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Mobile Journalism As Lifestyle Journalism?

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Abstract

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MOBILE JOURNALISM AS LIFESTYLE JOURNALISM?

Field Theory in the integration of mobile in the newsroom and mobile journalist role conception

Gregory Perreault  and Kellie Stanfield

Mobile journalism is one of the fastest areas of growth in the modern journalism industry. Yet mobile journalists find themselves in a place of tension, between print, broadcast, and digital journalism and between traditional journalism and lifestyle journalism. Using the lens of field theory, the present study conducted an online survey of mobile journalists (N = 39) from six countries representing four continents on how they conceive of their journalistic role, and how their work is perceived within the newsroom. Participants were journalists in television, print, magazine, and digital local and national newsrooms. The present study sought to understand how mobile journalists see mobile production as a part of their journalistic role, and what field theory dimensions influence mobile production in their newsrooms. While prior research has established a growing prevalence of lifestyle journalism, the present study finds that the growth of mobile journalism represents the development of lifestyle journalism norms, such as content driven by the audience, within even traditional journalism.

KEYWORDS Field theory; lifestyle journalism; mobile; mobile journalism; role conception; technology

Introduction

Over the past decade, citizens have been using their cell phones daily to capture and share breaking news. These citizens are not journalists, but use their phones to capture pictures and videos and share them online, namely through social media. In September 2013 social media began to quickly spread video footage of the use of chemical weapons in Syria—the video gained instant global attention. Videos of people suffering from the weapons in Ghouta, Syria were posted on YouTube and shared on social media, quickly garnering attention from viewers around the world and the mainstream media (Kanat 2015). An example of mobile media's ability to create and share content was in August 2014 after a white Ferguson, Missouri police officer, Darren Wilson, shot and killed an 18-year-old African American man, Michael Brown. Brown was unarmed and his body remained in the street for four hours after he was killed (Brown 2015; Buchanan et al. 2015). Word spread of Brown's death on social media, with people in the area taking pictures of his body and sharing them on Twitter (Bonilla and Rosa 2015).

Journalism scholars argued that mobile devices could revolutionize participatory journalism as traditional media no longer had a monopoly on the news (Deuze, Bruns,

and Neuberger 2007), and some found new media technologies were altering the news cycle flow (Bivens 2008; Westlund 2013). Journalists now have the resources, skills, and training to do this mobile journalism themselves (Westlund 2013). For example, while citizens used Twitter to capture the first moments after Michael Brown's murder, once journalists got word of the story, they, too, took to social media to collect and share what was happening via Twitter, Periscope, Facebook, and other social networking sites. They provided their audiences with a live look at what was happening in Ferguson, without waiting for their broadcast time slot or publication to print their story (Jackson and Foucault Welles 2016).

Mobile journalism is using mobile devices, like cell phones and tablets, to create or share content, or both (Scolari, Aguado, and Feij 2012). Research shows new journalists entering the field are expected to have these mobile skills (Wenger, Owens, and Thompson 2014). While it is becoming increasingly expected of new journalists, journalists with seasoned careers are now learning and using mobile journalism skills outside of their required duties or job descriptions.

Thus, the goal of this study is to understand how mobile journalists articulate their role within the broader journalistic field. Specifically, this study asked current journalists engaged in mobile journalism about their work and perceptions of their work in order to understand the factors that influence it. While research has examined the role mobile journalism has played in changing the traditional journalism industry and revolutionizing participatory journalism, studies have not yet examined what this transformation looks like for journalists in the newsroom. That is, there is a need for research to examine journalists' perceptions of their role as mobile journalists, and what influences them to take on mobile journalism in their newsroom. This study uses field theory and journalistic role conception as frameworks for examining the phenomenon of mobile journalism.

Field Theory

Drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu's field theory (1980, 1998, 2005), this research seeks to understand how mobile journalism positions itself within the journalistic field by understanding how mobile journalists conceive of their role. Field theory seeks to understand the journalistic field by exploring the relationships between agents in the field as well as the relationship with other fields (Benson 2004). The framework of field theory builds on the key concepts of field, doxa, habitus, and capital. Bourdieu describes a field as a structured social space where "various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field" (Bourdieu 1998, 40–41). Yet these struggle agents share a basic understanding regarding the nature of the field (Bourdieu 2005). This shared understanding is called the doxa (Benson and Neveu 2005), and includes ideas about institutional roles, epistemologies, and ethical ideologies that "constitute the cultural capital of a field, which makes it autonomous or distinct from other fields" (Vos, Craft, and Ashley 2012, 852). An example of journalistic doxa would be news values in that they are an enduring set of criteria of what makes something newsworthy (Willig 2013). Habitus denotes an understanding of the "journalistic game" (Willig 2013, 8) and refers to accumulated personal and professional experiences that produce knowledge within a field. Capital refers to the forms of "agency and prestige" within a given field (Sterne 2003) and refers to various forms of resources. In particular, field theory focuses on three forms of capital: cultural, economic, and social (Benson and Neveu 2005).

