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To cite this article: Anja Salzmann, Frode Guribye & Astrid Gynnild (2020): “We in the Mojo Community” – Exploring a Global Network of Mobile Journalists, Journalism Practice, DOI: [10.1080/17512786.2020.1742772](https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2020.1742772)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2020.1742772>



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Published online: 03 Apr 2020.



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## “We in the Mojo Community” – Exploring a Global Network of Mobile Journalists

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### ABSTRACT

Mobile journalism is a fast-growing area of journalistic innovation that requires new skills and work practices. Thus, a major challenge for journalists is learning not only how to keep up with new gadgets but how to advance and develop a *mojo mindset* to pursue their interests and solidify future work options. This paper investigates a globally pioneering network of *mojo* journalism, the Mojo Community, that consists of journalists and practitioners dedicated to creating multimedia content using mobile technologies. The study is based on empirical data from interviews with and the observation of the participants of the community over a two-year period. The analysis draws on Wenger’s concept of “communities of practice” to explore the domain, structure, and role of this communal formation for innovation and change in journalistic practices. The community’s core group is comprised of journalists mainly affiliated with legacy broadcast organizations and with a particular interest in and extensive knowledge of mobile technologies. The participants perceive their engagement with the community as a way of meeting the challenges of organizational reluctance to change, fast-evolving technological advancements, and uncertain job prospects.

### KEYWORDS

Mobile journalism;  
community of practice;  
mobile technologies; *mojo*  
community; digital culture;  
*mojo*; smartphone reporting;  
mobile content creation

## Introduction

Mobile journalism is considered to be one of the fastest growing areas of journalism (Hill and Bradshaw 2019; Perreault and Stanfield 2018) and is characterized by the close entanglement between journalism and technology. Westlund and Quinn (2018) describe mobile journalism as a journalistic process, and Burum (2016) refers to it as a “holistic form of multimedia storytelling” (153) whereby a professional journalist writes, shoots, edits, and publishes news stories entirely on a mobile, networked, handheld, multimedia device (see Jokela, Vääätäjä, and Koponen 2009; Westlund and Quinn 2018). In this study, the practices of mobile journalism, also called “*mojo*” and “*mojo practices*,” are understood as a form of all-around, multimedia solo reporting in which the smartphone serves as a complete production unit for collecting, editing, and disseminating news. *Mojo practices* have been labeled as a market-driven, neo-journalistic approach (Burum 2016) and constitute a breeding ground for innovative journalistic practices evolving within and beyond the

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scope of traditional news institutions. While mobile phones have been used by journalists for decades as a basic working tool (Quinn 2012), smartphones have become an “all-in-one-tool” that is also referred to as “the swiss army knife” (Quinn 2009) or a “pocket-sized mobile creative suite” for journalists (Borum and Quinn 2016). According to Pavlik (2019), smartphones are considered to be the most important resource for any journalist to handle the constantly expanding opportunities for multimedia storytelling. In tandem with technological advancements (Berry and Schleser 2014; Westlund 2013; Quinn 2013), practices of mobile journalism have gradually developed from applying the first solo video news-gathering tools in the 1990s (Bock 2012; Martyn 2009; Cameron 2011) to using smartphones as full-fledged multimedia production units (Borum 2016; Staschen and Wellinga 2018).

Adopting *mojo* practices in news organizations should be attractive for a number of reasons: mobile productions tend to be very flexible and hold the promise for organizations to reduce production costs and present a fast way to produce video, audio, and multimedia content for multiple platforms (Sundet 2012; Jokela, Väättäjä and Koponen 2009; Staschen and Wellinga 2018; Mills et al. 2012). *Mojo* practices make the journalist fully operational for a 24/7 news production cycle (Carolus et al. 2018; Westlund and Quinn 2018; Guribye and Nyre 2017; Bruck and Madanmohan 2013; Lund 2012). Furthermore, *mojo* practices are closely entangled with social media platforms and are open for new formats and ways of storytelling (Montgomery 2018) that hold the promise to reach younger audiences (Gentilviso and Aikat 2019; Molyneux 2017) by engaging with social media practices and emerging new visualities (Schleser 2014).

However, while *mojo* is commonplace in some news organizations and media start-ups, the practices are still met with skepticism within Western legacy broadcast organizations (Perreault and Stanfield 2018; Karhunen 2017; Hadland, Borges-Rey and Cameron 2019). Traditional broadcast organizations are challenged to overcome long-established institutional working routines as well as defined professional roles and existing principles of quality (Wallace 2009, 2013; Guribye and Nyre 2017). In some cases, broadcast-journalist unions deliberately try to slow down the adoption of all-round solo reporting practices (Perez and Cremedas 2014) as such practices place more tasks on the individual journalist and increase potential work-related health risks such as burnout (Blankenship 2016; Wenger and Potter 2014).

