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Abstract
In this article we propose the notion of *X Journalism* as an observational tool and concept. It owes its existence to a simple observation: the evolution of journalism is accompanied by the emergence of ever-new journalism-related terms, i.e. combinations of the word 'journalism' with a particular modifying term that represents and signals a certain specificity and novelty. Examples include 'robot journalism', 'foundation-funded journalism', 'cross-border journalism', or 'solutions journalism' – just to name

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a few. To date, we have collected and mapped 166 X journalisms and have 'crowd-categorized' them into clusters according to the different aspects they refer to. We explore X Journalism as a concept, present our mapping, and show how it can help to cope with journalism's increasing complexity, grasp the diversity of the field, trace its constant evolution, as well as identify patterns and interrelations between these different movements and occurrences. Through a test case of audience-related X journalisms we demonstrate an empirical application before illustrating the theoretical compatibility of X Journalism and suggesting a research agenda that highlights potentials for X Journalism-driven studies.

Introduction

Journalism research has done much conceptual work to 'tame' journalism's complexity so that it might make sense of and integrate ever-new developments and journalistic forms into existing approaches. Much attention has been paid to discussions on what journalism is and what it is not, to whether journalism as an expert system has distinct boundaries, and the extent to which developments in (new) technologies, audience attitudes and behaviors, the financial-economic foundations of the news industry, as well as in culture and society impact such debates. This kind of continuous demarcating and (re-)conceptualizing is also precisely what the programme of journalism research has always been about.

The complexity that requires taming in a contemporary context is primarily ascribed to digital transformation. This is exemplified in work that labels and critically debates 'automated journalism' (Carlson, 2015), 'computational and algorithmic journalism' (Anderson, 2013), or that considers the 'quantitative turn in journalism' (Coddington, 2015). More broadly conceived, the complexity of articulating journalism with its environment is tackled in ambitious cross-national comparative work such as the 'Worlds of Journalism' project (worldsofjournalisms.org) and the 'Journalistic Role Performance' project (journalisticperformance.org), or the 'Beyond Journalism' project (Deuze and Witschge, 2020) that aims to map emerging journalisms that deliberately position themselves outside of what the reporters and editors involved perceive to be legacy or traditional journalism. Likewise, there are theoretical attempts to come to terms with the sense of hybridization and 'mess' in both the journalistic field and the academic field that seeks to explore it (Witschge et al., 2019). As a common strategic academic ritual, these conceptual works are often accompanied by research agendas developed against the background of concepts, approaches or theoretical lenses that have been introduced and/or criticized beforehand. This all indicates that as scholars aim to make sense of what they perceive as a messy journalistic field they simultaneously end up further nuancing and complicating it.

This paper has emerged from similar concerns and observations about the unruliness of the field, but follows a different and radically simple approach. Namely, it does not come with a plea for another even more nuanced and granular theoretical concept. Rather, we argue that what we now need is an *observational tool* that allows us, first, to capture the diversity of the field *as a whole* by looking at it from a sufficient distance. Second, the tool should enable us to trace the constant evolution of the field *over time*. And, third, it should help us study journalism *relationally*, that is, identify patterns in and interrelations between all these different movements and occurrences. Such an undertaking is only possible from a meta-perspective.

In this article we adopt just such a perspective and propose an observational tool that aims to map and observe journalism as it continuously gets re-articulated to a changing environmental context or object: *X Journalism*. We also propose to use X Journalism as a concept (with a capital 'X' and 'J'). Our proposition owes its existence to a basic observation: the emergence of ever new X journalisms (with a small 'j'), i.e. combinations of the word 'journalism' with a particular modifying term that (is supposed to) represent and signal a certain specificity and, in a certain time frame, novelty. Examples include the aforementioned 'automated', 'robotic' 'algorithmic' and 'computational journalism', but also 'foundation-funded', 'constructive', 'solutions', and 'cross-border' journalism – just to name a few.

This routine of terminological distinction goes back to the pre-digital era when new terms were coined to signify, for example, the increasing differentiation of journalism practice into print, radio and television reporting and later, the de-differentiation into cross-media newswork. In the changing context, professional journalism has thus constantly been assigning itself new names – just as its scientific observers and educators have done. The result is an abundance of X journalisms originating from the three domains primarily responsible for defining and operationalizing what journalism is, can and also should be. Making better sense of this abundance can reveal to us why the terms have emerged. The emergence of a new X journalism – for example as a much-referenced staple in academic literature, a topic of debate at professional gatherings, or as a course taught at journalism schools – can be taken as an indicator that an approach or practice has gained a certain level of awareness or acceptance in the field. For example, there is currently much discussion about data-related developments reflected in terms such as 'data' or 'sensor' journalism, signaling that data-driven practices are increasingly becoming important for the field (Loosen, 2018).

X journalisms can be classified into different categories, which sometimes emphasize a *technological* development, describe a specific type of *relationship* between journalism and audiences, focus on how newswork is *funded*, or imply some form of *geographical* reference, for example. Such a classification allows us to turn the collection of X journalisms into a relational typology that helps us map, trace, and understand journalism's complexity and transformation over time through the names and labels we give it.

