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Editorial

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The first issue of *for(e)dialogue* is composed of a collection of papers given at the New Directions in Media Research (NDiMR) postgraduate conference in June 2015 at the University of Leicester. NDiMR is a one-day postgraduate focused conference organised by PhD students from the Department of Media and Communication. This conference has a similar aim and purpose of this journal as a whole which is to provide postgraduate students, PhD students and early career researchers with a platform and opportunity to develop and share their research and critically contribute to discussions of theory and methodology on a variety of Media and Communication issues. The NDiMR conference has been held annually since 2012, each year growing in size and attracting more delegates and presenters from across the world. However, this is the first time that some of the events' presentation papers have been collected for a published conference proceedings.

This issue features eight papers presented at the NDiMR 2015 event that all touch upon one or more of the broad themes of the conference. Two of the issues' papers are more theoretical in nature with one being the only new media focused work of the collection. This first paper, *'A poststructuralist review of selfies: moving beyond the heteronormative visual rhetorics'* by Patricia Routh, discusses 'gendered selfie production' and the relevant theories for gender identity within the online communities that 'selfies' are shared. The second more theoretical paper, *'Paul Ricoeur, visual hermeneutics and political science: an 'incompatible' relation (?)'* by Nikos Kaplantzis, explores the idea of re-working Ricoeur's critical hermeneutics notion to offer a stronger basis for combining visual studies and political communication approaches.

As well as theoretical discussion, there is a strong theme of exploring media representations within this issue. In *'A review on China's soft power projection through its transnational media institutions: conveying discourse of economic responsibilities in media 'going-out''* Xin Zhao presents a literature review on China's media 'going out project', a soft power initiative put in place by the Chinese government to represent their country in a way that counteracts the notion of 'China as a threat'. Other than the media representing a key government message, this journal issue also includes *'Public service broadcasting: the challenges of representing ethnic minority audiences'* by Gurvinder Aujla-Sidhu, a paper that explores equality of representation at the BBC, the UK's public

broadcaster, with special attention paid to the BBC's Asian Network Radio and issues of representing minority groups.

Papers in this issue also cover topics of media use featuring *'"Here you can use it": understanding mobile phone sharing and the concerns it elicits in rural Kenya'* by Leah Komen and *'The 2011 Egyptian Revolution: its effects on the Egyptian community in the UK in terms of political participation, media use, belonging and Egyptian identity'* by Rua Al-Sheikh. Leah discusses mobile phone use in Kenya, with a particular focus on examining mobile phone sharing practices amongst a sub-ethic group and Rua explores the role the Egyptian Diaspora played in the Arab Spring revolution and to what extent the media was used to increase political involvement.

From the papers described it can be seen that this issue covers media topics from numerous different cultures, however, in our last two papers, it is not just ethnic or national cultures that are the focus but the cultures of organisations in two fields. The first of these, *'A re-examination of the cultural resistance of orthodoxies with scholarly open access communication'* by Gareth Johnson, which presents a critical re-consideration of the UK's academic culture and its responsiveness in relation to open access ideologies and praxis. The second of these works, *'Dynamics of news selection in different socio-cultural contexts: theoretical and methodological issues'* by Andreas Anastasiou, focuses on cultures of journalism and news values. This paper is the most methodologically focused, and explores the methodological and theoretical issues and challenges of a comparative project that aims to contribute to the discussion of news judgement in different socio-cultural contexts.

All writings within this special issue move their research areas forward whether methodologically, theoretically or empirically which helps us fulfil the overriding aim of *for(e)dialogue*: pushing knowledge boundaries within the field of Media and Communication in small but important ways.

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Academic staff within our department have also contributed to the running of this issue in numerous different ways. Firstly Athina Karatzogianni, who supported and encouraged the idea of a postgraduate journal from the beginnings and who has been there to advise us throughout. Kaitlynn Mendes, one of the current PGR directors, who gave a lot of her time to authorise the papers for publication. We would also like to thank the two head of departments that have been in post during the creation of this issue: Peter Lunt, for his initial support and encouragement of the idea and Helen Wood for her help and support with the authorisation process. We would also like to acknowledge and thank our team of academic staff reviewers: Athina Karatzogianni, Kaitlynn Mendes, Kostas Saltzis, Jack Newsinger, Paul Reilly, Bianca Reisdorf, Jingrong Tong and Jessica Bain for providing their comments and recommendations on the works submitted and for ensuring a high standard of quality throughout the publication.

A Poststructuralist Review of Selfies: Moving Beyond Heteronormative Visual Rhetoric.

Patricia Routh

Abstract: *Mobile devices can instantly create and distribute a digital self-portrait, or 'selfie' across a myriad of social networks. The word 'selfie' summarises a particular kind of cultural and photographic practice that is motivated by a combination of the agency and aspirational biases of the selfie producer and where they prefer to share on social networks. With a specific focus on gendered selfie production, this paper aims to explore the relevant theories for gender identity within online communities in which selfies are shared. From a theoretical starting point, firstly this paper employs the poststructuralist theories (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980) as interpretative filters for a decisive understanding of the inner "rhizome" of an individual's ideal of "becoming". This paper argues that the embodied human subject is transformed by self-exploration with the production and distribution of their selfies.*

Keywords: selfies, gender, identity, production, embodiment

Introduction

This paper is concerned with the 'selfie' phenomenon: a shorthand term for the rapid popularity around the world in the production and circulation of self-generated digital photographic portraiture, spread primarily via mobile devices and social media. Among academic researchers from diverging disciplines that study selfies, there can often be conflicting opinions of/views of what actually constitutes a selfie. Often broadly integrating self-portraits made prior to advent of actual selfie technology, (camera phone and social media), or even portraits taken by a professional photographer, as to what constitutes a selfie. The Oxford Dictionary definition of a selfie defines the term to signify, 'a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and shared via social media (Allen, 2013). The definition offered by Oxford provides a starting point, but the definition tells us nothing about the use, purpose, or meaning of selfies for those that produce them (Warfield, 2014a). More precisely, a selfie is an object created by a mobile device designed to envisage human agency. Through an assemblage of non-human agents, a selfie is created, displayed, distributed, tracked, and monetised (Senft, 2015). A selfie is also a performativity gesture, distributing varied visual messages to diverse online communities, and individuals (Frosh, 2015).

The origins of the behaviours and attitudes surrounding gendered performativity within selfie production have existed and been cultivated in the western world for some time (Walker Rettberg, 2014). Western models of narcissism and hegemony, the invention of the mirror, the invention of the consumer camera and the availability and pervasiveness of gendered gaze in media, influence the gendered performances within selfie-making and also the subsequent reactions to selfie production. Equally as important to selfies, and what truly distinguishes them from other self imaging technology, is the mediated affordances of mobile camera devices and social networks (Warfield, 2014b). Through selfie production, groups of individuals, once marginalised in society by the dominant commoditised cultural visual rhetoric (ethnic minorities, women, homosexuals, transgender and non-binary), now have the power to control their image in ways that break from the societal norm. With a specific focus on gendered selfie production, both heteronormative and alternative performativity, this paper aims to theorise the selfie as a potential tool for positive transformation. It concentrates on the ways gender self-presentation is formed through an arrangement of affirmations and feedback derived from the online social groups in which they are distributed and shared.

1. Literature

This is a review of the key concepts, readings, and theories that will delineate the relationship between westernised self-image making and the current phenomenon of selfie production. It will establish the framework for this paper by providing both historical and contemporary thoughts about attitudes and behaviours surrounding gendered selfie production. The literature review is divided into three sections covering the key influences of selfie production related to this study: gender performativity, embodiment and digital visual objects. To expand upon the understanding of selfies as both a performative act and image, the selfie connects with core concerns across a range of the interdisciplinary areas of art, psychology, social science, media studies and philosophy (Senft, 2015). Drawing on the post-structuralist theories of 'assemblages', (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980), 'embodiment' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962), 'gaze' (Foucault, 1963), and 'gender identity' (Butler, 1990) as models for understanding gendered performativity within selfie production, these theories begin to form the view of selfies as a connection of overlapping biases, as well as nonhuman technological agencies and embodiment. According to Turkle (1985, 1997) online identity is emerging, decentred, and multiple, and 'playing with online personas' can shape a person's real life understanding of identity. A selfie producer continually seeks and adjusts visually what is important for their self-image to suit an aspirational self that is constructed by the "likes" or positive comments on social media networks (Ardévol and Gómez-Cruz, 2012). Through this type of interaction, a sense of

achievement and success emerges, which will empower (Bustard, 2014) the person in the selfie by shaping his or her real-life understanding of self-identity (e.g., he or she will be more confident in real life) in terms of others' idealistic perception and wide acknowledgment (Nemer and Freeman, 2015).

The attachment and dependence on western cultural visual rhetoric manifests in the history of self-imaging prior to selfies reveals the background and cultural framework for thoughts, attitudes and behaviours surrounding selfie production. History and culture condition the semantic meaning. To accurately understand a cultural phenomenon such as selfies, it is necessary to take into account the powerful cultural attitudes that define the visual rhetoric for a culture. By looking at the dominant communications employed to instruct and explain the 'proper social practices', including self-portraiture, a cultural bias towards gendered performativity in selfie production begins to form. Selfies are digital objects that suture together the material with the digital post-humans are becoming.

1.1 Gender Performance

The core concept throughout this paper is the idea of gender construction as a performativity. This topic finds its origins in '*The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*' by Erving Goffman (1959), which illustrates his idea by using a metaphor of theatrical performance. In Goffman, all social interaction is created when people perform within specific situations, which they construct themselves and put in front of the other person they are socializing with. According to Goffman, this performance will change depending on who one's 'audience' is. One of the main insights from this theory (an insight which is key to the topic of selfie production) is the importance of having an agreed upon definition of the situation in a given interaction, in order to give the expected performance. The dominant cultural discourse regarding how gender ought to look and behave, given particular historical, geographical and cultural norms heavily influence the aesthetic choices in selfie production. The very nature of selfie production falls in line with the theory posited by Goffman (1959); it is a performance of everyday life, which is progressively narrated by the producer.

Foucault (1977) posits that it is the hegemonic discourse that establishes the dominant memory and attitudes of societies. That memory also forms the basis of rationality and reasoning within society. Dominant discourse is identified as the principal way in which governments and mainstream media discusses/presents topics of cultural interest and concern. As Foucault (1977) proposes, dominant ideologies perpetuate dominant discourses which in turn perpetuate dominant ideologies. Technologies of self-reflection, images of perceived heteronormativity in western art and

advertising, commercial photography involving gender- these are the discursive prequels to current methods of selfie performance (Warfield, 2014b). Empowerment and cultural programming are related ideas which, when considering the selfie, are strongly gendered.

With the act of making a selfie, women (as well as other marginalised people who are non-binary) now have the authority to be the authors of their own visual stories (Trudy, 2015). Far from lifting the constraints of race, sex, gender, class, etc., the Internet has relentlessly underscored cultural imperatives geared toward heteronormativity 'whiteness', and heterosexuality. This is maintained through what Butler (1988) would describe as culturally repeated codes, those performative means of embodying ideological forces. We can see this at the level of the selfie, and through the imagery routinely used to represent heteronormative models of gender.

One example might be the 'male gaze' in film (Mulvey, 1989), television and fashion photography (Kilborne, 1979), which has long been assessed for the destructive effects on women, subjecting them to objectification, unattainable beauty standards, and demeaning visual rhetoric. Related to this, Angela McRobbie (2013) maps what she terms a 'double-entanglement' within popular cultural representations of heterosexual femininity, reflecting a co-existence of neo-conservative values blended with commoditised conceptions of gender empowerment pushed by the dominant cultural discourse.

Poststructuralist research continues on in a similar manner within intersectional feminism, in that the emphasis is placed on identifying meanings that are context-specific and that relate to the varying discursive practices operating. Intersectional feminism was coined by the American legal scholar and critical race theorist Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1989) and is considered a theoretical and methodological tool appropriate for analysing how historically specific kinds of power differentials and/or structural sociocultural categorisations and unjust social relations (Lykke, 2010). Intersectional feminism has become the predominant way of conceptualizing the relationships between systems of oppression. These systems construct our multiple identities and our social locations in hierarchies of power and privilege (Carastathis, 2014).

The distinction from the past is that selfie producers will make the image themselves and 'how you should look' in a selfie will derive less from outside influences and more from apsirations and gratifications from selfie-producing on-line social networks (Pollen, 2014). Through 'selfie' self-portraits, the once marginalised and commoditised can now actively decide how much of themselves they will reveal to the world, and in which ways. People can take on the role of both photographer and subject, reclaiming the power of portrayal. For many marginalised users who are

suffering in a relatively severe living environment in Brazil, selfies are not a shallow way to show narcissism, fashion, and self-promotion and seek attention. Selfies empower the users to exercise free speech, practice self-reflection, express spiritual purity, improve literacy skills, and form strong interpersonal connections (Nemer and Freeman, 2015; Senft and Baym, 2015).

Equally, selfies have become an important solution to counteracting the negative effects involved with viewing manipulated commercial images. On Tumblr in particular, the trend of selfies has taken on intertwined connotations of body positivity and self-care. For example, Tumblr blogger Lindsey Bottos, a 21-year-old Baltimore-based artist who is a photography major and gender studies minor, runs a Tumblr page where she often uploads selfies as well as pictures of her work. Since starting the Tumblr in 2010, she has received hundreds of cruel anonymous messages (Bahadur, 2014). She turned the words of hate into a feminist art project where she screen-capped some of the hostile messages and posted them over the same pictures of herself that were the subject of abuse.

This seemingly simple act of taking her power back went viral online, and opened a larger dialog about the level of harassment women regularly face online (Drake, 2015). The first set of images, published on her Tumblr on Jan. 26th, has already been re-blogged over 98,000 times. The artist claims that she's received positive feedback since drawing attention to her abuse and is motivated to keep working with her ideas and evolving practical visual research (Bahadur, 2014).

People of various races, sexualities and body types post their selfies as a means of negotiating a positive relationship with their own physical forms. Instead of becoming self-critical and self-destructive, people use selfies as an assertion of the kind of reality they want for themselves. In 2013, within several social media networks, (Instagram, Twitter, Tumblr and Facebook), the #FeministSelfie began trending and is still widely used as a way to share images of (mostly) women and girls that push back on gendered and racial expectations of beauty and presentation of self.   In doing so, they reframe what "beautiful" and "woman" mean, among other things (Cole, 2015). Further to this, selfies can be seen as a uniting force for marginalised communities, for whom the act of re-blogging, liking, and commenting (supportively) on selfies has become an act of support and solidarity (Lasén and Gómez-Cruz, 2009).

1.2 Embodiment

Selfies are as much an assemblage of emotions as they are digital media objects. With mobile devices, we experience affect and agency, the representations of memories and identity we create, and the 'space of flow' nature of social networks (Castells, 1996). The idea of assemblages within

selfie production cannot be examined without beginning with the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1980), who hypothesise that fully material syntheses occurs not just with living objects, but inanimate ones as well. For them, the self is merely the collection point of infinite and random impulses and flows (to use their terms, lines of flight and machinic assemblages) that overlap and intercut with one another, but which only form the most transitory and dynamic connections.

As for what finds and creates these assemblages that are transitorily influential to us, Deleuze and Guattari analogise the botanical rhizome as a model (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980). The root of the rhizome remains subterranean, seeking out, in any direction, what feeds and serves it best. In selfie production, the selfie producer continuously establishes connections between semiotic chains (interpersonal attachments), organizations of power (social hierarchies), and circumstances relative to the photographer's culture, social interests, and efforts.

This process is similar to what Delueze and Guatarri refer to as 'becoming'. Becoming is not a process of imitation or analogy; it is a new way of being that is a function of influences rather than imitation (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980). The process of becoming involves removing undesired parts from their original meaning and bringing about new meanings. Theorist Brian Rotman (2008) posits that the concept of machinic assemblages is the basis of consciousness and mind. Rotman's elaboration of Deleuze and Guatarri's perspective is that media machines are not simply cold extensions of the body; they are mutating assemblages that include consciousness, memories and notions of identity. Selfies work in this way, as an embodied act that distributes and continually transforms the subject's concept of self.

What truly defines the selfie is not just the 'self' that is in it; it is also about the relationship between the self and technology. It is not unusual that mobile devices and the objects they create mediate our experience of the world. Gibson and Ingold (1995) illustrate, part of what makes humans a unique species of primate is the adaptation of technology to the body and mind. From the beginning of human history, we have evolved as beings that can make and use complex tools, use them to communicate in multifaceted ways, and engage in complex forms of social life more than any other species in the animal kingdom (Gibson and Ingold, 1995).

Visual technology mediates our relationship with the world by imposing itself between the eye and what it sees. Not only do we learn to see differently, but also we learn to act differently when our vision is mediated (Shinkle, 2014). As Shinkle observes, we incorporate the camera phone so thoroughly into our perceptual experience that it tends to withdraw as the focus of our attention. Rather than intervening between the self and the world it has become an essential part of our

encounter with the world (Kindberg et al., 2005). This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as 'proprioception'. Proprioception refers to the sense of the relative position of neighbouring parts of the body and the strength of effort being employed in movement. This sense enables us to incorporate tools within our bodily boundaries; as a result of proprioception, we can use tools with such fluency that they effectively stop being foreign objects and begin to act as extensions of the body (Kilner, 2014). This is the difference between seeing through a camera and seeing with it – a more empathic relationship that blurs the difference between the human and the technological worlds (Martin, 2014).

1.3 Digital Visual Objects

In order to appreciate how traditional digital aesthetics correspond with gender performativity within selfies, it is important to consider the established western attitude towards amateur photography. This section will discuss key aspects of aesthetics of photography in order to put into context the type of imaging distinctive to selfies and its in-built digital aesthetics. Selfies owe their origins in part to film photography. While the camera obscura predates the 1800s, the invention of photography was essentially a 19th century occurrence (Peres, 2007). At that time photographs had no clear social or cultural use for amateurs (Gernsheim, 1971). It was only with the advent of amateur photography in the late 1880s that photography came into its own as a form of visual expression that could provide social and cultural affirmations for the photographer and for the viewer (Newhall, 1972). These uses reinforced this self-consciousness of photography as an art and communication (Sontag, 1973). Photography was (and is) one of the most ubiquitous technologies in mass use and is an invention that arguably has had one of the biggest impacts on cultural life in the last two centuries (Peres, 2007).

The dominant way of seeing and judging images in the western world is one that reflects the way we are trained to see. The perception that continually dominates amateur photography by the general public is that photography is a precise representation of reality. This suspension of disbelief regarding photography is thought to be one of the remarkable aspects of the form; that is, its ability to combine with and alter the viewer's perception of identity. Roland Barthes (1980) said that photography, as a pictorial semiotic, is by no means a precise representation of reality. Barthes proceeds to distinguish between a characteristic that he calls the 'studium' and the 'punctum'. Studium implies the universal meaning in the photograph. The punctum is the private meaning; it is not easily communicated through language. Barthes feels this is the detail that attracts and holds the spectator's gaze. According to Barthes, the photograph is a duality (signifier and signified). Sontag (1977) reinforces this idea in her essay 'On Photography'. The dominant discourse on the semantics

of images floats around us from sources in mass media and we adopt their meanings into our consciousness in order to fit them into our culture (Lacan, 1977). In this same way, societies construct meanings, judgments and rules of proper use for selfie production.

The digital aesthetic has now been all around us for over a decade. This encapsulates the term referred to as 'post-digital' – a term that has recently come into use in the discourse of digital artistic practice (Cascone, 2000). 'Post-digital' does not aim to describe 'a life after digital', but rather attempts to describe the present-day opportunity to explore the consequences of living one's whole life immersed in digital aesthetic. The impact of living with and interacting with digital devices in everyday life has blurred the lines that once separated humans from machines. Manovich (1995) posits that when someone creates a digital image they are never doing it alone. It is always a symbiosis of individual and computer, creating together. The digital image is something that 'can exist in different, potentially infinite versions' (Manovich, 2001).

The selfie differs from its predecessor, traditional photography, in that it provides not only an agency with the subject, but an assemblage of both human consciousness and machine which jointly reconfigures the subjects (Rotman, 2008). The selfie captures and constructs personal and group biases, maintains social relationships, and expresses aspirational identity in a way not possible with the technologies which preceded it (Dolphijn and Tuin, 2012). Selfies produced and shared from mobile devices to social media form spaces where we may derive important cultural knowledge that facilitates the construction of our identities (Jenkins, 2006). Selfies shared across social media networks create a sense of 'fitting in' over time. They strengthen social bonds by sharing even the most seemingly mundane personal celebrations, and use social biases to construct models to understand the inner worlds of self and others (Wetherell, 2012).

Conclusion

What all these theories suggest is that images are not the only things that are being morphed, interconnected, and translated. Selfies become affective assemblages of a complete experience that influences the ephemeral, the imaginary, the biological, and the theoretical – in other words, materiality. These unions of dominant discourse within selfie production are conflicting. Through access to mobile apps that 'improve' images of faces, to a western normative ideal, the perceived normative ideal of faces in selfies establishes levels of identification, strengthens the relations and feeling of empowerment (Senft and Baym, 2015; Nemer and Freeman, 2015).