Cultural capital indicates competence in area valued by the field, often indicated by the presence of titles or awards (e.g. the Pulitzer Prize). Economic capital refers to assets and currency of financial value (Benson 2006). In journalism, economic capital is often assessed through circulation rates, advertising revenue, and audience size (Benson 2004; Benson and Neveu 2005). Social capital refers to the sum of a person's entire social circle and involvement in social groups (Siapera and Spyridou 2012). For example, a journalist's social media network could be considered a type of social capital.

In field theory "qualitative aspects of demographic change are crucial" (Benson 1999, 468) in that new agents in a field can serve both to transform and conserve. As such, in operationalizing the field, it is essential to examine who is entering the field—their schooling, their professional training, and how they developed into the profession (Benson 1999). For doxa, it is necessary to understand the "universe of tacit presuppositions' that organize action within the field" (Benson and Neveu 2005, 3), which the authors explored, as supported by Willig (2013) via assessing journalistic priorities regarding newsworthiness. Habitus implies an "understanding of the journalistic game" and was explored in relation to the personal and professional experiences that produce knowledge "of the game" (Tandoc 2015, 562). Finally, capital is operationalized by exploring what it is that "agents seek" (Tandoc 2015, 562) and it refers to various forms of resources: economic, cultural, social, and symbolic (Benson and Neveu 2005; Sallaz and Zavisca 2007; Willig 2013).

Despite expansion in the journalistic field to include bloggers (Vos, Craft, and Ashley 2012) among others, the norms and goals of traditional media "continue to dominate" (Vos, Craft, and Ashley 2012, 861). Yet, "journalists clearly perceive capital instability within the journalistic field" (Tandoc 2015, 19). This instability has opened up "the gates to the influence of the audience" to shape content in order to build economic capital and preserve their cultural capital (Tandoc 2015).

Mobile Journalism

In journalism studies, field theory conceptualizes journalism as a field and hence, as a site of struggle. In the Pew Research Center's 2016 State of the News Media, consumption via mobile devices, i.e. cell phones and tablets, was front and center as the site of the most growth in advertising revenue, and the biggest increases in readership (Lichterman 2016). Simultaneously, news organizations shifted their focus from physical to digital. News organizations including Hearst, News Corp, the *New York Times*, and the Gannett and Tribune companies have begun to emphasize reporting using mobile devices, such as shooting video, recording audio, taking pictures, and editing said content with cell phones or tablets, in news work. Yet the journalistic field is more than just the sum of national media outlets. Looking at local newsrooms could provide more application and context for mobile media. Local news rooms provide a closer examination of issues like public affairs, culture, and crisis (Eveland, Marton, and Seo 2004; Pasek et al. 2006; Zelizer 1993). And while newsrooms can increasingly refer to physically detaching, digitally connected work spaces (Robinson 2011), this study's subjects referred to newsrooms as a place they were based physically while spending much of their time in the field.

Newsroom practice has long been segmented by medium, causing distinctions between print, magazine, radio, and television reporting, that develop out of the journalistic doxa. Mobile journalism differs in practice from other media (Cameron 2009). There are two strands within mobile journalism which cause confusion and potentially confound

the role of the mobile journalist: (1) field production conducted entirely using mobile devices that can be shaped for use in a variety of platforms and (2) content created strictly for mobile consumption, which may or may not be created strictly on mobile devices. For example, the majority of people who consume video content on mobile devices do so with the volume turned off (Slivka 2017). To adapt to this trend in mobile consumption, videos are created with captions on the screen so consumers can watch the video and understand it without having to listen to it (Slivka 2017).

Mobile field production tends to pride itself on being more “ad-hoc and timely” (Väättäjä, Koponen, and Roto 2009, 1) than other forms of journalism, which provides a means of developing cultural capital. This addresses an economic capital need in the broader journalistic field to operate cheaper and faster (Koponen and Väättäjä 2009). Journalists clearly perceive “capital instability within the journalistic field” (Tandoc 2015, 19). This instability has opened up “the gates to the influence of the audience” to shape content in order to build economic capital and preserve their cultural capital (Tandoc 2015, 19).

Previous research shows a key component of mobile journalism is that the audience is an influencer of the content (Tandoc 2015). As such, it is important to examine mobile journalism as it relates to lifestyle journalism, as both have been shown to be, in many ways, driven by the audience.