The discussion above describes the premise of the approach and the project that we want to present in this article. We also understand our approach as a 'service project' for and with the scientific community as well as the journalistic field it aims to describe and understand. The main purpose of this paper is, therefore, to introduce the X Journalism

approach, to present research questions that it can address, and to stimulate the collection of further X journalism terms from around the world.

In the following section, we will introduce X Journalism as a concept (2). Then we will discuss the mapping work we have already done by using X Journalism as an observational tool (3). Through a case of X journalisms that refer to specific understandings of the journalism-audience relationship, we will demonstrate an empirical application (4), and then illustrate the theoretical compatibility of X Journalism (5). We close by suggesting a research agenda that highlights potentials for X Journalism-driven research (6).

X Journalism as a concept: a holistic, observer-related, and three-dimensional understanding of meaning

The emergence of X journalism terms, although nothing new, has gained momentum in recent years in part due to the rapid growth in journalism scholarship and published professional self-reflection. We can also understand this as a sign of journalism's professionalization and subsequent progressive differentiation, as well as a signal of certain trends in the field. It is a practice by which researchers and practitioners alike attempt to keep up pace with the dynamics of the field, to distinguish a certain development from other trends, to assist in conceptual operationalization, and to open up a more or less new area of investigation and praxis. We acknowledge that coining a new X journalism can also be about building and attracting attention to a brand, either academic or professional (Ahva and Hautakangas, 2018).

Therefore, one can always also argue in detail about what a particular X journalism designates (or claims to designate) and whether it can actually be sharply distinguished from neighboring terms. In fact, such conceptual work is often the focus of academic interest through terminological explication and defintion work (as it was done in communication studies, e.g. by Merten (1977) with the term 'communication'). A similar strategy can be observed in sociology, which also repeatedly produces 'X societies', i.e. grand narratives theorizing societies in order to sensitize us to certain transformation processes such as the 'network society', 'knowledge society', 'risk society', and more recently 'datafied society'.

Our approach is similar, yet different in one key way. On the one hand, the various X journalisms represent empirical data about the emergence and usage of certain terms, and on the other, X Journalism stands for a *holistic* concept. As such, we understand X journalism terms as observer-related categories, be they journalists' self-descriptions of their profession, or academics' tools of analysis. We follow a holistic perspective in that X Journalism as a concept is not restricted to one particular trend or a certain range of phenomena, but considers every new journalism term that comes up. However, this also works retrospectively. This can be done, for example, with respect to the differentiation into X journalisms such as 'political', 'economy', 'sports', or 'technology' journalism, which represent editorial departments and beats, and reflect topics or societal domains that have become differentiated. X Journalism is thus less about counteracting an 'inflation of terms' with an 'explication of terms' (Engesser, 2008, own translation), but rather about making the inflation itself the object of interest.

Looking closer at X Journalism as a concept reveals its somewhat paradoxical nature as it represents a *variable constant* which makes it dynamic and stable at the same time. 'Journalism' in this sense represents the constant while the 'X' is the variable. The 'X' is always about a (new) form that – for whatever reason and by whomever – is particularly emphasized. Regardless of this, however, the labeled phenomenon is still referred to as 'journalism'. X journalisms thus share a certain 'family resemblance' (Wittgenstein, 2001) in that they always come back to forms of journalism, but cannot be clearly classified taxonomically and certainly not hierarchically. This is because the differentiating 'X' can be situated on many different levels: while, for example, 'digital journalism', on a technological level, stresses that certain newswork is based on or distributed through digital technologies, 'science journalism' differentiates itself from other forms in the dimension of topics that its reporting is about. Additionally, X journalism can exhibit blurred, overlapping boundaries – like 'computational' and 'data' journalism –, which in turn can become the subject of investigation (Coddington, 2015). In this sense, X journalisms also sensitize us to the relationships *between* them. This is because we can only fully understand a certain X journalism if we at the same time consider – or oscillate between – what is distinguished (the X journalism) and what it is that it is distinguished from (other forms of journalism). These relations and the resulting network character can be made visible through a mapping of X journalism terms. Such an exercise can reveal a rhizomatic reference structure (Deleuze and Guattari, 1977) in that all terms contain a journalistic concept, but for which no central or *shared* concept of journalism can be assumed.

This does not mean that there cannot be negotiations over whether a certain X journalism should be considered journalism at all. In fact, this fundamental interrelationship between demarcation and belonging is exactly the question journalism research is concerned with when dealing with boundary work in journalism (Carlson and Lewis, 2015). More abstractly, fundamental to any form of identity construction is an interplay of displaying one's identification with whom or what one regards as 'one's kind', and the simultaneous differentiating of oneself from whom or what one perceives as 'other' (Tracy and Trethewey, 2005). This twofold routine is also evident in the use of X journalisms in 'metajournalistic discourse' (Carlson, 2016) whenever an X journalism is referred to as a self-description by its advocates or by its critics.