By authoring oneself online through selfie production, the subject also has the opportunity to shape the medium itself because what becomes part of their personal assemblages can differ from the tropes and conventions that came before (Ounstend, 2014a). In selfie production one can be coy, vulnerable and proud. They may show their pain, their humour their activism, or their eroticism, but the distinction from the past is that selfie producers will make the image themselves and "how you should look" in a selfie will evolve less and less from outside influences and more from inner rhizomes and gratifications from their social networks (Pollen, 2014). Selfie producers show others how they see themselves to be and these images will fly in the face of convention and the controlled demographic 'ideal' of gendered form in visual culture history. Through these self-portraits, people can take on the role of both photographer and subject. The marginalised take the power of portrayal back. They actively decide how much of themselves they will reveal to the world, and in which ways. These seemingly disposable selfies in turn have weighted value, and important potential for the feminist movement (Sweet, 2015).

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Biography

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Paul Ricoeur, visual hermeneutics and political science: an 'incompatible relation'?

Nikos Kaplantzis

Abstract: *As a response to calls for political research to do more than refer to visuals and for visual research to focus on the political, this paper discusses a Ricoeurian narrative-communicative action approach to the construction of political space applied to images, even though, until today, very little attention has been given to Ricoeur's conception of the relationship between hermeneutics and visual theory. An updated reworking of Paul Ricoeur's critical hermeneutics offers a better basis for reconstructing visual (political) studies by sharpening the focus on the ideas of embodied imaginary and iconic augmentation. Ricoeur offers an explicit connection to visual political studies in the direction of pointing out the ways in which images, scenes, and narratives attempt to convey ideology, balancing a hermeneutics of suspicion with a hermeneutics of faith, illustrating the aporias, the opening and closing of possibilities from iconic image to ideograph and identity.*

Keywords: Ricoeur, visual political science, hermeneutics, narrativity, imagination

Introduction

What can images say? As one examines Paul Gauguin's painting *D'où Venons Nous / Que Sommes Nous / Où Allons Nous* (1897)[1], the question that make up the artwork's title – '*Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?*' – invite the viewer to contemplate the meaning of life with regard to the symbols Gauguin has left for us. In other words, the answer to the question 'where do we want to go?' presupposes the question 'where are we going to?', which is based, in its turn, on a certain answer to the question 'where are we from?'. On an epistemological level, a much more promising approach is that which focuses first of the questions of 'what' is remembered and only thereafter turns to the question 'who'. The question of 'what' we remember is directly associated to that of 'how' we remember. To remember can be to 'have' memories or to look for memories (Bottici 2012). On 'looking' at pictures we are engaged in an imaginative narrative construction contemplating a famous Ricoeur phrase: "Reading introduces me to imaginative variations of the ego. The metamorphosis of the world in play is also the playful metamorphosis of the ego." (Ricoeur 1991a, p. 301).[2]

Connecting Paul Gauguin's visual narrative to Ricoeurian ideas of 'embodied imaginary' (Ricoeur 1991a, 1992, 2000 among others) means iconic consciousness occurs when an aesthetically shaped materiality signifies social value. To politologize the visual through the 'rhetorics of the

image' as a cultural, politically-inspired concept of visual hermeneutics, our research strategy – far from a 'quantitative' content analysis – aims at analyzing how its generic codes, positioning of viewers, dominant images, discourses and its formal-aesthetic elements all embody certain political and ideological positions and have political effects. We may say pictures are not empty signifiers and may be containers carrying whole sets of 'transcriptions' about the ultimate social, political, economic, or legal impact that these images have at various historical junctures. Political pictures, either as 'icons' or as 'key images', reflect social knowledge and dominant ideologies; they shape understanding of specific events and periods; they influence potential action by modeling relationships between civic actors; they provide figural resources for subsequent communicative action and they provide resources for thought and feeling necessary to constitute people as citizens and motivate their identification with, and participation in, specific forms of collective life.

By giving a narrative texture in the first part, I situate Ricoeur's theory of iconicity a better basis for reconstructing *visual (political) studies*. Next I will focus on the issues of imagination, ideology, memory and narrative identity, which I believe radicalize his political thought and permits us to integrate it in the context of 'visual political analysis'. Finally, I proceed to a last comment (instead of a conclusion remark), discussing briefly his contribution to a *visual political science* project.[3]

1. Why Paul Ricoeur?

This paper underlines the importance of political imagery and the symbolic level of politics for the perception of political identities. Political communication obviously draws from the repository of political memory, political myths and the history of political ideas as well as from popular culture and associations with everyday life in order to load images with meaning. In other words, political pictures never come without political imagination. An updated reworking on Paul Ricoeur's critical hermeneutics offers a better basis for reconstructing cultural (political) theory, by sharpening rather than abandoning the focus on interplays between meaning and materiality, instead of substituting the former with the latter. His political philosophy is to provide a framework for the interpretation, analysis and criticism of social action and institutions. This framework will be capable to identifying ideological formations and distorted communication that prevent us from living well together in just society by highlighting the moral and political character of our decisions, actions and institutions in the name of democracy, justice and community. His political philosophy is designed to steer a delicate path between legitimate and illegitimate power and authority (Kaplan 2003, p. 2).

It is therefore essential in political iconography to draw the attention to connections between currently circulating images and antecedent imagery stored in an iconic memory. Furthermore, adopting ideas from hermeneutics would reframe cultural studies as an attempt to disclose the meanings of visual forms in order to interpret and explain their functions in human life-worlds *(*Hill and Helmers 2004, *Heywood* and *Sandywell* 2012). There is also another way of talking about the issues outlined below, the basic features of which are addressed *inter alia* in the assumption of *the visual construction of political reality*.[4] Until recently, the strong programs in contemporary cultural sociology have followed Ricoeur's philosophical demonstration that meaningful actions can be considered as texts, exploring codes and narratives, metaphors, meta-themes, values, and rituals (Alexander, Giesen and Mast 2006). A good starting point for further discussion is in Jeffrey Alexander's model of 'iconic experience', where he conceptualizes the interaction of a visual object and recipient as an immersion into aesthetic forms, as a movement from the iconic surface to moral depth (Alexander, Giesen and Bartmanski 2012). Iconic power depends on the seamless intertwining of surface aesthetic and depth meaning, where an actor experiences sensuous surface and understands discursive meaning at the same time.

Ricoeur's approach is an important contribution to political theory as a narrative-hermeneutic approach to the construction of political space applied to images. Ricoeur's work is not only about semiological challenges and epistemology, but significantly points to something beyond the text. He calls this the "matter of the text" (Ricouer 1981, p. 11). The ultimate horizon of his work is the horizon of being – a land that is promised but never occupied. The relation between text and being is constituted by the fact that the world of being is not merely represented by the text, but in fact disclosed by the text. To connect events and actions over time in a manner that reveals their significance in relation to each other, to their contexts, and to a valued endpoint, is to employ the transformational effect of plot.[5]

2. Paul Ricoeur and image representation

2.1 Paul Ricoeur on narrative and ideology

Ricoeur's philosophy is not so much a 'philosophy of language' as a 'philosophy through language' (Scott 2010). This will be shown as the discussion moves from a theory of meaning to a theory of action. Ricoeur calls this action 'symbolically mediated'. Human experience "in its profound temporal dimension, never ceases to be shaped by narrative" (Ricoeur 1992a, p. 7). Narrative in a sense arises from lived experience and affects what is taken to be lived experience. My narrative is a co-constructed interpretation. It is always a metaphor of the real, a representation, and it always

involves an imaginative process of configuration, "an unstable mixture of fabulation and actual experience" (Ricoeur 1992a, p. 162). Narrative identity is a constantly developing story, a representation that arises in part from distanciation, and from a drawing on the pre-interpreted elements of social life that can be reconfigured into new symbolic forms (Khan, 2006).[6]

Alexis Itao questions in what sense is reflection critical or a critique? (Itao 2010). Ricoeur explains: "Reflection is a critique in the sense that the cogito can be recovered only by the detour of a decipherment of the documents of its life" (Ricoeur 1974, p. 105). By all accounts then, dispossession denotes a critical moment in reflection, "the critique of the false cogito, the deconstruction of the ego ideals which form a screen between the ego and myself" (Ibid. p. 244). This critical moment points to another: the critical moment of "the recovery of meaning" (Ibid. p. 270). For Ricoeur, self-understanding must involve distanciation and the critique of ideology – this is necessary in order to form for self-understanding by the matter of the text and not, as Ricoeur puts it, by the prejudices of the reader.[7]

2.2 Ricoeur on memory and imagination

In the introduction to his magisterial work *Memory, History, Forgetting* (2004), Ricoeur states that he continues "to be troubled by the unsettling spectacle offered by an excess of memory here, and an excess of forgetting elsewhere, to say nothing of the influence of commemorations and abuses of memory – and of forgetting" (p. xv). This leaves us with the following questions regarding memory and imagination: firstly, the object which is represented no longer exists, but we possess a representation thereof in the present. Where and what is the original deictic form that is represented? Can the original image be recovered? Secondly, what relation exists between the *eikōn* and the original image/mark?

'Trace' is the concept used to refer to the relation between the eikōn and the (original) mark. Ricoeur sets out three major uses of this concept: traces that are written on a material support, traces as affection-impression in the soul, and traces as corporeal, cerebral and cortical imprints. He hereby emphasizes the temporal aspect of the phenomena of memory. Memory is not only related to people, places, and things, but it entails the notions of before and after, earlier and later. It is exactly the notion of temporality in Aristotle's thinking about memory that "assures the distinction in principle between memory and imagination" (Ricoeur 2004, p. 18). Aristotle distinguishes between terms mnēmē and anamnēsis in his study on the phenomenon of memory to illuminate the problematic of the entanglement of memory and imagination. Mnēmē refers to a memory that arises spontaneously (simple evocation), while anamnēsis is the active searching of

memory (the effort to recall). Ricoeur is of the opinion "that we have no other resource, concerning our reference to the past, except memory itself (…) we have nothing better than memory to signify that something has taken place, has occurred, has happened before we declare that we remember it" (Ibid. p. 21). The issue of the entanglement of memory and imagination can be summarized as follows: Is a memory a sort of image, and if so, what sort? And how could the interconnectedness between images and memories can be explained?

As Charles Reagan (2005, p. 310) explains, "the object of the representation no longer exists, but the representation is in the present". In other words, the thing that we remember is long gone, what we have is the memory of it. The important point, however, is that the thing that we remember and our memory of it are not the same thing. The one is a representation of the other. Flowing from this problematic of the representation of an absent thing is the age-old entanglement of memory and imagination. Our memory, which is the representation of the absent thing, is portrayed in the form of an image. It is not the real thing, but the image that the mind creates. How do we distinguish memory from imagination then? Our imagination is nothing else than images created by the mind. We may argue that memory pertains to the 'world of experience' and imagination to the 'world of fantasy', but this does not solve the problem whatsoever. If an image/(re)presentation is all we have, the question is how we can discern whether this image is an image from the 'world of experience' or an image from the 'world of fantasy'. When we recall a memory, we recall it in the form of an image, yet when we imagine a fantasy; our imagination is also in the form of an image. But what about pictorial narrativity?

2.3 Ricoeur on pictorial narrativity

Visual rhetoric is a very new area of study within this centuries-old discipline. Fisher's proposal of "narrative as a paradigm for the general communication" (1987, p. 59) was not prompted by an interest in visual communication. Not until 1970 was the first formal call made to include visual images in the study of rhetoric, which until then had been conceived exclusively as verbal discourse. Visual rhetoric constitutes a theoretical perspective that involves the analysis of the symbolic or aspects of visual rhetoric. Rhetorical perspective on visual imagery is a critical-analytical tool that highlights the communicative dimensions of images. The image must be symbolic, involve human intervention, and be presented to an audience for the purpose of communicating with the audience. To explicate function or to evaluate visual images requires an understanding of the substantive and stylistic nature of those images. Once an image is created, scholars who adopt a rhetorical perspective on imagery believe it stands independent of its creator's intention (Foss 2005, pp. 141-152).

Ranta (2013) argues that pictorial works can express or imply high-level narrative structures, including basic constituents of wider world views or world schemata, even in static pictures, in which an entire story is compressed into a single scene (sometimes called 'monophase pictures'). A pictorial narrativity (in monophase works) necessitates the representation of a significant, frozen moment that is part of a wider story structure. Visual narrative identity is a constantly developing story, a representation that arises from a drawing on the pre-interpreted elements of social life that can be reconfigured into new symbolic forms. This is the basic principle of visual narration according to Ricoeur, being firstly and mostly an action of re-creation and of re-inscribing the meaning. Visual texts do not reproduce reality; they invent and discover it, hence the term "productive reference". Visual imagery and imaging are celebrated for their generative capacity to distill and increase reality and this power comes from the synthesis of presentation and representation. These definitions include and delineate between perceived and mental images (images in the brain or mind) and exteriorized images.

As Ricoeur contends in his theory of imagination, all mental images are conceptual; they do not copy reality (Ricoeur 1991a). He calls the mechanisms of metaphor "language-like". In doing this, he removes metaphor from language and puts it in the realm of general mental processing, which includes visualization. Ricoeur's notion of iconic augmentation refers to the "power of the image to condense, spell out, and develop reality" (1991, p. 131). Images are not reductive but productive; they add to reality or create reality. Ricoeur sees a continuation of this process when an image is exteriorized or manifested in materials by an artist. To Ricoeur, exteriorization is a critical factor in creating meaning and is the exteriorization of thought in external marks which has encouraged the creation of images (Ibid. p. 131).

The visibility or materiality of an image also gives social function. Ricoeur implies that, just as mental images play a constructive role in shaping, distilling, and transforming thought in the individual mind, art images do the same in the social/cultural realm. He celebrates this in his compelling statement: "When the image is made, it is also able to remake the world" (Ibid. p. 129). Ricoeur's assertion is predicated on the belief that reality lies in how humans perceive it. For him, changing perceptions is changing reality and art or any images that present and catalyze new insights become powerful agents for shaping new realities on a grand scale. From Ricoeur's hermeneutic perspective, meaning emerges in the dialogue between the mind and the image; it is not in the image itself but in the active interpretation of the viewer. From this social, hermeneutical perspective, the artist creates the exteriorized image (through personal process of research) and the viewers continue the research (come to insights and understandings) by mining the images and

connecting them to their own experience. This is the crux of practice-based research: It is a social, participatory, conversational endeavor in learning based on synthetic productive conceptual images that creates new realities. As Ricoeur asserts, this can be transformative. Imaginative insight of the artist is shared and perceptions are changed.[8]

3. Visual political science and new methodological insights

Our reference to the specific painting has not been random. It provides a fruitful chance for political scientists that wish to shed more light to the issue of political power from the point of view of the political dimension of the social imaginary. From this point of view, *visual political science* as a critical "reading" of imagery, on one hand, takes on the role of symbolic mediator and in this ways brings to the forefront the question of the identity of the *social* entities in question. On the other hand, not only 'as theory of action or as a theory of experience' but also 'as a theory of meaning', *Visual Political Science* shapes the contours of the action and contributes to modeling the identity of the narrative's different protagonists. I am interested in analyzing visual aspect on individual images as symbolically mediated, politically motivated and culturally situated (Roberge 2011).

Political iconography implies a critical 'reading' of imagery and aims at studying the identification, description, and interpretation of the content of images. This point of departure takes an iterative step from spectacle (the power of looking) to narrative (the power of telling). Here is our bridge between a hermeneutics of writing and a hermeneutics of photographing and visualization the political and the social. The 'said' of speaking is, Ricoeur contends, the intentional exteriorization of discourse thanks to which the saying, sage, wants to become the enunciation, aus-sage. For writing, this means the written text. For documentary photographing, this means the visualized narrative. This is the basic principle of narration according to Ricoeur, being firstly and mostly an action of re-creation and of re-inscribing the meaning.[9]

Iconic effect is mediated by 'hermeneutical power', the understandings and evaluations offered by independent interpretation. The image becomes a puzzle and ambiguous object, quite similar to ambiguity of the symbol highlighted by Ricoeur in his interpretation of Freud. The puzzling aspects of those icons call for narratives that explain them, and their symbolic over-determination creates a multitude of competing and coexisting interpretations. Images provide multiple meanings and surprising synthesis: a pre-iconographic (paradigmadic level) description of the visual surface and a syntagmatic closure as a picture poses several puzzles, various connotations. Whereas the syntagmatic openness is characterized by structural under-determination or ambiguity, the

paradigmatic openness leads to symbolic over-determination or polysemy (Hill and Helmers 2004, pp. 106-107).

Interpretively, look at the image, as screen, window, and veil, etc., we are trying to see through the surface image to find out what lies behind – to explore, to clarify, to fill in gaps in self-understanding. A second look or closer examination may reveal something beyond the surface, what does not seem readily apparent – appears to take more shape, the 'lost' parts become defined, and new elements emerge and cohere, as understandings form and selves are constructed. The act of 'looking' may also give a glimpse of secrets, lifting an 'apparent reality' to reveal what seemed 'hidden' – adding what is missing to complete a picture, seeing through what is opaque, etc. to find 'new' personal meanings. Pictures can, in short, stimulate a 'memorizing' of people, events and objects and associated emotional and sensual experiences which are placed within contemporary thoughts, feelings and circumstance. As concerns those collective fields – culture and history –, Ricoeur's analysis focuses on social imagination, which is constantly performing creative works, shaped into two main imaginative endeavours*: ideology* and *utopia*.

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Biography

Nikos Kaplantzis is a Greek political scientist (Ph.D). Whilst working as researcher at the Laboratory of Political Communications, University of Athens, he completed his thesis focused on the construction of political identities through political photography. His recent academic interests seeks to make a focus on the way political images can be understood, methodologically and epistemologically, in political science. He is a member of the Hellenic Political Science Association, International Visual Sociology Association and Ricoeurian Studies. He is also author of 'Photography and Politics' (Ed. Nissos, Athens 2012).

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[1] The artwork is hosted on the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston: http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/where-do-we-come-from-what-are-we-where-are-we-going-32558

[2] Alternative visual paradigms feed into the theoretical schemes of 'cultural pragmatics' (Alexander 2006), 'Habitus' (Bourdieu 1991), 'Discourse practices' (Foucault 1966) and 'Radical Constructionism' (Edelman 1988). Additionally, a visual narrative is re-translated as *symbolic drama, ratification of authority, bio-power, self-fulfilling prophecy.*

[3] Although during the 1990s visual political communication became an issue of greater importance in political science, other disciplines, like art history (Bonfait 2003, Warnke and Ziegler 2011), visual history (Merback 2013, Tinkler 2013), visual sociology (Bartmanski and *Alexander 2012,* Nathansohn and Zuev 2013), visual anthropology (Belting 2011, Baert and Lehmann 2012) or visual studies (Sandywell and Heywood 2012, Rampley and Lenain 2012), still seem to have more competence when it comes to analyzing the power of pictures in public (political) discourse. Of course, *visual political science* is "not a finished method", and it is not a "metascience" (Sachs-Hombach 2006, *Hebel* 2011, Barnhurst 2012). *Visual political science* describes a transdisciplinary research field by the meaning of 'Politikwissenschaft als Kulturwissenschaft' ['Political Science as Cultural Science', Hofmann 2004]. A substantial body of work has grown around the visual in political communication scholarship (Cheles and Sponza 2001, Delporte 2006, Drechsel and Leggewie 2010, Paul 2010, Hebel and Wagner, 2011, Diendorfer and Uhl 2014) and an analogous body of literature has emerged around the political in visual communication studies as well (Becker and Ekecrantz 2000, Muller and Knieper 2004/2005, *Machin 2013, Matar 2013).*

[4] "The presence in which the representation of the past seems to consist does indeed appear to be that of an image, (…), an image that can be either quasi visual or auditory" (Ricoeur 2004, p. 5).

[5] Ricoeur sees signification work through a dialectics of event and meaning, where event is the act of signifying, and meaning is its result. He also proposes a dialectical understanding of narrative identity, talking of the interplay between 'idem'-identity or permanent sameness and a processual 'ipse' -identity or selfhood that is always in a dialectical relation to otherness, both to the other outside the self and to the otherness that is 'constitutive of selfhood' as such. Third, concern relates to contexts, including both spatial settings and social worlds of institutions and power structures that frame cultural practices (Fornäs 2012).

[6] Without going into Ricoeur's complex position and his view of mimesis, it is worth noting that he does not see narrative forms of expression as capable of full ontological mimesis, but rather speaks of the interplay between the experience of living and narrative (Ricoeur 1984). For Ricoeur, it is impossible to completely 'close' the 'gap' between the temporal dimension of lived experience and narrative configuration. Ricoeur seeks to mediate between the two, not 'reduce' the former to the latter (Lewis 2013).

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[7] What ideology interprets and justifies? "A system of authority", Ricoeur said (Ricoeur 1981). Ideology, we may presume, arises precisely in the breach between the request of legitimacy emanating from a system of authority and our response in terms of belief. Ricoeur treats ideology and utopia as derived from a common origin – the symbolic order or "social and cultural imagination" – and both ideological and utopian symbolizations, he says, are "constitutive of social reality". (Ricoeur 1991a, pp. 308-324). As established in *Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology* (1981), both the Gadamerian hermeneutics of pre-understanding and the Habermassian critique of ideology "cross on a common ground: the hermeneutics of finitude, which secures a priori the correlation between the concept of prejudice and that of ideology" (MacKenzie 2012, p. 104).

[8] According to Brown (2011, pp. 199-224), Ricoeur's analysis on images gives us a fresh understanding of the way in which documentary photographing can be critically understood to operate and how it does so. The reflexive participation of the observer is recognizable in the locutionary manner by which the observation is described and visualised in photographs. Ricoeur calls this the *reference*, a literal description, and in his nomenclature, *mimesis*. He calls the intentional sense of the inscription, *illocutionary*. A message and discourse that reveals aspects, qualities and values of a reality that he categorizes as *mimesis*. He calls the *perlocutionary* the indirect reference, re-describing a reality inaccessible to direct description and categorizes mimesis. These different aspects become apparent through the skill (phronesis) with which we photograph and the manner in which the primary and lateral messages that are descriptive, explanatory, affective, sensory. These messages are revealing values that stimulate the imagination and, in their total, make the world one that can be inhabited.

