shaping news production" (2011b, p. 7). A main characteristic of

Chadwick's model is 'interdependence', as old media look to exploit the viral nature of

online news, while new media news outlets still operate in an environment where traditional

news media are able to outperform their newer rivals in terms of financial and organisational

resources (2011a, p. 5). Much of new media continues to rely on the scoops and reporting of

traditional news media. Chadwick argued this hybridization between new technologies and

traditional news media would lead towards the empowerment of non-elites to contest the mainstream media's monopoly on framing and reporting of news. "The more that professional broadcast and press media use digital services like Twitter and Facebook, the more likely it is that media will become open to influence by activists who use those same tools." (Chadwick 2011b, p. 15).

This news environment describes a rich tapestry of actors able to participate in a news production cycle that is in essence more collaborative and diverse than the linear one-to-many model of broadcasting. Nevertheless, Chadwick, like Bruns, also recognises how professional journalists are competing on new media to outperform other actors and assert their dominance in this space. "[Journalists] have also selectively integrated digital practices and online sources into their own coverage, as they seek to outperform new media actors in an incessant, micro-level, and often real- time power struggle characterized by competition and conflict, but also negotiation and interdependence." (ibid., p. 8) It is through competition on the one hand and interdependence on the other that diversity is deemed to be fostered. With new players contesting the right to draft and determine news, journalists lose their privilege to decide who gets to speak. Instead, not only must they compete but also take heed of new emerging voices not to run the risk of rendering themselves irrelevant. "[O]nline activists and news professionals alike are now routinely engaged in loosely coupled assemblages characterized by conflict, competition, partisanship, and mutual dependency, in the pursuit of new information that will propel a news story forward and increase its newsworthiness" (2011b, p. 19). In more recent work, Chadwick (Chadwick et al. 2016) returns to the issue of unequal power distribution in the hybrid media system, and how news media are adapting to newer media. But he insists that greater opportunities remain for

non-elites to disrupt information flows than at any other point in the last 60 years. Critically, Chadwick notes that as professional journalists adapt their practices to digital media "this process also works in the opposite direction: amateur journalists and bloggers increasingly integrate the logics of professional journalists" (2016, p. 14) to the point that some of them are partly accepted into the professional community. I argue that what this suggests is an ongoing struggle over what constitutes legitimate forms of mass communication and that it is by no means clear that the give and take in this struggle is equal.

A similar collaborative spirit between citizens and journalists is echoed in Papacharissi's (2016) definition of "affective news streams" where "news [is] collaboratively constructed out of subjective experience, opinion, and emotion, all sustained by and sustaining ambient news environments." (p. 34) Everyone is invited to contribute and established norms in professional newswork, such as neutrality, are called into question. Essentially, it is the ability to talk back and for subjectivity to shape part of the news stream, that Papacharissi argues, reconnects journalist with a disaffected public.

> If we understand affective news streams not just as informative, but as collectively generated, pluralistic arguments on what should be news, and how news stories should be told, we may interpret affective news gestures as indicative of political statements of dissent with a mainstream news culture, and the agendas that culture cultivates. (ibid., p. 34)

All four authors are largely concerned in these papers with the consumption and productions of news through new media, and, it appears, social media specifically. Though not always stated, it is easy to see how Hermida's and Bruns' ambient journalism and produsing emerges in social networks that facilitate the flow and exchange of information, as seen on Twitter and

Facebook. Papacharissi specifically cites affective news streams on Twitter in the immediate aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombing, and Chadwick's hybrid media discusses journalists' adoption of platforms and practices used by non-journalists for expression, as is clearly seen in the uptake of Twitter among news media professionals. This work suggests a technological determinist streak, whereby it is not a deliberate rethinking of professional routines but technological innovation and adoption that is deemed to pave the way to democratising the news media. Above all, competition is the guiding principle by which democratisation takes place in the hybrid media system, and professional journalism is forced to adapt in order to remain relevant. Firstly, competition forces collaboration and interdependence as a whole range of individuals are relied on to add value to newswork through their participation. This inadvertently threatens to deprofessionalise news reporting as it opens up to non-professionals. Although Papacharissi recognises that 'affective news streams' are often riddled with inaccuracies and therefore produce poor news coverage in the conventional sense, she argues, they present "liminal paths to accuracy" (ibid. p. 35). She suggests this will ultimately produce news of the same standard as older conventional news reporting but will have managed to democratise the process.[9]

All four authors predicted or argued that this collaborative news environment has a profound effect on news production that renders it far more open to non-elites. An empowering quality

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[9] In the case of the Boston Marathon bombing, others were more sceptical of the effect of a 'tweet first fact-check later' approach by networked journalists, questioning that unfettered self-expression in the "marketplace of ideas will eventually, somehow, produce the right answer" (Annany 2013). Annany argues for a sense of responsibility in speech. That a networked press must ask, "what if the version of the truth I'm about to say is taken to be true?"

is ascribed to new technologies as far as breaking down barriers between the general public and journalists is concerned. From a macro-level, this activity can be interpreted as an expression of discontent that forces a renegotiation of professional routines. Given that attention is a scarce resource in this ambient news environment, not only among news audience but also the public, ordering the content of these news streams in some meaningful way becomes inevitable. As already discussed, there is a hierarchy in how information is likely to be ordered by audiences, but more specifically to this research, by journalists.

Roger Silverstone (2006) problematizes this technologically determinist take on the media environment from a political theory perspective. In discussing the global media sphere[10] he places the onus back on more conventional forms of media, such as broadcast and the press, for mediating an effective public sphere for global citizens. Silverstone subscribes to the view shared by political theorist Mouffe (discussed in, e,g., Carpenter 2008) and supported by empirical research already mentioned, that the Internet alone, without a link to conventional, more inclusive media, has a fragmenting effect. He discusses the notion of 'hospitality' with regard to the news media's public service role. Crucially, hospitality extends an invitation to

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[10] In *Media and Morality*, Silverstone is primarily concerned with the importance of the world's media in constructing a moral order in a globalised world. As such, pluralism, which he also refers to as cosmopolitanism, plays a central role. He writes, "Pluralism insists on difference, but not irreducible difference. It insists that the shared fundament of the human condition imposes limits on the range of meaningful difference and likewise enables the possibility of communication, some kind of communication, across the widest and deepest channels." (2006, pp. 15-16) Therefore, it is envisaged that there is a single overarching mediated public sphere to accommodate the plurality of voices in a globalised world.

speak but also places a responsibility on the host to listen. Such hospitality is a prerequisite for a pluralist global media sphere, demanding not only that the right to speak is extended to all, but also the right to an audience. "The internet is often seen as offering such a space. Yet the internet even in its openness is not necessarily a space of hospitality, for if it is hospitality, and this is its contradiction in terms, without a host." (ibid., p. 142) This cuts to the core of the criticism of the news environment on social media, where participants can 'produse' with abandon but there is no impetus on anyone to listen to agonistic views. The large volumes of academic work on the alleged 'filter bubble' and 'echo chamber' (eg. Carlson & Lewis 2015; Jacobson et al. 2016; Pariser 2012) are proof that this criticism has remained unresolved. The world's media therefore has a role that cannot be provided by the Internet alone as the ability to speak and be listened to has to be extended consciously and deliberately. While a return to disseminative media, such as broadcast, as the primary form of news media does not appear likely (or desirable) online news sites by mainstream news media could perhaps be envisaged to provide a hospitable space. This view on hospitality also has implications for the role of the professional journalist on the Internet, to, arguably, invite and facilitate a plurality of voices and views.

Both Bruns and Chadwick touch on the adoption of digital practices in professional news production, which is of particular interest to this research as it begins to explore how journalists manage the boundaries between their organisations and social media actors. However, both authors perceive the social media space to be non-hierarchical and open, which has been disputed. Chadwick qualifies this argument somewhat, by pointing out that mainstream news media do remain dominant for a number of reasons, but also forecasts the slow democratization of the news production process through technology. Yet, the behaviour

of elite journalists and the formation of interest groups (namely professional journalists in this case) also shows how a different outcome is achieved, that displays the characteristics of collaboration and diversity but is in reality quite exclusive (Larsson et al. 2016; Lasorsa et al. 2012; Nuernbergk 2016).

Bruns argued that in the digital age, gatewatching has replaced gatekeeping, as a newsgathering practice due to the loss of control over information distribution by print and broadcast (2003), and is an activity engaged in both by mainstream and alternative media (Bruns & Highfield 2012). Central is the notion of collaboration between professional journalists and users in uncovering and curating newsworthy information, which, though not new, has become increasingly widespread. Bruns (2014) cited crowdsourcing projects around data dumps as examples of how the public are encouraged to survey huge quantities of information and alert newsworthy findings to journalists, who then work them into stories.

> Today, finally, the transition has been further sped up by the widespread availability of near real-time social media platforms which accelerate the news cycle even beyond the already significant pressures of 24-hour news channels. The result is the final breakdown of traditional journalistic gatekeeping models, and a corresponding shift towards gatewatching. (ibid., p. 226)

In short, there is no longer a need for journalists to carry out all the journalistic tasks of the past. Instead they should concentrate their efforts their "core practices of investigative journalism and quality coverage". The reality, of course, is that what is being watched is often still the product of professional news production (Chadwick 2011a). It is also not entirely clear where Bruns envisions the news curation by users should take place. If it is only carried out on social media platforms specifically, it is simply not feasible for news consumers to survey the breadth of the 'prodused' content available in any kind of time efficient way.

Although a US survey of news audiences (Pew Research Center 2016) shows that a majority of Americans do access news through social media, in many cases it can only be a fraction of the available content that is skewed by individuals' networks and power laws. If the crowdsourced news curation is to be incorporated on news organisation's own platforms, there is inevitably a gatekeeping process that professional journalists will again enact, through the selection of news content.

Bruns assessment of the news environment is cast against the background of growing commercial pressures on the news industry, in which the news media has to rationalise resources and recruit users to carry out journalistic tasks. Echoing the sentiments of Jenkins (2006) and Shirky, Bruns argues that in such a highly competitive environment, news users gain power in influencing news production as media organisations cannot simply exploit their free labour, and must surrender an element of control. This tapping of the 'wisdom of the crowd' is seen by Bruns to potentially deliver a similar impartiality and objectivity as required of professional journalism as "there is no indication that the overall user base of Facebook or Twitter has a common preference for one political view or another, for example" (Bruns 2014)[11]. Nevertheless, in practice, research showed (Bastos et al. 2013; Xie et al. 2011) that ideology plays a pivotal role in shaping dominant online political commentary, with a small number of highly active, extremely opinionated voices often polarising the conversation.

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[11] This assumption is seen in Kevin Kelly's *New Rules for the New Economy* (1999), where the marketplace of ideas inherently produces the correct answers. Kelly's idea of the 'swarm' believes that the participation of every individual, no matter how ignorant, contributes to producing the right answer. Technology is considered key in interpreting participation correctly.

Shoemaker and Vos (2009) argue gatekeeping remains at the heart of how information

reaches conventional news audiences as well as bloggers and other users, who rely on this

information for commentary and news curation. "People rely on mediators to transfom

information about billions of events into a manageable subset of media messages." (ibid., p.

1) They consider the sharing of media messages by news audiences on the Internet as a

secondary level of gatekeeping that characterises information diffusion after the initial

gatekeeping of the mass media. Therefore, news audiences can also act as gatekeepers. In her

Networked Gatekeeping Theory, Barzilai-Nahon (2008) also critiques the perception of a

flattened egalitarian news environment, often described as characteristic of the convergence

culture generated by technology. By rethinking traditional notions of the gatekeeper in the

context of mass communication, she produces a more differentiated model of gatekeeping

that has currency when adapted to networks such as social media. Barzilai-Nahon describes

the network gatekeeper's objectives as first, preventing the entrance of undesired information

from the outside. Second, preventing the exit of undesired information to the outside. Third,

controlling information inside the network. The theory suggests that within networks, the

'gated', meaning "the entity subjected to gatekeeping" (2008, p. 1496)[12] can possess certain

attributes that gives them bargaining power in their relationship with gatekeepers. In

networks, gatekeepers are not only the senders of information but can become the destination

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[12] Moreover, in networks, users may choose to be gated. "Being a subject to gatekeeping does not

imply that the gated is lacking alternatives or that gatekeeping is forced on her or him. The gated is

bounded by gatekeeping sometimes from her or his free will." (ibid. p. 1496) Especially, in an intense

content saturated 24/7 news environment and with a limited quantity of attention available to news

users, trusting gatekeepers to select information has its benefits.

points for information from the gated. However, it is not the capacity to produce information alone that challenges the gatekeeper as the ability of the gated to produce information does not necessarily ensure that information will reach an audience. In reverse, this also means that traditional gatekeepers – meaning journalists in this context – are now required to promote their own work since publication is no longer the main mechanism of gatekeeping (Vos & Heinderyckx 2014) "as dissemination in an overcrowded information environment has become equally important" (Tandoc & Vos 2016, p. 962).

Barzilai-Nahon (2008) identifies four types of attributes, that contribute to message salience from the gated to gatekeepers:

> (a) their political power in relation to the gatekeeper, (b) their information production ability, (c) their relationship with the gatekeeper, and (d) their alternatives in the context of gatekeeping. Network gatekeeping predicts that salience of a particular gated to gatekeepers is correlated to the possession of these attributes; that is, low if one attribute is present, moderate if two attributes are present, high if three attributes are present, and very high if all four attributes are present. (p. 1506)

Therefore, the one-way flow of information from the gatekeeper to the gated no longer applies but the relationship becomes more fluid, whereby the gated can improve their position through acquiring these attributes. Nevertheless, the theory still tries to capture how a centralized structure remains in place in a decentralized information space such as the Internet.

News media as public sphere

Habermas' study of the public sphere is the major accepted theoretical model underpinning the press' functions in building a public. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Habermas 2003) lays out an historical analysis of the evolution of a public arena within bourgeois society. Although its critics have highlighted many shortcomings, it provides a widely accepted foundation to explain the emergence of the public sphere and democracy, and the press as a democracy-building institution. According to Habermas, this space emerged to hold public opinion – albeit a public that was limited to a small and moneyed section of the society which was granted privileged access – to exert pressure on political decision-making by power elites. It is the realm where private persons come together to discuss issues of common concern to them, and presupposes a strict separation between matters considered private and public. It is only the public that is concerned with the common good and warrants deliberation and contestation on a public stage. In order for the opinions formed to truly represent those of the public, participants must appear as equals and the Habermasian public sphere suggests this is best achieved through the personal dissociation from private interests.

Both the press and bourgeois public sphere emerged during a period characterised by a libertarian concept of what the press should be (Christians et al 2009). In this time the corporatist emphasis on the common good, to the exclusion of that of the individual, was modified to include individual liberties. Such liberties were deemed of benefit only to oneself. In the context of the liberty of the press, this was understood as the right to publish and read whatever one wishes. Libertarian thinkers believed in an individualistic approach to society, with every person deemed to be born equal, rational and capable of governing. The libertarian model grants individuals the right to affirm this equality at least in theory. It was

grounded in the belief that where there is a free exchange of ideas in a public sphere the truth will prevail. Therefore, the press was an organ that sought an objective truth. "The classic marketplace-of-ideas theory was based on the assumptions that the truth is discoverable, that people can agree on evidence. It is assumed that people are willing to put aside their social biases and sift through data to get to the core issues in a discussion." (ibid., p. 49) While the claim to such an equal deliberative reality was clearly never realised[13], it did give a framework to those who were subjugated or marginalised for them to challenge their position in society.

Habermas proposes the public sphere of the bourgeois capitalist society, though it remained imperfect, can be understood as a blueprint for an inclusive realm where debates about the common good are staged and consensus is reached. The press as an organ of public opinion and conveyor of information that is of public interest plays a pivotal role in this. It allows individuals to make informed judgements, but also acts as mediator and facilitator of debates among a large and geographically spread out citizenry. By speaking to a geographically broad audience and manifesting the vernacular in written form, the press built the nation state through *imagined communities* (Anderson 1983). It was with the appearance of the press – initially in the form of the newsletter – in the mid-17th century that self-awareness of private persons as participants of a 'reasoning' public emerged. In tandem with the growing interdependence of local, regional and national markets during the height of merchant capitalism, the printed newsletter bound together individuals from beyond the local communities and symbolised "communities of fate" (Goode 2005, p. 6) . At the same time

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[13] Several theorists (Fraser, Livingston) have long pointed out that public discourse in this era was dominated by property-owning white men to the exclusion of most others.

that the printing press brought together communities in a way that challenged the traditional

centres of power, state authorities also appropriated the press to reinforce their reign of

power. "Inasmuch as they made use of this instrument to promulgate instructions and

ordinances, the addressees of the authorities' announcements genuinely became "the public"

in the proper sense." (Habermas 2003, p. 21)

Coupled with the emerging self-image of a 'reasoning' public, Habermas points out it was

ironically the state-controlled press that provided a model to challenge the abstract state

powers, whose physical presence was increasingly removed from ordinary lives. Instead, the

ruling elite became represented in print, in turn simultaneously pioneering the medium by

which it could be challenged. By representing themselves to geographically distant

communities and society through the press, state powers inadvertently reinforced the idea of

communities seeing themselves as bound together as a public. Persons who had never and

would never meet were being addressed collectively on issues that concerned all of them.

Publicity, through means of the press, made it possible to hold state powers accountable to

society. Initially by scrutinizing the information released by the state into a public arena and

subjecting it to public debate and opinion, and later by responding to the state through the

press freedom and freedom of speech enshrined in law.

> These technologies enhance the potential to 'work through' the linkages between a
> locally situated lifeworld and the intrusion of a 'world out there', whilst creating new
> distantiated relations through the dissemination of symbols: 'lived experience' and
> 'mediated experience' are progressively interwoven. (Goode 2005, p. 93)

Habermas draws on Kant's 'principle of publicity', whereby a rational and just judgement on

political matters is the result of debates by a plurality of spectators. He believed that

impartiality, and consequently the truth, could be arrived at when citizens embrace the viewpoint of others. This is only possible when the exchange of ideas takes place in a public arena so as to be tested against one another. Parity among participants in this exchange is deemed essential, and could be accomplished by the exclusion of those who could be described as dependent on others for their livelihoods. This meant the exclusion of non-property owning classes and women. While he recognises Marx's argument that the bourgeois public sphere of the 19th century "hid before itself its own true character as a mask of bourgeois class interests" (Habermas 2003, p. 124) a progressive integration of lower strata of society into the public sphere, once brought to its logical conclusion, would culminate in a single public sphere where all voices were represented.

The bourgeois public sphere was seen as a "means of education" and "integrating the citizens into the state from above". (ibid., p. 121) For example, Habermas argues reading societies of the late 18th century educated the petty bourgeoisie and brought them "up to the level of culture: culture was not lowered to that of the masses."(ibid., p. 166) Not only does he naturalise the bourgeois conception of the public sphere, modelled on its own perception of what constitutes objective, educated, and rational argumentation, he also attempts to reconcile two opposing worldviews. Here the Kantian view that values the public realm outside the power of the state as a forum where arguments can be tested and public opinions formed stands in opposition to the Hegelian understanding of the public which rejects this same realm as impotent since it holds no state power, and public opinion as inherently subjective. For Hegel the public space was only present in the state and public institutions had a duty to educate society about the principles underpinning political and social life (Muhlman 2010, p. 128). The Habermasian argument that the press has a duty to educate the public in their role

as citizens is not without its difficulties. It would be difficult to conceive of effective democratic citizenship without the understanding of what this role entails or access to a basic level and quality of information to make informed decisions. Yet, at what point does education turn into the imposition of a dominant ideology on society, forcing those least served by it into a subservient role pandering to the interests of elites? The notion that lower strata of society needed to be initiated into the culture of the bourgeoisie through reading societies can also be perceived as the attempt to assimilate and neutralize the unpalatable differences these social classes brought to the public sphere, by undermining and marginalising their experiences through elitist claims to the right to define what constitutes rationality, impartiality and the common interest. The public sphere, then, does not facilitate the meeting of participants as equals until innate differences that could lead to any paradigm shift in society are eradicated.

Habermas saw in 20th century broadcast media as a form of refeudalisation where audiences consume media in isolation without a forum for discussion. Nevertheless, Habermas himself dismissed new media as harbouring nothing more than 'global villages' that reflect the fragmentation of society (Goode 2005, p. 106). He considered it an effective way for individuals to shield themselves from opposing views and opinions by only focusing on those voices that are in agreement, therefore not encouraging participants to form opinions in a deliberative manner.

Nancy Fraser scrutinized several assumptions in the Habermasian theory. Citing revisionist historians she argued that bourgeois public sphere met opposition from counter publics comprising the disenfranchised from the start. As it remained inaccessible to large sections of

society it never lived up to the utopian vision of unrestricted discussion. Moreover, some claims assert that this was never its intended goal. "On the contrary, it was the arena, the training ground, and eventually the power base of a stratum of bourgeois men, who were coming to see themselves as a 'universal class' and preparing their fitness to govern" (Fraser, 1990, p. 60). The claim to the bourgeois public sphere as the only or true public sphere to have emerged appears profoundly ideological, and Habermas' argument that it set the foundation for a theoretical but unrealised ideal is thrown into question. However, Fraser's work is not primarily focused on dismantling the idea of the Habermasian public sphere but to explore historical counter narratives that offer lessons in how its limitations can be overcome, equipping it as a better counterbalance to political power elites.

Three of those criticisms hold relevance to social media as a public arena. Firstly, Fraser questions the assumption that an equality among actors is possible by simply assuming it rather than manifesting it in social and economic reality. When participants in the public sphere interact as if they are equals it will by nature benefit the dominant class, since the socially and economically disadvantaged are required to sideline their concerns. This is one criticism relevant to this research as social media is often perceived as a leveller of voices. Less regard is given to the real-world factors that may allow some voices to become more prominent or authoritative. What presumptions and characteristics do social media users have to live up to, in order for their opinions and information to resonate across a wide demographic and make it into newsrooms? Secondly, Fraser questions the supremacy of the single public sphere to the exclusion of other publics. She argues that in an inegalitarian society this too plays into the hands of power elites, as other stratas of society are unable to collectively define issues and opinions relevant to them as a community and agree tactics

before taking them to the larger public sphere where they are pitched against agonistic views. Even in an egalitarian, and presumably multi-cultural society, multiple publics are still necessary for identity-building. Fraser does not dismiss a greater overarching public sphere but rather considers smaller 'subaltern publics' as fulfilling a necessary function to level the playing field on a larger stage. The array of online communities speaks to the demand for forums that facilitate certain segments of society and is reflected in several protest movements that organised actions and agitate online before and while taking to the streets.

Thirdly, the dogmatic separation of public and private issues often worked to the detriment of women and those in the lower stratas of society, for whom the private sphere – both constituting economic and domestic life – was distinctly political. Therefore, the definition of what is considered public has and must constantly be revisited and redefined as the clear distinction between the two spheres shift according to public opinion. With social media the line between public and private matters has been blurred beyond recognition. Topics that are private are shared widely, arguably diminishing social media's potential to act as a forum to discuss issues of a common concern. On the other hand, this space also facilitates communities that come together to discuss profoundly public matters. Social media, then, might best be understood as a means to create a public space, not the space itself. And as a platform to facilitate discussion around public as well as private matters, can it lower the hurdle for perceived private matters, that are nevertheless of public concern, to cross over into public discourse? For example, the 'me too' movement in 2017 saw many individuals share their private stories to build a momentum that led to intense public debate in the mainstream news media and among political actors about sexual assault and harassment, and a perceived culture that facilitates it.

While Habermas believes that a single public sphere will facilitate a plurality of opinions from which consensus emerges, pluralists argue that this does not acknowledge that public opinion is not a monolithic block and will necessarily comprise perspectives that are irreconcilable (Mouffe 2009). It is how the public space can make live within itself these agonistic views that is the key question. Mouffe, like Habermas, also dismisses new media for not providing the necessary "agonistic public space" that exposes citizens to conflicting ideas, but instead makes it possible to continually reinforce one's beliefs by blending out everything that does not correspond with it (Carpentier & Cammaerts 2006). Although she does not believe that the public space must lead to consensus among participants in the way that the Habermasian public sphere does, she sees it as a space where oppositional views must clash and find a way to exist side by side. Both Habermas and Mouffe's criticisms of new media that allows participants to circumvent and shield themselves from confrontation have been validated by research about the 'echo chamber', whereby a network of users is only confronted with views they agree with, (eg. Barberá 2015; Conover et al. 2011) but also challenged by research suggesting a much more varied news diet by interested users than feared (eg. Bakshy et al. 2015; Dubois & Blank 2018). Speaking of Twitter, Fuchs (2014) also argues against the notion that Twitter, in particular, qualifies as a public sphere. He argues that the unrealised promise made by the bourgeois public sphere of inclusion and equality are just as absent from the environment on Twitter. "Capitalist structures of accumulation operate not just in the economy, but also in culture, where they result in the accumulation of reputation, visibility and attention of a few" (ibid., p. 192). Ultimately, the same rules apply, whereby, those with the most resources hold the greatest sway and presence, while the social nature, meaning interaction and exchange, is particularly limited.

"Twitter's reality is one of asymmetric visibility; its democratic potentials are limited by the reality of stratified attention and the visibility characteristic for a capitalist culture." (ibid., p. 192) Rather, he calls it what Habermas described as a "pseudo-public sphere" or "manufactured public sphere" (ibid., p. 201). However, whether or not social media qualifies as a public sphere is not the subject of this research. The research considers the public sphere, in the context of news, as primarily represented in the professional global news flow. The question is how the disruptive nature of social media has affected professional journalism and been integrated in the mainstream news flow. It leans on Fraser's 'subaltern publics' as a way to understand online communities discussing matters of common concern. Mouffe, when speaking of the journalist as gatekeeper, says they must be a 'gate-opener' to the views and arguments put up by all sections of society. To facilitate plurality it is insufficient to put across individual voices or fragments of information. Rather communities must be permitted to put across their agonistic views as comprehensively and complete as possible since pluralism is not an exercise in individualism and contains the idea of the collective.

The literature discussed in this chapter has sought to explore both the social media and conventional news environment and the logics that govern the two. By exploring how users function in social networks, I provide a basis for understanding how journalists may also function there. In addition, I have looked at conceptions of the role of the journalist as opposed to the amateur or the everyman, and the professional boundary work in journalism that attempts to validate journalists' right to their own interpretive community. Finally, I have attempted to make the case for why mainstream news media remains important in providing a public sphere in order to explain why the research specifically looks at the adoption of collaborative newswork by these institutions.

3. News organisations and their media models

As already mentioned, the news outlets studied in this research are the BBC World Service, AlJazeera's English-language news and France 24 English. This warrants a discussion of the professional cultures that these organisations are based in and how they might carry out boundary work before analysing the findings of the research. They outlets were chosen as they are all comparable in the size and scope of their mission but are also characterised by differences that may potentially produce contrasting findings. They are all elite international news organisations with global audiences and share many professional norms, albeit in different cultural contexts. They also have a formalised commitment to interactive newsgathering with the allocation of resources to these kind of sourcing routines. They also, in some cases, carry out professional training, while two of the organisations had best practice guidelines in place when this research was performed. By investigating different practices in interactive newsgathering at each of the news organisations, the research hopes to look at what approaches are being developed and how these are rationalised. It will take into account the particularities of the different media systems and their professional cultures (Hallin & Mancini 2004) to help the interpretation of the findings. By considering the different typologies of the media models within which each of the organisation exists the research attempts to investigate whether interactive newsgathering practises are adapted to and/or reinforcing pre-existing norms. The typological approach to describing the news organisations in terms of media models in this research was chosen to offer an understanding of how journalists rationalise their own professional role at their organisations, and the context of the media system within which they operate. Although professional routines

suggest common normative practices, the news organisations investigated in this research are all embedded in media systems that produce defining characteristics that will be explored next. Each of the organisations has also defined a particular 'ethos' or mission statement which are also outlined.

While each of the organisations speaks to a global audience, they do not necessarily speak to the same audience, or may be valued for different viewpoints as perceived by their viewers. For example, the BBC sample in this study speaks primarily to the Anglophone world, while France 24 speaks to the Francophone world. Although this study examines France 24's English-language output, it is still largely focused on communicating France's, or the Francophone world's news agenda. Al Jazeera is focused particularly on the Arab world and competes for global audiences from outside the largely western-dominated international news media. Nevertheless, Al Jazeera's adoption of western professional norms provides a basis for comparison.

Both the BBC and France 24 are public service media but embedded in significantly different media systems, and experience differing degrees of government influence and journalism cultures. Hallin and Mancini's (2004) definitions of Western media systems is used to compare the liberal system, of which Britain is a part, and the polarized-pluralist system that includes France. Al Jazeera, on the other hand, is not at home in a democracy and funded by the Qatari government. This can make it vulnerable to authoritarian forms of censorship, but its business model, which aims to attract a pan-Arab audience, was chiefly made possible through the independence of its journalism (Sakr 2005) and the adoption of western professional norms. Nonetheless, Al Jazeera presents itself as challenging dominant Western

global news outlets, by bringing an Arab perspective or viewpoint to the global news market (Bebawi 2015).

Although different forms of western media models, preceding but also informing Hallin and Mancini's typologies, first emerged and manifested in the printed press, they are mirrored loosely along the same geographical lines in broadcasting (Kelly 1983). In as far as western Europe is concerned, the different relationship between politics and the broadcast media sees a "formally autonomous system" in Britain, and a "politics-over-broadcasting system" in France (ibid., p. 73). Hallin and Mancini's typologies have been cited for comparative approaches to western media organisations in investigations of the effect of the Internet on these systems (Benson et al. 2012; Powers & Benson 2014). They remain relevant and a necessary consideration in the analysis of the findings, particularly because research by Powers and Benson (2014) found that new media did not necessarily have a homogenising effect on news production across different media systems. Rather, their particularities were reaffirmed in online news. For example, news outlets in the US were more likely to become homogenised, while online news remained similarly diverse in France and Denmark. In relation to the Anglo-Saxon media system, this is supported by research into the UK media (Redden & Witschge 2010) that also found "news organisations often cover stories from the same angle and different news organisations repeatedly publish the same information in their stories" (Witschge, 2011). However, Power and Benson's findings suggest homogenisation is observed in the news outlets inside this one media system, but not across different media systems.

BBC

As regards Hallin and Mancini's (2004) typologies, the BBC is couched in the liberal media system that is characterised by an informational style of journalism, political neutrality, and strongly developed journalistic professionalism[14]. It is also referred to as the Anglo-Saxon model but several major differences between the American and the British media remain which has led to the latter also being placed within a broad definition of a European media model (Mancini 2005). Primarily, these are found in the idea of public service media, which is less developed in the US. The BBC was historically considered the gold standard for public-service broadcasting and influenced the shape of other PSB across Europe[15]. As such, "broadcast journalism was assumed to be oriented towards the values of universalism" (ibid., p. 88) with the idealised aims of objectivity and independence that were said to be delivered through the "political insulation of public broadcasters and regulatory authorities" (Hallin & Mancini 2004, p. 199). The aim of 'neutrality' does not mean an absence of values but rather a centrist position that attempts to stretch across mainstream politics.

The Annan Report (1977) that directs British broadcasters to impartiality asserts that broadcasters "are operating within a system of parliamentary democracy and must share its

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[14] However, partisanship, as commonly seen in the British press, is also significantly at odds with the American media model, which is represents the other main country in this system. Despite this, "the existence of 'fact-centred practices' is certainly a common characteristic of the two journalisms and, in turn, it differentiates them from many other journalistic practices in Europe." (Mancini 2005)

[15] Although it was also significantly altered, especially in southern Europe, including France, where governments exerted considerable control.

assumptions." This means that voices seeking to undermine democracy need not be shown impartiality.

> In place of 'mathematical' balance and 'indifferent' neutrality Annan proposes 'due impartiality', which comprises three elements. First, the broadcasters should allow a full *range* of views and opinions; second, they should take account of the *weight* of opinion ('While it is right that the accepted orthodoxies should be challenged, equalise it is essential the established view should be fully and clearly put…'); this they should recognise that the range and weight of opinion constantly *changes* (p.269). (Hartley 2014, p. 51)

Therefore, 'due impartiality' harbours contradictions that restrict the degree to which broadcasting can challenge orthodoxies and mainstream discourse. By definition, mainstream views must be given greater *weight*, reinforcing a centrist ideology, while also representing other opinions. It appears that broadcast media is not envisioned to be a substantial force in shifting mainstream opinion, since, although required to represent the "full range of views and opinions", it must reinforce established public opinion. What is not clear is how mainstream views are defined and whose they are, especially in the case of the BBC World Service. When covering world news events, is it the views of the British public and British foreign policy or the mainstream views of the country where the news event is taking place that must be given greater weight? Projecting British mainstream opinion is certainly one element that shapes the news content of the BBC as became clear in the parliamentary debate that ensued from the Annan Report, where Lord John Vaizey said that "the BBC World Service performs a great role in getting our message, a message of freedom and democracy, across" (Annnan Report 1977) . However, this cannot be taken to mean that the BBC is merely an extension of the foreign office, especially given the structures designed to safeguard editorial autonomy. Since its inception, the BBC was envisioned as "an intra- or

cross-diasporic contact zone" (Baumann & Gillespie 2007). It was deemed to present "a unique opportunity to foster bonds of understanding and friendship between the peoples of Britain's scattered dominions and the mother country, and to bring to Britons overseas the benefits already enjoyed by the British public at home" (Reith 1932 quoted in Mansell 1973, p. 1). As the foundation charter states and Bauman observes, Britain assumed the central point within this dialogue. "We cannot know, of course, but may safely assume that the BBC Empire Service was not meant to provide a global diasporic forum for, say, the descendants of indentured labourers from British India scattered from the Caribbean to Eastern and Southern Africa"(Bauman & Gillespie 2007). Returning to the notion of 'due impartiality', this is to say that mainstream views and opinion informing news production were, at least on one side, weighted in favour of British mainstream public opinion. Perhaps at its most basic though it is the perpetuation of journalistic professional routines and norms of the liberal media model and the BBC's own version of social responsibility journalism that are part of the 'democratising mission' of the BBC. Since the beginning, the BBC's mission was to actively shape society with a remit to build a national identity, first and foremost domestically (Potter 2012). However, the same premise was applied to its Empire Service, the BBC World Service's frontrunner.

> Applied overseas, these ideas came to mean that the BBC would also seek actively to reinforce the bonds of empire. In this way, it was believed, broadcasting could encourage international peace and order and, to a lesser extent, the spread of democratic values, thus helping Britain retain its influence in the wider world. (ibid., p. 5)

The aim to promote democratic values perhaps suggests that, already at its inception, the BBC was preparing for the possible dissolution of the Empire. Arguably, the professional

norms adopted in news production that create power relationships between a plethora of voices – more of which is discussed further on – were providing a template that it was hoped would be accepted by audiences, and perhaps replicated by local media.

In the liberal model, the commercial press emerged early with, as already mentioned, a strongly developed professionalism. Hartley (2013) discusses how the commercial press continues to exert influence over the BBC, which, although state-funded, exists within a commercial media environment and is influenced by market-forces through its competition with for-profit organisations (p. 48). For example, deregulation of commercial broadcasting in Britain has had the knock on effect of softening of news values in PSB (Curran et al. 2009). Professionalism in the liberal media is defined by a clearly developed hierarchy in the editorial process to produce a polished finished product but that also inhibits journalists' autonomy (Hallin & Mancini 2004). In part, professionalisation developed in the earlier part of the 20th Century to shield journalists from media owners, who were often accused of imposing their own interests (Curran & Seaton 2003). However, it also serves to ensure widespread appeal by not limiting its market through partisan positions and constrained journalists' ability to express their own views (Gabszewicz et al. 2001). In Britain, this holds especially true for broadcast journalism, which in any case is under pressure to appeal to a wide audience due to the production costs involved. Moreover, publicly-funded broadcasting also has to fulfil its public service mission to appeal to all sections of society in order to justify the license fee (Curran et al. 2009) The press, on the other hand, is characterised by partisanship, which spells the biggest difference between the US and the British versions of

the Anglo-Saxon media model[16].

Therefore, some of the potential findings of the research with respect to the BBC might be expected to include:

i) A strong emphasis on professional norms and routines in interactive newsgathering

ii) Comparatively few polarised sources

France 24

France 24 is embedded in Hallin and Mancini's (2004) polarized-pluralist media system that is found across Europe's Mediterranean region. Although France differs from southern Europe, where many countries saw major disruptions to the development of their news media through periods of dictatorship, it also exhibits similarities in its tendency to place the media within the political sphere. France 24, like all French public service broadcasters, is overseen by a mediating council. While initially French broadcasting was under the control of the government with directors appointed directly by the president, since the 1980s there has been a move away from such direct intervention with the establishment of the Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel whose responsibility it is to regulate broadcasters. It is to one-third each appointed by the president, assembly, and senate. In addition, one-third of its members are

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[16] While in the US the press reacted to increasing concentration of ownership through strengthening independence and norms of objectivity, in Britain this would have undermined the partisanship of national tabloids. However, Britain also did not move to publicly fund newspapers to encourage diversity of views, as is often the case in other European media models. (Curran & Seaton 2003)

newly appointed every two years. This has broken direct political intervention in the day-to-day running of broadcasters (ibid., p. 107) but the council remains plagued by criticisms of being too politically partisan (Blumler 1994, p. 151).

Benson (2002) captures distinguishing features of French journalism as follows: "Important aspects of the French 'political/literary' approach to journalism include the use of particular narrative formats, such as the interview, the commentary, and the reactions story, and secondly, a style of writing that mixes to a significant extent descriptive and normative statements." (ibid., p. 63) A defining characteristic of this media model is the strongly pronounced partisanship among news organisations within a political system that is more pluralist with greater differences than seen among mainstream parties in the rest of Europe and North America. The press pursues explicitly political, ideological or commercial ends, and the professionalisation of journalism, insofar as journalists see themselves as autonomous actors independent of their employer, is less developed. State subsidies, in some form or another, account for a significant portion of funding among French media, and is designated to maintaining the plurality of media voices, especially those on the fringe. Commentary and opinion are established forms of journalism that play a far greater role than in the liberal media system and journalists are usually expected to work for organisations that are broadly sympathetic with their personal views. Hence, countries that are regarded as existing within this media model typically provide a legal basis by which journalists can be compensated if the political orientation of the organisation they work for changes since a journalist's ideological alignment with their organisation is considered intrinsic to their work.

Historically in France, many journalists were part of power and ideological elites, not only political but also religious as well as scholarly, and for longer than seen elsewhere in Europe. They were mostly directing their speech at peers. While there has been a shift toward the liberal media model with increased professionalisation of journalism, these elite voices continue to carry greater weight. Therefore, it is of interest to this research to examine if this tradition is translated into the sourcing of social media content or whether there has been a greater move to democratising news media through wider non-elite participation.

The rise of French commercial media, however, has created a push towards the more commercially-oriented liberal model. This is also reflected in broadcasting where the introduction of commercial TV has meant a shift to more centrist programming to capture larger audiences. However, distinguishing qualities of the polarized-pluralist model remain (Blumler 1994; Powers & Benson 2014).

The potential findings of the research with respect to France 24 might be expected to include:

i) A greater representation of ideological elites

ii) Greater amounts of opinion and commentary

ii) More fringe sources to maintain a broad sense of plurality

Al Jazeera

Al Jazeera's independence has always been a bone of contention since the organisation is funded by the rulers of Qatar's hereditary monarchy . However, much of its pan-Arab appeal and success has been the result of its insistence on independent reporting in a region

characterised by state-owned media that serve as mouthpiece for governments. This commitment to journalistic independence has made the broadcaster a target for punishment by Arab leaders throughout its lifespan (Rinnawi 2006) but it has also been thanks to this that Al Jazeera has been credited for altering the media landscape of the Arab world, and somewhat loosening the grip of government control (Sakr 2005).[17]

Its professional culture also emerged from the European public service broadcasting model with strong initial links to the BBC, but later shifted towards its own distinct identity. Sakr describes the broadcaster's origins, "When the BBC Arabic news service folded, Qatari officials set about recruiting its redundant members of staff, thereby forming the nucleus of what was to become the Al Jazeera satellite Channel, broadcast from Qatar's capital, Doha, with effect from the end of 1996" (ibid., p. 148). The employees took with them the training and norms that they acquired in their work at the BBC, forming the core of the culture that would be cultivated at Al Jazeera. However, the former BBC employees also criticised the broadcaster for failing to deliver the public service needed for Arab audiences.

> It had been both a dream and a challenge, talkshow presenter Sami Haddad told a media awards ceremony in June 2003, to move from reporting the world 'from the viewpoint of London' to meeting the 'real needs' of Arab viewers from inside the Arab world, through 'facts not propaganda, different views not sanitised views, appeals to their intelligence, not insults to their intelligence' (Haddad 2003). (ibid., p. 149)

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[17] The Qatari government's support for the Syrian opposition during the Syrian conflict (eg. Maclean & Finn,2016) cannot be disregarded in Al Jazeera's news coverage. Yet, it can be argued that the prevailing politics of a country is often found reflected in its news media.

