Journalism Research

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Editorial

Relying on interviews with journalists and founders of German News-start-ups our authors Alexa Keinert, Annett Heft and Leyla Dogruel identified four trends in future journalism. One of them is: The illusion of objective journalism is replaced by journalism with attitude. The experts also think that the funding of professional journalism must increasingly come from civil society.

In the historical paper Gerret von Nordheim highlights Gandhis understanding of journalism. As a publisher and deskman, he developed – and followed – ethical principles that even today, 150 years after Gandhi's birth, give us cause to reflect. One of his maxims was absolute proximity to the reader.

Although photojournalistic images have long been an elementary part of journalistic media, communication science has always been guilty of neglecting research into the actors and structures of photojournalism. Felix Koltermann is absolutely convinced of this in his essay.

Werner D'Inka, one of the publishers of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (*FAZ*), observes that the first person form is becoming more prevalent, especially in reportage journalism. Potential causes include the media transformation, a change in the way journalists see their role, and erosion of the credibility of established media. But D'Inka is sure: The first person has no business in journalism – apart form a few exceptions.

What do you think? Are there cases where the personal form can or even has to be used in journalism? You can leave your comments directly under the papers, the essay, and the debate pieces, or send us an email at redaktion@journalistik. online.

We are also always pleased to receive topic suggestions, offers of manuscripts, and critique. Discussion is the lifeblood of academia.

And why not follow *Journalistik* on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/journalistik.online/

One last comment on our own behalf: We are happy to welcome Martina Thiele in our editorial board, after Petra Herczeg had left to our regret. A short vita of our new editor is on our website.

Paper

Alexa Keinert / Annett Heft / Leyla Dogruel

How do news entrepreneurs view the future of their profession?

Four theses on tomorrow's journalism

Abstract: **In view of fundamental transformations in the media landscape, the future of professional journalism is not only debated among communication scholars but also among journalists and media professionals. Relying on interviews with journalists and founders of German news start-ups, we contribute to this debate and present news entrepreneurs' perceptions on (1) the core functions of journalism in the future and (2) trends regarding journalism concepts, organisational forms, and revenue models of professional journalism. Based on our findings, four trends can be identified: (1) Professional journalism must focus on comprehensively investigated ›good stories‹. (2) The illusion of objective journalism is replaced by journalism with attitude. (3) Collaboration is the future organisational form in journalism. (4) The funding of professional journalism must increasingly come from civil society.**

In view of the transformation of journalistic content production, distribution, and reception, the question of how the future of professional journalism can be shaped is not only a matter of communication science research (e.g. Buschow 2018; Van der Haak/Parks/Castells 2012). The challenges for professional journalism are also extensively addressed in the industry itself – as a thematic focus in newspapers[1], symposia[2], and opinion pieces[3] (e.g. Ehl/Urner 2017). Even though

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1 For example, the series »Zeitenwechsel« of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*: https://www.sueddeutsche.de/thema/Zukunft_des_Journalismus (02.10.2018)
2 Most recently by Netzwerk Recherche on the subject of »Journalism? Not for nothing«: https://netzwerk-recherche.org/termine/konferenzen/fachkonferenzen/journalismus-nicht-umsonst/ (02.10.2018)
3 The direct quotations of the interviews were translated and partly syntactically changed in order to facilitate a good reading flow. Larger omissions, however, are marked. All interviewees have agreed to a non-anonymous presentation of the results. Quotations were accepted by the interviewees, if desired

it is generally undisputed that journalism and its functions are indispensable for society (Haas 2010; Jarren 2008, 2015), the current transformations raise the question of whether a future for journalism, as it has been practiced so far (Picard 2014; Weischenberg 2018), still exists and how professional journalism can and will be able to sustainably position itself in hybrid and digital media environments. With a view on digital news journalism, we want to contribute to this debate by describing and condensing perspectives on the future of journalism by news entrepreneurs as ›pioneers of the industry‹ (Hepp/Loosen 2018; Ruotsalainen/Villi 2018) and by contextualising them with regard to current scientific literature. Our analysis focuses on the following questions:

1. According to the news entrepreneurs interviewed, which *functions* of professional news journalism will remain (or become) central in the future?
2. Which (new) *journalism concepts, organisational forms,* and *revenue models* do news entrepreneurs see as future trends?

In the course of digitalisation and the emergence of what has been called a »networked public sphere« (Benkler 2006: 11) with the possibilities of (direct) digital distribution of content, new journalistic offerings have developed in the form of journalistic start-ups which are testing alternative forms of financing, organisation, and offerings (Achtenhagen 2017). Thus, they consolidate and expand journalistic practices concurrently (Carlson/Usher 2016). In reference to Ruotsalainen and Villi (2018), we understand news entrepreneurs as both journalists and entrepreneurs who

1. are active in a journalistic start-up that reacts to the current challenges of journalism,
2. realise a special form of journalism (whether regarding functions, concepts, or forms of organisation), and
3. test revenue models beyond classical advertising.

In their role as innovators in the industry, news entrepreneurs seem particularly suited to answer questions about the future of professional journalism (Carlson/Usher 2016; Hepp/Loosen 2019).

In approaching the question of future functions, concepts, organisation and financing of journalism, we will first review the research on developments and trends in journalism. After a brief description of our interviews with journalists and founders of 12 ›digital-only‹ journalistic start-ups, we look at how they perceive the role of professional journalism in digital and hybrid media environments, what concepts and organisational forms they use to position themselves in these environments, and what ideas they have about future revenue models for journalism. The assessments and perceptions of these journalists and entrepreneurs are particularly insightful in the current transformation phase of the industry, since, according to Usher (2017), they reveal the nature of future journalism. The aim of this article is to systematise and analyse the opinions of

the practitioners interviewed in this study on the question of the future of journalism and to work out central trends as points of reference for both an academic and a socio-political debate.

The following article is based on the semi-structured, in-depth interviews and document analyses that were undertaken as part of a project that investigates the professional autonomy of news entrepreneurs. The project results regarding the autonomy perceived by founders and journalists on professional norms and values, procedural and organisational self-determination, and independence from external influences are published in Heft und Dogruel (2019).

Challenges for professional journalism

In addition to economic aspects (Buschow 2018; Lobigs 2018), the discourse on current challenges for journalism particularly focuses on questions about the quality of professional journalism and its identity (Neuberger 2018; Papacharissi 2015; Weischenberg 2018). In view of the restructuring of editorial offices and cost-cutting measures (Puppis/Künzler/Jarren 2012) resulting in accelerated work processes and higher workload, the dissolution of boundaries, de-professionalisation, and more precarious working conditions in the journalistic field in Germany are diagnosed (Steindl/Lauerer/Hanitzsch 2017). These developments can be seen as problematic for high-quality and in-depth reporting. How journalism can maintain its identity and, at the same time, develop further in the face of dwindling boundaries between media and formats and between different actors and the logics of different functional systems is described as a »tightrope walk« (Neuberger 2018: 38, own translation).

Especially against the background of an increasing supply of media information and a new »information, communication and mediation industry« (Jarren 2015: 115), a growing need for the provision of classification, context, and background is seen and stressed as a unique selling point of journalism (Novy 2013). Self-observation of society and the provision of reliable information, analyses, and classification for the benefit of all are regarded as central functions of professional journalism and in digital media environments (Van der Haak/Parks/Castells 2012).