[9] First, ideology as a meaning-interpretation-text triptych is what reveals and hides reality – through the permanence of symbolism, but also through the constant possibility of manipulation and distortion. Secondly, it is the task of a theory of action – centered on, among other things, the concept of performance – to examine the diverse ways by which the mechanisms of social inclusion-exclusion construct themselves. Thirdly, ideology as an interpretation of the world is involved in the self-understanding of a subject nevertheless capable of keeping a distance from itself and thus somewhat criticizing its illusions.

A review on China's soft power projection through its transnational media institutions: Conveying discourse of economic responsibilities in media 'going-out'

Xin Zhao

Abstract: *This conference paper provides a systematic review of previous literature on China's media 'going-out' project, one of China's soft power initiatives. The project was launched to mainly counteract the media imperialism and the China threat theory, and disseminate China's responsible power claim, the core value of China's soft power practice. Particularly, China tries to portray its responsibilities in economy. But it is under-studied how China's transnational media represent China's responsible power claim during the media 'going-out' project. It is necessary to bridge this academic gap by examining relevant media texts and production procedures based on a comprehensive understanding of the Chinese conceptions of responsibility and the Western conceptions of China's responsibility.*

Keywords: transnational media, responsibility, China, soft power, discourse

Introduction

Joseph Nye (1990) coined the term 'soft power' to describe a country's ability to co-opt rather than coerce in the process of shaping the preferences and long-term attitudes of the public in the receiving country in order to facilitate the missions of the practicing country. The term and basic idea of soft power not only quickly gained popularisation among Chinese politicians, scholars, pundits, and journalists, but also witnessed China's extensive practices. Among various soft power resources, media serves as a quicker conduit in delivering a country's messages. In 2009, China emphasised the role of media in its soft power projection by launching the media 'going-out' project. This paper provides a systematic review of sufficient studies pertaining to China's media 'going-out' project in order to see to what extent the project has been investigated. If already thoroughly discussed, then future research agendas need to be generated; if limited theoretical and empirical underpinnings are searched out, then it will be timely to contribute data to studies of this project, one of the key movements of China's soft power practice.

This paper firstly focuses on the overall context of the project and then its key findings and approaches. It aims to synthesise the current research status of the project and locate its academic gaps. During reviewing, as to the process of studies retrieving, an exhaustive sensitive search by keywords, such as 'China' & 'soft power' and 'China' & 'media going-out', and their synonyms was

conducted first in several complementary databases including Communication Source, Google Scholar, and e-journals accessed through Bangor University Library. Then the located studies from different disciplines and in different languages were sifted through and only the most relevant studies were kept. It is important to highlight that there were no more than ten studies focusing on China's media 'going-out' project directly, but much more on China's soft power. The review firstly expanded its search by snowballing the references in the limited studies and secondly narrowed down its focus on media in the numerous studies of China's soft power. Then the appraising of studies were based on their relevance to the research questions and their validity in empirical investigation and data analysis. Lastly, a narrative synthesis was applied to analyse the relationships within and between studies and assess the robustness of the evidence (Petticrew and Roberts, 2006). Through the review, this paper concludes that China's launch of media 'going-out' project was under the pressure of the media imperialism and the negative China threat and irresponsibility theses. With its own transnational media institutions, China not only tries to counteract the ideological attack, but also voice its benign messages as a responsible power in areas like economy. In order to understand China's media 'going-out' project and outbound communication from a microscopic perspective, an examination of relevant media texts and media production procedures is necessary. However, this is a quite under-studied topic that needs special academic focus.

1. The Overall Context

> "We have to assure countries around us, including the United States that we have no aggressive intentions, that we want a peaceful environment to concentrate on economic development. We have to have others believe us, and that is a problem." (quoted in Shirk, 2007, p.106)

The above statement, coming from Major General Pan Zhenqiang in China's National Defence University, indicates clearly the objective of China's soft power projection and that is to counter the Western negative perceptions of China and to disseminate its benign messages. Therefore, China's major transnational media institutions are deployed as conduits. In particular, China launched the media 'going-out' project in 2009 and emphasised the role of transnational media institutions in delivering and branding China's national image to the world (Hu and Ji, 2012). Literally, 'going-out' refers to outbound communication from China. Although the wording is grammatically awkward to some extent, the current research keeps it for the reasons that firstly, it is a political statement from the Chinese government, and secondly, it is used in many widely cited academic works, such as Hu and Ji (2012) and Svensson (2013). It is worth mentioning particularly why the year 2009 is chosen as the starting point of this project, on which there is actually no consensus since no official document

clearly indicates it. Although one report (Wang, 2012) says that the 'going-out' project of China's press and publication began in 2003, some scholars (e.g. Zhao, 2013; Hu and Ji, 2012) maintain that the 'going-out' of media initiated from 2009. This year witnessed some major movements of China's media, such as China Central Television's revamp of the 24-hour English-language news service CCTV News, Xinhua News Agency's launch of the 24-hour English-language television channel CNC World, and *China Daily*'s expansion in overseas distribution and bureaus (Zhao, 2013; Hu and Ji, 2012). Therefore, the current study also considers that the project started from 2009. This chapter casts light on previous studies on the context of the project's launch and development from both external and internal perspectives. It particularly focuses on the contradiction between the China threat theory and China's claim to be a responsible power.

1.1 External factors: media imperialism and China threat theory

China's launch of media 'going-out' project is driven by external pressure emitting from the media imperialism and the China threat theory (Hu, Zhang and Ji, 2013). Media imperialism brings massive information flow and values originated from Western mainstream media to the Chinese market, while the China threat theory is more like a direct ideological attack on China. Accordingly, the project desires to challenge the Western media giants with China's own media conglomerates and to reverse the amplification of negative reports by Western media (Hu, Zhang and Ji, 2013).

1.1.1   Media imperialism

Media imperialism developed as a result of technical innovations that increasing flow of information was transferred with no border barriers during the Cold War period (Volkmer, 1999). Galtung and Ruge (1965) contribute to the establishment of the concept of media imperialism by pointing out the unbalanced news flow from centre to periphery countries. The UNESCO project carried out by Sreberny-Mohammadi *et al.* (1985) proved that major wire services exerted dominant influence on setting international news agenda and deciding ways of news presentation. Nevertheless, with the proliferation of digital technologies and media privatisation and deregulation, erstwhile passive information recipients are getting more involved in the worldwide information flow, resulting in the contra-flows, such as news from the Arab news network Al Jazeera and the Chinese television channel Phoenix (Thussu, 2010; Volkmer, 1999). Along with these newly emerging news media, the national gate-keeping policies and the local audience's behaviours all undermine, to a certain degree, the dominant influence of media imperialism (Chadha and Kavoori, 2000). The new phenomenon induced other positive arguments, such as the new public sphere theory which suggests that the international communication has enabled diverse realities and values to coexist in

the global public platform (Castells, 2008; Volkmer, 1999). However, the parallelism of flows and contra-flows does not necessarily result in a "diverse" or "democratic" world (Thussu, 2010, p.234). This study agrees that the media imperialism is still exerting influence on the global media and communication environment and it is closely related with the underlying disparity in political and economic domains (Boyd-Barrett, 2010; Schiller, 2010; Thussu, 2010). The contra-flows, such as China's transnational media channels, are actually signs of contradictions from peripheral countries.

1.1.2   China threat theory

The evolution of the China threat theory can be divided into three stages (Jin, 2009). It first appeared as the term 'Yellow Peril' coined by German Emperor Wilhelm II to refer to the dangerous Asian people at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, and then as 'Red Scare' promoted by Western countries as an expression of anti-communist fear in the 1950s when the new China was founded (Ren, 2015; Jin, 2009). In the 1990s when the Cold War ended, the theory prevailed again, aroused by countries like Japan and America, as a result of China's reform and opening up and ascending economy (Ren, 2015). The theory repeatedly appeared in Western dominant media, such as US elite newspapers, to indicate that China's rise may pose economic/trade, military/strategic, and political/ideological threats to regional and global stability (Yang and Liu, 2012; Zhang, 2008). It is also widely discussed in Western scholarly works and government policymaking in countries like the United States (Wu, 2007). This research chooses not to deliberately separate the views expressed in different channels since they may have mutual influence. Since 2005, the China responsibility theory has gained more momentum. It is originated from, as generally accepted, the term 'responsible stakeholder' raised by Robert Zoellick (2005), the former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State (Chen, 2009; Deng, 2009). Literally, it means that China should take its responsibilities in international affairs. To take a closer examination, the theory contains the implications that China is an irresponsible country, it should shoulder more responsibilities, and it should stay inside of the current international system (Ma, 2007). Overall, it shares the same kernel with the China threat theses that both are advocated to condemn, restrain, and regulate China (Ma, 2007).

Among all the domains that China is progressing prominently, economy is perhaps the area that has generated most fear and suspicion from the international community (Wu, 2007; Ding, 2006). Evidence is shown in the empirical examination of the coverage of China threat in the US print media over a 15-year period (1992-2006) that perceptions of China as an economic/trade threat remained stable with a clear uptick in recent years compared with perceptions of China as a political/ideological or a military/strategic threat (Yang and Liu, 2012). Three major reasons

contribute to the wide-ranging fear of China's economy: first, China may follow the path left by Western dominant powers that power transition stimulates conflict; second, China has a completely different political and ideological environment in which its economy is developing and that is also a potential point of conflict; third, China possesses rich resources of culture, population, and territory, which may turn out to be the foundation of its refusal to be a status quo power (Chen, 2009). What's more, according to Bernstein and Munro (1997, p.19), China's ambition to dominate Asia is propelled by "nationalist sentiment, a yearning to redeem the humiliations of the past, and the simple urge for international power". In a word, in the view of other countries, China's position as an ambitious country with strong national strength on one hand, and as a transitional country with victimhood sentiments on the other hand, is the main reason for its threatening gesture.

Drawing from this complicated identity, what are the exact economic threats, seen from the Western perspective, that China is likely to pose to the world? Firstly, China's booming economy, increasing national strength, and deep-rooted victimhood ideology can result in economic manipulation and this may be the major concern in most relevant debates (Al-Rodhan, 2007). For example, China's economic ascent has resulted in, or has the potential to continue to cause, violations of intellectual property rights, a loss of manufacturing and industrial jobs in Western countries, furious energy competition, and environmental problems (Yang and Liu, 2012; Breslin, 2010; Al-Rodhan, 2007; Broomfield, 2003). The second potential threat is much less discussed in the China threat theory. China's uncertain internal situation is a threat to China itself, which is also a threat to the outside world as a result of ripple effects (Al-Rodhan, 2007). The uncertainties include China's blurred economic future and potential social instability caused by immense income inequality and poverty (Al-Rodhan, 2007). In a word, considering China's political, social, and ideological positions, its potential threats in the eyes of other countries not only involve its possible ambition to strive for hegemony, but can also be expanded to include the potential instability coming from China's internal issues in this era of globalisation (Al-Rodhan, 2007).

However, there are also opponents of the China threat theory. Through an analysis of China's position, the liberal optimists hold contrasting opinions upon China's economic growth compared with those of pessimistic realists. Externally, China is a member of the international community and it is constrained by the global market so that it is more inclined to cooperate with other members rather than generate conflict or isolation (Breslin, 2010; Liang, 2007; Broomfield, 2003; Roy, 1996). For example, China is seen as showing "stubborn commitment" to the existing trade system during its accession, learning, and socialisation in the World Trade Organisation (Scott and Wilkinson, 2013, p.782). What is more, their positioning of China does not cast light on China

alone but measures its actions according to a certain standard in a wider environment. For instance, as to the cheap labour issue, China is not the only developing nation that is chosen as a manufacturing factory and also not the only reason that results in the decline of manufacturing jobs in developed countries (Al-Rodhan, 2007). Internally, China as a historically benign and non-imperialistic country is likely to pay more attention to domestic social problems and it will spare little effort to pose threats to other countries aggressively (Roy, 1996).

It can be concluded that whether the ascending China is a threat or not is largely a matter of position and identity, no matter whether the threats (or not) are postulated according to China's previous actions or purely out of imagination. However, the proponents of the China threat theory are supported by their positioning of China as a country with strong hard power, special political system and social structure, and firmly embedded victimhood sentiments. While the opponents recognise China as a member of the globalised world, a normal member sharing universal development standards in the wider world, and a benign country in nature. It is because of the vague and non-uniform positions of China that both sides of the China threat theory have the deficiency of overgeneralisation. A definition of China as a threat or not should, first of all, clarify its position, which is the result of complicated internal and external sociocultural factors.

In summary, as one of China's key initiatives of soft power practice, the media 'going-out' project particularly targets at reversing the media imperialism and more importantly, the discourse of China's potential threats and irresponsibility advocated by Western countries. In response, China claims itself as a responsible power.

1.2 Internal factor: the claim to be a responsible power

China is fighting against the Western world's unfavourable depictions, and at the same time, it is trying to portray itself as, and persuade foreign audiences that China is, a responsible power via its own voices and perspectives through its own news media channels. China's persuasion and attraction as a responsible power is the overarching dimension of China's soft power practice (Kalathil, 2011; deLisle, 2010). Among a range of domains, China is most eager to demonstrate its sense of responsibility in global economic issues (Gao, 2013). Its promise as a responsible economic partner is also the core of China's doctrines of constructing a harmonious world and insisting a peaceful rise (d'Hooghe, 2010). Being economically responsible means that China's economic rise neither attempts to threaten the current international order nor targets at any member of the global community (Lye, 2010).

It is truly confusing to face the two terms, the China responsibility theory and China as a responsible power. However, they are intrinsically different in the following aspects. Firstly, they have different times of appearance. The China responsibility theory started to gain attention from 2005 when Zoellick raised the term responsible stakeholder. However, China's claim to be a responsible power began to take shape in the 1990s, although there are dissents about its origin. Some scholars contend that it began to spread in China in the mid-1990s as an acceptance of the language from America's (Clinton administration) speech of China policies (Deng, 2015; Shirk, 2007). One piece of evidence is China's explicit description of itself as a responsible power in the White Paper of foreign affairs in 1999 (see Gao, 2013). Some believe that it is an idea that originated from China itself (Yeophantong, 2013). For example, in 1997, the then Chinese President Jiang Zemin firstly mentioned the international responsibility of China, as a big power, in a speech to the Russian State Duma (Jiang, 1997). China's responsible role is a construction of various discourses so that neither Western nor Chinese language of China's responsibility should be ignored. Secondly, the China responsibility theory is basically a deviant of the former China threat theory and both are meant to restrict China's development, whereas China's own claim to be a responsible power is based on China's own developmental objectives. However, the norms of responsibility that China is claiming to pursue are likely to have Western derivation as explained previously.

Existing studies on China's role as a responsible power and its responsibilities in economy are mostly conducted from the perspective of international relations and politics (Deng, 2015; Yeophantong, 2013; Zhang and Austin, 2013; Zhao, 2010; Gill, 2007; Shirk, 2007). They try to present China's actions in international relations and politics and then interpret, judge, and define if they are responsible based on certain, but not universally accepted, standards. For example, from the observation of Susan Shirk, China's endeavours to be a responsible power can be primarily detected from three domains: accommodating its neighbours, engaging in cooperation in multilateral organisations, and enhancing its economic attractions to cultivate friendly relations (Shirk, 2007). Based on these and other actions, China's responsible role is generally concluded into two facets. Firstly, a state should not only actively participate in domestic development, but also in international affairs that are pertaining to an international community member's absolute liability and the world's advancing trend, taking both national interests and global benefits into consideration. Secondly, a state should not only act as an insider but also a formulator of the international system (Gao, 2013; Xu, 2010; Xia, 2001). Similar with the vagueness of the China threat theory, China's claim to be a responsible power is also implicit politically and morally (Zhang and Austin, 2013). China's position or identity, either as a good neighbour or as an active organisation participant, is defined variously in

different scholarly works so that the standard of responsibility is also inconsistent. This leads to difficulties in defining whether China's actual or future movements are responsible or threatening.

A sole focus on China's responsibilities, as well as China's threats, from the perspective of international relations and politics, can slip into the fallacy of oversimplification easily. It is of vital importance to understand the root of China's responsible power claim. Specifically, it is necessary to probe into the evolutions of the idea of responsibility in the Chinese context and the Western language of China's responsibility, which are the two discourses that have exerted major influence on the construction and representation of China's responsible power claim in different channels. Secondly, to discern China's actual articulation of the claim of responsible power, a systematic analysis of China's governmental policies as expressed in major political documents will be useful. Thirdly, an analysis of the representation of the claim through China's transnational media institutions can help to uncover the exact messages that China tries to disseminate to the outside world.

2.   Key Findings and Approaches

Previous research about China's media 'going-out' project mostly state the outreach strategies of China's media first and then analyse, but not in a systematic way, the underlying political economy factors and also influences (e.g. Gorfinkel *et al.*, 2014; Bakshi, 2011; Zhang, 2011). Only a limited number of studies have conducted media texts, production, and/or audience analysis, the three major parts of media studies (e.g. Lee, 2014; Zeng, 2010). Therefore, it is necessary to change the status quo of academic studies on China's media 'going-out' project by focusing on specific texts, production procedures, and/or audience and examine China's soft power projection in a microscopic way. In particular, to understand China's intentions and efforts to counteract the negative Western perceptions and disseminate its own benign messages, an analysis of media texts and production is essential and effective. Two exceptional studies are pointed out here. Zeng (2010) conducts a detailed discourse analysis of the news texts of CNC World in her Master thesis. It illuminates an important research perspective in assessing China's outbound communication and soft power projection. The contributors to the actual influence of a media institution, including production values, professionalism, market structure, content censorship, media ownership, and foreign investment policies, are all manifested through its content. Specifically, as to the projection of soft power through media institutions, among the three factors identified by Zhang (2008) that influence the rise of soft power, namely the power of transmission, the message conveyed, and effective communication with the audience, the message should serve as the core. This is in line with Ding's (2008) statement that the maintenance of soft power rests with its content instead of form. Thus, it

is proper to conduct a detailed discourse analysis of the content of China's transnational media institutions to examine how the discourse that China is a responsible power in economy is represented.

As for the analysis of media production, Lee's (2014) PhD thesis, China's soft power projection through media products in South Korea and Japan, brings fresh air into this domain. In addition to a thorough analysis of relevant materials, such as China's published statistics, local documents, government documents, and local scholarly works, the author also applied qualitative interviewing and interviewed 36 media practitioners and professionals in China to examine China's exports of cultural products. Fieldwork with media practitioners adds considerable evidence to the formulation of his arguments since it provides valuable first-hand materials. Therefore, it is important also to involve analysis of media production by interviewing relevant Chinese media practitioners and examine how they conceive the responsible power claim and represent it in media during China's media 'going-out' project.

Conclusion

China's media 'going-out' project emphasises the role of media in soft power projection. It was launched to counteract the media imperialism, and more importantly, the impugnation of China's potential threats and irresponsibility. What's more, it is, at the same time, meant to softly disseminate China's benign messages that China is a responsible power in areas like economy through its own transnational media institutions. To obtain a better understanding of the discourse of China's economic responsibilities represented through China's transnational media institutions, an analysis of pertaining media texts and production procedures is necessary and effective. In addition to the above major findings through systematic literature review, this conference paper has also located academic gaps in the representation of China's economic responsibilities discourse through its transnational media institutions. It proposes to change the status quo of academic studies of China's media 'going-out' project and its projection of responsible power discourse by focusing on relevant media texts and production procedures, on the basis of a thorough understanding of the concept of responsibility in the Chinese setting and the articulation of China's responsibility in the Western language.

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Public Service Broadcasting: the challenge of representing ethnic minority audiences

Gurvinder Aujla-Sidhu

Abstract: *This paper examines the problems the BBC has in engaging and representing minority audiences. The Director General of the BBC, Tony Hall, has claimed that he wants the future BBC to "represent every family and community in the UK" (June 2014). Not an easy feat when the BBC's own research indicates that it is failing to attract ethnic minority audiences (BBC Service Review 2012). Critics such as Hall (1990) have suggested the problem is the media construction of "race" as an issue and its definitions. The paper will focus on the BBC Asian Network, a radio station which was almost closed down in 2010, ostensibly because it was the most expensive BBC radio service to operate, and had very low listener figures. Producers and Editors explain the issues they face in attracting and retaining the target audience.*

Keywords: Ethnic Minorities, representation and Public Service Broadcasting, BBC, Asian, BBC Asian Network

Introduction

Since the 2010 General Election the BBC has undergone a period of sustained scrutiny by the Government and from commercial media particularly in the aftermath of the Jimmy Saville scandal. In 2009 the BBC agreed to a licence freeze, which led to a series of high profile cuts, called Delivering Quality First, a plan that proposed the closure of two of its digital radio stations. In 2015 the BBC agreed with the Conservative Government to fund licence fees for the over 75's, at a cost of around 750 million British Pounds, in return for an increase in line with inflation to the licence fee. Critics claim the move will mean a twenty per cent cut in funding, which may lead to further job cuts and further cuts to some BBC Services. The BBC Charter Review consultation report (2015) examines how the BBC should be funded in the future and questions the core BBC mission of serving 'all audiences' asking if it should instead focus on underserved audiences. The white paper will be published in 2016 and is expected to have a huge impact upon the future direction, size and funding of the BBC.