As a result, the culture fostered at Al Jazeera saw journalists largely left to their own devices with little government censorship. However, at the same time, Al Jazeera teased out its own particular brand that shaped its news coverage and that is broadly defined by the organisation as 'giving voice to the voiceless'. In it , it is implied that Al Jazeera will turn on media imperialism and represent those that elitist Western news organisations sideline. As such, Galtung's Structural Theory of Imperialism (1971) and the 1970s and 1980s push for a New World Information Order (Samarajiwa 1984) provide a starting point to interpret the sourcing practices of Al Jazeera. Both the NWIO and Galtung sought to address the West's domination of the global news flow' through its powerful transnational news organisations that centralised agenda-setting power in the former colonial countries[18]. Galtung defined a hierarchy between centre – meaning Western – and periphery states, where the former significantly influences the news agenda of the latter. Between peripheral states the news flow was found to be limited. Haynes (1984) disputed Galtung's research finding a much more active role in news agenda setting and framing within periphery states and a considerable emphasis on regional news. However, the adoption of similar agenda setting principles as those common in centre states, was also found, suggesting an adoption of western professional norms as the basis for deciding what and who is newsworthy. Galtung's theory was preceded by Galtung and Ruge's (1965) pioneering work on news values tested in a study of international news reporting in Norwegian newspapers. A combination of the 12

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[18] According to a 1979 NWIO report presented at UNESCO, 80 percent of the global news flow came from the major transnational news agencies based in the West, while only 20 to 30 percent of the new produced covered so-called developing countries.

news values[19] found by the researchers in international news stories could increase the ranking of news stories about non-elite nations or groups that were especially disadvantaged. To illustrate this point they outlined a number of hypothesis that included but were not limited to the following four:

1. "The lower the rank of the nation, the more consonant will the news have to be" (ibid., p. 82) – meaning it must affirm preconceptions.

2. "The lower the rank of the nation the more negative the news from that nation has to be". (ibid., p. 83)

3. "The lower the rank of the nation, the higher will a person have to be placed in that nation to make news". (ibid., p. 83)

4. "The lower the rank of a person, the more negative will his actions have to be". (ibid., p. 83)

Al Jazeera clearly identified with the premise behind the NWIO and the Structural Theory of Imperialism and articulated this in some of their corporate branding with slogans such as, "'Reversing the North to South flow of information', 'Setting the News Agenda', 'Every Angle / Every Side', and ' All the News / All the Time'." (Bebawi 2015, p. 71) The mission statement of Al Jazeera and the geopolitical context within which the organisation exists (El-Nawawy & Iskandar 2003) may mean that Al Jazeera challenges the structural imperialism theory with its coverage through specific practices or routines that differ from those by the other two news organisations.

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[19] Negativity, proximity, recency, currency, continuity, uniqueness, simplicity, personality, predictability, elite nations or people, exclusivity, and size.

Attempting to define a more generalised Arab journalism, independent of the constraints

enacted upon it by censorship, Pintak and Ginges (2009) set it against "Western journalistic

norms of objectivity and disengagement".

> Arab journalists see their primary mission as driving political and social change in the Arab world (Pintak and Ginges, 2008). Some leading Arab media figures wear two hats, that of journalist and that of politician. (ibid., p. 171)

The authors define Western journalistic norms primarily according to the Anglo-Saxon

model, but Arab journalism considers its role as struggling against some of the norms.

Although, Al Jazeera's media culture has integrated characteristics shaping the BBC, there is

a strongly articulated attempt to add plurality to the global news media and break Western

dominance in the news flow. For example, a specific characteristic that Pintak and Ginges

noted to shape Arab journalism was respect. In a survey, the vast majority of journalists

agreed or partly agreed that ''journalists must balance the need to inform the public with the

responsibility to show respect" (p. 171). The notion of respecting the subjects or groups of

news reports produced a journalistic norm within Arab journalism culture.

Al Jazeera's mission statement suggests that it will attempt to break or subvert the routine

reliance on accredited and authoritative sources in professional journalistic practice.

Therefore, the case studies will help explore if and how social media was mobilised to

achieve this.

Therefore, the potential findings of the research with respect to Al Jazeera might be expected

to include:

i) emphasis on providing a forum for citizen voices

ii) Social media-sourced content more likely to be sought from less elite nations

Overview of social media strategies at BBC, France 24 and Al Jazeera

BBC

In 2011, the BBC published a roadmap named *Delivering Quality First* (BBC 2011) that laid out core areas for the organisation's online strategy to "[p]repare the BBC for a fully-converged digital world" (ibid., p. 52). Among the listed online products targeted by this strategy was the BBC's news service. The following points laid out in the report were two areas relevant to this research.

> Digital curation: use editorial, social and personal tools to make the most of content, bring audiences more of what they like, and increase their engagement and participation with the BBC.

> Social experiences: to make the most of the growing popularity of networks off bbc.co.uk, extend the reach of content, engage with new audiences and closely integrate experiences with BBC Online (ibid., p. 52)

These two agenda items show that the BBC is, firstly, aiming to distribute its own news products on social media and networks. Secondly, they are also encouraging collaboration and interactivity to feed back into BBC Online news output. However, the primary strategy appears to be to position the BBC's output as the content around which audience participation and engagement takes place.

Therefore, the BBC primarily considers its own material as social media content more generally. However, elsewhere the organisation distinguishes between its own material spread

through social media channels and other types of social media material. The 2014/2015 annual report (BBC 2015) mentions BBC Live, the online real-time blog which was used extensively both in the Greek referendum and the migrant crisis case studies presented here. It was described as a format that "brings together the best of the BBC's output and the best of social media to provide an interactive, immersive experience" (p.49). It aims to make "coverage more interactive, social and relevant" (ibid., p. 75). This description suggests that the BBC considers the material produced by its varying services and channels as separate to material produced outside the organisation.

Elsewhere in the report, the BBC Online newswork is cited in connection with delivering and distributing news texts through social media in accordance with its own mission statement to 'inform, educate and entertain'. Moreover, the report states that "[a]s the distinction between fact and rumour blurs online, there is a greater opportunity and role for the BBC in providing impartial and independent news" and "[the] Corporation's journalism will always rely on reporters on the ground, where it matters. In a world where trust is at a premium, the BBC guarantees news that is trusted and gets its facts right" (ibid., p. 58). This suggests that the BBC considers its role online (be that on its own proprietary platforms or outside platforms) to produce journalism according to its own professional norms. This is in line with the hypothesis laid out above that engagement with social media is primarily focused on reaffirming and reflecting journalistic norms and practices.

While there is no specific reference to the BBC's own journalists' activity on social media, there is a suggestion that the online strategy is largely geared towards distributing BBC output. This suggests a tendency to primarily consider Twitter as a distribution platform, that

does not steer far from the traditional top-down news delivery of mass communication. The annual report highlights that since its inception BBC Live garnered over 1 billion page views across 40 news events (ibid., p. 49). This shows that the user-generated content shown there has considerable reach.

The BBC Outside Source product launched as a radio show in 2013 before it transitioned to an hour-long daily programme on the BBC World News television channel, also reflects online conversations on social media. Primarily, it aims to emulate the non-linear interactive consumption of news online through a large touch screen TV used by the presenter to display texts originating on social media. As a format, it is designed to "provide audiences with a fully integrated web, radio and TV experience" and encourage "audiences to share their knowledge and experience of that day's stories, no matter where they are in the world, via social media" (BBC Media Centre 2014).

> We were looking online at how people consume the news, and they don't consume the news in the same linear way as they do in a broadcast medium [...] They also take lots of relevant and current information from a whole range of sources rather than going to one source – whether it's the BBC or any other – and making that their own place to get information about the world. (Reid 2015)[20]

It aims to incorporate news content produced by the BBC's different language services and conventional news sources, such as agencies, on the one hand, and to combine this with unconventional sources. The latter are typically sourced through interactive newsgathering on social media platforms.

In addition to the aim to place the BBC's brand and original newswork at the forefront of its social media strategy, the organisation also harnesses the newswork of non-journalistic and

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[20] Not all BBCOS programmes are televised with some produced just for online.

outside sources when it is considered relevant to the news coverage. The BBC UGC Hub, which sources, verifies and distributes user-generated content to the organisation's various news services, is tasked with sourcing eyewitness material and non-journalist voices through social media. Therefore, there are two competing interests that the BBC attempts to bring together. Firstly, to represent itself as a focal point on social media, through which it positions itself to reach news audiences. Secondly, to incorporate networked journalism into its own coverage. The way the BBC negotiates this conflict is by placing itself in an intermediary position that shifts its emphasis to authenticating and vetting voices (Barot 2013) , rather than defining its role as opening up access to a wider array of voices. However, plurality and diversity are obviously an important journalistic norm and editorial value that the BBC subscribes to, and in a promotional video (BBC Academy 2013), senior World Affairs producer Stuart Hughes asserts that he mobilises social media to access a greater variety of sources.

France 24

France 24's digital strategy, like the BBC, also focuses on distributing its own news output through social media. The organisation's overarching ethos is to cover international news from a "French perspective" (France 24 2017). This, again, suggests that one might find evidence of characteristics of the polarized-pluralist media model specific to France in the networked journalism carried out by this organisation. Again, like the BBC UGC Hub, France 24 has a commitment to sourcing eyewitness media, and fostering audience participation. This is particularly reflected in its 'The Observers' news product. The Observers describes its aim as covering World News through eyewitness media and invites non-journalistic sources to share their material and draw attention to issues they would like to

see reflected in news coverage (France 24 n.d.). However, the editorial team of the Observers has a gatekeeping role in selecting what to report on its platform and how to contextualise it as they mainly treat the material and accounts provided to them as source material. The term user-generated content is mostly applied to visual and audio-visual material captured by amateurs and a strong focus is put on the authentication of such material. France 24 also positions itself as sifting through, verifying and transmitting amateur social media content in its mainstream coverage. This is reflected in The Observers' efforts to educate news audiences on professional routines regarding verification of amateur content (France 24 2018; France 24 2015).

France 24's newswork is closely linked with the French press agency AFP[21] and often uses its news reports on its own platforms. AFP has also laid out its ethical standards and verification processes in the use of eyewitness media in its editorial charter (AFP 2016). Both France 24 and AFP have formally extended their newswork to integrate collaboration with non-journalists but also stipulate how they maintain their gatekeeping role by selecting collaboration based on what is deemed relevant to their news agenda. Therefore, there is an expressed commitment by France 24 to mobilize social media to access citizen voices and eyewitnesses on the ground for direct input into the news coverage, through the material produced by these sources. While The Observers is the flagship of networked journalism at France 24 social media-sourced content is also found throughout its other online coverage. As

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[21] AFP is the third largest international news agency. While it is not controlled by the state, three of 18 seats on its board are controlled by the French government, from where it also receives approximately 40 percent of its funding. (Allsop 2018)

seen in the BBC, this is most prominent in live blogs — although France 24 enlists this method of reporting less frequently — but also in other audio-visual and online text reports.

Al Jazeera

Al Jazeera mobilizes social media for its coverage throughout various English-language news services. However, two of its sections, The Stream and AJPlus concentrate on collaborative newswork more than any of the others. The Stream is both a website and a webcast that generates its content almost exclusively from social media content — usually in a discussion-style format. The objectives of The Stream give an insight into how it mobilises social media for its newswork. Al Jazeera put an emphasis on deliberation and discussion among non-elite voices in the marketing of The Stream around the time of its launch. When it first went live in April 2011, The Stream was plugged as a means to give 'voice to the voiceless'. By focusing on social media as news source, its mission statement was to "report and take part in the global conversation" and to "break down the centralized control of what constitutes news" (Keller 2011).

The Stream was primarily envisioned to take its lead from online communities on social media as a news source but did restrict its remit to "less-covered online communities" (ibid.) with non-mainstream angles and viewpoints on news events. The reason to point this out, is that it was not an entirely commercially-driven service focused on bolstering its news audience by reporting on the most popular themes and content on social media. It was framed as fitting into the wider ethos of Al Jazeera, to "cover the people often ignored; people whose voices must be heard" (Al Jazeera 2014). Therefore, on one level Al Jazeera ascribes

user-generated content in news coverage a role that breaks down barriers between gatekeeper journalists and ordinary citizens, and claims to offer an opportunity for online communities to act as agenda-setters. Its emphasis is placed on Al Jazeera's participation in online discussions. For example, The Stream's hosts typically engage with audiences on Twitter, approaching members of online communities with questions to encourage a dialogue around particular issues. On the one hand, The Stream emphasises its role in reflecting a global conversation. On the other, it bills itself as reflecting voices on the ground. Therefore, issues that can have a very local quality and focus are opened up for a global discussion through social media participation.

Beyond The Stream, Al Jazeera's overarching ethos to give voice to people and communities less covered is also likely to inform how networked journalism is mobilised for other audience-facing news products online. Visual and audio-visual user-generated content was described as "critical" (Bartlett 2014) in news coverage, in a 2014 interview with former Al Jazeera English managing director Al Anstey, and integration of collaborative news practices essential in comprehensive coverage of news events. Anstey defined such content as originating from non-journalistic sources further underlining how Al Jazeera, primarily harnesses social media to source material produced by amateurs.

Like BBC and France 24, Al Jazeera also has a strategy to distribute its own news output through social media platforms, and does so throughout its many different social media accounts (Ellis 2012). Especially, AJPlus provides all its coverage directly to audiences through social media without redirecting them to Al Jazeera's own proprietary platform. By being native to social media platforms, AJPlus both reflects audience participation through

the use of amateur content and produces stories that are generating interest on these

platforms. However, it also distributes the news coverage produced by its own staff that ties

in with news stories that are generating discussions on social media. As such, AJPlus both

reacts to hot trending topics on social media and also tries to steer these with its own in-house

produced content.

4. Methodology

Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of this research is to investigate how integration of collaborative or interactive newsgathering via social media platforms has affected professional sourcing routines at three elite international news organisation. It examines the role that traditional notions of professionalism in journalism play in how collaboration is managed with social media users. In order to examine the use of social media for newsgathering, analysis of three case studies of crisis and conflict reporting were carried out, as well as in-depth interviews with professionals at each of the organisations.

Often social media-sourced content that enters the global mainstream news flow is understood as synonymous with 'amateurism', meaning that a citizen journalist dimension is often ascribed to it, and is frequently referred to by corporate media as user-generated content. In the analysis of the news texts, identities of different kinds of 'users', or 'produsers' (Bruns 2006), will take the conventional typologies of news sources into account to contribute to an understanding of sourcing and gatekeeping routines. It will then investigate the power relationships between different types of social media users and the news organisations to contribute to understanding of how interactive sourcing routines are affecting professional norms. By measuring not only the level of social media content, but also source identity, relationships, and framing, the research attempts to contribute to understanding of the origins and role of such user-generated content in news coverage.

Norms in journalism refer to overarching values defined by the professional community that should be embodied in their work. They are considered integral to the occupation such as impartiality, transparency, reliability and accuracy, and so on. Schmidt (2008) distinguishes between normative roles and cognitive roles, where the former comprises adopting desirable values and the latter is about the methods by which these are put into action. In journalism, normative roles are fairly persistent although emphasis can shift overtime. For example, while impartiality persists as a norm for much of journalism, it is losing importance for journalists engaging on social media as studies have shown (Lasorsa et al. 2012; Vis 2013). Instead, transparency has emerged as a more important norm among journalists (Singer 2015) as journalists reveal how they work in an almost real-time news environment where the flow of information may undermine accuracy. Rather, journalists aim to build trust with audiences by sharing their practices to show how they arrive at the best version of the truth at a particular moment in time, and acknowledging if this information is revealed to be inaccurate at a later stage. Norms can therefore be said to have longevity as a code of ethics that journalists sign up to as a community. As the news environment changes, emphasis on different normative roles may shift to accommodate the professional reality. Cognitive roles can be understood as professional routines, which are "concerned with those patterns of behavior that form the immediate structures of mediawork" (Reese & Shoemaker 2016, p. 399). They are the mechanisms that have been legitimised and adopted by the journalistic community to fulfil their norms. The analysis of the effects of collaborative newsgathering on professional norms and routines are broken down into the following three research questions that form the focus of the study.

RQ1: Is social media sourcing affecting the power relationships between primary and secondary definers?

RQ2: How do professional journalists create and articulate professional boundaries in the participation by non-authoritative citizen voices/audiences?

RQ3: What mechanisms do professional journalists use to maintain their gatekeeping role?

As I have explored in the previous chapter, the three news organisations comprising this research are based in different media models and traditions. Therefore, the ways in which journalists engage with non-journalists and the type of newswork they produce should be considered in their specific context. The respective media models can arguably be expected to determine and shape the professional boundary work done in collaborative newswork by journalists at the respective news organisations, and this provides a frame in which to interpret the findings to the research questions. With regard to RQ1, the specific media model may affect the identity and representation of primary and secondary definers, and how these two interact. With regard to RQ2 and RQ3, media models may affect the extent of inclusion or exclusion of audiences and the roles they are attributed.

Case studies

The research comprised three main case studies that spanned between eight and 28 consecutive days of coverage of a news event. These news events were selected based on

three criteria. Firstly, they had to exhibit an international dimension that made them significant news events to the sample of media organisations described above and would dominate the news agenda for at least a few weeks. Secondly, they had to be examples of crisis and conflict reporting that would foster citizen engagement both online and offline through discussions, debate and actions. For example, the social media discussions might provoke widespread interest and participation, but can also translate into actions in the real world through protests. Citizen engagement, therefore, did not remain solely in the virtual realm, but its real world manifestations also fed back into it through tweets, photos and videos. Lastly, all case studies had to exhibit a strong social media dimension in how newsworthy information was shared and could therefore affect news coverage.

News coverage in each case study was analysed for social media-sourced material. This material was filtered out and analysed separately from other content comprised in the coverage. News coverage by each organisation was collected through selecting all relevant news texts via the online news archive where possible. Some of the news organisations' archives were better suited than others as they provided search functions that enabled filtering by date and keywords. For the three main news organisations, this was the case on aljazeera.com, stream.aljazeera.com, and observers.france24.com. In other cases, the search functions were linked with algorithms that did not allow a systematic filtering of all coverage but returned results for certain keywords based on popularity,. This was the case for the BBC World News website and the website of France 24 English. Therefore, a complete set of news coverage could not be obtained through searching the website alone. Since all of the news organisations distribute their news output on Twitter, the workaround solution was to search the organisations' main Twitter accounts. Tweets from their accounts were filtered for

keywords through advanced Twitter search across the entire timespan of each case study. For the BBC, the Twitter accounts trawled were @BBCWorld, @BBCTrending, @BBCMonitoring and @BBCOS. For France 24 English, the Twitter accounts included @FRANCE24, @France24_en, @France24Debate and @BreakingF24. In addition, two Al Jazeera Twitter accounts were also examined — @AJPlus and @AJStream.

The research focussed on three separate case studies:

1. News coverage of the Greek debt crisis around the time of the referendum in July 2015. All news coverage by BBC World News, France 24 English and Al Jazeera English between 26 June and 15 July were collected and analysed for social media-sourced content. The dates spanned the period during which the story most dominated the international news agenda, and started on the date the referendum was announced until the Greek parliament voted on legislation that was demanded in the negotiations for further loans.

2. News coverage of the migrant crisis for four weeks in 2015 from the 20 August until the 17 September. During this period, events dominated headlines across all three news organisations. The news event had a strong civic dimension and public pressure led governments to take actions that had far-reaching consequences for migrants and refugees.

3. News coverage during the air offensive in the battle for Aleppo, in Syria, in November 2016. The online news coverage by BBC, France 24 English and Al

Jazeera English was gathered from the 15 November to 22 November. The period studied started with the end of a ceasefire between rebels and the Syrian regime and Russian military.

As all the case studies involve global news events, the research cannot reveal anything about how practices might differ when the events take place in closer proximity to the news organisations studied. All the news organisations are global players and national or local news outlets may have significantly different approaches to interactive newswork on stories on regional or national stories. While the media system varies with regard to the news outlets in the research the type of story remains in some ways the same. A study of the demarcation between local and national boundary work found that "local press' boundary intersection with national coverage [...] signified a desire to maintain local expertise when reporting on local identities and issues" (Gutsche Jr & Shumow 2017, p. 12). Local news media sought to claim authority by delegitimising national news media, which suggests two different journalist communities that behave differently. It may be reasonably assumed that this distinction between journalistic communities holds true for national and global news media as well. There are, however, other ways in which these news events differ. One is largely cast as an economic news event, while another cast as an humanitarian event, and the third as an example of war reporting. For example, differences in levels and forms of citizen inclusion are observed in some types of news stories over others.

Case study analysis

The three case studies of international crisis reporting provide a basis for a comparative approach to examine how the three news organisations mobilised social media. As the discussion of the media models and social media strategies attempted to spell out, the case studies sought to explore how networked journalism may be affecting the commonalities and differences between each of the organisations. Sourcing practices is one way in which this can be studied. For example, it was used as methodological approach in a study by Benson (2002) to determine whether commercialisation of the news media resulted in a shift towards a more ideologically centrist news media in France. Benson wrote that "[i]deological diversity can be measured according to the social actors who are given voice, or the content of the pronouncements, regardless of source, which are mentioned in journalistic accounts." (ibid., p. 56) By employing this methodology over several case studies, a comparative analysis of how networked journalism is integrated into news production within each organisation over an 18-month period and across different news stories is possible.

The research aims to provide a clearer view of the extent to which networked journalism is integrated into routines by limiting anecdotal evidence through a structured content analysis of the all relevant news texts over the course of the case studies. By studying all the social media-sourced content over the same period for each organisation, the aim is to take a holistic view of networked journalism. While the analysis of specific incidents of collaboration and participation on news production by amateurs is valuable in its own right, the value in this research is considered to be in a more comprehensive analysis of newsgathering routines that attempts to provide a more representative picture of the relationships between journalists and non-journalists in their collaboration. Three case studies spanning international crisis or conflict reporting across the three organisations over a set period aim to provide a broad

enough basis for comparisons that are not only case-specific but allow a wider inference about the role of networked journalism in news reporting.

Quantitative content analysis is an established method for the systematic study of mass media. It is considered "an extremely useful tool for summarizing a large quantity of data and establishing relationships among different factors with a known degree of certainty" (Priest 2010, p. 7). Its use as a research method in mass communication has consistently grown throughout the second half of the last century (Neuendorf 2002, p. 27) and it is used extensively throughout the three case studies of this research. The Lasswell model was developed to study propaganda messages in the two world wars and is best summed up as "*who* says *what* to *whom* via what *channel* with what *effect*" (ibid., p. 34). Quantitative content analysis was used, for example, in the study of contributors to the e-zine *openDemocracy*, that laid bare a social inequality in dominant voices out of step with the site's proclaimed aims (Curran & Witschge 2010). The research aims to define the level of agency granted to different groups active on social media by empirically recording the sources of social media content used in newswork, the frequency of their use, and the type of messages they contain. The method seeks to reveal the voices with the greatest ability to access traditional news media with their messages along with what type of messages are able to cross into mainstream media.

To establish if and how sourcing routines are applied in networked journalism and whether they involve significant levels of inclusivity and involvement of non-elite sources, for example, it is important to code the sources. For the purpose of the research, sources were coded by referencing primary and secondary definers (Hall et al 1978). In addition, the

identities of non-elite sources comprised amateurs, citizens, accidental eyewitnesses, and citizen journalists, and were therefore neither conventional primary or secondary definers. As discussed in the previous chapter, conventional primary definers are typically representatives of major social institutions, mainstream politics, and accredited experts. Conventional notions of secondary definers are professional journalists and their institutions that rely primary definers to influence framing of the news agenda. The identities of those involved in the networked journalism found in the case studies were therefore grouped into seven broad categories:

1. *Professional journalists of the respective news organisations, described as 'in-house journalists*: These were social media sources that were directly affiliated with the respective news organisation that was analysed in the case study. For example, BBC journalists were considered in-house journalists across BBC news texts.

2. *Professional journalists of other news organisations*: These were those who were affiliated with other professional news organisations.

3. *Professional news media*: These were the social media accounts of professional news media, and included both those of the news organisation studied and others. However, the data indicates how many of the news organisation's own social media accounts were used.

4. *Political representatives*: These included politicians in mainstream politics or spokespeople of political parties, governments, and the institutions linked to governments.

5. *Experts*: These included individuals or organisations that were sought out for their professional expertise in a given topic but were not linked to any of the previously stated groups. For example, these might include academics or analysts.

6. *Citizen and amateur voices*: These were conventional non-elite voices, who were speaking as private citizens, amateurs, voluntary activists and citizen journalists, or grassroots movements.

7. *Other sources*: Some sources did not fall into any of the above definitions. Often, these involved famous personalities who, by the nature of their personas, were speaking in a semi-public capacity with their activity on social media.

Confining sourcing routines to a count of the sources in each category does not necessarily reflect how each group ranked in terms of access to the mainstream news coverage. Therefore, measuring the 'weight' – or the 'source power' – (Cottle et al. 1998, pp. 110-111) that each group possess in the collaborative newswork had to take frequency of each groups access to the professional newswork into account. Each category was not only analysed for its number of sources in the news coverage but also how much importance these voices were given in the news texts. This was done by the method of calculating the average number of times that sources in each category were able to cross their message into the news texts of the

case studies. For instance, two same-sized groups may not have the same source power if one is relied on more frequently to inform the news texts.

As social media is a very broad spectrum of platforms, the research sought to avoid excessive generalisation of networked sourcing routines by differentiating between them. For example, while Twitter is a popular platform with journalists, it has far fewer users than Facebook and is dominated by a different demographic. As explored through the literature, the degree to which the news organisations rely on specific platform is another way of testing what types of sources and messages our sought. Interpreting the results of the case studies without acknowledging the environments created on social networking sites would suggest a homogeneity that is not representative of social media. Therefore, wherever possible the gathered data was separated by the platform that it originated from. While this was not always possible (eg. sources may have cross-posted content on a number of platforms or the content could not be traced back to a platform), in the majority of cases the origins of material was either clearly signposted ora reverse search of the material linked it to a specific social media account. This enabled the research to answer a number of additional questions at a level under the main research questions defined at the beginning of this chapter. These questions provided a more nuanced analysis of the research questions, by exploring gatekeeping mechanisms, boundary work, and power relationships found in the case studies with regard to specific social media environments.

1. What were the most popular social media platforms for newsgathering by each of the organisations?

2. Were there differences between the news organisations in what platforms they sought out for their sourcing routines?

3. What types of sources, according to the seven categories, were obtained through which platforms?

Though the exception rather than the norm, sources were not always attributed when their content was used in the coverage creating potential obstacles in identifying all of the content creators. Furthermore, mobile technology has made it possible for some user-generated content to become practically indistinguishable from professional content. The news output of social media news agency Storyful, which specialises in sourcing and verification of eyewitness and amateur material for professional news organisations, could be accessed for cross-checking some of the content where sources were not clearly identifiable. As a journalist at Storyful at the time of the research, I worked on all of the news stories comprised in these case studies and therefore had in-depth knowledge of the material that was being circulated through social media at the time and where it originated from.

While Lasswell's model provides empirical data, it is a mostly descriptive method and does not generally allow inferences about intent of the message or its sources (Neuendorf 2002, p. 53) Clearly, all of the user identity categories named are very broad and while they provide some insight into the kind of sourcing routines on social media, a solely quantitative analysis could miss some of the nuances in professional practices that emerged. Therefore, qualitative analysis of the sources in each category was necessary to explore the identities of these voices and the nature of the collaboration in more depth. By only categorizing sources there is the risk of reification, that is "thinking that abstractions like attitudes, values, and content

themes are objectively real when they are actually just convenient categories invented by the researcher" (Priest 2010, p. 6). For example, political sources may have also been analysed for affiliation. Did they represent the mainstream centre of politics or fringe elements? In an international context, what type of political sources may have gained more access to elite media through their social media activity?

Critical discourse analysis as a means to investigate representations, identities and relations of such actors complemented the quantitative analysis of actors and and their source power. Of particular interest is Norman Fairclough's argument that discourse analysis can shed light on relationships, which ties in with the research aim to investigate power-relationships and hierarchies established in networked journalism. How the source groups interacted and what relationships were constructed between conventional primary and secondary definers, and non-elites, explored whether the position of the different groups to define news texts had been altered and how.

1. How is the world (events, relationships, etc.) represented?
2. What identities are set up for those involved in the programme or story (reporters, audiences, 'third parties' referred to or interviewed)?
3. What relationships are set up between those involved (for example, reporter-audience, expert-audience or politician-audience relationships)? (Gillespie & Toynbee 2006, pp. 122-123)

Fairclough (2010) describes the methodology: "the discourse analyst will focus on discourse, but never in isolation, always in its relations with other elements, and always in ways which accord with the formulation of the common object of research" (p. 5). In the context of this research, textual analysis explores the ways in which collaboration takes place and is presented. This means that the relationships that are manifested in networked journalism are explored with reference to the discourse of journalistic professionalism and the discourse of

collaboration. Therefore, the case studies did not serve to analyse the representation of the news event itself but the relationships and practices that were played out through collaborative newswork. In other words, the research analysed how two discourses, those of collaboration and professionalism, were manifested in the news texts.

Therefore, among the key concepts of textual analysis, the most relevant ones to the case studies were: actors and their framing or agenda-setting power; language, grammar and rhetoric of and to describe different social media actors and their content; discursive strategies. The most obvious discursive strategy employed is framing and selection to produce a text. Others include positioning, legitimation, politicization (Carvalho, 2008).

> Positioning is a discursive strategy that involves constructing social actors into a certain relationship with others, that may, for instance, entitle them to do certain things (cf. Davies and Harré, 1990; Hajer, 1995). Positioning can also be viewed as a wider process of constitution of the identity of the subject through discourse. [...] Legitimation consists in justifying and sanctioning a certain action or power, on the basis of normative or other reasons (cf. van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999). Politicization is the attribution of a political nature or status to a certain reality[…]. Some of these strategies have a reverse, such as de-legitimation and de-politicization. (ibid., pp. 169-170)

For the purpose of the research, examining positioning means investigating what relationship is constructed between social media actors and their content in news texts. Legitimation examines how much power social media actors possess to have their viewpoint affirmed or translated comprehensively in texts. Politicization examines to what extent sources are represented as political or apolitical voices, which, in terms of collaboration can have bearing on how authoritative they may appear since professionalism in journalism is often represented through values of impartiality and autonomy. For example, to be entrusted with

the role of collaborating on newswork, those involved may need to prove they can adopt journalistic values. Of course, discursive strategies are not only the realm of journalists but also other users publishing on social media, whose content is used in the news texts. "A good method of discourse analysis should account for those two levels of discursive intervention over a certain ''object'' – the sources' or social actors' intervention, and the journalists' intervention" (Carvalho 2008). The research therefore considers the legitimation of discursive strategies by actors on social media as a component in defining the authority they are granted in the news texts. This means, to what extent are the discursive strategies by different types of social media users replicated or contested in news texts?

Discourse analysis often examines only key texts or texts over a very short time span. However, changes in discourse over time should be a component of analysis, which is addressed in the research in two ways, by examining case studies of coverage in 2015 and 2016, as well as examining a sample of texts over varying time spans from eight days to 28 days. In order to put the findings in some context of news developments and how they may have affected networked newswork.

A final consideration was the 'liquid' nature of digital journalism, meaning that news texts are able to be edited after initial publication and news content deleted. This has led to some calls for new research methods in studying online news texts (Karlsson & Sjøvaag 2016) by analysing them in real-time and revisiting them periodically to check for changes. The resources required for such analysis were outside the scope of the research and all news texts were analysed retrospectively, at a time when any further changes to the texts were unlikely. Karlsson and Sjøvaag also acknowledge that the need for new methodological approaches

may be "overstated as they relate to the practice of news enterprises that have not changed as much as digital media allows" (ibid., p. 188). In the case studies, the texts were also largely likely to be static for the following two reasons. Live blogs, though evolving, build on information and are not generally changed retrospectively, and audio-visual texts are too labour intensive to produce to be edited and republished multiple times.

Interviews

In order to triangulate the findings in the case studies, interviews were conducted with editors at the three news organisations. These interviews served mainly two purposes; to identify key themes, trends and emphasis representative of each news organisations' approach to collaborative news production; to explore some of the findings in the case studies further, and corroborate conclusions drawn from them.

The primary focus on news texts ensured that the research remained modeled on the state of practice in journalism as it is, not as it is perceived to be by media professionals. The pervasiveness of theory ascribing democratising qualities to social networks, especially among those who are deeply engaged in it professionally, runs the risk of colouring interviewees' perception of how social media-source content is incorporated into news coverage. For example, former editor of the BBC College of Journalism Kevin Marsh welcomed the emergence of the 'journogeek' as a means to return to one of journalism's core values of involving the public in news production. He wrote: "At last, we can use thousands – sometimes tens of thousands – in our audiences to build accurate pictures of what's really happening in our communities" (Marsh 2008). Similarly, the Guardian's former editor Alan

Rusbridger described Twitter as a 'level playing field', where it is what you say, not who you are, that matters, and argued that the news environment on the platform possessed its own values and agenda which could influence newsdesks (Rusbridger 2010). This perception of the integration of social media in mainstream news production is visibly at odds with critics, who accuse old-school journalists of hostility towards the opportunities offered by new media (Lee-Wright 2010). More recently, media academics have pointed to the persisting gap between professional journalists and online communities, calling for 'relationship building' to facilitate greater collaboration (De Aguiar 2015; Schaffer 2015). Therefore, subjective perceptions and interpretations of the impact that social media has on news routines without empirical data offer very limited insight.

Nevertheless, textual analysis alone also offers little insight into how the journalists at the news organisations perceive their role in relation to social media newsgathering. Interviews were therefore aiming to contribute to an understanding of how editors at the news organisations studied perceive their interaction with social media content and what routines they apply to this. As a research method, interviews provide a representation of experience and perception rather than complete access to a person's thoughts (Silverman 2006). However, they are a means to tease out the intentions of professional journalists. Despite their limitations, interviews can offer an insight into the meanings ascribed by journalists to social media-sourced content and how they negotiate the challenges posed by social media to professional norms and practices.

> A special interest of qualitative researchers lies in the perspectives of the subjects of a study. Qualitative researchers want to know what the participants in a study are thinking and why they think what they do. Assumptions, motives, reasons, goals, and

values—all are of interest and likely to be the focus of the researcher's questions. (ibid., p. 423)

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were considered a means to obtain an insider perspective at each of the organisations. "In a semi-structured interview, some topics are chosen before beginning the research based on the literature or practice. However, when and how the topics are presented is not structured" (Corbin & Strauss 2013, p. 39). Together with the text analysis it was possible to probe stated aims for social media newsgathering, and the possible practical and professional reasons for any discrepancies shown up in the case studies (Cottle et al. 1998, pp. 44-45).

An interview guide was drawn up in advance outlining questions addressing specific themes in relation to sourcing practices on social media. The questions were open-ended and delved into the editors' knowledge of their routines, experiences, as well as opinions. Instead of fixed questions the guide was deemed to offer enough flexibility throughout the interviews to tease out nuances and details in the interviewees' responses. It allowed specific topics to be explored further ad hoc and permitted participants to provide additional information if they wanted. The final question of each interview allowed the participants to raise anything that they felt was of importance but not addressed upto that point.

Interviews were carried out with editors responsible for formulating and applying the organisations' news production processes for collaborative newswork through social media. The interviews comprised many of the same questions, although they were not necessarily asked in the same order. There was flexibility in the interview, with some questions skipped or adapted to explore in more detail if the topic had already been addressed in another

answer. Overall, the interviews addressed all the same themes and subjects making it possible to largely compare the answers of the three editors systematically.

As the methodology was designed to explore the integration of collaborative newswork into coverage, the news organisations' editors and producers tasked with developing social media use for networked newswork were best placed to offer this insight. With the responsibility of gatekeeping through selection and oversight of news stories they were deemed to provide information that would allow conclusions representative of each news organisation's approach to collaborative news production to be drawn. The interviewees were conducted after the completion of the first two case studies. The participants were BBC social media editor Mark Frankel, France 24 Observers producer Julien Pain, and AJPlus executive producer Ethar El-Katatney. Julien Pain was the only interviewee no longer employed at the relevant organisation at the time of the interview, However, he had been working there during the period spanned by the first two case studies and was therefore the appropriate person to discuss the coverage.

The interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewees and later transcribed. All three interviews lasted between 25 and 30 minutes and and were carried out over the phone or via a video call, while the interviewees were in their workplace. They had all received an introduction on the topics that would be covered in the interview several weeks in advance, including the case studies that had been analysed.

The following questions were addressed by all the interviewees in some shape during the course of the interviews :

1. Is there a formalised strategy in place at your news organisation for how social media is used in news reporting?

2. How does citizen journalism and participatory journalism fit into this?

3. How would you define the sourcing criteria of social media content for news reporting? What qualities should it possess to be picked up for your news coverage?

4. What would you consider the biggest impediments to the use of user-generated-content from citizen journalists in your news production?

5. If you had to define how an extra-media source was to most easily be featured with their content hoping for it to be covered, what would that look like?

6. Do you believe there are guidelines necessary for journalists in how they use social media for newsgathering?

Other questions asked specifically about the findings in the first two case studies. Such questions attempted to tease out some of the reasoning behind the use of social media content by correspondents, experts or citizen journalists in the case studies.

The transcripts were analysed according to the questions and themes laid out in the interview guide. This ensured a systematic approach to the textual analysis that provides a basis for comparison and a focus on the questions set out (Cottle et al. 1998, pp. 279-280). The findings of the interviews were also considered within the framework of the media models relevant to each of the organisations, as already described.

Journalist as researcher

My professional experience as a practitioner affected the choice of methodology and the weighting of different methodological approaches. It prompted me to focus on the empirical and textual analysis as the foundation of my research, that was followed up and explored further with interviews but aimed not to allow these to supersede the case study analysis. For one, I thought that raw data found in news texts could provide a frame for the subsequent interviews and a basis to limit the subjectivity of their analysis. In my experience, journalists are often accomplished rhetoricians and frequently speak in anecdotes. I believe an empirical approach built on with textual analysis could act as a corrective to this while the interviews still offer valuable professional insights that social media editors could provide. The news text analysis could provide context or potentially dispute some of the interview findings.

Through my work at Storyful I had considerable exposure to the news events in all three case studies. I had been covering the Greek debt crisis, the so-called refugee crisis, and the Syrian war since the uprising, giving me an in depth knowledge of the social media content that shaped their reporting before I began analysing the news texts in this research. This was beneficial in terms of establishing as much accuracy as possible in the empirical data of the case studies as it can be difficult to always trace users and content retrospectively, especially where information is deleted or edited or becomes unavailable in some other way. For example, having covered the Syrian war through collaborative newswork from the days of the uprising, I was familiar with many of the actors shaping the news coverage. This meant I was able to identify them and had knowledge of how and where they distributed information. It also meant I had a degree of background knowledge of how these actors evolved, where they

were located and how they had established themselves as news producers. Similarly with the Greek debt crisis, I was aware of the daily nuances and developments of how information emerged and events unfolded online. This gave me the privileged position of also having a broader view of other social media content available beyond that found in the news texts of this research. But perhaps most importantly, it meant that I had experienced the newswork through social media in all three case studies at different points in real time, leading me to acquire a level of detailed knowledge of the news events that might otherwise have not been possible to achieve.

Of course, my professional involvement in precisely the type of collaborative newswork this research explores has meant that I am familiar with the practices involved in appropriating and legitimising non-journalists' newswork for professional news media. My professional role as journalist made it easier to gain access to the interviewees and allowed me to conduct the interviews on a level of peers rather than as an outsider. Applying a set of routines to make material by non-journalists fit for use in professional news reporting is at the heart of the work I do everyday. I know how these routines are adapted to different types of collaborative newswork, depending on who journalists engage with. Coming from a company that in many ways set the industry standard for collaborative newswork, I entered this research already deeply familiar with much of the rationale behind it. However, the routines and practices, and the rationale that supports them, is something that has evolved over the time that I worked in this area. From a personal point of view, the methodology also permitted me to take a step back from my professional involvement and explore the consequences of this type of work based on raw data. I should add that my reasons for choosing the news organisations here rather than Storyful was because I believed that it was

more representative of how collaborative newswork is presented to audiences. Storyful's news agency model means that there is a buffer between the collaborative newswork done by the journalists and its final presentation to news audiences. Public-facing professional news organisations can play a stronger role in communicating professional boundary work.

Summary

RQ1: Is social media sourcing affecting the power relationships between primary and secondary definers?

The quantitative analysis was designed to help answer RQ1 by identifying the user groups most relied on in interactive newsgathering and by attempting to measure their source power. Textual analysis of the framing and contextualising of collaborative newswork with different user groups also sought to investigate power relationships and hierarchies created in the collaboration.

RQ2: How do professional journalists create and articulate professional boundaries in the participation by non-authoritative citizen voices/audiences?

RQ3: What mechanisms do professional journalists use to maintain their gatekeeping role?

The textual analysis played a large role in exploring RQ2 and RQ3 focusing on how social media sourced content was presented and referenced. It looked at how power relationships were formed between journalists and non-journalists. It specifically attempted to identify collaboration with citizen users and explore how this was framed by focusing on what place

these users took in the news texts, how they were described and whether and/or how the activity of collaboration was highlighted explicitly to news audiences. The quantitative analysis of the breakdown of sources according to social media platform explored one the mechanisms by which collaboration was managed and allowed further insight into what role the platforms play in boundary work.