Diverse concepts and new forms of organisation are discussed in this regard. Forms of networked journalism in which the necessity of cooperation with other professions, as well as with citizens, is emphasised for the collection, examination, and enrichment of information (Van der Haak/Parks/Castells 2012); here, the figurative tightrope walk becomes particularly vivid. Other concepts include collaborative cross-border journalism, which gets its strength from the cross-border bundling of competencies and resources for the purpose of more diverse

and high-quality reporting (Alfter 2016), especially in cost-intensive areas, such as investigative journalism (Sambrook 2018). In addition, ›point of view journalism‹ (journalism with a distinct perspective) is debated. It is argued that instead of insisting on (unattainable) objectivity, it is more important and expedient to focus on transparency and formats that convey a multitude of perspectives (Van der Haak/Parks/Castells 2012). The concept of constructive journalism as a reporting style is controversially discussed regarding the extent to which it could increase the public value of media (Beiler/Krüger 2018; Mast/Coesemans/Temmerman 2019). Other approaches emphasise new ways and spaces of collaborative storytelling as the expression of novel forms of news production in hybrid platforms in which affect and subjectivity play a greater role (Papacharissi 2015). In view of this differentiation of professional journalism and with a view to its identity, Jarren (2015: 121) has argued that the various »journalisms«, i.e. the various new forms and concepts of journalism, should be seen as gains to be analysed and understood.

In addition to the struggle for professional quality and the identity of journalism, its financing is a central issue. The long-successful revenue model of journalism, cross-subsidisation from the advertising market in addition to direct revenues from subscriptions and newspaper sales, is in crisis. This is caused by both declining advertising revenues due to the entry of competing online intermediaries, whose business models dominate the advertising markets, and readers' reluctance to pay for online news in conjunction with the early strategy of media brands offering their online content free of charge (Wenzlaff 2013; Lobigs 2018). Here, too, the industry and research expect news entrepreneurs to provide important impulses on how to deal with the challenges of financing journalism (Vos/Singer 2016).

While established online media providers continue to rely predominantly on a combination of advertising and direct revenues in the form of paywalls (Kansky 2015), news entrepreneurs in particular have new revenue concepts that include foundation-financed models, large-scale donations by individual ›patrons‹, individual donations (crowdfunding), membership fees, or micropayments for individual content (Aitamurto 2011; Wenzlaff 2013). The extent to which such alternative forms of income offer an opportunity for journalism is controversial – as the debate about endowment funds as a ›third way‹ of financing the institution of journalism (Kiefer 2011) shows. Existing analyses indicate that such alternative financing models hardly offer a viable economic basis for journalism (Lobigs 2018) and that there are reservations about public or foundation-based financing of journalism (Russ-Mohl 2011; Stöber 2011; Weischenberg 2018). Particularly with regard to the independence of journalism, it is unclear (Porlezza/Splendore 2016; Vos/Singer 2016) which revenue models will be established and viable alongside the classic model of cross-financing from advertising and user fees.

News Entrepreneurs as new actors in the journalism ecosystem

As a »source of hope« (Vos/Singer 2016: 143) in dealing with these challenges, news entrepreneurs have positioned themselves as pioneers in their industry. They are particularly important because they are often seen as the driving forces that could revitalise journalistic practices online and initiate necessary innovations in the news business (Nee 2013). According to Deuze and Witschge (2018), news entrepreneurs are the consequence of a general shift of expectations where an entrepreneurial spirit is not only demanded on the organisational level (macro level) but also from the individual journalist (micro level). What is meant by ›entrepreneurial journalism‹, however, has not yet been clearly defined (Ruotsalainen/Villi 2018; Vos/Singer 2016). In response to rather inclusive definitions, Routsalainen and Villi therefore try to offer an exclusion criterion as a compromise: entrepreneurial journalism means the discovery of new opportunities and paths for journalism with the attempt to turn them into a business model (2018: 82). At the same time, various studies on entrepreneurial journalism (including Usher 2017; Wagemans/Witschge/Harbers 2019) have shown that it does not reinvent journalism, but rather confirms and links existing concepts, thereby questioning them.

The term ›entrepreneurial journalism‹ already indicates a central ethical challenge: roles and tasks that absolutely had to be separated in traditional media are performed together in the journalistic start-ups, which raises questions about the autonomy of media professionals (Porlezza/Splendore 2016; Vos/Singer 2016). Nevertheless, the potential of entrepreneurial journalism seems largely undisputed: the innovative and disruptive news start-ups are seen as a necessity for survival or renewal of the industry (Vos/Singer 2016; Carlson/Usher 2016).

Method

Owing to these (ascribed) characteristics, news entrepreneurs were interviewed, whereby this study contributes to journalism research »beyond the stable news institutions« (Deuze/Witschge 2018: 176). The analysis of which services and functions news entrepreneurs want to provide (i.e. where they see their unique selling point) and with which organisational forms, journalism concepts, and revenue models they position themselves is based on in-depth interviews with journalists and founders of news start-ups, which were conducted as part of a larger project (Heft/Dogruel 2019). In order to identify relevant companies, we first searched for journalistic start-ups in Germany or with considerable German share. Based on national and international media competitions (e.g. Grimme Online Award, Lead Award, Data Journalism Awards), databases on innovative

journalism projects and funding organisations (e.g. Vocer, Journalismfund. eu, Media Lab Bayern), and supplemented by snowball sampling, we identified around 140 organisations. Based on information given on their websites, the type of company and basic organisational information (such as date of foundation, number of employees, organisational structures, goals and thematic focus, as well as the financing model) were determined in order to allow for a systematic case selection.

According to the principle of theoretical sampling (Corbin/Strauss 2008; Kelle/ Kluge 2010), start-ups were selected which vary in their degree of institutionalisation and their financing models and represent different types of journalistic organisations. We have differentiated three types:

1. journalistic networks of collaborative content production, in which journalists, activists, and data managers work together;
2. online journalism platforms, which offer an infrastructure independent of traditional media organisations and publish and monetise journalistic content under a common label; and
3. online media, which are permanent, have been initiated independently of traditional media organisations, offer editorial content, and have a certain rhythm of publication.

Our analysis includes 12 projects:

- *Investigate Europe* and Host-writer's *Agora Project* are examples of network journalism;
- *CamperStyle*, *Das Filter*, *Deine Korrespondentin*, *Perspective Daily*, *Correct!v*, *dekoder*, *Krautreporter*, and *Netzpolitik.org* represent strongly institutionalised online media;
- and *The Buzzard* and *piqd* are examples of online platforms.

For all companies, the founders and some journalists were selected on the basis of secondary source analyses. A total of 17 interviews were conducted: five with founders of the various projects, five with journalists working on the projects, and seven with persons representing both levels in our study. The interviews were conducted from January to March 2018 either in person (1), by telephone (9), or online via Skype or the like (7). They lasted between 25 and 64 minutes with an average duration of 48 minutes. In order to understand the underlying perception of journalism, the news entrepreneurs were asked about the backgrounds, occasions, as well as the motivations and goals of the start-up. They were also asked about the fulfilment of their ideas, future goals, special features, and unique selling points of their respective offerings. In addition to questions about the organisational structure, we also asked about the form, scope, and organisation of financing to account for their revenue model. Regarding the future of financing, we also inquired about planned changes in the type or scope of their long-term viable financing models. The founders and journalists were

asked to give their overall assessments and visions of the future of journalism. The interviews were transcribed and all passages were marked in which future plans (of their own enterprise) and future visions (of journalism in general) of the interviewees were expressed. These passages were structured in a multi-stage process, assigned to the categories of *functions*, *concepts*, *forms of organisation*, and *revenue models* and multiple ideas and elements were condensed in order to identify trends (Mayring 2008).