Research on the learning and innovation processes of professional journalists is mainly limited to experiences from journalism education (Steensen 2018 in Porcu 2016). There is still little knowledge about how and where professional journalists develop new professional practices or adapt to new technologies. This study addresses this issue by focusing on a group of professional broadcast journalists who explore the disruptive potential of mobile technology in journalism by engaging in and learning through a network of peers. They are the forerunners and early adopters (Rogers and Shoemaker 1971), or journalistic pioneers (Hepp and Loosen 2019), of mobile journalism, organizing themselves in a global community dedicated to pursuing knowledge on how to apply mobile technologies for journalistic purposes and mobile content creation.

Drawing on Wenger’s ([1998]; 2002) theoretical concept of “community of practice” (CoP), this study investigates *the role* of this particular community as an overlooked collective actor in the field of mobile journalism. Furthermore, the study *explores the individual motives* of selected community members who serve as so-called “*mojo* trainers.” These

mojo trainers are involved in spreading the knowledge, ideas, and meanings developed by this peer group to a broad range of stakeholders beyond the confines of the community.

The analysis is based on qualitative data collected through participant-observation at the Mobile Journalism Conference in Galway, Ireland, 2017 and on 17 in-depth interviews with mojo trainers from eleven different countries. The analysis shows that this particular community is an important *orientation, experimentation, and innovation hub* for its participants. The hub is particularly important for the many international mojo trainers who teach mojo to journalist colleagues and mobile content creators in many countries based on negotiated meanings, practices, and resources developed in the community. The data indicate that this journalistic pioneer community serves an important role as an intermediary in developing the field of mobile journalism and content creation practices, negotiating and envisioning as well as spreading knowledgeable arguments for future developments in the field. The analysis also offers insights regarding the importance of a social space for journalistic innovation and learning culture. This study thus provides perspectives beyond the increasingly criticized “newsroom-centricity” of journalism research (Wahl-Jorgensen 2009; Anderson 2011; Hermida 2019; Deuze and Witschge 2018).

The paper is divided into four main sections, we start by briefly explaining the background and the theoretical framework of the study, then describe the empirical data and method, and finally discuss the results.

## Background

The adoption of mojo practices can lead to tensions and conflicts in news organizations. According to Perreault and Stanfield (2018), journalists promoting mojo practices in such organizations were perceived as “a burden” and as being “the harbinger of changes to come” (8) and thought that news managers and senior editorial staff were less willing to embrace the necessary changes. Furthermore, “professional journalists’ ambivalence to new technologies” (Hadland, Borges-Rey and Cameron 2019, p. 18) might be due to the difficulties in integrating the new technologies into the established production systems and the tight connection to the challenges of verifying mobile news content produced by amateurs. Innovations in journalistic practice thus challenge existing workflows, practices, values, and the understanding of professional roles (Wallace 2009; Borger et al. 2013; Perez and Cremedas 2014). The issue of quality plays a special role in the context of broadcast journalism marked by long-developed principles and standards of quality of audio-visual content production (Mills et al. 2012; Hadland, Borges-Rey and Cameron 2019; Ellis 2015) as well as TV journalism’s reliance on teamwork to manage the complex technological challenges involved in TV productions (Ellis 2015). Blankenship (2016) found a negative perception of solo journalism among TV journalists, who associated models of solo- and multi-skilling with cost-cutting and a lack of journalistic quality (see also Karhunen 2017).

While there are several challenges for the adoption of mojo practices, especially in major Western broadcast organizations, scholars have pointed out that mobile production skills are increasingly required for professional journalists (Wenger, Owens, and Thompson 2014) and are considered as “salient in the current media environment” (Jones 2017, p. 344). According to Deuze and Witschge (2018), journalists are expected to update

their skill portfolio and work routines in order to keep up with the developments that change the news industry. This applies also to novel journalistic practices such as mobile reporting and mobile content creation that require distinct competencies and skills to be trained and developed (Kumar and Haneef 2018).

Research on learning processes within legacy media newsrooms is mostly limited to experiences from journalism education (Steel et al. 2007; Porcu 2017). Porcu (2017) explored innovative learning cultures within legacy media newsrooms and argued that the scarcity of scholarly attention to learning and innovation processes of professional journalists was “the biggest gap in the media innovation literature” (12). Lowrey, Sherrill and Broussard (2019) explored journalistic learning cultures by focusing on the example of data journalism and by looking at ancillary organizations as key agents involved in ongoing journalistic developments and innovation processes. They claimed that journalism labs, professional training centers, and membership organizations, foundations, and academic programs are important intermediaries in the ongoing development processes in journalism, fostering communication between actors, defining “the meaning of innovations” (6), and helping to legitimize innovation processes. Hepp and Loosen (2019) conceptualized pioneer journalists and pioneer communities as intermediaries of organizational change processes in the news industry. Journalists who emerge as forerunners or early adopters (Rogers and Shoemaker 1971), stimulating and exploring innovative journalistic practices and technologies, serve as agents of such transformation processes (Quinn 2012, 2013; Mills, Pellanda, and Pase 2017). Hepp and Loosen further argued that pioneer journalists in their role as intermediaries between media development, journalistic work, and other social fields rely on an ongoing exchange of ideas and knowledge across various institutional, formal, and informal contexts (see also Hepp 2016). Thus, pioneer journalists are typically embedded within communities of practice and “embody imaginations of possible future scenarios” (Hepp and Loosen 2019, 6).