As such, X journalisms can serve as boundary objects, are a part of journalistic boundary work and the accompanying discursive struggles for legitimation, authority, and the power to define what counts as (a new form of) journalism (Hanitzsch and Vos, 2017). This can be seen in the example of 'pioneer journalists' – a particular group of professionals who incorporate new organizational forms and experimental practice in pursuit of redefining the field and its structural foundations (Hepp and Loosen, 2019): these actors, experimenting, for example, with sensor journalism or the 'journalism of things', are often concerned with a demarcation from what they see as established journalism, which still remains a point of reference – even if only *ex negativo*.

Every X journalism is a distinction, by which emphasis is placed on a particular form, while others are excluded. It is important to note that those 'other journalisms' that are excluded are just as important for the identification of a particular X journalism as is the

denomination of the X journalism itself. As such, the X Journalism approach is a simple yet effective way of zooming into journalism's internal complexity without losing perspective of journalism as a whole.

In this vein, we assume that each term has *meaning* insofar as it denotes a difference – quite simply by the respective specification of the 'X' by someone (for example, a journalist or journalism researcher). To what extent and in which ways this is related to other phenomena is already a specific question of theoretical and practical relevance and highlights the relational value of just such a mapping exercise. This understanding of meaning differs from that in everyday life. Rather, it stands for the distinction between the context of meaning that is currently at the centre of attention (a certain X journalism) which at the same time refers to other possibilities (other X journalism terms). From this point of view, meaning always refers to something specific, something different, which is not a subject at the moment, but which is however carried along as a possibility (Schützeichel, 2003).

Following Luhmann (1995: 75 pp.) we can distinguish — and regard as relevant for making sense of X journalisms — three dimensions of meaning: the fact[1], the temporal, and the social dimension. Put simply, the fact dimension concerns *what* is designated as a theme; it structures the reference frame of meaning by dividing between 'this' and 'that'. The temporal dimension indicates *when* something is happening; it differentiates between 'before' and 'after'. The social dimension indicates *who* it is that addresses something, who is the addressee, and/or whom something is about; it allows for the differentiation between 'ego' and 'alter' in social interactions and asks, for example, whether a certain meaning is shared among actors. All dimensions exhibit several subdimensions and, according to Luhmann, it is important to note that each dimension is meaningful only when combined with the other two; they can only be separated theoretically. Additionally, they operate on the production and the reception margins of communication processes (Lee, 2000).

In our approach, and with respect to the fact dimension, the respective 'X' stands for *what* an X journalism term designates. In temporal terms, it can be relevant *when* a term appears, changes, and possibly disappears again and, on a superordinate level, whether time periods can be identified in which the emergence of X journalisms accelerates (for example, in relation to changes in the media environment). The *who*, finally, points to questions such as, which actors are using an X journalism term, who is addressed and in which context, and perhaps what the motives are behind it. Altogether, this also allows us to differentiate between instances in which journalism observes *itself* and those in which it is observed *by others*, for example, by politicians or researchers when attempting to identify particular forms of societally relevant journalism, for example. As Lee (2000: 321) notes with reference to Luhmann, '[s]elf-description occurs when the social system stops its operations long enough to consider itself as a unit, giving itself a name and naming what it is not. Self-description involves the writing of a self-reflective narrative, an 'autological' text that integrates distinctions made in the social, temporal, and functional [what we refer to as 'fact'] dimensions'.

X journalism terms are empirically identifiable communication units that allow us to identify these reflections; and the consideration of all three dimensions of meaning affords us the opportunity to draw a holistic picture of a systemic phenomenon

and of who defines which X journalism at which time and in which way, especially in contrast to other X journalisms. Against this background, X Journalism as a concept facilitates the investigation of the complex and dynamic processes involved in the evolution of journalism.

X Journalism as a tool: collecting, categorizing, mapping

The collection of X journalisms terms forms the backbone of the X Journalism Project and our proposed concept. The collection dates back to 2010 and began as a byproduct of a research project on audience participation in journalism (Heise et al., 2014; Loosen and Schmidt, 2012). A first attempt to systematize the term collection was made with the aid of the mind mapping tool 'mind42'; this mind map is still online.[2]

At a conference in Finland in 2018, we revived the idea of X Journalism, established our research network, and turned the idea into a research project. Since then the collection of terms has been ongoing through additional online crowd-sourcing (we established the @X_Journalism Twitter account) and observation of the metajournalistic discourse, especially around conferences. At this exploratory stage, we have not associated any particular sampling procedure with our collection – initally, the collection is just a collection. We have regarded a term worth collecting when it is in use. This does not mean that further research on X journalism terms can neglect questions of sampling (see our test case outlined in section 4).