The future of journalism – a journalism for the future: The perspective of news entrepreneurs

Despite the diversity of the start-ups and the variety of answers the participants gave regarding the challenges of journalism in the future, central trends have emerged. The research questions will be answered in the following section by highlighting these four trends: (1) Professional journalism must distinguish itself from increasingly automated news, tweets, and content from social networks with well-written and comprehensively researched stories. (2) The illusion of objective journalism must be replaced with journalism with attitude and personality. (3) The organisational form of journalism of the future is collaborative. (4) Professional journalism cannot be financed without civil society—and possibly only with the involvement of the state. In conclusion, the findings presented in this chapter are contextualised within the scientific debate.

Thesis 1: Reflection on the core business – good stories as a unique selling proposition

Even though the news start-ups in our sample pursue different business models and goals, what they have in common is that they react to the crisis of traditional journalism and seek answers to the challenges of a digitalised media world for journalism. One of these challenges is the increasing complexity of public communicators in the face of new, diverse communication networks and platforms (Blumler/Kavanaugh 1999). The public no longer only learns about world events from newspapers and radio, but also from reports by individuals which are shared via social media or through the professional communication of the most diverse actors, be they company representatives, politicians, or stakeholders. In view of the large number of information channels, respondents therefore refer to the classification of this mass of information and the diversity of circulating perspectives as a central unique selling point of professional journalism. For a

journalist of the online platform *The Buzzard*, it is clear: »Curatorial services will have the future.«[4]

For the respondents, an important aspect of this curatorial service is to present as many perspectives as possible and make them accessible to the recipients. Journalism then becomes an »opinion navigator«, as the founder of *The Buzzard* explains: »We are the point of contact that brings you to many other voices that are on the Internet«. This aspect of diversity can also be found in other news start-ups, such as *piqd*, *dekoder* or *Perspective Daily*, which deliberately include authors who do not come from journalism.[5] *Deine Korrespondentin* and the contributors to the *Agora Project* consistently adopt certain perspectives in their stories,[6] which are intended to supplement mainstream reporting. This focus on diversity is associated with the intention of contextualising information and illuminating the various facets of themes or events in order to come closer to a more comprehensive understanding of reality. The mission of *The Buzzard*, for example, is to »make possible a more differentiated picture of the political debates of our time [...]. What we are really interested in is the variety of arguments.« In order to achieve this, interviewees (e.g. from *piqd*, *Netzpolitik*, *Perspective Daily*, *Investigate Europe*) emphasise that space and time are needed for research, extensive reportage, and background information, so that a »calm view« is possible in which »the grey tones are very well allowed« (*piqd*). The task and unique selling point of journalism is then no longer to provide information, but to present connections and diverse perspectives, background information, and orientation: »The future of journalism should be that we continue to make very well-researched and very well-written stories. No matter on which channel.« (*piqd*)

Thesis 2: Point of view journalism

Objectivity in journalism has always been controversial: objective reporting is regarded as an important value of journalism (Meier 2018; Munoz-Torres 2012), while, at the same time, views vary considerably as to what is to be understood by this principle (ibid.). In addition, there is a fundamental discussion as to whether objective reporting is possible at all (see Neuberger 2017). Against the background of the debate about trust in the institution of journalism, some of the news start-ups surveyed (*Netzpolitik*, *Perspective Daily*, *The Buzzard*, and *piqd*)

4   *piqd*, for example, has a »team of curators« consisting of »130 clever minds«, which includes not only journalists and editors but also writers, politicians, and scientists: www.piqd.de/about (24.02.2019). Experts with an academic background are part of the *dekoder* team: www.dekoder.org/de/hintergrund-materialien (24.02.2019).
5   *The Agora Project* describes itself as a »temporary European Newsroom« (agora.hostwriter.org/, 24.02.2019), while the unique selling point of *Deine Korrespondentin* is stories by women about women (www.deine-korrespondentin.de/ueber-uns/, 24.02.2019).
6   Title of an article by Charles Lewis, founder of the ICIJ, in *The Guardian*: www.theguardian.com/commentis-free/2016/apr/18/future-of-journalism-collaboration-panama-papers (18.04.2016).

have found their answer to this question: they pursue a journalism that reports self-confidently and transparently with attitude and opinion instead of (ostensibly) objectivity. For *Netzpolitik*, one respondent describes this understanding as follows: »We have a different picture of journalism [...] because we don't assume that there could be a neutral journalism, but ›journalism with attitude‹ we say. We make clear what we stand for and from what perspective we write.«

This understanding of journalism goes hand in hand with general phenomena such as individualisation in postmodern societies and the personalisation of public communication and politics (Blumler/Kavanaugh 1999; Hans 2017). Journalists as individuals step out of the shadow of the news organisation (e.g. in *Netzpolitik*, *piqd*, *Krautreporter*), which is intensified by the fact that they communicate on social media under their own name, while the employer's brand name recedes into the background (see also Ruotsalainen/Villi 2018). In this vein, *Deine Korrespondentin* is experimenting with podcasts and video formats so that »you can also get to know the person behind the name a little« (*Deine Korrespondentin*). Like journalism with attitude, this personalised journalism is intended to (re)build trust between recipients and journalists: »We often seek personal access to the stories. Our authors are very present, both in the commentary column and in the articles [...], because we believe that trust comes from a personal level and not necessarily from an institutional one, as it used to be.« (*Krautreporter*)

Thesis 3: The future of journalism in three words: collaboration, collaboration, collaboration[7]

Collaborations of various kinds are seen and lived by some of the news start-ups investigated as a central organisational form of sustainable journalism. Examples of start-ups which institutionalise cooperation between journalists are the *Agora Project*, *Investigate Europe*, and *Perspective Daily*. The first two projects take a decidedly European perspective, for which the exchange and cooperation with colleagues from different countries seems not only advantageous, but indispensable: »We make great stories that you couldn't do on your own, even if you were a brilliant reporter, no one can research in five to six countries at the same time« (*Investigate Europe*). For the co-founder of the Agora Project, the collaboration of several journalists also means a rapprochement with the already outlined ideal of a more diverse reporting: »We simply believe in this idea of cooperation, which also brings you to question national stereotypes, and you can only do that if you get together with people with different backgrounds.«

But other forms of cooperation are also practiced. Krautreporter and Correct!v

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7   Titel eines Artikels von Charles Lewis, Gründer des ICIJ, in *The Guardian*: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/apr/18/future-of-journalism-collaboration-panama-papers (18.04.2016). Eigene Übersetzung.

work together with their readers to enable local, resource-intensive research and and to draw on the knowledge of their recipients (e.g. in the form of the CrowdNewsroom at *Correct!v*[8]). Other start-ups, such as *Perspective Daily*, engage in a lively exchange with their subscribers through surveys (information given in interview with Maren Urner), which can thus influence their content. This form of influence is expressly desired, since it is expected that cooperation can also lead to a (regained) relationship of trust between journalists and readers: »It was important to us that a relationship should develop between readers and authors, between audience and journalists, that this gap that exists should be bridged« (*Krautreporter*). Beyond these concrete examples, some of the respondents expressed the wish that cooperation should replace the »competitive logic« (*Investigate Europe*) in the media industry and should shape all phases of production and distribution of journalistic content – be it at the level of the publishing houses (see also Hepp/Loosen 2018), in order to face the challenges of journalism together, or at the level of articles and work routines in the start-ups (e.g. bei *Perspective Daily*, *Agora Project*).

Thesis 4: Society does it: new sources of funding for journalism

How the financing of journalism will and should be organised is a central problem not only for the scientific debate, but also for the news start-ups. The survey showed that the founders of the companies analysed often rely on a financing mix and base their revenue model on different pillars: »Essentially, it is a matter of creating a good mix, not just concentrating on one source of income, but building up different pillars« (*Deine Korrespondentin*). This makes the news start-ups, presumably, more resilient and less dependent on particular interests. In addition, the news entrepreneurs seemed to be open to alternative financing models, such as the provision of their own expertise to other organisations for a fee or the organisation of topic-specific events (e.g. *Deine Korrespondentin*, *decoder*, *Netzpolitik*).