## Theoretical Framework

The theoretical concept of “community of practice” (CoP) originates from the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) in the early 1990s and was coined to address the situated and social nature of learning. In this framework, learning is understood as a socially constructed experience of meaning-making situated in a cultural and historical context (Farnsworth, Kleanthous, and Wenger-Trayner 2016), and the resulting CoP is characterized by three fundamental and interrelated dimensions of shared experience: *mutual engagement*, *a joint enterprise*, and *a shared repertoire* (Wenger 1998, 72–73). Later, Wenger revised and renamed the three structural dimensions of a CoP to *domain*, *community*, and *practice* (Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder 2002).

Wenger’s (1998, 2002) concept of CoP applies to a specific structured process of social interaction and negotiation of competence in a special area, or “domain,” over time (Farnsworth, Kleanthous, and Wenger-Trayner 2016, 143). It is defined as “groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis” (Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder 2002, 4).

In the contemporary context of networked social life and studies of digital culture, the concept of CoP has attracted renewed attention. Stalder (2018) identifies “new forms of

communality that develop in the offshoots of networked life” (83) as a fundamental part of digital culture that is promoted by new virtual spaces for social interaction and that increasingly play a role in influencing social action. Thus, Stalder highlights the concept of CoP as a productive means of looking at and understanding new ways of social acting, learning, practicing, and knowing (84–85). CoP also serves as an umbrella term that encompasses previously developed concepts such as vicarious learning and observational learning (Bandura 1974).

## Methodological Approach and Sites of Investigation

This study follows a qualitative approach based on empirical material gathered through participatory observations at key sites for mojo community interactions and 17 in-depth semi-structured interviews with selected members (mojo trainers) of the community. The annual Mobile Journalism Conference (MoJoCon) in Ireland and the community’s public Facebook group named Mojofest Community – Where the Global Mojo Community Meet and Share, which currently has about 5,800 members (as of November 2019), were identified as important field sites for research on the community.

The conference has been organized since 2015 and was originally initiated and hosted by the Irish public broadcaster Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ). The event is considered pivotal for the emergence of the mojo community and is furthermore one of the most important gathering points for face-to-face interactions by the community’s core group. We chose the conference as one of our fields of investigation to gain access to the community, to obtain empirical data through participatory observations on the community’s social interactions, and to establish contact with relevant interlocutors. The data was gathered during the third Mojo conference, which was carried out in Galway, Ireland, from May 4–6, 2017. The data was logged by taking field notes during the event and by collecting documents and material, including news media coverage between 2015–2018 that was publicly available and related to the activities of the community. In order to prepare the interviews and to enrich background data about the conference and the community, social interactions in the community’s Facebook group were observed regularly and data recorded using field notes.

The 17 in-depth interviews with active mojo trainers from the community lasted between 45 and 60 min each and produced more than 16 h of recorded data that were transcribed. The interviews were conducted over a two-year period, from February 2017 to September 2019. The first one was conducted in February 2017 during a local mojo training in academic education and the following six interviews during the conference in Galway, Ireland, in May 2017. The tight-packed time schedule of many potentially interesting interlocutors attending the conference proved to be very challenging in order to collect more interview data at this particular meeting point. Therefore, also due to the fact that many interesting informants were situated on different continents and were frequent work travelers, appointed Skype-interviews proved to be the best solution for gathering more interview data and following-up on interviews. The selected informants were identified as pioneers in using mobile technologies for solo multimedia storytelling and reporting. They were experienced practitioners, describing themselves as “mojo trainers” or “mobile media consultants,” thus being involved in spreading knowledge about mojo practices to other groups beyond the circles of the community. However, their roles

and levels of engagement in the community varied to a high degree. Six persons with very high degrees of engagement were identified as being part of the community's core group. Seven interviews were done with active members who participated and engaged on a regularly basis in the community activities. The other four informants were more passive community members; they followed the activities of the community but were not very active in social interactions during the time of observation. Twelve of the interviewees were male and five female, altogether representing mobile journalists and mobile content creators from 11 different nationalities and four different continents.