Lifestyle Journalism

In lifestyle journalism, journalistic doxa and journalistic habitus are created vis-à-vis a relationship with the audience. Furthermore, this relationship helps build social capital (Fürsich 2013). Lifestyle journalists “prefer a direct connection to their audiences by taking on the recipient’s’ perspective and by giving clear value judgments” (Fürsich 2013, 14). Few have argued about where mobile journalism fits between traditional journalism and lifestyle journalism—and this paper hopes to address that. But some have argued that lifestyle journalism reflects an “unparalleled degree of human agency and user control in our lived experience of mediated reality” (Deuze 2009, 26) and hence this study of the conception of mobile journalism is relevant within broader discussions of lifestyle journalism (Fürsich 2013).

Journalists understand their intimacy with an audience sometimes as useful even on more serious journalistic work. Al Jazeera English, for instance, thinks of interactive reporting with the audience as a way to “give voice to the voiceless” (Usher 2016, 105). In other cases, audiences can serve as a journalistic source in that audiences can be “ideal for data collection” (Usher 2016, 115). Journalists view audiences not just as citizens and consumers but also as clients who participate in the news creation process in lifestyle journalism (Skovsgaard and Bro 2016). This sort of openness suggests a “culture of radical sharing” and has its dangers: regular engagement with audiences can have consequences for sources and can “challenge perceptions of journalistic authority over editorial judgment” (Usher 2016, 191). This openness requires transparency (Singer 2015) with the belief that such openness will strengthen the relationship with the audience (Carlson and Usher 2016).

It is worth noting that lifestyle journalism is not all together new, although it is increasing influence perhaps is (Fürsich 2013). The audience, a key focus of lifestyle journalism, has historically been a source of expectations regarding how journalists should perform their role (Skovsgaard and Bro 2016). Even in nineteenth-century journalism,

some news organizations emphasized “audience reactions” (Ryfe 2006, 65). Ryfe (2006) noted that even newspapers not explicitly associated with political parties would nonetheless articulate political leanings as part of an appeal to a “target audience” (Ryfe 2006, 69). And it has certainly had a home for decades in feature writing and long-form journalism that gives clear “value judgments” (Fürsich 2013, 14), “adopts an intimate voice that can be informal, frank, or ironic,” and “investigates ordinary events, celebrating their specialness” (Taylor 2005, 125).

Lifestyle journalism and mobile journalism share several essential norms: engagement with the audience via social media and an emphasis on reporting perspective. In lifestyle journalism, the audience is engaged in order to build readership and viewership, obtain feedback on stories, and to identify additional stories (Fürsich 2013; Hanusch 2012); in mobile journalism, social media is used so that audiences can “position themselves vis-a-vie events and places” (Goggin et al. 2015, 44). In lifestyle journalism, the emphasis on perspective is attached to an advice-giving, guidance function (Hanusch 2012); in mobile journalism, this norm is often attributed to developing “richer, multifaceted storytelling” (Martyn 2009, 208) that emerges from enacting technical skills (Martyn 2009; Blankenship 2016).

Mobile journalism production skills are increasingly expected of journalism students entering the field (Wenger, Owens, and Thompson 2014), requiring a different nature of journalistic habitus. In 2010, researchers found mobile skills were referenced in only 2 percent of television job posts (Wenger, Owens, and Thompson 2014). Yet by 2013, mobile production skills were mentioned in 27 percent of all television job posts, and even that “lags behind mobile’s prominence in newspaper and online job ads” (Wenger, Owens, and Thompson 2014, 138).

All of this taken together implies that mobile has the potential to be a site of conflict within the journalistic field. This conflict stems from an increased emphasis on mobile production in newsrooms, the increased number of job ads featuring mobile journalism skills, the sense that mobile production is addressing deficiencies in the current journalistic economic structure, and the sense that mobile’s focus on the audience is critiquing journalistic cultural capital.

Journalistic Role Conception

Journalists typically find their “professional identities” in their doxa, and in particular, in their roles (Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman 1976, 131) and those roles are typically discussed in terms of contributions to democracy (Christians et al. 2009). Hence, lifestyle journalists would be likely to struggle in articulating their roles.

Roles function as a type of social stability—they provide journalists with a clear sense of their social identity (Christians et al. 2009). Yet early scholarship on journalist roles was less closely attached to democratic self-governance and was more descriptive, as opposed to normative (Lapinski and Rimal 2005). In essence, descriptive roles describe journalists’ approach to journalism, but do not capture the nature good, right, and moral rules within the journalistic field. Journalists typically defend roles of “surveillance of the environment,” “the correlation of the parts of society in responding to the environment,” and “the transmission of the social heritage from one generation to the next” (Lasswell 1948, 38), in so much as these roles are closely identified with journalistic identity (Berkowitz 2000). Later Wright (1974) added “entertainment” to Lasswell’s functions (16)—a role reflective of

lifestyle journalism and simultaneously—Wright (1974) argues—reflective a long-standing mode of human personal communication. Hence, it is only natural that entertainment would find its way within journalism. Yet journalists tend to turn to normative roles of dissemination, interpretation, adversarial, and populist mobilizer (Weaver and Wilhoit 1986; Weaver and Wilhoit 1996; Weaver et al. 2007) as a form of legitimacy. These normative roles do not naturally appear to assist in democratic self-governance, but they fit within democratic theories of the press and root journalism in shared societal beliefs and pro-social values (Christians et al. 2009).