 All in all, the interviewees agree that a stronger societal involvement in the financing of journalism is necessary. The existing form of cross-financing journalistic content through advertising is regarded as no longer desirable.[9] In contrast, two other central revenue models are emerging for tomorrow's journalism. For many of the companies – such as *Perspective Daily*, *The Buzzard*, *Deine Korrespondentin*, and *Krautreporter* – the ›silver bullet‹ is to be financed by their own readers, whether through subscriptions or crowdfunding campaigns. This

8 Website of the *CrowdNewsroom*: crowdnewsroom.org/
9 For example, Perspective Daily declares (financial) independence from business to be one of its core values (perspective-daily.de/ueber_uns#/values (24.02.2019)), and Correct!v also emphasises independence from economic interests as an important aspect of self-image (correctiv.org/ueber-uns/ (24.02.2019))

form of financing combines several advantages for news entrepreneurs: successful crowdfunding campaigns can be seen as proof of having created a product that meets readers' demands and is found to be good. This form of financing also creates a clear guideline for journalists, which can also affect the quality of journalistic products: »Not all advertising-financed journalism is automatically bad journalism, but the probability that it is worse is higher because the incentives are simply set differently than when you write for your readers« (*Krautreporter*). One interviewee even describes this revenue model as »the most independent form of journalism« (*Perspective Daily*).

At the same time, the interviewees are also aware that financing via the readers alone is not sustainable for all projects or large media houses: the recipients are still too used to receiving free information on the Internet, so payment thresholds are often not accepted (e.g. with *Deine Korrespondentin*). To bring about a change of attitude on this point is a »long-term educational process« for which »support from civil society and people who can afford it« (*Investigate Europe*) is necessary. While the academic debate is critical, foundations are another attractive source of funding for many news start-ups. In rarer cases, such as with *Correct!v*, decoder, or *Investigate Europe*, these are the only or most important source of funding; for the other entrepreneurs, however, foundation funds are a possible pillar in the funding mix (as reported by *Perspective Daily* and *Deine Korrespondentin*). However, some entrepreneurs (e.g. from *The Buzzard*, *Deine Korrespondentin*) also point to the problem that there are comparatively few foundations that promote journalism, as this form of financing is not yet widespread in Germany.[10] Even with non-profit projects – in our sample, this applies to *Correct!v* and *decoder* – entrepreneurs have found that there are obstacles to long-term financing through foundations. However, the principle of public benefit and non-profit status is not only relevant for the revenue model of the projects, but it has also been discussed by the media as a specific understanding of journalism: »Our job is to provide information so that people can form an opinion as well as possible [...] so that democracy works. We have internalised this a little bit more than in a classic editorial office [...]. It's part of our mission, otherwise we wouldn't be able to remain charitable« (*Correct!v*).

Overall, it became clear in the interviews that the entrepreneurs surveyed prefer civil society financing sources to traditional investment – as is usually the case in the start-up sector. According to some respondents, the pressure emanating from this revenue model is too great (e.g. *Das Filter*) and too reminiscent of advertising financing, from which many journalistic companies have deliberately turned away. Entrepreneurs were rather open to government-organised

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10 This fact is also discussed and problematised in the industry: www.carta.info/85466/warum-stiftungen-den-journalismus-staerker-foerdern-sollten/ (25.03.2019).

financing. With regard to the functions of journalism for a democratic society, the managing director of *piqd*, for example, argues that »we need state-organised structures for the distribution of information on the Internet which are democratically controlled and which are not simply on the capital market, i.e. which are not subject to purely quantitative growth constraints« and thus takes a position which has also been discussed and strongly criticised in communications science (see Kiefer 2011; Russ-Mohl 2011; Stöber 2011).

Conclusion

With a view to the function and identity of professional journalism, our study shows some trends that are reflected both in the visions of practitioners and in scientific analyses of the future of journalism: ›good stories‹ and professional research, classification, and analysis are considered to be key unique selling points. Journalism with attitude and collaborative network journalism are perceived as concepts that can increase the public value of and trust in media. The future of professional journalism is therefore optimistic, according to the representatives of digital news start-ups. They are convinced that journalism can defend its significance when the understanding of journalism is adapted to today's media landscape as the orientation that journalism provides is more in demand than ever before. According to the news entrepreneurs, central challenges exist, particularly at the level of organisation and financing. Collaboration must assert itself more strongly against competition, the willingness of recipients to pay must increase, confidence must be regained, and legal and political hurdles in financing must be tackled. The news start-ups are more willing to say goodbye to previous revenue models and break new ground, such as state-organised financing, which is highly controversial in the scientific debate because it touches on central questions of journalistic autonomy.

The trends and challenges presented in our study are generated from interviews with a few selected news entrepreneurs who each represent special journalism concepts and are thus naturally limited. On the one hand, the identified trends cannot be interpreted in isolation from the projects' business models nor their stage of development. On the other hand, the interviews are snapshots of a very dynamic field which, as was pointed out at the beginning, is currently undergoing radical change. Our analysis therefore focuses on those developments leading to a reorientation of journalism that are central and topical from the perspective of the start-ups surveyed. Nevertheless, it is argued (see Carlson/ Usher 2016; Hepp/Loosen 2019) that these insights into the understanding and visions for a sustainable journalism of the news entrepreneurs can prove to be revealing, as they are pioneers within the industry.

Overall, the interviewees' visions of the future confirm Carlson and Usher's (2016) and Usher's (2017) assessment that news start-ups modify journalism's forms, ways of organisation, and revenue models while preserving the fundamental understanding of journalism and the assumptions about its functions and role in society. Even though the innovative formats and concepts of news entrepreneurs cannot be transferred one-to-one to traditional media organisations and further debate on normative issues is required, examples (such as the European Investigative Collaboration Network[11] between the German news weekly Spiegel and other established European media or the initiative of public broadcasters to increasingly establish dialog formats with their readers[12]) show that entrepreneurs are central idea generators and innovative ›laboratories‹ for the further development of professional journalism in hybrid and digital media environments.

Further research could adopt differentiation into functions, concepts, organisational forms, and revenue models made here in order to analyse which trends are emerging. This research should take into account a greater diversity and number of journalistic start-ups and whether different types of news entrepreneurs systematically differ regarding their understanding of journalism, or whether a common vision of the future of journalism should be developed. Current developments, organisational forms, and the financing of journalism should be critically monitored in relationship with its fundamental values, such as autonomy (Heft/Dogruel 2019: 694) and—in its position as an intermediary—on other social processes, such as public opinion forming and political decision-making.