Nearly all informants (14 of 17) had received professional education or training as a journalist. Only two of them had gained their journalistic skills based on practical training alone. One informant was a technician who had worked for many years as a broadcast engineer and later on as the head of the innovation department at a national broadcast corporation in Europe. Eight informants were freelancers, and nine were permanent employees. Eight of the permanent employed informants were contracted at a Western media broadcast organization, while the last one worked as a lecturer in an academic journalism training program. All the permanently employed informants pursued journalistic as well as trainer roles in mobile journalism (mojo trainer), thus spreading knowledge about mojo practices beyond the boundaries of their employing organization and the mojo community.

The interviewed group of freelancers had a more complex and hybrid occupational portfolio. These solo freelancers earned their living optionally and often combined jobs as mojo trainers, mobile journalists, and mobile content creators for business communication.

The interviews were structured into three sections. In the first section, informants were asked about their professional background, journalistic working experience, and how they were introduced to the practice of mobile journalism. The second section focused on their experience in applying mojo for professional production in their current work environment. Finally, the third section explored the role of the community for the informants. They were asked how they became aware of the global network, how they perceived the activities of the community, and about their motives to participate or engage in the network.

The material was first sorted into the preliminary topics and themes that were identified. The themes were then sorted into overlaying thematic categories on the issues that motivated the respondents to participate and engage in the community. The first author carried out the initial analysis, which was then discussed in a number of collaborative analysis sessions.

## Findings

The mojo community can be traced back to global pioneering mobile journalism projects (Borum 2016; Jokela, Väättäjä, and Koponen 2009; Quinn 2009, 2013) and is linked to institutions engaging in mobile journalism practices, such as the news agency Reuters, the Thomson Foundation, the Nokia Research Center, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the Irish public broadcaster RTÉ, and especially the European Association of Regional Television (Circom), which first brought the mojo pioneers together and supported the first training sessions for professional TV and video journalists. In 2015, the

innovation department of RTÉ, which at the time had been employing mobile journalist pioneers and was a visionary actor in the field of video and multimedia journalism (Burum and Quinn 2016; Staschen 2017), initiated the first worldwide conference on mobile journalism in Dublin, Ireland. The initiative was motivated by the perceived disappointment and frustration among enthusiastic mojo practitioners, who had experienced under-appreciation by colleagues and the media organizations by which they were employed. A way out of this situation was to gather a larger group of like-minded people outside their common institutional work relations to help each other collectively through new forms of knowledge gathering. The former head of the innovation department at RTÉ described the strategic objective of initiating the first international mobile journalism conference and the mojo community as follows:

The idea of [the] mojo conference was bringing together a lot of the international journalist pioneers and innovators so that we could share, share knowledge, share ideas, debate the future, and basically create a collaborative community that could experiment and grow their talent as mobile content creators.

The reflections of this respondent correspond well with Wenger's (2002) definition of a community of practice. The idea of a community is here promoted in order to create a social fabric for people who have a common interest in mobile technology at the intersection of journalism and content creation and want to share experiences, knowledge, and new ideas. By participating in a community, people build collaborative relationships, exchange information, establish norms, and negotiate meaning. Consequently, the engagement of members binds them together socially and enables the community to conduct processes of social learning. Wenger (1998) summarized this phenomenon under the structural dimension of *mutual engagement* and noted it as a basic feature of a CoP (76).

### **The Domain of the Mojo Community**

The shared domain or field of interest of a CoP, also referred to by Wenger (1998) as the *joint enterprise*, that links its members together can be described for the mojo community as an interest in mobile technology, especially smartphones and related technologies, at the intersection of journalism and the more generic field of mobile content creation. Nonetheless, retracing the *indigenous enterprise* (Wenger 1998) of the mojo community, an important pillar to generating community coherence, demands long-term observation. The particular area of activity and the body of knowledge that a CoP organizes itself around is, according to Wenger (1998), a substantial part of the community's ongoing collective negotiation processes and thus is not a fixed matter but is influenced by the conditions of the community, its composition, and the contexts in which it is embedded (Wenger 1998, 84). A shared object of interest and a central symbol for the activities of the mojo community is embodied by the artefact of the smartphone. It is paraphrased by community members as a "power center for content creation," a "swiss army knife for journalists," and a "complete content production unit." The smartphone represents an anchor point for the practice of the community and is the core object of identification for its members. The special role of the smartphone is manifested in visual representations of community activities and its developed resources. The mobile appears also in a more abstract sense—that is, in the name of the community and in the habit of community



members to refer to themselves with titles like “mobile journalist” (or the abbreviation “mojo”), “mobile content creator,” “smartphone journalist,” and even “smartphone evangelist.”