All of these roles taken together, regardless of the degree of democratic contributions, provide journalists with a framework for doing their jobs. Hence given the struggle inherent in entering the journalistic scene without being able to make a clear argument for democratic contributions, it is worthwhile to consider how mobile journalists articulate their role relative to the field.

This leads us to propose the following research questions:

RQ 1: “How do mobile journalists see mobile as a part of their journalistic role?”

RQ 2: “What field theory dimensions—doxa, habitus, capital and field—influence mobile production in a newsroom?”

Method

In order to address the research questions, an online survey through Qualtrics survey software was distributed to mobile journalists via several different mobile journalism social network hubs. The researchers shared the survey by posting a link to it in the “#mojolive” Facebook group and the “MoJoCon” Facebook group, groups in which mobile journalists share tips and information about mobile production tools with one another. They also Tweeted a link to the survey using and the “#mojocon” Twitter hashtag. The 27-question survey used open-ended and closed-ended questions to probe the journalists’ experience with mobile journalism and their journalistic roles, asking journalists to describe the priorities in their coverage using the survey questions from the Worlds of Journalism survey as a model (see Hanitzsch et al. 2013). It is a 47-item measure utilizing a 5-point Likert scale (1–5), and asks participants to rate how influenced they feel they are, and thus their work is, by things like audience research and data, religious considerations, and newsroom managers. Since the Worlds of Journalism survey seeks to examine journalistic roles internationally and broadly and the current research is examining journalistic roles more narrowly and explicitly, numerous open-ended questions were all so posed such as “what motivates you to do mobile journalism?” “Describe the process of producing a mobile news story,” and “Do you feel mobile is integral to your news organization’s overall coverage?” Textual analysis of qualitative survey data was chosen as opposed to other methods in order to combat the possibility that an “important issue could be overlooked” or that a particular issue “could be ignored” (Choy 2014, 102). This method allowed researchers to reach the subjects with expertise needed, to conduct a broad-based analysis and yet to allow participants to describe their thoughts at length. Sharing the survey online allowed for the concurrent collection of quantitative and qualitative data. Including the open-ended questions allowed participants to explain in detail their rationale for producing news content using mobile devices, and thus provided researchers with rich descriptions that were then compared and contrasted within subjects.

For the purposes of recruitment, researchers defined journalists as “People who work for a journalistic medium as their main job” and “carry out journalistic activities” such as publishing on “current and socially relevant topics” (Fröhlich, Koch, and Obermaier 2013, 815; Weischenberg, Malik, and Scholl 2006, 30–31). Since our target group of mobile journalists was more narrow, we added the requirement that journalists must be doing the majority of their work using mobile devices. Survey questions were divided into three areas: (1) questions about journalists’ professional background and current occupational context—in order to understand the nature of the field (Benson 1999), (2) questions about journalists’ priorities in regard to their journalistic role—in order to assess journalistic doxa (Hanitzsch et al. 2013), and (3) questions about journalists use of mobile—both practically and in terms of its perceived value in their newsroom culture—in order to understand journalistic habitus and capital. This qualitative survey gathered 39 respondents, of which 24 indicated where they are located. The largest number of participants, 17, were from the United States, largely representing the South, Midwest regions. The remaining participants were from Australia, Germany, Spain, Argentina, and the Netherlands.

The procedure for this textual analysis involved a three-step process. First, the responses were collected through Qualtrics survey software. Once the responses were collected, each was examined in more detail for denotative theme. During this process, aspects of the responses considered were any mention of motivation for doing mobile journalism or influence over the journalists’ work, resulting in three major categories: personal, environmental, and audience influences. Personal meant the participant mentioned something he/she must do or does, environmental indicated an external motivation from within the newsroom, and audience meant the participant referred to viewers, readers, watchers, etc. Next, each of the responses was again coded for sub themes within each of those three categories, resulting in four major sub themes: job preservation, newsroom requirements, newsroom barriers, and audience desires.

After each response was coded, themes and ideas emerging from each individual response were compared with one another to establish resonance and find relationships, commonalities, and dissimilarities among them. It is important to note that despite the method being three clearly defined steps, the process was not linear. There was a constant movement between the steps, as well as across the responses. Additionally, the coding and interpretations were discussed between researchers as a validity check. All participants were granted anonymity in part because this study is most interested in understanding a perspective on changes in the field. In the interests of respecting participant anonymity, responses will be reported by participant letter.