The charter renewal consultation draws attention to the fact that the BBC continues to struggle to reach black, Asian and minority ethnic audiences despite offering a dedicated radio service, the BBC Asian Network that produces content specifically for approximately four million people in the UK who describe themselves of South Asian descent. The BBC Asian Network was created when the

BBC bought together a number of regional radio programmes for Asian communities and united them, under the new remit covering news, music and events from UK Asian communities and South Asia diaspora (including India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh). It broadcasts in English on DAB, with a limited number of hours delivered in a range of South Asian languages. The target audience for the station is British Asians aged up to thirty-five years of age, a group that the BBC described as "under-served" (DCMS 2004, p.26). But within a decade of the station's launch, the BBC proposed its closure, as part of Delivering Quality First (DQF) in 2009, because they claimed that low listener figures made the Asian Network the most expensive BBC service to run. The BBC suggested that the money saved could be reinvested in delivering content to Asian audiences within its wider portfolio of television and radio even though BBC generic research revealed that the BBC failed to attract black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups (BAME) to its news and radio output (BBC Service Review, 2012, p.13). After a public consultation, the plans were rejected by the BBC Executive in 2011 and it proposed the Asian Network should continue to exist but on a significantly reduced budget.

This paper examines the challenges the BBC Asian Network faces in trying to represent all Asian communities under a single service, which broadcasts mostly in English. By using academic literature about ethnic minority representation and material from five interviews with members of current and former BBC Asian Network staff in 2014 and 2015, this paper tries to demonstrate the difficulties that specialist services have in reaching minority audiences. The face to face interviews are a sample from an on-going project. Within the sample presented in this paper, is a former news editor, a current news editor, a former local radio manager, a former planning editor and a senior member of staff. Open-ended questions, tailored to each interviewee's specific role, were posed as well some generic questions to all interviewees. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the responses by classifying the transcripts and examining what themes and trends emerge. What is revealed from the interview data presented in this paper is that the journalists working for the Asian Network believe it is a valuable service, but they feel the BBC in its entirety needs to do more when representing ethnic minorities. The BBC Asian Network cannot alone attract, engage and represent *all* South Asian people for the BBC. This paper also explores the future of the service, and questions if the BBC Asian Network will be required for subsequent generations of British Asians. Already second, third and other generations of British born Asian's are served by a range of other BBC radio stations for news and sport and commercial radio stations offer Bollywood music.

All media outlets are under pressure to improve their representation of minority groups and to recruit more ethnic minority journalists. As a result, in June 2014 the BBC announced a new diversity

strategy, which included a 2.1 million pounds' fund to help Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) talent on and off screen, and to help BAME staff to move into senior management roles. But critics have suggested the money should be ring fenced specifically for some programmes or that the BBC should spend more money (Albury, 2015). BBC Director General, Tony Hall has said he wants the BBC to "represent every family and community in the UK" (BBC Media Centre, 2014). Limited progress has been made, the proportion of staff describing their background as a minority stood at 13.2 percent in February 2015 compared to 12.6 per cent in March 2014 (BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2014-15, p.88). The problem, however, is not recruiting ethnic minority staff but retaining them; in 2013-14 more ethnic minority staff resigned than were recruited (Burrell, 2014). This could be because most ethnic minority staff are concentrated in the lower page grades or they hit a ceiling where progression to senior levels does not take place.

1. The BBC and Ethnic Minority Representation

The BBC is mandated by law to produce programmes, "that reflect the lives and concerns of different communities and cultural interests and traditions within the United Kingdom" (*Communications Act*, 2003, s. 5. p.236). For decades the BBC has been criticised for failing to represent ethnic minority communities on and off screen. Cottle (2000, p.102) has suggested that "ethnic minority programmes all too often fail to give robust representations to the diversity and difficulties of minority communities, cultures and identities." Campion (2005, p.4) has argued that broadcasters have misinterpreted cultural diversity to only mean more Black and Asian faces on screen, rather than programme content reflecting specific cultures and identities. Critics of public service broadcasting condemn BBC expansion, and the licence fee, because they suggest the BBC is given a "public policy directive" to build an empire giving it an "unfair advantage" (Brooks, 2006). There has also been a move from commercial media to have the licence fee 'top sliced' for other broadcasters. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport in a 2006 report described the issue as a "conundrum" and suggested that the BBC has to be a "strong broadcaster with universal reach" but one that does not stifle "innovation elsewhere" or uses its "unique advantages unfairly to compete with others" (DCMS, 2006 p.2).

Unlike other public service broadcasters, Kumar (1977, p.234) suggests the BBC is "unique" because some people consider the organisation to be part of the "national culture." The BBC is mandated to promote a "sense of national identity" (*Communications Act, 2003*). But this causes problems for the BBC when the idea of identity or Britishness itself becomes complicated. Changes to immigration laws have meant that politicians often emphasise a need for minorities (particularly Muslims) to integrate into the British way of life. Malik argues that, as a result broadcasters have

turned away from celebrating multiculturalism within programmes and instead focus on a "perceived need for social cohesion" (2013, p.228). Subsequently, news and current affairs outputs often frame stories as 'us' and 'them,' where the immigrants become the 'other'.

2. Academic research

Two key themes emerge from academic research about ethnic minorities and the media; that ethnic minorities on TV, are frequently portrayed in stereotypical ways for example: "terrorism, violence, conflict, and carnival" (Campion, 2005, p.24) or they usually appear within negative stereotypes in the news stories (Hartmann & Husband, 1974; Cohen & Gardener, 1982). Secondly the language used within stories about ethnic minorities in the news is often considered to be 'racist' (Van Dijk, 1998; Barker, 1981; Hall, 1990) by the minority communities. On screen, particularly in terms of newsreaders and reporters, the numbers from minority groups has increased. Malik (2008) suggests the emphasis on "Asianness" is fuelled by the "positive co modification of a globalised, Bollywood influenced South Asian popular culture and the negative preoccupation with Islam" (Malik, 2008, p.352). Members of the Muslim community believe they are represented in a "distorted and stereotypical" manner and the more they practice their faith the more their "seemingly alien culture" is perceived as a threat (Abbas, 2001, p.251).

Saha (2012, p.427) has argued that there is a tension between "public service ideals (ideas about citizenship, national identity and cultural diversity) and market forces." He believes that because the BBC and Channel 4 have struggled with limited finances they have focused on programmes with appealing broad formats rather than offering programmes geared specifically towards minority audiences and that the almost closure of the BBC Asian Network is indicative of this (2012, p.227).

The manner in which PSBs in the UK manages issues of race and racism may influence how the public in general perceive them. One key problem is that there is no single tangible, definitively limited thing called racism (Fenton, 2003, p.131). Instead there are a number of contexts or situations "in which 'others' are represented as inherently different or lesser and these representations become defining elements of the relationship." Hall (1990, p.9) has argued that 'racism' is one of the most profoundly "naturalised" ideologies because the media is able to create a definition of what race is to help audiences "make sense of the social world" but, at the same time it also defines what the "problem of race" is understood to be' (1990, p.11).

Saha (2012) has demonstrated that Asian producers are complicit in the process of "problematic representations of race" (2012, P.436). His interviews with ethnic minority television producers revealed they presented ideas for commissioning, based only on what would draw in large audiences. Saha argues that this illustrates a "different kind of institutional racism," where:

> rationalized, standardized and commercially driven processes of contemporary television production are inscribed with a broader neocolonial logic that coaxes black and Asian cultural producers into creating reductive representations of difference. (2012, p.436)

3. BBC Asian Network and Its Objectives

The BBC Asian Network is the only BBC radio service specifically targeting South Asian audiences with a mix of music such as Bollywood and Bhangra, and news about the communities. This part of the paper will demonstrate how the BBC Asian Network is combating under representation and mis-representation by allowing voices that are not usually heard on mainstream media on-air, thus making the service very useful, within the BBC's portfolio. The 2011 census revealed that three million people in the UK described themselves as being of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage and, unlike some minority communities, these groups retain very close ties to their homelands, culture, religion and languages.

The unique target audience and their different needs could go some way to explain some of the problems the BBC Asian Network has faced such as lack of engagement from the intended target audience and its proposed closure as part of the BBC's Delivering Quality First (DQF) policy. The key focus of the DQF was to cut spending by twenty percent but to still deliver the highest quality programmes. The problem posed by the closure of the BBC Asian Network was that the BBC still needed to offer something for minority audiences because, at least in theory, audiences lie at the "heart" of the organisation according to the BBC webpage outlining its missions and values. (BBC, Missions and Values,).

An independent review of digital radio, carried out in 2004 by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, was critical of the station and called for the remit to be strengthened in order to attract a core target audience, because at that time the station was trying to be "all things to all Asians" (DCMS, 2004, P.50). The review also pointed out that the continued growth and fragmentation of the Asian community would "increasingly question the notion of a homogenous Asian community with a body of shared values and interests" in the future (p.50).

4. Asian Network Analysis with interview data

The term 'Asian' itself has always posed problems for the British media and academics alike because it implies a homogenous and united group with no recognition of their conflicting and disparate beliefs. However, among the Asian communities there is conflict and also consensus. The communities identify themselves mostly via religion or language. Husband (1994, p.11) labels the term Asian as "functionally meaningless", because it imposes a specific identity onto people. In addition, he suggests that groups are "radically fractured by age, gender, class and political affiliation", but for commercial purposes minority ethnic media serve a broad diverse audience (2005, p.463).

Four out of the five interviewees believe the BBC overall lacks knowledge about the various Asian communities. Mike Curtis, a former news editor and Network Manager at the Asian Network, described the complexities of representing these communities:

> It *(the BBC)* said here is something for the Asians across the UK go and sort it. It was down to us on the ground, the journalists and presenters to pick away through that, to be fair and balanced to all groups. People outside the Asian Network within the BBC didn't really understand how diverse those communities were. We produced documentaries about racism within the Asian communities; we had interviews with Asian people complaining about immigration. Which certain people in the BBC didn't understand that, they saw the word Asian, the one stop shop for everybody and that was it. (Curtis, 2013)

The lack of understanding historically, often meant some of the content produced was not pushed to other parts of the BBC. The Asian Network of 2015 has a more central role within the BBC, and is increasingly seen as the centre for specialist knowledge for Asian communities. However, the question of how to represent one group or a number of them is something that current News Editor Kevin Silverton, says is something the entire station grapples with:

> The question is sometimes do you have to appeal to all of them or can you be more specific? And how often can you do that? So how alienating is it to a Muslim audience if you just talk to talk about Sikh issues for instance? Or are there enough commonalities across the Asian population that you are interested in a kind of shared experience because that is the experience of being from a specific background and culture within Britain? (Silverton, 2015)

News is unpredictable and some issues dominate the agenda for weeks and months which can mean one community getting prolonged coverage over the others. However, what singles Asian Network news from the rest of the BBC is that the news involves members of the various Asian communities. Frequently news provided by mainstream broadcasters gives the "definition of the situation" (Cottle, 2000, p.37), which is often provided by those in a position of authority or "white elites" (Van Dijk, 1993, p.22). Van Dijk's research (1998) has identified that people from ethnic minority groups are quoted "less and less prominently than (white) elites" particularly within the press" Van Dijk (1998), as cited in Cottle (1998, p .39). Asian Network reporters interview ordinary Asian people on stories and by doing this Asian Network journalists challenge academic research findings that suggest all news output is similar, because journalistic conventions, routines and tight deadlines lead to the "over-accessing" of those "in powerful and privileged institutional positions" (Hall *et al*. 2013, P.61).

The BBC Asian Network output does have its limitations; most non-Asians perhaps do not consider listening to it and the few news stories that are shared across the BBC for Breakfast, News24, Radio 4 or 5 Live, tend to have a broad appeal. The crux of the problem is that the media, particularly the manner in which mainstream media frames a story, is how the general public form their opinions on issues such as immigration. The media are therefore a "powerful source of ideas about race" (Hall, 1990, p.11-12). But one senior member of staff believes the lack of ethnic minority representation elsewhere in the BBC is the result of BBC working practices.

> I think in the BBC we have a particular way of working and I think we are formulaic sometimes especially when it comes to dealing with diverse communities. I mean if we look at the big issues that are always picked up by either the Asian Network or 5 Live or the BBC, it tends to be with things like radicalisation, forced marriages those are important issues, very important issues and we should be talking about them. (Anon, 2015)

Original stories about the Asian communities are shared within the BBC, for example on Breakfast, online or Newsnight. But this senior staff member is frustrated by the type of stories selected by the wider BBC.

> The moment I mentioned the word Muslim, or radicalisation or forced marriage they (the BBC) loved the story. No matter how many times it was done. That for me was a frustration (Anon, 2015)

This supports Malik's (2001) suggestion that the media focus on Islam in their output. Some community groups, particularly Muslims, do not always trust BBC output, because of the framing, language or stereotypes used within the news (Harb and Bessasio, 2006, P.41). One of the first jobs

the first News Editor for the Asian Network, Mike Curtis dealt with was the creation of a unique style guide for the producers. The journalists at the Asian Network believed at that time that mainstream BBC used language and phrasing which was insensitive to the Asian Network's target audience, obvious examples including 'Islamic terrorists or militants'. Mike Curtis explained why this was essential to connect to the audience and gain their trust:

> It was important that we phrased things correctly, even saying communities plural than community for talking about Asian communities. (Curtis, 2014)

The Asian Network has always attempted to reach all Asians but the station has not always succeeded. In 2009 Sikh organisations accused the BBC of being insensitive to their religion, after a Muslim Asian Network presenter suggested on air that Sikh's did not need to wear their ceremonial dagger at all times. Lord Indarjit Singh, from the Network of Sikh Organisations suggested in an interview for a news article "that stations like the Asian Network do little to encourage integration and social cohesion because they allow communities to ghettoise themselves" (Times of India, 2009). But Asian Network journalists believe the service reflects and gives insight into the British Asian lifestyle. Audience figures for the station have been increased, to 562,000 in 2014 (Quarter 1, 2014) following a high of 668,000 in (Quarter 4, 2013). But compared to the potential size of the target audience it is evident that many British Asians are not tuning in. Kamlesh Purhoit is a former Planning Editor for the Asian Network:

> Unfortunately, in the BBC what is happening is that there are people with pre-formed ideas and pre-conceived kind of thoughts about what are the important stories for their output. Then the BBC cannot complain that not enough Asian people watch the BBC output or listen to BBC radio. Its then no surprise if most of the Asian families I know will watch Zee TV or Sony TV and watch all the soaps and the dramas and DTV for their news when actually they should be as licence fee payers be getting those services from the BBC. (Purhoit, 2015)

A BBC Trust review of music stations in 2015 revealed that only thirty-four percent of black, Asian and minority ethnic adults listen to at least one of the BBC's music stations a week. (BBC Trust, 2015, p13), compared to forty-nine percent of listeners from non-ethnic backgrounds. Kamlesh Puroit outlined the difficulties the station faces in targeting its audience.

> I think in many ways it's become even more complicated more difficult. That may sound like an irony, because the Asian Network is much more focused now towards a younger audience. Those people more or less are people born in this country or came here at a very

young age and are very much integrated into British life I am not sure they need an Asian Network. (Purhoit, 2015)

It is often suggested that British Asians are served by the BBC's other radio stations, but the figures from the BBC Trust review above clearly contradict this point.

Owen Bentley, is the former Local BBC Radio network manager, and was involved in establishing the BBC Asian Network, he believes the problem with poor representation is not just top down, but also to do with audience experiences which are not always given a robust representation or understanding in output. An example is the Asian Network's short lived soap, Silver Street, which was axed a couple years after it was launched. Bentley suggests it was because it was a BBC Executive idea rather than the BBC Asian Network.

It never took off, that's a lot to do with listening habits if you never been used to a soap opera you don't then get into it on radio. But one thing I notice as an outsider to the Asian community, was that the people they had recruited all Asian, were not basically in touch with the working class of the Asian community at all; they were all graduates they were all very much of the London literary scene, and so I though the drama never really ever managed to get down to an average Asian family in Birmingham or Leeds or whatever. (Bentley,2015)

This is a wider criticism directed at the BBC that its programmes do not represent the working classes and the staff make-up also fails to do so. An essential requirement for most entry level jobs at the BBC is a degree and this frequently excludes poorer sections of the audiences, and to an extent some ethnic minority groups. Despite the difficulties the Asian Network has faced, a senior member of staff described the station's goals and the output as "incredible:"

As public service broadcasters it is a really important job to reflect those 4.8 million people and to represent them fairly and to a broader audience. What the Asian Network's role in that is perhaps a vehicle to bring people into the BBC and to then push them around show them what else they might like. (Anon, 2015)

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated why the BBC has to represent ethnic minority audiences. However, to attract viewers or listeners, programmes are frequently tailored for a broad mainstream appeal to the detriment of minority groups. To summarise, producers at the station believe they inform,

educate and entertain British South Asian communities. But they feel the BBC needs to give a more accurate representation of the British Asian communities on screen.

The gap between the licence fee payer and the BBC will continue to widen unless the BBC begins to develop more programmes that appeal to minorities, and the working classes, the two groups the BBC Asian Network does serve. The notion of public service broadcasting that reflects all communities could become redundant following the Charter Review Consultation. Also a move to a subscription form of funding instead of a licence fee in the future could also mean there may be no need for the BBC Asian Network or for BBC television to showcase Asian actors.

What this paper has also tried to suggest, is that the BBC Asian Network, cannot alone engage and represent people from South Asian backgrounds, more needs to be done across the entire BBC. The modest success of the BBC comedy Citizen Khan, attracting around 2.7 million viewers, reveals that audiences will consume programmes written and cast with ethnic minority actors. In fact the need for television to screen relevant programmes to these audiences has never been greater, but optimistically hoping that a digital radio service can be 'all things to all Asians' does not appear to be working for the BBC in serving this broad but diverse group.

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Biography

Gurvinder Aujla-Sidhu is a Journalism Senior Lecturer at De Montfort University were she is also currently completing her Phd. Gurvinder's research examines how Public Service Broadcasting engages with minority audiences. This paper highlights some of the early interview findings for the research and briefly summarises the literature review. Prior to working in higher education, Gurvinder spent more than 10 years working as a broadcast journalist working for a number of years as a journalist/producer at the BBC Asian Network. The previous work history prompted the research project.

"Here you can use it": Understanding mobile phone sharing and the concerns it elicits in rural Kenya

Leah Komen

Abstract: *Globally, mobile phones are mostly used as personal items largely due to their data storage and services provision. However, various features enable mobile phone sharing and this subverts the notion of a single individual use. In cultures where communal sharing is valued and seen as normal, it is natural for mobile phones to be incorporated into other traditionally shared support systems, such as meetings summoned by elders, which involve social, economic, cultural and political activities. This paper draws on a recent doctoral thesis to examine the role of mobile telephony in the social transformation and development of Marakwet, a sub-ethnic group of the Kalenjin community in the Rift Valley region of western Kenya. The paper argues that the adoption and domestication of mobile telephony is both innovative and a source of problems for the Marakwet, depending on how the device is used in everyday life. The paper shows that while mobile phone sharing amongst the Marakwet is the most preferred practice, privacy and data security are key concerns among users.*

Keywords: Mobile telephony, assemblage, sharing, privacy and security concerns.

Introduction

Mobile phones are generally thought of as personal items. However, there are contexts whereby the device is shared by various users, subverting the above owner-consumer narrative. Various mobile phone features enable users to frequently share the device and its functions with others. In cultures where communal sharing is valued and viewed as normal, mobile phones are usually incorporated into other shared support systems, such as meetings summoned by elders. Generally, communal mobile phone use is an arrangement whereby the device is accessible to multiple users, typically in a public space. This access is either free or attracts a small affordable fee.

Mobile phone sharing is common in developing countries, though there are insufficient empirical studies on this phenomenon. This mobile phone sharing practice has been defined "informal, non-numerative, resource distributing activity where multiple individuals have a relationship with a single device – as purchasers, owners, possessors, operators and/or users" (Burell, 2010, p.230). This implies that an original holder grants to others the partial use, enjoyment or possession of an item, resource or place. However, such a definition is not exhaustive, and is challenged and problematized by emergent methods of sharing, be they formal (that is, with strict agreement reached) or informal (based on trust). This raises questions about the nature of the much

debated interactions between mobile phone users and the device itself. This paper thus examines ideas about mobile phone sharing, sharing patterns and trust and mischief assemblages as issues of critical concern in the daily life of the Marakwet people in western Kenya.

Sharing is a key subject in social inquiry (Mauss, 1990; Huntsman and Hooper, 1996). Mobile telephony has also been the centre of media research in developed countries, where it is celebrated for its multiple uses as a personal device (Ling, 2004; Ito et al., 2005; Livingstone, 2002). But in developing countries, research on mobile phone sharing is relatively limited, although sharing of the device is widely acknowledged as a common practice in those countries. A report by United Nations Conference on trade and Development (UNCTAD) avers this fact, stating that in developing countries, especially in poor, rural communities, several people frequently shared a single mobile phone (UNCTAD,2005,P. 12). A study of urban teens in Sweden by Weilemann and Larsson (2001) demonstrated the social character of mobile phone sharing and how this challenges the conventional view of mobile telephones as distinctively personal devices. For Katz and Aakhus (2002), Swedish urban teens share phones 'minimally' by exchanging messages across handsets and sharing time through borrowing and lending phones. In their study, Steenson and Donner (2008) established that in urban Indian families' individuals and friends often share one or more mobile phones, a practice largely motivated by social obligation, familial customs and traditional gender roles.

The sharing of mobile telephony is also common in parts of Africa (Vodafone, 2005), for instance, in rural Rwanda, where handsets are often used by several individuals (Donner, 2005, P. 2). Similar experience is evident in Burkina Faso, where many villagers share a single phone (Hans and Kibora, 2008). Carmody (2010) attributes this practice to the huge costs of mobile phones and the large numbers of phone subscribers in Africa.