### ***Structural Aspects of the Mojo Community***

CoPs emerge in various forms and can be identified by several structural features or attributes in order to categorize them into typologies. Communities can be classified according to different attributes such as size (number of members), age (period of existence), lifespan (from temporary to permanent), process of creation (intentional or spontaneous), boundary characteristics, composition (homogenous or heterogenous), and more, like their degree of reliance on information and communication technology (ICT; Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder 2002; Agrifoglio 2015). Based on how much communities rely on ICT, they can be classified into face-to-face (Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder 2002; Dubé, Bourhis, and Jacob 2006) or virtual (digital) communities (Rheingold 1991; Hammond 2016). However, this strict division into physical and virtual interaction is not suitable to describe the social interactions of the community that is the focus of this paper. In the following section, the features that characterize the mojo community are thus discussed in particular.

The activities and interactions of the mojo community are closely intertwined between the physical and digital spaces. While most of the mojo community’s practices are mediated and situated in virtual environments (social media platforms, messenger apps, conference apps, etc.), regularly attending conferences and meetings that enable face-to-face contact is also crucial to strengthening the coherence between community members. During the conference, social interactions happened simultaneously in both spaces (digital and physical) and flowed almost seamlessly between the different social arenas due to community members’ extensive use of smartphones and related technologies. We thus suggest describing the mojo community as a “hybrid community” (Agrifoglio 2015), characterized by an enmeshment of virtual and physical interactions and activities.

### ***Composition of the Community and Levels of Participation***

The community’s most ubiquitous and most easily accessible meeting point is found on the social media platform Facebook, which hosts a heterogenous group of people with various cultural and professional backgrounds, motives, and interests. Although primarily initiated and coordinated by professional journalists, the community’s practice attracts also the attention of people with a professional background and interests beyond journalism, including “content creators” (public relations and communication professionals), commercial equipment producers (mojo software and hardware manufacturers), video trainers, educators, researchers, and students.

Members of communities participate with different degrees of engagement. Wenger (2002) identified three main levels of participation. First, there is a small circle of people who form the community’s “core group” and take a leadership role within the group. They are very active, engaging in discussions or debates in the public community forum, initiating projects, and identifying topics that are relevant to the community

(Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder 2002, 56). At the next level of participation there are the “active members,” those who regularly attend events or meetings of the community and engage in the community’s public forum but without the same intensity as the core group. Finally, the largest group consists of members who are a part of the community’s peripheral context and take a more passive, observational role. This also resonates with Bandura’s (1974) concept of vicarious learning emphasizing that observing and imitating the behavior of others is key to learning. In the same vein, Lave and Wenger (1991) used the term legitimate peripheral participation to characterize this form of learning. It is worth noting that the degree of engagement and participation is never fixed and varies for a member over time.

The informants interviewed in this study were part of the community’s core group. Several of them were connected to Western public broadcast corporations such as the BBC (United Kingdom), RTÉ (Ireland), ABC (Australia), ARD (Germany), CBC (Canada), CNN (USA), NRK (Norway), or SVT (Sweden), to name only a few. In addition to that, there were traceable connections of community members to several ancillary organizations engaged in the development of journalism, such as the Thomson Foundation, Circum, or the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. The members of the core group were all active as mojo trainers or mobile media consultants during the time of the study. The majority of members of the Facebook group did not appear to be active but probably observed the interactions of the group or engaged only when necessary. According to the interviewed mojo trainers, an increasing part of these “silent members” are mojo novices who joined the group after attending a mojo training course in order to develop their mojo expertise by benefitting from the gathered resources and collective expertise of the mojo community.

Participatory observations at the Mobile Journalism Conference in Ireland as well as of the community’s interactions on Facebook revealed that the most active members of the community increasingly explore the capabilities as well as limitations of mobile technology and other related technologies in order to develop and test new techniques for reporting and content creation. These forerunners, or mojo pioneers (Hepp and Loosen 2019), are eager to expand the boundaries of existing practices and stimulate journalistic innovations. In a published practical guide for mobile journalism, they describe themselves, compared with their journalistic colleagues, as horizon scanners (Rogers and Shoemaker 1971): “being at the forefront of engaging with new technologies and working up solutions for how such technologies can transform the way traditional media organizations work” (Staschen and Wellinga 2018, 7). All of the respondents in this study indicated being more interested in exploring technology than their average journalist colleagues and reflected by using expressions like “we are nerds” or “the interest in tech is in my DNA.” This special interest in technology became observable in all spaces of the pioneers’ interactions. At the community’s conference in Ireland and on their Facebook group, the exploration and discussion of additional mojo accessories and related software applications played a prominent role. A German respondent put it like this: “What I do see, especially when I see my colleagues and visit the Mojocon, [is that] many have this what I call a ‘feature-itis.’ They are obsessed by new gadgets and stuff.” This corresponds to Brown and Juhlin’s (2015) concept of “enjoying machines.” In other words, the core group members of the

community can be described as journalists who are not only interested in but actually find pleasure in the exploration of new technologies.