Journalistic Role Conception in Mobile Journalism

In discussing their role, mobile journalists described their role as being a liability in the newsroom, and yet as a way to keep up with audience interest. As such, journalists doxa primarily understood required a descriptive, as opposed to normative, role: as surveillance of the environment, a way of connecting society with that environment and presenting it in an entertaining manner.

Journalists were motivated to do mobile because mobile includes “a combination of better storytelling, ability to share information easily across platforms, working remotely” (Participant B). Participants described this “better storytelling” (Participant B) as often

requiring the “value judgments” often built into lifestyle journalism (Fürsich 2013, 14). News can be presented in a more “timely nature” (Participant E) if reporters “shoot video via mobile phones whenever they can” (Participant BB). As such, journalists saw mobile as a role that lent itself toward “community and breaking news reporters” as well as sports reporters (Participant W). Mobile journalists said they were motivated to use mobile because of the “need to do so” because their competitors are using mobile (Participant T). Furthermore, journalists argued that their role required them to “know how to be flexible and work from the field as needed” (Participant W).

Yet journalists also argued that this role is often seen as “burden” and as a result, they are not granted the equipment to make mobile work high-quality, and more efficient (Participant X). Newsrooms perceive mobile as a burden perhaps in that it requires newsrooms to “modify the workflow to adapt it to the new habits of consumption” (Participant C). In short, mobile journalists represent the harbinger of changes to come. Traditional journalism norms would chaff, in particular, in relation to the inclusion of “value judgments” (Fürsich 2013, 14) that emerge from mobile. As one participant wrote, “everyone has a smartphone and a history to narrate. From that perspective, the role of journalists has to change radically to adapt us to the empowerment that new technologies have given to citizens” (Participant C). Not all journalists had that experience in their newsroom, however. One participant noted that his news organization had gone “all-mobile” and as such his work is considered “integral” (Participant B). That experience, however, is still relatively rare. According to study participants, their newsrooms have largely attempted to integrate traditional media technologies with mobile and with mixed results. As one participant put it, “it is difficult to implement mobile technology in minds that resist” (Participant C) and another noted, “the news organizations I work for have been unable to integrate mobile and traditional into one cohesive team” (Participant E).

Journalists largely understood their role vis-à-vis their relationship with the audience—which is standard attribute among lifestyle journalists. When discussing how they conceptualize story ideas, one participant wrote, “I try to think, ‘How will a reader see this on their phone?’” (Participant W) Journalists found mobile to be a useful way of “reaching the audience” and “providing them with news immediately in the way they prefer” (Participant X). Mobile, participants said, allows journalists to better inform people as a result of a “better workflow” (Participant B) and “greater interactivity” (Participant C). This interactivity is not just curated to be between the audience and the story but also between the audience and the journalist. Through use of mobile, and specifically through leveraging social media, journalists said they can get more feedback from the audience. This feedback allows them to become “an expert on my beat” (Participant X). Many participants noted a strong desire to be recognized by the audience to be the “one people will turn to” (Participant X). In essence, the mobile journalists in this sample saw them as the voice of the audience in the newsroom—responding to audience interest in both news stories and the method of relaying that information.

Journalists largely identified with descriptive journalistic roles. Participants heavily emphasized, “hard news” (Participant X) and “breaking news” (Participant D) in mobile reporting, which connects mobile journalists with the values and norms associated with traditional journalism. Journalists discussed their work as including largely descriptive journalistic methods such as “live streaming” (Participant E), “push alerts for breaking news” (Participant X), and use of “Facebook Live” (Participant X). In listing the relative value of various journalistic roles, participants responded to a 5-point scale of

“Unimportant,” “Slightly important,” “Somewhat important,” “Very important,” and “Extremely important.”

Journalists placed a high value on the practices of an accurate recorder/storyteller. In response to “report things as they are,” 53.3 percent of respondents listed it as extremely important and 33.3 percent listed it as very important. Similarly, in response to “tell stories about the world” 43.8 percent of respondents saw it as very important and 25 percent as extremely important.

Journalists also placed a higher importance on audience-oriented roles. For example, “provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience” was seen as very important to 56.3 percent of respondents and extremely important to 18.8 percent. The query of whether they should “educate the audience” was seen as extremely important to 31.3 percent and very important to 37.5 percent of respondents. Lastly, “provide entertainment and relaxation” was seen as somewhat important to 31.3 percent of respondents and unimportant to 25 percent of respondents.

Normative practices were seen as less important. In response to “monitor and scrutinize business,” 25 percent of participants saw it as unimportant and 31.3 percent saw it as slightly important. Yet, respondents thought the practice of “provide information people need to make political decisions” was more important; 31.3 percent responded that it was extremely important and 25 percent responded that it was very important.