This all illustrates the fact that we understand X Journalism as both a *concept*, as outlined above, but also as a relatively simple *observational tool* that principally offers fundamental groundwork which can be the starting point for various theoretical and empirical research activities. However, this requires a methodically adhered mapping approach. For many years mapping has been popularly harnessed as a general descriptive tool in media and communications research. Typically, the term is used without further theoretical implications, just as a reference to the process and output of 'charting' media and communications related data. Examples include topics as diverse as the geo-cultural mapping of different kinds of journalism cultures (Hanitzsch et al., 2011), news websites with respect to their online-specific capabilities (Humprecht and Esser, 2018), or the mapping of actor roles in social media (Bechmann and Lomborg, 2013). In recent years, the method has been used in connection with big data approaches to mapping the twittersphere (Bruns et al., 2014).

From crowdsourcing to categories

By using X Journalism as an observational tool, to date, we have collected approximately 166 X journalisms, and our database is constantly expanding. We have inductively, iteratively, and consensually 'crowd-categorized' them into clusters according to the different aspects they refer to. In so doing, we understand the resulting typology as an attempt to keep pace with the complexity and dynamics of the field. However, these categories are also generally open to expansion and could, theoretically speaking, be defined differently.

Our eight categories of X journalisms refer to the fact dimension of meaning we introduced above: they cluster the terms in relation to *what* their 'X' primarily stands for.[3]

The list is sorted in descending order according to how many X journalisms have been assigned to each category. Since the collection was initially concentrated on contemporary terms – especially those linked to technology and data or audiences – and because we have not yet carried out a systematic historical search for X journalisms, there does exist a certain bias; the X in an X journalism term can refer to:

1. a specific **motivation or reporting style** (e.g. 'solutions', 'green', 'partisan' journalism, but also classical forms, such as investigative journalism) (62 cases);
2. a (novel) **technology or data-led approach** used at different stages of the journalistic production process, for example, for gathering or presenting news (e.g. 'sensor', 'drone', 'augmented' journalism) (27 cases);
3. a **thematic focus or beat** (e.g. 'politics', 'sports', 'technology' journalism) (23 cases);
4. a particular kind of **audience relationship** in terms of participatory openness, publics reached, etc. (e.g. 'engagement', 'millennial', 'citizen' journalism) (21 cases);
5. a particular type of **(distribution) medium or channel** ('print', 'TV', 'Facebook', 'Snapchat' journalism) (21 cases);
6. a distinct form of **organizational or economic model** in terms of a particular funding or business arrangement, structure or process of newswork, etc. (e.g. 'crowdfunded', 'post-industrial', 'process' journalism) (20 cases);
7. a reference to a particular **place or locus** of journalism or stressing the decreasing importance of place when it comes to news use (e.g. 'hyperlocal', 'global', 'mobile' and 'locative' journalism) (13 cases);
8. a **time-related dimension** as expressed in 'slow journalism' or 'real-time journalism', which refers to the speed of journalistic production and publication cycles (3 cases).

We do not understand these clusters as being particularly distinct – this would contradict the premise of understanding X journalisms as observer-related categories to which different meanings can be ascribed. One could, for example, discuss whether 'Facebook journalism' and 'mobile journalism' do not also fall under the category of technology, or whether 'crowdfunded journalism' stands for a particular kind of economic model rather than a specific type of audience-relationship. In any case, terms that fall into the respective clusters have a certain 'family resemblance' in the sense that they carry X's that refer to the same aspect, but they do not determine them entirely or even sufficiently.

However, so far these eight categories cluster X journalisms in relation to the fact dimension of meaning. To also acknowledge their temporal and social dimensions of meaning requires additional (meta) data and a more detailed examination of who uses a particular X journalism term and how, and in which time period it emerged or disappeared. In the following, we will demonstrate how we have implemented this within the proposed framework by creating a database.

Database and automated data collection

At the core of our archive we use a simple collaborative spreadsheet to manage our collection of X journalism terms. The changes made to the spreadsheet at the same time document what we have learned with regard to X journalisms as data. Enriching our collection with metadata using computational means, we plan to present the results in a data-driven visualization.[4] In this section, we will further elaborate on the set of metadata as it currently stands, the code used to enrich X journalism terms, our experience with various APIs, and an outlook on the automation of the process as our database continues to grow. A current snapshot of the database in .csv format as well as the code are available on Github.[5]

At this stage, the spreadsheet contains a unique identifier per X journalism, the term itself, up to two tags which represent our eight categories introduced above, names of notable persons or concepts associated with a given term, alternative spellings, the year of first mention, the number of scientific results for a given term, and up to three academic references. While we manually researched the most relevant references according to Google Scholar's ranking, we used code to speed up and automate the collection of metadata. Following the three dimensions of meaning previously established, we wanted to find more information on a) the temporal dimension, or the point in time when these terms first appeared and b) the social dimension with respect to the level of scientific attention they generate.