1. Theorising mobile phone sharing assemblage

Science and Technology scholarship argues that the relationship between the users and technological devices is an interrelation that does not privilege one over another. But Lucy Suchman, (2007) proposes a more inclusive understanding of human-machine interactions that acknowledges the actual realities of the complexities of such interactions. Following the Actor-Network theory (ANT) of Callon (1986) and Latour (2005), Suchman proposes an approach that promotes 'intra-actions', whereby boundaries between humans and machines are produced, disrupted and transgressed (2007, p.256). For instance, when people share their mobile phones, they tend to create boundaries between who is admitted or not admitted. However, sharing also leaves room for

the inclusion of others, especially during emergencies, whereby such individuals are seeking urgent help from other people. In effect, by looking at the co-production of humans and machines as an effect of fields of intra-action, a new view of the human will also emerge. In this way, human-machine interactions become dynamic, rather than static.

Mobile phone sharing is also informed by norms of reciprocity (Donner and Steenson, 2008; Ling and Donner, 2009), as individuals who refuse to share can be considered as selfish and flouting the local convention. However, a person who has been robbed of their phone or defrauded with a phone may be reluctant to share the device, regardless of societal norm. Sharing, therefore, reveals the complexity of human-machine interactions, and such relationships can best be explained by observing and explaining them within their specific contexts.

The assemblage theory provides a powerful basis to better grasp mobile phone sharing. Manuel DeLanda (2006) explains that this theory considers heterogeneous components that interact to form a whole through performing several roles and processes that describe the identity of an assemblage. This identity is not fixed but changes as components perform roles that transform them into other assemblage in a process of relations of exteriority. Assemblage theory thus goes beyond explaining the tensions between humans and mobile telephony to also allow for the emergence of new identities of assemblages as this interaction goes on. In effect, the Assemblage theory concerns how various components that make up sharing assemblage constantly interact to form new assemblages.

According to DeLanda (2006), the components of a social assemblage play varying material roles. The material components include: the mobile phone device itself; gender roles in terms of access and the expectations of society regarding sharing, such as requests for physical assistance, for instance, one phone user calling another to ask them to take care of their children, to purchase stuff from the market, or to rescue them from some ugly situations. Other material components of the assemblage include: the amount of time, energy and devotion invested in building and sustaining mutual relationships, and the people exchanging conversations around sharing, and who could converse in physical proximity or from afar. In contrast, expressive roles transcend language and symbols to include decisions made before actual encounters, the motivation behind sharing, and decisions on whether to share time, money and/or chores, and manner of bodily expressions (DeLanda, 2006: 12).

In Marakwet, sharing assemblages have the following distinctive expressive components:

- the non-linguistic display of solidarity, cohesiveness and trust, for example, manner of greeting and type of posture, with proximity depicting closeness of relationship;

- particular Marakwet dialects spoken, which identify individuals' community membership;

- interpersonal networks among peers and within the community

- Certain cultural practices that include preferred areas for meetings, communal meeting places, choice of times and length of meetings, etc.

2. Methodology

The study was purely qualitative, involving 12 households in Sibou Village of the Marakwet district. Using ethnographic interviews and field notes as the key methods of data collection, supplementary data was generated from 5 focus group discussions conducted among discrete social groups, namely: women; men and women together; clan leaders; teenage girls; and boys. The purpose was to generally understand the use and consumption of mobile telephony in both the household and the family. The focus groups were structured against the backdrop that the community operates mostly in social networks groups. The same questions were asked in the focus groups and the ethnographic interviews to make comparisons across the diverse participants possible. Questions were designed to elicit open-ended responses from three broad and sometimes overlapping areas, namely:

- descriptions of personal mobile phone use patterns and preference by individual household members;

- perceptions on the societal use and implications of mobile phones among various (socio-economic) status groups

- opinions on how mobile phones can benefit the community better.

Ten of the participating households were adopters who had access to and used mobile telephony, while two households were non-adopters, chosen to draw comparisons on the motivations for the use and non-use of mobile phones. Literate participants gave their consent by signing a consent form, whereas the semi-literate gave a verbal consent, which was audio-recorded. Participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identity. Also, they were encouraged to describe their personal encounters with mobile phones, so as to determine the different shades of their experiences with the devices.

3. Findings and discussions

The study showed that amongst teenagers, sharing was motivated by friendship and the need to share costs. One was not expected to share without contributing in some way. For instance, Boaz, aged 19, explained how he contributed towards his friends' mobile phones, to enable him use them to call his girlfriend or listen to radio broadcasts:

> I do not have to worry, because I don't own a mobile phone, all I need to do is give the owner twenty bob (twenty Kenya shillings) to charge his phone or twenty bamba (twenty Kenya shillings) for top-up; then I can come along and we listen to news together with other friends. So it is not a must to own a phone; we just do cost sharing.

Yet another respondent Cheptoo, aged 18, stated:

> For us girls we do not have that much money, but what we do is agree to top up one phone and each can text to their boyfriend or whoever and another can decide to pay for the phone charging and then we can save the texts under different files, so that one can feel a sense of privacy.

These two accounts illustrate how actions in this community depend largely upon circumstances, needs and desire to communicate, which are rooted in the act of cost sharing and reciprocity. Individuals are motivated by a lack of phones, and teenagers do not consider this as an impediment to their ability to communicate with significant others. They see it as an opportunity for socialisation even as they go about their individual lives. This is typical of assemblage theory, as it does not embrace a single logic. To several others mobile sharing territorialises, de-territorialise, or re-territorialise, which Suchman describes as the transgression of boundaries (2007). Sharing among teenagers includes, but is not limited to: sending short message texts (SMS); emailing others with internet enabled phones; making calls; sending and receiving money through their mobile phones, a service known as M-PESA; listening to news and listening to music, especially among boys.

3.1 Mobile phone sharing patterns

Activities relating to mobile phone sharing went on regardless of what gender owned or had access to the device, be they temporary custodians of the borrowed phone, or a friend of a friend. This then raises the critical question of whether or not technology is gender neutral.

When individuals interact through mobile phone sharing, they not only display their preferences as to whom they ask favours from, but this choice implies aspects of their personalities,

that is, what they like; who they like to hang out with; who they prefer and what their tastes are like. For instance, two people might have identical mobile phones with the same amount of credit and those who do not own mobile phones will make a choice as to who they will borrow the phone from. It is very likely that factors, such as the attitude of the phone owner towards the potential borrower, the relationship between the owner and the non-owner, experiences in the past and matters of trust, will affect who the person without a mobile phone chooses to borrow the device from. In other words, a "mobile phone is not only a symbolic repository for the user's social capital but also signals to others certain unspoken clues about the user's identity and social status" (Larsson, 2009, p. 9).

Mobile phone sharing practices are diverse and vary among individuals. However, some participants preferred some practices to others. Some practices relate to those held in the pre-ownership culture, where many depended on a few who had communication technologies like radio and television to meet the information they need.

Mobile Phone sharing patterns

Decides to give out Handset. Accept Top up card or cash Or for free:
BUT prerequisites are they are given for trust, or family relations

Borrower of the Handset. Has Sim, top up card , cash at hand or nothing

Owner or custodian of Mobile phone handset and SIM
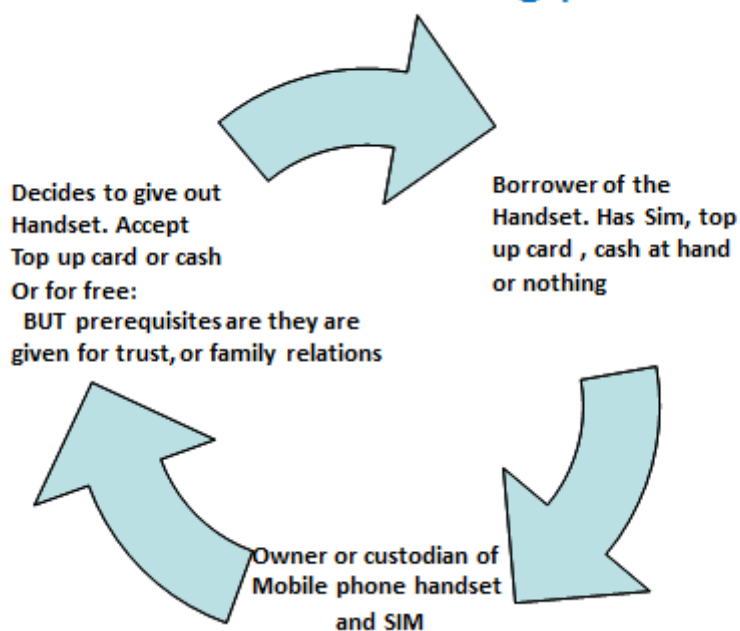
Mobile phone sharing patterns in Marakwet (ethnographic data, 2011)

Most participants shared their mobile phones for free across the divides of age, gender and economic status. The study showed that sharing was largely altruistic, as opposed to a means of addressing a lack of money or resources. However, data also revealed that altruistic acts can be motivated by a lack of resources, a position illustrated by Chebeet, a 38 year old woman:

> People don't share mobile phone just because they don't have enough money; sometimes people share mobile because of many reasons, like a poor network from Orange may warrant someone to borrow a phone from someone with Safaricom. Then, again, the issue of charging… if one's phone loses charger he or she will ask to use another's that has a charger. Yeah, it is always like that around here.

Kibiwott, a civil servant aged 42, corroborated Chebeet's position, insisting that it is not only money or a lack of it that encourages sharing:

> Sometimes, when people share the phone they get together and can discuss stuff. For example, the other day our member of parliament called on us in a baraza [open air meeting, held under a tree] over the phone, the person put his phone connected to the speakers and we talked with her for over an hour. So she has the money but prefers to share the phone so that she can address the constituents!

Kibiwott's testimony broadens the scope of sharing from the simple need of people for air time to include the sharing of organisation, leadership and the like. This is true of assemblage theory, which posits that assemblages are not permanent but, in fact, temporal, because as components, such as the mobile phone, organisation, or even leadership structures interact new assemblages form. Assemblages speak of connectivity, interrelationships and emergence, as seen in the above testimonies. Mobile telephony thus facilitates more sharing of community life and also reinforces social networks, such as the *barazas,* seen as important common meeting spaces. Most teenagers used shared mobile phones to share music downloads, news alerts and, in the case of boys, sports reports. To do so, they converged by the hillside where reception was clearer. In this way, mobile telephony functions as a facilitator of further social networks and social connections. This practice reflects Lefebvre's (1991) theory that space production assumes different modes, from natural space to a more complex production of social space.

Besides airtime top-up, another prevalent mobile phone sharing practice is beeping, otherwise known as "flashing" or "please-call-me." This practice involves calling an individual and hanging up even before they can answer. In some cases, this is symbolic. For example, teenage girls indicated that if they flashed their boyfriends twice, it would be to convey that they needed top-up. Otherwise, it meant that the beeper or flasher was expected to be called back.

Usually, such practices connect with the economic status of an individual. The study established that individuals who are flashed are perceived by the "flashers" as being able to call back, since they were perceived to have money or, at least, have more money than the flashers.

However, flashing is also used to convey symbolic meanings understood by those engaged in this practice. Emmy, aged 21, noted: *'When I flash [my boyfriend] twice he knows I am asking for air time, but if I flash once, it means he needs to call me back.'* Other girls were in agreement with the symbolic meaning of flashing, though views varied individually. Kibet, a 49-year old businessman, stated:

> I hardly get flashed but when I am, I first of all feel afraid;, I get scared because I think to myself, "Something must have terribly gone wrong", and when I call, sometimes it is really bad news like someone has died or sometimes good. Mostly it is bad news.

Lena, a mother of two, insisted that:

> Flashing is a nice way to hide your shame, at least, imagine if you have a phone that doesn't ring, at least when you flash, someone can call you. Like when my children take too long to call me I flash them, then they call me and I feel good.

However, one of the key challenges of flashing using a shared mobile phone is that it is futile, unless the recipient of the flashing recognises the flasher, though in most cases, however, the "flashers" might have given their number to those they are flashing.

Another common mobile phone sharing practice among teenage boys in Marakwet is '*harambee*', a Kiswahili word meaning resource pooling. This is a situation or process, whereby each individual puts his or her money towards paying for mobile phone charging and pre-paid phone credit. The money is credited into one person's phone, and others are invited to text or call or listen to radio, music, news, etc.

Nicodemus, aged 18, does not own a phone, while Musa, aged 21, does. Together, they agree how much is needed to maintain Musa's phone. In pooling funds for pre-paid top-up cards and charging the phone to be able to sign up for news alert and music downloads, the pair is joined by Boaz, 19, and Kiptoo, 23. Thus, the four do not need individual phones. Instead, they just need to raise enough money to top up Musa's phone. Though the boys are happy that they are able to use and access Musa's phone, they sometimes feel awkward having to go to him to receive or read text messages from their girlfriends. Each of the boys mostly wants to own a phone. These situations illustrate the nature of assemblages: always territorialising and re-territorialisng. For instance, if Musa decided to give them privacy to read texts from their girlfriends, they could feel a sense of privacy and pride, but the fact that those texts could remain in Musa's phone unless deleted is a source of worry too, as the boys revealed.

Evidence showed that most personal mobile phones in Marakwet are basically communal. Most respondents said that they shared their handsets with whoever was in need of them in the community, on the condition that the assisted individuals used 'good language', because in some cases they had lent their phones to individuals, who used them to insult people. For this reason, mobile phone owners became more vigilant, choosing to stay close when borrowers used their phones.

The majority of participants affirmed that they would share their handsets for free, especially with old men and women, as they were considered to be custodians of culture. However, a small proportion, mostly young people, would usually charge money for their handsets. They would allow others free access, only if such individuals proved beyond reasonable doubt that they could not afford a top-up card. Just like the older men and women, they would be vigilant and ask that users stayed close, in case anyone decided to be mischievous by using abusive language in calls and texts. Thus, trust was a pre-requisite to phone sharing.

Basically, altruism and reciprocity inform the practice of sharing of resources in Marakwet. A study by Chavan and Gomey (2008) of the cultural factors behind phone sharing in rural India showed that people were largely interested in sharing their devices. Owners and users of mobile phones were happy to share them with a wide range of significant others within their social relationships, such as family, friends, siblings, peers, relatives and even strangers. According to that study, sharing occurred at both private and public locations, even though most times the boundaries between the two spaces were blurred.

3.2 Trust and mischief assemblages/concerns of mobile phone sharing

Moral economy is a key feature of Marakwet life. According to Domestication of technology theorists (Silverstone et al., 1992; Moley, 2003; Gray, 1992; Goggin, 2006; DuGay et al., 1997) this term situates values, norms and regulations of behaviour around the household. This is evident in this research, as individuals were expected to behave appropriately when using a shared phone, and not to use it to abuse or insult others, share insensitive text messages, and cheat/con people. To prevent these, phone lenders stayed very close to borrowers, to guard against any transgression.

The act of remaining close to borrowers during phone use was also tied to larger societal expectations and disciplinary measures introduced by Kenya's regulator, Communication Authority of Kenya. Most of the interviewees expressed concern about possible repercussions for them if borrowers used their phones to engage to abuse people or cause mischief, as the government

regulator would hold them, rather than the borrowers, responsible, since SIM cards were registered under usernames.

Older participants emphasised the centrality of trust as a consideration for sharing their mobile phones. Chukor, a father of two teenage boys, stated:

> You see, in as much as I would want to help everybody, there are people who are very bad. Someone can ask to use your phone to call, text or even send M-Pesa. But when they do like that, they send abusive texts or quarrel with someone using your phone.

However, when asked whether there were situations when trust was not obligatory, he noted as follows:

> Well, you cannot refuse someone to use your phone for emergency cases like sicknesses, invasions of the Pokots or even concerning the death of a loved one! When it comes to a matter of life and death, you do not need to be that cautious.

In this scenario, sharing is one of those Marakwet values that do not consider emergency situations as a precondition. But Hezekia, 80 years old, noted with caution:

> These days there are many people who are corrupt and bad; they will lie to you and even steal the phone from you, especially for those of us that cannot read or write. So I must know you, know your character and behaviour, before I can allow you to use my phone.

However, he recognised the need for compromise in certain compelling emergency situations:

> But when a child is sick or there is an invasion from the Pokots (a warring neighbouring community also a sub tribe of Kalenjin tribe) or an accident, anyone can use my phone because that is a matter of life and death.

Other participants expressed similar sentiments regarding health or emergency situations. In such cases, one would be obliged to share, regardless of whether one knew the borrower, or wished to share or not. For some, this was the only case whereby sharing was done for free, with the borrower choosing to give a tokenistic contribution if they so wished. Apparently, in adverse situations affecting the community, everyone was expected to share freely, whereas in ordinary situations, one had the prerogative to choose. Teens preferred to share with their peers, but were also open to lending to their parents and neighbours or strangers. The elderly, on the other hand, only shared with their grandchildren and wives, aside from the overall sharing that was need-based. The majority

of the women used the mobile phone quite often through sharing, even though the majority of phone owners were men.

Mobile phone sharing, therefore, reveals participants' personalities. Farman advances this position, showing a link between spatial relationships and identification. He suggests that "spatial relationships have always been determined in the way we understand ourselves" (Farman, 2012, p. 17). Mobile telephone sharing, in this case, does not only highlight the patterns of communities, but also the ways these practices reproduce themselves in different social settings. As participants' testimonies show, mobile phone sharing also connects with the self-perception of mobile telephony users (see Goffman, 1959).

Mischief was cited as one of the risks of mobile phone sharing, irrespective of the reason for sharing. Siaban, 48 years old, narrated how, due to lack of electricity, he had to take his phone to the nearby corner shop for charging. He explained that, because of this, he had to fight hard to regain his friend's trust:

> I took my phone as usual for charging and paid. While my phone was still at the charging shop someone went and said that was his phone and needed to make a call and return it for charging. He was given the phone, after which he sent an abusive text. So when I went to finally take it back from the charger's shop, a friend of mine whose name I had saved called me and rained insults on me, asking me how could I. We had to call Saraficom [leading service operator] to verify what time it was texted and searched among ourselves until we found the culprit. It is very bad. You cannot be too safe with a mobile phone.

Mischief was further cited regarding security matters. Mathew, 58, narrated:

> Sometimes mobile phone can cause unnecessary worries, like one day someone send texts around that [a rival sub-tribe] Pokots were coming to attack us...and so people got so tensed up only for a second message to be sent out to friends to say it was a joke. I wish such people could be arrested.

Conclusion

Though mobile phone sharing is widely embraced and practised, numerous risks accompany it, and any excitement is equalled by concerns about it. This is typical of assemblage perspectives, which display complexities, because as wholes they are composed of heterogeneous components. This paper has challenged the personal use of mobile telephony by showcasing how mobile phone

sharing affects the lives of people and that mobile phone sharing is not necessarily due to the paucity of mobile phone devices or the capacity of rural users to afford. In fact, in reality, mobile phone sharing is complex and largely based on the societal duty to share, rather than the simplistic notion that non-sharing is due to lack of money.

This paper has also fronted assemblage theory as a possible theoretical framework for understanding the complex interactions of mobile phone users, mobile phone sharing patterns, with respect to context and the culture of people of Marakwet, to reveal the multifaceted nature of mobile phone appropriation and domestication in rural Kenya. The study also found that mobile phone sharing creates and expands community spaces, such that there is no longer public and private space dichotomy. The paper thus highlighted values, norms and regulations by the government as critical in determining how much of the device is shared. There is a need to do a further investigation on whether or not mobile phone sharing affects or is affected by gender differentiation, power and age. Although the study has shown that mobile phone sharing is gender neutral, there are situations when social networks demand a mobile phone sharing among people of the same gender, age group and literacy levels. Mobile phone sharing therefore, produces systematic exclusions and inclusions and, on other occasions, preferential access.

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Biography

Leah Jerop Komen PhD is currently a lecturer at Daystar university- Kenya. She has a master's degree in Development Communication from Daystar University, and a PhD from University of East London. Her research interests include: the domestication of communication technologies in sub-Saharan Africa and how human-technology and context interrelationships from part of social assemblages that intersect with development.

The 2011 Egyptian Revolution: Its effects on the Egyptian community in the UK in terms of political participation, media use, belonging, and Egyptian identity

Rua Al-Sheikh

Abstract: *This research seeks to examine the role played by the Egyptian Diaspora living in the UK during the 2011 Egyptian revolution and the extent to which they participated in it. The aim is to detangle the factors impacting the UK Egyptian community in terms of identity and belonging, and discuss whether the 2011 uprising had increased their political involvement through mass media or not. The assumption that diasporic communities are politically apathetic is considered. Little research has been conducted in this area of Diaspora, and a qualitative approach has been used to explore this. Preliminary findings indicate that Egyptians in the UK are more involved in political activities with regard to Egypt since 2011 uprising. When the Egyptian revolution broke out, some Egyptians living in the UK engaged in the revolution by voicing their opinions over the Internet and social media, while others travelled to Egypt to participate in the uprising.*

Keywords: Diaspora, Egyptian revolution, political engagement, social media, Egypt-UK

Introduction

The majority of research conducted on the 2011 Egyptian revolution concentrated on the participation of Egyptians living in Egypt, and how the social media has played a significant role in encouraging them to participate. In contrast, the focus of this project is on the Egyptian diaspora in the UK, and the role played by them in the revolution.