Translation: Alexa Keinert, Annett Heft and Leyla Dogruel

About the authors

Alexa Keinert (*1993) (*1993) has been a research associate at the Institute for Media and Communication Studies at Free University Berlin since February 2019. At the Chair of Digital Communication, she is working in cooperation with the University of Zurich on a research project on ›Local Public Spheres in the Digital Era‹. Her research focuses on public sphere theory, media and communication change, as well as spatial dimensions of communication and the public sphere. She studied communication and political science in Berlin and Zurich. Contact: a.keinert@fu-berlin.de

11 eic.network/ (24.02.2019)
12 Described, for example, by Jan Weyrauch, programme director of Radio Bremen in the article »Nur zu senden reicht nicht mehr« (*Die Zeit*, No. 49/2018, 29 November 2018)

Dr. Annett Heft (*1971) has been head of the research group ›Digitalisation and the Transnational Public Sphere‹ at the Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society and the Free University in Berlin since December 2017. In her research, she is interested in the comparative analysis of political communication and mobilisation in Europe with a special focus on digital public spheres, transnational communication and the European public sphere, transnational journalism, and journalism networks as well as computational social science research methods. Contact: annett.heft@fu-berlin.de

Jun.-Prof. Dr. Leyla Dogruel (*1982) graduated from the Institute of Media and Communication Studies of the Free University of Berlin in 2013 and has been junior professor for media systems and media performance at the Department of Communication at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz since October 2017. In her research, she investigates how communication and media (structures) change in the course of social and technological developments and how people, but also organisations and society as a whole, deal with these changes. Contact: dogruel@uni-mainz.de

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Paper

Gerret von Nordheim

Means of power

Gandhi's journalistic ethics

Abstract: **Gandhi saw journalism as an irreplaceable means of power in his fight against oppression. As a publisher and deskman, he developed the ethical principles that are presented systematically in this paper. Even today, 150 years after Gandhi's birth, they still give us cause to reflect. Gandhi's principles are not those of a journalist who idealizes practice at a hypothetical level, nor those of a theorist guilty of creating an implausible utopia. Instead, they bear witness to a life spent dealing practically with the ethical problems of journalistic work. Given the increasing fragmentation and sense of outrage in today's society, his publications' absolute proximity to the reader – in both form and content – and his strict avoidance of unnecessary affectation appear almost prophetic. Other aspects appear stranger: Gandhi rarely reported on political events and rejected both advertising and the exercise of journalism as a profession.**

> »All my experience has convinced me,
> that there is no other God than truth.«
> (Gandhi 1983: 257)

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi sought both God and truth – without differentiating between the two. He saw the path to this God as truth in *ahimsa*, the perception that all life only finds completion in love. All his efforts were directed at this aim of personal fulfillment. But it was only the rare combination of this unconditional effort with a sense of the effect of the media that made him *Mahatma* Gandhi, the great soul, worshipped like a God, the outstanding figurehead of

non-violent struggle. Gandhi was a favorite among reporters, a victim of caricaturists, a wonderful stager, propagandist and, above all, a passionate journalist and publisher.

> »I have taken up journalism not for its sake but merely as an aid to what I have conceived to be my mission in life. My mission is to teach by example and precept under severe restraint the use of matchless weapon of ›Satyagraha‹.« (Gandhi, quoted in Bhattacharyya 1965: 80)

Gandhi's top priority was not power *over others*, but *self*-empowerment (cf. Galtung 1987: 170). This was one of the fundamental conditions of Satyagraha, as he called the non-violent struggle he practiced. Gandhi strove to break free of passion in his thoughts, words and deeds. He wanted to »make himself zero« (Gandhi 1983: 285). The self-control he practiced while fasting, for example, gave him the strength to influence others and exercise power. To put it less drastically, self-control was the prerequisite that allowed him to exercise a positive influence. And Gandhi's main way to exert influence – given that he avoided public speaking – was through the written word.

This inseparability of self-control and influence – of means and end – is expressed in the journalistic ethics that Gandhi developed during his time as a publisher and deskman. This paper will present his ethical principles. Today, 150 years after Gandhi's birth, they are especially pertinent – highlighting a third way between activism and objectivism in an age when journalists' attitudes are increasingly the subject of public debate. Gandhi instrumentalized journalism for his aims and yet – or perhaps therefore – made every effort to report truthfully.

Gandhi began his career as a journalist in South Africa and later continued in his homeland, India. In both countries in around 1900, newspapers were both the means and the object of confrontation in society. The British colonial government in India in particular was trying to nip the nationalism emerging among the population, largely expressed through the foundation of numerous newspapers in the national language, in the bud (Tamendehrou 2014: 30). Strict press laws were enacted again and again in an attempt to outlaw journalistic activities. At the same time, English language publications were supported as the mouthpiece of the government (Tamendehrou 2014: 32). In this febrile, polarized environment, Gandhi stressed the value of truth. It is this dialectic that makes his thoughts so topical in an age of rampant relativism.

Another reason why Gandhi's journalistic principles still deserve respect today is the fact that they were never simply theoretical considerations under ideal conditions but, like all his principles, had to stand up in practice. Gandhi put them into practice every day:

»›Indian Opinion‹ reflected, just as ›Young India‹ and ›Navajivan‹[1], do today, part of my life. Week after week, I poured my heart into their columns and preached the principles and applications of Satyagraha. For ten years, [...] there was barely an edition without an article by me.« (Gandhi 1983: 115)

Gandhi's collected written works run to around ten million words (Galtung 1987: 63), a large part of which is made up of the articles he wrote during his forty-year career as a journalist. Starting with an outline of his biography, this paper examines what motivated Gandhi to this indefatigable journalistic activity. The main section of the article then traces the role that Gandhi's journalistic work played in the context of his political struggle, before illustrating and categorizing his journalistic and ethical principles in a structured way.

1.   Gandhi's journalistic development: a biographical overview

As a child, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi received no more than an average education. He himself writes in his autobiography that he »was a very average student« (Gandhi 1983: 9), and his parents also seem to have shared little knowledge with him. This may seem surprising given his heritage – Gandhi's father was a chief minister, as were his father and grandfather before him. However, Mahatma Gandhi reports that his father received no education other than that gained through practical life, and knew nothing of history or geography (Gandhi 1983: 8). A lawyer friend stated that the 21-year-old Gandhi displayed a lack of general knowledge, knew »nothing of the world«, and had not even read the history of his country (Gandhi 1983: 54).

It is therefore no wonder that Gandhi paid little attention to the strongly politicized newspapers in India during his adolescence (Driessen 2002: 58) and had never even read a newspaper until he began his university studies in England (1888-1891) (Driessen 2002: 123). The young law student wanted to adapt to British society, bought the clothing of a gentleman and read the *Times* of London — which would shape his concept of good journalism (Bhattacharyya 1965: 71).

It was in London that Gandhi took his first tentative steps as a journalist. The texts he produced during this period were inspired by the problems he saw himself facing as a strict vegetarian in the new Western world. The promise he had made to his mother before leaving India – not to eat meat even when abroad – became a heavy burden for Gandhi in more ways than one. Not only did his first attempts to achieve a full, healthy vegetarian diet in England fail – British

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1   *Indian Opinion* was Gandhi's newspaper in South Africa, *Young India* and *Navajivan* two of the three newspapers he published in India. He also later founded *Harijan*.

friends also tried to break Gandhi's »obstinacy« (Gandhi 1983: 41) and convince him to eat meat. The torture only ended when he finally met some like-minded people, joining a vegetarian society and even writing articles for its magazine.

It is indicative both of Gandhi's process of maturing as a journalist and of his concept of journalism that his first articles also report on the initial resistance he had to overcome in his new Western environment, testing his vow and his principles. Shy and initially extremely insecure, Gandhi went on to develop strong self-confidence and missionary zeal, which only increased as he replaced inner dilemmas with reinforced conviction.

Having graduated in law, Gandhi returned to India only briefly before travelling to South Africa in 1893 to gain professional experience. This was to set him on the path that would define his life. Various experiences of the racism prevalent in the colony at the time became turning points in Gandhi's life. In one court room, for example, the judge instructed Gandhi to remove his turban. Gandhi refused, left the building under protest, and reported the incident to a newspaper, emphasizing his right to wear traditional dress (Gandhi 1983: 67). As he wrote in his autobiography, the incident became »an unexpected advertisement« for him just a few days after his arrival (69).

For Gandhi, it was a characteristic and natural reflex in any conflict to immediately look for a communicative level that not only included discussion with the opposing side, but often also meant publishing and explaining one's own standpoint. This is one reason why Gandhi became a public figure in such a short period of time.