## Motives and Reasons for Engaging in the Mojo Community

The analysis of the gathered data material provides a rich picture of the role of the mojo community as an agent in journalism innovation. It emerged from the data that a main motive for the informants' engagement with the mojo community was *to develop the mojo mindset*. The need for developing the mojo mindset is rooted in a shared belief in mobile technology as the most important, disruptive tool of journalism. The shared belief in mobile technology is not only a basic connection that links a diverse group of people together—it also influences their interests, point of attention, and worldview. The informants are subsequently attracted to the mojo community by the following motives: (1) a need for belonging and unity with likeminded colleagues, (2) perceived resistance against mobile journalism in traditional Western TV newsrooms, (3) a need for orientation, knowledge extension, and support, and (4) sustainable protection of jobs. The identified themes are not meant to be exhaustive and can be partly overlapping. They are meant to characterize the reasons for participation and the value of the engagement in the community seen from the perspective of the participants. The motives are the reasons and contextual factors that provide a rationale for our informants' participation in the community. They are closely interrelated, and in the following we will explain the four identified motives in more detail.

### *A Need for Belonging and Unity with Likeminded Colleagues*

Not surprisingly, informants expressed “a sense of belonging” to the mojo community when asked to describe their relation to the mojo network. They felt a special connection either to the community's area of interest or to individual community members. A Norwegian journalist, who had experimented with mobile journalism for many years and has participated in the mojo community since the beginning, described his relationship to the community as follows:

We are all a big family [...] it is a mixture of many nice people who have been working with that for many years. Some of them I have known for quite a long time, we meet regularly on conferences, and we have experienced a lot together.

A German journalist described the role of the community by calling it “a work family” that not only presented the opportunity to meet “trusted acquaintances,” “old friends,” or “likeminded people” but “that supports me and gives me the feeling to believe in the same things.” Although most of the contact between community members is carried out virtually, several respondents said they felt as if they had known each other for a very long time.

The phenomenon of mutual relationships is, for Wenger (1998), a very typical structural characteristics of a CoP. People develop ties through common activities and, when sustained over time, these relationships deepen and become more tightly interwoven on a personal level. For some people, these informal social relationships extend even beyond normal work-related activities. Several informants emphasized “a certain way of thinking

within the community” that attracts them to participate and that gives them a kind of “spiritual home,” confirming their own beliefs and convictions. A French journalist formulated his experience as follows: “I am part of the community because *mojo* is a state of mind, it is a new culture, and we in the *mojo* community share the same mind-set.” This understanding, which is also reflected in phrases like “family,” “movement,” or even the “united nations of mobile journalists,” establishes a common ground for communal interactions that reinforces a strong sense of belonging and unity, especially with a focus on the community’s core group.

### ***Perceived Resistance against Mobile Journalism in Traditional TV Newsrooms***

All informants reflected on the perceived, fundamental change of the media business. The term “media revolution” was used to describe the advances in mobile technology and its wide-ranging consequences for broadcast journalism. One of the informants argued that mobile technology combined with emerging consumption practices of audiences will lead to “a fundamental transition in TV journalism” and to “the rise of a new architecture.” Several respondents expected a “substantial loss of importance of legacy media organizations,” and the majority of the interviewees were worried about a broadly perceived unwillingness of bigger broadcast organizations to change. Especially the larger broadcasters were seen as being “stuck” in rigid organizational structures and established work-routines. The classic “TV mindset” was perceived by several respondents as being in sharp contrast to the “*mojo* mindset” based on “a completely new culture.” A respondent from Italy explained more specifically why mobile journalism was often framed as “a new culture” or “a new way of thinking,” sketching out how *mojo* is perceived outside of the *mojo* community, here alluding especially to the colleagues in traditional broadcasting:

I have worked more than 30 years as a journalist and touched in my life every kind of medium, so I will tell you what’s the state of art at broadcasters, the printing press, and digital media. State of the art is that we have a language that is shaped by traditional broadcast. It’s a visual and video-language that is based on classic TV formats, and these quality standards and mobile journalism as a complete workflow is absolutely not allowed, especially not in TV, because it is considered as something that is of low quality. [...] They [the traditional broadcasters] have a culture of backwardness, they believe they can do it by themselves, they believe it is something stupid, they make them believe that they will get some problems with the unions, about their professional careers, what then will happen to the cameraman, the soundman, and so on. They are really not prepared for where the media market is heading and consider *mojo* as something like low quality bullshit [...].

The quote points to several reasons for the mutual frustration shared by many informants. Mobile journalism was, in their view, misjudged and misunderstood by their journalist colleagues as being of “low quality” and unable to keep up with the established quality standards in TV broadcast and therefore “is not taken seriously.” A mobile journalist, filming with a smartphone and working solo, was seen by TV colleagues as a “jack of all trades,” and several informants mentioned that they were regularly meeting “a kind of arrogance” from other colleagues. One informant who experimented with mobile journalism at a large public German broadcaster reported that when he planned to film with a smartphone, his colleagues commented jokingly: “Oh no, not you again with your tiny little cinema for mice [German: *Mäusekino*]!”