In a similar manner, advocacy-oriented normative roles were also seen as relatively unimportant. In response to that they should “set the political agenda,” 43.8 percent of respondents saw it as unimportant and 31.3 percent said it was slightly important. “Influence public opinion” was seen as unimportant to 37.5 percent of respondents and slightly important to 31.3 percent of respondents. Both approaches to government were seen as relatively unimportant as well. Fifty-six percent of respondents saw “support government policy” as unimportant and 18.8 percent of respondents saw it as slightly important. The idea of being “an adversary of the government” was unimportant to 50 percent and slightly important to 37.5 percent of respondents. Finally, “motivate people to participate in political activity” was seen as unimportant to 31.3 percent of respondents and slightly important to 25 percent.

In essence, the role mobile journalists articulated were primarily descriptive and audience oriented. Journalists attached themselves to the standards of traditional journalism through coverage of “breaking news” (Participant D; Participant W) but in practice, their work identifies more with concepts often associated with soft news—goals of informing, educating, and entertaining (Hanusch 2012).

Mobile Journalism in the Newsroom

When examining the factors that influence the use of mobile journalism, three themes emerged: personal, environmental, and audience motivations.

Personal Factors: Habitus and Capital

Participants indicated several personal factors that influence the use of mobile journalism in their newsrooms. The most common personal influence participants expressed was that doing mobile journalism will allow them to keep their job. This is a clear reference to journalistic habitus in that it indicates that journalists see “the game” (Tandoc 2015, 562)

as requiring this skill set in order to be modern and preserve their careers as journalists. For example, Participant H said she needed to do mobile journalism so that, “Hopefully I’ll be able to keep working in this business.” Participant G explained he does mobile because it’s, “being and staying up-to-date. Being faster and better than others. Being able to do my own thing and to publish stories others can’t realize.” Several participants mentioned mobile journalism is the way of the future, and mentioned they do it to adapt to the “pace of the technical revolution.” Many participants indicated doing mobile journalism was a sort of survival technique during an uncertain time in journalism.

Related to that, many participants indicated they believe doing mobile journalism will increase their bottom line, which will, in turn, help save or protect their jobs. In other words, the skillset could potentially increase, or at least preserve, their economic capital from a field theory perspective. For example, several participants indicated doing mobile allows them to better connect with their sources, which they indicated could drive story views, which would keep them employed. Several participants explained doing mobile journalism makes them feel like they are more accessible to the audience, which helps increase their readership—a reference to social capital. Participant Z said, “I expect to establish myself as the expert on my beat, the one people will turn to for hard news because they’ve seen me on Facebook or on Twitter and feel connected.” Many participants indicated mobile journalism “promoted interactivity,” which allows them to engage with their audience. Participant V explained, “I want them to think of my newspaper as having the information and if they see it on Twitter or Facebook from me, they may be more inclined to read my story the next day.” This conception of the audience reflects a lifestyle journalism value of openness—this sense that by engaging in different aspects of the journalism process, they might have an enhanced relationship with the news organization (Carlson and Usher 2016; Usher 2016).

Interestingly, none of the participants indicated their management or any other colleague told them doing mobile is necessary to remain a journalist. Further, only one participant is required to do mobile each shift, in the form of tweeting. No other participants indicated their management or superiors asked them to do mobile, or even required it. Thus, it seems as though this influence to do mobile journalism is strictly personal, with journalists’ imagined or perceived outcomes of increased readership influencing their motivation. That is, ultimately the social capital draw within the field—their audience via social media—influences their motivation to do mobile.

Environmental Factors: Doxa

While most participants felt it was vital for them to do mobile journalism in order to keep their jobs, a large number of participants indicated they faced opposition to mobile in their newsroom. One of the most common environmental factors participants indicated influences the use of mobile journalism in their newsrooms was the management. These participants expressed their management was largely not supportive of doing mobile journalism. Thus, while many participants indicated mobile has the potential to secure their jobs, others indicated they do not do mobile journalism because their newsroom management does not support it.

One potential reason for the discrepancy is explained by a participant who explained managers simply do not do mobile. Participant H wrote, “Field personnel, on-air people, some producers [do mobile]. Assignment desk people seek out mobile content. About

the only ones who don't do mobile are management." Participant F wrote, "It is not common because most of the editorial staff is over 50 years old and resistance to change is very high." Participant J explained he did mobile, but stopped, "I did it for 2.5 years and it was not appreciated or valued very much by management." Taken together, these participants are referencing an issue of journalistic doxa in that the "tacit presuppositions" (Benson and Neveu 2005, 3) of their news organization do not see mobile as meeting primary news values.

One explained he was expected to do mobile, but management only approved of certain types of mobile, in that only some of it met the newsroom's doxa. Participant V said, "We are all required to have a Twitter account updated three times per day. We are not allowed to have a Facebook page related to the newspaper." Some participants indicated they have tried to convince their management to allow their newsroom to take on new types of mobile journalism, or expand the mobile journalism they do, but have not been successful. Participant B explained,

I have tried to get the paper to do Periscope or Facebook live, but they will not. I also do video and upload to Youtube as a supplement to some of my stories. All I do on Social Media and Youtube is supposed to drive readers to our online or paper product.