This need became even greater a little while later, when Gandhi was dragged off a train and forced to spend a night in a station. He had asserted his right to travel in First Class, as his ticket allowed, rather than in the luggage van – the usual place for Indians in South Africa at the time. This experience of discrimination was new and shocking to Gandhi. He wrestled with the issue and almost returned to India, before deciding that it would be cowardly to go home without resolving it (Gandhi 1983: 70). From this moment on, Gandhi did everything he could to improve the living conditions of the Indian minority in South Africa. He shook off »his shy self literally overnight and dedicated himself unreservedly to his political and religious destiny as a leader« (Erikson 1978: 50). This was thus the time during which his philosophical and political orientation developed – a declaration of war on oppression and exploitation, be it in the form of racism, colonialism, caste rule, capitalism, sexism, or discrimination of religious groups. He began to call meetings, gather information about injustices, hold talks with politicians, and organize protests against unjust laws (Gandhi 1983: 83-86). Alongside all these efforts, he continued to look for channels through which he could highlight the problems of his compatriots to a wider audience, as well as opportunities to reach, inform and educate the South African Indians themselves.

In 1896, he published the *Green Pamphlet*, a brochure on the situation in Africa. It created quite a stir in his home country – Gandhi's essay was discussed by almost every Indian newspaper and printed a total of 5,000 times in two editions (Gandhi 1983: 95). The public resonance opened doors for Gandhi, who began to work together intensively with various European and Indian newspapers. It did not take long for newspaper publishers to regard him as the official representative of the Indian minority in South Africa. He now had increasing opportunities to present his view of the situation to an ever-larger audience (Driessen 2002: 124ff.).

This development process also made it clear to Gandhi that occasional pieces in newspapers, and the reliance on the goodwill of the editors it entailed, would not be sufficient to achieve his goals: He needed an independent mouthpiece. In 1903, he set up *Indian Opinion*, a weekly newspaper with an average circulation of 2,000. Gandhi was not only the publisher – he also wrote the majority of the articles himself and initially funded *Indian Opinion* with the help of proceeds from his flourishing legal firm (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2003).

The 16 simply designed pages of *Indian Opinion*, printed weekly on an ancient press, became one of the most important weapons in Gandhi's fight against discrimination (Driessen 2002: 128). The first columns and articles took a very moderate tone, with the publisher declaring that »we have unfailing faith in British justice« (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2003). However, Gandhi soon recognized the futility of political petitioning and began active resistance – with the tone of his articles changing to match (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2003). He informed his readers about his campaigns and gave advice on conflicts with authorities. Gandhi also saw *Indian Opinion* as a medium of understanding – he used the newspaper to communicate with Indians in South Africa, publishing and responding to reader letters. Looking back, he wrote in his autobiography:

> »Satyagraha would probably have been impossible without this weekly. For me, it became a real treasure trove of insights into human nature in all its nuances. [...] It was as though the entire community was thinking aloud in this communication with me. It made me very conscious of the responsibility of a journalist, and the influence it gave me over the community made the future struggle truly possible, while also giving it its proper dignity and irresistible strength.« (Gandhi 1983: 115-116)

The fact that the neologism *Satyagraha* [2] itself was found through a call for proposals in *Indian Opinion* is a further indication of how central the paper was to Gandhi's efforts in South Africa (Gandhi 1983: 133). The Indian press researcher

2   Composition of the Gujarati words *sat* and *agraha*, truth and strength

S.N. Bhattacharyya writes: »South Africa not only shaped many of the ideas and traits of Gandhiji, but made an out-and-out journalist of him as well.« (Bhattacharyya 1965: 2).

Gandhi returned to India in 1914. There, he found the central challenge of his life: the struggle for Indian independence. This aim, too, would be impossible to achieve without appropriate journalistic platforms, as his experience in South Africa had shown. He decided to take over the English-language weekly *Young India*, as well as *Navajivan*, which was published in Gujarati (Driessen 2002: 131).

In 1933, he also launched *Harijan*, a weekly newspaper whose sole aim was to improve the living situation of a section of society that had been marginalized up to then: the ›untouchables.' Gandhi referred to members of this caste as ›Harijans,' people of God, and dedicated the newspaper to them. In Gandhi's view, helping the untouchables and ultimately abolishing the caste system altogether was essential to India's internal peace (Bhattacharyya 1965: 55).

Gandhi remained both politically active and a media figure right up until his death. Skillfully staged large-scale events such as the Salt March in 1930 (cf. Driessen 2002) helped him to bring his message to a global audience.

There is no question that the mechanisms of the media were an essential part of the Satyagraha strategy. However, Gandhi was only able to achieve this integration by adhering strictly to principles for dealing with the media and, above all, by practicing as a journalist himself.

> »Publicity is our best and perhaps the only
> weapon of defense«
> (Gandhi, quoted in Bhattacharyya 1965: 3)

2.1   The nation's teacher: Introduction

Gandhi's main aim with his newspapers was to address the broad population directly, in order to win them over to his struggle. He therefore used journalism primarily in order to prepare and enable satyagraha. Galtung (1987: 47-50) compares Gandhi to the Chinese revolutionary Mao Zedong in this context – both resistance fighters believed that social change needed to begin with simple people; the struggle was to improve their living conditions. The main proponents of social change should be not the intellectual elites, but primarily the farmers who formed the majority of society. They had to be the first to be convinced of the struggle and taught its techniques. But achieving this goal required two conditions to be met. Firstly, Indian society needed to be united and inner peace created. Gandhi believed that this relied entirely on general reform of Indian society

and particularly on improving the position of the ›untouchables.‹ As we will see, Gandhi attempted to initiate this reform through journalistic means, especially through advice and education.

The second pre-condition for mobilizing his compatriots for the non-violent struggle was the ethical and moral education of his readers in line with his own ideas. In the Satyagraha campaigns, the Satyagrahi, Gandhi set the very highest standards for his fellow fighters, writing:

> »The author of the Sanskrit saying ›forgiveness is the ornament of the brave‹ drew on his rich experience of satyagrahi, which never gives anyone the slightest reason to criticize it. Satyagraha means dismissing all weakness and also dismissing distrust; after all, what help is mistrust to those who want not to destroy their opponents, but to win them over to their side.« (Gandhi 1983: 176)

Gandhi saw Satyagraha as a weapon of the truthful and, as such, he could only apply it if the people behaved accordingly; if they had the moral strength to maintain the principle of non-violence in spirit, word and deed (Gandhi 1983: 237). Teaching the readers was thus the central motive of Gandhi's journalistic work.

In fact, educational intentions in journalism were nothing unusual at the time. Rapid progress in education and research had raised the intellectual level of the population, and many English papers, especially during the Victorian period (1837-1901), began to communicate political and moral values (Bhattacharyya 1965: 92-93).

This was the historical background against which Gandhi began his journalistic career, which quickly gave him the position of »national communicator and educator through the press« (Brown 1989: 135). Historian Judith Brown argues that Gandhi took on an educational role with his newspapers, continuously enlightening his readers on social problems, giving them examples of altruism and patriotism, informing them about rights, and showing them how they could get involved in the Indians' problems (Brown 1989: 50).

From the 1930s, if not earlier, Gandhi's authoritarian relationship with his readers was aided by his reputation as a sacred person – a ›mahatma‹ or ›great soul,‹ who had dedicated his life to the Indian nation and its poorest inhabitants (Brown 1989: 311). Gandhi's mission benefited from the emotional necessity of searching for a second father, which had been embedded in the Hindu religion for millennia. Particularly during *antevasin* – the teaching years during the life of a Hindu – the authority of the parents is passed on to a recognized guru (Erikson 1978: 37). Gandhi exploited this traditional, religious institution – Galtung writes that he practiced an »enlightened gurucracy« (Galtung 1987: 40).