Querying databases about our terms was not a trivial task. When it comes to searches for text within text, the problems of disambiguation and anaphora resolution are evident (Mitkov, 2014). In our case, the search term is a 2-gram (a sequence of two words) which makes it difficult to generate empirically valid results. Some X journalisms are more specific, like 'gonzo journalism' while others are more ambiguous, such as 'new journalism' that can denote to the subjective reporting style from the 1970s, or just to any new aspect in journalism. To maximize precision, we assumed APA style capitalization and wrapped our query in quotation marks to indicate that we queried for exact matches. By either consulting documentation or running queries both with and without these properties we established that all sources were able to deliver exact matches.

Using Node[6] we then built several scripts to automate the search of our X journalism terms. We decided on the New York Times Search API[7], dating back to 1851, as our 'temporal' source and extracted time stamps for the earliest mention of each term. Google Scholar[8], while severely limited in its filtering and sorting options, gave us a general idea of scientific interest by the number of search results per term. Exploring the Google Ngram Viewer[9] (an index of n-gram time series data offered by Google as a byproduct of their catalog of digitized books, cf. Sparavigna and Marazzato, 2015) turned out to be problematic as its corpus ends in 2008. This is not ideal, as the journalism landscape has appeared to be especially dynamic in recent years (Lewis and Zamith, 2017). Still, the data show valuable historic trends well suited for display as sparklines or other types of compact visualizations. A general surge in relative hits since the 1990s demonstrates how journalism has diversified in recent years. We quickly discarded Wikidata[10], a knowledge base of linked data concepts, as a source for our queries. Here, concept identifiers[11] are needed to achieve workable results. At the time of writing, the availability of concept data for our journalism terms is sparse.

In visualizing the temporal data from the New York Times API we found interesting results that could be useful in further research. For example, we identified a cluster of first mentions in the year 1964 for terms like 'science journalism' or 'crusader journalism'. Overall, we learned more about the semantic intricacies of our terms as data and explored multiple avenues for making sense of the metadata. Although the process of enhancing X journalisms with metadata in this way cannot be fully automated, the generated code assists in updating the growing collection of terms. Having reached a stable schema, we are now exploring data visualizations.[12]

Overall, we can therefore demonstrate that X Journalism is well suited for the use of computational methods. If we think of topic modelling, for example, the vast amounts of blog posts and other sources of meta-journalistic discourse around certain X journalisms could be collected by web scraping and then subjected to a Latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) in order to capture the context in which certain X journalisms are used. Also, abstracts of scientific articles in a certain category of X journalisms could be analyzed by means of LDA, which could provide insights into the research questions, theories and empirical methods involved in dealing with these X journalisms. In this manner, it would also be possible to compare both fields, the practical and the academic, in terms of their use and understandings of certain journalisms.

A test case: audience-related X journalisms

The clustering of the terms into a typology was the first step in the mapping exercise. A second step is to examine what occurs within distinct clusters. In this section we will show how the analysis of X journalism terms within the audience-relationship category can shed more light on the factual, social, and temporal differentiations in meaning that signify the different terms. In so doing, we hope to illustrate the heuristic and analytical value of X Journalism as a concept, applied here to the *scholarly* use of the terms.

In October 2018, we searched the literature database EBSCO Communication and Mass Media Complete[13] with all 24 X journalisms that we had by then identified as referring to a particular kind of audience or audience-relationship. The searches were conducted on titles, abstracts, and keywords for each of the terms. We excluded 123 search results from non-academic sources and ended up with a total of 822 mentions of audience-related X journalisms in 695 different journal articles, book chapters, and conference papers, with 'peer-to-peer journalism' and 'wiki journalism' not being found at all (see Table 1).

Along the *fact dimension*, we can differentiate X journalisms according to their semantic meaning - similar to Engesser (2008), who typifies participation-related X journalisms according to semantic fields. In our case, the most mentioned X journalisms are 'citizen', 'public', 'participatory', 'civic', and 'community' journalism. Three of the terms – 'public', 'civic' and 'community' journalism – refer to audience-related news practices or reform movements from the pre-digital era: 'community journalism' is typically about the ways in which community members can practice journalism themselves for the community in which they reside, whereas 'public' or 'civic' journalism refers to the self-corrective ethos and movement that underlined the need for professional journalists to better engage with the public as active citizens (Merritt, 1995).

Table 1. Overview of audience-related X Journalisms in the EBSCO database.

Rank	X journalism/ search term(s)	No. of academic papers mentioning X journalism	Year of first mention
1	Citizen journalism	289	2006
2	Public journalism	184	1995
3	Participatory journalism	112	1998
4	Civic journalism	88	1995
5	Community journalism	57	1975
6	Network(ed) journalism	29	2007
7	Interactive journalism	12	2006
8	Grassroots journalism	11	2000
9	Collaborative journalism	8	2002
10	Reciprocal journalism	7	2014
11	Crowd(-)funded journalism	6	2012
12	Crowdsourced journalism	4	2010
13	Deliberative/Deliberation journalism	3	2012
14	Hyperlocal journalism	3	2011
15	Conversation(al) journalism	2	2015
16	Dialog(ue)(-oriented)/Dialogical journalism	1	2017
17	Discursive/Discourse journalism	1	2018
18	End-user journalism	1	2013
19	Engaged/Engagement journalism	1	2015
20	Lay journalism	1	2008
21	Millennial journalism	1	2009
22	Relational journalism	1	2017
23	Peer-to-peer journalism	–	–
24	Wiki journalism	–	–