According to Egyptologists such as Reem Saad (2012), the Egyptian revolution is considered to be a turning point in the country's history. Egyptians decided to revolt in early January 2011, immediately after the uprising in Tunisia in late 2010, and after the fall of president Bin Ali. The deaths of Abu Azizi, an ordinary Tunisian man, and Khaled Said, a young Egyptian who was tortured by the Egyptian police and then died, triggered the unrest in the region (Manhire, 2012).

The Middle East, not excluding Egypt, has witnessed difficult economic, political, and social periods during its recent history. Unemployment in the region has, for instance, been a key factor for a long time (Vargas 2012). Forty million Egyptians were reported to live below the poverty line under President Hosni Mubarak's regime (Al Aswany, 2011). Moreover, President Mubarak was planning to present his son, Jamal Mubarak, to succeed him. Egyptian citizens were unhappy with Mubarak's

government, and the idea that his son would take over the presidency caused a certain dread. The beginning of the uprising saw many Egyptians, including Al Aswany (2011), a well-known novelist and one of the co-founders of the political movement, *Kifāyah* ('Enough'), holding pessimistic views regarding the success of a revolution. However, the wave of rebellion soon reached Egypt, and the citizens were motivated to revolt, immediately after the Tunisian uprising in 2010. Almost one million Egyptians participated in the demonstration in Tahrir Square in Cairo only on the 25th of January. This encouraged others to join protests and support their fellow Egyptians in the streets. According to Al Aswany (2011), the Egyptian revolution offered a sense of solidarity among Egyptians by giving them a feeling of being members of one family (p. ix).

The majority of articles written by scholars on the participation of Egyptians concentrate on those living in Egypt. However, there is a dearth of studies focusing on Egyptians living in Diaspora. The aim of this paper is to fill this gap by focusing on Egyptian Diaspora in the UK, including those who were born in Egypt or the UK, and their role in the revolution.

1.   Literature review

Responding to an email sent to the Office for National statistics regarding the number of Egyptians in the 2011 UK census, the number of Egyptians who were born in Egypt but currently residing in the UK is 29,821. However, this number does not include Egyptians from the second and third generations who were born in the UK, but whose families were originally from Egypt. There is an acute need for further studies amongst this community of Egyptians in the UK. Furthermore, it is important to include second and third generations of Egyptians in order to examine the youth's opinion of their identity and whether they classify themselves with regard to ethnic, cultural or religious identities.

A commissioned report amongst the Egyptian community in England, Communities and Local Government (CLG) (2009) recently aims to unravel the way Egyptian community relate to their homeland and their faith (particularly Islam). The CLG study reveals the difficulties, especially the second generation Egyptians face, living in a cross-cultural or trans-national society, and due to different cultures and religions in particular. On the other hand, due to the shared religion, language and cultural traditions, Egyptians who migrate to Gulf countries don't suffer from problems with regard to religion and language (Hadley, 1977). Therefore, for Egyptians, the transition to an Arab country is not the same as migrating to a European country. Consequently, Egyptians who decide to migrate to Gulf countries are not named 'Diasporic groups' while those who wish to migrate to Europe can be named 'Diasporic groups'. Kalra *et al.* (2005) differentiate between the term diaspora and immigration as 'diaspora' is a more complex term which includes a group of people who have never

migrated, such as members of second-generation immigrant families. In addition, diaspora involves more settlement in host countries or those with dual identities such as Egyptian-British (Kalra *et al.,* 2005), unlike Egyptians who have settled in the Gulf whose notion of return is common.

There are a few studies conducted on Arab communities in Britain such as these conducted by Madawi Al-Rasheed and Camila El-Solh (1992). Another example is the study by Caroline Nagel (1998) who studied Arab communities in Britain, in terms of Arab identity and integration into the host country. Her results showed that some Arabs in Britain neither integrate with the host country, nor stand out as a separate identity or race (Nagel, 2008). Usually Arab groups analysed in such studies include Yemenis, Moroccans and Iraqis (Karmi, 1997). Nevertheless, the Egyptian community in the UK had not been under scholarly scrutiny before 1997.

Ghada Karmi (1997) considered the Egyptian community in the UK to be the largest Arab ethnic group. The most interesting finding Karmi came up with is how some Egyptians lacked the sense of patriotism. For instance, many respondents did not wish to return to Egypt, due to the difficult economic conditions back in Egypt (Karmi, 1997). Since then there have been limited academic papers written on the Egyptian UK Diaspora and its political links with the country of origin. This research project seeks to fill this void by focusing on Egyptians in the UK and the impacts the recent uprisings in Egypt have had on their political participation, socialisation, belonging and identity. Theoretically, the project rests on the concept of Diaspora as a process that binds several communities around the world, based on two co-ordinates: homeland orientation and boundary maintenance (Cohen, 1997; Brubaker, 2005). The group of Egyptians in the UK is mainly overlooked and under-represented in research and it is here that this paper hopes to make a significant contribution. This is also topical in the wake of the 2011 uprising which is claimed to have engaged Egyptian Diaspora communities in solidarity with those inside Egypt.

One similar study conducted on Syrian migrants argues that Syrian Diaspora activists acted as 'cultural brokers', linking protesters' voices inside Syria to the outside world, bridging the gap between new and mainstream media, and collaborating with journalists to translate messages and views (Andén-Papadopoulos & Pantti, 2013). Severo and Zuolo (2012) conducted another study on Egyptians abroad, in Italy in particular and defined the Egyptian community as fluid and shifting. Moreover, they noted the emergence of a trans-national Egyptian community (Severo & Zuolo, 2012, p.78). It is interesting to investigate whether a sense of belonging, pride and patriotism exists among Egyptians in Diaspora. It is also interesting to study the impact of new and social media on the cultivation of this sense of nationalism (if any) among Egyptians in diaspora, claiming that social media played an important role in the Arab Spring (Howard and Hussein, 2011).

A recent study amongst Egyptian diaspora is reported by Işık Kuşcu (2012) which looks at the role played by Egyptian-American diaspora group during and aftermath the 2011 revolution and how this group can influence both homeland and host country's politics. It is claimed by Kuşcu (2012) that the Egyptian-American diaspora group is connected to their homeland by following the events there. Furthermore, the 2011 Egyptian revolution has been a turning point with regard to more involvement among Egyptians abroad in Egyptian affairs than in Mubarak's era (p.121). Nowadays thanks to new technology, communications and transport, diasporic groups are more connected to their homelands than before (Kuşcu 2012). This confirms Safran's view (1991) that homeland occupies a central position as an important component of diasporic identity (p.123). As a result, the relationship between diasporic groups and homeland is concrete.

One important contribution to the debate surrounding Egyptians in the UK is the study of Sameh Fawzy examining the Egyptian community in the UK and their participation in the aftermath of the Egyptian uprising (2012, p. 42). In his analysis, Fawzy (2012) argues that one of the most important changes that happened after the fall of Mubarak's regime in 2011 is that Egyptians abroad are more willing to participate in rebuilding Egypt (p. 43). Before the uprisings, Egyptians believed that nothing could be changed - after the revolution, many people became hopeful of change, which strengthened the relationship between migrants and their homeland. The majority of Egyptians in Britain are considered to be highly-educated and the focus of Fawzy's study presents is the reasons for the emigration of Egyptians to other countries. Labour, studying and seeking better standards of living are the most common reasons for leaving Egypt (Fawzy, 2012).

With regard to social media and the uprising, according to Tufekci et al. (2012), many protesters heard first about the uprising in Egypt in 2011 via Facebook. In addition, Egyptians used Facebook heavily with regard to distributing videos and photos of protests in Tahrir square despite its recent introduction to the Egyptian society.

2. Diaspora theory

Diaspora has always been a controversial concept in terms of definition. Some scholars define it as the social organisation that connects people living in a host country, with their homeland (Wahlbeck 2002). Kalra *et al.* (2005) associate the diaspora concept with relocation, dispersal and forced movement (p. 10). Diaspora can be approached in three ways: (i) its relationship with forced movement (refugee or asylum status) or voluntary geographical relocation of people (Wahlbeck, 2002). Vertovec (1997) argues that Diaspora is 'a mode of cultural production' (p. 229) which is related to the outcome of relocation and how it might affect migrants' lives in dealing with dispersal and

forced movement; (ii) its political connotation, and how politics might contribute to the concept of Diaspora (p. 228). In this sense, politics might be the main cause of this phenomenon and why people suffer from dispersal and relocation. Finally (iii) some scholars, such as Cohen (1997), consider diaspora as a social organisation (p. 229), and, according to Van Hear (2005) it constitutes a trans-national community (p. 230). In terms of a transitional community, globalisation has played a significant role in creating this situation. Nowadays, diasporic groups are no longer isolated, thanks not only to globalisation but also to modern technology (Van Her, 2005) The Internet has quelled feelings of loneliness and nostalgia by enabling diasporic groups affected by geographical boarders to continue to communicate (Graziano, 2012).

3. Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative approach including semi-structured interviews together with ethnographic examination amongst Egyptians in the UK. These methods have been selected to scrutinise the effects of the Egyptian revolution on Egyptians' daily lives in the UK. Piaget (2008) argues that the qualitative method involves engagement in people's lives and their in-depth feelings and experiences. Therefore, a qualitative approach in this case is considered to be the most appropriate.

Semi-structured interviews were selected in this paper for many factors. First, according to Kvale (2007) interviews can be defined as a conversation with structure and rules. Second, interviews are considered to be 'a conversation site for knowledge' (p.7). In addition, Longhurst (2010) argues that semi-structured interviews help the researchers to elicit details about a chosen topic. Although the interviewer prepares set of questions to be asked, semi-structured interviews can unfold new topics without advanced preparation to tackle in depth. According to Longhurst (2010) focus groups is defined as a group interview of 6-12 persons to tackle a chosen topic. Focus group has not been chosen as this paper seeks to examine personal experience and feelings of Egyptians in the UK. Consequently, semi-structured, face to face interviews are chosen to gather information with regard to effects of revolution on Egyptian diaspora in the UK.

Research questions focus on:

- To what extent has the revolution affected Egyptians in Diaspora, in terms of identity and sense of belonging, and whether they have increased their political participation in virtual campaigns/activities concerning Egypt?

- How did Egyptians in the UK use media including social media vis-à-vis traditional mainstream media, particularly pan-Arab and British TV, during the time of revolution?

- To what extent has the 2011 Egyptian revolution represented a turning point to Egyptians' political participation in the UK given the stereotype of Diaspora communities as politically apathetic as the idea of living outside the home land makes you isolated from what's going on in the country?

Ethnography was chosen based on observation and field notes gathered from protests organised by Egyptian community in the UK. Ethnography involves describing people and their culture and environment as an impassive observer (Hammersley and Atkins 2007). Ethnographic work includes attending protests and marches organised by the Egyptian community in the UK. Getting involved with events organised by Egyptians in the UK is beneficial in terms of accessing UK-Egyptians who do not use social media sites. Also, ethnographic work has been selected in order to examine the political activities of Egyptians in the UK.

There are several Egyptian communities living in the UK (Karmi, 1997) - some with strong links to their country of origin (Egypt). The selection of participants to be interviewed in the semi-structured interviews was based on the following criteria not all Egyptians in the UK were eligible to participate.

Interviewees must:

- be of Egyptian descent, either born in Egypt or the UK

- have resided in the UK since 2011

- have witnessed the 2011 revolution: either in the UK or personally in Egypt

- be 18 years old or more

To access participants, Egyptian groups on *Facebook* have been identified, such as Egyptians living in the UK, particularly London, where most of them reside. Almost sixty members of those groups have been contacted by sending a Facebook message explaining the reason for the project and whether they would be interested in participating or not. Twenty people have responded, while others have stated that they had left the UK or were not interested in the topic. Participants who agreed to participate were sent the information sheet giving more details about the project. Also, in order to access participants, an advertisement has been distributed to various universities, the Luton Mall, restaurants and cafes and listing the criteria that should be met. An advertisement on the website,

'Meet up', has been placed, in the hope that group members from the Arab and Egyptian communities will respond. Five interviews from the website members have been conducted.

It is worth mentioning that an ethics approval form has been completed in order to conduct a project involving human participation. University of Bedfordshire provides a form for every student to fill in before collecting data.

4. Discussion and preliminary results

The researcher has established contact with seventeen interviewees living in the UK, and intends to add another five, in order to present a substantial database for analysis. This section shall present the preliminary findings, following the fieldwork conducted in the UK. For confidentiality purposes, the participants shall be referred to as *Interviewee 1, 2,* and so on, in order to protect their identity. Preliminary analysis of the interviews has identified three themes, using Dey's (1993) method of identifying categories and sub-categories for analysis. The following section discusses these three themes:

4.1 Theme one: Political participation

The first category is political participation among Egyptians in the UK. This category includes the role of Egyptians in UK, the difference between first and second generation participation and more involvement among Egyptians in Egyptians political activities.

4.1.1 Role of Egyptians in UK in the uprising

Egyptians who were born in Egypt view political participation differently from those who were born in the UK. Those born in the UK believe their role in the UK is more powerful than travelling to Egypt to participate. However, Egyptian-born citizens residing in the UK believe their role will be more influential if they participate collectively in Egypt. For instance, *interviewee 6*, born in Egypt, states: "if there is going to be a second revolution in Egypt, which is coming soon, I prefer to be in Egypt with my friends and family*".*

On the effect of participating in protests in the UK to support the Egyptian uprising, *interviewee 6* comments, "the effects of protesting here in the UK are limited, while in Egypt, you can sense you are doing something for your country […]".This doesn't refute the fact that Egyptians abroad can play a role, at least to show solidarity among Egyptians abroad and their fellow Egyptians back home [Egypt] by sharing their demands and sufferings. In order to prove how Egyptians in the UK

show solidarity with Egyptians back in Egypt, the Facebook group '25th Jan Egyptians in the UK' organised an event entitled 'Freedom and dignity to our people back home' on 21 October 2014.

Interviewee 15 shares the same opinion with *interviewee 6,* in terms of the limited role of Egyptians in the UK by stating **"I** don't believe in protests here in the UK as they are ineffective and that's why I didn't participate in any protest in the UK regarding 2011 uprisings". On the other hand, *interviewee 1* believes her role as an Egyptian in the UK is more powerful than going to Egypt: "I believe participating here in the UK is more powerful in my case, than going back to Egypt".

Interviewee 1 was born in the UK, so the place of birth can play a role in this case. Because other participants such as *interviewee 6* above, who has lived all his life in Egypt and has family and friends in Egypt, expresses different views.

4.1.2 First vs. second generations' political participation

It is notable that the first and second generation Egyptians in the UK view the uprisings in different perspectives. For example, *interviewee 2* believes the uprisings were not necessary; while *interviewee 3* feels that first generation of Egyptians have played a negative role in the uprisings: **"**Older generations were living in a stable lifestyle and don't want to change, while the younger generation wanted the change, and suffer more than the older generation in terms of finding a job and other economic problems, and that's why older people were against protesting*".*

Interviewee 10 expressed how she wanted to participate in the uprisings as an Egyptian, but her parents were against it, and were really concerned about her participation. On the other hand, younger generations of Egyptians were pro-uprisings and many of the interviewees participated in the protests, whether in Egypt or the UK.

4.1.3 More involvement among Egyptians in Egyptians' political activities

To conclude, although Egyptians in the UK have faced difficulties in terms of participating and protesting, more engagement is noticed among Egyptians in the UK, especially after the revolution. Egyptians in the UK believe their voice might make a difference, especially in terms of elections and their participation. *Interviewee 13* expresses how he feels that elections after the revolution are important, and all Egyptians should participate, unlike the situation during Mubarak's regime. *Interviewee 13* expresses "the results of the elections were expected, Mubarak was the only candidate and would obviously win, and therefore, voting in the elections would be useless". However, after the

revolution, elections have become meaningful. *Interviewee 14* shares this point of view with *interviewee 13:* "after the revolution, elections were more effective than in Mubarak's time*"*.

4.2 Theme two: Belonging and loyalty

The second theme explored is the sense of belonging and loyalty to Egypt; almost all participants interviewed were loyal to Egypt, despite of their place of birth. For example, *interviewee 4* is 'loyal to Egypt' and believes he is Egyptian and British at the same time, although he was born and raised in the UK: "My homeland is Egypt and although I was born in the UK, I look Egyptian and my way of living is Egyptian, and I am a foreigner here, as British people always ask me where I am from, originally?"**.**

When asked if he experienced a sense of identity crisis*, interviewee 4* said "It is an identity crisis, but I don't think it's a problem, as I am an Egyptian living in the UK as I feel Egyptian in everything: culture, food and religion, and this is what makes a human being". *Interviewee 9* (18 years old) believes that at an early age, an identity crisis is normal and every teenager will go through it, but family plays a significant role in knowing who you are and how to deal with identity crisis or such confusion.

There is also a sense of pride among Egyptians in the UK. For instance, interviewee 4 states: "I was proud before the revolution, then I was extremely proud of being Egyptian during and after the revolution". However, the sense of pride has been declined recently, due to the mistakes the new Egyptian government has made. *Interviewee 4* expresses his feelings by stating: "everything went wrong in Egypt after the revolution and this has made me less proud".

4.3 Theme three: Media role

The final theme is the role of media according to Egyptians living in the UK. Media, social media in particular, has played a significant part in the uprising.

4.3.1 Social media as a source of information

In terms of source of information, the younger generation consider social media as a source of information with regard to keeping updated on Egypt's news. Participants aged 18-30 believe that Facebook is the main source of information for them. "My source of information about Egypt is social media, and I can differentiate between fake and true information", *interviewee 6* said. On the other hand, participants who are 30+ do not trust social media as a source of information. *Interviewee 15* (50 years old) expresses that the reason behind mistrust of social media is the inaccuracy and inadequacy of social media.

4.3.2 Mainstream media

In addition, Egyptians have little trust in the reportage of the mainstream media, Arabic or Western, but particularly Egyptian. *Interviewee 14* expresses how he has lost trust in Arab media in general, and specifically Egyptian media, because of their hidden agenda.

Conclusion

To sum up, studying the effects of 2011 revolution on Egyptian diaspora has demonstrated interesting findings. In this paper, a qualitative approach has been adopted. Interviews with Egyptians in the UK have demonstrated the following: UK-Egyptians are more involved in Egypt's politics. The place of birth has played a significant role in deciding on participating in the uprisings either in Egypt or in the UK. For instance, Egyptians born in Egypt preferred to take part in Egypt while those born in Britain believe taking part in the UK would benefit Egypt more than participating in Egypt in terms of raising awareness. Moreover, Egyptians in the UK have a strong identity in terms of building a strong relationship to Egypt.

Finally, in terms of media role, Egyptians in the UK face difficulties trusting mainstream media and social media. Among diaspora groups worldwide, Egyptian diaspora in the UK has not received enough attention scholarly. Consequently, this project has discovered the effects of 2011 revolution on Egyptians in the UK, giving the fact they are Egyptians even if living abroad.

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Appendix

Table 1: list of Interviewees

Participant	Age	Gender	Place of birth	Marital status	Political participation	Passport	interview Language	Interview date	Interview length
1	22	Female	UK	Single	Non-activist	Dual*	English	4.4.2014	1.5 hour
2	43	Male	E**	Divorced	Non-activist	Dual	Arabic and English	20.8.2014	1.50 hour
3	36	M	E	Single	Non-activist	E	Arabic	1.9.2014	1 hour
4	33	M	UK	Single	Non-activist	B°	Arabic and English	1.9.2014	1 hour
5	32	M	E	Single	Blogger	E	English	22.9.2014	1 hour
6	20	M	E	Single	Online activist	E	Arabic	10.10.2014	45 mins
7	31	F	E	Married	Online activist + an activist	E	Arabic	12.11.2014	1 hour
8	26	M	E	Single	Non-activist	Non	English	13.11.2014	1 hour
9	18	M	UK	Single	Non-activist	B	English	17.11.2014	1 hour
10	24	F	US	Single	Non-activist	Dual	English	13.12.2014	1 hour
11	50	F	E	Divorced	Non-activist	Dual	Arabic	15.12.2014	1 hour
12	37	M	E	Single	Non-activist	Dual	English and Arabic	19.12.2014	1 hour
13	32	M	E	Married	Non-activist	E	Arabic	22.12.2014	1 hour

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14	33	M	E	Single	Non-activist	E	Arabic	24.12.2014	1 hour
15	50	M	E	Married	Non-activist	Dual	Arabic	26.12.2014	1 hour
16	36	M	UK	Single	Non-activist	Dual	English	11.1.2015	1 hour
17	20	F	UK	Single	Non-activist	Dual	English	20.5.2015	1 hour

*Egyptian and British nationalities

** Egyptian British

Table 2: Ethnographic events [1]

Event	Location	Date
Rabaa - 1st anniversary march	The Egyptian embassy in London	16/8/2014
'Freedom and dignity to our people back home' event	The Egyptian embassy in London	21/10/2014

Biography

Rua Al-Sheikh is a PhD researcher in Media studies at the University of Bedfordshire, UK, expected to graduate in October 2017. She completed an MA in Cultural History, Memory and Identity from the University of Brighton, UK and a BA in Sociology and Media studies from the University of Sussex, UK. Her research interests include the Middle East, Diaspora, Egypt, Iraq, Egyptian revolution, the UK, identity, belonging, social media and mainstream media

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[1] The events above are attended by the researcher in order to observe protests organised by Egyptians in the UK.