The informants were concerned that the potential disruptive effects of mobile technology for the journalism profession are not sufficiently acknowledged by employers who represent traditional broadcast news organizations. Furthermore, they reported strong resistance by broadcast unions against a broader adoption of *mojo* practices. This tendency corresponds with the findings of other studies, such as Perreault and Stanfield's (2018) research on the integration of *mojo* practices in TV newsrooms and professional TV reporters' perceptions of solo multimedia journalism (Blankenship 2016; Wallace 2013; Martyn 2009; Perez and Cremedas 2014). The results of these studies confirm the existing mistrust within traditional Western news organizations toward *mojo* practices and solo reporting, which were, for other TV journalists, associated with a decline in work quality and work overload. Thus they were seen as the harbinger of the transformation ahead (Perreault and Stanfield 2018).

However, the resistance against mobile journalists as full-fledged production units is a typical trait of Western legacy news organizations. In a global context, there are varying degrees of necessity for integrating mobile journalism into the newsrooms. A journalist from Norway summarized as follows: "I think it's important to keep in mind that there are places in the world where they *can* do *mojo*, and other places where they *have* to do *mojo*." His statement was further explained by community members who were transnationally active as educators and trainers in the field. They pointed out that to journalists who are embedded in media organizations that can rely on already existing highly specialized equipment, established infrastructures, and relative job security, the mobile device is only an additional tool in the journalist's toolbox (Guribye and Nyre 2017). By contrast, smaller newsrooms and new media actors with tight budgets have no other alternative than to report and produce with mobile devices.

### ***A Need for Orientation, Knowledge Extension, and Support***

A third motive for informants to engage in the *mojo* community is also described by Wenger (1998, 2002, 2015) as a core function of a CoP: creating, sharing, and maintaining a shared repertoire of resources and knowledge related to a special topic of interest. As a neo-journalistic practice, mobile journalism is embedded in a complex and quickly changing technological environment closely tied to innovation and technological advancements. Some respondents perceived the field as a "complex jungle of innovation, change, and development," which created a need for orientation. In order to navigate this "jungle," the "crowd" [community] emerged as an important resource "to make sense of things." Thus, one informant highlighted the role of the *mojo* community as "being an essential part of the *mojo* practice." Many informants expressed a need to "keep up with technological developments" or "to observe the actions of other community members." They understood the community as an *indispensable knowledge hub* that offers the opportunity to enhance their skills, get inspired, and learn from the experiences of others, especially experts and innovators in the field. One informant said:

Mojo is a central part of the digital revolution with a completely new language. You see, the mobile is a new medium with new channels and new ways to consume, so that means you need also to consider new ways of production and keep track of all the technical developments. But the old media doesn't understand neither the new language nor how to

produce it, so I have to go where I can learn more about it and talk to experts and pioneers. And that's the mojo community.

In that sense, the community offers for many informants an alternative social arena for learning and knowledge enhancement in a field that not only changes very fast but is considered "new," "with a new language," and "not understood by traditional media organizations."

Another argument that was put forward was the need for a place in which they could test ideas, improve skills, and discuss individual work examples with others. Some respondents thus referred to the community as an "experimental laboratory."

### ***Sustainable Protection of Jobs***

An underlying motive for many of the respondents to participate in the mojo community was increasing their personal value in the newsroom and preserving their jobs through active enhancement of their knowledge and skill sets. An Australian journalist working in academic journalism education reasoned as follows:

What I gain from belonging to the community and especially the Facebook group is the information and guidance and expertise that informs my work as an educator by paying attention and practicing and then designing learning programs [...] to create my journalism training. You know, the community is a source of information that is pertinent to my job.

Continuous learning and further training are becoming fundamental prerequisites for journalists in order to adapt to the needs of a fast-changing job environment. The mojo community is perceived by the informants as a social meeting point and a learning arena that enables them through mutual knowledge exchange "to be competitive in the market," "to be better informed," and thus "to act smarter and faster." In that sense, there is a fundamental shared belief in the transformative power of a mojo mindset and its impact on journalism and media business.

### **Conclusion and Outlook**

This study has explored the emergence, structure, and perceived role of a global social formation called the "mojo community." This community was originally initiated by professional journalists and has since grown organically within the spaces of social media and at the annual conference gatherings. The mojo community circulates around a shared interest in mobile technologies, especially smartphones and related artefacts, for visual journalism and mobile content creation.