The consideration given to different media cultures sought to explore all three research questions within their cultural context. The interviews sought to explore these research questions in further detail by analysing the way that social media editors articulated their professional norms, routines, and practices to describe and validate collaborative newswork.

5. Gatekeeping the Greek financial crisis

The Greek referendum in July 2015 amid the country's financial crisis became global headline news and was covered extensively by all three news organisations. In June 2015, it became apparent that talks between international lenders and Greece's young Syriza government were deadlocked. Syriza had been trying to negotiate new loan conditions for the country's ailing economy that would not entail more austerity measures but had made no headway. As a loan repayment deadline loomed but lenders refused to release further funds unless their conditions were met, the government called a referendum in a last ditch attempt to break the deadlock. The timeframe of this case study covered the main part of the news coverage about the referendum. As a democratic exercise, the vote naturally generated large amounts of discussion on social media platforms and news texts about it were shared widely.

Framed as a stand-off between eurozone lenders, the IMF, and Greece, it was presented as a pan-European news event that did not just affect Greeks but members of the public in other European nations. New developments in the negotiations were frequently broken on social networks by political and social actors, as well as journalists. The tendency for any new developments to be tweeted almost instantaneously created extremely fast-paced news coverage that relied heavily on interactive newsgathering. Therefore, the key role that social media played in the newsgathering and the platform it offered to civic engagement made it a prime candidate for this research.

The crisis and the vote itself saw news content, information and commentary widely shared on social media platforms not only in Greece but internationally. The use of popular hashtags [22] illustrates some of the social media discussion generated by the referendum itself. #Greferendum, #Oxi, #Nai and other hashtags relating to the financial crisis were trending[23] on Twitter, providing forums for commentary and the sharing of information. #Greferendum was tweeted over 310,000 times in the seven days preceding the referendum, while #dimopsifisma – an English transliteration of the Greek word for referendum – was tweeted

[22] On Twitter, hashtags are keywords that allow the sorting and filtering of tweets. They essentially provide open forums to users on specific topics. To participate in one of these forums one simply adds the same hashtag to one's tweet.

[23] A trending hashtag is one that stands out for its popularity and is highlighted to users. It is determined by Twitter algorithmically and is visible to users based on their geographical location. (Twitter, n.d.)

145,000 times[24]. The Greek word for 'no', oxi, became another popular hashtag with nearly 290,000 tweets in the seven days preceding the vote.

Timeline

A timeline of the key events throughout the news coverage allows some of the findings to be placed within the news context. As professional routines may be adapted according to news events, an overview is useful for understanding the social media components of news texts.

- **26/06**: The Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras announced a referendum on the conditions attached to talks about new loans to support his country's economy.
- **29/06**: Capital controls were imposed on Greek banks that saw limits set on the withdrawal of money from private accounts. A large demonstration was staged in Athens against the loan conditions, calling for a No vote.
- **30/06**: A large demonstration took place in Athens calling for a Yes vote.
- **03/07**: Rival protests took place in Athens calling for a No and a Yes vote.
- **05/07**: The referendum took place, returning a No vote.
- **13/07**: Eurozone members agreed a deal for new loan discussions to start.
- **15/07**: The Greek parliament passed legislation to satisfy conditions for new loan discussions against the backdrop of angry protests and rioting in Athens.

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[24] These figures were obtained through online Twitter analysis tool topsy.com on July 5. The tool counts the number of times a hashtag is tweeted in a period of up to one month previous from the date it is used. The term #greferendum was not found to have been tweeted earlier than June 26, while #dimopsifisma had been tweeted almost another 85,000 times in the three weeks before Greek prime minister Alexis Tsipras announced the referendum.

News texts between 26 June and 15 July were examined for social media-sourced content and relevant texts were gathered and analysed. The period under investigation started with the Greek government's announcement to hold a referendum on 5 July regarding conditions attached to potential new loans. The period between 26 June and the referendum saw a number of protests for and against the conditions. It also saw the introduction of capital controls which limited ordinary Greeks' access to their savings and put caps on cash withdrawals. Following the referendum that delivered a 'no' vote, discussions with eurozone members and international lenders ramped up. This culminated in a deal on the 13 July that was largely perceived as damaging to the Greek public. On the night of the 15 July, the Greek parliament voted through legislation that would fulfill conditions attached to the deal against the backdrop of civil unrest in Athens. While the financial crisis had been rumbling on over a long period, the announcement of a referendum had been unexpected.

Sample of news texts

News texts were collected according to the methodology in the last chapter with only texts containing social media-sourced content selected for analysis. The BBC coverage comprised 17 online news texts that were relevant to this study; 15 of the texts were live blogs that published rolling updates on new developments. Each blog was typically closed within a 24 hour period. Aside from regularly updated main news stories in the more traditional format of a closed news article, live blogs provided the BBC's main online news coverage on the financial crisis.[25] The remaining two texts were reports on memes that emerged on social

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[25] Research on the prevalence of live blogs in breaking news coverage showed that "15 percent of news consumers use live blogs on a weekly basis" (Newman and Thurman 2014, p. 662) reaching a

media platforms in response to the news coverage of the Greek debt crisis. There were no 'native content' texts identified, which is industry terminology for texts published solely on one of the BBC's social media accounts without a hyperlink back to the organisation's own proprietary platform. France 24 English published 16 relevant news texts of which 10 contained live blogs similar in format to those published by the BBC. The remaining two news texts featuring social media sourced-content were closed-format texts found on the France 24 website and featured embedded tweets as well as multimedia material. Al Jazeera produced 10 relevant news texts. Their emphasis and format differed significantly from the BBC and France 24 with no use of social media content in live online coverage. The texts comprised six written and closed news texts, five of which were published on the Al Jazeera English main website, while one was featured on the The Stream website. The latter was also the basis for a webcast that comprised the extensive use of social media users in a live discussion on the Greek financial crisis. The format invites Twitter users to participate in the discussion and their tweets are reflected in the webcast or amplified by @AJStream through retweets, creating a virtual forum. The online news text published in the runup to the webcast featured social media content on the financial crisis which also comprised commentary and testimonies circulating on social media. There were also three 'native' multimedia texts published on a verified Al Jazeera social media account. Fig. 1 lists the news texts analysed according to their date of publication.

	BBC	France 24	Al Jazeera
26.06			
27.06			

popularity on par with news videos and audio and that audience participation was twice as high as in other online news (ibid, p. 663).

28.06			
29.06	BBC Live bbc.com	F24 Live Media Watch	aljazeera.com
30.06	BBC Live	Media Watch France 24 Debate	
1.07	BBC Live	F24 Live	1. Aljazeera.com 2. AJPlus video
2.07	BBC Live		1. The Stream online report 2. The Stream webcast
3.07	BBC Live		
4.07			aljazeera.com
5.07	BBC Live	1. F24 Live 2. france24.com	
6.07	BBC Live	1. France 24 2. Media Watch	1. aljazeera.com 2. aljazeera.com
7.07	BBC Live	1. F24 Live 2. france24.com	
8.07	BBC Live	F24 Live	
9.07	BBC Live	F24 Live	
10.07	BBC Live	F24 Live	
11.07			
12.07	BBC Live	F24 Live	
13.07	1. BBC Live 2. bbc.com	F24 Live	AJPlus video
14.07	BBC Live		
15.07	BBC Live	F24 Live	aljazeera.com

Figure 1. Sample of news texts covering the Greek financial crisis

Sometimes a single piece of content sourced through social media was used in several news texts of the same news organisation. For example, they may have been featured in a live blog first as well as a closed-format news text a short time later. In the quantitative analysis, each piece of content was counted only once and the initial report was sought out and included in the sample shown in Fig. 1. However, each new piece of content referenced in the news coverage, including where its source was cited with other information in another news text, was included in the study. As stated in the methodology, the number of times that a source was able to contribute to news coverage with pieces of social media content was considered a marker for source power.

The vast majority of sources across all three news organisations originated on Twitter. This can be largely attributed to its accessibility as a crowdsourcing tool and its structure that allows to act as a one-to-many publishing platform. The microblog's public nature means most of its users' tweets can be viewed by anyone. The indexing of tweets with the ability to search keywords and hashtags chronologically, as well as the retweet function, means that it is relatively easy to identify the original sources of information. Compared to other more popular social media platforms, such as Facebook with its privacy settings and algorithmic search function, Twitter content is considerably more transparent. Given the importance of accuracy and verification in journalism, it is therefore far easier to incorporate in professional routines. However, the number of active monthly users on Twitter in 2015 was 304 million, according to figures published in July 2015, compared with the 1.4 billion Facebook users,

who log into their account at least once a month[26]. Twitter and Facebook user demographics also differ in terms of age, education level, income and geography, with Twitter users younger, more educated, wealthier and more likely to live in urban areas than Facebook users. While social media networks cannot be viewed as representative of global society with its huge disparities in accessibility around the world both from an economic and infrastructure perspective, it is, however, evident that Twitter is far less popular as a means to publish and share information and less diverse.

Quantitative Analysis

Twitter users and source power

The BBC's news coverage used the greatest number of Twitter sources (195), followed by France 24 (167) and Al Jazeera (44). In the quantitative analysis of these sources, they were grouped according to the categories discussed in the literature review and methodology. They are shown in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 and include: journalists of the respective news organisation; other journalists with mainstream news media; official news media sources, political sources; expert and analyst sources; citizen voices such as eyewitnesses, bloggers, grassroots movements and opinions by private members of the public; and finally, sources that did not fit into any of the aforementioned groups.

	In-house journalists	Other journalists	News Orgs	Political sources	Analysts /Expert sources	Citizen contributors	Other

[26] Figures published at the end of the second quarter of 2015 showed a 0.7 per cent growth in its membership quarter on quarter with the growth rate significantly declining year-on-year since 2013. (Arthur 2015; Scholer 2015)

BBC	31	66 (8)*	10 (5)* (3)**	28 (5)*	14 (1)*	41 (22)*	5
France 24	5	56 (7)*	24 (1)* (1)** (8)***	20 (2)*	30 (1)*	31 (7)*	1
Al Jazeera		4 (2)*	1**	2*	1*	44 (14)*	

Figure 2. Number of Twitter sources by identity group in news texts of the Greek debt crisis

* Greek sources
** News organisation's own Twitter account
*** News aggregator source
Note: Number of sources shown in brackets are comprised in the total number shown without brackets.

With the largest group of Twitter users in the BBC sample, it follows that the outlet also sourced the greatest number of tweets (533), again followed by France 24 (313) and Al Jazeera (55). Fig. 3 lays out the number of tweets reflected in the news texts according to each category of users as another quantitative measurement of source power – the number of tweets by each group were divided by the number of users in them to indicate the source power of the group by average number of tweets per account. The higher the average number of tweets per account in each group the greater weight and authority the group was considered to have been given in the coverage.

	In-house journalists	Other journalists	News Orgs	Political sources	Analysts /Expert sources	Citizen contributors	Other
BBC	199	124	24 (3)*	87	34	60	5
France 24	21	120	37 (7)*	40	54	39	1
Al Jazeera		6	1	3	1	62	

Overall, both the BBC and France 24 showed a much greater proportional use of journalist sources, or conventional secondary definers. In addition these sources also had considerable access to the news flow through their tweeting than other groups. Of a total 533 tweets in the BBC coverage, 199 tweets came from their 31 in-house staff. In terms of source power, an average of 6.4 tweets were referenced in the news texts by each account in this group. Another 125 tweets from 66 other professional journalists were found in the texts, meaning an average 1.9 tweets per account Political sources, though a comparatively small group of accounts (28) in the BBC coverage, had the second greatest weight as sources with an average of 3.1 tweets each. Citizen sources had the least weight with an average 1.5 tweets per user.

France 24 published 313 tweets of which 141 were posted by professional journalists. In this user group, France 24 relied mainly on professional journalists from other mainstream news media with a slightly higher average to the BBC of 2.1 tweets per account. Its own inhouse staff comprised only 5 sources, but they too were most often referenced with 4.2 tweets. Twitter accounts by news organisations or those aggregating professional news texts were also heavily relied on. Citizen sources had the least weight with 1.3 tweets per user. There were two main differences to the BBC's sourcing found in the texts. Firstly, France 24's greater reliance on expert users. This user group was proportionally much greater in France

24 coverage although the BBC gave greater weight to those users that it did reference. Secondly, the BBC made considerably greater use of its own journalists' tweets.

In this sense, both the BBC and France 24's use of social media conformed to the more conventional gatekeeping approach of professional journalism and is consistent with research on live blogs that found innovative new approaches to sourcing, correction and verification but not necessarily a radically new approach to the inclusion of citizen testimony (Thurman and Newman 2014, p. 663). It also chimes with Reich's analysis (2015) showing no significantly greater involvement of citizen testimony in online news compared to older news mediums, especially in political and financial news. However, what the data does show is the strong reliance on professional journalists on social media from across a wide range of mainstream news media. The overwhelming majority of journalist Twitter users were not Greek and all tweeted in English. While this could be partly explained by the pan-European nature of the news event as it played out in several geographical locations (Athens, Brussels, Frankfurt), the vast majority of journalist users worked for elite news organisations as foreign correspondents. Therefore, journalists from similarly elite organisations to the BBC and France 24 served as the preferred contributors for networked journalism.

A third way to quantify source power was to look at the overlap in sources between news organisations, meaning the individual accounts that had been able to enter the global news flow through more than one of the news organisations. This overlap was particularly significant between the BBC and France 24 with tweets by 51 users referenced in the coverage by both organisations. This accounted for 26% and 31% of all Twitter sources respectively. These sources were almost exclusively accounts of power elites and journalists,

meaning that they did not originate among the citizen user group. The overlap of sources indicates that both news organisations approached collaborative newsgathering in a similar way from a common pool of sources.

There were some changes observed in the type of Twitter users found in the BBC's news texts over time. Texts published in the earlier part of the period studied showed a heavier reliance on the BBC's journalists as Twitter sources when compared to later texts. The live blog published on the Greek debt crisis on 29 June contains 13 tweets from BBC journalists compared to just 7 from other sources. The following day, 12 tweets had been tweeted by BBC journalists compared to 8 by other accounts. Both days one official BBC Twitter account tweet was included in the blogs. On 5 July, the day of the referendum, 40 of the blog's tweets had been posted by BBC journalists whereas 34 tweets were posted by other sources. By 12 July, the day of the eurozone summit where a deal was struck, it was non-BBC related accounts that took the lead with 67 of 88 tweets not posted by the organisation's own journalists. Again, on 15 July, when the Greek parliament passed legislation required by the deal, only 14 tweets published on the blog came from BBC journalists compared to 41 from other accounts.

These changes over time may have two reasons. One being that as the Greek debt crisis dragged on dominating the international news agenda correspondents from around the world travelled to Athens and Brussels, many of them also tweeting the latest developments. This led to a pooling of information and resources from across news organisations which became available to everyone, including newsrooms. Journalists from other similarly elite news organisations are likely to have been trusted to employ similar professional routines to those

of the BBC, making them easy to incorporate in the BBC's own coverage. Secondly, journalists in the BBC's newsroom may have developed more trust towards specific outside sources over time, leading to their direct commentary becoming increasingly reflected in the news coverage. As the BBC's staff monitored Twitter accounts tweeting about the financial crisis, over time they were able to identify key voices that fit the organisation's criteria for authoritative, newsworthy and trustworthy sources. Therefore, reporters editing the live blogs had time to refine their sourcing of Twitter comments and reports, picking information from accounts that had established themselves within the context of the news event.

As shown in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3, Al Jazeera mobilised Twitter differently with a much greater emphasis on users in the citizen category. While these users had a similar weight to the same type of sources used in the BBC and France 24 coverage, Al Jazeera almost exclusively sourced information from these users. As a result, there was also only a very small overlap in sources between Al Jazeera, the BBC and France 24 with only 3 sources in common. The fact that there was such little overlap between Al Jazeera's Twitter sources and those of the other two news organisations, also underlines the weaker source power of citizen voices in their access to multiple news organisations. Only one source in this group was found among all three news organisations and went by the Twitter handle @GreekAnalyst. Their true identity was never revealed and they described themself in their hyperlinked blog as "providing on spot, real-time coverage and analysis of the Greek economic crisis". The commentary this accounts was tweeting was largely in opposition to the Syriza government. The account tweeted both in English and Greek, and although the location of the person behind the account was undisclosed this suggests that they were in fact Greek. One might argue that the anonymity of may have meant that the source was miscategorised. Yet, as there was no other

information available it was treated as a non-elite source as it presented itself as such and gained no obvious advantage from a potentially different status. The other two sources that all three organisations had in common were political sources.

In terms of its news output, one significant difference between Al Jazeera and the other two organisations was that it did not run any live blogs on the debt crisis. Instead of using interactive newsgathering in a breaking news/rolling coverage format, it was used largely to gather commentary and testimonies to reflect a plurality of opinions in citizen debates taking place. The majority of all users in the Al Jazeera coverage were found in two news items featured on The Stream. In the run-up to the referendum on 2 July The Stream published an online news text entitled *The great Greek drama*, which also became the subject of a live webcast. By not relying on Twitter for real-time newsgathering to reflect the latest developments, Al Jazeera could focus on citizen testimony and commentary to reflect a public debate. Rather than using social media for conventional newsgathering with its focus on authoritative voices, it gave space to opinions and first-hand experiences of the Greek financial crisis by members of the public. Real-time collaborative newsgathering arguably places a lot of pressure on reporters to ensure accuracy and verification of information from a distance and within a very short timeframe.

Type of sources in user groups

As mentioned already, the vast majority of tweets used in Al Jazeera's news texts was found in the two texts by The Stream. In the The Stream webcast four Greek interviewees, a hotel owner, a student living in London, an unemployed man and a psychologist posed as a virtual panel of interviewees that were dialed into the show on a conference call. The show's

moderators then invited questions and comments via Twitter in real-time but had also preselected older comments and questions to put to the panel. In the days before the programme The Stream's Twitter account had put out calls to participate in the live webcast by tweeting comments, questions and accounts of personal experiences directed at @AJStream or with the hashtag #AJStream. A call was also put out via Facebook but yielded considerably less engagement, none of which was represented in the webcast and other online news text.

Among the accounts used by Al Jazeera in the citizen group, 13 were Greek. Greek sources were generally given greater weight with multiple tweets used in the news texts of The Stream. The remaining accounts were spread across the world, with some in India, Australia, the US, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Latvia, Ireland and elsewhere. Some of these users were tweeting questions directed at Greeks, while others expressed opinions. This created a global discussion around a news event that was otherwise framed by The Stream as a very local event in Greece and the experiences of ordinary Greek citizens. This global discussion and opining on an issue experienced largely by Greeks was also acknowledged by the programme's host in a comment to the panel. In contrast, among the citizen users sourced by the BBC and France 24, a large section of them were not Greeks and of those that were, there was not necessarily more authority attributed to them. In the BBC sample, Greeks were the largest group (22) in the citizen group with 19 others from around the world, while there were just six among the same group in the France 24 texts. This raises questions about what purpose is served by drawing in comments by those who remain unaffected by the news event.

Greeks were the smallest group among the expert accounts with only one Greek in this group both used by the BBC and France 24. Therefore, the power to interpret the Greek financial crisis by sources that were typically referenced by the BBC and France 24 for their perceived disinterested expertise (Hall et al., 1978) was granted almost exclusively to non-Greeks. The following are some of the users found in this category: head of analysis at the Danish free-market think tank CEPOS, Otto Brøns-Petersen; head of European macro credit research at RBS, Alberto Gallo; political analyst at think tank Open Europe, Vincenzo Scarpetta; Professor at European Politics at the Fletcher School of Tufts University, Kostas Lavdas; the German central bank and the World Economic Forum.

Politicians, party spokespersons or representatives of political institutions played a large role in the BBC coverage with significant weight given to them[27]. In this category the largest single group, comprising 10 Twitter accounts, were EU sources. They included EU council and commission representatives, their spokespersons, MEPs or the EU institutions' media relations operation. Leader of the Eurogroup and Dutch finance minister Jeroen Dijsselbloem was counted among this group but could also be considered as acting both as an EU as well as a national representative. five sources were Greek, three Spanish, two British, and the remaining eight were from Slovakia, Slovenia, Cyprus, Luxemburg, Belgium, Italy, Finland and Malta. German politicians or German government sources were absent despite being the most influential political players in the negotiations. All of the represented sources tweeted consistently and overwhelmingly in English. With regards to Germany neither Chancellor Angela Merkel nor Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble had a social media presence,

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[27] This may be explained by a professional practice that prefers to seek out those who can be held accountable, as once put by a BBC Newsnight editor (Katz 2017).

although other official government sources do exist but mainly tweet in German. There was a very limited use of official French government sources with one tweet by President Francois Hollande. Both Hollande and his prime minister, Manuel Valls, tweeted almost exclusively in French, as did the official government Twitter account @Elysee. The German and French governments' positions were amplified and represented almost exclusively by reporters. For more peripheral political voices from smaller or less influential nations, the use of social media appeared to give them greater representation both in the BBC's and France 24's news coverage. They were mostly members of the political elite in their own respective nations such as government leaders, ministers and their spokespersons. It can be assumed that their access to the global news flow was helped by their strong social media presence. The engagement with social media platforms alone did not ensure access but needed to be linked with tweeting in English – a foreign language to most. Twitter voices that either did not have the ability or will to tweet in English were excluded from social media-sourced news coverage. Therefore the political voices included in the coverage were actively seeking to address an international audience rather than their own national one. Overall, political sources that were sufficiently elite to be counted among the favoured source types perceived as authoritative were able to use social media in a way that enabled them to enter the global news flow. Nevertheless, these same sources may previously not have been given the same weight in news coverage as they were not considered the main or most important actors in the news event. Therefore, Twitter engagement raised their profiles and permitted 'authoritative' but less influential sources to draw more attention to themselves through their tweeting, leading to a greater likelihood of inclusion in news coverage.

Text analysis

Power relationships

The source power findings in the quantitative analysis was also borne out in the textual analysis. Investigating the power relationships between users from different groups and the representation of their content in the news coverage showed a similar hierarchy both in the BBC and the France 24 news texts. The BBC more frequently represented its journalists as authoritative sources on Twitter and set out to build communities of non-authoritative users around them. In several of the live blogs, readers were directed to BBC journalists active on Twitter to ask questions or follow for updates. This responded to changing ways in which news is consumed in an increasingly interactive collaborative way on social media, as for example, described by the "affective news stream" (Papacharissi 2016). It suggests that audiences may be disinclined to click through to BBC's own online platform and wish to be informed mainly through their Twitter feeds. Individual reporters became 'social media anchors' with whom audience interaction was encouraged through Twitter. For example, the BBC live blog pointed readers to its Athens-based correspondent tweeting as @BBCRosAtkins to direct questions on the Greek debt crisis to (see Fig. 7). It also pointed readers to its economics correspondent Robert Peston on @Peston, Athens correspondent on @jasminecoleman and business correspondent on @Theothebald. Similarly, the BBC Outside Source programme that is marketed as providing a platform for non-elite voices also invited questions from social media users to ask Peston in a webcast on 13 July[28].

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[28] This programme could not be reviewed later but the tone in the relationship created was concluded based on the invitation for questions.

Ros Atkins @BBCRosAtkins · Jul 6
The creditors felt the commitment was worth making in return for economic stability. That hasn't materialised tho.

> **Yamada Photography** @mikephoto55
> @BBCRosAtkins @njiemo0 340 BILLION !! How did the EU allow it to get so big ?

Ros Atkins @BBCRosAtkins · Jul 6
Banking collapse, euro exit, no deal – then maybe. I wouldn't bet on it.

> **Alejandro Alvarez** @aletweetsnews
> @BBCRosAtkins is there a chance Greece might be ejected from the EU altogether? if so, what might lead to that happening?

Ros Atkins @BBCRosAtkins · Jul 6
He seems to suggest that both the creditors and #Tsipras think perhaps it does

> **David Phillip Phinn** @dpphinn
> @BBCRosAtkins does Varoufakis' resignation make a deal more likely?

Figure 4. Q&A with BBC correspondent Ros Atkins on Twitter

These interactions taking place with BBC journalists on Twitter were always framed as audiences being informed rather than as a reciprocal level relationship. Journalists were framed as holding the power to create meaning and presented as authoritative. While their Twitter activity also provided straightforward reporting, a large portion of the BBC journalists' Twitter-sourced content consisted of opining. As the news events moved along rapidly with information often emerging not from reporters in the first instance but through actors involved in the news event, such as politicians, journalists took on the role of contextualising. In addition to their commentary and analysis, it was also BBC journalists'

anecdotes and personal experiences that were reflected in the liveblogs, that centred the focus

on them (see Fig. 5).

Figure 5. Examples of personal anecdotes tweeted by BBC correspondents in Athens

The tweets of other journalists found in the coverage were more likely to resemble the solely

factual reporting characterising hard news, such as quotes from officials, breaking news

updates, or other information that had become available and fit with professional routines in

newsgathering. Therefore, the mobilisation of Twitter to conduct a reciprocal level networked

journalism was illustrated primarily through the interactions with other professional

journalists. As journalists pooled their resources through the loosely connected social

networks created on Twitter information spread quickly between them. However, these

journalists were often similarly elite and all English-speaking, showing that the group itself

was to an extent homogenous. BBC correspondents' tweets were more likely to be sourced if

they contained some form of analysis, positioning these journalists as a type of primary

definer and authoritative voice by representing them as an expert source. Other journalists

were more likely to be sourced for their own newsgathering befitting the role of a reporter.

BBC journalists opined alongside other elite sources and linked into a loose network of

influential users that could be described as news- and opinion-makers. In other words, their

analysis was based around the actions and viewpoints expressed by other elite sources, who

they most interacted and pooled information with. Primary definers such as politicians and

experts had significant clout as newsmakers, as the quantitative analysis of source power

showed, and they were able to access the news flow with announcements or their

commentary and analysis. The greater level of opining by journalists on Twitter has been

pointed out in previous research (Lasorsa et al. 2012). However, amid a loss in the ability to

report news due to a news environment saturated with information, the textual analysis shows

that opinion and commentary by journalists is used to add value to the coverage. Although it

has been suggested that the greater amount of commentary in the news reporting would open

up professional newswork to bloggers and blur lines between professional journalism and

amateurs, this was not proven to be the case in the BBC texts. Instead, the organisation,

seemed to attempt to consolidate – and, by including opinion, effectively to extend – the role

of its journalists through social media.

In the France 24 news texts, content by journalist Twitter users typically had a more

informational style. Given the small number of France 24 correspondents among this Twitter

group, it mirrors the way that information was interactively gathered through a broad

community of similarly elite international correspondents as the BBC. The journalists' tweets

often deferred to traditional primary definers and reported on their words or contained images

of documents or events with a few also providing analysis. However, analysis in Twitter

content was mostly left to the expert users. Although, as will be discussed, France 24

journalists played a significant role in general in framing and contextualising pertinent social

media content that had surfaced. Outside of the extensive use of journalist users in their live

blogs, France 24 also used tweets to link to what other news organisations were reporting. All

of these organisations were elite French and international media, further emphasising that

Twitter was appropriated primarily to highlight and promote the work of professional news

media (see example in Fig. 6). It was comparable to the news reviews often done by news

outlets, which, on the face of it, summarise a diversity of views and stories from across the

news media. However, it also reinforced the echo chamber of similarly elite journalists and

their organisations using Twitter as a distribution platform for their content to audiences as

well as other news outlets. In addition, there were 24 sources identified as news organisations

in the France 24 coverage of which only one was Greek. However, eight were not news

organisations in the traditional sense but Twitter accounts that aggregate and republish news.

They have here been described as 'aggregator' accounts and are usually characterised by their

lack of transparency, meaning it is not possible to identify the group or person operating these

Twitter accounts. Their main purpose is to collect news through Twitter and amplify it by

sharing it, while not producing any of the information themselves. They may also be bots,

meaning the tweeting of news content is automated and there is no additional information, be

it opinion or commentary added. Therefore these accounts were listed in the news media

group of users. Even tweets by citizen Twitter users were at times reflected to amplify

professional news coverage. These tweets were not sought out for a representation of these

users' views other than their retweeting or hyperlinking to professional news reports. This

was specifically a peculiarity of the France 24 news texts. Therefore, the use of non-elite

sources and citizen commentary contributed to a very mainstream media-centric view of the

Twitter activity around the news event.

Figure 6. Tweet by French newspaper Libération used in a France 24 news text

As already shown, Al Jazeera took a significantly different approach as it focused on building

a 'community' around AJ Stream's social media presence that aimed to facilitate a

conversation between its members. There was a very limited amount of Twitter-sourced

content found in the straight reporting of the crisis on aljazeera.com. Where it was

incorporated it followed the same professional sourcing routines as the BBC and France 24,

such as users who were journalists and politicians but none of the tweets were sourced from

Al Jazeera journalists. The Twitter interactions seen in Fig. 7 and Fig. 8 are representative of

a typical exchange between The Stream producers and citizen users participating in the

webcast. The Twitter interaction is reciprocal and non-hierarchical. It is also one-to-one as the

Twitter accounts respond to each other through the use of their Twitter handles at the start of

each tweet, which eliminated the tweets from the timelines of their followers. The comments

emerging from citizen users in these conversations were amplified through retweets and/or

inclusion in the Stream programme.

Figure 7. Twitter interaction with AJStream

By comparison, the questions and answers format with BBC correspondents (Fig. 4) did not

see them personally engaging with individual users at all. The testimonies and opinions of

citizen users were at the centre of the conversation. It followed a style of interaction

comparable to the vox-pop format that is typically used in news reports to gauge public

opinion. Through the real-time reflection of these Twitter accounts in the programme

interactions between them could develop as users were able to advance the conversation and

respond to the opinions of other users. It was the only example among all the news coverage

Figure 8. Twitter interaction with AJStream

where citizen users had the opportunity to be represented as primary definers in a news text and granted the ability to shape the discussion with their views. Both of the other news organisations attempted similar engagement but with limited success. Comments were invited via @France24Debate or #F24Debate as well as @BBC_WHYS and #WHYS – an acronym for World Have Your Say. The France 24 Debate webcast however did not feature a single social media comment and comments sent to the BBC were few and far between, suggesting that their Twitter presence was not considered sufficiently engaging for users inclined to enter into a conversation.

Overall, cartoons were very common in the tweets sourced from citizen users among all three news organisations. Complex messages that would have been too difficult to fit into a single tweet were conveyed in a way that was visually engaging. These messages were presented largely unmediated, meaning that control over the type of comments that were represented

was practiced primarily in the selection process rather than through framing. However, it also meant that these tweets were mostly used to add colour to an otherwise complex political and financial issue and were presented as less important. The users were rarely, if ever, introduced or contextualised, unlike the sources from the other user categories. Left largely nameless, this contributed to defining their level of importance as below that of other users. With the exception of the report discussed by The Stream, the selection of the tweets seemed to be mostly based on editors' preferences rather than any clearly defined approach to sourcing such tweets. For example, there were no particular qualities among the sources' identities, such as personal involvement or experience, and origin. The only common trait that all possessed was that they tweeted in English. What was presented both in the BBC and France 24 news texts was often an undifferentiated global conversation around the news event, where voices within the citizen user group were largely presented as indistinguishable[29].

I also analysed source power in two examples of specific events that took place during the period studies and the findings are presented in the following two sub-sections.

Varoufakis' resignation

As social media have created a news environment comprising huge amounts of information, legacy media compete for the ability to define what that information means. As already mentioned, collaborative newsgathering has been integrated into sourcing routines which is

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[29] This was not the case for emails reflected in the coverage, sent by readers. Citations from these were often accompanied by a preamble about the writer's identity and reason for their interest. For example, they were holidaying on a Greek island or were a British citizen living in Greece.

more about distilling information rather than producing news. In an information saturated news environment, where journalists have lost the privilege of being the only ones to publish and broadcast, their personal input is to select, frame and analyse the news. Through the newsmakers' ability to publish to audiences it is possible to compare original texts published on social media with how they are reproduced in the news texts of the research. This arguably offers more transparency about the selection process in newswork, as press releases which used to be sent to journalists were largely inaccessible to the general public. A comparison between the blog posts of Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis and their reproduction in news texts could reveal what was selected and what was omitted.

Newsmakers, meaning those individuals who are influential in shaping news agendas through their words and actions because they are a major actor in news events, may not primarily (or even at all) try to get the attention of professional news media but rather bypass it to speak to their audiences directly through social media. This was most clearly seen in the social media activity of Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and his finance minister. Both tweeted regularly throughout the period and frequently in English, suggesting that they were not addressing Greeks but the international community. Moreover, the news of important developments were often broken through their Twitter engagement, bypassing the 'gatekeeper' journalists. For example, Varoufakis' surprise resignation on 6 July, the day after the referendum, was announced in his blog to which he tweeted a hyperlink. It was just one of numerous examples of how actors in the news events themselves published their own breaking news outside of the orbit of professional news media. Varoufakis published and tweeted his resignation only in English, retaining the greatest possible level of control over how the announcement would be framed for news audiences outside of Greece. A

comparison between the original text and its treatment in the news coverage is discussed

shortly, and illustrates how professional journalists assume their role in interpreting and

analysing news events for audiences. The interpretation offered by both the BBC and France

24 focused on Varoufakis' rhetorical and negotiating style with creditors. It was both his

personality and conduct that was framed as the major barrier in reaching any agreement in the

talks.

In the BBC's live blog on 6 July there are several references to two blog posts published by

Varoufakis throughout the day. The first was about the previous day's vote and the second

announced his resignation. Two extracts from these posts were cited in the BBC texts, both of

which are presented below. The extracts of the first blog were featured in the BBC live blog[30]

with two citations that were contextualised with a short comment by the journalist calling

them a "mixed message" and "tough words".

> From the moment our election seemed likely, last December, the powers-that-be
> started a bank run and planned, eventually, to shut Greece's banks down.
> [...]
> Today's referendum delivered a resounding call for a mutually beneficial agreement
> between Greece and our European partners (Varoufakis 2015a).

The second blog post announcing that he was stepping down, was also cited but the citations

focused on the interpersonal aspects of the negotiations. While Varoufakis listed bullet points

on what he believed the Greek government had attempted to achieve in its time in office, how

he believed creditors had reacted, and how the Greek government planned to approach

negotiations in light of the referendum result, these did not become subject of the news text –

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[30] This blog post was not quoted in the news texts of either France 24 or Al Jazeera.

either through direct quotation or paraphrasing. The first extract that was used in the BBC

text was as follows:

> Soon after the announcement of the referendum results, I was made aware of a certain
> preference by some Eurogroup participants, and assorted 'partners', for my 'absence'
> from its meetings; an idea that the Prime Minister judged to be potentially helpful to
> him in reaching an agreement. For this reason I am leaving the Ministry of Finance
> today (Varoufakis 2015b).

A second citation of the resignation, quoted him writing "I shall wear the creditors' loathing

with pride". This was followed by two tweets from BBC correspondents that provided

analysis and commentary about the resignation. There were several other pieces of analysis in

the live blog and elsewhere in the BBC coverage but none that were sourced through Twitter

[31].

The France 24 reports on the resignation also contained quotes from Varoufakis' blog post.

The blog was cited in one multimedia text that contextualised and commented on the finance

minister's five months in office, mixing it with some analysis. In the France 24 Media Watch

programme on 6 July, the resignation became a topic for analysis and featured three

journalists and three citizen Twitter users sourced alongside other journalists' commentary.

Four out of the five tweets sourced for this programme focused on Varoufakis' appearance,

and his much commented on departure on his motorbike with his wife, while only two

reflected the Twitter users' opinion of his policies or what his resignation means in a political

context (see examples in Fig 9). The Debate, another programme aimed at providing analysis,

also discussed Varoufakis resignation. While the programme invites discussion and

comments through social media it did not feature any social media content. So France 24 too

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[31] There were also numerous quotes from emails to the BBC by readers, most of whom were British.

responded largely with opinions and analysis in how it reported the resignation, imposing its control over the message that was contained in the blog post. It turned to social media mainly to add some lighthearted commentary rather than involve and invite participation in the way that meaning was constructed.

Figure 9. The two tweets commenting on the meaning of Varoufakis' resignation

Al Jazeera news texts took three quotes directly from the blog post. It was followed with one quote of analysis from the Al Jazeera correspondent in Athens that was not taken from social media. All of the news organisations contained the second quote above regarding Varoufakis' decision to step down after the referendum's No vote as he was made aware that some of the Eurogroup members preferred for him not to be taking part in the negotiations. Al Jazeera and BBC also quoted the sentence, "And I shall wear the creditors' loathing with pride."

While the blog post was hyperlinked to in news texts, the quotes reflected were limited. A strong focus among all the news organisations was the fact of Varoufakis resignation due to the Eurogroup members dislike for him and his overt defiance. It was particularly the personal animosities that received coverage, while his blog post comments describing the vote by the Greek people as a democratic action and his call for different loan conditions based on this were not cited. The text subsequently became the subject of extensive analysis with journalists and expert sources largely left to provide interpretations. There were also a small number of citizen sources, who most commonly tweeted caricatures that were presented in the programme. For example, all of the tweets by citizen users in the France 24 Media Watch programme contained illustrations. These tweets were not solicited by France 24 or specifically targeting the programme, but rather were selected by its producers from the range of commentary available on social networks. So it did not appear to be a design of the programme to include only illustration from such type of users, but rather the outcome of where journalists and producers see value in citizen participation.

Protest representation

Several protests took place in Athens in the run up to the referendum during which eyewitness multimedia material was posted online. While the demonstrations received news coverage across all the news organisations, this was mostly limited to traditional reporting styles. Reports were filed by correspondents at the rallies, who often also tweeted about them.

France 24 did not include any social media-sourced content, Twitter or otherwise, of the protests in their news coverage. The BBC used a number of tweets containing images and

text reports but all of them belonged to their own correspondents in Athens. They followed a format that concentrated largely on the size of the turn-out while incorporating a small number of citizen testimonies, relayed by the BBC correspondents. The BBC live blog on 29 July included four tweets about the rally by one BBC correspondent. The first referred to the arrival of a colleague at the rally. The second commented on the size of the rally with an image overlooking the protest and the final two contained images of protesters amid the protest. There was also a reference to a solidarity march in London with a hyperlink to a Periscope video shot by a Guardian journalist. The BBC live blog on 30 June included three tweets about the rally. All of them by BBC correspondents. Again, two comprised images taken from a nearby balcony overlooking the protest and the third cited a slogan chanted by the protesters. On 3 June, two rival protests took place in Athens, the larger one saw thousands rally in front of the Greek parliament calling for a rejection of the loan conditions. The smaller one called for voters to accept the conditions. In the BBC's liveblog, three tweets by two of the organisation's correspondents in Athens contained bird's eye-view images of the larger rally. As in the previous days, they were taken from high up balconies of nearby buildings. One of these was a short video. It also included two tweets by Tsipras, who addressed the rally.

In the coverage of civic action through protests, an event that might be considered particularly well suited for collaborative newsgathering with citizen users, coverage remained entirely under the control of BBC reporters. There were no tweets by citizen users sharing images or comments from or about the protests. The voice of protesters was gauged in terms of numbers, while journalists were distinguished by their named presence. A very limited amount of amateur footage was used in the news coverage and the lack of attribution to its

sources allowed little deeper analysis into its origin. The fact that were was such little eyewitness material is likely to be down to the fact that a large number of professional journalists from across the world had travelled to Athens to cover events and news organisations had their own crews on the ground to provide high quality multimedia material. The amateur footage that was used showed clashes outside the European Commission offices in Athens on 2 July, where news crews were not present, and some of the clashes on 15 July. Therefore, the exception in sourcing material from citizen users was when the footage could be considered novel, such as showing the breakout of violence, in the absence of any news camera crews. In these cases, the citizen user carried out an act of journalism that was consistent with the news agenda and therefore could easily be incorporated into the coverage. However, the large media presence in Athens meant there was little occasion for this scenario. Al Jazeera's main coverage of these protests also contained no social media-sourced content. However, The Streams' coverage did involve citizen users referring to the protests and voicing their opinions, including one user tweeting from one of the rallies. All social media content was in English, across all three news organisations, limiting the number of Greek voices that were represented. Those Greek voices that were sourced were not speaking to each other or the Greek media but specifically aimed to reach a global audience. Inadvertently, this excluded those who did not speak English, or used social media primarily to communicate with other Greeks.

Platforms

The reliance on the social media platform Twitter over other platforms may have affected the types of users that news organisations involved in their coverage. Since Twitter users can

easily send out their messages in the traditional one-to-many style while capitalising on loose networks that amplify tweets in a many-to-many broadcasting format, the platform is a natural fit for newsmakers and journalists, who already benefit from larger followings that allow them to broadcast more widely. Other social media platforms are more popular with ordinary citizen users by comparison and a focus on delving into the online communities on them might produce different results.