A Re-Examination of the Cultural Resistance Orthodoxies within Scholarly Open access Communication

Gareth J Johnson

Abstract: *This paper presents a critical re-consideration of the problems in achieving a greater embrace of the praxis of open access (OA) to research publications within the UK academy. It offers an ideological critique of the underlying subversion of scholarly communication by an industrialised publishing sector. It also considers the ideological and financial drivers that have caused the emergence of an open access to research publications movement. Through examining this developing open access paradigm, it problematises aspects of the UK academy's reluctance to engage. While examining academics' imperative to disseminate research, through exploring the legacy publication model, it proposes that that the higher education policy landscape must also be accounted for, when considering engagement barriers. Hence, the paper concludes that the conditioning of academics by a neoliberal policy-saturated environment likely contributes to their reticence to embrace the praxis.*

Keywords: publishing, resistance, culture, open-access, academics

Introduction

This paper presents a critical re-examination of the perceived obstacles operating within the UK's academic culture to engaging with open access (OA) dissemination praxis. Drawing on broader research, it seeks to problematise and challenge some of the orthodoxies operating within academic publishing discourse over the past two decades.

The production and dissemination of academic research through legacy publication vectors has, like many communicative forms, been subject to digital disruption (Weller, 2011). This disruption has been exacerbated by the economic impacts of the serials crisis and institutional funding austerity (Hess & Ostrom, 2007; Wyness, 2010). At the same time efforts to shift the academy to more open forms of research communication have been met with practical reluctance and ideological resistance (Suber, 2012; Owens, 2012). This is despite considerable infrastructure investment, promotional efforts and moves to mandate OA dissemination (Science and Technology Committee, 2004; RSP, 2013; RCUK, 2014). Additionally, notwithstanding the arguable '*self-evident*' societal good that OA represents (BOAI, 2002) and the reported global academic community's intellectual willingness to engage (Rowlands & Nicholas, 2006), collectively British academic culture has been perceived to have lagged behind comparable nations (Finch, 2012).

Consequently this paper challenges the orthodox questioning of '*why haven't UK academics engaged with OA more?*' (Johnson, 2015), arguing that it becomes conceptually flawed in the light of the UK's neoliberal policy environment.

This environment has seen the reframing of research praxis within a neo-Taylorised discourse, and has resulted in ontological tensions between a Nemanian scholarly ideal and the extant neoliberal managerialised Higher Education (HE) praxis (Newman, 2014; Saunston and Morrish, 2011). Thus this paper contends that the question of academic openness becomes reconstructed as '*how has OA managed to make any impact within a marketised sector?*' It is to consider this neoliberal influence that the paper first turns.

1. Neoliberalisation of Higher Education

> A university training is the great ordinary means to a great but ordinary end; it aims at raising the intellectual tone of society…It is the education which gives a man a clear conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them and a force in urging them. (Newman, 2014, p.138)

Newman imagined the academy as a community of scholars engaging in critical thought and disinterested rationalised discourse, standing apart from society as one of civilisation's crowning jewels (Fillitz, 2000). Today, the modern research university has to juggle its role in creating workers for the developing knowledge economy and evolving itself to function within a neoliberal policy environment (Newfield, 2008). The traditional construct of a higher education is predicated on an ideology of social hope, that the next generation will become developed intellectually, socially, ethically and transformed into citizens who can readily engage in the betterment of a democratic society (Barnett, 2011; Williams, 2009). This lofty vision is an ideology which is perhaps less commonly embraced today than it was, with institutions more commonly configured in economic terms. For example, *Universities UK* states its vision of universities' roles as:

> ...an autonomous university sector in the United Kingdom that, through excellence in teaching, research, and knowledge exploitation, raises aspirations, has an international reputation for innovation, and contributes to the wider economy and society (UUK, 2013).

The Jarratt Report (1985) is usually cited as the instigating agency for this shift from Newmanian to neoliberally configured institutions. Although as Caffentizis and Federici (2007) argue, the university should represent much more than a glorified mechanised scholarly production-line creating educated worker drones and new knowledge. Drawing on Newman's (1982) construct of an ideal

institution, universities are also vital sites of genuine ideological and intellectual struggle, where the broader debates of society are addressed or challenged.

In an era before the 1980s' waves of marketisation, academic, not financial priorities, were paramount in universities' operating philosophies (Foskett, 2011). However, as a consequence of the increasing neoliberal competition for resources and students, they have had to reposition themselves as "*simulacra of business*" (Saunston and Morrish, 2011), with all the managerialism apparatus of appraisal, evaluation, and quality audits that this entails. Additionally, modern universities not only serve the nation's economy, but have also become organisations increasingly seeking to emulate business practices over their own traditions (Harvie, 2006). Notably, institutions such as Warwick and University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST) are often identified as harbingers of this movement (Barchiesi, 2009; De Angelis and Harvie, 2009). This neoliberalised environment also generates tensions within those disciplines, particularly the humanities and arts, which are not perceived as significantly contributing to the national economy (Preston, 2015). With its central role in academic praxis, it is unsurprising that scholarly publication is subject to these influences. Hence, before considering these recent impacts on academia, it is valuable to consider the historical rationale and functioning of research dissemination.

2. Academic Publishing Imperative

Since the 17th Century the academy has relied on the dissemination of research findings. For scholars this dissemination represents an essential aspect of their immaterial knowledge productive labour for a variety of reasons. They seek to propagate novel ideas and thought while engaging in peer discourse. Through participation in this discourse their work becomes subject to review by their peers, achieving a crucial measure of quality assurance. Functionally the accumulation of peer-prestige capital acquired through other scholars citing their publications, represents an essential career progression metric (Barassi, 2012; Fry et al, 2009). However, this particular metric aspect has arguably also evolved into a neo-Taylorist driver for the modern neoliberal HE institution (Slaughter & Rhodes, 2004), especially since the introduction of national research assessment exercises (Shaw 2013). It is not simply 'publish or perish', but rather 'publish high-quality, world class research or perish'. For academics, direct financial rewards remain only a minor publication incentive, with only a handful of particularly high-profile academics receiving any such recompense.

Publishers though, have long controlled the essential apparatus and vectors of distribution, as well as demanding exclusive economic intellectual property rights over published work. This places them into an unequalled Gramscian hegemonic dominant position (Jones, 2006) over the global HE

research landscape. Consequently, and especially during the 20th Century, this key facet of the HE environment became increasingly commodified, with toll-gate barriers erected to extract considerable revenues in return for permitting access (Lilley, 2012; Suber, 2012). Thus, as academics labour to produce novel research, they are situated in a subservient and arguably exploited power-relation as knowledge producers and consumers within the publishing domain.

Nevertheless this traditional, legacy publication system was constructed as a pre-internet *rivalrous* necessity, in that the physical collation, reproduction, and dissemination of journals and books required an infrastructure far outstretching that possessed by most institutions or learned societies (Weller, 2011). Understandably this function became increasingly centralised within what became a commercial academic publication industry, an industrialisation representing for institutions and scholars a practical saving in time and effort. At the same time, this signified a gradual shift in the extant power-relations in publishing away from the academy, centralising them also within the publishing industry. This, perhaps, suggests why in the wake of the possibilities presented by digital, *non-rivalrous* distribution, that the new forms of dissemination represent attractive possibilities, because of the potential to reconfigure this power imbalance. However, in the late 20th Century other tensions became reified, challenging this publishing hegemony.

3. Legacy Publishing and the Serials Crisis

While the opportunities presented by digital dissemination represented one spur towards a more open form of academic dissemination, other drivers existed. Most notably the economic impetus of the *serials crisis* rose to particular prominence in the late 1990s, although some suggest it had begun to manifest a decade earlier (Dames, 2012). Conceptually, the serials crisis centres on the disproportionate and continuing escalation of journal subscription costs, which rose at three times the retail price index during the period 1986-2010 (Science and Technology Committee, 2013), significantly faster than library budgets could accommodate (Hess & Ostrom, 2007). As publishers enjoyed profit margins closer to those in the illegal narcotics trade or petrochemical industry (Economist, 2013; Harvie et al, 2014) and subscription costs outstripped the ability of even wealthy institutions, the legacy publication model's legitimacy was challenged (Owens, 2012).

The impacts were amplified by the domination of the academic publishing market by a small number of actors. This was achieved through acquisitions of smaller publishers, mergers such as the Wiley-Blackwell amalgamation (Spilka & Handley, 2006) and the continued outsourcing of learned society publication. In accordance with the prevailing neoliberal ideology (Harvey, 2005), this marketised publication sector should ideally ensure completive pricing for the academy, but this is

not so. Within academic publication there is no like-for-like ability for academics to function as consumers and switch between journal brands. Simply put, publishing or reading for example the *Journal of Communication* is not functionally equivalent to doing the same in the *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, and thus access and subscriptions must be maintained. The crisis has been exacerbated by the illusion of abundance (Hess & Ostrom, 2007) and the isolation of academics from the true costs of publication. This isolation may in part be ascribed to the ability of academic libraries to successfully manage their budgets, trimming other expenditures. Moreover, the bundling of journal titles into package deals created a quantitative façade of plenty, although qualitatively questions as to the value of included titles should be highlighted. Additionally due to the nomenclature and associated discourse, the serial crisis was long perceived as a library concern rather than an academic one. Hence the academic community was positioned to be largely complacent and complicit with the legacy publication status quo.

However, in recent years the inability to access research publications began to cause greater problems for the academy. Learned societies found their operations threatened by the loss of revenue streams, as libraries increasingly cut niche titles to fund big package deals (Harington, 2014). This in turn represented a narrowing of publication destinations for scholars who work beyond the mainstream, particularly those outside the sciences. Furthermore, since the 1990s, libraries have continued to shift proportionally greater amounts of their operating capital to fund journal acquisitions. This has a deeper impact on the arts, humanities, and social science communities, as it has diminished the market for monographs. Since monograph publication is seen as an essential step on the career ladder for these scholars (Terras, 2014), and as publishers lose the incentive to commission them, early career researchers risk particular disenfranchisement from the academy and career progression.

Finally, the government's push to increase the proportion of secondary education school leavers who attend university, has resulted in over 40% of UK 18-21 year olds attending higher education in the current decade (Wyness, 2010). Yet this educated public becomes cut-off from continued engagement with scholarly discourse upon graduation, negating the potential societal benefits from this enlarged educated class (Gatti, 2014). Furthermore, given that much research conducted in Britain funded by the Research Councils draws from public taxation, the publishing industry seemingly denies the general populace access to publically funded work. While some such as Beall (2015) argue that this access is not a public right, it still remains a matter of concern for some (Gatti, 2014; Suber, 2012).

4. Challenges, Opportunities, and Benefits

> An old tradition and a new technology have converged to make possible an unprecedented public good. (BOAI, 2002)

It is therefore unsurprising that efforts would be expended to rectify this situation, and this was given form in challenging the publication status quo, seeking to bypass rent-control mechanisms and restrictive reader barriers through enabling OA to academic knowledge (Suber, 2012). Through taking advantage of emerging Internet based platforms and channels, it has become possible for scholars to make their work openly available to all, not only those able to afford the rental charges. OA arguably also represents a key component in the creation of a scholarly information commons, and presents a challenge to the publishing industries' property-based hegemony over academic information exchange (Hess & Ostrom, 2007; Eve, 2014a). The potential liberation of research publications from their control seems a globally attractive proposition. Yet this had not spread within the UK with the anticipated rapidity or evenness (Finch, 2012), despite significant governmental infrastructure resourcing for over a decade (Science and Technology Committee, 2004 and 2013).

Prior to the availability of the World Wide Web, OA was not easily achievable on a global scale. While some academic communities, notably the sciences, made use of electronic means to exchange papers, access was generally restricted to people within particular institutions or research communities. Today, while digital distribution has removed the physical and technological barriers, there still remain many legal, economic, practical, and cultural barriers to achieving wide-scale access. It must be acknowledged that OA represents a broad spectrum of concepts, including *open education*, *data* and *science* and even *access to knowledge*. While conceptual overlaps exist, there are considerable differences between the specific policies, praxis, and personalities within each area. For reasons of clarity, this paper focuses solely on OA to research publications, defined as material that is "digital, online, free of charge, and most copyright and licensing restrictions" (Suber, 2012, p. 4). Crucially, OA does not circumvent peer review while removing most access and usage barriers. Should this approach become a normative part of academic research praxis, it is possible to speculate that in the longer term it could engender a greater ethos of openness across the academy's operations.

Conceptually OA represents an unqualified public good with its offer of ungated access to knowledge, but it also confers benefits to the researching academic community. The increased visibility stemming from OA publications has been equated to increased citations, and hence

prestige capital, on numerous occasions, notably by Harnad & Brody (2004). It is reasonable to assume this is at the expense of citation levels for non-OA publications. Studies have also indicated that the sooner post-publication a work is made OA, the greater the impact it can achieve, leaving many to call for publisher policies to allow openness at the point of publication (Suber, 2012). However, as OA becomes a normative act it is reasonable to assume that this particular benefit will be reduced.

For libraries a longer term advantage is an anticipated reduction in the levels of journal subscription expenditure (Houghton & Swan, 2013; SPARC Europe, 2014). This benefit has yet to be realised, although limited overtures towards reducing subscription charges in return for article processing charge (APC) payments have recently been made (Research Information, 2014). The potential exists for the business community to also benefit, with many relying on developing academic intellectual outputs to bring novel products or services to market. Sequestering academic research behind toll-gates places it beyond the ability of many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to purchase. As a result they face a loss of profitability as efforts are expended duplicating research already conducted (Parsons, et al., 2011).

One final potential benefit is the widening of participation in and awareness of research beyond the academy (Fry *et al*., 2009). Societal benefits are however a contentious issue. Although a shift to a mass market HE means an increasingly university-educated populace, the strength of this 'public good' rationale is challenged in some quarters (Gatti, 2014).

5. Routes, Rights and Requirements

While OA may seem ideologically coherent to some observers, this is perhaps a reductionist view as different varieties exist. The two most recognisable routes are commonly differentiated as *gold* or *green* OA. While green has a longer history, gold is increasingly seen as the more desirable and sustainable form within the UK (Finch, 2012; Science and Technology Committee, 2013; RCUK, 2014). Gold 'OA publication', offers an alternative to legacy publication processes, references a practice whereby the final published version of a work is made accessible to all at the point of publication. While some larger commercial publishers levy APCs of around £2,000 (Finch, 2012), they are in the minority. Many purely OA titles, often run by university presses or disciplinary collectives, waive such charges, satisfying their operating costs through other routes (Eve, 2014b). Under a gold system, authors additionally benefit from a greater retention of their publication rights, although this varies between publishers. Gold has been criticised as too broad a notion, and one that is perceived significantly differently within the OA discourse. For example, a common

misconception is grouping hybrid and pure OA journal titles together under the gold banner, since functional and economic dissimilarities exist between them (Shieber, 2013). Fuchs and Sandoval (2013) suggest that the term *diamond OA* should be introduced to differentiate forms of gold that do not embrace the APC pay-to publish model, citing academic-run journals titles such as *tripleC*, *Ephemera* or the *Open Library of Humanities.* This would reserve gold to refer solely to titles employing APC fees. However, the term has yet to secure a strong resonance within publishing discourse.

The second route, known as *green OA* 'self-archiving', is the practice of academics or their surrogates, placing a version of their publications online via institutional or community websites (*repositories*). Green operates alongside legacy publishing, with the Physics *arXiv*[1] service often cited as its progenitor. The praxis of green OA has rested for years on the assumption that the author's final submitted article while intellectually functionally equivalent to the published entity is legally disparate, allowing its open dissemination. Despite over two decades of praxis, and the *Harnad-Oppenheim* solution supporting this interpretation (Oppenheim, 2014), some publishing industry figures continue to question its legitimacy. However, the lack of any significant legal action has underscored green's legitimacy, or at least anunwillingness from publishers to directly antagonise academics (Holcombe, 2013).

Functionally, OA also possess a level of granularity related to the permissible degrees of user rights, where the terms *gratis* or *libre* are employed (Suber, 2012). Gratis items are shorn of barriers of price, but any reuse still requires permission from rights' holders. Libre items also have the price barriers removed, but additionally are free of most copyright and licencing restrictions. Thus there are many degrees of libre OA, depending on the level and types of permitted rights. In part because of these greater freedoms and because it represents the further sundering of the links between research literature and proprietorial capitalist control, libre remains the OA movement's aspirational goal (Swan, 2012).

Policy has played a significant part in the evolution of OA within the UK, notably the role of *mandates* requiring academics to comply with ideas of openness. The introduction of mandates by funders has been espoused as potentially stimulating academics towards greater adoption of OA. *Institutional mandates* are policies variously enacted and enforced within individual universities, slowly growing in number (ROARMAP, 2014), although they continue to be regarded as enforced insufficiently to compel academics to engage with OA (Peekhaus, 2012). Research funders also make use of mandates, increasingly following the Finch (2012) report. These *funder mandates* have a greater impact that both expresses a policy position, yet also defines clear publication expectations

to be met by grant holders. In the wake of Finch's recommendation that all UK research should be available through OA (Hall, 2012) many major UK funders introduced requirements (RCUK, 2014; HEFCE, 2014), necessitating the open dissemination of work, arguably reducing the publication destination choices for academics. Publishers are also affected, as increasing numbers of mandates pressure them to revise their licence agreement terms to permit green self-archiving or make gold routes available – potentially risking a downturn in UK academics publishing in their titles. Given the UK's unilateral move towards a gold OA centric policy (Houghton & Swan, 2013), against a more hybrid green/gold approach in the rest of the world, this remains a problematic area.

OA's emergence can also be considered part of broader radical shifts in knowledge labour practice such as peer production, or the Access to Knowledge and Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) movements. These more socialised economic models (Benkler, 2006; Restakis, 2015), like OA, are impacting business and government practices (Moore & Karatzogianni, 2009). In common with the OA moment, these shifts largely originated autonomously within their respective practitioner communities, evolving community norms and arguably forming discrete cultures with disparate hierarchical contributor niches. But as Moore and Taylor (2009) discuss, the degree to which these have successfully realigned society's economic identities and regimes on the macroscale remains questionable. Yet even the most radical of these community members remain situated within capital's domain. An alternative social economy does exist, that opposes the neoliberal free market, driven by mutuality and reciprocity. However, as Restakis (2015) suggests, to operate it requires a pre-existing culture that has already normalised such mutually-beneficial ideological traits within society. If so, the peer production community's experiences suggest that an ideological radical, commons focussed form of OA faces a stiffer challenge to emerge successfully in the academy.

This relates to and validates Marx's construct of the persuasive power of capitalist domination, since knowledge has always been a social product, and one over which '*hegemonic battles over the power to rule and regulate'* will be contested (Vadén & Suoranta, 2009). This resonates within academic publishing with the rising number of mandates and funding for gold OA[2]. Rather than embracing the more radical ideas of creating a scholarly digital commons, their pragmatic formulation seems to propagate a continued capital domination over the realm. Thus, OA like other peer production activities risks becoming subverted.

6. Higher Education Praxis and Resistance

> Academic authors currently lack sufficient motivation to self–archive in institutional repositories. (Science and Technology Committee, 2004, p. 59)

With such pressures and opportunities it seems that the progression towards OA praxis would be inevitable. Yet this paper began by outlining two key points, that OA is not being holistically engaged with by UK academics, and that the evolving world of academic publication is situated within a neoliberal policy culture. It is understandable given the 2010-2015 coalition government's pro-business agenda, and the significant publisher representation on the Finch Committee (Finch, 2012), that policies driving the evolution of academic dissemination would be formed in a manner conducive to maintaining the publishing industry's economic well-being. This despite the understanding that a transition to a purely APC-based gold model will do little in the short-to-medium term to alleviate HE's costs, and will actually increase the fiscal pressure on universities during a transition period of uncertain length (Houghton and Swan, 2013).

Nevertheless, despite the orthodox presentation of OA as an inarguable public good, pockets of engagement (Johnson, 2015) and an espoused intellectual willingness to engage (Rowlands & Nicholas, 2006; Fry et al, 2009), its praxis remains far from being a normative function within the UK academy (Finch, 2012). This is despite extensive efforts by activists (RSP, 2013) to advocate to and engage with the community and the emergence of mandates. Perhaps, with the UK academy's shift over the past three decades away from liberal collegiality towards a marketised neoliberal operational ethos, it perhaps comes as little surprise that academics have not wholeheartedly embraced an open ideology. Where competition, individualism, and the quest for capital underlies every moment, perhaps we should celebrate that given these cultural obstacles that OA's progression has occurred at all.

While it may seem that the morphogenesis of OA is at the mercy of a governmentally driven neoliberal policy environment, it must be remembered that it is the academics themselves who remain at the centre of the web of possibilities. The orthodox obstacles to OA achieving a greater impact within the academy are generally ascribed to issues of labour, process, and opportunity (Fry et al., 2009; Finch, 2012). The community's apathy, antipathy, or anticipation for OA praxis may be influenced by actors within the academy, and those such as publishers, funders, and learned societies external to it (Johnson, 2015). Nevertheless, as immaterial knowledge labourers, academics have long controlled the means of production, quality assurance and, increasingly, through digital technologies the dissemination vectors too (Eve, 2014b). Hence it is not

unreasonable to consider that the biggest obstacle to embracing OA praxis is not one of process or policy, but is reified through the cultural disposition of the academic community itself. Ultimately it is solely the academics whose responses will determine OA's long term success.

Conclusion

Prior work to overcome OA engagement problems usually situates solutions within an envelope of technological determinism, through software solutions, or through neo-Taylorist approaches compelling academics to achieve change (Harnad, 2014; Zhang, 2015). The epistemological and ontological roots of academic cultural inertia receive little consideration. Hence, the author has sought to problematise this environment through an ethnographically framed ideological critique of academic scholarly communication paradigms. Through this he seeks to better understand the basal causation for academy's disengagement. Early results suggest that awareness and comprehension of issues around OA dissemination remain generally low, although pockets of encouraging engagement are reported (Johnson, 2015). At the same time a shift towards a more pragmatic, less idealistic, OA movement has been exposed. This is perhaps not an unexpected consequence of the linking of research incomes with OA funder mandated requirements. This research will further contextualise the veracity of the commonly perceived barriers, via engaging with academics and other scholarly communication actors. It is hoped that this may also reveal some obfuscated cultural narratives existing within modern day academic publication praxis.