Two other top terms – 'citizen' and 'participatory' journalism – tell us more about the role of the audience in the digital era: they usually refer to the ways in which individuals can independently publish news material on the internet or how newsrooms can rely on citizens to send them information, footage or comments that they can then publish (Borger et al., 2013; Engesser, 2008; Wall, 2017). Consequently, the most used audience-related X journalism terms portray how the academic field has dealt with the shift from the mass media (few-to-many) to the social media (many-to-many) context.

Along the *social dimension* we collected the names of the publications (listed in the EBSCO database) in which audience-related X journalisms were discussed (see Table 2). *Journalism Practice* is by far the top journal to feature these subforms most often. This could be evidence of how strongly the academic engagement with these specific X journalisms or X journalisms in general is connected to journalistic practice and not necessarily to theory. It is also notable that ICA conference papers stand out as another important publication avenue. This indicates that academics have been using the X journalism terms in their mutual, scholarly discussions. To be able to further interpret

Table 2. Top 10 venues for works on audience-related X journalisms.

Rank	Publication venue	Total no. of audience-related X journalisms mentioned in publications from that venue
1	*Journalism Practice*	107
2	Papers presented at the International Communication Association's annual conferences	68
3	*Journalism*	63
4	*Journalism Studies*	51
5	*Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*	51
6	*Newspaper Research Journal*	38
7	*New Media & Society*	29
8	*Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*	21
9	*Pacific Journalism Review*	13
10	*International Journal of Communication & Journal of Mass Media Ethics*	13

the social dimension (for example, 'networks' of authors with similar interests, their motivations, consensus or disagreement in the field), qualitative analysis could be conducted on the key arguments or points of criticism around specific X journalism terms, or the key addressees of the texts: are they primarily written for other scholars and students, or for reporters and managers in the industry?

Our quantitative mapping proved most insightful in relation to the *temporal dimension* of meaning: we see that the four oldest terms are also among the top five most-mentioned terms. The first academic publication to mention an audience-related X journalism dates back to as early as 1975 with an article from the *Journalism Educator* on how students from Arizona University took over Tombstone weekly *Epitaph* as a project in 'community journalism' (1975: 3). Over the next twenty years, 'community journalism' appears to have remained the only audience-related X journalism attracting scholarly attention: the next appearances – 'public' and 'civic' journalism – were first mentioned in 1995 (Lambeth and Craig in *Newspaper Research Journal* and Arena in *Political Communication*), and 'participatory journalism' in 1998 (Dardenne in the *History of Mass Media in the United States: An Encyclopedia*).

The real peak of audience-related X journalisms, however, was around the turn of the millennium. This is not surprising, since in 2000 the two purely journalism-focused journals, *Journalism* and *Journalism Studies*, were launched, followed by *Journalism Practice* in 2007 and *Digital Journalism* in 2013, which crucially expanded the opportunities for publishing journalism-related research. In this publication context, by far the most-mentioned term, 'citizen journalism' was first used in 2006. The term originated in debates around 'public' and 'civic' journalism dating back to the 1980s, yet was amplified by digital expectations (of the internet) in the late 1990s (see Rosen, 1999 in particular).Technological development in online interaction and self-publishing had brought journalism's audience relationship into the limelight again. New opportunities afforded by the internet and related hopes for the democratization of journalism sparked a great
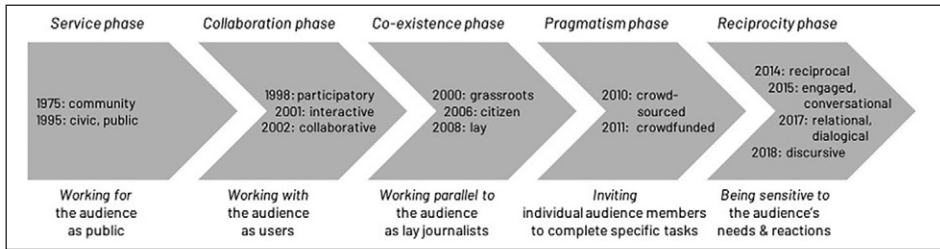
Figure 1. Five phases of audience-related X journalisms.

deal of scholarly interest (e.g. Ahva, 2011; Deuze, 2003; Deuze et al., 2007; Haas, 2005; Singer et al., 2011).