In this case study, however, other platforms were used very sparingly for interactive newsgathering. On 29 June, Greek banks imposed controls on cash withdrawals that limited customers to withdrawing a maximum of 60 euro a day. Several images used in news texts showed long queues of anguished-looking people outside banks. There were seven social media-sourced contributions on the capital controls in the The Stream report. Of these, six came from citizen users, and only two of these had been posted on Twitter. The other four had been published on Reddit[32]and were in English. The contributors described their daily lives being largely unaffected by the bank closures, writing: "Common people carry on with their lives like before. It's not like we have any substantial amount of money left in the bank" and "as long as you don't watch TV, it's just another day." The overall message was that for many spending 60 euro a day was far beyond their means and therefore the limit did not have any palpable effect on them.

Although some of this was also evident in the BBC coverage as correspondents noted the calm in Athens, there was little offered in terms of an explanation. Such citizen testimonies, however, did provide exactly that. These kind of personal accounts of how Greeks felt

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[32] Reddit is best described as huge messaging board where users can share information in threads and vote other users' messages up or down, determining their visibility in the thread. (Bond 2018)

affected by the financial crisis and unfolding events were largely missing from the social media-sourced content in the BBC and France 24 coverage. A link between the type of users that were reflected and the preference for Twitter became evident. Although The Stream did also source many citizen Twitter users, this particular social platform was easy to adapt to the existing sourcing routines by France 24 and the BBC.

In general, where France 24 and the BBC used social media sources from other platforms than Twitter they also showed a strong reliance on traditional sources. The BBC incorporated four blog posts by Greek finance minister Varoufakis, a blog post by IMF chief economist Olivier Blanchard, one by American economist Jeffrey Sachs and a contribution by political analyst Professor Richard Rose on the London School of Economics blog. There was also one Facebook post by Italian prime minister Matteo Renzi. A Facebook post by the Greek Solidarity Campaign on 29 June called for a protest at London's, Trafalgar Square – one of the few representations of citizens as activists. But a video shot by a Guardian contributor of the rally was used to illustrate the protest in a later text.

Both France 24 and the BBC used a YouTube video of MEP and former Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt delivering a confrontational speech in the European Parliament on 8 July, accusing the Tsipras government of not offering any concrete commitment to reforms on "five points", including downsizing the public sector, "opening the markets" and privatising public banks, and ending corruption and "privilege". The speech elicited a great deal of social media reaction. Both organisations also published a YouTube clip of European Council President Donald Tusk addressing reporters, one on 9 July and one on 13 July. In the latter he announced an "agreekment" in the euro summit talks, sparking reaction on social

networks under the hashtag #Agreekment. France 24 also linked to an EU Council livestream on 7 July and two statements by the council's communications department. The BBC on 5 July linked to a statement by the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker. On 6 July, both France 24 and BBC linked to a press release by the European Central Bank. Together with the reliance on EU Twitter sources for breaking news updates, this shows that power-elites were able to use several social media platforms and their own websites as an additional way in which to enter the news flow.

Summary

Non-elites sources were largely marginalised in the networked journalism that was evident in both France 24's and the BBC's news coverage. By and large social networks were not found to be used to represent citizen testimony directly. Ordinary citizens were given voice almost exclusively through traditional format interviews in online text and audio-visual reports. In the live blogs, significantly more of the citizen commentary reflected was sent directly to the BBC via email. However, this type of content is outside of the scope of this study for two reasons. Firstly, this type of commentary, in contrast to citizen testimony published on social media, is self-selected as contributors have to take the initiative and put in effort to address the BBC directly. This is likely to skew the spectrum of opinions. For example, it is unlikely that an ordinary Greek would take the time to write to a foreign news outlet in the same way that they might embrace Twitter or other social media to publish their comments, opinions and experiences. Secondly, it is also not possible to review the gatekeeping done by the BBC in selecting comment for publication as there is no knowledge of what was not published.

Where Twitter was used mainly to mobilise public participation in news coverage – as seen in the Al Jazeera sample of sources – as expected, the vast majority of sources fall into the citizen user group of which many were Greek sources with greater source power than other users in the news products. At the same time, there was a wider global social media debate reflected, not only by Al Jazeera but also the BBC, with participation from several sources that had no stake in the news events. This raises questions about the value of some of these contributions and the news organisations' rationale for publishing them. If the objective is to depict a more authentic picture of public opinion and news events through interactive newsgathering and social media commentary then the aim may be better served by virtually getting as close to news events as possible. Diluting the commentary and information shared by citizen with a personal stake in what is being reported with an undifferentiated global input threatens to erode the specific geopolitical context of a news event and undermines the voices of those directly involved and affected. However, other factors may have driven the choices made by journalists such as building a model of participation that involves actual audiences of the news organisations, rather than the most relevant ones. Such decisions may have given more weight to commercial considerations.

The BBC's own staff were producing an overwhelming amount of the social media content that was used by the news organisation, suggesting a trend towards social networks being used as a tool to publish reports in a less formal matter. The interview chapter of this thesis explores further how the BBC formalised news production for social media audiences, but this research demonstrates that journalists' participation on social media was sanctioned by the organisation and incorporated in a number of different ways. As the BBC's correspondents build up a presence on Twitter they are trading on their status as professional

journalist and benefit from their employers' reputation. At the same time they become Twitter personalities in their own right with their organisation taking second place. This is a departure from traditional news coverage, where the byline is largely less important than the brand or title of a news product.

The pooling of information and commentary of professional journalists from a wide variety of news outlets and the considerable overlap of sources used both by the BBC and France 24 may point towards a homogenisation of mainstream media rather than the diversification of sources. The data shows that the dominant accounts used in the news coverage by two of the three organisations were most commonly professional journalists from a wide spectrum of news outlets. On the one hand this undoubtedly ensures that acquired knowledge is spread widely and pushes for news organisations to reflect it. On the other hand, while this pooling of information and commentary has been argued to have a diversifying effect, when it takes place almost exclusively among established media professionals it can also have the opposite effect of leveling the differences between the news outlets as the organisations develop a symbiotic relationship among each other. In short, the distinctions between a report by France 24, the BBC or another news outlet collecting information in the same way are minimised despite a greater number of sources. When the content published by different news organisations is substantially identical, plurality suffers.

The attraction of drawing on the work by professional journalists working for other organisations shared is self-evident, as they are usually abiding by similar professional standards while producing news content at no extra cost. Crowdsourcing information in this manner is very cost efficient. Material by bloggers, citizen-journalists and eyewitnesses on

the other hand, can add an extra layer of work for the mainstream news organisations in discovering such content, contextualising, and verifying it. In-house journalists need to have the skills and time to thoroughly engage with the news content produced by non-journalists to ensure that the standards on which news organisations build their reputation are met.

The research shows bottlenecks and obstacles in the two-way flow of information between social media users and professional news media. I believe there are two aspects to this. One is mainly practical and based on a necessary selection process to whittle down the overload of information available. The social media gatekeepers serve an important function of separating important and accurate information from unimportant and inaccurate information. The as professional journalists active on social media, these gatekeepers adhere to the same conventional selection criteria that inform professional routines elsewhere adapting their practices to a different environment rather than allowing the environment to significantly shape their news reporting.

As the data showed, France 24 also used citizen sources as a way to link to news texts created by mainstream news organisation. This means the number of citizen users among its coverage were not reflective of the actual amount of original content they provided in the news coverage. In the overall composition of the live blogs it created the impression that social media users remain largely passive in their consumption of mass media and their engagement is reduced to simply sharing professionally produced news. The also seemingly arbitrary choice of most citizen sources diminished their value significantly in contrast to the other sources.

The entire source sample showed a clear preference for English-language contributions with non-English social media content facing much greater hurdles in accessing anglophone international mainstream media. There is a genuine possibility that where information is originally not produced in English but gathers momentum through retweets and wider discussion, it will eventually be tweeted and commented on by English-language sources. Yet, this does not detract from the fact that non-English sources are disadvantaged in the access to these news organisations; a significant problem when the news event is taking place in a non-anglophone country. Essentially, they rely on privileged social media gatekeepers to show an interest. A willingness by elite global news media to engage with social media users in their local language would perhaps be helpful in achieving a more authentic representation in news coverage.

Several examples showed France 24 and the BBC using material shared on social media that fuelled online discussion but not necessarily following through in reflecting the ensuing engagement. This suggests that both organisations sought to assume leadership roles in social media debate. In addition, the BBC's efforts to build up a strong presence on social media with its own staff shows that the aim is predominantly for these news outlets to place themselves at the helm of public debate. Social media did at times fulfill the function of contributing to news coverage in unconventional ways and arguably the trickle down effect of a vibrant social media forum leads to elite journalist sources within that environment being informed by it and eventually enabling it to enter the global news flow. However, the opportunity of direct public access to the professional news flow, as seen in the findings relating to France 24 and the BBC, is far more limited in scope than commonly held assumptions about social networks' power to transfer privileged media access to non-elites.

6. Migrant crisis: the pursuit of journalism's ethics

This case study sought to investigate the use of interactive newsgathering in the coverage of what came to be known as the 'migrant crisis' in Europe. It analysed online news coverage across four weeks straddling August and September 2015. The chosen timeframe both saw the migrant issue surge to the top of the news agenda among mainstream news media and spark public debate, citizen initiatives and protests organised and discussed on social networks. Social media played a multi-faceted role in how it facilitated public engagement around the topic, affected developments in the news events, and also served news organisations as a tool in their own news production.

Below are the main news events relevant to the collaborative newswork found in the news texts. They are listed in chronological order and provide an overview of the period covered in this study and the pace at which news events developed. As is evident, the migrant crisis was a truly pan-European news event that sparked public debate across borders and provided the basis for reporting on local, national and international level.

Timeline

- **22/08 – 23/08**: Rioting broke out in the eastern German town of Heidenau over a planned asylum seekers home. Videos of the clashes with local police were shared online by the local branch of the left of centre Social Democrats Party (SPD).

- **25/08**: German authorities announce the suspension of the Dublin II agreement for Syrian asylum seekers via Twitter.

- **27/08**: The bodies of dozens of suffocated migrants are discovered in a truck parked on the side of a motorway in Austria.

- **02/09**: The body of drowned Syrian toddler Alan Kurdi is found washed up on the beach in Bodrum, in Turkey. The boat carrying his family capsized during the crossing to Greece, killing him, his brother and mother. Photos of the dead boy lying on the beach are captured by a Turkish photographer and used prominently across international news media.

- **03/09**: An Austria-bound train carrying migrants was allowed to leave Budapest's Keleti station after weeks of stand off between migrants and Hungarian authorities. It was then stopped in the Hungarian border town of Biscke with news crews at the scene.

- **04/09**: Migrants stranded in Budapest set off on foot to the Austrian border.

- **05/09**: First trains carrying migrants from Budapest arrived in Munich.

- **09/09**: Migrants broke through a police cordon at Roszke, in Hungry, where they had been held. Video of a Hungarian camerawoman showing her tripping up a man carrying a child quickly spread across social media. Meanwhile, in Denmark authorities suspended the rail-link to Germany.

- **12/09**: German authorities said 40,000 migrants arrived in the country in one day.

- **16/09**: Clashes between migrants and security forces broke out on the Hungary-Serbia border.

As large numbers of migrants crossed European borders and made their way into central and western Europe, social media platforms saw high levels of news content shared both from mainstream news media, official sources, and alternative media sources. The rampant exchange of communication contributed to an impression that public opinion was vocalised through online social networks precipitating action from state powers. Germany announced the suspension of the Dublin II agreement that requires asylum applications to be submitted in the country of migrants' first entry to the EU. At the start of September a photo of a drowned toddler on a Turkish beach hit front pages around the world and prompted a public outcry. The extent to which political actions can be traced back to public social media engagement is not clear but platforms were used as spaces to organise civic engagement in the real world. While the number of migrant arrivals to the EU peaked in October (UNHCR, n.d.) the scene for this development was set in August and September when developments in the political arena surrounding the migrant crisis developed rapidly. Activities on social media were prominent at different points during the course of this study and were used extensively to share news texts among audiences, as well as provide a platform for commentary. They facilitated the organisation and coordination of numerous citizen initiatives across Europe and drummed up support for anti-asylum seeker protests. Social media was also used as a means of communication between authorities and citizens as well as migrants. Other times, information and eyewitness media was shared through social networks revealing the mistreatment of refugees. Social media also served as a way for human traffickers to publicise their service and a means for migrants to share their own user-generated content, as well as advice and information to fellow migrants about their journey to western Europe. Thus, the group least able to access mainstream media, the migrants themselves, was given a forum on social media through which their voices could be

represented. However, given the precarious situation many migrants found themselves in,
content owned by them was often shared publicly by third parties to protect the anonymity of
the original owner. Social media engagement also sparked heated debates on freedom of
speech in Germany and led the German public broadcaster to run a campaign against online
hate speech.

Sample of news texts

The websites of the news organisations as well as the Twitter accounts – named in the
methodology – were searched for the keywords 'migrant', 'migrants', 'refugee' and
'refugees'. All texts between 18 August and 17 September were examined. All of the
identified news texts over the timeframe were then selected and scanned for social media
content. All news texts that did not contain any clearly identifiable social media content were
disregarded, whereas those that did were analysed using qualitative and quantitative
methodologies. Fig. 10 shows a break down of the total number of online news pages
gathered from the BBC, France 24 and Al Jazeera coverage. They illustrate the news texts
found that contained social media content.

	BBC	France 24	Al Jazeera
18.8	BBC Trending		
19.8			
20.8	BBC Outside Source	AFP	@ajplus
21.8			
22.8			
23.8		france24.com	
24.8			

25.8	BBC Trending bbc.com		Al Jazeera Blog
26.8	BBC Trending bbc.com bbc.com		@ajplus
27.8	bbc.com	AFP Media Watch AFP	
28.8	@BBCOS @BBCOS bbc.com bbc.com	Observers	
29.8			aljazeera.com
30.8	BBC Trending		
31.8			Aljazeera.com @ajplus
1.9	bbc.com	france24.com	@ajplus @AJStream
2.9		AFP france24.com	The Stream aljazeera.com aljazeera.com
3.9	bbc.com bbc.com bbc.com bbc.com BBC Live	france24.com france24.com AFP france24.com AFP	@ajplus aljazeera.com
4.9	BBC Live bbc.com bbc.com @BBCOS @BBCOS @BBCOS bbc.com	france24.com AFP france24.com France24.com France 24 YouTube	aljazeera.com @AJEnglish
5.9	BBC Live bbc.com	AFP AFP	aljazeera.com aljazeera.com
6.9	bbc.com @BBCWorld	france24.com france24.com	aljazeera.com

7.9	bbc.com bbc.com	Observers	aljazeera.com aljazeera.com aljazeera.com
8.9	@BBCOS @BBCOS @BBCOS bbc.com	AFP AFP france24.com	Opinion
9.9	bbc.com BBC Trending bbc.com	france24.com france24.com AFP france24.com AFP	aljazeera.com @ajplus aljazeera.com
10.9	BBC Trending bbc.com bbc.com	AFP AFP AFP Media Watch France 24 france24.com france24.com	@ajplus @ajplus
11.9	bbc.com bbc.com bbc.com bbc.com	AFP france24.com france24.com	Aljazeera.com @ajplus The Stream @ajplus
12.9	BBC Trending	AFP	@AJEnglish The Listening Post
13.9			@ajplus @ajplus aljazeera.com
14.9		france24.com	The Listening Post
15.9	bbc.com	Observers AFP	
16.9	BBC Trending BBC Live @BBCOS	AFP	The Stream @AJEnglish @ajplus
17.9			aljazeera.com

Figure 10. Sample of news texts in the migrant crisis

The BBC sample consists of 49 texts. They comprise 40 texts published on bbc.co.uk and an additional 10 tweets published on one of the BBC Twitter accounts listed in the methodology. All of these texts, including the tweets, contained or referenced content that could be traced back to originating on social media. The social media-sourced content comprised text, images and audio-visual material. Overall, there were 47 online news pages found on France 24's English-language digital platforms that contained or explicitly referenced social media content. The texts were published both on france24.com/en and observers.france24.com/en. France 24 features not only its own content but also frequently news output by news agency Agence France-Presse (AFP). Since AFP coverage is featured across france24.com and subsequently distributed through France 24 Twitter accounts, it was not possible to separate the news texts from one another. Therefore, all 18 AFP online news texts used or distributed by France 24 is comprised in the sample of the coverage. Al Jazeera featured a total of 41 news texts. The main website aljazeera.com featured 21 texts comprising or referencing content originating on social media. Four texts were published on the digital platforms of the Stream web community. These include news texts on stream.aljazeera.com, @AJStream and a webcast. In addition, all tweets published on the @ajplus and @AJEnglish accounts containing the keywords were examined of which 16 featured content sourced through social media. These tweets did not link back to any coverage on Al Jazeera's own websites. They were all also analysed as part of this research.

A wide variety of news texts featured social media content across all three news organisations, ranging from hard news reports to opinion pieces, media reviews, live blogs and social media focused sections. While Twitter remained the most commonly used social media platform for newsgathering – similar to the previous case study – Facebook was also

used extensively for newsgathering. A comparison between Twitter and Facebook sources shows differences in the type of users that were sought out. This was especially true for the news texts of the BBC and France 24, where collaborative newsgathering on Twitter has been shown to be shaped significantly by elite journalists and the professional news media.

Quantitative Analysis

Twitter Sources

Twitter users were divided into nine groups: in-house journalists working at the respective news organisation, other professional journalists, news organisations, politicians, state authorities, aid organisations, experts, citizens, and others. Humanitarian aid organisations, due to their activist nature, were not considered 'expert' users, while their formalised and professional organisational structures also did not fit the citizen user group.

	in-house journalists	other journalists	news org	politician	authorities	Aid	expert	citizen	other
BBC	26	24	3 (1)*	2	3	4	3	22	4
F24	5	5	-	3	3	-	2	11	3
AJ	2	13	3 (1)**	6	1	4	3	56	3

Figure 11. Number of Twitter sources by identity group in texts on the migrant crisis

* News organisation's own Twitter account
** Aggregator news source

The BBC had a total of 91 different Twitter sources with the use of content tweeted by in-house journalists highest. While BBC employees comprised the largest group of Twitter sources it was closely followed by other professional journalists with 52 sources overall originating in the mainstream media, mirroring the media-centric approach to collaborative newsgathering that was also found in the case study of the Greek financial crisis. Moverover, the sample in Fig. 11 only comprises the BBC journalists whose Twitter content was found in the news texts. In addition, the BBC directed readers to a Twitter list of 33 of its own correspondents to follow for updates, illustrating an effort to build social networks around its own journalists speaking directly to news audiences through the micro-blogging site. The hierarchy of this conversation is primarily one-to-many from the position of the journalist, who is not required to follow back the users following them making the conversation primarily uni-directional (Murthy, 2013). The hoped for result is that users who follow the list will retweet some of its content, which then turns it into a many-to-many form of distribution (Kwak et al, 2010). The journalists from other news organisations were typically similarly elite and English-speaking. They originated from international news organisations such as Channel 4, New York Times, ITV, The Guardian, as well as younger but by now assimilated professional news organisations such as Buzzfeed. Others included German broadcaster RTL and Arabic news outlet Al Alan TV. The third largest group were citizens users. They were geographically spread out, comprising users across the world but with an emphasis on Arabic voices. Users that could be identified as hailing from countries affected by conflict were limited. Where there were such users, they were usually speaking about their perception of the migrant crisis from the viewpoint of an outsider rather than as someone with personal experience of it.

France 24 stood out for its very limited use of Twitter for newsgathering with only 32 sources overall. Almost a third of them were journalists and another third were citizen users. Since the news event often played out in remote areas and involved people with very little opportunity to relay their experiences to a wider audience by themselves (ie. without mainstream news coverage), journalists very arguably facing less competition from non-journalist sources in reporting from the field and could default to more conventional news reporting through its own proprietary platforms. The BBC's extensive use of Twitter was used primarily to highlight their reporters' presence on the platform as a means for news distribution. France 24 on the other hand appeared less invested in building social media audiences around its individual reporters.

Al Jazeera had the largest number of Twitter sources (91) with the vast majority defined as citizen users. This corresponds with the findings in the coverage of the Greek debt crisis although in this sample the use of Twitter was more broadly spread out across many different types of news texts. In the last case study they were almost limited to a single webcast by The Stream, suggesting that the use of Twitter was not prominent in the overall coverage. Nevertheless, a large number of Twitter sources in this study were also found in a webcast by The Stream and the related written news text published on 11 September. The format to host citizen voices through the interactivity that social media allows puts these types of users front and centre of the programme, which is not necessarily the case in any other of the Al Jazeera texts.

The overlap in sources between the news organisations was limited, given the very different approaches to Twitter sourcing routines between the BBC and Al Jazeera. All three

organisations shared only two Twitter sources: a cameraman for German broadcaster RTL (@RichterSteph), and the emergency director at Human Rights Watch (@bouckap). Despite France 24's extremely limited newsgathering through Twitter it had more sources in common with the BBC (five) than Al Jazeera (three) did. These sources were in addition to the two sources found across the news texts by all three organisations. France 24 also had three sources in common with Al Jazeera. Most overlap was found among journalist sources, while there was also some overlap among citizen users. As already stated in the last chapter, sources with access to multiple news organisations can be considered to have more weight and authority than those who are represented in the texts of only one.

Twitter Source Power

The quantitative analysis of source power was measured in terms of the number of tweets by each user group that was included or referenced in the news texts. Although a tweet may have been used more than once in different news texts, individual tweets were only recorded once.

	in-house journalists	other journalists	news org	politician	authorities	Aid	expert	citizen	other
BBC	80	46	3	3	5	5	3	24	4
F24	10	5	-	3	4		4	11	4
AJ	3	15	3	7	1	4	4	65	3

Figure 12. Number of tweets per source group in texts on the migrant crisis

Among the 173 tweets found in the BBC news texts nearly half originated from its own reporters tweeting from the field. On average a BBC reporter would see their tweets used 3.1 times in the BBC's coverage, while other journalist users would be featured with around 2 tweets on average. Citizen users, while being the third largest user group, would have comparatively little source power with just over 1 tweet per user. Overall, France 24 featured 41 tweets. Albeit a much smaller sample group than that of the BBC, the outlet also gave the greatest platform to its own journalists with two tweets per user on average. Other journalists were only represented with one tweet each, putting them on par with citizen users. The two expert users featured were represented with two tweets each. Al Jazeera had the largest number of Twitter sources but only 107 tweets in its coverage. This can be explained with the greater reliance on citizen users, a group generally associated with less source power. Citizen users were represented in the coverage with an average of 1.2 tweets. However, Al Jazeera did not give greater preference to professional journalist sources either with only 1.2 tweet per user. The much more limited use of media sources and the equal source weighting underlines Al Jazeera's more non-elite approach to interactive newsgathering on Twitter, and social media overall.

However, this quantitative method to measure source power could not reflect the interest and attention that some pieces of content generated. For example, a particularly high-value tweet may have been used several times across numerous texts but was only recorded once here. Therefore, the news texts around a range of pieces of content that were able to generate a considerable amount of coverage or were presented in a more prominent way are investigated more closely in the textual analysis.

Facebook Sources

The sample in this case study had a much greater amount of Facebook-sourced content than the Greek debt crisis, which permitted interactive newsgathering to be broken down according to platforms and examine differences in sourcing routines. Facebook was used primarily as a platform to source citizen users, and distinctions between the identities of non-elite sources provided a better idea of who they were. As seen in the breakdown of the users according to their identity in Fig. 13, four groups comprised sources that are non-elite users and which would have been grouped into the citizen user group among the Twitter sample.

	BBC	F24	Al Jazeera
Syrian	10	2	2
Other individuals	8	5 (1)*	4
Communities/Initiatives	8 (1)**	7	6
Media activism/Citizen Journalism	/	2 (1)**	/
Professional Journalists	/	/	3
News Media	1	2	/
Government/Pol	1	3	2

Figure 13. Facebook sources by identity type in texts on the migrant crisis

* Celebrity
** Syrian

As already mentioned, the refugee crisis generated considerable civic engagement (both in support and opposition to refugees) that also received widespread news coverage. Often organisation of citizen groups and initiatives took place on Facebook and the platform itself received media coverage amid a political outcry in Germany over the unchecked publication of hate speech by users.

Syrians, the main focus of the refugee crisis coverage, were all but absent from the sample of Twitter users. However, the BBC focused much of its Facebook newsgathering on finding users that identified themselves as Syrian. Although Facebook played a role in the coverage, source power through this platform was limited. Where individual users were referenced it was usually only once throughout the news texts. Groups and initiatives were reported on but not necessarily named or linked to. The overlap in users again mirrored the trend found in the Twitter news sourcing, with BBC and France 24 having the most sources in common (three), while the three organisations only had one source in common. The one Facebook user comprised in the news coverage of all three outlets was an Icelandic initiative calling on Icelanders to open their homes to refugees. The page received 12,000 likes within days[33] and was treated in the coverage as representing public sentiment towards the refugee crisis. The other two users shared by the BBC and France 24 were a Syrian refugee and activist living in Vienna and a Hungarian TV station. The TV station attracted media attention due to footage tweeted by a German journalist, showing its camerawoman tripping up a man carrying a child as refugees broke through a police line. Hence, it was related to a news item that was initially broken on Twitter by a reporter and not necessarily representative of the sourcing routines specific to the platform. The limited overlap across the board underscored the overall trend

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[33] Iceland had a population of under 330,000 in 2015.

that sees less source power for non-elite users, which accounted for the majority of Facebook accounts.

Source power was limited for citizen users, with far less access to the global news flow, but the range of voices showed sourcing practices that led to plurality in who was represented. Sources sought out by the different organisations showed diversity in users, meaning the sources of the organisations were not originating from similar demographics. For example, Al Jazeera reported on a Turkish Facebook page that organised boat crossings to Greece and an Islamist Facebook community accused of providing a platform for extremists to divide Arab nations. This provided a more non-European perspective on the coverage, and included other regions that had a role to play in the migrant crisis. By comparison, France 24 took a Europe-centric approach that focused both on European initiatives supportive of refugees as well as those strongly critical of the intake of refugees, including a Croatian Facebook community and the British incarnation of the German anti-immigrant PEGIDA movement. Similarly, the BBC focused on the different ways in which citizen were organising their support and help across Europe, but did not mention any anti-refugee Facebook content.

In general, Facebook content was often used to construct a representation of public opinion. One way in which the BBC did this was through Facebook sources that published illustrations, including satirical cartoons. The sharing of illustrations was understood to be indicative of how the users thought about the news topic. However, the representation of Facebook as a gauge of public sentiment was common to all three organisations. Hence, Facebook groups, and community and events pages represented the largest number of Facebook sources for France 24 and Al Jazeera. Where these sources were referenced in the

news coverage, what was typically reported on was their existence and their purpose, while actual content posted to these pages by individual users was typically absent. With a few exceptions, individual users were not the focus of the coverage. Instead, the views expressed through Facebook campaigns and how they organised concrete actions offline were seens as a barometer of the public mood.

YouTube Sources

Content originating on video-sharing platform YouTube was not pervasive in the coverage with Al Jazeera making the most extensive use of the platform for newsgathering with 11 videos. While some of the videos may have been posted on YouTube, the news organisations may have become aware of them through another platform. For example, embedded YouTube videos are common in tweets or on Facebook and can be viewed without leaving either of the platforms. By comparison, links to Facebook content are less common on Twitter as there is no embed option for Facebook posts. Therefore, Facebook content is likely to have been discovered initially on the platform, whereas YouTube content may have been first found on other social media platforms. This does not allow any analysis of how journalists specifically use YouTube for newsgathering.

Footage sourced on YouTube tended to be of a high production and playback quality which limited the range of sources. Only poor quality footage deemed to be of high public interest would warrant inclusion in news coverage. However, one such video had the highest source power as it was featured by all three news organisations. It was the only video featured by more than one of the organisations and filmed by an Austrian volunteer at a Hungarian reception centre for refugees in Roszke, Hungary. The footage showed refugees scrambling

for sandwiches thrown at them by security guards. The clip was shared on social media by the volunteer's husband, an Austrian politician.

The tables below list the number of videos sourced through YouTube by each of the news outlets, and details their title, content and uploader. The uploader in each case is also the producer of each of the clips.

BBC

Title	Description	Uploader
'The millionaire saving migrants in the Mediterranean'	A short documentary about non-profit rescue mission MOAS	timesXtwo – an ABC and BBC collaboration
'Syrian Border Stories'	A short documentary about four displaced Syrians	timesXtwo – an ABC and BBC collaboration
The national team: Spot against racism	Video campaign against racism	DFB Team – German Football Association
Unknown	Video of refugees demanding to be let into Keleti train station in Budapest (deleted)	Unknown

Refugee camp Roszke	Secretly filmed footage of security throwing food into crowd of refugees in Roszke	Sprido08 – Austrian politician
		Online – Arabic satirical site

Figure 14. YouTube videos in BBC texts on the migrant crisis

The @BBCTrending Twitter account linked to two short documentaries published on YouTube by a joint ABC and BBC venture. News content reported on by BBC Trending is framed as originating in social media and of interest to audiences in this space. However, it was also used to highlight and distribute content created by the BBC. This follows the BBC's trend in highlighting content created by its own or affiliated journalists. One of the short documentaries, 'The millionaire saving migrants in the Mediterranean', documents the work of the MOAS rescue boat charity, which raised its profile especially through its Twitter activity, where it published photos, footage and updates from rescue missions. The documentary may have therefore benefitted from MOAS' prominence when distributed on Twitter and other social media platforms.

France 24

Title	Description	Uploader
Refugee camp Röszke	Secretly filmed footage of security throwing food into crowd of refugees in Roszke	Sprido08- Austrian politician

'MEDITERRANEA by Jonas Carpignano (Official Trailer)'	Documentary trailer	NDM Ventas internacionales – Film production company

Figure 15. YouTube videos in France 24 texts on the migrant crisis

Al Jazeera

Title	Description	Uploader
Musical presentation by youths of Yarmouk camp	Video of Palestinian man playing the piano amid rubble	Al Yarmouk Camp – media activists in Yarmouk, Syria
You are not welcome here!	Video of the mayor of Béziers visiting refugees occupying an empty building	Mairie de Béziers – Mayor of French town Béziers
Destruction in the market of Douma	Video of the aftermath of a bombing in the centre of the Syrian city of Douma	amran amar – media activists in Douma, Syria
Refugees Welcome – FC Bayern Make a Statement	Footage of FC Bayern players walking onto pitch with child refugees	Bundesliga – German Football League

Unknown	Aerial footage of an airstrike carried out by coalition forces	US Central Command – US-led military coalition
Migrants break through security line in Roszke	Video shows migrants breaking through police lines in Roszke	Nemzeti1tv – Hungarian TV station
Refugee camp Röszke	Secretly filmed footage of security throwing food into crowd of refugees in Roszke	Sprido08- Austrian politician
Werde Fluchthelfer.in	Campaign calling on people to ferry migrants across borders	Robyns Lifehack Palace – citizen activist
Public dialogue "Living well in Germany – what's important to us": Chancellor in conversation with students	German chancellor Merkel takes questions from highschool children, among them a Palestinian girl fearing deportation.	Bundesregierung – German government
Anja Reschke: "Push back – Open your mouth"	Clip showing news anchor calling on people to speak out against racism	ARD – German public service broadcaster

Project: Refugee Smiles	Video about charitable work done by American dentists for refugees	Deah Barakat – citizen activist

Figure 16. YouTube videos in Al Jazeera texts on the migrant crisis

Al Jazeera featured the widest range of YouTube videos originating from professional media and citizen journalists, as well as government sources. The selection of YouTube videos shows some of the same news topics emerge as found in the news texts by the other two news organisations. For example, the issue of hate speech and anti-refugee sentiments was given voice through some of the Facebook and Twitter content in the France 24 coverage. The anti-refugee mayor of the southern French town of Bezier received coverage by France 24 and AFP after he used an altered AFP photo of refugees waiting to board a train. Attention was drawn to the use of the photograph via a tweet by an AFP journalist (Lemarchand, 2015) comparing it to the original. Al Jazeera covered the mayor's attitude through the use of one of his YouTube videos showing him visiting a group of Syrian refugees to tell them that they are not welcome in the city. Al Jazeera also featured a YouTube video of a German news presenter calling on people to speak up when they encounter racism. The use of BBC YouTube videos mirrored the overall trend of a heavier emphasis on professional journalistic sources, while Syrian citizen journalists and activists were most likely to feature among the Al Jazeera sample.

Text analysis

Journalists as sources

While the quantitative analysis showed tweets by journalists were sourced extensively, textual analysis of some of the news texts reiterated that point. Journalists reporting on the refugee crisis were given special coverage by news organisations highlighting the popularity of the social media content they posted. With Twitter employed as a broadcasting and self-promotion tool for journalists, news organisations gave prominence to some of the most popular material tweeted by journalists.

For example, the BBC gave prominent coverage to a photograph by a photojournalist. But before it became the subject of news reports, the image had been widely shared on Twitter and the following analysis partly investigates how this dissemination took place. Photojournalist Daniel Etter, who was commissioned by the New York Times to cover the migrant crisis, was interviewed by BBC Outside Source after one of his photographs attracted huge amounts of attention on Twitter. The photograph showed a father's tears of relief as he disembarked an inflatable boat that had safely landed on the shores of the Greek island of Kos. The photo was one of a series that Etter produced on the migrant crisis, and which went on to win the 2016 Pulitzer Prize in Breaking News Photography (The Pulitzer Prizes, 2016). A tweet by @BBCOS on the 20 August said, "We speak to @DanielEtterFoto whose incredible photo of a refugee family has gone viral." The BBC Outside Source video could not be viewed for this research;, however, it is clear from available summaries that Etter was interviewed about his personal experience witnessing and photographing refugees arriving in

Greece and his reaction to seeing his photo gain so much traction. The photo also received a special mention in a news piece titled "10 moving photos of Europe's migrant crisis" which was published by BBC Magazine two weeks later. A short text accompanying the photograph included a tweeted comment by an Irish journalist for Ireland's leading broadsheet Irish Times, saying, "An entire country's pain captured in one father's face." The apparent impact that the photo had on social media platforms was used to frame why this particular photo was chosen for coverage. It was not only a compelling photo by a professional photographer but a photo worthy of coverage because it 'went viral'. The image's popularity was presented as a measure of its newsworthiness and proof of its ability to capture the public imagination.

The photo was first published by the New York Times on the 16 August and some of the earliest mentions of the photograph on Twitter originate on accounts by New York Times staff (Tufekci, 2015; Yeginsu, 2015). A cursory analysis of all the accounts mentioning @DanielEtterFoto in reference to the photo throughout the day shows that many of them were elite professional journalists. Among those who shared the photo early on, were journalists from the Wall Street Journal, NPR and Vice. The photo was also tweeted by Barry Malone (Malone, 2015), the producer of The Stream. Given that The Stream has built a particularly large social media community around it, the tweet unsurprisingly received thousands of retweets. Etter tweeted the photo himself on 17 August (Etter, 2015), writing, "I am overwhelmed by the reaction to this family's tears of relief. This is why I do what I do." In the coming days, the photo went on to be featured by many professional global news organisations and their journalists. The reconstruction of the earliest users to share the image shows that professional journalists played a significant role in the distribution of the photograph on Twitter for several days. Effectively, the BBC's coverage simply contributed

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to building public awareness of the image and helping it be distributed further. The choice of a tweet by the Irish journalist to contextualise the photograph in the BBC Magazine news text just underscored further how much weight is given to journalists users in selecting what content makes the grade for collaborative newswork. As is perhaps to be expected, often this is content created by fellow journalists.

In a BBC Trending story published on 10 September, a photo by BBC correspondent Manveen Rana was featured for 'going viral' on Twitter. The photo was described as showing a policeman hugging a Syrian toddler near a crossing in southern Serbia and the news text was framed as discussing why the photo attracted so much social media attention. The headline of the news text said: " Why this picture of a migrant child being hugged went viral." In the title the photo of a BBC journalist was contextualised as pertinent in the eyes of the public. The first six paragraphs of the news text described the scene and quoted Rana on what she witnessed at the border crossing putting the spotlight on her as the reporter.

In the fifth paragraph, Rana is quoted on the Twitter reaction she received to the photo from Serbians. In the seventh and eight paragraph, some of the tweets from Serbians reacting to the photo were published without identifying the users and the report claimed that echoes of the Balkans War were the reason why the images resonated with many. Despite the headline's promise, the public debate was not given prominence in the news text. Rather, the focus was firmly on the BBC correspondent and the material she produced, making her the main subject of the report, while social media discussion independent of her was buried far down in the article. The fact of the social media reaction itself was again framed as the reason why the images were worthy of special coverage on the BBC's own platform.

In the BBC coverage, marketing the 'buzz' around the social media content created by professional journalists, and especially that around BBC reporters, was found to be a core element of their social media newsgathering routines. Social media was not only a reporting tool, or a newsgathering tool but also an important promotion tool. While publishing news content through social media platforms is a part of almost every news organisation's distribution strategy, it was the reciprocal relationship between news organisations and individual reporters in the marketing and distribution of their own content that stood out in the findings.

Although interactive newsgathering using Twitter was less prominent in the France 24 sample, one of its own reporters' Twitter activity was at the centre of several news reports. In a text headlined "The journey to exile notebook'", three France 24 correspondents reported on joining refugees on their trip along the Balkan route to central and western Europe. The text features a photo of the reporters at the top and presents a diary running from 31 August to 4 September that concludes with a feed to one of the reporter's Twitter account, @Fernande_VT, embedded at the bottom. But her Twitter activity and a link to her account is already featured in the lead of the news text. While the France 24 texts also includes some of the images shared on Van Tet's Twitter account, most of the report appeared to have been produced exclusively for France 24's online website. In the most part the Twitter account featured different content from that presented on the website and the cross-over between the two was less evident than in news texts by the BBC featuring their own correspondents' tweets. Twitter served mainly as a tool to diversify news content distribution and the reporter was partly tasked with distributing their own coverage in tandem with their organisation

highlighting their newswork. Like the BBC, France 24 used Twitter as a one-to-many broadcasting platform where the journalist takes on responsibility of broadcasting their own content directly to audiences without the intermediary of the newsroom and its editors. Therefore, the attraction to tune into this journalist is dependent on the appeal of her news content. As news audiences source their own content on particular issues, the news organisations tried to push their own correspondents into the limelight and assume the role of a one-person new outlet. However, as news organisations seek to protect the professional routines and practices in order to distinguish themselves from amateurs, encouraging audiences to follow correspondents on a platform where their reporting bypasses newsroom routines, also undermines professional boundaries. Journalists are expected to embody established practices and routines without the structures (ie. the editor and copy editor) that are responsible for implementing them. Aside from acting as a reporter, the journalist acts as representative of their profession on Twitter, assumed to be acquiring authority and a high reputation by doing so.

Al Jazeera did not carry out this type of promotion of individual journalists as sources for news audiences. In one report (Phillips, 2015), Al Jazeera journalist Barnaby Phillips described his week on a refugee rescue boat in the Mediterranean. The report featured a photo Phillips had tweeted looking out over the sea from a cabin but while Phillips recorded his experiences on Twitter, the report did not mention his Twitter account or activity there nor cited the social media platform as the origin of the photo. In short, the report was mainly a conventional news report of a journalist reporting from the field without any special mention given to his social media activity.

Hungarian camera woman

Many of the news texts promoted professional journalists by introducing them, naming them and actively encouraging audiences to follow them. In one instance, though, it was the disappearance of the journalist from the news content they provided that appeared to emphasise the value of the independent observer. This image of independence and apparent autonomy is often embodied by the foreign correspondent, who supposedly lacks ties and subjectivity and is therefore free to report events as they really are.

A short video by a German reporter and shared on Twitter became the focus of several news items by each of the news organisations, revealing the hierarchy within the profession. The footage itself was filmed by a correspondent for German TV broadcaster RTL, while the subject of the footage was Petra Laszlo, a camerawoman for Hungarian news outlet N1TV. In the footage, she is seen tripping up a male refugee carrying a child as hundreds break through a police line at a collection point in Roszke. The video was the focus of four BBC news texts, four France 24 news texts and two Al Jazeera news texts, making it a particularly prominent piece of social media-sourced content. Unlike the previous examples of prominence given to journalists' coverage, the source of the footage received no special mention, except in the attribution of the footage. There was an inversion of the trend to give greater importance to journalist personalities, whereby he assumed the traditional representation of the professional journalist: impartial, objective, invisible.

While local reporters were mostly absent in the journalist user group of all three news organisations, the news texts involving this video were particularly focused on scrutinizing

and commentating on the camerawoman's local Hungarian media outlet. Laszlo's employer was given prominence and always described in terms of its political affiliation. Description of N1TV ranged from "Internet-based television station close to Hungary's far-right Jobbik party" (Agence France Presse, 2015), "It supports anti-immigrant party Jobbik" (BBC, 2015) to "part of the far-right Jobbik party's media empire" (AJPlus, 2015). By stressing the link between N1TV and Hungary's ruling anti-migrant Jobbik party, the news texts devalued the camerawoman as an independent and impartial observer and the video itself clearly displays her bias. Laszlo is relegated to a servant for anti-immigrant demagogues. In other words she was shown as embodying the worst traits of journalism. Falling from the privileged position of the decent journalist, she became the manifestation of the public mood – neither objective nor impartial – and was widely condemned as deviant. In France 24's Media Watch programme Laszlo is even described as "a bit of a hate figure of the European press". The Media Watch programme shows that what is at stake in the editorialising of this news events were journalistic values and the professional code of ethics. Both the overt political affiliation of her news outlet and her personal intervention in the news event break drastically with professional journalistic practices. By becoming the story, Laszlo is framed not just in terms of the moral value of her actions – tripping up a refugee carrying a child – but what it means to be a good journalist. This makes the treatment of the camerawoman in the news texts a stark example of how deviance, and the exclusion it implies, were applied and reinforced in boundary work (Carlson and Lewis, 2015).