Unlike in the Western world, in many Eastern traditions, gods take the form of images, leaving more space for god-like people, gurus, or mahatmas. For Western observers, it is important to understand that this intermediate world made it possible for Gandhi to receive more than admiration and respect, without his points of view becoming ideologized or regarded as absolute (Galtung 1987: 41). It appears characteristic of both Indian culture in general and Gandhi in particular that, despite his predestined position, he never dictated opinions to his followers. He did not patronize them, instead constantly calling on his readers to form their own opinions:

> »The newspapers should be read for the study of facts. They should not be allowed to kill the habit of independent thinking.« (Gandhi, quoted in Gupta 2001)

The influence that Gandhi exercised through his journalistic work should therefore not be seen as manipulation in a pejorative sense. In his view, journalists could only successfully fulfil their educational role by serving the reader with helpful and useful information. He wrote, »The sole aim of journalism should be service« (Gandhi, quoted in Gupta 2001). Gandhi believed that this principle of service gave rise to various practical consequences, which are examined in the sections below. It will become clear that all Gandhi's journalistic principles can be traced back to the standard he set himself: to optimize the use value of newspapers for the reader and, at the same time, to protect editorial work against influences that contradict this choice of priorities. Gandhi thus saw journalism as a means of power in two senses. On the one hand, he used journalism as a way to bring about positive change. On the other, he saw it as important to empower himself first of all, in order to make journalism usable for his purposes.

Gandhi saw himself repeatedly faced with the challenge of reconciling his journalistic actions, his dharma[3] and his ethics. Creating this congruence was a religious necessity for him – the means and the ends had to be inseparably coessential in everything he did (Erikson 1978: 477).

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3   In Hinduism, *dharma* refers to one's life's work, which is determined in equal measure by one's previous life, by what one learns, and by choice. It integrates individual experience, yet is still essentially related to the entire community. It is namely the consolidation of the world through the personal fulfillment of each individual within a shared, cemented order

2.2 Help for self-education: Gandhi's principles of use value journalism

Gandhi wanted to use the high use value of his articles to motivate his readers to learn. His idea of journalism can therefore be effectively described by the term ›use value journalism.‹

By definition, use value journalism differs from other journalistic forms in »its dominant intention to communicate, which supports the recipients in an intended action« (Eickelkamp 2004: 16). In Gandhi's case, this objective was initially very general, namely to improve the living situation of his countrymen, and especially rural Indians. To do this, he had to ask himself what the reader was doing, how, and with what aim. Products of use value journalism are intended to make a positive change to the life of the reader, who should gain an individual benefit from it; the choice of topics is based on action, implementation, and results (Eickelkamp 2004: 16).

Gandhi's most influential publication also consistently followed the idea of use value – the weekly newspaper *Harijan* contained no reports on political events, for example. Gandhi decided that, »It will rigorously eschew all politics« (Gandhi, quoted in Bhattacharyya 1965: 56). The paper did not report on the India Act[4] of 1935, nor on Gandhi's withdrawal from politics. Instead, *Harijan* contained helpful tips on reorganizing villages, proposals for redeveloping the cotton industry, warnings about poisonous snakes, and instructions for making paper out of rags and fertilizer out of excrement, to name but a few subjects (Bhattacharyya 1965: 56). The weekly paper also set great store by dispensing dietary advice – »laughingly he called himself a food missionary« (Brown 1989: 301).

Gandhi said that *Harijan* was not published for the brief amusement or enjoyment of the reader (Bhattacharyya 1965: 75). For him, practical advice was of such great importance that no space remained in his newspapers for entertainment such as articles about films, art exhibitions or sporting events. Gandhi even saw factual information that did not have a specific use as superfluous (Driessen 2002: 136). He stated:

> »What is really needed to make democracy to function is not the knowledge of facts, but right education. And the true function of journalism is to educate the public mind, not to stock the public mind with wanted and unwanted impressions.« (quoted in Bhattacharyya 1965: 160)

In order to answer the fundamental question of use value journalism – *What is*

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4   In 1935, the Government of India Act initiated parliamentary elections in the provinces. The Indian National Congress won seven of the eleven provinces in 1937.

the reader doing, how, and with what aim? – it was essential to find a way to share in the lives of farm workers and to learn of their concerns and problems. Gandhi needed to know what was happening in the villages in order to develop a benchmark on which to base his search for and selection of issues. He needed to find ways to gain information in a country as large as the Indian sub-continent, without paved roads or a working telephone network. Although news agencies did exist, most only covered the cities and were manipulated by the government (Driessen 2002: 138). Furthermore, he wanted to find out what concerned his readers first hand. Wearing the clothes of a farm worker, he visited their fields, sat down with them, and spoke to them in their language (Bhattacharyya 1965: 158). This discussion, this type of research, was more than just a way to gain information – it allowed him to get to know his readers and share in their problems and fears.

In order to reach more people across the entire country, Gandhi also built up a huge network of volunteer correspondents over the years. Satyagrahi or sympathizers of his movement reported to him on what was happening in their regions, making their own contribution to the struggle for independence. Spending a great deal of time reading letters from readers is essential for use value journalists, as it is the »initiation into the mental world of the readers« (Fasel 2004: 75). Gandhi read every letter his supporters sent him. S. N. Bhattacharyya writes that he was the best-informed publisher in India: »That is how he could feel the pulse of the nation through a fleet of self-styled correspondents« (Bhattacharyya 1965: 84).

2.3 The elephant in the room: Gandhi's principles of journalistic truthfulness

In Gandhi's view, every journalist must strive to reflect the truth in his articles. If journalists deliberately distorted the truth, however, be it through a lack of care or of diligence, the positive and constructive functions of journalism could reverse into a devastatingly destructive force. Gandhi wrote:

> »The newspaper is a great power, but just as an unchained torrent of water submerges whole countryside and devastates crops, even so an uncontrolled pen serves but to destroy. If the control is from without, it proves more poisonous than want of control. It can be profitable only when exercised from within.« (Gandhi, quoted in Gupta 2001)

Gandhi saw being aware of and mastering this ambivalence as the greatest responsibility of any journalist – a conviction that grew not only out of his work as a publisher and deskman, but also from his experience of reporting about himself. In the *Disturbances in Durban* chapter of his autobiography *The Story of*

My Experiments with Truth (Gandhi 1983: 95-106), Gandhi reports on how he only just managed to escape an angry mob of European plantation owners in South Africa. Their aggression had been fueled by Reuters reports that gave a completely distorted representation of some of his speeches (Gandhi 1983: 96). Gandhi had indeed criticized the working conditions of his countrymen in South Africa during a trip to India, but the journalists had reported on this in an abbreviated, exaggerated form. Gandhi wrote:

> »This kind of thing is not unusual, and the exaggeration is not always intentional. Very busy people who are used to looking at everything through their own lens skim-read something and then turn out an excerpt that may be merely a product of their own imagination.« (Gandhi 1983: 95)

Although Gandhi shows understanding towards the writers of the unfortunate reports in this quote, he would never have shown such lenience to the employees of his newspapers or even to himself in his role as a journalist. Unconditional commitment to the truth was not just one of the cornerstones of journalism for Gandhi (cf. Gupta 2001) – his understanding of truth was central to his philosophy. He used the words ›truth,‹ ›god‹, and ›love‹ largely synonymously, since they meant the same thing to him – the source of *ahimsa* (Galtung 1987: 17). He wanted this to gain practical meaning through the satyagraha struggle and, as a result, it also needed to become the prime principle of journalism, which was to make the struggle possible. Only if this was fulfilled would Gandhi's journalistic activities be compatible with his ethical principle of the inseparability of means and ends.