Furthermore, looking at when the different X journalisms were first used in an academic publication, we can distinguish between five phases of varying length (*temporal dimension*), each of which is characterized by the emergence of two to six new terms that seem to refer to the same particular facet (*fact dimension*) of journalism's relationship to and understanding of its audience (*social dimension*) (see Figure 1):

The changes from one phase to the next represent certain shifts of focus with newly introduced and scholarly researched audience-related X journalisms differentiating themselves from those in the phase before in regard to the three dimensions of meaning. In these sometimes overlapping transitions, the meaning of the journalism-audience relationship, or at least the parts of it that were considered important, changed. It appears there was an initial shift from understanding the audience as a collective and democratic force towards a more individualized image of the audience as networked users and consumers, who then became shrewd and numerous enough (a crowd) to be given designated tasks in terms of background work or funding. Interestingly, research shows that audience engagement – a core aspect of many audience-oriented X journalisms – has experienced a similar reframing from a normative-political to a strategic-economic meaning: nowadays, newsrooms often engage users either to have them help distribute content through sharing (Krumsvik, 2018) or to build a community around the medium and turn occasional visitors into subscribers (Malmelin and Villi, 2015). The last phase highlights that the competition, and perhaps the culture, of the digital realm requires that more attention is paid to the audience's needs in a more responsive manner and acknowledgement is made of the reciprocity of the journalism-audience relationship. Beyond the time covered by our mapping, we might now be witnessing a phase in which (some) forms of audience participation in journalism are conceptualized as outright 'dark' or counter-democratic (e.g. Quandt, 2018).

From X Journalism's holistic perspective, it would make the most sense to connect and compare these investigations with similar analyses on other clusters of X journalisms. Which X journalisms, for instance, emerge, vanish, or change in meaning in the categories of 'technology and data' or 'organization and business model' - before, during or after developments in the audience-relationship cluster? And what does this tell us about the interrelations between technological, organizational/economic, and audience-related transformations?

All that said, we realize the limitations of our approach. With the type of database mapping described above, validity relies on what is included in the database. More importantly, our mapping strictly focuses on when a term gained *academia's* attention, which does not necessarily coincide with when it gained prominence in the field of *practice*. This would require more closely mapping sources such as editorials, trade magazines or j-blogs. Furthermore, to gain a better understanding of the *context* in which the shifts in audience relations happen, we could conduct a qualitative inquiry of the texts as well as the surroundings in which they were published.

Illustrating the theoretical compatibility of X Journalism

We understand X Journalism first and foremost as a descriptive and theory-agnostic approach that is compatible with various theoretical approaches. We have already made clear that our primary view on X Journalism is a constructivist one which considers X journalism terms as observer- and process-related categories rather than ontological realities. This is, however, an epistemological premise which one does not necessarily have to follow in order to make use of X Journalism as a tool and concept. To demonstrate the theoretical compatibility of X Journalism, we will briefly outline in the following how X Journalism can be used within different theoretical frameworks. What questions does, for example, systems theory pose to X Journalism, and which questions would field theory ask, and how would a figurational approach deal with X Journalism?

Systems theory, for example, would use X journalisms from a differentiation-theoretical and evolutionary perspective, looking, for instance, for co-evolutionary patterns between media change and changes in journalistic practice in the form of de- and re-differentiation (Scholl and Malik, 2020; Loosen, 2015). Thus, one would, for example, ask to what extent developments around certain X journalisms reflect journalism's adaptation to changes in its environment. One possible interpretation is that specific X journalisms, such as data-related X journalisms, reflect broader societal trends of the datafication of society. Journalism responds to these trends through its own means, for example, with structural changes such as the implementation of new professional roles in the newsroom for handling data. From a systems-theoretical perspective, one overarching question would always be whether and to what extent such structural changes also contribute to changes in journalism's performance and whether this may also ultimately lead to a change (e.g. in the form of an expansion) in the function of journalism for society (Diakopoulos, 2019; Loosen, 2018).

Another variation on the theory of societal differentiation is Bourdieu's *field theory*, which has found various applications in journalism research (Benson and Neveu, 2005). Seen through a field-theoretical lens, certain X journalisms appear as professional milieus, that is, groups of journalists who have similar ideas of journalism's social identity and its societal function and share comparable professional role conceptions. Moreover, field-theory-inspired research would be interested in how different individual and corporate actors are differently equipped with (different forms of) capital in order to locate a particular X journalism within the journalistic field, for example, between the intellectual and the commercial poles (Bourdieu, 2005). Of particular interest for the examination of X journalisms is the idea of fields as relational and dynamic. As a

consequence, power relations and positions change with each new actor who enters the field. Field theory would, then, analyze how and to what extent the relational structure of the field forces actors to change their position and identity in comparison with other actors; something that is observable with any X journalism that reaches a certain attention threshold and at a certain point of development is also an attested structure-building power for the field (like it is currently the case with automated journalism). A useful blueprint for the continuation of field theory and X Journalism is a study by Marchetti (2005) in which he provides a categorization of sub-fields of specialized journalism, i.e. journalism with a specific thematic focus or beat.