Contrary to the aforementioned examples of journalists' social media content being used to promote the individual, the journalist in this case was the fly on the wall. In all of the news texts, he was neither seen nor heard allowing his content to appear objective and impartial.

And it was in this role that professional journalism was vindicated, and specifically the value of the foreign correspondent as independent observer. A journalist who will overtly help the police during a news event cannot be perceived as independent and much less as 'speaking truth to power' as the enduring myth of professional journalism states. The presence of foreign correspondents to cover the fate of refugees was therefore seen as elemental to covering the refugee crisis appropriately as they were the untarnished and impartial observers that could discover and report the truth as a public service.

Although the source of the content remained largely out of view in the coverage, his ability to grab widespread attention on social media was cited as a reason for the mainstream media attention. The video was framed within the context of 'going viral' online and eliciting a 'global public outcry'. Again, it was the reaction by social media users that was used to explain the broad coverage of the video, and which ultimately led to the firing of the camerawoman. Professional journalistic values were vindicated first through the 'global public outcry' and finally through the exclusion of Laszlo from the profession. The sacking of the Hungarian reporter contributed to boundary work in professional journalism, not just through reinforcing the ethical code of the profession but by also implying that professionalism is intact.

Alan Kurdi

On 2 September the lifeless body of a Syrian toddler was discovered washed up on a beach in Turkey. The boy, Alan Kurdi, drowned along with his mother and brother when their boat capsized. Photos of the boy were widely shared and discussed on social media before being

splashed across front pages and news broadcasts around the world. All three organisations ran several news texts about his death.

It was Turkish photojournalist Nilüfer Demir (2015) who captured the images that went on to go around the world but was given no special mention alongside the iconic photographs. Instead, it was the tweeting of three of the photographs by the Human Rights Watch emergency director Peter Bouckaert that became the subject of a number of news texts. Bouckaert, was categorised in the data set as an expert source. Arguably this is only partly applicable as he can be said to be independent but not disinterested given his position inside an advocacy organisation. However, in this case his bias is considered to be outweighed by his perceived independence. Both Al Jazeera and the BBC cited Bouckaert directly in their coverage. Although France 24 also covered the images extensively in their news coverage it did not cite him explicitly in any of it.

Research (D'Orazio in Vis and Goriunova 2015) tracked the spread of the images on Twitter after initial Turkish news reports featured several photos of the tragedy, including four of Alan Kurdi. The first tweet[34] that showed the toddler lying face down in the surf at Bodrum was published by Michelle Demishevich, a Turkish journalist and activist. While a small number of Twitter users from Greece and Spain shared the photos as a result, the audience remained mainly in Turkey before several users in the Middle East picked up on the images and began tweeting them. Bouckaert, who was based in Geneva, was identified as the first user to tweet the images with considerable impact outside the MENA region. However, while his tweet was retweeted hundreds of times, it was in fact the Washington Post's Beirut Bureau

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[34] The tweet was could not be accessed at time of writing.

Chief, Liz Sly (@Lizsly) who's tweet about Kurdi really stood out as the most widely spread globally with over 7,000 retweets. Nevertheless, Bouckaert was cited in news texts both by Al Jazeera and the BBC. A comparison between how both organisations used this source shows substantially different approached and representation of Bouckaert.

In an Al Jazeera video report, Bouckaert was interviewed about how his tweet went viral and asked what his personal response was to the impact that his tweet had. His involvement in the spread of the images were reflected in a positive way, and presented as a catalyst for change in public opinion about the migrant crisis. As such he was presented as a source of the photographs. A BBC news text cited Bouckaert as the author of a blog post explaining why he decided to tweet the photos of the dead toddler. Both of the reports focused on the ethical questions around the sharing of graphic imagery. The interest in Bouckaert was framed in the context of i) his ability to reach a large audience with his tweet and ii) the timeless issue of ethics in photojournalism with regard to the portrayal of death and victims of violence.

Al Jazeera:
Bouckaert was interviewed for an episode of Al Jazeera's Listening Post published on 12th of September about how the photos of Alan Kurdi shifted public opinion to become more sympathetic towards refugees. In it, Bouckaert described how he felt about the impact that his tweet had.

The almost seven and a half minute report starts with describing the anti-refugee stance of the Hungarian government and much of the country's media coverage before claiming that the photos of the boy had a profound effect on how Europeans viewed the refugee crisis.

> *Narrator:* However, a single tragedy captured by a lone photographer on a Turkish beach undermined their arguments and shifted the debate as well as the news coverage. The photographer works for Turkey's Dogan News Agency and her images went global after they were tweeted out by Peter Bouckaert of the NGO Human Rights Watch.
>
> *Bouckaert is shown at a laptop simulating typing the tweet that was so widely shared*
>
> *Bouckaert speaks to camera:* I wasn't surprised that it went viral on Twitter. I had expected that. I was taken aback by the fact that so many people came out on the streets and said, 'enough is enough. I'm going to do something to make sure these refugees get to Germany.' Two thousands drivers in Austria alone drove into Hungary to pick people up and I think that's a very beautiful reaction.

The report then continues with interviews with a lecturer at Goldsmiths, University of London, about the symbolism of the photos and a Hungarian journalist arguing that it is important for these types of images to be shown. The Al Jazeera report focused on the ability of a non-journalist, in this case an NGO worker, to make a profound impact on public opinion and galvanise civic engagement with his tweets. There is a positive representation of this kind of public speech as he is framed as empowered to reach potentially huge audience and have a real-world impact. The ethics of the publication of the graphic photos becomes the subject of the report. The viewpoint that is presented is one that is supportive, arguing that it is necessary to depict the gruesome reality that migrants face in order to provoke a public response.

BBC

In a BBC Trending report headlined "Alan Kurdi: Has one picture shifted our view of refugees?" a hyperlink leads to Bouckaert's blog post explaining his reasons for sharing the images.

3. Is it even right to share this image?

The BBC has chosen to publish only one photograph of Aylan, in which he is being carried by a Turkish police officer and is unidentifiable. However, several news organisations have published more graphic images of the boy.

Image copyright AP, Image caption The boy's lifeless body was captured in a series of images released by a Turkish news agency

On social media there was a similar debate about what purpose was served by retweeting or sharing such a graphic image. A **blog post** by human rights watch was widely shared, arguing the image being shared might influence European leaders. But **many others** urged people not to share the image, as it was too heartbreaking and graphic to take in.

Figure 17. Extract from BBC Trending report 'Alan Kurdi: Has one picture shifted our view of refugees?'

In contrast to Al Jazeera, the BBC took a more critical approach to the decision to tweet the images and implicitly questioned the ethics of sharing graphic photos of a dead child. Preceding the extract featured above was a section in the news text describing calls by the toddler's aunt to share images taken of him when he was still alive. In response, photos taken when the boy was still alive were tweeted, especially by journalists (Vis 2015). A tweet by an American journalist of one such photo, said: "Aylan Kurdi, the 3 yr old who washed up at

Antalya and captured the world's attention, as he should be remembered:". The BBC frames the issue as a discussion on the ethics of anyone sharing the images and positions itself as authoritative voice in shaping that discussion on what it means to act ethically in the alternative news environment of social media platforms. The broadcaster also used this discussion to set itself apart from other news organisations. The photos had in fact been taken by a photojournalist and were originally published by a professional news outlet, followed by many other news organisations around the world. So, whether intentionally or not, the BBC did not only argue against the widespread sharing of the photo by non-journalists but by professionals as well, reflecting a struggle to dominate in defining professional conduct in the global news flow on two fronts.

Bouckaert is not mentioned in the report by name and his blog to explain his motives for the tweet, which was widely seen as contributing significantly to the spread of the image, is summed up in one sentence and no quotes. It is positioned between calls for sharing photos showing Alan alive, the BBC's own editorial position on what is ethically right, and a hyperlink to a tweet criticising the spread of the graphic photos. The blog post is not primarily represented to discuss Bouckaert's views or considerations of ethics but contributes to constructing the BBC's argument on publishing the photo. It presents the BBC as having taken the views expressed in the blog into account in its own editorial decision, while also distancing itself. The final say on what is deemed ethical lies with the news organisation reinforcing its position as authoritative. The social media debate about the images is taken as a cue to provide transparency about editorial decisions that validate professional practices. The fact that Bouckaert and other social media users are sourced for a news text that reflect on an ethical debate in news coverage is particularly interesting as they ultimately serve as

representing 'the other' to professionalism and also draws on the idea of deviance. Since the professionalisation of journalism was characterised by the emergence of a code of ethics and a code of practice, the text can be read as a reflection on how the BBC's coverage of the image is of a higher value than the distribution of the images by thousands of users. The blog post is used as a means for the BBC to explain how it considered different sides of the argument and to claw back authority as a leading voice in defining the ethics of how such sensitive material should be presented to a news audience. In this scenario Bouckaert's voice and reasoning, as expressed in his post, carries much less weight than in the Al Jazeera news text. However, I argue that as a means for showcasing deviant behaviour it was not nearly as successful as the video of the Hungarian camerawoman, because the position among all three news organisations differed in this case. The BBC took a different position, not only against the social media habit of non-journalists but against their peers, revealing the difference inside the professional group that could easily seem like a power struggle among news professionals.

The Al Jazeera report also addressed the issue of ethics but in a way that focused on galvanising a public reaction that would force political change. Bouckaert's decision to tweet the images taken by a Turkish journalist, is supported by a Hungarian journalist, who is also interviewed for the report. He says: "We must share these kind of pictures. Without them we cannot truly understand this refugee crisis. In the last couple of weeks the intense tragic developments did affect public opinion in a positive way. No longer is the entire narrative focused on the imagined danger that the refugees pose." The sympathetic approach to Bouckaert's voice and message, and positive reflection of the impact that tweeting of the images had on media coverage and politics, is consistent with the Al Jazeera's overall

approach to represent itself as facilitator of social media debate and discussion, that gives such voices prominence. Engaging in a form of activism, Bouckaert represents the empowerment of individuals to spread messages through social media. If nothing else, the case of Alan Kurdi's death showed that universal ethics in journalism can be evasive and the struggle to define them are not only between news organisations and non-journalists but inside the circle of professional news organisations as well.

What about Bouckaert's identity as a user? Bouckaert straddles two identities; those of expert and activist. Expert, through his work for a human rights NGO, and activist for the same reason. Above that, he shares characteristics of the professional elite journalist that may have qualified him as an appealing source. He filled the journalistic role of simply reporting information sourced from elsewhere and capitalising on the influence he yielded on Twitter to distribute it. Overall, like many of the elite journalists he was an outsider to the events and reported on them from afar. In a way he became a gatekeeper, or rather a 'gate-opener', as his personal involvement in spreading the message was central in precipitating a public outcry. Despite the Washington Post correspondent's much wider reach in tweeting about the toddler, it is Bouckaert that gets to speak about making an impact with his tweet in the report. He is both different from journalists but clearly a polished communicator who can adopt the role of an accredited voice. His identity is not so wildly different to those that audiences would be used to that it was easy to integrate him into some of the coverage as an equal user. Therefore, the extent this really reflected a greater involvement and access to non-journalists, even by Al Jazeera, is debatable

Palestinian pen seller

The blogger tweeting under the handle @GissiSim was one of the few citizen users who attracted enough media attention to become the main source of several news texts by both BBC and Al Jazeera. According to his website, gissisim.com[35], the man behind the account is Gissur Simonarson, a web developer and consultant living in Oslo. He also runs the Conflict News website ("About Conflict News," n.d.), an independent news website that gathers and curates social media content from conflict zones. On 25 August, Simonarson tweeted photos he obtained showing a Palestinian man from Damascus selling pens on the streets of Beirut while carrying his sleeping daughter. The tweet received a huge number of retweets and elicited a surge of commentary on social media platforms. In response to the public interest that the photos generated, Simonarson set up a crowdfunding campaign for the man and set out to track him down. Through his network of social media connections, he was soon able to locate the man and present him with the money that was raised. In both the BBC (Fig. 18) and the Al Jazeera (Fig. 19) news texts the content was presented as an example of the power of social media as a tool to generate public action which will have a real-world impact.

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[35] No longer available at time of thesis submission

Figure 18. BBC Outside Source tweet about the Palestinian pen seller

Campaign raises $130,000 for Syria refugee family

Picture of desperate man selling pens in Lebanon's streets with daughter inspired online fundraiser that has gone viral.
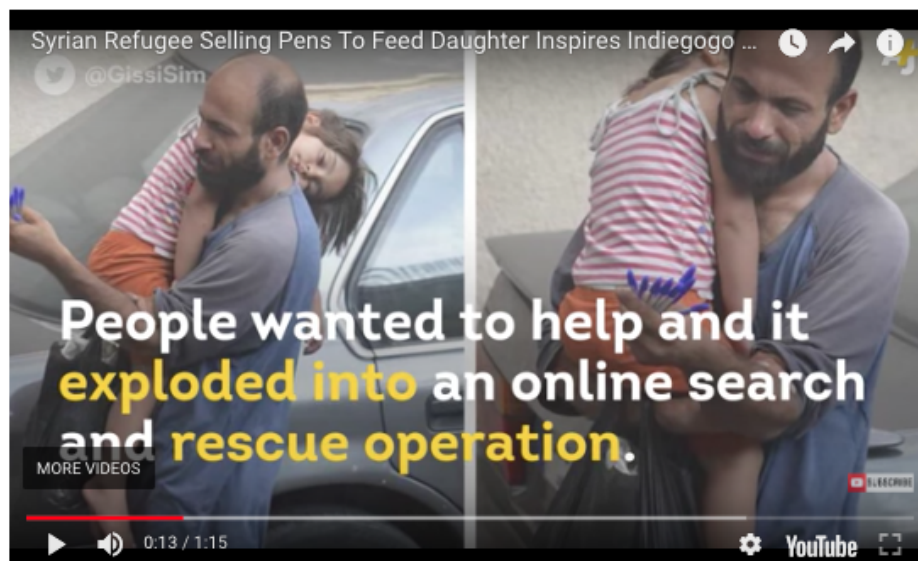

Figure 19. Al Jazeera news text on Palestinian pen seller

Simonarson was acting as a private citizen but he has some common characteristics with a foreign correspondent in that he too had an outsider status. He was personally unaffected by the Syrian conflict and had no obvious personal interest, which reflects the idealised impartiality of professional journalism. There was a sense of purity in his actions. On the other hand, his efforts to find the man in the photos in order to present him with the money gathered through his crowdfunding campaign moved him into an area of activism meaning that he did become personally involved. His appeal as a source may therefore have been in his identity as impartial observer and distributor of information, which brought him in line with journalistic ideals. The photos are presented as visual quotes of an unbearable situation which Simonarson framed in his social media posts and managed to distribute to a wide audience. What followed from this position of impartiality in a situation far away, were emotions of empathy that led to acts of altruism.

Both the BBC and Al Jazeera treated Simonarson quite differently as a source in their news texts. In the BBC texts he was given the space to speak about his crowdsourcing experience and was given similar prominence to the aforementioned journalists, whose images went viral on social media. The Al Jazeera coverage focused on the subject of the photos, Abdul Halim Attar, and the impact his unexpected fame on Twitter and the crowdfunding campaign had on his life. Attar's own personal experiences were framed in a wider discussion of how Syrian refugees lived in Lebanon (Fig. 20), while Attar was also given room to express what he planned to do with the money and help he received. The social media source for this news story therefore directly led to another source to emerge. In this case, the social media content was a way to reach those individuals with the least opportunity to communicate to large news

audiences. So, while the BBC coverage ended with the blogger given a greater platform to be

heard by BBC audiences, the Al Jazeera coverage used him primarily to reach another source.

Figure 20. Image taken from Al Jazeera video report on the Palestinian pen seller

An interesting contrast emerges between the coverage by the BBC and Al Jazeera in this

example and the previous one of images shared of Alan Kurdi. While Al Jazeera gave voice

to Attar in this case, it gave voice primarily to the NGO director who was partly responsible

for the spread of the photos of the drowned toddler, while ignoring calls by Kurdi's aunt not

to share the graphic images. In fact, an entire video report was dedicated to justifying the

spread of the images. Kurdi's aunt, who was reported as living in Canada, was not

represented.

On the other hand, the BBC relegated HRW director Bouckaert's voice on his reasons for

sharing the images to a link to his blog and without mentioning him by name. Kurdi's aunt's

stance was used show the debate generated around the ethics around sharing graphic images.

Her call for people to share images of the boy when he was still alive, chimed with many

western journalists, among whom the use of graphic imagery in news reporting is often deemed more problematic. In both cases, the debate was centred around ethical issues of spreading the images and in both cases the organisations used sources to prop up their own stance.

Al Jazeera's claim to give 'voice to the voiceless' is framed as reflected in sharing photos of the ultimately voiceless; the dead refugee child. The reasoning is that not to show the tragic outcome of this little boy's journey to reach Europe would be to silence him and the thousands of others who drowned trying to make the crossing. By the same token, the BBC's reason for citing Kurdi's aunt and several journalists attempting to counter the spread of the photos with images of him alive fell in line with upholding western journalistic ethics.

In the case of the pen seller, Attar was arguably far more marginalised and voiceless than the tech-savvy and comparatively affluent web developer and blogger Simonarson. Except for the fact of his tweets drawing attention to the plight of Attar and his family, he was not given much space to speak in the Al Jazeera coverage, while his Twitter activity was used to direct the focus on its subject. The BBC's focus on the blogger over the subject of the photos he shared, instead throws the focus on the perceived impartial distribution of news content by an outsider and how this can spark positive public engagement with a real-world impact. Despite the use of a citizen user by these two news organisations, the representation of Simonarson's social media material underscored the overall trend found in the sourcing practices in the quantitative analysis whereby Al Jazeera focuses its social media newsgathering to source content that is seen to offer a platform to marginalised individuals and groups, while the BBC emphasises entrenched professional routines. Simonarson's treatment as a high-impact source

in his interview, similar to that of some BBC journalists, suggests under certain circumstances some non-journalistic unaccredited sources can cross the boundary between blogger and established mainstream media but that the characteristics of such a user overlap with those of a professional.

The Kempsons

A video report by France 24 Observers documented volunteers helping refugees arriving on the Greek island of Lesbos, which was one of the busiest arrival points for refugees coming to Europe. The report featured the Kempsons, a British couple living on Lesbos, who were heavily involved in raising awareness about the plight of refugees on the island and put out calls for donations through their social media accounts. The 12-minute report features Julien Pain, a France 24 journalist, visiting the island to interview the Kempsons and follow them as they help new refugees arriving on the island. People interviewed in the report are sometimes identified with graphics as seen below, mentioning their Twitter handles, where available.

Figure 21. Screenshots from the France 24 video report about the Kempsons showing Twitter handles of individuals shown in the report.

The report also features several short interviews with refugees as well as ordinary Greek residents. In the context of this research the Kempsons were categorised as citizen users, and they were counted among the Facebook users and Twitter users in the samples but most of their material was published on Facebook. One of the themes is the Kempsons' use of Facebook to mobilise aid and other support, although none of their actual social media content is featured. Nevertheless, it becomes clear that it was their social media activity that raised their profiles as users of interest for a news report. The repeated mention of the Kempson's Twitter handle accompanying their interviews shows news audiences how they can follow the couple and perhaps respond to their calls for support. Together with the

interviews and the glimpse into their voluntary work, the couple are framed as a legitimate source for updates on refugees' lives on the island.

A number of other sources emerged from the interview with the Kempsons, including refugees, Greek residents on Lesbos and the mayor of Lesbos. Of course, all of the organisations in this study featured reports interviewing these types of sources throughout their coverage. Nevertheless, in this particular news text, the Kempsons' ability to attract mainstream media interest through their citizen journalism and activism on social media was also found to lead to the inclusion of voices with the least ability to gain representation in mainstream media.

Summary

The comparatively diverse use of social networks in collaborative newsgathering in this case study compared to the previous, showed that platforms were used to gather different types of content. While Twitter was used to source 'opinion makers' that are more traditionally elite, Facebook was used almost exclusively to source citizen users and to represent the public mood or opinion. However, professional journalists remained those with the greatest source power overall and Twitter was still the dominant platform for collaborative newsgathering. While platforms host different types of users and it would be wrong to assume that Twitter necessarily results in the prominence of elite source. Al Jazeera maintained its focus on citizen users across platforms, setting it apart from the BBC and France 24 approach to social newsgathering. The migrant crisis was a news event where news organisations could easily dominate given the inaccessibility of many of the locations to ordinary citizens. For France 24, this meant that it used relatively few Twitter users, rather relying on its own reporters to

produce online news text that followed traditional formats. At the BBC, in-house journalists were promoted as reputable and authoritative voices on Twitter for audiences to follow.

Discourse on ethical content and ethical behaviour in journalism was found across all three news outlets, showing that they were all involved in boundary work (Carlson and Lewis, 2015). For example, the BBC attempted to assert its authority and set itself apart from other news organisations and ordinary users. While discussions of ethical codes attempted to increase authority, the discourse around the use of the photos of Alan Kurdi showed there was no consensus on what these codes are. This, in turn, undermines a claim to professional practices as news organisations and journalists diverged so significantly in their views (Hanitzsch & Vos 2017). Professional routines and norms were validated and at times explained through non-professional users at the BBC, while Al Jazeera used their own sourcing routines primarily to back up its claim to inclusion. As a result, the ethics debate also highlighted the fissures that undermined notions of professionalism versus amateurism.

7. Battle for Aleppo: sanctioning amateur journalists

Few news events have seen media activists and citizen journalists relied on by the professional news media to the extent seen in the Syrian conflict. Since its start in 2011, large amounts of multimedia material and other information found in international news coverage originated from networks of citizen activists and fighters, who shared eyewitness material and updates via social media platforms (Wall & El-Zahed 2015). As Reporters Without Borders called it the deadliest conflict for journalists, the Syrian war was characterised by a notable lack of professional journalists on the ground. By March 2017, the NGO recorded 211 journalists and citizen journalists killed since the start of the war (Reporters Without Borders 2017). Analysis of news texts by the three news organisations in November 2016 examined how professional journalism negotiated the reliance on amateur sources with the requirements of professional routines.

Eastern districts of Aleppo, Syria's second largest city, had been under rebel-control since 2012. In the summer of 2016 the Syrian army and its allies launched a major offensive to cut off supply routes and regain control of the areas. On November 15, a one-month moratorium on Russian air strikes in northwestern Syria came to an end and a major air and ground offensive resumed to seize control of all of Aleppo from an alliance of armed opposition fighters within a month. In mid-November an estimated 250,000 people continued to live in the east of the city and the vast majority of the information that emerged from rebel-held areas originated from a little more than a dozen citizen activist and rebel sources. In the almost complete absence of professional journalists on the ground, social media platforms

such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were used extensively to distribute high-quality multimedia material and breaking news updates from within eastern Aleppo. The period investigated spanned eight days from 15 to 22 November, covering the resumption of fighting in Aleppo after a period of relative calm. During this time air raids by the Syrian army made headlines on an almost daily basis. News coverage was dominated by reports of hospitals targeted across eastern Aleppo, which prompted the World Health Organisation (World Health Organization, 2016) to condemn the air strikes.

Timeline

From 15 to 22 November 2016

- **15/11**: A moratorium on Russian air strikes on rebel-held areas of Aleppo ended and air raids on northwestern Syria resumed
- **16/11**: BBC reported a children's hospital in eastern Aleppo was struck.
- **18/11**: Al Jazeera reported another air strike on a children's hospital in eastern Aleppo while one of their news crew was inside the facility.
- **19/11**: The World Health Organisation reported all hospitals in eastern Aleppo had been put out of service by the fighting

The period investigated started with the end of a one-month moratorium on airstrikes by Russia, which led to a renewed push to retake eastern and southern parts of Aleppo from armed opposition groups. The offensive lasted a month with opposition-held areas fully brought under Syrian army control by mid-December.

Sample of news texts

News texts published by all three news organisations were gathered by the same method as in the other two studies – both through the organisations' online archives and the specified Twitter accounts. All relevant texts spanning the eight days from 15 to 22 November were then analysed for social media-sourced material and all texts without clearly identifiable content originating from these platforms were disregarded. Based on some of the news texts in the sample, it could be confirmed that both Al Jazeera and AFP had journalists of their own inside east Aleppo. In one interview, a BBC Arabic editor said that the organisation was relying mainly on citizen journalists and state media. However, the BBC also had at least one correspondent in Syria at the time, although it was not clear if they were in Aleppo. Nevertheless, all of the three outlets used social media content extensively. This type of content often captured events at the heart of the fighting in areas that would have been the most dangerous to access. Therefore, news organisations were not able to rely on their own reporters to provide coverage, excluding amateur journalists, without missing some of the most important information and multimedia material to come out of the conflict. This meant news organisations were forced to integrate reporting by amateurs into their coverage, at times creating entire news texts solely sourced through such social media users.

Unlike the previous two case studies, it was more difficult to ringfence the social media sources found in the texts. On the one hand, most of the coverage about the Syrian war relied heavily on social media users. On the other hand the platforms, or even the users, where the material originated was often not explicitly stated. Moreover, the news texts investigated in this case study built on years of news coverage, much of which was also influenced by

activists sharing material on social media but which was impossible to capture in this data set. Therefore, it was not possible to trace back all of the information supplied to its original source. In order to keep the study as focused as possible, the news texts reflected in this sample explicitly cited specific sources that were known to have primarily used social media to reach mass audiences. The inclusion of these sources was based on the assumption that the news organisations would have become aware of them initially thanks to their use of social media platforms. However, relationships fostered with these sources overtime may have led to some of the supplied information or content being sent directly to the news organisations.

Similarly, it was not possible to separate the sources by platform in many of the cases as the users, the vast majority of them activist and citizen sources, used several platforms to share the same content and hyperlinked from one platform to others or cross posted the same content on several platforms – for example, on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube or their own blogs.

	BBC	F24	AJ
15.11	@BBCWorld BBC.com	AFP	
16.11	@BBCOS BBC.com BBC.com BBC.com	France24 (Reuters) France 24 AFP	aljazeera.com aljazeera.com
17.11	BBC.com	France 24	Aljazeera.com @AJPlus
18.11		AFP France24.com	aljazeera.com
19.11	BBC.com	AFP AFP AFP	Aljazeera.com Aljazeera.com @AJEnglish

20.11	BBC.com	AFP AFP	Aljazeera.com Aljazeera.com @ajplus Aljazeera.com
21.11	BBC.com (First broadcasted in September)	france24.com	Aljazeera.com
22.11	BBC.com (possible short clips of UGC)	AFP AFP	Aljazeera.com Aljazeera.com Aljazeera.com

Figure 22. Sample of news texts covering the Battle for Aleppo

Quantitative Analysis

Source power and identities

Over the sample period all three news organisations published numerous news texts about the renewed fighting in Aleppo. Al Jazeera produced 19 news texts about Aleppo of which 15 contained multimedia material, photographs and text originating on social media. France 24 published 23 news texts of which 14 contained social media-sourced content. The BBC produced 11 news pieces, all of which contained some social media-sourced content. Included in the BBC sample was one documentary entitled 'Inside Aleppo'. The 45 minute video had been first published in September but was republished by the BBC on 21 November. As such, France 24 had the greatest share of news texts without any obviously identifiable social media-sourced content, followed by Al Jazeera with almost a quarter of news texts that did not rely on interactive newsgathering. The prominence of social media-sourced content in the coverage throughout the period shows the extensive reliance on amateur and citizen-journalists, who were often but not always described as 'activists' by the

news organisations. The vast majority of social media sources were therefore framed as having civic qualities.

As already mentioned, the vast majority of sources were neither professional journalists nor conventionally authoritative or accredited sources but rather citizen journalists and media activists, publishing content on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. In the context of Aleppo, this group also included search and rescue volunteers, medics and opposition fighters as well as fighters aligned with the Syrian army. The sources were not always fully identified in the news texts. While France 24 and AFP attributed reports by such sources consistently, BBC and Al Jazeera often simply referred to 'activists' or 'medics'. On some occasions, Al Jazeera also blurred logos that identified the sources of amateur media. This made it difficult to gain a comprehensive list of the sources used in the sample. However, it mostly remained possible to identify these sources as originating on social media and the user group they belonged to. In some instances the exact source were identified through searches of amateur material released in the period investigated.

Sixteen different sources could be identified in the BBC coverage, which in total provided information or multimedia material 35 times. In addition there were 14 references to sources that could not be identified. This is not to say that there were an additional 14 sources as some of these, or even all, may have been the same as those that were identified and attributed in the news texts. Al Jazeera referenced 15 identified social media sources a total of 67 times. A further 19 references were made to unattributed sources. France 24 sourced content from a total of 18 sources 49 times with no references to unidentified sources. Quantitatively, the greatest source power was found among sources that were clearly

sympathetic towards opposition fighters in eastern Aleppo. Given the difficulty in access to the rebel-controlled areas this is unsurprising. Fig. 23 shows six sources were successful in gaining entry to the professional global news flow through the BBC, France 24 and Al Jazeera. They comprised about a third of each organisation's attributed sources, showing the dominance of a small group of amateurs. However, cited most regularly by a considerable margin was the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), which was mainly run by a Syrian citizen-journalist based in the UK. He recorded death tolls and locations of fighting and air raids. Fig. 23 lists the most influential sources, meaning they appeared in news texts of more than one of the news organisations, while Fig. 27 lists the remaining sources that could be identified and their weight in the coverage of each of the organisations as measured through the number of times that they were sourced for different pieces of information.

	BBC	F24	AJ
Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) – Citizen journalist documenting number of casualties and reports of fighting through network of activists on the grounds	6	20	19
White Helmets in Aleppo- Network of search and rescue volunteers in opposition-held areas of Syria	6	5	15
Aleppo Media Center (AMC) – Pro-opposition media activists	3	3	6
HNN – pro-opposition media activists	4	2	2

Thqa – pro-opposition media activists	2	2	3
Independent Doctors Association (IDA) – Medics in opposition-held Aleppo	3	1	2
SMART – pro-opposition activists reporting through network from across Syria	1	3	(1)
Ibrahim Abu al-Laith – White Helmets spokesman		1	3
Local Coordination Committee (LCC) – Syrian network of anti-Assad activists	2		1
Russian Ministry of Defence		2	1
Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) – state media		1	2
STEP – pro-opposition activists reporting through network from across Syria	1	1	
Fatemah Alabed – citizens in opposition-held Aleppo reporting on events through Twitter	1		1

Figure 23. Most influential sources in Battle for Aleppo texts ranked according to number of mentions

By far the most influential source across all of the organisations was SOHR. Some of the

news texts in the sample of this case study relied overwhelmingly, even sometimes

exclusively, on the information provided by SOHR. For example, on 19 November, France 24 published an AFP report under the headlined "Regime bombardment kills 27 civilians in Aleppo: monitor". The first four paragraphs cited SOHR and their founder Abdul Rahman on the latest updates from the fighting in eastern Aleppo, while the remaining two paragraphs provided some background context about the offensive.

In an interview with the New York Times in 2013, SOHR founder Rami Abdul Rahman (a pseudonym), was reported to be working out of his home in Coventry, England, together with four other members inside Syria, collating reports of death tolls from a network of 230 activists across the country (MacFarquhar 2013). According to the same report, he fled Syria in 2000 over anti-government activism after two of his associates were arrested. Profiling the group in the early days of the conflict in 2011, the BBC described it as apolitical in nature. However, at the same time it was also explicitly in favour of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad stepping down.

> It now has more than 200 members and affiliates, covering every province in Syria, with some volunteers aggregating and publicising information from the UK.
>
> Those in Syria work to confirm casualty reports of people that have come from activists or been cited in the media, checking with family members, witnesses or medics on the ground.
>
> As foreign journalists are unable to operate freely in Syria to verify reports themselves, the media are increasingly reliant on such information.
>
> The group says it is impartial in its reporting, recording the deaths of soldiers as well as civilians and protesters. (Lang 2011)

The New York Times described the means by which Abdul Rahman gathered death tolls in the following passage:

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Activists in every province belong to a Skype contact group that Mr. Abdul Rahman and his aides tap into in an effort to confirm independently the details of significant events. He depends on local doctors and tries to get witnesses. On the telephone, for instance, speaking in his rapid-fire style, he asked one activist to visit a field hospital to count the dead from an attack.

With government soldiers, he consults contacts in small villages, using connections from his youth on the coast among Alawites, the minority sect of Mr. Assad, which constitutes the backbone of the army.

Mr. Abdul Rahman has been faulted for not opening his list up for public access online, but the world of nongovernmental organizations gives him mostly high marks. (MacFarquhar 2013)

The reported methods by which the group gathered the death tolls were similar to how news media and journalists may have gone about collecting such information. Further, the question of impartiality was addressed the New York Times article as well as the BBC report through the claim to record deaths on both side of the conflict. Despite Abdul Rahman's personal history as a dissident who fled Syria, both reports laid out his work as attempting to remain a neutral source amid the fighting. Given the notion of impartiality as a cornerstone of professional journalism practice, it lent authority to SOHR as a source.

In a war where access was extremely limited for professional journalists, some of the work traditionally done by them was effectively outsourced to amateurs. Stories and passages such as the ones above created some transparency about the work processes and routines of SOHR, thus helping legitimise it as a credible source. They also serve to separate the partisanship from the work that was produced by describing norms and methods that lay claim to a separation of factual truth and subjective bias. However, the opaque network of the group meant that most information about how information was gathered came from the

founder himself. While the lack of transparency may be attributable to concerns for the safety of volunteers gathering information, it remains clear that an activist source with a wide network of amateur sources, which by the BBC's own account the media had become increasingly reliant on, was referenced consistently for updates on death tolls in fighting, and became a quasi-authoritative source for such information. The SOHR took on a prominent role in the news coverage as a source that had adopted journalistic norms and values, especially with regards to impartiality and accuracy. As such it was seen as carrying out acts of journalism instead of citizen activism, the latter of which, through its partisan nature, presents a greater barrier to entry into the mainstream news flow. Frequently, it was referred to not as 'activist' but as 'monitor' across all three news organisations, implying a detached and disinterested character.

The second most influential source was the White Helmets. It shared the same amount of influence as the SOHR in the BBC coverage and provided content in at least 15 cases in the Al Jazeera coverage over the eight days. The group (also known as the Syrian Civil Defense) comprised a network of search and rescue volunteers active across opposition-held areas of Syria. It also presents itself as an impartial and neutral civil society group but also states that it only operates in areas outside of the Syrian government control. On the group's website it described itself as follows:

> The volunteers save people on all sides of the conflict – pledging commitment to the principles of 'Humanity, Solidarity, Impartiality' as outlined by the International Civil Defence Organisation. [...]

> The White Helmets mostly deal with the aftermath of government air attacks. Yet they have risked sniper fire to rescue bodies of government soldiers to give them a proper burial.

Bakers, tailors, engineers, pharmacists, painters, carpenters, students and many more, the White Helmets are volunteers from all walks of life. Many have paid the ultimate price for their compassion – 204 have been killed while saving others.

As well as saving lives the White Helmets deliver public services to nearly 7 million people, including reconnecting electrical cables, providing safety information to children and securing buildings. They are the largest civil society organisation operating in areas outside of government control, and their actions provide hope for millions. (White Helmets, n.d.)

The voluntary amateur nature of the group places it among the citizen user group, while the claim to impartiality aligns it with qualities sought out by news organisations to fit with professional routines and practices. This group published high quality videos, images and updates from Syria's different provinces across multiple platforms, including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Over the course of the conflict, the social media activity of this group became increasingly sophisticated. In addition to its main social media accounts that published content pulled together from its volunteers across the country, there was a second tier of social media accounts designated to specific provinces that shared content only from these areas. Local social media accounts from Aleppo, for example, published content only specific to Aleppo. Some of this material was republished by the overarching White Helmets social media accounts. This resembled a centralised media network with local outlets responsible for the reporting of events on their doorstep. A number of spokesmen for the White Helmets also had a strong social media presence, operating their own social media accounts. In its structure, therefore, the White Helmets' citizen journalism outlets resembled that of news networks or the communications operations of large NGOs. Navigating the sites and tracing back the origins of the content to specific locations was made reasonably easy with members of the White Helmets, such as Ibrahim Abu al-Laith (Fig. 23), found personally giving interviews to news outlets.

Other citizen journalists ran similarly sophisticated media operations through designated YouTube, Facebook and Twitter accounts, ensuring that content, much of which was audio-visual material, was publicised widely. Titles of videos and keywords in tweets made content easily searchable and identifiable, usually containing the name of the neighbourhood, city and date. Logos of different citizen journalist groups, such as the Aleppo Media Center (AMC), Halab News Network (HNN), Thiqa, and others meant that videos were easy to identify as originating from these users, and ensuring that news organisations could trace videos back to the source in their verification process. In addition to the logo, a feature of White Helmets videos was to show its members dressed in their distinctive uniform, eliminating doubt about who the footage showed. Aware of the requirements of news organisations for reliable information, citizen journalists took great care to make the videos as accessible as possible, with a clear labeling format that was replicated across different citizen journalist groups.

Despite a relatively small sample of identifiable social media users (ranging between 16 and 18 sources) used by all three news outlets the crossover of sources between them was significant. All three organisations had at least six sources in common, all of them citizen journalists, activists, and voluntary organisations of medics and rescue workers. For each news organisation, this represented more than than a third of their social media sources. Another seven sources were found in the coverage by two of the three news organisations.

Only two of the sources in Fig. 23 were not citizen journalist or civil society groups. These were the Russian Ministry of Defence and the Syrian state-media outlet, the Syrian Arab New

Agency (SANA). Both were sourced through social media channels significantly less than some of the other users. However, these sources were cited many more times in the total sample of news texts across all of the news organisations but those references were eliminated from the study as it could not be conclusively traced back to originating on social media platforms. Information originating from SANA is likely to have been mostly sourced through its website, while the Russian MOD had more traditional channels to disseminate their information to news media such as through press releases, press conferences as well as their website.

The social media users with the most source power were typically outside government-controlled areas as well as often partial to the cause of anti-government activism. However, at the same time there was an effort made to present themselves as impartial in their reporting. Those users with the least source power were, though active on social media, the warring parties (Fig. 24). These sources' overt interest in presenting their side of the story may have meant that they were not deemed suitable except in exceptional cases, whereas the other sources' self-presentation as quasi media outlets fit more easily with journalistic routines and practices.

BBC	France 24	Al Jazeera
Unknown opposition activists and citizen journalists (14)	*Jabhat Fateh al-Sham* Opposition fighters (2)	Other unidentified opposition activist (15)
THA opposition media activists (1)	*Modar Shekho* Nurse in Aleppo (1)	*@AlabedBana* Young girl living in Aleppo (6)
SHAM Front Opposition fighters (1)	*Syrian Democratic Forces* Opposition (1)	Pro-Assad activist footage (2)
Basel Ibrahim Media activist	*@UNReliefChief*	*Syrian Army* (2)

(1)	United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (1)	
Seraj Aldeen AlOmar Member of opposition media activists *Al Buraq Media* (1)	*Milad Shahabi* Opposition media activist (1)	Unidentified 'health' official cited (1)
Ahmed Hashisho Member of opposition media activists *Al Buraq Media* (1)		*Boffle Spoffel* Citizen (1)
Basem Ayyoubi Opposition media activist (1)		Pro-Assad militia (1)
		Free Syrian Army (1)

Figure 24. Sources with least source power in Battle for Aleppo texts ranked by number of mentions

Textual Analysis

16th of November

Textual analysis of three news texts published on 16 November across the three news organisations analysed the difference in how the BBC, France 24 and Al Jazeera framed activists. Albeit a limited sample, it aimed to investigate the power-relationship established in the texts between activists and journalists, and activist and other sources.