One potential explanation for the resistance to mobile is some see it as an additional burden that does not drive news consumers back to the original medium. Participant G explained, "Colleagues see it as an additional liability. We do not get any proper equipment." Participant Z wrote, "Younger reporters have embraced Facebook Live and Twitter more, whereas older reporters treat it as another burden or an afterthought."

Thus, participants expressed newsroom management seems to be focused on the audience it already has through its traditional forms of news dissemination: television and radio for broadcast newsrooms, newspapers, magazines, and websites for print newsrooms, etc. While some managers are also concerned with certain audiences on specific social networking sites, like Twitter, participants indicated some managers are less interested in growing their audiences beyond their current readership, viewership, or listenership, and instead are more focused on satisfying their current audiences. While it might seem counterintuitive, this finding is consistent with the fact that newspaper circulation continues to decline (Barthel 2016) and is further explained simply by the fact that for television news stations, their main business, for now, is over the air. Studies show it is a business that is losing consumers, both locally and nationally (Matsa 2016). Yet as a field, the entrance of mobile also represents a demographic change—as indicated by the reference of several participants to "younger reporters" (Participant Z).

Thus there exists a tension amongst mobile journalists between journalistic doxa and journalistic habitus; a tension between what they feel they need to do to preserve their jobs, and what their management expects them to do. While many indicated they feel mobile helps them develop a presence and kind of para-social relationship with their audience, which helps them increase their audience and readership or page views, there also exists a pressure from their management to not spend time or company resources on mobile, with some even forbidding certain types of mobile journalism and engagement. Intriguingly, these personal and environmental influences and motivators for doing mobile seem to be deeply rooted in the audience, or the perceived audience.

Audience Factors: Social Capital

In addition to personal and newsroom environmental factors, many mobile journalists expressed explicitly a need to consider the audience when doing mobile journalism—a reference to social and, at times, cultural capital. Sociologist Goffman (1959) first explained people change or adapt their behavior based on their actual audience. That is, the audience itself plays a key role in determining a person's behavior, as the person assess an audience and chooses to act in a certain way based on who those people are what the person believes their expectations to be. Most participants indicated they think about how the audience views stories, or would most like to view stories. In fact, when discussing mobile, most of the participants explained mobile journalism is what their audience prefers. Participant Q wrote, "It's how these people prefer," and Participant Z said "It's another way of reaching the audience and providing them the news immediately in the way they prefer."

Interestingly, only one participant actually said he had researched the audience. He explained,

My audience is varied. I've looked at data on my stories and I hit a pretty big 18–35 audience, but in the evening my stories do really well with Boomers. People seem to interact more with my stories when they find them via social media, so I tend to get a younger, female audience during the day.

When asked who they thought their mobile audience was, the other participants were specific in their answers, but did not suggest they had actually researched who their audience was.

Instead, most participants described an "imagined audience," or their mental conceptualization of the people with whom they communicate (Boyd 2008). Some were specific in who they imagined their audience to be. Participant DD said, "Members of the local community or with an interest in the topic," Participant Z said, "I think my audience is 25–40 years old, educated and civic-minded/engaged," and Participant E said, "The same audience that I had through more traditional journalism plus a newer audience more attuned to getting information from digital platforms." Research has shown that an imagined audience can be just as powerful as an actual audience in determining behavior (Baldwin and Holmes 1987). However, the imagined audience described by these journalists was not aspirational—it was an attempt to put faces on the often faceless community of readers and viewers that find their work online. Both Participant DD and Participant E reference actual community members they would have contact with—the "local community" and the "same audience I had through more traditional journalism"—but then extended the size of the audience to acknowledge the broad reach of social media. In short, the journalists develop the deep relationships with audiences incumbent in a form of lifestyle journalism, while acknowledging that there is potential reach beyond the audience they know they have. As such the audience is able to inform their coverage in terms of news preferences and cultural preoccupations, while part of the audience still remains a bit mysterious.

This imagined extension of their audience became more complex when considering how other journalists imagined this additional audience. For instance, some said they thought their audience was anyone with Internet access. Participant H explained the audience is, "Anyone who accesses information via a screen." Others expressed similar ideas. Participant F said, "Everyone, everywhere and at any time," Participant R said, "Generally

anybody, it depends on the story and the format," and Participant N said, "People that watch online video." While there exists the potential for anyone with Internet access to be the audience for their stories, the likelihood of this actually being the case is small. Thus highlights a potential issue for mobile journalists attempting to convince their newsroom management their mobile work is valuable. That is, without being able to really know or predict who this additional imagined audience is, there exists a challenge for mobile journalists attempting to legitimize their mobile work and the time and resources necessary to complete it. While on the surface it may seem as though personal and environmental factors influence and drive mobile journalism, they take a backseat to the audience. As such the import of capital among journalists—economic and social in particular—serves as a primary motivation for mobile work.