A *figurational approach* into media and communications research, as introduced by Hepp and Hasebrink (2017), would reconstruct and analyze particular X journalisms as specific communicative figurations characterized by a certain actor constellation (for example, editors, developers, users, community managers, media organizations) rooted in (communicative) practices (journalistic practices making use of particular media or technological tools, for example) and defined by particular frames of relevance or meaning orientations (in our case the respective 'X') which orient these practices (see for a figurational approach on 'pioneer journalism', Hepp and Loosen, 2019). Consequently, such a figurational analysis follows an actor-centered and practice-theoretical approach while placing emphasis on communicative practices based on a particular media ensemble relevant to the social domain under study. This means that with this approach, X journalisms would always be investigated in regard to their particularities in relation to media technologies.

Conclusion and future research

X Journalism owes its existence to a simple observation: that the evolution of journalism is accompanied by the emergence of ever-new journalism-related terms. The collection, mapping, and categorization of these various X journalisms can help us come to terms with journalism's increasing complexity, capture the diversity of the field, trace its constant evolution, and identify patterns and interrelations between these different movements and occurrences.

However, this can only succeed from an inclusive meta-perspective which arises when we do not only concentrate on one particular 'X' that is considered relevant at a specific time, but try to capture the dynamics in their entirety. If we concentrate too much on the 'X' in journalism research, i.e. on what is regarded as new and 'innovative' at a given time, we risk neglecting and not adequately grasping the very character of journalism's ongoing transformation.

X Journalism is, therefore, supposed to be both a relatively simple *observational tool* and a *concept*. As an observational tool it makes use of the fact that the already existing and newly emerging X journalism terms that go along with journalism's evolution represent empirically identifiable communication units that are relatively easy to identify and categorize. It becomes a concept if we equip it with the following characteristics: it is holistic in that it is not focused on one 'X', but intended to capture and map all X journalisms; it is observer-related because it is sensitive to the fact that each X journalism is always brought into the world by someone and may be understood differently by

different actors; and it considers the meaning of X journalisms as a product of the fact, social, and temporal dimensions of meaning, which in its most basic form acknowledges that the meaning of an X journalism depends on who uses which term at what time. Therefore, an X journalism can mean different things to different actors (in different contexts and points in time) and can also become the subject of negotiation processes in the field as well as in academia.

Furthermore, it would be possible to extend the mapping of X journalisms to different languages/language spaces in order to open up a spatial dimension of meaning. This appears especially important when considering that X Journalism so far is limited to English and is, thus, likely to be dominated by a Western perspective.

All this makes clear that we understand the collection of X journalisms not only as a purely descriptive exercise, but as a conceptual-analytical approach that can provide the groundwork for various theoretical and empirical research activities. As a holistic concept, it is comparatively powerful and can be used for many different purposes, for instance to:

- reconstruct the strategies behind the use of X Journalism terms in academia and in the field of journalism itself;
- analyze what types of terms (dis)appear at what time, e.g. to identify trends/phases in journalism's transformation;
- distinguish between terms of unchanged relevance and those with shorter lifespans;
- identify particular patterns of (re-)differentiation within our eight clusters or categories of X journalism terms;
- compare internationally the significance of particular X journalisms in different countries and journalism cultures;
- use X journalisms as stimulus material in empirical research, e.g. in interviews with practitioners to create mind maps for related terms;
- investigaste the potential co-emergence and relations between x journalisms and x societes.

The diversity of the theoretical, methodological, and practical application contexts of X Journalism owes itself to the simple idea of mapping X journalisms in order to explore journalism's diverse meanings through the names we give it.

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Notes

1. It is difficult to translate Luhmann's German term 'sachlich' into an appropriate English word. Luhmann understands 'sachlich' in a broad sense as 'what is the topic or frame

of reference?'. Hence, although here we use the translation 'fact dimension' (Luhmann, 1995), this must *not* be understood in the sense of 'fact-based' like the English term might suggest. According to Luhmann, the fact dimension does not come with any ontological assumptions about what is 'real' or what 'really is the case'. Instead, as in his theory in general, it follows a constructivist perspective and is thus understood as strictly observer-related (Scholl and Malik, 2020).

2. https://mind42.com/mindmap/f5d46df2-29aa-47d4-b57f-6872ff6cda5a?rel=pmb
3. This is not to say that the other dimensions of meaning are not relevant to 'understand' a particular X journalism (in temporal terms, for instance, an 'X' can be characterized by certain production routines, and in social terms, it could mean its reporting is of interest to only a specific group of people, for example). However, if we look at X journalisms holistically from a meta-perspective and in relation to each other, the 'X', no matter what it may denote, always stands for the fact dimension of meaning.
4. https://xjournalism.org
5. https://github.com/leibniz-hbi/xjournalism-data
6. https://nodejs.org/en
7. https://developer.nytimes.com/apis
8. https://scholar.google.com
9. https://books.google.com/ngrams
10. https://wikidata.org
11. https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikidata/Notes/URI_scheme
12. https://xjournalism.org
13. EBSCO CMMC comprises around 1,100 journals from media and communication studies (https://www.ebsco.com/products/research-databases/communication-mass-media-complete).

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