BBC

Fig. 25 shows 10 stills from a BBC video report titled "More airstrikes on Aleppo". The order of the selected stills are indicated by the number in the top left corner. They display the entire
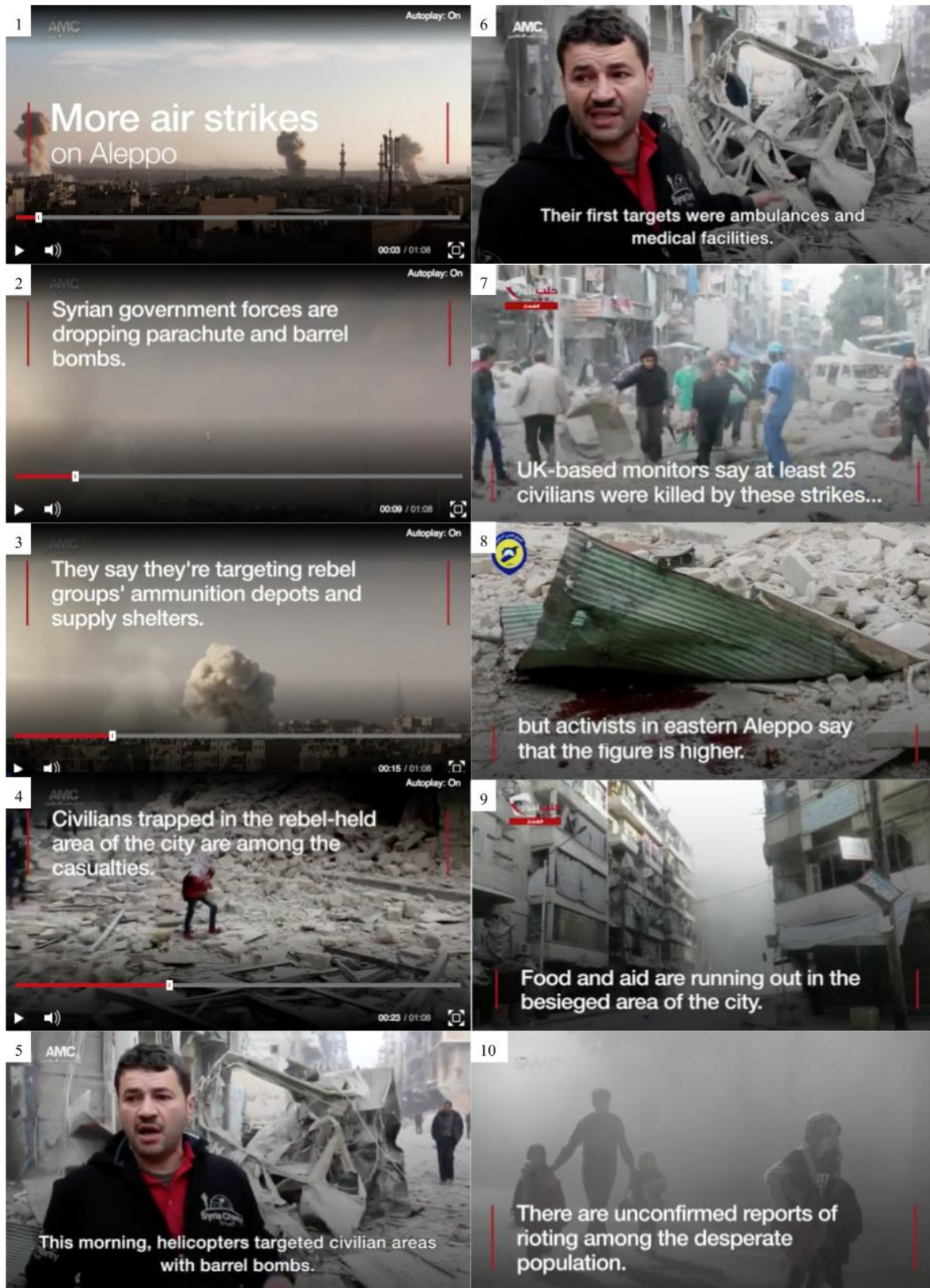
Figure 25. 'More air strikes on Aleppo' by BBC on 16.11.2016

written text that was overlaid onto the footage. The first image sets the scene with footage of bombs dropping onto buildings described as located in eastern Aleppo. It was sourced through the Aleppo Media Center (AMC), one of the most popular pro-opposition citizen journalist groups that recorded and publishing multimedia material (see Fig. 23). Against these images as backdrop, the report cites Syrian government and army sources claiming to be targeting the depots of rebel fighters in their air strikes. It then cuts back to the AMC framing the attacks as targeting civilians with video material and interviews. Footage shows young girls walking through rubble and a short interview with one man wearing a jacket imprinted with the words 'Syria Charity' – a Paris-based non-profit, according to its website – describing the targeting of "civilian areas with barrel bombs" and "medical facilities." Subsequently, the report cites SOHR and other activists. The AMC footage is reinforced with further audio-visual material from another three pro-opposition citizen journalist groups – Halab News Network, White Helmets, and SMART. In this news text example the information provided by the Syrian authorities is presented only to be delegitimised in the narrative constructed by citizen journalists. The activists' claims remain unquestioned in the absence of other independent reporting and are reproduced through the piecing together of content produced by east Aleppo's pro-opposition citizen journalists, be that high quality raw video material, interviews, casualty counts and other reports providing information on the fighting. However, notably absent in this content were the opposition fighters as citizen-journalists frame the conflict almost exclusively in civilian and humanitarian terms. Fig. 25 also shows one example of how these pro-opposition sources are legitimised more than others. The perceived credibility of the opaque information gathering by the SOHR is boosted with a reference to its casualty count that is described as conservative compared to that given by activists on the ground. The implication being that the rigorous verification

practices carried out by SOHR may play down the true death toll. This creates a tier system of trustworthiness, with SOHR framed as the most trustworthy, while activists may be somewhat less precise but can be relied on for journalistic material nonetheless.

France 24

"Syria: Russia resumes air strikes in rebel-held East Aleppo after ceasefire" was a video report published by France 24 on the same date. In Fig. 26 the audio narration is transcribed on the right and descriptions and sourcing of the video material is detailed on the left. This textual analysis shows that France 24 relied on a much broader pool of sources, many of them fitting Hall et al's conventional primary definers with pro-opposition citizen-journalists as an alternative view that contributes but does not extensively shape the overall narrative.

Video material	Reporter narration
Jets taking off from an aircraft carrier (Source: Russian Defence Ministry, YouTube)	Taking off for battle, Russian carrier jets take off to pound opposition targets in Syria.
Footage of cruise missile being launched from aircraft carrier. (Source: Russian Defence Ministry on social media)	For the first time, Moscow is using its only aircraft carrier in combat alongside cruise missiles from its naval frigate.
Footage of Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu briefing Russian President Vladimir Putin. (Source: Media or official Kremlin footage)	*Interpreter translation of Shoigu*: [...] cruise missiles were launched from the Admiral Grigorovich frigates to hit predetermined targets. Separately Bastion coastal missiles have been launched to hit targets deep into the Syrian territory.
Military aerial footage of strikes on targets. (Source: Russian military)	Russia kept silent about targeting Aleppo saying its offensive was aimed at the Islamic State group and the Al Qaeda

Footage of ground rocket launch. (Source: Unknown)	affiliated al-Nusra front in rebel-held Idlib and Homs provinces. Moscow claims no Russian nor Syrian jet has bombed Aleppo's Old City in the past 28 days.
Video of column of dust rising from buildings. (Source: Aleppo pro-opposition citizen journalist group Thiqa on social media)	Three weeks of relative calm was shattered the same day Russia launched its offensive as dozens of air raids pounded opposition-held eastern Aleppo.
Footage filmed in rubble and dust suggesting recent bombing or shelling of the area. (Source: White Helmets on social media)	Residents of the besieged neighbourhoods believe Moscow's escalation of the violence is just a prelude to a major ground operation. Syrian state TV reported that regime troops were preparing to attack from nine directions.
Footage of tanks rolling down a road. (Source: Unknown) *Footage of opposition fighters' tanks and rocket launchers firing. (Source: Jabhat Fateh al Sham on social media)*	In the last four weeks opposition fighters have rejected repeated Russian offers of humanitarian pause in fighting to leave the city.
Video of rubble-filled roads and bombed out buildings (Source: Pro-opposition citizen journalists AMC on social media)	No aid has entered the area since July. The UN warns that a quarter of a million people trapped in the city's rebel-held east are facing mass starvation.

Figure 26. 'Syria: Russia resumes air strikes in rebel-held east Aleppo after ceasefire' by France 24 on 16.11.2016

Compared with the BBC report, pro-opposition citizen journalists' power to frame the narrative was curtailed by France 24 reporters through the inclusion of competing narratives by other sources. A large and leading part of the report was framed by Russian military and government sources, reproducing their narrative of fighting extremists in Syria. The initial 50 seconds of the report – just over half of the total length – shows footage of military hardware,

a military briefing and aerial footage of an air strike. The emphasis is placed on the military aspect of the conflict and the image created by these sources is a largely sanitized one. The inclusion of footage by opposition fighters showing the firing of rockets and tanks also put the focus on the conflict as two opposing armed sides. Furthermore, the pro-opposition citizen journalist narrative – focused on emphasising the civilian cost – is framed not just as the outcome of Syrian regime and Russian military action but contextualised as also resulting from opposition fighters' refusal to accept a ceasefire. This narrative is wholly absent from the citizen-journalist controlled BBC report. On the other hand, the Russian claim that their military is not targeting Aleppo is called into question by the content produced by citizen-journalists which created a counter-narrative that asserts Russian involvement. Competing narratives are presented to the news audience throughout the report with the opportunity for different actors to reframe and contest each others' claims. Unlike in the BBC report (Fig. 25) pro-opposition citizen journalists could attract the attention of the France 24 producers and succeeded in relaying their claims but this was not uncontested and they were not dominant in framing the overall news text. As such, citizen-journalists were not carrying out the journalists' work in overwhelmingly producing the news text but were treated primarily as sources. The power to select and contextualise the different sources and material comprising the news text remained far more evidently in the hands of professional journalists. The wide selection of sources to counterbalance one another also implies the lack of impartiality by each actor that requires representation of different sources to produce a more notionally balanced news text. By contrast, the BBC news text saw responsibility for reporting on events abdicated to citizen-journalists to the point that it incorporated an interview staged by them.

The Al Jazeera video report on 16 November gave significant framing power to pro-opposition citizen-journalists. Fig. 27 also breaks down the audio narration on the right and stills from the video material on the left with information about its sourcing detailed beneath them. As seen in the BBC video report, citizen-journalists were dominant in the framing of the news text but unlike in the BBC news text, their message was largely mediated through the narration of an Al Jazeera journalist. Although BBC journalists selected the material and reports for their news text, in many ways this content was left to speak for itself appearing to show a low level of mediation by professional journalists. By comparison, the Al Jazeera news text is heavily mediated through narration, albeit sympathetic of the citizen-journalists' framing. Moreover, the blurring of the logos identifying the source of the activist material used implies a sense of ownership and responsibility adopted by Al Jazeera for this material. The line separating Al Jazeera's own content from that of pro-opposition citizen-journalists is blurred as activists are more deeply integrated into the news text. The narrator reported the claims and reports of citizen-journalists as their own without attribution.

Video material	Reporter Narration
 (Source: White Helmets)	There's panic on the streets of Aleppo. Places like Al-Ferdous neighbourhood are few areas where rescuers can still reach

 (Source: White Helmets)	Scores of people have been wounded in the latest round of attacks.
 (Source: White Helmets)	These are some of the most intense air strikes by the Assad government's jets in three weeks.
 (Source: White Helmets)	Elsewhere in the city, when the suffocating dust and smoke settled, the destruction became clear.
 (Source: White Helmets)	This is the Haderiya neighbourhood. One of the nine areas which came under attack in the besieged city of Aleppo.

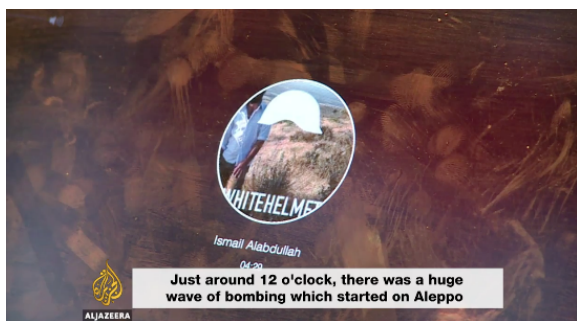|	
 (Source: Unidentified activist)	This man in the Hanano neighbourhood says barrel bombs targeted this area. He tried to save a little girl here but she died.
 (Source: Unknown)	Suheil al-Hassan is an important leader of the Assad military. His troops say they're ready to take the city of Aleppo.
 (Source: Al Jazeera)	We spoke to one of the rescuers who was unable to go and help others. *Al Jazeera reporter:* "Ismael tell me where you are and what is happening around you."
 (Source: Al Jazeera)	*White Helmets spokesman Ismail Alabdullah:* "What's happened, just around 12 o'clock, there was a huge wave of bombing which started on Aleppo city targeting many neighbourhoods, actually all the neighbourhoods. I was trapped in my apartment until now, and maybe in a few minutes I will try to go there"

 (Source: Syrian state TV but originating from Russian Ministry of Defence)	The attacks in Aleppo were timed with Russian strikes on Idlib and Homs. Pro-government TV uploaded this video, which it says was shot just before the Russian aircraft carrier Kuznetsov was used for the first time. Russia's defence ministry says it will be targeting [Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant] positions and Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, a group formerly known as al-Nusra Front. Many see this as Russian muscle flexing of its military might.
 (Source: Unknown)	Since last year, the military support for the Assad government has turned the tide and reversed opposition gains.
 (Source: Al Jazeera)	*Reporter:* "Rebels say they are being attacked by Syrian, Russian, Iranian and Lebanese forces. People in the city of Aleppo say they knew these attacks were coming but could do little to prepare and as world leaders have failed to provide a solution the people of Syria continue to suffer."

Figure 27. 'Syria war: Aleppo pounded by air strikes as pause ends' by Al Jazeera on 16.11.2016

For the first 38 seconds (of 2'05") video material is largely provided by the White Helmets. The reports by its members' and other pro-opposition citizen-journalists is cited throughout without attribution even though the only Al Jazeera journalist seen in the footage is located across the border in Turkey's city of Gaziantep. Mediated through the journalist's voice it

conveys a sense of objectivity – a problematic but persevering value of professional journalism (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007; Muñoz-Torres, 2012; Skovsgaard et al., 2015). In fact, the news text illustrates citizen-journalists becoming primary definers as they provide the majority of the information, while also merging with secondary definers – the news media – as they adopt the role of the reporter themselves. Al Jazeera's news text is the starkest example of the break-down of the separation between citizen-journalism and professional journalism as the two are not only in a symbiotic relationship with one another but the division becomes all but invisible. By contrast the BBC provided the platform for the narrative and content of citizen-journalists to be reproduced without adopting the same extent of responsibility and ownership of this material. Afterall, such sources were typically described as *activists* – a term that implies strong partisanship and runs counter to notions of the Anglo-Saxon media model's emphasis on neutrality and impartiality. As such it fell short of attributing full professional journalistic values to these sources despite efforts to legitimise them for the purpose of the news coverage. Nevertheless, at the same time, these sources were presented as providing journalistic work and the BBC became strongly reliant on them. In fact, the term 'activist' did little to diminish these source's value, if not, in fact, elevated it.

Claim to Impartiality

Sources are typically not expected to be impartial. In fact, most of the sources listed under Hall et al's (1978) primary definers are political actors, social institutions and civic groups with interests that at times compete and at other times are aligned. The only exception is the expert, whose value lies in their perceived disinterested expertise. However, notions of impartiality lie at the heart of journalism practice, as most journalists pride themselves at

least on applying routines designed to provide impartiality and a level of autonomy that enables their work to be untarnished by interest groups (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2007). Therefore, it is particularly noteworthy to see impartiality mentioned in relation to these sources, suggesting they are viewed not only as journalistic sources. In the absence of professional journalists on the ground, these users provided many of the components of the news coverage, in terms of audiovisual material and news updates. While the news coverage often did refer to pro-opposition citizen journalists as activists, the White Helmets were also referred to by the more neutral term of *medics*, while SOHR was frequently referenced as *monitor*, suggesting a disinterested character. These sources were therefore partly legitimised through the appearance of neutrality. Furthermore, while the term 'activist' was used frequently to describe pro-opposition citizen journalists, this did not prevent them from receiving a prominent role in many of the news texts, and often being cited in the first paragraph.

Below are the first paragraphs of two of the BBC news texts:

> Syrian opposition activists say at least five people have been killed after Syrian government aircraft bombed rebel-held
> eastern Aleppo. (BBC, November 15, 2016)

> At least 25 people have died in a third consecutive day of Syrian government air strikes and shelling on rebel-held
> parts of Aleppo, activists say. (BBC, November 17, 2016)

On 16 November, the BBC published a news text entitled "Aleppo: Mother films bombing from rooftop". It featured the footage of Fatemah Alabed, a woman living in Aleppo, filmed from a rooftop showing the bombing of buildings as she spoke into the microphone. The entire text was contextualised by the BBC only through the headline and the following accompanying paragraph: " Fatemah Alabed is an English teacher living in East Aleppo – she

has three children. Standing on her rooftop, she filmed the scene as Syrian jets resumed their bombing of the city after nearly a month's break." Initially, Alabed attracted the interest of mainstream news media through a Twitter account allegedly used by her seven-year-old daughter Bana for tweeting her experience of the war. Located in the opposition controlled area of Aleppo, the tweets painted an emotional picture of living under threat from bombardment. In November 2016, the account, @AlabedBana, had more than a quarter of a million followers.

While Alabed said she managed the account, sometimes tweeting her own updates, others were described as sent by her daughter. All of the tweets were sent in English, prompting some to question the level of influence and control yielded by adults in what Bana posted. Regardless, Alabed's obvious attempts to reach large audiences together with her daughter through their savvy use of technology attracted the interest of mainstream media and
arguably put her into the role of an activist. In the news text "Aleppo: Mother films bombing from rooftop", a huge level of control was placed with Alabed in producing the news text, with only minimal amount of input by BBC journalists themselves. In the short paragraph, the BBC reference to Alabed as a mother and resident of Aleppo, suggests a more neutral role as citizen witness. The text does not reference the means by which she came to the news media's attention – primarily through the Twitter account in her daughter's name portraying the conflict as the Syrian army attacking vulnerable civilians — a child, in this case. Other video reports also relied overwhelmingly, if not exclusively, on footage provided by citizen journalists.

To a large extent, the coverage from inside eastern Aleppo was placed in the hands of extremely social media savvy users, who did much more than simply act as a source. Instead they stepped into the role of the journalist themselves, which explains the tendency to legitimise their voice through the values of professional journalist routines. As the BBC at times attributed professional practices to such users, elevating the value of their content, it created room for these users to provide the news coverage that was hard to obtain through other means. And yet, by assuring that methods of newsgathering and reporting by these users was coherent with professional practices, it did so without undermining the value of professional routines as a whole.

However, attempted impartiality is generally at odds with the role of the citizen journalist. For example, blogs, a popular forum for citizen journalists before social media truly came into its own, have been specifically described to "not follow the canons in factchecking, seeking out alternative or opposing views, or attempted impartiality" (Halavais 200, p.: 29). Other content analysis studies of citizen journalism have also shown it not to hold true to professional understanding of objectivity (Carpenter 2008; Paulussen & D'heer 2013). Despite attempts to bestow the values of professional routines on some of the citizen journalism used, the BBC clearly grappled with the contradictions and sought to address potential criticisms of imbalance in the news coverage created by the dominance of pro-opposition citizen journalists. Speaking on the BBC Outside Source programme on 16 November, presenter Nuala McGovern asked a BBC Arabic journalist about the reliance on 'activists' in the news coverage of Aleppo. This interview followed directly after a 2 minute and 15 second segment in which McGovern interviewed a member of the White Helmets. McGovern introduces the White Helmets interviewee as located in the Turkish city of

Gaziantep but in contact with other volunteers in Aleppo, presenting him as a spokesperson for the organisation. The interview then goes on to discuss the alleged casualties of overnight air raids attributed to Syrian and Russian forces, with the interviewee stating a precise number of warplanes and helicopters. During the interview McGovern probes her interviewee about the origin of the information.

> *BBCOS presenter*: Where do you get your figures from? Who tells you who has died?
> *White Helmets spokesman:* Our teams. Syrian Civil Defense teams. As you know, we are the only one responding to the attacks. So we have about 120 volunteers inside eastern Aleppo city.

The answer is noteworthy for three reasons. Firstly, words such as 'responding' and 'volunteers' suggests an altruistic dimension to the group's work akin to that of nonprofits. The use of material provided by NGOs in news production has long been normalised with non-profits adopting a media logic that mimics journalistic norms in order to increase their chances of mainstream news media integrating such material in their coverage (Cottle and Nolan, 2007; Fenton, 2009). However, news organisations themselves form "new legitimating rationales" (Wright 2014, p. 396) around their dominant moral values that gives preference to some non-profits over others. Research into the use of NGOs' multimedia material by mainstream news reporting on Africa, found the BBC World Service "blended ideas of 'public service journalism', including notions of 'impartiality' and 'balance', with a Reithian approach to the educative purpose of media consumption; and an 'African service ethos' which privileged representing 'ordinary Africans'" (Wright 2014, p. 397). Similar legitimating rationales are extended to the use of citizen-journalist material from Aleppo that blurs the lines between how to identify these actors – it is not clear if they are seen wholly as

NGOs or citizen-journalists. While the answer above emphasises the voluntary non-profit nature of the group, for whom a framework of legitimation already exists through perceived execution of journalistic routines, it also plays on the notion of 'ordinary citizens' on the ground to provide independent reports. Therefore, attempts to legitimate the reliance on these sources combine the argument of impartiality with the representation of 'ordinary citizens'. By stressing the voluntary nature of the work done by the White Helmets, combined with a wide network of 120 members, it implies a level of independence and autonomy by these actors who are presented as not beholden to the organisation for financial gain and able to report truthfully what they see and experience. However, perhaps most glaringly, the interviewee states in his pitch for his organisation that the BBC have little choice in who to source their information from. Therefore, in a further attempt to legitimate the reliance on such sources, notions of balance are discussed in the subsequent interview segment between the BBCOS presenter and the BBC Arabic journalist.

> *BBCOS presenter:* Do we always have to rely on activists that are there? Is it ever possible for reporters to get in, in this particular instance and what's happening with air strikes?
>
> *BBC Arabic journalist:* It is very problematic for the reporters to go there actually because either they go with the one part, either they're embedded with the Syrian regime troops and these will show you what's happening in the western part or you go embedded with the Free Syrian Army let's say or Jabhat al-Nusra, Jabhat Fateh [al-Sham]. Now, and this is a problem as you will see what's happening in the eastern part. This situation is very loaded in terms of sectarianism, very loaded with terms of political division. It's very hard and difficult in a devastated situation like in Aleppo – in all Syria, actually. Activists are one source erm, ah of the sources, as well as the official line. So we try to balance and listen to both stories. (BBCOS, November 11, 2016)

Noteworthy is that the threat to journalists' safety in accessing areas of conflict in Aleppo is not addressed directly in the interview despite it being perhaps the most compelling practical

reason for the lack of on-the-ground reporting by professional journalists. Rather surprisingly perhaps, the argument being made is that on-the-ground reporting in this instance has become redundant due to the volume of information released by both sides. The interviewee mentions "political divisions" and "sectarianism", along with the need to embed reporters on either side, as reasons why the potential work done by them would differ little from the information already emerging from the conflict. The barriers facing journalists in assuming an autonomous and impartial role once embedded with a warring party have been made by veteran war correspondents such as Patrick Cockburn, who writes, "Journalists cannot help reflecting to some degree the viewpoint of the soldiers they are accompanying. The very fact of being with an occupying army means that the journalist is confined to a small and atypical segment of the political-military battlefield." (Cockburn 2010) As Cockburn asserts, one of the main flaws of the practice of embedding is that journalists come to view the conflict only in military terms missing the broader picture . Nevertheless, there are also defences for the practice as "[a]ccompanying armies in the field is usually the only way of finding out what they are doing or think they are doing." (ibid. 2010) Criticisms of embedded journalism typically reflect the view that it provides a limited and controlled view of a small section of a conflict that is not necessarily reflective of the wider picture and sees journalists turn into spokesmen for the military (Al-Kindi 2004). The practice is tainted by journalists' instinctive sympathy for those they are reliant on for their safety, leading to a symbiotic relationship – as demonstrated by Gordon Dillow's account of embedding with US Marines during the Iraq war (Dillow 2003). Nevertheless, a survey of embedded journalists in the Iraq War have still found them to view their role as beneficial to journalism (Fahmy & Johnson 2005). This view was dependent on the understanding that their main task was simply to reflect a narrow and

incomplete view of the conflict that could contribute to the broader picture when complimented by the work of non-embedded journalists.

The idea that embedded journalists do little more than the public relations work of the army they are embedded with has also been contested. Reviewing the practice of embedding journalists with the US military, Buchanan (2011) argues that there are push and pull factors that can lead the media and military interests to diverge. The media's reliance on ratings and audiences means ultimately they are not entirely beholden to the interests of the military and will seek out more autonomy and independence when viewers tire of the dominant narrative. This paints a much more complex picture of the benefits and drawbacks of the practice of embedding journalists than what the BBC Arabic journalist concedes in the interview. Arguing, as he does, that journalists would merely be used as pawns by the warring parties, he suggests that balanced reporting can be obtained by simply weighing up the information released by opposing sides. The burden and responsibility of reporting is then shifted onto actors in the conflict and activists on the ground while their information is 'managed' by BBC journalists in remote newsrooms. Reverting back to the pro-opposition activist users relied on so heavily for the news coverage, they are much more than mere sources but relied on and legitimised to do the actual work of journalists. Moreover, as professional journalists are distanced from the events they are tasked with covering they become less able to contextualise events independently, leaving activists and citizen journalists to fill not just the gap of reporter but also of expert. As such they emerge as primary definers through their supposed expertise, while their reporting role, together with their means to create high quality multimedia content, defines the narrative and framing of events. His explanation does leave one question open, which is supported by the cited research and argues that while embedded

journalists may only be able to provide a narrow view of conflicts from within their relatively controlled space, it can contribute to more complete coverage when read in tandem with coverage by other journalists. Therefore, the BBC could have embedded journalists on either side to build up more balanced reporting but chose not to likely due to the increased targeting of reporters by insurgents, the rise of which was already recorded in conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq (Buchanan 2011, Cockburn 2010), and were also a hallmark of the Syrian conflict. However, explicitly acknowledging this state of affairs may have undermined the representation of pro-opposition activists and citizen-journalists inside rebel-controlled districts of Aleppo as carrying out acts of journalism compatible with valued professional practices, especially with respect to notions of impartiality and autonomy. Media activists' freedom to report from east Aleppo while the area remained too dangerous for many reporters at least raises questions about their interest in controlling the emerging narrative.

The BBC's claim to balance by sourcing information from both sides is not supported by the data set, which shows an overwhelming preference for pro-opposition social media users. In fact, all of the social media users identified in the sample were sympathetic to the rebels. Syrian army and Syrian state media were cited in the news texts though their content was not primarily distributed through social media and therefore is not part of the sample studied in the research. Nevertheless, only one of the news texts analysed led with the information released by the Syrian government or a source sympathetic towards the Syrian government. The remaining news texts all led with activist sources, or juxtapose activist sources with pro-government sources creating a frame that undermines the latter.

Objectivity

Above all else, the findings in this case study raise questions about the autonomy of news organisations in the newswork. Where does the treatment of openly partisan sources as journalist-like leave the objectivity norm? Objectivity as a normative practice in journalism emerged in the early part of the 20th century and is based in a scientific approach (eg. see Janowitz 1975; Shoemaker & Reese 1996) to determining an objective truth about events that are deemed newsworthy. "The objectivity norm has been the means employed by journalists to convince receivers that they produce reliable and valid descriptions of reality. This legitimating function has made objectivity a beacon which guides the work journalists do – when they select, collect, and present the news." (Skovsgaard et al. 2015, p. 24) The claim to objectivity has been criticised on several counts but nevertheless the ambition to report objectively persists as a cornerstone of professional practice. One obvious flaw is the inherent subjectivity of the individual that critics argue reduces objectivity to an unachievable ideal. Nevertheless, the development of normative practices in journalism sought to create a method which removed journalists' subjectivity from the output of their work in order to permit a claim to neutrality and objectivity. Emphasis was put on the practice not the individual and what was developed was "[u]nity of method rather than aim" (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007: 84). By recognising the inevitability of personal and cultural bias, a code of practice allowed subjective individuals to produce work that was not just deemed objectively true, but also permitted subjective views to be argued in a manner that would stand up to scrutiny. Therefore, the objectivity norm did not only set out to report in a neutral way but also to allow a method by which arguments could be formed. By emphasising the manner by which sources produced their information rather than the beliefs, views and motivations of the sources themselves, the BBC, for example, could present the SOHR as a reliable source despite the founder's personal history as a dissident. In short, the description of his impartial

methods served to legitimise him as producing valuable journalistic work. The discussion of the sources' newsgathering practices served to lay claim to a commitment to professionally sound, approved practices[36].

However, the claim to objectivity evidently still remained an issue for the news organisations, judging by the loaded term 'activist' frequently used to describe the users that much of the reporting was effectively outsourced to. As the objectivity norm diminishes in news content with the spread of amateur and citizen-journalism (eg. see Carpenter, 2008), news organisations are at pains to elevate their value through claims to professional practices. Therefore, another method of legitimising their reporting was with the claim to providing balance – another professional practice aimed towards producing objective reporting (Shoemaker and Reese 1996, p. 15). In this case, the role of the news organisation itself was emphasised to argue it met the requirements of professional practices. In the BBC Outside Source interview, for example, a claim to balance was made by arguing readers were provided with the different sides of the story through information released from both anti-Assad and Syrian government and military sources. By producing 'balanced' reporting, meaning a range of opposing views are represented and heard, journalists adopt a passive role in creating meaning. Rather than steering audiences through value judgements made by journalists, audiences are provided with an array of information from which to form their own opinions. Balance through the mere presentation of opposing voices, however, is not considered sufficient to provide good reporting. The claims made by them have to be scrutinised and critically engaged with to test them for validity (Ryan, 2001; Skovsgaard et al., 2015). Only then can audiences reach informed conclusions. Therefore, journalists are

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[36] Despite much academic research providing evidence to the contrary.

still called on to do the work of gathering hard facts and considering opposing claims and arguments. In terms of social media-sourced content that clearly dominated news coverage of events in east Aleppo, these hard facts could in most cases not be obtained independently through journalists reporting as detached observers from the ground, or from what would constitute an independent source. Aside from the data showing a preference for pro-opposition activists in sourcing multimedia material and news updates, suggesting balance of viewpoints was often not achieved, critical engagement with sources was almost impossible. This risked reducing coverage to unverifiable claims and counter-claims.

The departure from the objectivity norm in online news was already predicted by Bruns (2003) who argued that gatewatching, rather than gatekeeping, would become the method by which information is vetted and distributed to wider audiences. As news organisations grappled with their obligation to produce coverage in line with their professional standards while outsourcing much of the reporting to amateurs, the gatekeepers ultimately became gatewatchers, choosing which sources would be elevated to prominence for their audiences. Bruns (ibid) argued that interactive newsgathering will make objectivity an obsolete ideal and normative practice. With the abundance of information available online the onus is no longer on a limited number of news outlets to produce objective journalism. Rather, the information saturation rather than scarcity means gatewatching replaces gatekeeping. Hereby, groups of "online librarians" survey relevant and reliable information emerging and point those seeking this information towards it.

> Online news operations are therefore not primarily charged with an obligation to report objectively and impartially, or to work to a set amount of column inches or airtime, but rather with the task of evaluating what is 'reliable' information in all the topical fields they cover. Due to the abundance of potential news sources in the

networked environment of the World Wide Web, such information evaluation becomes a critical task, and for many online newsgatherers their role is less similar to that of the traditional journalist than it is to that of the specialist librarian, who constantly surveys what information becomes available in a variety of media and serves as a guide to the most relevant sources when approached by information-seekers. This 'librarian' position contrasts markedly with that of the traditional ideal of the 'disinterested' gatekeeper-journalist – instead, Internet 'librarians' (if we accept this term for now) are usually personally involved, 'of the people', and partisan; they support the case of those seeking information rather than that of the information providers or controllers. (ibid)

Bruns is clear, however, that these librarians are not reporting, rather they are collecting texts. He predicted that newsrooms themselves will host a collaboration between traditional journalists and such gatewatchers. This integration of the gatewatcher into newsrooms is supported by the evidence in this case study. As the BBC Arabic editor himself suggests in the interview, journalists adopted primarily a gatewatching role, gathering texts released on both sides of the conflict. The news texts by France 24 and Al Jazeera showed a similar reliance on such material. In addition to carrying out the work of the gatewacher, newsrooms also relied heavily on other non-journalist gatewatchers such as the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. In this case study, in fact, the journalists largely abandoned their traditional role as those reporting the news but acted as the conduits through which other sources' information was distributed. Gatewatching was deemed sufficient to produce coverage to professional standards. The editor in the interview expressed a striving for balance that he asserts is provided by listening to voices on different sides of the conflict. While balance is generally not considered equivalent to the idea of impartiality and objectivity (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2007) the sourcing in news items also showed an extensive reliance on pro-opposition activists and citizen-journalists that, at least in the period investigated, did not support claims to balance. As Bruns argues though that the role of the newsgatherer is not to ensure impartiality, balance or objectivity in each text they help distribute further. Rather

gatewatchers help collect as wide a range of reliable texts as possible, which viewed as a

whole may provide the greatest and most up-to-date amount of information on a given topic.

However, in the case of the Syrian war, the ability to release information was arguably

limited, not least with regards to the technological means and know-how to produce and

distribute their own material in a way that made it widely accessible. The lack of

transparency in the sources themselves also meant that the "specialist librarians" – meaning

the newsroom editors using the content – had little means to assess the worth and reliability

of the texts. Implicit in the online news environment that Bruns describes is the expectation

of extreme diversity as well as freedom of speech, which replaces impartiality. Yet, again

there was no way to be sure that either such diversity or freedom of speech existed. As

veteran Middle East correspondent Cockburn (2016) pointed out, it seems implausible that in

an area largely off limits to independent journalists, citizen journalists would be granted any

autonomy to report independently[37]. This is not to argue that the reporting by activists was

without merit or accuracy but that the information released may have been tightly controlled

and incomplete.

As Hall et al. (1978) argue, creating authoritative and accredited sources is vital to satisfying

professional routines in journalism. This systematically implants bias in favour of these

sources into news texts as they are influential in deciding which issues are problematised and

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[37] Others have questioned widespread criticism of some of the activists reporting, specifically White

Helmets, uncovering a concerted effort to delegitimise the group through online campaigns (Solon,

2017). However, the issues raised here are not in reference to misinformation campaigns against the

White Helmets but rather how much the reporting done by the group can credibly be argued to step in

for the absence of independent professional journalists.

how they are framed and discussed. A number of activist sources achieved this position to the extent that they were elevated above sources that may have been more conventionally considered primary source such as the Syrian government or army. While the Syrian government was understood and portrayed as inherently biased, activists adopted a hybrid role of the disinterested expert/war correspondent, which gave them a powerful voice in the news coverage. By framing these sources in such a way, the news organisations managed to not only produce large volumes of news coverage on events that were practically off-limits but could use it as a chance to advocate for professional practices by bringing the issue to audience's awareness.

Summary

Holzscheiter (2005) differentiates between power *in* discourse and power *over* discourse. In this study, power in the discourse of the news event was often held by activists. This also largely held true of the power over the discourse as activists were almost the only sources who were able to report from inside east Aleppo. If the news organisations covered the events in east Aleppo, they had to relinquish much journalistic control to activists, who provided a large extent of the material that comprised the news coverage. However, power in the discourse of professional journalism in collaborative news production was dominated by the news organisation, and this was achieved through the admission of citizen journalists who were perceived to carry out acts of journalism according to professional norms. Therefore, the hierarchy of the concept of professionalism over amateurism was maintained through the legitimising of citizen journalists through professional norms.

Citizen activists oftentimes took on the role of reporters in the coverage of the Battle for Aleppo and were required to appear to adopt journalistic norms, such as impartiality (Yousuf & Taylor 2016), as well as a level of transparency around the origins of their news content (Andén-Papadopoulos & Pantti 2013). Although they were frequently described as 'activists', there was little discussion of what this term meant and especially in the BBC and Al Jazeera coverage was no barrier to heavily influencing the news narrative. As such citizen activists were very powerful not just as primary definers but also secondary definers as they were able to select what information and sources inside east Aleppo were given coverage. For example, they often gave prominence to images of the civilian cost of the conflict, while giving little insight into the military activity of the opposition fighters.

While the news organisations acted as secondary definers by providing access to the global news flow, media activists already possessed this access through social media alone. News organisations, in fact, had very little power to mediate these messages. The extensive use of news content produced by media activists and the legitimising of this content through the discourse of professional journalism meant they took on more than a simple primary definer role. In a collaborative news environment such as this, the news production by professional journalists could not be isolated from that of the citizen activist. While steps were taken to make news content accessible and valuable to mainstream news media the personal motivations, connections, circumstances and sources of citizen activists usually remained opaque. This differs from traditional ideas of primary definers such as ruling politicians. Primary definers, with the exception of the 'expert', are not deferred to for their perceived adoption of journalistic ethics and values. Whereas the Syrian regime, its state-controlled media and the Russian government were framed as biased with narratives that could be

contested by others, the framing of citizen-activists' content as providing impartial and

authentic reports framed them not only as more valuable sources but also as fellow

journalists.

8. Interviews: making sense of networked journalism

Interviews with editors at the three news organisations attempted to investigate the role that interactive newsgathering played in news production in each of the newsrooms. Analysis of the themes and issues raised by the editors in these interviews aimed to help me interpret the findings in the previous three chapters. The questions discussed revolved around the aim and purpose that was pursued with networked journalism, and what defined the rationale behind interactive newsgathering in professional newswork. Specifically, it explored whether news organisations acknowledged the use of social media-sourced material as a means to involve audiences and foster participation. Consistent with the methodology throughout the case studies, the interviews compared the organisations' perceptions of their use of collaborative newswork in the context of their respective media models and culture. Therefore, it compared and contrasted how editors responsible for defining the processes behind networked journalism were led by the media model of their organisation. In doing so, the interviews attempted to investigate the differences found in the case studies. To a large extent this meant discussing how professional routines were adapted to the practice of interactive newsgathering and explored power-relations between non-journalists and the news organisation. Most importantly, it sought to explore how editors viewed their role in managing these interactions. Since this research investigates the potential shift of power in who can influence and participate in the global news flow, the interviews sought to explore how the news organisations perceived their position in managing audience participation and to what end. A particular focus was placed on the process of gatekeeping and how routines were adapted to create hierarchy in source power. So, for example, did editors perceive

interactive newsgathering primarily as a way to gather information from accredited sources? Was collaborative newswork understood foremost as a means to engage audiences? Or was it perceived as a means for pooling – or crowdsourcing – information from peers in a fast paced real-time news environment? Particular attention was paid to the perception of audience participation in interactive newsgathering, which meant the participation of users that were not accredited sources or professional journalists. What role, if any, could they play in agenda-setting and how were they most likely to draw the attention of news organisations?

Exploring gatekeeping practices at the organisations was the main focus to determine the power-relationship created in interactive newsgathering. Therefore, questions asked included:

1. Has social media, in your opinion, broadened access to news coverage for specific groups over others?
2. What qualities should social media content possess to access the mainstream news flow?
3. What are the main impediments to the use of user-generated content in news coverage?
4. If you were to define how a citizen journalist or eye-witness was to most easily gain your attention with their content to have it covered, what would that be?

Interviews are an established method in journalism research and can serve to "explore and analyze the various ways in which [expert professionals] give meaning to their everyday work" (Deuze, 2005). The use of interviews assumes a degree of reflexivity in how professionals view the role of social media in newsgathering and news production. They were

considered a suitable way to investigate the editors' perceptions and intentions, and provided a means to investigate how these were reflected in the findings of the case studies. The findings of the case studies were used to explore how consistent the news texts were with how professionals rationalised networked journalism practices. In turn, this made it possible to investigate divergences between the findings in the case studies and the reflection on the use of collaborative newsgathering.

Questions posed to the interviewees especially explored issues around power-relations between social media sources and news organisations by discussing gatekeeping practices, audience participation and agenda setting. This tied into the three research questions set out in the methodology chapter.

RQ1: Is social media sourcing affecting the identities and power relationship between primary and secondary definers?

RQ2: How do professional journalists create and articulate professional boundaries in the participation by non-authoritative citizen voices/audiences?

RQ3: What mechanisms do professional journalists use to maintain their gatekeeping role?

The interviewees were asked a mix of general questions about the approach to interactive newsgathering by their respective organisations, and questions exploring some of the findings of the case studies that were tailored to each of the news organisations. General questions posed were, for example, whether there was a strategy or process in place for how each

organisation approached collaborative newsgathering. They explored how these processes

may or may not tie into the media model or culture of the respective organisation, and

whether there was an explicit commitment to uphold this culture in networked journalism

routines. As laid out in the methodology chapter each news organisation is embedded in a

specific media model and ethos and contextualised with this in mind. Therefore, this section

of the interview allowed to compare and contrast the organisations according to those models.

Case study specific questions delved into the differences between the organisations but

explored each organisations' routines in their own context. The interviewees at the BBC and

France 24 were asked about some of the reasons for relying on conventional authoritative

news sources on social media, whereas the interview with Al Jazeera explored the use of

non-authoritative sources.

The interviews were conducted in the last three months of 2015 and first half of 2016,

following conclusion of the first two case studies on the Greek debt crisis and the refugee

crisis. This meant the Aleppo case study did not feature in the questions. All three editors

were contacted by email and agreed to be interviewed for this research. As the interviewees

were located in San Francisco, Paris and London, the interviews were carried out by

telephone or Viber. They lasted between 25 and 30 minutes and consisted of open-ended

questions.