Conclusion

This research sought to understand how mobile journalists discursively construct their role within the broader journalistic field, and what factors are affecting the integration of mobile journalists' skills in the newsroom.

Through an online survey of mobile journalists at a range of news organizations, this research found that journalists constructed their role in a classic descriptive manner. In regard to RQ 1, participants emphasized the role of societal surveillance and story recording. Furthermore, mobile serves in their position as way of orienting them toward the audience. Participants oriented their work vis-à-vis their audience, as is a standard practice in forms of lifestyle journalism (Hanusch 2014).

In RQ 2, this research found mobile journalists saw the integration of mobile technology as a resulting from a mixture of personal, environmental, and audience factors. The most prominent personal factor participants cited was that mobile production was a way in which journalists could argue for their continued validity in the newsroom—and as such, it serves as a form of job security. And yet participants simultaneously said they felt mobile integration was restricted by management. Participants also felt that the audience factored in heavily in the integration of mobile journalism skills—in that the use of mobile tools is often in response to audience interest.

In essence, these findings paint a picture of a new entrant in the journalistic field. The topics that mobile journalists tend to cover are those topics standard in traditional journalism—breaking news and community news. Furthermore, mobile journalists tended to use the terminology of traditional journalism—emphasizing "accuracy," "truth,"—and work in traditional journalistic environments—newspapers and broadcast news stations. Yet their orientation is one of a lifestyle journalist in that their identity is formed via a relationship with audience. Hence, the fact that journalists reported being seen as a "liability" and a "burden" then seems natural in that there are occupying the professional settings of traditional journalists and yet operating with the norms of lifestyle journalists.

From a field theory perspective, journalists all articulated boundary discourse that seemed to indicate the discomfort that comes from pushing a paradigmatic boundary (Hanusch 2012; Lewis 2012). As Hanusch (2014) argues, the increased prevalence of lifestyle journalism is in its own way evidence of a shift within the journalistic field. Yet this shift has in the past been described largely in relation to the growth of feature-oriented niches—travel journalism (Hanusch 2010), gaming journalism (Perreault and Vos 2016),

and music journalism (Fürsich 2013). The newsroom resistance to mobile is likely reflective of its younger audience; an audience that is perhaps more invested in the feature-oriented niches of lifestyle journalism than traditional hard news. This study indicates that beyond “soft news” realms, lifestyle journalism norms are prevalent in mobile journalism—a type of journalism that occupies the same space and covers the same topics as traditional journalism. That said, prior research has shown that lifestyle journalists do look for opportunities to attach themselves to the cultural capital associated with traditional journalism—often this is articulated through ethics statements and professional associations such as the Society for Professional Journalists (Perreault and Vos 2016). The broadening focus of lifestyle journalism as seen in this research could then be indicative of a desire to attain a level of cultural capital that is typically reserved for traditional journalism. It could also reflect a desire to reach a larger audience. This sample’s emphasis on audience interest and job preservation seems mutually dependent. With a larger audience, a mobile journalist would then attain a level of social capital that would help legitimate their claim in the newsroom.

Mobile journalists operate with a differing journalistic doxa, within the same social spaces as journalism (Bourdieu 1998). While traditional journalists have long-valued gathering cultural capital through means such as awards, mobile journalists seem increasingly interested in building cultural capital in addition to social capital. As with interactive journalism, one would suspect that the convergence of mobile journalism within traditional journalism could at once result in “uncertainty over journalists’ authority” and yet at the same time “bring the fun back to journalism, providing another incentive for readers to come to news” (Usher 2016, 186). The convergence of the topics and norms from traditional journalism and lifestyle journalism could be of value in the current news environment; the emphasis on building a large, engaged audience could very well what could mitigate journalism’s predicted decline

Limitations and Avenues for Further Research

This research is rooted in the interpretivist tradition and as such can make no claims as to generalizability of the sample. Furthermore, it must be acknowledged that the use of survey, while a boon for gathering a wide range of self-report information from journalists from across the United States and world, does not allow for the same degree of rich data collection one might expect from ethnography or length interviews. However, the use of survey allowed for a larger sample size (few newsrooms at the time of writing have multiple mobile journalists), and researchers also urged participants to write at length about the issues questioned in the survey—and respondents obliged.

Further research should consider looking at a mobile journalism “case” to examine how this field maintenance occurs within a single newsroom. An ethnography of a mobile journalist in a mixed newsroom—although it would not address the same degree of newsroom integration addressed in the present study—would allow for a deeper look into how lifestyle journalistic norms are perceived within traditional journalistic settings.

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