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Biography
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[1] The arXiv Physics Pre-Print Server, http://arxiv.org/
[2] 2012 announcement from the RCUK of the block grant to fund gold APCs for the UK HE sector
http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/media/news/121108/

Dynamics of news selection in different socio-cultural context:

Theoretical and methodological issues

Andreas Anastasiou

Abstract: *This paper tackles theoretical and methodological issues of a comparative research in three countries of different journalistic cultures (UK, Sweden and Greece) that contributes to an explanation of news judgement, called 'journalistic gut feeling' by journalists, as implemented in varying social contexts. A thesis of this investigation is that the combined consideration of the theoretical domains of news values, news practice and journalistic professionalism is required so that an adequate explanation of the dynamics of news evaluation is produced. The theoretical approach adopted is Bourdieu's 'field' perspective as applied in journalism research by Benson, while the methodological one is a comparative, mixed methods design that pays attention to contextual factors, drawing on suggestions by Bryman, Hantrais and Hanitzsch. The methods applied are a questionnaire survey of journalists and focus groups simulating editorial meetings.*

Introduction: Aims and contribution

Since the dawn of the twenty-first century scholars writing on news production use terms such as: new era, new environment, new revisionism, new paradigm, new conditions, new challenges, reconsideration, rethinking, reinterpretation, revisiting, restructuring and the like. Cottle (2000, p.21) suggested that there was a demand for a "second wave of news ethnography", because the "theoretical orthodoxies", produced by the first one of the nineteen seventies and eighties, had been "out of touch with today's [news] production practices". Several researchers (Matthews, 2010; Willig, 2013; Usher, 2014) situate their works within that "second wave", though not denying that the "golden age of newsroom ethnography […] has stood the test of time because these works so accurately identify forces that still order newswork" (Usher, 2014, pp.21-22). So, although "social theory continues to provide the necessary theoretical and conceptual framework", Cottle (2000, p.21) suggests that "these must be tested empirically".

It is context, therefore, that the present investigation places at the core of its attention; the manner in which the social, political, economic, cultural, technological or other conditions contribute to shaping the ideas behind, and processes of, news selection. Moreover it is a comparative approach that is being followed so that the context variable is effectively distinguished, as the investigation

takes place in three countries- UK, Sweden, and Greece, representing different media cultures (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Hallin and Mancini (2004) identified varying *patterns* of journalistic ideology and practice, largely related to the context that was dominant in countries of similar (western) political systems, but with a different mix of conditions prevailing over the role of media in politics and the status of journalists in society. Limitations of Hallin and Mancini's (2004) theory are acknowledged by the authors, in their original and subsequent works (2012a; 2012b), and they are suggested in various scholars' critical reviews of their approach (Hanitzsch, 2009; Couldry and Hepp, 2012; Esser and Hanitzsch, 2012; Humphreys, 2012; Hanitzsch and Donsbach, 2012; Hardy, 2012; Brüggemann et al, 2014). This notwithstanding, I argue that making use of their typology is still helpful and does not compromise the framework of my research design or the purpose of this investigation. That purpose is to seek empirical evidence on the following: (1) Whether the ongoing transformations in the socio-political environment of the countries studied have significantly affected the prevailing journalistic culture prevailing in each of them; (2) How similar or different decision-making processes and factors of newsworthiness are in the context of each country's journalistic environment. The latter has been suggested by Hallin and Mancini (2004, p.303), who indicate that "[t]here is a need […] for comparative data […] that would show differences or similarities in news selection criteria [and] conventions of presentation".

1. Comparing journalism: Beyond Hallin and Mancini

Hallin and Mancini's self-criticism has also been considered, with respect to factors not covered by their study, such as the factor of *power,* on which they recommend further theoretical analysis: "research that systematically addresses issues of media and power in a comparative way is almost totally lacking" (2004, p.294). The findings of the present investigation, therefore, are complementary to Hallin and Mancini's theory, or they suggest some departure from that, especially because their approach to politics does not extend further from a criticism of differentiation theory, which "is generally concerned with relations among social institutions, not among agents of social interests" (2004, p.82).

My empirical research seeks to uncover relationships between media ownership (or media influence by other agents of economic interest) and the decision-making logic of journalists (Hanitzsch, 2009). Analytical approaches helping the quest for such a mix of contextual factors are: Bourdieu's (1998) 'field' perspective, the 'societal' approach of comparative methodological design adopted by Hantrais (1999), and Hanitzsch's (2007) 'de-construction' of journalistic culture. These three approaches are used together and lead to bridging the analytical gap between macro and micro social accounts; i.e. to co-examining examine the role of internal and external to the newsroom− factors in

the process of news selection. Hanitzsch (2007) has offered an appropriate thread connecting conceptual and methodological views of comparative journalism research. He suggests a de-construction of the culture of news production into "three essential constituents (institutional roles, epistemologies, and ethical ideologies), further divided into seven principal dimensions: interventionism, power distance, market orientation, objectivism, empiricism, relativism, and idealism" (Hanitzsch, 2007, p.371; Table 1). Hanitzsch's (p.380) suggestion of the specific constituents and their dimensions is made on both actual and normative grounds, and relates to the "essential shared values" that according to Elliott (1988, p.30) "give journalists a group identity", or according to Keeble (2005, p.55) facilitate the construction of a "collective conscience for the profession". It thus offers useful analytical instruments useful in for building the research design of this project, including the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the idea of 'power'. Hanitzsch (2007, pp.373-374) refers to the dimension of 'power distance', explaining it as "the journalist's position toward loci of power in society", where on the one end one finds the 'adversary' pole and on the other one the 'loyal' pole; the former matching the 'watchdog' role of the press (scrutinising and criticising authorities), and the latter that of a 'propagandist' or 'agitator' of dominant (or hegemonic) ideas, who is openly or implicitly serving "as an ideological state apparatus in an Althusserian sense" (Hanitzsch, p.374).

Table 1: Deconstructing Journalism Culture

Institutional Roles			Epistemologies		Ethical Ideologies	
Interventionism	Power Distance	Market Orientation	Objectivism	Empiricism	Relativism	Idealism
Intervention (+)	Adversarial (+)	Consumers (+)	Correspondence (+)	Empirical (+)	Contextual (+)	Means (+)
Passive (-)	Loyal (-)	Citizens (-)	Subjectivity (-)	Analytical (-)	Universal (-)	Outcome (-)

Source: Hanitzsch, 2007, p.371

2. News selection: Conceptualising the 'meso' level

Explanations of news selection or news production make use of various perspectives, ranging from the 'gatekeeping' tradition that places a great decision-making weight on individual journalists (White, 1950; Shoemaker, Vos and Reese, 2009), to pure political economic ones that view external factors only as determinants of newsroom logic (Herman and Chomsky, 1998; Murdock and Golding, 2005). Between the two, classic works of newsroom ethnography suggest that the dynamics shaping journalistic practice and leading news judgement may rather be explained by use of a mix of factors, internal and external to the newsroom, the former including a set of routines along with a ritualised

occupational culture or 'ideology', and the latter including influences exercised from the side of political, economic and cultural forces of society (Schudson, 1989; 2005a; Cottle, 2003; Becker and Vlad, 2009; Schudson and Anderson, 2009). In the area of news selection, all three above approaches can be observed.

The 'classics' Galtung and Ruge (1965), and Harcup and O'Neill (2001) tend to adopt a gatekeeping view. Rosengren (1974), and Golding and Elliott (1979) place more weight on external economic and political factors. Westerståhl and Johansson (1994), and Allern (2002) follow intermediate – though not identical – routes, considering both internal (technical) and external (ideological and economic) factors. The present study examines the mix of internal and external factors comprising the environment or 'context' of news evaluation in each of the three countries investigated, and the way this context interferes in the journalists' news judgement. In doing so, appropriate theoretical spectra and methodological tools are adopted, meeting the need of examining the dynamics impacting on journalists, as this is assessed not at a micro (individual news outlet) or macro (societal) level, but at a meso one; the level of the journalistic 'field' as a whole (Bourdieu, 1998). This particular analytical approach, suggested by Bourdieu (1998) and complemented by Benson (1999; 2006; 2013), is deemed to provide the appropriate level of analysis for a combined consideration of internal and external factors.

As the micro perspective tends to theoretically understate and methodologically ignore the role of wider societal factors, while the macro perspective tends to overlook the role of individuals or organisations, the meso perspective brings the two together and studies their relationship and interaction by examining the institutional or interorganisational level (Benson, 2005, p.11; Benson, 2004, p.280). The journalistic field, according to Bourdieu (1998, p.39), "is a microcosm with its own laws, defined both by its position in the world at large and by the attractions and repulsions to which it is subject from other such microcosms". Bourdieu (Ibid.) clarifies that, by referring to 'own laws', to 'independence' and 'autonomy' of the field, he means that "what happens in it cannot be understood by looking *only* [my emphasis] at external factors". Other authors suggesting the field perspective are cautious too with the use of the term 'autonomy', and clarify that this should by no means be perceived as an absolute property of a field. This idea of relative autonomy suits the objective of the present investigation, which aims to relate journalistic professionalism to the process of news selection. The degree of autonomy present can be an indicator of the level of professionalism. In the context of this research project, journalistic autonomy is assessed while the process of news selection is empirically investigated, but also the concept of autonomy is theoretically considered and studied, in order for the factors and dynamics of news selection to be understood and explained.

A word of caution is necessary here. Using field approach as an analytical tool does not imply that the journalistic field in any given country is conceived as unitary nor that a unitary logic, professional culture, and set of rules, forms or routines are believed to govern journalistic practice. One may refer to 'national culture', which, according to Benson (2013, p.33), "is best understood as a 'repertoire' of logics, with some more dominant than others". In the same way, the journalistic field – as a cultural intermediary- reflects such a 'repertoire' of logics. Nevertheless, Benson argues that "[a]lthough any given field features multiple logics of practice, the dominant field logic is evident in the most commonly shared 'form' of news that provides a template for the reporting, writing, and presentation of news" (2013, p.196). On the one hand, that is, Benson posits that "the [field] system is not of a piece" (2013, p.142), and on the other that "the nation-state clearly remains an important demarcator of difference" (2013, pp.188-199). This is considered in the empirical part of this study, where external influences on the journalistic field are traced, as are internal variation and exceptions. In short: though by no means it is claimed that there exists a singular journalistic culture- even within a country, it is underscored that varying conceptions of rules and principles, and varying patterns of journalistic practice are indeed observed in different countries or regions, the source of their differences being "the societal structural configuration of fields that regulate, fund, and provide normative legitimation of distinctive journalistic practices" (2013, p.23). However, ultimately, this is one of the points being empirically assessed in this investigation.

The field perspective is not taken as a distinct theory of journalism, but rather as "a research tool, the main function of which is to enable the scientific construction of social objects" (Bourdieu, 2005, p.30). Benson (2013, p.195) adds that the field model is not offered "in opposition to the standard sociology of news but rather as a more comprehensive or 'ample' framework for research". Benson (Ibid.) also draws an analogy between field perspective and Gramscian hegemony by accepting that they share "the same critical engagement" about "how media often serve to reinforce dominant systems of power". However, he suggests an additional advantage of the field framework, which is that it pays "closer attention to distinctions in forms of power" (Ibid.). This last point is also of interest for the present research project, investigating the role of different types of power in the process of news selection, as implemented in different cultural (national) contexts. Power is conceptualised as the influence of the fields of politics, economics and culture on the field of journalism; that is, as the degree of delimiting the autonomy of the journalistic field that is. Moreover, it is operationalised as selection and framing criteria in the process of news production, as they relate to external (to the newsroom) forces: ownership, advertisers, corporate actors, politicians, audience / wider public (in the sense of a dominant culture, containing ideological features).

The use of 'field theory' as an analytical 'tool' implies viewing the field of journalism as a set of individuals and organisations (diverse but, on the aggregate, forming a prevalent culture); also as well as a subset within a larger set of social actors (individual, organisational and institutional) interacting with each other under different capacities and with different degrees of influence on other actors. Such a theoretical view is methodologically expressed by a research design studying journalists both as individuals and as units of larger groups (organisations; institutions; society). This research design follows the logic of a comparative approach, ensuring that the investigative tools used are appropriate for considering contextual differences and assessing their impact on the practice of journalism.

3.   Methodological instruments

Bourdieu's 'field theory', referring to the relationship between the fields of journalism and power, can fruitfully be combined with Hantrais's (1995) societal approach of comparative methodology, focusing on the relationship between the micro and the macro. It can also be combined with Hanitzsch's (2007) model of 'deconstructing journalistic culture', involving –among others - considerations of context and the distance (or relationship) between journalists and centres of power. The link that connects these theoretical and methodological approaches and shapes an integrated framework for the investigation and the interpretation of its findings is the inter-organisational perspective informing the research design of the present project. The research instruments employed, a survey via questionnaire and a set of focused discussions simulating editorial meetings, are built on the adoption of research questions tracing the factors that determine: (1) the newsworthiness (publishability) of 'events' as this is understood by journalists; (2) the process through which these factors are assessed, and (3) possible exceptions to the application of the relevant rules and criteria usually at play. Additionally, to form a foundation framework leading to a better understanding of the concept of newsworthiness and the process of news selection, this investigation touches upon the normative aspect of journalists' conception of their main role and mission in society (to report fully and truthfully as accepted in theory). It also seeks answers concerning what factors facilitate or hinder the implementation of such a mission.

The main (overriding) research question of this paper is: How does socio-cultural context impact journalists' decision on news selection and evaluation? In order to establish an answer to this research question, two sets of secondary (partial) questions are asked; one set aiming to correlate factors, thus serving the quantitative requirements of this - combined method s- investigation, and one aiming to explain processes, thus serving the qualitative ones. The quantitative component comprises the following research sub-questions: (1) What are the main criteria of newsworthiness (publishability)? (2) What factors can make a newsworthy event (complying with the above mentioned

criteria) not be published (in compliance with the above mentioned criteria)? (3) What factors can lead to publishing a news story despite its non-compliance with the widely accepted criteria of newsworthiness? (4) What factors, other than newsworthiness, are at play in news selection/treatment? (5) What is the main mission of journalists? (6) What factors can override the main mission of journalists? The qualitative component seeks answers to the following questions: (1) How is a degree of newsworthiness assigned to events? (2) How are events / news stories classed and evaluated in practice? (3) How 'close' to (political or financial) centres (or actors) of power are journalists? (4) How does such 'proximity' impact on the news selection process? (5) How are journalists constrained or challenged in fulfilling their mission?

4. Quantitative component: Survey via questionnaire

Of the above mentioned research sub-questions, corresponding to the quantitative component of the investigation, sub-questions one to four are approached through the section of the questionnaire referring to the theme of newsworthiness. Research sub-questions five and six, are assessed through the section referring to journalistic professionalism. The options for factors of newsworthiness included in the questionnaire have been grouped in units of fairly similar meaning, so they correspond to factors most widely suggested in the literature. Data retrieved via the questionnaires produce indications leading to the assessment of journalists' sense of their own 'autonomy' (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, p.14); leading also to the assessment of other components of journalistic professionalism or of the institutional roles of journalists as they perceive their occupational culture, and as the latter is 'deconstructed' by Hanitzsch (2007, p.371).

The population of interest in this investigation consists of the entire body of professional journalists in the United Kingdom, Sweden and Greece; the 'professional journalists' being defined as the regular members of the journalists' unions in the three countries. The sample of the survey is established by contacting the whole of the population, after ensuring the practical support of journalists' unions for that purpose. The technique applied allows for obtaining a random and representative sample, while the sample size allows for classification of the results according to sub-categories in which the respondents belong to; such as: (1) years in the job; (2) type of media they work for; and (3) personal political stance. The questionnaire is concluded with an invitation for participation in the qualitative part of the investigation, so that participants for the simulation meetings are recruited.

5.   Qualitative component: Simulation of editorial meeting

To generate data supporting inferences regarding the process of news selection, the research method applied is a set of group discussions simulating regular editorial meetings of a newspaper. Media-related qualitative research, involving focused group discussions, was conducted and explained in literature by the Glasgow Media Group (GMG) (Eldridge, 1993; Philo, 1993; Kitzinger, 1993). The latter suggested a 'news game', elements of which are also utilised in the present investigation. These elements refer to participants selecting from several alternative photographic captions or being asked to produce their own ones. In the present investigation, participants are asked to choose between alternative headlines to suit the news stories discussed. The difference between GMG's 'news game' and this project's is that the former investigated the audience's understanding of the news, while the latter investigates the professional journalists' criteria for the selection and evaluation of news items.

The focus group discussions are simulations of editorial meetings, during which the process of news selection, evaluation and framing is observed. Participants are given a pool of artificial –but realistic and timely - events, and are asked to decide on each one's suitability for publishing, evaluation of the degree of prominence they deserve; also on the headline that best suits each of the publishable ones. Each of the participants plays the role of a section head representing a different newsbeat: (1) internal politics; (2) foreign news; (3) economy; (4) social issues. Summaries of ten potential news stories (events) for each beat are distributed to the participants. Each participant has to discard five and select five for publication. Out of the five selected, one is evaluated as the top story of the beat, which is to be mentioned on the front page of the newspaper. Out of the four top stories, the section heads discuss and select the main story of the newspaper. Each newsbeat head also has to decide on the headline to be used in each of the stories selected for their section of the newspaper; the selection is made among four given options, but a fifth, open one, is also available. In this way: (1) the initial stage, of choosing five stories, produces indications of the way participants judge the newsworthiness of the stories; (2) the second stage, of selecting one top story for the newsbeat and then one for the front page, produces indications of how the prominence of stories is decided; (3) the third stage, of assigning headlines to stories, produces indications of the logic journalists frame the stories.

Data generated in the way described above is used to answer the first and second qualitative research sub-questions, referring to degrees of newsworthiness and criteria of evaluation. Data used to answer the remaining three sub-questions, about non-journalistic factors potentially influencing the process of news selection – especially the role of various power centres - is gathered through the discussion during which the editors are supporting their choices or are challenging the choices of

colleagues. The researcher prepares the news items used for the experiment, also the available headlines. This is done in a way that, firstly, they reflect various news dimensions, so that light is shed on the journalists' logic of newsworthiness. Secondly, they can be associated to the dimensions of journalistic culture suggested by Hanitzsch (2007, p.371; Table 1), so that a contextual correlation is made between the participants' perception of journalistic professionalism and their views regarding newsworthiness. Thirdly, they facilitate discussion by providing challenging cases that lead to making inferences about the distance of journalists from loci of power, as well as about possible constraints they face during their news selection routine.

6. Analysis and limitations

Discussion and analysis of the quantitative and qualitative components of this combined methodology investigation is integrated. The correlation of all partial answers of the two sets of sub-questions, produces inferences that lead to answering the main research question of this investigation. The analysis thus produces evidence regarding views of the participants: (1) on journalistic professionalism and news factors; (2) on the relationship of journalists to agents of power, as well as on the normatively desired and actual degree of journalistic autonomy from such power loci; (3) on the role of internal and external to the newsroom factors influencing the process of news selection. The findings on these areas are studied separately for each country, and then the patterns and thematic analyses for each of them are compared, so that the impact of context on the dynamics of news selection is finally assessed. To ensure that the analysis serves the aim of for corresponding to a meso- or interorganisational (field) perspective, factors such as type of media outlet the respondents work for, years on the job, and personal socio-political views are correlated to their views on journalistic professionalism and news values. In this way, the impact of field logic is assessed, as opposed to that of individual views or rules applying in particular organisations, and to a possible direct impact of wider societal forces and dynamics.

Limitations of this investigation are: (1) Bias of self-selection resulting in imperfect randomness and representativeness of the sample. This is addressed by an over-recruitment of participants. (2) The artificiality of the environment and conditions in the simulation of editorial meetings. This is addressed by posing that there is hardly any non-artificial research case, since the presence of the researcher can be viewed as influencing even the most 'natural' ethnographic observation. (3) Selecting the participants of the focus groups among survey respondents (who know the logic of the investigation) entails the risk of conditioning them, so they are less spontaneous during the editorial meeting simulation process. This is understood; yet, deemed to be preferable to other ways of recruitment, because utilisation of a large base for a –random and stratified- selection is

possible. By acknowledging such a limitation, an effort to minimise its potential cost is made, in the form of: a) using different wording for survey and focus group; b) placing emphasis on describing processes rather than selecting factors, which is the case in the quantitative part; c) creating an –as typical and routine as possible- atmosphere of a real editorial meeting.

Concluding remarks

The combined discussion of quantitative and qualitative approaches of this investigation serves as a 'bridge' between the micro- and macro- levels of analysis. The survey findings draw a picture of the aggregate (prevalent), which is then related to the particular (anecdotal) that is produced through the focus groups. Given that the participants in both components of the investigation are diverse, representing a variety of media outlets (which, in turn, represent a wide range of media types) the overall journalistic culture is reflected in the findings. Given, also, that the (survey and focus group) questions specifically ask about factors and forces influencing the logic of news selection, the investigation produces indications of the participants' perception on such influences. Finally, although the subjects of this investigation are individual journalists, the meso- or inter-organisational level is still studied, given that the units of analysis are the aggregate for the survey and the whole group for the focus group discussions.

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Biography

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