The first part of the interviews explored topics specific to the respective news organisation,

including the role of the news organisations' culture in their overall approach to interactive

newsgathering. They also sought insight into the reasons for the findings of the case studies.

The second part explored sourcing criteria of social media content. This included questions

about what qualities or attributes were desirable in social media-sourced material for news; what might prevent certain social media content from being used; and how important the editors perceived professional guidelines or training for interactive newsgathering.

The interviews were conducted with BBC social media editor Mark Frankel, France 24 Observers editor Julien Pain, and AJPlus executive producer Ethar El-Katatney. Six main themes emerged. All of them were consistent with the main themes that emerged from the case study content analysis. They were:

i) An organisation-specific social media strategy

ii) Agenda-setting qualities in social media-sourced material

iii) Audience participation

iv) Format of the professional news product

v) The role of different social media platforms in networked journalism

vi) Verification of newswork by non-journalists

Strategy

The first theme discussed in the interviews was whether each organisation had a defined strategy or approach to the use of social media and what it comprised. The discussion of a defined strategy was framed in the context of the organisations' ethos, as it was discussed in the methodology, and also analysed with the organisations' respective media model in mind. The aim was to explore the main uses and meaning that collaborative newsgathering had for the organisations. The question was open-ended and non-directed and produced responses

that described two different approaches to social media use for the news organisations. The first involved the distribution of the organisations' own news products to audiences on social media platforms and the second was about collaborative newsgathering and newswork. From the editors' point of view these two uses for social media were understood as distinct and separate from each other. This indicated that collaborative newswork did not directly entail the audiences of the news organisations in one sense. In another though, it did not chime with the findings of some of the case studies that newsgathering and distribution could also be strongly interlinked when it involved the networked journalists at BBC and France 24. Both outlets did not only source content from third parties, which was then redistributed through their own channels. Especially the BBC, and to a lesser extent France 24, used their own correspondents as social media sources and distribution channels simultaneously. Therefore, the strict separation between sourcing and distribution could not be identified as BBC journalists could act both as distributors of their newswork (which is simultaneously BBC newswork) and act as sources for BBC coverage through their Twitter activity with the same material. Nevertheless, both Frankel and Pain conceptualised the two uses of social media by their organisations as separate. In the following extract Pain discussed how different teams were designated for the different uses of social media.

> At France 24, we had basically two teams. There was one team that is more about community management so they were publishing only articles, videos we produced and pushing it online and social media platforms and adapting it to every platform, and then interacting with the audience; answering questions and emmm sometimes gathering questions from the audience and transferring it to the journalist. But that was about it. It's just community management. There was another team, which I handled, the Observers where we were engaging more with the audience, so meaning if you take the refugee crisis for example, we were trying to spot refugees who were tweeting and posting things on Facebook and trying to ask them to sometimes do more with us; to answer questions, to produce videos – showing their trips, showing their problems. And then we had a full team of journalists actually editing their content and producing specific video and text based on these UGC. And that's really

two different things; a team of journalists and a team of community managers. (J. Pain, phone interview, July 5, 2016)

In terms of the internal workflow, the France 24 editor spoke of community management (meaning news distribution and interaction with audiences through the France 24 social media accounts) as carried out by a different team of journalists to those engaging in collaborative newsgathering. Moreover, these two roles are understood as requiring different expertise and skill sets. This suggests that audience feedback and engagement is kept separate from the everyday work of journalists who source newsworthy material through social media. Although some of the feedback may be redirected to journalists and editors, they are one step removed from this interaction. Interactive newsgathering then is not responsive to the audience of France 24 and their engagement with the news organisation through social media channels, but is shaped by a proactive approach by journalists seeking out content deemed worthy of news coverage. The selection process for content primarily results from the news values defined by France 24 journalists – although in exceptional circumstances it may be influenced by the two-way communication with the audience. However, while there are some allowances made for the audience's feedback, the audience is managed and kept at a distance from newswork process. Professionals can often refer to social media users as audiences in a general term (see Frankel), but the audience targeted by community managers and referred to by Pain is solely the audience of France 24's news products. This audience is clearly defined through, for example, the number of followers of France 24's Facebook or Twitter accounts but may also grow and change for each news item that is shared by followers. While there is some receptiveness in these interactions, the primary objective for community managers is the marketing of news products on social media since community management in most cases

entails distributing France 24's newswork and engaging with responses to them to foster a relationship with audiences that may encourage audience loyalty. Largely, users among this audience are not those that news content is sourced from. In this scenario, community managers navigate social media mainly as a "many-to-many" broadcasting platform (Kwak et al, 2010) where the main flow of information is uni-directional. The separation of audience engagement and collaborative newsgathering, both in professional roles and workflows, shows the structural limitations to the two-way flow of information between the news organisation and its audience. With one eye on audience responses to engage where necessary or desirable, actual audience participation in news production remains the exception with mechanisms in place to enable effective gatekeeping. This is not to say that these mechanisms are only deliberately limiting audience participation but could also result from a lack of resources to monitor and relay feedback to journalists. However, the fact remains that throughout the case studies, there was little evidence of responsiveness to audiences in the news items themselves or the inclusion of content produced by France 24's social media audience. Being an engaged member of France 24's audience on social media platforms therefore offers little opportunity to be heard by its newsroom and influence news coverage in a way substantially different from how TV ratings do.

The BBC social media editor also described two distinct roles for social media in news production. Again, one of them is the distribution of BBC's news content and the other is the sourcing of user-generated content for its news coverage. However, Frankel also described interactive newsgathering as audience involvement. This suggests that, unlike France 24, the BBC conceives of collaborative newswork in itself as a form of community management by involving audiences. Yet, as the case studies showed, there was little evidence of directly

involving BBC audiences on a particular piece of news coverage. Rather social media users, some of whom may be considered the wider target audience of the BBC World Service, were represented in the news texts. There was no identifiable link between the users and the BBC.

> I think that there is a sort of misnomer about UGC, that UGC is all about something that is just of the moment. Actually, no, UGC is the audience. It's involving our audience in any aspect of our journalism. So that can be both planned or reactive. (M. Frankel, phone interview, July 29, 2016)

While the BBC had mechanisms by which it invited comment and engagement from audiences on social media, there was again little evidence of this content being used in the news texts of the Greek debt crisis and refugee crisis case studies. In part this may have been because there was little response to the BBC's calls for engagement. Therefore, Frankel's description of audience involvement may more accurately describe the incorporation of content created by users who have no identifiable reason to be involved. In that sense, like France 24, journalists retain full control over gatekeeping as users are unable to determine how their content is used in newswork. This type of user involvement cannot be described as citizen participation in the normative sense as it would require the users' own deliberate involvement in the newswork and power for them to directly select news topics and frame news texts. Therefore, to a great extent audience participation in news production appears to be about animating and engaging users who the BBC wishes to attract with its news coverage.

In the first two case studies, power to select content remained solely in the hands of the news organisations and involvement of non-elites was ad hoc. By contrast, in the Aleppo case study, the power to select information and frame the conflict was significantly weighted in

favour of amateurs. Framing has been described by Tankard et al (1991) as ''the central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration" (Reese 2001, p. 10). The content creators were clearly seeking out access to the global news flow and were presenting and distributing their multimedia material targeted at international news organisations. Collaborative newswork was deliberate and power in this relationship was not necessarily in the hands of the news organisations. However, it is difficult to argue that these users can be understood as audiences of the news organisations in question. The BBC was likely not trying to speak to a predominantly Syrian audience when covering events in Syria. If the findings of the case studies are applied to the concept of audience involvement, this concept is arguably so loose to render it meaningless. It is not clear if these are BBC audiences, or anyone who may be part of a news audience anywhere at any time. If audiences involvement was the driving factor behind the findings of the first two case studies, this audience would primarily consist of professionals journalists and accredited sources, followed by non-accredited sources. Therefore, the term audience involvement appears to have been used as little more than a catch-all phrase without much analysis of what it means in practice and whether it is applicable. Nevertheless, it may signal an intent. The use of the term 'audience' throughout the interview strongly implied that this group is largely perceived to be private non-accredited sources — in other words non-elite voices. Frankel described the emergence of audience involvement as a response to the abandoning of traditional forms of news consumption that has resulted in a lack of audience loyalty and forced news organisations to find new ways to engage with audiences. Specifically, this means an awareness of the shift from a one-to-many news distribution model as seen in broadcasting, to a news environment where outlets need to actively seek out new audiences through engagement on social media

platforms. This suggests that audience engagement through social media is not only

understood as using new technological platforms to distribute news products but also as

building new relationships with news audiences, entailing their involvement and reciprocal

communication.

> I think the way to look at it is to say that people's approach to information has shifted, in that there isn't this kind of complete loyalty to one medium. If you were to go back 20 or 30 years people were very loyal television users or radio consumers, or the paper industry was in ruder health in those days. And I think that's changed or being challenged [...] especially amongst our younger audience, there is no longer that loyalty [...] to one form of news distribution and increasingly people have seen [...] the smartphone's growing predominance both as a phone and as a computer, if you like, as a portal to the outside world, become less committed to the consumption of news in a traditional; and linear way. And we've had to think of a whole host of different ways of reaching and engaging them. One of those is through social media and so social media is a bigger part of our world as a consequence. (M. Frankel, phone interview, July 29, 2016)

According to Frankel, the ability not just to speak to audiences through social media

platforms but the willingness to listen and be influenced by them is what it takes to remain

relevant in the digital news environment. Engagement and involvement of users is not only

planned but also reactive. Social media-sourced content is used especially to show audiences

are heard and responded to. Although the interaction with audiences was described as

reactive at times in order to show willingness to engage there was no clear definition of how

users might be able to prompt a reaction and engagement from the news organisation. The

selection of multimedia material or other social media content was broadly based on

journalists' and editors' own prioritisation of what they deemed interesting or newsworthy.

This is not to say that non-authoritative social media users were not used as sources since the

findings of the case studies show they clearly were. Rather, there was little evidence that

these users did anything to actively gain the attention of these particular news organisations

and were not selected because they approached them. Even Letters to the Editor have to be

directed to a newspaper before they can be selected for publication. The interview with

Frankel showed how audience engagement and participation is largely directed by editors

with little scope for users to get the attention of the newsroom and actively participate in

newswork. Instead, non-authoritative voices were selected because their content fit with the

agenda of the journalist selecting them. Asked about the use of citizen voices that had no

direct experience of a news event or were not personally affected, Frankel said these voices

may have been sought out for a number of reasons, be that to reflect a wider global

conversation around the topic, or "that they had very interesting things in their own right to

say."

> It could be to reflect the conversation that's wider. It could be just to ensure that there
> were other people coming to the story that we're recognising that it wasn't just a
> narrow constituency that we've reflected or were talking to. It could be that they had
> very interesting things in their own right to say that we haven't found another way of
> bringing to light or we felt that was the best way of illustrating that perspective on the
> story exactly through their voice. You know, it could be a number of reasons. (M.
> Frankel, phone interview, July 29, 2016)

There was a strong gatekeeping element in how BBC journalists maintained their complete

control over what was deemed worthy of participation. Ultimately, what was considered

interesting remained the decision of the journalist who chose these messages to amplify.

However, there was also an understanding that audience participation was necessary as a way

to engage and maintain audiences. Therefore, in the case study of the Greek debt crisis, it

may have made more sense for journalists to seek out voices from demographics that were

indeed BBC audiences than those that were not. Greek citizens affected by the day-to-day

reality of the debt crisis were more likely to be seeking out their own national news media

rather than the BBC to learn about the latest developments. The BBC was not speaking to Greek news audiences but rather English-speaking audiences around the world. From the point of view of community management, speaking to these users would serve the goal of audience building better. Therefore collaborative newsgathering did not necessarily serve to help relay the experiences of ordinary Greek people, but to reproduce the views of social media users elsewhere shaped by the global news flow. This type of audience involvement may in fact contribute reinforcing the views of international audiences that were likely shaped by news coverage of the global news media such as the BBC.

The symbiotic partnership between community managers and those carrying out collaborative newsgathering also creates a type of 'produsage'. The joint newswork feeds into what Hermida (2010) defined ambient journalism or Papacharissi (2010) called affective news streams. Those involved in collaborative newsgathering adopt, transform and interpret material filtered out from these news streams, before community managers redistribute the 'prodused' news products to news audiences. As such, the newsrooms insert themselves into the news stream through the distribution of their networked newswork on social media (or their journalists' activity on these platforms) with the goal to form and influence the conversations. Based on the findings in the analysis of the Greek financial crisis and the refugee crisis, interactive newsgathering and redistribution of this content usually entailed an aim to shape news streams for the audiences that interact with them both at the BBC and France 24. The only news texts that deviated from this approach were the webcasts by The Stream, where a large number of users engaging with the news topic were incorporated in the coverage and had the power to shape the discourse of the news topic. The case studies showed that almost all users who took part in the discussion on the topics featured were

reflected in some way throughout the programme, suggesting a very low threshold in who could enter the mainstream news flow with their content.[38] The format of the programme fostered a discussion between different users that was hosted but remained largely unedited by The Stream. It did not interject in the news stream on Twitter with its own staff's expertise, but rather used it as a way to engage and recreate another similar news stream in its webcast. The participating audience in the webcast did so knowingly and deliberately. Many responded to calls for comment by producers and journalists on Twitter and engaged in a conversation with them. This means they were in fact a clearly defined Al Jazeera audience that set out to be included in the discussion. They were not reported *on* but had the ability to shape the news texts deliberately. Of course, this too can be understood as a form of community management and audience building. The audience involved was also mainly global, although, as described in the Greek case study, there was a hierarchy of power and authoritativeness in Al Jazeera's coverage that elevated Greek sources over others. But there was a commitment to empowering Greek voices to tell and frame their experiences to a global audience, and it was not primarily a way to reflect audiences of The Stream back to themselves.

The Stream is one Al Jazeera product that reflects the organisation's approach to social media, while AJPlus is another and produces content that is often the product of collaborative newsgathering as well but that is also designed to be distributed on social media. Its news content is published exclusively on social media. While it often draws on content on social media, its journalists have greater input in selecting and framing it, and there are no

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[38] This was determined in the analysis of the data by looking at all the responses received by The Stream to their call for comments and participation on Twitter.

invitations for participation. The resulting news product is therefore also shaped by the

gatekeeping practices of the journalists, albeit with a particular slant characteristic of Al

Jazeera.

> So, just to backtrack a little, so Al Jazeera is the voice of the voiceless is a very Al Jazeera ethos.
> [...]
> We are a newsroom but we're not a very traditional newsroom in the sense that we don't have a newsdesk, a planner. We're a small editorial team who actually create.
> [...]
> So we're in this unique position that we have really great reach but we're also very limited in the number of stories we can do a day. We never push more than like 10 a day. And that's combining, you know, the different formats. (E. El-Katatney, conference call interview, December 14, 2016)

Unlike with The Stream, there is very little community engagement on the AJPlus accounts

across social media platforms. However, the engagement that does exist was mostly

consistent with the community-management approach seen on the BBC and France 24

accounts, and that is largely limited to publishing news texts. So, while The Stream is focused

on building communities around its brand to foster conversation, AJPlus is primarily

producing content and distributing it straight through social media. It presumably also aims to

foster conversation but that conversation is mainly between audiences around the content it

produces. So, it too, acts more as an 'influencer', inserting itself into the news stream with its

own 'prodused' and branded content than encouraging participation through social networks.

However, the angle is arguably a different one, taking major news events to a more local,

human-interest level.

> So we have a lot more room to think more creatively and think a lot beyond what's on Reuters and what's on AP, right? Cos that's what a lot of traditional media does, right?

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> They just pull from the wires because that's right there. We're not trying to compete with that and we're not trying to be the place where you come to us for the news.
> [...]
> I'm tracking a lot of different other more local, especially different regions. (E. El-Katatney, conference call interview, December 14, 2016)

AJPlus also differs from BBC and France 24, as it does not have its own proprietary platform. Therefore, the way that content is distributed is firstly through its own social media accounts, and then relying on shares and retweets by other users to help spread it. The difference between publishing to a website, and using social media as one of several means of distribution, such as search engines or news aggregators, is that the content has to be tailored to social media in order to give it the furthest possible reach. It has to resonate with different audiences, tapping into existing communities around the topic discussed. While this is also an aim by news texts linked to on social media by the other two news outlets, it is not the sole, or even primary concern in producing news content. AJPlus journalists are likely more embedded with social media communities and even if they do not stand out as individual actors in these communities they are lurking and listening, taking the pulse of what interests and resonates with these communities, in order to then contribute and shape the conversations.

In the talk of audience involvement and participation lies the promise of ordinary voices of private citizens being heard and represented. It resembles the practice of collecting and recording vox pops, especially when the material that is published through social media is framed as reflecting an aspect of the public discourse around a specific topic. Vox pops are the inclusion of "interviews with the ordinary man or woman on the street" (Beckers 2017a, p. 101) and are often reflective of individuals' opinions on certain topics. Vox pops usually

involve individuals who do not have a representative function and have no expertise on the news topic (Kleemans, Shaap & Hermans 2015). They are most often represented in audio-visual news texts and are deemed a means by which to encourage public involvement but are also viewed as the least valuable content by journalists (Beckers, 2017b). However, the amount of vox-pops in traditional news reporting – including through social media content — has increased significantly over the past 25 years, while the use of "citizens as agents or active contributors of relevant content" has not, according to research conducted in the Netherlands (Kleemans, Shaap & Hermans 2015, p. 14). Twitter, especially, has been used to gather vox-pops published by citizens themselves (Beckers, 2017a).

> Agents and affected citizens were less prominent; in particular, the prominence of affected citizens has declined over the years. This implies that journalists do not give citizens a substantive active voice in public debate but that citizens are largely and increasingly used as mere illustrations. (Kleemans, Shaap and Hermans 2015, p. 14)

The case studies too showed a substantial use of citizen sources for vox pops, which were oftentimes shown in order to reflect a discussion that was framed as public opinion. The use of citizen sources as active contributors in the news production process was far more limited. However, this reality shown in the case studies mostly did not reflect the interviews that focused predominantly on social media newsgathering as the a means for accessing eyewitness material and fostering non-journalist's active participation in the newswork. However, limited vox pops may be in transferring power to non-elites in news it does still possess value as a means for the public to access the news flow. Finding out what individuals feel and think about news events is an important way to represent the opinions of those other than the elite. Yet, in a globalised news environment the values in vox pops might be more difficult to pinpoint. How valuable is it to represent opinions by individuals unaffected by a

news event and who are forming their opinions primarily on the news coverage of global news media? One may argue that this effectively undermines the opinions of affected citizens, essentially levelling non-elite voices regardless of their circumstance. Therefore, the quality of the vox pops is important in producing meaningful coverage of the discourse that is taking place. Vox pops of citizens directly affected by a news event could be rightfully considered empowering to ordinary citizens, as it may raise ideas, opinions or concerns which the news media then need to address in their news texts. However, research has shown that journalists' attitude towards vox pops is mainly negative (Beckers, 2017b), which suggests that many journalists might not take great care in the voices they choose to incorporate in their news coverage as they consider them of inferior value to other types of sources. On the other hand, "[j]ournalists who perceive vox pops as a good public opinion tool and consider vox pops as increasing audience involvement are more positive about them. Surprisingly, journalists who use vox pops are not per se more positive about them." (Beckers, 2017b, p. 109) It is fair to assume that those who are working for The Stream or AJPlus are overall more positive in their attitude towards reflecting the opinions expressed by social media users, since holding a microphone into online communities forms a core part of their jobs as journalists. Also, public involvement plays a significant role in the successful dissemination of their news content once it is shared on social media. Therefore, these journalists are likely to pride themselves on producing a meaningful insight into what the opinions of citizens affected by a news event are. On the other hand, journalists who do not consider this to be the core part of their job, may be less inclined to invest as much energy into reflecting the public discourses taking place on social media. With the exception of the Aleppo case study, Al Jazeera's use of social media was particularly focused on its AJPlus and The Stream news products, while social media played a much more limited role across

the Al Jazeera English online platform. With specific news products that were very strategic and deliberate about the use of social media, the outlet's editorial approach was a very clearly defined one. The BBC and France 24, on the other hand, took a much more ad hoc approach to social media content in the Greek debt crisis coverage, and to a lesser extent the migrant crisis. The content was largely mixed in with the regular traditional reporting styles.

Agenda-setting

A theme that cropped up in all three interviews was the perceived power relationship between social media and mainstream media and the ability for social media users to become agenda-setters in news coverage. Agenda setting was addressed in questions about how non-journalists carrying out newswork on social media can get the attention of editors and journalists on issues of importance to them. It was explored both in terms of journalists' proactive and reactive approaches taken towards the social media users and communities. In other words, what steps do news organisations take to seek out involvement from news audiences in setting the news agenda?

Pain's response suggests a mostly reactive approach to the information shared on social media, which becomes of interest to news organisations due to its potential to be of major interest to France 24's news audiences.

> We monitor all the social media to see, what can I get out, also what's gonna be the next hot news. That's what everybody does. (J. Pain, phone interview, July 5, 2016)

Social media is seen as a 'beat' to be covered by journalists mainly because it harbours the potential to produce content that can attract a lot of interest from audiences. Moreover though, social media is seen as an environment that sets its own news agenda, and which is implicitly considered of huge importance to news organisations. Through their participation on social media, users have the ability to set and frame what is newsworthy and should be, at least in part, leading the news agenda of news organisations such as France 24. Social media is therefore understood as having its own news ecosystem that news organisations seek to exploit for sourcing news for their own coverage. An added value to gathering this news content is that journalists know that an audience already exists for this material. The material that is being sourced is usually already generating discussion, so enhancing and repackaging it before redistributing the 'added value' newswork on social media platforms is likely to drive audiences to the news organisation. So social media is monitored for news that is first broken on social media rather than by news outlets through their conventional distribution channels. France 24 then responds by covering this news, integrating it into the global news flow. In that sense, "what everybody does" is a description of Chadwick's hybrid media model, wherein journalists develop an interdependence with non-journalists, giving the latter greater power to determine the news agenda. It also echoes Papacharissi's affective news streams, which argues news is being created in a collaborative effort on social media, continually mutating and being redefined by its contributors. News production becomes a contested process, involving both journalists and non-journalists, that does not result in a final product. Instead it is constantly evolving. However, as already argued earlier, there are influencers in this process, who are characterised by their greater power to impose a particular news agenda or frame than others – France 24, with its many followers on all the major social media platforms being one. Therefore, while Pain looks to social media for

news, the selection of newsworthy content by journalists themselves puts them in the position to also shape what the "next hot news" will be. Therefore, gatekeeping is still under the control of journalists, who ultimately make the decision about what content to extract and amplify, and how.

In the first two case studies, the type of content described by Pain was not the main component of the social media-sourced material found in the texts for either France 24, or the BBC. While France 24 Observers does focus especially on eyewitness material, it represents only a very small part of all the social media-sourced material used in the news coverage. Overall, the news agenda had been strongly defined by professional journalists and accredited sources, while non-journalist private citizens had the least source power. Only the Aleppo case study was characterised by extensive reliance on unaccredited and non-journalist sources, and saw these gain significant agenda-setting power. This only supports the argument that news organisations hold significant influence in defining the terms of any collaboration with social media users, and that their decision to embrace some content over others plays a role in defining what is 'news'. Control is only relinquished in exceptional circumstances. With the agenda still often dictated by news organisations, audiences fill in the gaps. For instance, eyewitness material was mentioned by Frankel and Pain as playing a pivotal role in how social media is used in collaborative newsgathering in a breaking news situation. Very often, information about a breaking news event will first emerge on social media, with eyewitnesses sharing accounts and images. However, what constitutes a breaking news event is already defined by existing routines, and amateur content takes the place of the eyewitness account. Eyewitnesses can be approached remotely without requiring a reporter to

be at the scene, and their testimony is backed up with videos or images captured on their phone.

> [I]f we're looking at a story where we are keen to find eyewitness testimony on such as a breaking or developing story, then UGC would be very central to that. Because obviously we need to get to people who are right there and have pictures and video and can talk to us about what is going on, so there is definitely a social newsgathering component. (M. Frankel, phone interview, July 29, 2016)

Social media-sourced images takes on the role of the eyewitness, and offers evidence of what took place. It does not necessarily set the news agenda in its own right though. For example, a bomb attack in central Paris would be deemed newsworthy with or without eyewitness material and produce high volumes of news coverage. The eyewitness material only adds colour to what would certainly have been high up on the news agenda, not because there are images of the event but because the event happened at all. The production of eyewitness material has been described as acts of citizen journalists by several authors (Allen 2013; Gillmor 2004) where ordinary people are empowered to take part in the production of news. Recalling the events of 9/11, Gillmor writes, "[N]ews was being produced by regular people who had something to say and show, and not solely by the "official" news organizations that had traditionally decided how the first draft of history would look. This time, the first draft of history was being written, in part, by the former audience." Yet, the argument that the ability to produce eyewitness material is necessarily empowering has been contested if this content only provides the raw material for news organisations to incorporate in their journalism. This hinges on how we define journalism and if we understand it as selecting, ordering and editing information into a final news product to give meaning to events. Therefore, "[a] real question we need to ask is not what is journalism, but where does the journalistic process begin?"

(Burum 2016, p. 13). Burum distinguishes between user-generated content, the raw content

recorded by eyewitnesses, and user-generated stories which are texts fit for broadcast and that

are produced by ordinary citizens (Burum 2012). Only the latter, he argues, can be considered

citizen journalism and offers "editorial empowerment at the source" (Burum 2016, p. 14).

User-generated content alone, on the other hand, is only a building block used in the

construction of news by professional journalists. In the case of breaking news events, as

mentioned by Frankel, the audience involvement only extends as far as it fits with the

professional routines and values of news production. In essence, technology has enabled

journalists not to be required at the scene of an event in order to report about it as

eyewitnesses are presenting themselves on social media, not only with accounts but with

actual images to back them up. In these cases the value of eyewitness material to the news

coverage is judged by the same standards that journalists would apply to any other piece of

information or content to build their news coverage, which in major breaking news events is

low. In these cases, the threshold for gaining entry into the global news flow is dictated by

simply having been a witness who recorded content of sufficient quality.

> Well, when in terms of breaking news the only quality is to be there at the right time.
> So if you're at the right time somewhere and you post a video that's interesting then
> even if it's badly filmed or, you know, the only thing we have to do is to check that
> it's true and then that's it. (J. Pain, phone interview, July 5, 2016)

Private citizens are generally most likely to be represented in news coverage in unexpected

news events (Reich 2015), and this professional practice could be easily adapted and

enhanced through the widespread use of mobile phone technology. In fact, it eased the burden

to expend resources on having journalists and entire TV crews at a scene when eyewitnesses

could easily provide the raw content directly to newsrooms. This may well have made them more valuable to journalists as sources but it has not fundamentally tilted the power relationship between news media and private citizens in their favour. This is not to say that eyewitness material cannot make an impact on the news agenda. In many cases user-generated content has recorded human rights abuses or other important issues that have provoked civic or political action. However, the requirements for entering the mainstream news flow are stricter and more difficult to meet as news organisations have to take a proactive approach in seeking out this content as it does not fall into a predetermined news agenda.

> But equally, if it's a story where we know there is an audience focus because it involves, you know, not so much something that is breaking or developing but something that people have direct experience of, so it could be a study that has found, you know, that people believe or think or feel particular things and we're looking for case studies or people who have experienced those things or have been affected by those issues, then again you're talking about UGC because you are looking for members of the public who have direct experience of those... of that particular case. So, it's largely dependant on what you're looking for really. Some of it is the kind of thing that you can look for in advance because you might be working on a feature that would involve a member of the public because you'd be that input into your feature. (M. Frankel, phone interview, July 29, 2016)

Outside of breaking news events, Frankel describes situations where the BBC might proactively seek out the input from users who are private citizens. The scenario he describes is again one where the editorial decision on a particular topic was made solely in the newsroom and users are sought out to fit with the BBC's own news agenda. Journalists are decision makers in what is important to audiences and subsequently contact users who may have experience on this particular issue for an opinion. Journalism practices have long involved this type of interaction with private citizens on issues tabled by the professional

news media, while technology has enabled journalists to find such voices more easily. In this instance also, social media serves as a tool to carry out the same established practices rather than foster new ones. These do not intrinsically challenge the power-relationship between news media and audiences, where the two interact. It may be argued that it has enabled a wider spectrum of voices to be heard as journalists are able to find sources that would have been outside their reach or off their radar in the past, providing a more diverse discussion of news topics. However, the type of interaction in the proactive scenario described by Frankel has remained essentially the same.

> For contributors to feature in our journalism, they have to: a) have something that is worth talking about because it's newsworthy, and secondly, they need to be reliable and trustworthy and genuinely there and aware of what's going on. You know, there's a lot of fakery out there. There's a lot of rumour, there's a lot of people who claim to know things or be in places, or have taken footage. So those are the key things that we would need to establish before we would go even near approaching them or using their contribution. (M. Frankel, phone interview, July 29, 2016)

Exploring what might be the reason that users' content is able to enter the mainstream news flow, Frankel again mentions newsworthiness, personal experience and trustworthiness (or authenticity) as the main factors. What constitutes newsworthiness appears as a fixed value determined solely by the journalist. The power to define news values remains in the professional realm. However, the second criteria suggests the BBC will relinquish a degree of control over the practice of reporting to users that meet its set of values and expectations. Once these criteria have been satisfied, users can shape the news product through their content. This is particularly evident in the Aleppo case study, where media activists (who were known and trusted to be in close geographical proximity to the events or connected to those who were) were able to feature highly in the coverage. Journalistic values such as

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impartiality, or even balance were not necessarily mentioned in this context. They were discussed in depth in relation to the Syrian Observatory of Human Rights and to a lesser extent the White Helmets but not applied to other sources in opposition-held territory. Rather, their role was was seen solely as that of an eyewitness stepping in for the absent journalist. As the Aleppo case study showed, where there is an almost categorical absence of journalists, this position can be a very powerful one. Without any requirement to adopt any of the other journalistic values, activism can become a feature in the journalism produced – though steps were taken to undermine the role that these motivations played in the BBC news texts on the battle in Aleppo. This creates an interaction between news organisations and users that places control over the news agenda (what constitutes 'newsworthiness') and the users deemed relevant and suitable for networked journalism with the news organisation. Meanwhile, the actual newswork done by such users is scrutinised only according to a narrow set of journalistic practices. Namely, the ability to confirm beyond reasonable doubt that a piece of content shows what it claims to. On the flip side this can lead to decontextualising content and the omission of pertinent information to provide a balanced or impartial representation of events.

In the interview with the AJPlus editor, online communities played a significant role in determining what content may enter their newswork. The collaborative newswork was mainly focused on areas that were inaccessible to journalists and highlighted the benefits of accessing communities that were otherwise difficult to reach. El-Katatney stated the intent of seeking out news content that was not on the news agenda of elite professional outlets.

> Our stories aren't necessarily tied to places, where journalists can access. We're still very reactive.

[…]
The social media element and UGC works best in stories that the media isn't covering. (E. El-Katatney, conference call interview, December 14, 2016)

Part of this is tapping into online communities that discuss and share information of interest to them. She described collaborative newsgathering in terms of taking the lead from these communities on what is newsworthy. This may sound similar to the sentiment by the France 24 editor, who describes social media as a tool to find the "next hot news", but there are differences. According to the interviewee, AJPlus seeks out communities and their conversations in order to report on them, which suggests seeking out a news discourse on particular topics by interested and involved users. The news coverage is explained in terms of reflecting this discourse rather than shaping the discourse.

Ultimately, the power to decide which communities' conversations to reflect remains with the journalists, giving them significant gatekeeping power in the interaction. However, El-Katatney's interview suggests there is a strong commitment to represent a news discourse created by online communities, hence giving them power to define it. This was consistent with the overall finding in the case studies that showed Al Jazeera was using social media predominantly to report on the conversations between unaccredited sources, deliberately seeking out sources who had the least source power but who also often showed personal involvement and knowledge of the news event. In the Aleppo case study, this went as far as fully absorbing social media content into Al Jazeera's news coverage without any clear distinction between the two, as well as embedding its own journalists with those producing this content.

As journalists there is no way, even if we were, you know, the most powerful media organisation in the world, there is no way you can have access to document everything that's happening everywhere. And if you have a system that's set to, you know, your workflow is set to how to receive this content, verify this content and utilise this content, then that means you've just accessed a huge network, that's so much bigger and can amplify more than you can do. (E. El-Katatney, conference call interview, December 14, 2016)

El-Katatney expressed a similar use for social networks as a distribution platform with a ready-made audience. The aim is not to only gather content but also to distribute it again to users who are already having a conversation around the particular topic and pieces of content that the news outlet is reporting on. In accessing a community where newsworthy content is shared, gathering this content and reporting on it, Al Jazeera is taking advantage of a ready-made audience. Once news texts that involve these communities are distributed they can receive significant amplification as its members help distribute the texts to their own networks. In order to do this effectively, it reflects the conversation that is already taking place, bringing together the different pieces of a scattered discourse taking place across social media platforms.

The one minute news reports here are very different from the one minute news reports I did when I worked on TV, you know. They just look very very different. And the audience doesn't just want to know what happened, they want to know what the people there felt like. They want the more emotional connection, they want the more human interest kind of aspect on it. (E. El-Katatney, conference call interview, December 14, 2016)

The focus on the human interest story, the eyewitness, and the emotional connection, shows there is an aim to break down the barrier that exists between news media and the ordinary private citizen. It is not about finding accredited sources on breaking news events, or guiding the social media content through journalist sources, but to access the plethora of other voices

that audiences can connect with on a more personal level.The focus is on content that does not comprise the normal news flow, but hones in on a parallel new environment that is created on social media platforms. Examples that were given by the El Katatney still point to the selection of news content being directed by the news agenda set by the Al Jazeera, and the overall agenda of the global mainstream news media, which is also symptomatic of the hybridisation of the news environment, whereby audiences do largely discuss topics and issues already raised by professional news media that remain a powerful player in shaping public discourse.

The social media users sourced for coverage are chosen because they have specific attributes, and, where a news event is set in a particular location, because they have first-hand knowledge of it. Therefore, the use of social media sources is not to engage the Al Jazeera audience per se in the way that the the BBC may have been selecting a stereotypical BBC audience in their coverage, but to tap into the communities that are affected by the event. Rather, they may consider their audience as fluid and changing depending on what is being covered. For example, Greek audiences may typically not seek out coverage by Al Jazeera on the events in their country, but through assessing and reporting on the conversations taking place in Greek communities, Al Jazeera may not only have relayed this discourse to its loyal audience base but gained, at least temporarily, new audiences. While Frankel spoke of building audience loyalty through reciprocal engagement with users, which will ensure brand awareness and encourage users to return to the BBC for its coverage, the interview with El-Katatney suggested finding audiences that already exist for a specific news event and holding a microphone into their virtual forum. The two news outlets share the same intent, which is to build audiences. The one positions itself as delivering the news to whoever is

likely to be their core audience, both through social media and its own digital platforms, while taking note of the feedback that it receives. The other establishes new audiences, even if only temporarily, by embedding itself in specific online conversations.

> No one is coming to AJPlus to see what happened in that train crash in New York. They'll come like three hours later to see our story which includes life of the victims and talks to you and gives you some social media reactions and someone who's an eyewitness. (E. El-Katatney, conference call interview, December 14, 2016)

Nevertheless, the AJPlus interview also shows, that social media is used to fuel the existing news agenda with further content, creating conversation and even an exchange between users and journalists. But this takes place within the context of a news agenda not set by social media users. What is valuable is their reaction to the global news flow and their ability to 'produse' content that can be absorbed into it. Therefore, the framework within which social media users contribute is controlled by an agenda that is not set by them. They act largely as sources rather than collaborators, although their power as sources may have increased through their engagement on social media platforms.

Platforms

As the case studies showed, there were different approaches to how different social media platforms – namely Twitter and Facebook – were used in sourcing content and the type of content they typically contributed to the news texts. The micro-blogging site was used by BBC and France 24 mostly to gather elite sources. Nevertheless, social media is often treated as a homogenous environment that enables audiences (ie. ordinary citizen users) to enter the global news flow (Allan 2013). Asked which voices he thought had gained most from social

media engagement in terms of accessing the global news flow, Frankel acknowledged the different user groups that dominated on different platforms and the discrepancies between what platforms journalists mostly commonly used and those most frequently used by ordinary private citizens.

> [W]e talk about social media as if it's one thing and it's very different. For most people, say in journalism, social media is Twitter. And frankly for most of our audiences, social media is anything but Twitter. So, you know, Twitter is often an echo chamber of opinion formers trying to shout their latest, you know, book, policy idea, thoughts, concept, whatever it is. So you're not necessarily talking to the people that you're wanting to reach or the audiences that you're most keen on impressing. You're certainly talking to other journalists and opinion formers. Whereas Facebook is a much broader platform in that sense. (M. Frankel, phone interview, July 29, 2016)

Frankel's comments that journalists are most likely to refer to Twitter to source content, supported the conclusion drawn from the case studies that identified it as a newsgathering platform which was most adaptable to established routines, and therefore most likely to be used by professionals. Broersma and Graham (2012) also supported this with their research that identified Twitter as a professional network for journalists to stay in touch with their peers, exchange information and seek contacts. Meanwhile, (Heinrich, 2012) described it as a type of personalised newswire for journalists. Together with the 'pack mentality' of journalists (Boczkowski, 2010), the disproportionate reliance on the least 'social' platform, creates a high threshold for entry into the global news flow for non-elite users. This research clearly showed journalists relied particularly on the micro-blogging site, while non-elite users, described by Frankel as audiences, are the least likely to participate on this platform. This suggests that journalists actively work to maintain their sphere of influence and control over the news flow in a way that allows them to dominate. Facebook, on the other hand, was used almost exclusively to source content from non-elite users. However, it was used to a

much lesser extent than Twitter despite its significantly larger user base. The preference for

Twitter is more likely to reproduce the opinions and information put forward by elite users.

So, while Twitter as been driving social media access to the global news flow, greater access

of Facebook users might result in a different demographic participating in networked

newswork. Therefore, audience participation in the news environment is largely kept on

social media platforms, where users can 'produse' but not have significant access to

professional newswork. So, while Frankel argued that social media has been beneficial in

opening up the news environment to a new set of users, who were previously denied access to

the news flow, this is mostly in the context of the alternative news environment that exists on

solely on social media. The impact that amateurs can have on news audiences with their

newswork is mostly seen to be taking place on social media platforms, which is not

necessarily synonymous with opening up a gateway into the professionally produces news

media.

> Having said that [social media] has clearly become a very very important avenue for a lot of different organisations today that could shift perception and to make an impact. It's a much quicker way to reach people that they are perhaps unfamiliar with or find hard to reach in other ways. And done and used effectively, it can be very potent. It can be really really powerful. (M. Frankel, phone interview, July 29, 2016)

The perceived impact of social media on communicating with large audiences by

non-journalistic sources is described by Frankel in a general sense and as something that

happens outside the professional news media. While he sees significant power given to

non-journalistic users through harnessing social media platforms the BBC arguably does not

see its role as facilitating voices on social media, but rather as working in tandem with this

alternative news environment.

Frankel was the only of the three interviewees that brought up how user groups differed

across platforms, and the disparity between the social media platforms most commonly used

by journalists and those used by ordinary citizens. El-Katatney listed out the types of

platforms that journalists were using to source content but phrased it as an issue of tapping

into particular communities. She also mentioned a greater variety of platforms used to source

content, outside of Facebook and Twitter, such as Instagram and closed messaging services

such as Whatsapp and Snapchat.

> I think [it is valuable] having a newsroom that is very diverse. We have a lot of young
> people here, who don't even know Britney Spears. That's how young they are. That
> they're very well plugged in. (E. El-Katatney, conference call interview, December
> 14, 2016)

The case studies also suggested that Al Jazeera was primarily focusing on tapping into very

specific types of communities. They did not use Twitter to source journalists' communities or

even opinion-makers, which explains why sourcing practices were not dependent on

platforms at Al Jazeera. Rather they sought out communities that did not stereotypically

participate in the newswork of professional news media but created their own networks in

which they shared information.

Verification

As to be expected, one of the most important factors dictating if social media-sourced

material would be used in coverage by any of the organisations was how easily its

authenticity could be verified by journalists. All three interviewees said the ability to ensure

the authenticity of a piece of content was paramount before considering any other characteristics. Journalists therefore applied their practices to any piece of content, either qualifying or disqualifying it from use in news coverage. How these practices were applied could change from case to case, and decisions were explained depending on the context of the content. However, the most common context within which verification was mentioned was in breaking news events. In this case, the users providing content were primarily used as sources rather than as participants in the production of news coverage. Even as news organisations are seeking to integrate this content into their coverage, the shape the interaction takes between the content producer and the journalist puts the journalist in a position of power over that of the user. Once a piece of content, usually eyewitness material, is deemed newsworthy, the question is to what extent the user providing it can meet the criteria set by journalists to ensure sufficient proof that it is trustworthy. In a breaking news scenario this would first of all mean proving they were at the scene and did indeed record the material themselves. Professional journalists explain the need for verification in accordance with their own journalistic routines and standards as their duty to the public. By extension, verification of social media-sourced material is to safeguard the reputation of their news organisations. Failure to implement it sufficiently is seen as undermining a core value of journalism to represent the truth, and considered detrimental to the profession in the eyes of the public. Especially in breaking news scenarios – though not exclusively – it is understood as a process to ensure accuracy and authenticity that is usually limited to providing certainty that the material originates from the location and time of a particular news event. Other issues such as the motivation and framing that goes into the production of content is usually given little importance and is also oftentimes not discussed or overtly represented in news texts that make use of eyewitness material. A piece of content will, in the most part, be framed and

contextualised within the news text where it is typically inserted into written text or overlayed with verbal descriptions by journalists, and juxtaposed with other images. The producer of the material has no direct role in this process. During the interview, Pain described verification in terms of breaking news event, which oftentimes are events that would be considered high up on the news agenda regardless of whether eyewitness material is available or not.