This international community of mobile journalists and content creators can be characterized by Wenger's ([1998]; 2002) theoretical concept CoP, with its structured processes of informal social interactions in which people exchange knowledge, collaborate, experiment, and learn new ways of working based on applying smartphones as full-fledged multimedia production units. On the one hand, the community serves as an important social arena for people who are eager to foster their knowledge and competencies in ways that are met with skepticism in many traditional media organizations. On the other hand, the community is a nexus not only for journalists but also for practitioners and professionals

from other sectors who are interested in creating, developing, discussing, experimenting, and sharing knowledge on mobile technology for storytelling and content creation.

Many informants of the study and members of the community's core group were affiliated with big Western, mainly European, broadcast organizations. The members can be typified as technologically inclined journalists. A core issue for journalists who engage in the mojo community is to develop a mojo mindset. The community is seen by the informants as a kind of "spiritual home," a place to meet with like-minded people who understand themselves not only as "mobile journalists," "mojos," or "mobile trainers" but who share the conviction that the neo-journalistic practice of mojo is quickly evolving and breaking with existing routines and organizational structures. Journalists working as global "mojo trainers" reported that mojo practices seem to be more quickly and more consistently adopted in Eastern Europe and some developing countries. In the absence of other resources, journalists tend to embrace mobile technology with more conviction. Developing a mojo mindset, in turn, is rooted in their engagement with four interrelated thematic issues: (1) a need for belonging and unity with likeminded colleagues, (2) perceived resistance against mobile journalism in traditional TV newsrooms, (3) a need for orientation, knowledge extension, and support, and (4) sustainable protection of jobs.

The interviewed community members considered themselves experts and yet they referred to a constant need for orientation in the complex and quickly evolving field of smartphone-based content creation in order to maintain their expertise. It appears that learning and knowledge extension become an increasingly competitive advantage in the complex cultural and technological environment of journalism. Thus, several informants see their community activities as an investment to increase their value in the newsroom and to preserve their attractiveness as employees. The community is important to them as a social orientation, experimentation, and innovation hub, giving interested people from any country the opportunity not only to make sense of technological advancements but also negotiate different cultural approaches in the field.

However, it is important to emphasize that the sample of surveyed community members in this study is not representative of the entire community and does not necessarily reflect the whole spectrum of reasons why people engage in the community, especially not for those members who are not associated with or interested in journalistic practices but still have an interest in the activities of the community. It is also argued here that interrogating the phenomenon of mobile journalism beyond conventional sites of investigation, like traditional newsrooms, or by exploring the work practices of individual journalists offers a valuable and timely perspective on the issue.

Mobile technology is at the core of the digital media ecosystem, with profound consequences for the ongoing structural and cultural transformation processes of journalism (Goggin 2014; Hjorth, Burgess, and Richardson 2012; Westlund 2013). This study has zoomed in on a phenomenon identified by Stalder (2018) as a fundamental part of digital culture and the networked society. He identifies "the space of networks, communities, and informal cooperation—the space of sharing and exchange that has since been enabled by the emergence of ubiquitous digital communication" as a "new interstitial space" (22) that develops in the "offshoots of networked life" (83), which is referred to by Mancini (2014, 93) as a set of "social micro niches." Stalder argues that these interstitial spaces are especially important to look at because they are "the actual subjects [in a

networked society], who create the shared meaning that we all call culture” (2018, 81). He points out that “[c]ommunal formations are especially powerful when they generate the material and organizational resources that are necessary for their members to implement their shared worldview through actions” (91).

All informants in this study, and most of the members of the community’s core group, label themselves as *mojo* trainers, pioneers, and experts in the field. They are active worldwide as mediators, educators, and consultants, and thus are deeply involved in the diffusion of the community’s negotiated meanings, interpretative frameworks, and concepts. Their knowledge and interpretations are not only passed on to traditional media organizations but also to a wide range of other professional sectors that are interested in enhancing their knowledge and skills in areas formerly exclusive to professional journalists.

The study has contributed a rich description of not only the fostered culture that circulates around mobile journalism but of the strategies individual journalists use to handle the organizational reluctance to change in the face of advancements in technology and new cultural practices that might have disruptive effects on their profession.

Focusing on the activities and interactions of a network of global experts and innovators reveals an interstitial space for the field of mobile journalism and mobile content creation in which shared meaning is negotiated, norms are established, and specific routines and practices are introduced. The analysis further provides insight into how and why individual journalists and people from other sectors collaboratively create, share, and preserve a large set of knowledge and resources for applying mobile technology to journalistic production and multimedia content creation. The analysis further sheds light on how a transnational culture of mobile journalism is fostered in a networked social arena. Another topic for exploration in future research is how this arena contributes to blurring the boundaries between journalism practice and content creation as a commercial practice.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Funding

This work was supported by the Norwegian Research Council Norway under the program SAMANS-VAR Grant [number 247721/O80].

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