> The first thing is, can we verify the images the guy is sending us or the images we find online? That's the first thing, especially in terms of breaking news. In terms of breaking news, I don't know, if there is a video coming out after the bombing of the Brussels airport then we focus on the images we can confirm. So if it's just like very short and the guy doesn't answer our messages we would give up. But if the person answers and we can ask him a few questions and talk to him on the phone, or if the video is long enough and we can check and spot things that it was really shot inside the Brussels airport then we would use it. (J. Pain, phone interview, July 5, 2016)

In this instance, rather than eyewitness material representing a type of audience participation in news reporting, it is simply a relatively new format in which private citizen sources provide additional material for news texts. With mobile phones ubiquitous in many areas of the world, sources are able to provide content to reporters beyond the verbal eyewitness account that is often a feature in unexpected news events. The tasks of the journalist – compiling, framing and editing reports – have mostly not been shifted to users. Especially not non-elite ones. As discussed, the only case study where users took on such tasks was in the news coverage of the battle for Aleppo, fuelled by the absence of journalists on the ground.

However, in most cases, social media users posting newsworthy content are unsuspecting news sources competing for the attention of journalists and editors, who select and appropriate the eyewitness material according to their own criteria. This changes little about

the power relationship between citizen sources and journalists. The same routines remain largely intact. Nonetheless, this is not to say that eyewitness material cannot have a dramatic impact on the news agenda at times. Content that commands a lot of interest in the alternative news environment of social media platforms is something journalists do want to harness for their own news products and capitalise on. The fast-paced and highly competitive news cycle means journalists are keen to find sources that can supply content which reaches large audiences. This was also shown in the France 24 interview, where Pain said finding the "next hot news" was the main reason journalists monitor social media platforms. Through the increase in the value of the material that sources can provide to journalists they are potentially gaining some power in putting their accounts across. But this power is limited through the format that high-value content takes; a dramatic video of an incident is far more likely to attract interest from journalists and deemed "hot news" than a verbal statement or argument. Equally, a visual piece of content is more easily inserted into news coverage created by professional journalists.

> You know, there's a lot of fakery out there. There's a lot of rumour. There's a lot of people who claim to know things or be in places, or have taken footage. So those are the key things that we would need to establish before we would go even near approaching them or using their contribution. (M. Frankel, phone interview, July 29, 2016)

Frankel also described the primary role of the journalist in sourcing eyewitness material as guarding against the spread of misinformation. Again, this is understood first and foremost as ensuring that the user disseminating any newsworthy material is also its producer, or has first hand experience of the event or topic he is sharing information about. However, this basic requirement means that users are thought of as eyewitness sources not as 'collaborators' or

'citizen journalists'. It is not required of journalists to be present at the time a news event takes place in order to report on it. Although one of the tasks ascribed to journalists is to bear witness', this is not necessarily meant in a literal and immediate sense. A journalist is not required to be an eyewitness, especially in unscheduled news events where being in the right place at the right time is a matter of chance. Journalists very often arrive late and do not have any first-hand knowledge of the specific incidents they are sent to cover. The work of journalists is the reconstruction of what took place through a professional set of routines and processes that are deemed trustworthy. Usually this involves seeking out and speaking to eyewitnesses, and representing statements by authoritative and official sources on the events. Applied to social media, the so-called audience participation offered through social media newsgathering in breaking news scenarios is mainly limited to journalists sourcing eyewitnesses remotely without needing to attend the scene to find them. While the eyewitness material that these sources provide may unveil news events and incidents that would not have gained any exposure in the past as journalists were not aware of them, or unable to package into a marketable news product due to a lack of content to illustrate the information, it has not challenged the relationship between journalists and sources in news production. Non-elite citizen users have gained power in their interaction with professional journalists primarily through their value as sources only in as far as this corresponds with professional routines. Of course, professional journalism and the voice of the public are not anathema to each other, and can and do interlink. So citizen sources have undeniably been able to enter the global news flow where previously they might not have been able to and influence the news agenda thanks to technology. This at times has benefitted both sides with journalists able to get high value content and scoops, and members of the public able to get the attention of news media.

Where the event is not a breaking news scenario other factors begin to be considered in the use of eyewitness material. Contrasting two piece of content – one of an alleged soldier from Mosul returning home and another of starving children in the Syrian town of Madaya – El-Katatney described the process behind how some content was chosen over others at AJPlus.

> [A] good example from a couple of weeks ago. It was a soldier in Iraq from Mosul. He reunited with his mother. Right? So it's a soldier and he runs up to his mother. "I haven't seen you in three years." Eventually we decided not to run with that story because it's almost impossible to verify. Like, I can't, I don't even know… the footage comes from a source that I can in no way verify. How am I going to verify someone in Iraq? How am I gonna know when this happened? This could've been the liberation in 2004. It's not that it could be staged. I assume it's true but the facts of the story itself are almost impossible for me to know where he is. And there is no other source. This is a one person source. It's not like there are several stories of people reuniting with their families. [...] I don't know what their agenda is, who put out the video. All those things. That's the kind of video that you wouldn't run with. Unless there is some way to give that story context or to verify it somewhere else. And it's not a Madaya story, right? The Madaya story, even if it came from one source, that's a supremely important story of children starving in Madaya, Syria. But even though it came from one doctor in Madaya, I verified it. The Sans [inaudible] Medical Society here in US were sending them money but still the very core of that story was one person. But that was fine for that story because it was an important newsworthy story that the information coming out of that region was that they were starving. [...] The facts added up. So that was fine to run with it because it was such an important story to tell. The other one, the soldier from Iraq. it was a nice story but it's not a story you would, you know, you would run with because it might, you know, it doesn't add a lot to the story and it's not supremely along the lines of what AJPlus were trying to do, like the issue of Syria. One that we were trying to raise awareness of. (E. El-Katatney, conference call interview, December 14, 2016)

The comparison reveals a number of factors that determine whether a piece of content is used. In non-breaking news events journalists continue to consider verification in terms of corroborating information based on multiple sources. This is the 'two-source rule' typically used by journalists according to which at least two sources need to confirm a piece of information independently of each in order for it to be considered for news reports (Sullivan,

2017). Alone, the fact that users are considered in this context, shows that journalists think of them as sources in the conventional sense. Where the location and date cannot be confirmed from the content itself, it may be discarded for not being trustworthy. Finally, according to the interviewee, journalists could not establish the motivations of the content producer as they had no way of finding out who they were and did not have their own reporters on the ground. The contrast with eyewitness material of starving children in Madaya is particularly interesting as the footage also possessed no distinguishing features that confirmed location and date, little was known about the content producer and their motivations and there were no journalists on the ground. Assuming that neither of the videos were staged, the factors determining the use of one over the other, was the newsworthiness of the video from Syria in terms of the dramatic effect of starving children to highlight the plight of civilians living in Madaya, as opposed to footage of a soldier returning home in the battle for Mosul. The latter suggested advances by the Iraqi army in retaking Mosul from the jihadist group Islamic State. Particular efforts were made to verify the video from Madaya, that was considered "supremely important". A single piece of footage showing an instance of such human suffering, could be deemed of paramount importance even in the absence of other such images, as it was newsworthy in its own right. It was also considered to be keeping with the editorial agenda of AJPlus, as the interviewee points out, while the footage from Iraq was not. Audience participation was controlled by the editorial agenda of the news organisation on the one hand, the 'newsworthiness' – as defined by the news organisation – of the content, and also rationalised through professional routines determining verification practices.

Guidelines

Interviewees were asked about whether guidelines were useful and should be in place for interactive newsgathering. The question addressed how professional norms may be formalised by the news organisations in news sourcing on social media platforms, and attempted to probe what is deemed an ethical approach to audience participation. Both the AJPlus and BBC interviewees believed that guidelines were necessary and described what they entailed at their respective news organisations, while the France 24 interviewee believed that journalists should be free from any guidelines that could be too prescriptive and therefore hamper them in their profession. On the one hand, this is somewhat unsurprising as both the BBC and AJPlus are founded in the Anglo-Saxon media tradition, which attempts to instil a strong separation between the journalist as a subjective individual and the work they produce through a raft of routines. As discussed, this separation between 'objective' truth and the subjective opinion is not as prevalent in the Mediterranean media model, therefore efforts to prescribe a correct way of reporting to journalists is somewhat anathema to the media tradition that France 24 is founded in. On the other, however, the BBC and Al Jazeera showed considerable differences in their approach to collaborative newsgathering, which indicates that guidelines were primarily there to sanction the practice within the profession rather than vocalise a normative ideology around participation in newswork. The guidelines outlined by the BBC and AJPlus interviewees were mainly focused on general awareness of how to interact with potential sources safely and responsibly, so as to protect them, and ensuring content is verified as accurate and truthful. The focus in guidelines was on methods that journalists should apply. Again, this fits with the overall approach to social media users primarily as sources rather than collaborators or participants. The interviewees focused largely on how professional practices and ethics should be adapted to social media rather than rethinking what shape audience participation in mainstream news reporting may take through

the interaction on social media platforms. Therefore, the purpose of the guidelines was to

integrate collaborative newsgathering into the profession and provide a sanctioned set of rules

around it that distinguished journalists from non-journalists.

> Oh no, there should definitely be guidelines. There should be guidelines if someone is
> inside an attack of, you know, if there are people in a school shooting. And you don't
> message them with your phone. Or in the Pulse nightclub and you're like, "did you
> take this photo? Can you give it to me?" Like we've had several training of things you
> wouldn't even think of. If someone is in a situation of danger and you tweet at them it
> will make sounds. Like it will ping your phone. You're putting them in danger. Or
> someone, like, "my friend's just died." Like the Oakland fire last week here. That's a
> good example of where we were sourcing. And people whose friend's just died. How
> do you talk to these people? There's a lot of training of how do you actually reach out.
> You see so many of these, like, "Hey, I'm a journalist for blah blah, can I use your
> photo in all perpetuity?" There is just a lot of worry about how you phrase and how
> you reach out to sources. In how to even just broadly verify someone before you, like,
> verify who they are, what their bio is, looking them up on other platforms, their name.
> There are a lot of ways to verify that you should be trained in and that there should be
> guidelines in because there are a lot of ways to cut corners and get quicker to knowing
> if this is a piece of content that you should start looking into before you even start.
> You know, just a lot of simple tools that all journalists should know. We have our own
> guidelines. (E. El-Katatney, conference call interview, December 14, 2016)

The two factors that warrant guidelines according to El-Katatney was attempting to ensure

users' physical and emotional safety when interacting with journalists at her news

organisation. Ethical sourcing of content meant ensuring that sources are treated respectfully,

with their well-being in mind. Protecting sources – a responsibility that is deemed very

important in professional journalism – is extended to social media. This is understood in

terms of duty of care on the one hand, and in terms of copyright on the other. It is commonly

cited by journalists as an important component of ethical interactive newsgathering (Posetti et

al., 2014; Storyful, 2015; WAN-IFRA, 2014). Duty of care entails recognition that sources

are typically not trained journalists and unpaid when they provide content to news

organisations. Professional journalists therefore have a responsibility to ensure that they are

not taking advantage of sources in a way that might endanger them only to gain access to material that is of value to news coverage. Oftentimes, however, this means sources are patently in dangerous situations that journalists have no access to. The Syrian conflict, for example, was deemed too dangerous for journalists, who, therefore, relied on amateurs to provide information and multimedia material. A byproduct of the duty of care argument is that professional journalists ensure a degree of neutrality and removal in their interaction with users. Information is shared without journalists' intervention, and professionals continue in their role as disinterested observers. This upholds another important tenet of professional journalism and reinforces the chasm between amateurs and professionals. This same notion of duty of care is rarely problematised when dealing with young freelance journalists, who often put themselves in dangerous situations without the benefit of protection from a news organisation as a way to break into their chosen profession. In part, the argument of duty of care is what separates professionals from civilians and cements the responsibilities, role and hierarchy in interactions. On the other hand, the issue of copyright acknowledges users as publishers. They are treated as news producers in their own right and the ethical way in which to show this is through giving onscreen credit to them. While this might be seen as outsourcing responsibility for the content itself to the person who produced it, it also acts as a quality seal for the news organisation, indicating that efforts were made to verify the authenticity of social media-sourced material by tracing it back to the original owner. By absorbing the copyright of users into ethical conduct in interactive newsgathering, users are in one way treated like journalists with bylines and the potential offer – though usually not – of compensation, but it also offers transparency in the work of the professionals, indicates verification, and finally separates the news organisation from the content that suggests a degree of unaccountability.

El-Katatney considered guidelines as helpful in implementing work processes that would speed up newsgathering and verification, and could work in tandem with the training of journalists. Therefore, guidelines were considered in terms of solidifying how social media was integrated into routines on a purely operational level but not as a way to fundamentally integrate audience participation and rethink the relationship between audiences and the professional news media. Despite the view that social media has profoundly changed the relationship between professional news media and audiences, the way that it was formally integrated into professional practices was framed in very conventional terms, where the journalist carries out gatekeeping according to familiar norms. While the view that social media has allowed audiences to have a different role in the news environment as active participants rather than passive consumers was shared by the interviewees the discussion of guidelines made it clear that on a day-to-day basis there was little effort made to formally integrate this. Nevertheless, AJPlus did use interactive newsgathering in a way that took greater notice of non-elite users, which may be ascribed to the culture of the news organisation. So, whether interactive newsgathering empowered audiences and provided access to the global news flow was more a matter of the culture cultivated by journalists than formally linked to social media but rather implemented with its help.

> So, for example, we have guidelines we take quite seriously, in terms of how we approach members of the public, the extent to which we involve them in our stories in the first instance, rights, obligations, copyright and so forth, the issues around their own safety and how we credit them and how we signpost to our audiences that the material has not been filmed or recorded by a BBC journalist. So you know we have things that we abide by, you know, our own editorial standards and guidelines. But in terms of how it's used beyond that largely depends on the circumstances. (M. Frankel, phone interview, July 29, 2016)

The BBC interviewee outlined guidelines not only regarding duty of care, copyright and crediting of sources, but also on the extent to which sources are involved in the reporting. "To what extent can audience involvement be integrated into professional norms and processes without undermining them?" is the question that the guidelines seek to confront. The focus in the guidelines is largely on the interaction between professional journalist and their news organisation on the one side and the user on the other. It considers how journalists speak to sources and provides a set of rules and obligations in the exchange of content. Frankel was the only one of the three interviewees that mentioned guidelines about the extent to which users are involved in the news reporting, suggesting that there is a formalised demarcation between the task of the journalist and that of the user, which may be case-dependent. The ethical code and guidelines are mainly about setting boundaries in the interaction on both sides, and a dividing line between journalists, who must implement these rules, and the user, who is mainly brought into the newswork in a structured way through them. For example, the involvement of users was phrased as limiting access rather than opening access. There is no mention of editorial considerations in the use of eyewitness material, which are dictated by circumstance and are therefore left at the discretion of the journalist. This cements the relationship between users and journalists, where the latter adopts a set of obligations and practices that then allow them to integrate content into their coverage according to their own needs and preferences.

Pain from France 24 was the only interviewee who rejected the idea of guidelines for the use of social media-sourced material, rather suggesting training as a method to foster work processes around interactive newsgathering. This was because the existing routines and professional code for journalists was deemed transferable to interactive newsgathering and

did not require further enunciating. Rather, journalists had to be trained in how these could be applied. Guidelines were not considered a useful or efficient way to help journalists as they were either too specific or not specific enough. Interactive newsgathering was considered a tool that journalists had to learn to use effectively, which could be best served through training. However, the course of the interview also saw the interviewee speak more about the relationship between journalists and users, and the way that social media could challenge existing hierarchies in source power. This led the interviewee to consider the question of guidelines in terms of potentially challenging gatekeeping, which he argued would be mainly brought about through training. In the main, though, the issues that would be addressed in training overlapped with those listed out in the guidelines at the other two news organisations. But the fact that each case was specific and may warrant a different course of action was the reason that the interviewee believed guidelines were ineffective.

> *Pain:* Personally, I'm not a huge fan of guidelines. I think in our profession we have to adapt all the time and guidelines for me, it makes you dumb. […] For me training is more important. So yes, I think we should do a lot of training with journalists and teaching them and showing them how to use UGC. Especially, you're right, not to use a comment from an Australian guy on the Greek crisis but explaining to him how you can use voices from Greece, meaning maybe you use a translator or use Google Translate if you don't. And how to contact them, how to get more from them and where to find that comment and I think it's more a question of training than guidelines. Because guidelines, you're going to put up guidelines and then it's gonna be either too general and not really useful for journalists or it's going to be very specific and then you have to adapt it every week.

> *Interviewer:* Maybe guidelines was the wrong word but you know how you have certain news values, or you have, you know most journalists are aware of them, whether they're overtly aware of them or whether they're kind of aware of them is another thing, but you know in kind of like practices. There is a certain idea of you should be maybe impartial, what you're doing should have relevance and that kind of thing. And maybe how that's sort of adapted to social media.

> *Pain:* That's for me being too vague. You know your own news reporting should be impartial. Every journalist on earth will tell you that. It doesn't mean anything because then what is impartiality and applied to every case what does it mean concretely, and that's what's important. As I told you, I think, it's going to be too

vague or too specific and it would be very challenging to find something that is in between. It's also training. "Ok, let's work on the Greek crisis today with a group of twenty journalists and let's see what's out there and then, well, you explain." [...] You could use [guidelines] during the training and then you need to work on it and get used to it. [...] I think in the long run it would be fantastic if every journalist would have this capacity of working with UGC and social media and I hope we'll get there but so far there is still specific working with it and you develop this capacity by actually doing it. It can't be just theoretical. (J. Pain, phone interview, July 5, 2016)

Summary

Collaborative newsgathering with non-journalists and non-elites is frequently understood as "audience participation" by the interviewees. As the BBC interview revealed, understanding this type of collaborative newswork as necessarily aimed at involving subjects directly involved or affected by a news event is a misnomer. Yet, the France 24 interview suggested that some editors may hold this as an ideal to strive for, though it is not necessarily seen in practice (perhaps through lack of adequate training). Nevertheless, collaborative newswork can be viewed as a means to maintaining audiences and building brand loyalty by conveying a sense of empowerment through participation. Participation is therefore not primarily about the quality of the collaboration and its outcome, but the appeal to audiences. This is done in different ways by the organisations, depending on who they are targeting and how they understand their own role as news producers. Arguably AJPlus better understands the structures and fluidity of audiences on social media than the more hierarchical structure of the BBC. AJPlus' approach to collaborative newswork is equally driven by the impetus to reach large audiences but may be better characterised by the term 'community participation'. I posit that 'audience participation' deals with members of audiences as mainly disconnected individuals that have not fully left behind the era of mass media. News organisations may engage individuals but it takes place only as a one-to-one interaction between the user and the

news organisation. Community participation on the other hand acknowledges the interconnectedness of potential audience members and the capacity for those deemed connected, knowledgeable and authoritative inside particular networks to widely distribute news content that passes their muster. Audiences are fluid and Al Jazeera appropriates this fluidity, recognising that there are influential groups around specific topics that can help amplify AJPlus news content that resonates with them. The objective is not primarily to build an audience around AJPlus, but to insert themselves into 'ready-made' audiences. The power deferred to non-elites are substantially different with the second approach that requires a deeper integration of non-accredited sources in the newswork. The community, which is usually knowledgeable on the subject matter, has to recognise its role and voice in the newswork. By El Katatney's own admission, AJPlus favours undercovered topics, where online communities can fill a gap and more easily achieve a status of authority thanks to a lack of alternative sources. It is easy to see how agenda-setting power is harder to achieve on topics that are widely and frequently covered and a range of accredited sources cater for the routines and practices that journalists are most at ease with.

The most popular use of social media-sourced material is in breaking news scenarios. Technology has enhanced the variety and quality of news content available but changed little in terms of source power. Long-established norms and news values determine what constitutes newsworthiness. Editors found it difficult to define how users can gain their attention despite perceiving collaboration in newswork as important — for audience building or otherwise. Fulfilling the requirements of professional values and practices such as authenticity was brought up as a way to ensure content was not disregarded outright. Yet ways to influence the editorial agenda was not defined or even considered an important

aspect of collaborative newswork. This suggests limited scope for journalists to critically engage with professional practices where collaboration is concerned. The interviews suggest that interactivity between journalists and users is tightly managed and formalised, with users usually treated less as participants or collaborators and more as sources. Source power may have been affected but gatekeeping practices continue to mirror those used in the past. Participation in a more collaborative and egalitarian way is mostly seen taking place outside of the mainstream news flow, in the alternative news environment created on social media platforms. When journalists are speaking of audience participation in news reporting, it is shown to be a controlled and formalised interaction that enables sourcing of content from afar. Perhaps, as news organisations compete in the alternative news environment on social media platforms, the true audience participation is in how news products are distributed and contextualised by users.

All of the interviewees considered the question of guidelines in a solely practical sense that would help journalists apply routines, processes and ethics, and that would in turn professionalise interactive newsgathering for them. All three interviewees were also broadly in agreement about the type of practices that needed formalising and the methods that were being applied – be it through guidelines or training – showing that journalists are coming together to establish their role collectively in managing audience participation. This role is defined primarily by existing routines although emphasis on practices and values slightly varied.

9. Conclusion

At the outset, this research aimed to examine how journalists and news editors manage the collaborative newswork with non-journalists through social media and the challenges this posed to them. It soon became apparent that journalists' diminishing role as exclusive providers of news has created a seismic disruption to the industry, one that the professional community is mobilising to counteract. The mass entry of non-journalists to major information distribution platforms and the manifestation of two-way mass communication has seen journalists attempt to assert not just their relevance but also their authority. The loss of exclusivity both in news production and in control over the means of news dissemination has undoubtedly thrown the profession and its institutions into crisis. Not least, the Internet has left the entire business model on which journalism is built in disarray, with a devastating effect on the industry's profitability. However, in this muddle of information exchange and collaboration, created by the Internet and turbo-charged by social media, legacy news media remain influential in shaping news discourse[39]. This is true not only due to their economies of scale in newswork, which place them at an advantage over other news producers, or their reach through various mediums that extend beyond digital media, such as broadcast and print. It is also true because in an otherwise fragmenting news environment they are the closest we have to an overarching public sphere. Although their privileged position as news providers has become contested, mainstream news media is still largely accepted as providing the 'townhall' for public discourse. This is demonstrably the case as media exposure remains sought after by power elites and activists alike. I agree with Browne (2018) that while the

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[39] Normative approaches and professional practices in newswork are also often internalised by citizen journalism, especially where structures mirror those in professional organisations. (Lindner, 2017)

promise of the Habermasian public sphere remains unfulfilled (and is perhaps unachievable), it presents an ideal to strive for. There is I believe, the need for a place where voices meet, though I do not maintain that they must reach a common way of seeing. An agonistic model of democracy (Mouffe, 2005) does not place the same expectation on the media to build consensus. Opposing viewpoints may never be reconciled, nor is that the aim. In this model, democracy needs to find ways to accommodate irreconcilable view points, or risk becoming hegemony by consensus. If mainstream journalism's perception of what democracy should achieve is limited by the striving for consensus, the value of plurality is necessarily put into question – not only the plurality of voices but the plurality of approaches to covering those voices. Nevertheless, as a space, mainstream news media remain the institutions we have to try and tangibly manifest this aim in the real world and are therefore worth preserving.

The new news discourse that emerged from the networked nature of news production is attempting to bridge the divide between professionalism and amateurism in newswork by absorbing collaboration into journalistic norms (Hujanen 2016). But it also does so by reasserting professional authority. In fact, I argue that this news discourse is perhaps above all concerned with boundary work. The findings of my research suggest that collaborative newswork often takes place between journalists in the western news organisations studied here. Where it does not, non-elite contributors are not necessarily sought out for the value of their newswork but the value of them (and people like them) as audience. Even where non-journalists are sourced specifically for their newswork, it is often explicitly framed within the logic of professional routines to legitimate their contributions. In order to validate the amateur's newswork, this framing has to be done by professional journalists creating a very clear hierarchy that places journalists at the top. The stamp of approval that has to be

given by professionals not only creates a hierarchy between them and those they collaborate with but makes the journalist indispensable in the process. At the same time that collaboration has become a journalistic convention, professional norms and routines have been adapted and used to define legitimate collaboration that is sanctioned by the professional community.

Nevertheless, the case studies have shown a significant divergence between the three news organisations in how they approach networked journalism. The BBC used social media content extensively to promote their own reporters as well as other elite journalists, while France 24 used it primarily to source professional journalists from other news organisations and expert sources. The expectation laid out in the methodology that France 24 would present more fringe sources was not borne out significantly in the research. The migrant crisis included some extreme right voices emerging, while the BBC presented no such voices. However, original messages among citizen sources were very limited across France 24 texts. The Media Watch programme during the Greek case study involved high levels of opining and commentary, but overall France 24 did not substantially differ from that seen at the other news organisations. Meanwhile Al Jazeera most consistently used social media to source non-journalist and non-elite sources. This suggests fragmentation among news media in how to tackle collaboration. The approaches appear to be influenced by media models and cultures. One might argue this indicates diversity across the news landscape, but on the other side it also suggests a lack of shared vision with regard to what collaborative newswork should look like in practice. While in interviews they each claimed collaborative newsgathering as an important journalistic practice for themselves, it was the mere adoption of collaboration as convention that appeared common denominator among the professional

community. Consensus on how, or to what end, collaboration takes place seemed mostly absent. The interviews and case studies showed that collaborative newsgathering has been integrated into journalistic norms (i.e. the watchdog role, facilitating public discourse through diversity and inclusivity, objectivity, etc) as well as professional routines. But how each organisation approached this integration into norms and practices (ie. who they collaborated with and how this was framed) appears to be shaped largely by how they understand their role as journalists, which is influenced by the respective media traditions and cultures. Yet, the focus did not only differ between news organisations but showed a degree of change across case studies which also indicated weak internal coherence in each organisation's approach. Collaboration could be borne out of necessity in some cases, and not in others, and this influenced its nature – as the case study on the Syrian conflict showed. This chimes with the assertion that normative approaches to journalism are extremely difficult to ring fence and are subject to rapid changes, which calls the idea of a claim to professionalism itself into question. Lewis (2015) calls for a more interdisciplinary approach to explore boundary work, acknowledging the rhetoric, practice and the objects around and through which boundaries are drawn. Such a holistic view of boundary work creates space to analyse the different mechanisms and approaches to boundary work from different angles and creates a richer picture of how the profession asserts exclusivity as journalists and imposes authority even as digital news practices are integrated.

For example, while the polemic around collaborative newsgathering in a professional context was strong from each news organisation during the interviews, the adoption of Twitter as the main platform where collaboration was performed favoured specific dynamics in this interaction. Journalists claimed to endow social media-sourced content with journalistic value

by stamping their own processes on it. There were numerous examples of user-generated content used to underscore the professional nature of journalism. It was used to promote professional journalists as, for example, seen in the BBC and France 24 coverage of the Greek referendum; to highlight deviant practices such as in the coverage of the actions of the Hungarian camerawoman in the case study of the migrant crisis; to legitimise non-journalistic material through journalistic norms as seen extensively in the Aleppo case study across all three news organisations; to act as public forum for discussion with The Stream hosting citizen discussions; and also to broaden the number of news sources for newswork – the reports on Palestinian pen seller, the huge pool of journalists in Brussels sharing each other's insights during the negotiations on the Greek loan, and the majority of sources from Aleppo itself, to name just a few. All in all, this suggests that professionals understand their role to have a very strong gatekeeping component, which is expressed in the way they collaborate and how they legitimise or delegitimise their sources. Non-journalists, especially non-elite ones, have little opportunity to define networked journalism. Arguably a more empowered position was only granted to non-elites in the formats that Al Jazeera used. This is likely to have been the case as they were quite structured and formulaic in their collaboration through The Stream and AJPlus, which carved out a distinct space for non-elites.

The research defined three research questions in the methodology. Each case study and the interviews attempted to deal with these questions. Therefore, I want to largely avoid repeating these case-specific conclusions here, but rather produce a more removed perspective. It is difficult to address the questions separately as they inevitably overlap in places. Although I have attempted to deal with them individually as far as possible. The conclusion seems more

coherent when bringing the questions together as an overall analysis of gatekeeping in networked journalism.

RQ1: Is social media sourcing affecting the power relationships between primary and secondary definers?

RQ2: How do professional journalists create and articulate professional boundaries in the participation by non-authoritative citizen voices/audiences?

RQ3: What mechanisms do professional journalists use to maintain their gatekeeping role?

One of the most striking findings of this research is the blurring between primary and secondary definers. Secondary definers, meaning journalists, appear to act like traditional primary definers, assuming roles of authority and expertise in analysis and commentary. Professionals could achieve a degree of celebrity among peers. For example, the Greek referendum case study showed that the 'right kind' of journalist could have significant clout in gaining access to Western elite mainstream news media. This journalist was usually part of the professional elite themselves. So journalists did not necessarily go to power elites for information but sourced information from their peers, both bolstering each other's reputation through promotion of each other's newswork, and fostering an interpretive community[40]. There are obvious reasons for this in terms of journalistic conventions, as professionals are

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[40] To put the findings in the Greek referendum case study in context, political reporting has long been characterised by 'pack journalism' (McNair, 2012) and the data suggests that journalists appropriate social media to continue this practice virtually.

keen to appear removed from power elites and as gatekeepers to their spin. Of course, power elites also continued to act as primary definers for journalists, but the networked journalism that resulted cannot be easily put down to the sole (or even primary) framing and agenda-setting of these sources. It could be argued that journalists closed ranks to safeguard their value of autonomy and relied on each other as individually autonomous journalists to build what they might understand as an autonomous community. Social media has not only revolutionised the communication flow between audiences and news organisations, but also the communication flow between media professionals, and this is being used by them to assert influence and authority. The resulting journalist community is clearly also perceived as hostile, or at least unaccommodating, by outsiders – politicians from less influential European Union countries used Twitter extensively to speak to the public about the Greek loan negotiations – and this is obvious in how their gatekeeping is side-stepped with the help of social media. While some newsmakers, who presumably feel supported by the journalist elite, choose to primarily speak through the news media, others do not. Yanis Varoufakis' resignation is a case in point. Aware of the framing power of journalists (and his own ability to circumvent it), Varoufakis chose to publish his own resignation as Greek finance minister to a mass audience rather than speak to and through international news media. Most notably, he did so in English. In the Greek case study, 'sense-making' and analysis was carried out extensively by BBC journalists and some other journalists, while France 24 relied heavily on accredited expert sources – traditional primary definers – but also journalists. Hall et al. (1978) may have once welcomed journalists assuming greater power in the relationship with power elites. Writing in the 1970s, he might have seen journalists' role as stand-in citizens being given greater autonomy and importance. However, the persisting marginalisation of non-elite voices in sourcing, interaction, and collaboration through a medium that lends itself

to greater inclusion, means the journalistic community is revealed to be mainly concerned with its struggle for its own elitist position. Certainly, social media has not been the leveller it once promised to be in mass news media and inclusion of non-elites, especially by political correspondents, is not a priority (Molyneux and Mourão, 2019; Nuernbergk, 2016). With the exception of journalists' increased visibility through the support of their community, sourcing practices have not changed substantially. I would argue that especially at a time where the concept of professionalism has come under intense scrutiny, journalists have an interest in maintaining the status quo, emphasising their supposed authority and falling back on their reliance on power elites, rather than opening up to more diverse collaborative newswork. In the Greek case study, both BBC and France 24 fell back on their reliance on power elites, even in their social media sources. The texts from the refugee crisis showed a more varied picture, where the BBC relied heavily on their own and other journalists, while France 24 limited the level of social media-sources overall. Since power elites already have privileged access to the news media, they continued to be heavily represented regardless.

In the case studies I highlighted the reliance on primarily English-speaking sources, which, given the news stories, were arguably not always the most informative or representative of voices. For example, by relying on only English-speaking sources in the coverage of the Greek debt crisis, these testimonies may not have provided a particularly authentic view of what ordinary Greeks thought or communicated to one another in their social networks. It arguably highlights how these sources were attempting to speak to a global community. The news organisations' use of them perhaps illustrates how journalists, broadly speaking, choose those who are accessible to them, which suggests that collaboration can be focused on the

discourse of contemporary newswork than the qualitative impact that participation can have in broadening newswork.

While plurality and inclusiveness is certainly a journalistic norm, it can be argued that in a news environment where newswork is no longer necessarily controlled by journalists, non-elites pose a greater threat to professionalism than elites. Journalists' continued relevance in news production with regards to power elites is self-evident, as they fall back on engrained ideological justifications for their profession as gatekeepers against power elites and political spin – encapsulated in the well-worn expression of 'holding power to account'. In other words, power elites are not challenging professional journalism's raison d'etre. However, amateurs engaged in newswork are. Ordinary people, such as eyewitnesses, recording news events and publishing their material online, do so too. The notion that journalists' work must provide the basis of an informed citizenry has arguably become much harder to defend when ordinary people themselves can and do carry out some of this work. Even routines of fact-checking and verification, both of which are usually invoked with regard to eyewitness material, do not require a journalist per se. 'Fact-checking' projects such as snopes.com and factcheck.org have mushroomed and so-called fact-checkers do not necessarily think of themselves as journalists. What was always considered a self-evident journalistic practice, primarily carried out by the journalist and then their sub-editors, has been revamped as a new occupation of sorts to tackle what has been dubbed 'fake news', 'misinformation', or 'information disorder'. Ironically, dealing with misinformation has even become a semi-academic pursuit in recent years despite journalism's aim to claim the area of verification for themselves, while public bodies and political entities are also trying to enter

this field (Poynter 2018). Beyond doubt, fact-checking is used in boundary work in journalism, but even there it is contested as an exclusive domain of journalism.

The objectivity norm is also difficult to use as a defence when there is no overt bias, though objectivity is often the go-to norm when dealing with any activism. Boundary work to distinguish professional newswork from that by non-elite actors can be tricky because there is just no one-size-fits-all approach, and acts of journalism are carried out by non-journalists (Allan 2013). As non-elite sources can be the trickiest for journalists to distinguish themselves from, boundary work can be as basic as distinguishing between those who have authority and those who do not through inclusion and exclusion from newswork – meaning that non-elite sources that encroach on the newswork of journalists too much are sidelined where there is not an overwhelming need to include them. As the case studies showed, Al Jazeera did the most to deviate from this hierarchy, showing that they understood part of the purpose of their professionalism as providing a broad forum. However, this was always clearly signposted, with a division between straight up news reporting, which (except in the Aleppo case study) comprised little social media content, and news content that was especially tailored to social media. This is significant because there was still boundary work that was communicated through the different news products. AJPlus and The Stream news products were far more likely to comprise social media-sourced content, as opposed to coverage on the main website aljazeera.net. In addition, the news products that were focused on social media content were couched in the idea of inclusivity and facilitating public debate, which are themselves journalistic norms. The convention of collaboration the way Hujanen (2016) described it was perhaps most closely represented there, with the journalist managing the chaos of citizen debate.

There are exceptional circumstances where access might be impossible, such as seen in the Aleppo case study. There, the public audience was exposed to high levels of legitimising of non-journalists through journalistic boundary work, even though they may not have been in keeping with journalistic norms and practices with regard to independence, impartiality and even autonomy. However, the defence of professionalism was asserted in tandem with the reliance on non-journalists' newswork. It is likely that by doing so, news organisations undermined their exclusivity as news providers through a short-term trade-off for the benefit of keeping production costs down and their own correspondents safe. The aggressive pursuit of journalists, not only by the Syrian regime but also by opposition fighters, must be understood as a battle for controlling the news narrative. And this was a battle that was decidedly won by the opposition to President Bashar al-Assad across the three news organisations – though to different extents across the news outlets. These sources were able to become primary definers of the Syrian conflict in much of the coverage, but were also secondary definers through their activity as news producers in their localities. In fact, part of the legitimising of their newswork by professional journalists was in promoting them as taking on journalistic practices, therefore partly integrating them into the journalistic community.

The way the three news organisations managed participation by non-elites was perhaps the most diverse out of all the source groups, ranging from near exclusion to appearing to embed newswork with particular communities. The BBC appeared to be mainly concerned with reaffirming the power relationship between journalists and non-elite voices. Non-elite and audience participation in newswork was condensed into the same thing, which meant that

BBC news editors were primarily interested in involving their global audience in order to foster brand loyalty. There was a sense that audience participation was integrated because it made business sense. In the case studies, collaborative newswork with non-elites was often mainly about engaging the BBC audience and not necessarily about exploring new voices to produce more multifaceted coverage of the news event. Collaboration with non-elites in newswork was very low except for the Aleppo coverage, where a high level of legitimating was carried out by the BBC. Al Jazeera's reasoning for how it managed participation by non-elites was also partly built around audience reach, but rather than claiming a particular audience for itself, it tried to harness the existing audience for a particular news topic. It recognised the fluidity in news consumption, and the 'influencers' and communities at the centre of particular news content on social media. To capitalise on the audiences built around these communities, more parity between journalists and amateurs was needed. France 24 on the other hand used non-elite sources often to simply source the content of other mainstream news media, so that the original input of these sources was virtually non-existent. The outlet was perhaps the most consistent in excluding non-elite sources from newswork, and even in the Aleppo case study took the most removed approach to such sources. While France 24 Observers gave non-elites a much more prominent role in collaborative newswork, it was not found to have had any relevance to the case studies. Its own news agenda existed in parallel to the mainstream news agenda. This perhaps also limited how explicit the newswork needed to be in terms of showing boundary work, as collaboration with non-elite users did not bleed into the main news output. It was presented as a specialised form of newswork that was physically removed from the bulk of the journalism produced at France 24. At least in these case studies it was not a driver in agenda-setting routines, with no integration into the

mainstream news cycle. The relevant and topical newswork of the day remained firmly in the hands of journalists.

It is probably no coincidence that Twitter has emerged as the social media platform of choice for most journalists. The professional networked community can be perhaps one of the most powerful gatekeeping tools available to journalists, while at the same time appearing to be in the thick of the collaborative newswork. Out of all the platforms available for networked journalism, it was the one that was relied on the most, and this is no coincidence. Many prolific journalist tweeters cultivate their 'following' to 'follower' ratio. The number of users they follow – often in the low thousands and sometimes in the hundreds – are those that they deem important enough to listen to. For them, Twitter provides two-way communication but they hold a megaphone and have highly selective hearing. Social media (usually Twitter) for journalists is largely not a place to listen and watch but a place to speak and be heard. The microblog as a platform for news and opinion makers to put information out was also pointed out by BBC Editor Mark Frankel, only underlining how journalists' are most comfortable in a space that replicates the sourcing practices they are used to. English writer and producer Charlie Brooker once likened Twitter to a video game, summing it up: 'It's a massive online, multiplayer RPG in which you choose an avatar and you act out a persona loosely based on your own in order to gain followers" (Channel 4 News 2013). The observation is perhaps a little tongue-in-cheek – in keeping with Brooker's own public persona – but there is truth to it. Twitter is a tool by which most journalists chase audiences based on their image and strategic networks of collaboration. When collaboration happens it is usually expected to happen with the 'right' people. Anyone outside of this might provide a 'scoop' but is not brought into the collaborative relationship beyond that. I would add that if you were to view

Twitter as a game, it is not just each man for himself – on the contrary, tied into it is a necessary element of community building which can benefit the community overall. The professional networked community can be perhaps one of the most powerful gatekeeping tools available to journalists. Carlson (2018) has written about journalism's objectivity norm as a commitment to remaining external to the political process in order to occupy the "symbolic communicative center of democratic society" and has called on journalists to advocate the social value of this norm. I am inclined to agree, but believe that such externality should also require journalists to exist outside the echo chambers of their own networks. I would argue that in networked journalism among the professional elite, the idea of externality has been often abandoned. Indeed, the use of the concept of filter bubbles to berate audiences and defend professional journalism is, arguably, illogical – given the blind spot that consists around the filter bubble of networked journalists themselves. It can be argued that the social media echo chambers created and inhabited by journalists exist primarily to reinforce their professional authority, but given the loss of control over newswork as a whole, the question is whether they are largely self-affirming (even self-deceiving) about the state and status of the profession. The more the journalist elite fosters its own community, the less it is able to connect with the wider public. Given that the role of stand-in citizen has become somewhat obsolete for journalists, they need to reimagine their role in different terms. Instead of chasing the self-perception of acting as stand-in citizen, perhaps it is time to foster a new role as link between citizens and journalism's institutions.

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