Given that absolute truth is unachievable, journalistic truth is taken below to mean the intention of approximation. We will now show how Gandhi attempted to achieve this truth; how he tried to live up to his prime principle of truthfulness in his journalistic activities.

Psychohistorian Erik H. Erikson (1978) talks of Gandhi's attempt »to introduce an almost Christian, but certainly Socratic, ›yes, yes‹ and ›no, no‹« to Indian life, in which, unlike in the Western understanding, truth has various meanings (Erikson 1978: 43). Stemming from this standard, he argues that Gandhi always focused on the factuality of the content. He consistently put this principle into practice in his journalistic work in particular. For Gandhi, the duty of care and the obligation to correct, just as they are interpreted today in the Press Code of the German Press Council (Deutscher Presserat 2019), were an inner necessity and self-evident fundamental conditions of constructive journalism:

Gandhi rigorously rejected the publication of information that had not yet been carefully checked for truthfulness. In his view, the press had an obligation to hold back publication until information had been confirmed unambiguous-

ly (Bhattacharyya 1965: 84). Even then, Gandhi was conscious of the tension between topicality and careful research, time pressures and the flood of information. He knew that daily newspapers find it harder to report truthfully than weekly publications – another reason why all his newspapers were issued on a weekly basis. However, he also believed that the pressures of time and competition in daily journalism were no excuse for a lack of care (Bhattacharyya 1965: 73).

Of course, neither his staff nor Gandhi himself were infallible. One of his principles was therefore to publish corrections immediately if his writing contained untruths. Gandhi rarely viewed his writing as purely transient daily journalism. Instead, he emphasized that it was often of such lasting value that correcting serious errors was all the more necessary (Bhattacharyya 1965: 75).

However, the principles mentioned are not sufficient as a framework for truth in journalism. A duty of care and a willingness to correct oneself are merely necessary, but not sufficient, conditions for journalistic truth. In Gandhi's view, journalism could only succeed with truthfulness, i.e. with a love of and unconditional commitment to truth.

Viewing the principle of truthfulness in a journalistic context merely as an obligation to truthful reporting would be insufficient and misleading, however, as this interpretation communicates the idea that a person can be obligated to be truthful and that truthfulness is primarily a question of discipline. Yet truthfulness cannot be ordered; it must come from an intrinsic motivation and is thus primarily a question of personal attitude and professional ethos. Gandhi thus believed that control exerted from outside was »more ruinous than a lack of control. It can only be beneficial if it is practiced from the inside« (Gandhi 1983: 116).

Like negligent research, a lack of truthfulness can also lead to incorrect representations that Gandhi could not accept. A resident of one of his ashrams[5] remembers an incident that demonstrates this:

> »Charlie[6] and I had left Bapu lying on the verandah, and Charlie was telling me about an article he had just written for the Manchester Guardian about the Satyagraha movement then in progress in Travancore. In glowing terms he had described how all eyes were now concentrated on this wonderful movement and no one was interested any longer in the proposed Government reforms. ›I will just go and show it to Bapu[7],‹ said Charlie, › before I send it off!‹ Presently he returned, thoroughly crest-fallen. What did Bapu think of it? I asked. ›Oh,‹ said Charlie, Bapu said: ›Charlie, it is what you

5   In many Indian languages, an *ashram* denotes a place of contemplation. The literal meaning of the term is a »place of exertion. Gandhi's ashrams were above all communities whose members had chosen a particular way of life.
6   Charles Freer Andrews, a close and long-standing employee of Gandhi.
7   Gandhi was affectionately known as *Bapu* to his family and friends.

would like to be true: but it isn't true.‹ With all Bapu's idealism went a strong strain of realism, which Charlie Andrews sometimes lacked.« (Bhattacharyya 1965: 74)

The English journalist Martin Kingsley wrote that it testifies to a »deep ignorance of any journalistic art« (Kingsley 1948: 102) to believe that it is possible to assess the truthfulness of an article merely based on the precision of its presentation. He argued that it is well known that any practiced journalist can write an article that does not contain a single untrue fact, and yet »as a whole is a singular lie from A to Z« (Kingsley 1948: 102).

Gandhi would have been well aware of this problem. To demonstrate it, in an interview he referred to the poem *The blind men and the elephant* (Bhattacharyya 1965: 160). In this parable, six blind men attempt to »see an elephant, and come to completely different conclusions. The first compares the animal to a wall, the second to a spear etc. It shows that observations may be true in themselves but, in claiming to be the absolute truth, can become untrue. The blind men needed someone who could see to classify and weigh up their findings, in order to gain a correct overview. In Gandhi's view, this is a metaphor for the role of a conscientious journalist.

In this context, he wrote a letter to his son in which he described the principle of journalistic diligence and thus the fundamental condition for journalistic truth:

>»What is truth in journalism? How does it differ from accuracy? Are they the same thing? Truth is not only a question of knowledge. It means more. It means the balancing of judgment in a most disinterested manner.« (Gandhi, quoted in Bhattacharyya 1965: 73)

Here, Gandhi describes the establishment of truth as a creative process, as an objectification of partial truths, i.e. multiple perspectives, on the part of the journalist to form a legitimate, journalistic truth. This process corresponds to Gandhi's general idea of the establishment of truth as, in line with his ethics, it leads to an intensive fusion with one's inner self (Erikson 1978: 43).

The journalist Rudolf Walter Leonhardt (1976) writes that compiling facts to form a whole is the part of the establishment of truth in which the journalist is no longer merely a craftsman – instead, he has to work as an artist to compose the facts. According to Leonhardt, the second step in the working process – ordering the piece into a cohesive picture – is a spontaneous process and cannot be achieved with fixed, formulated rules. »The crystallization point around which the details coalesce can be an idea, even a coincidence, a conviction, even a prejudice« (Leonhardt 1976: 9).

At this critical moment of his work, a journalist thus has to integrate part of his subjectivity into the journalistic product, necessarily adding his own perspective. This clearly demonstrates the necessity of journalistic diligence – in order to do justice to the truth, in Gandhi's view the journalist must disregard his prejudices and limit his composition of the cohesive image to the verified facts. The journalist must resist the temptation to influence or alter the facts, to add, omit, excessively emphasize or disproportionately play down circumstances in order to achieve an interesting and rounded overall picture. It is only when the truthfulness, the will to deliver truth, outweighs other interests that the facts can be scrupulously assessed.

As Gandhi once said to a journalist from an influential British newspaper, »We are today suffering from a double evil – the suppression of the facts and concoction« (Gandhi, quoted in Bhattacharyya 1965: 171).

At the time, he criticized journalism for having become the art of »intelligent anticipation of events« (Gandhi, quoted in Bhattacharyya 1965: 160). Premature interpretation of uncertain facts and wild speculation were, for Gandhi, »journalistic kite-flying« (Bhattacharyya 1965: 171). In his view, the journalist should be aware of the gap between his own knowledge and the necessity of using it journalistically. As most journalistic »facts« are often merely changeable assessments, he argued, in certain events, the journalist best met his professional responsibility by saying nothing (Bhattacharyya 1965: 171), rather than by generating unnecessary fear, for example. He gave the following criticism:

> »The newspaperman has become a walking plague. Newspapers are fast becoming the people's Bible, Koran and Gita rolled in one. A newspaper predicts that riots are coming and all the sticks and knives in Delhi have been sold out. A journalist's duty is to teach people to be brave, not to instill fear into them.« (Gandhi, quoted in Bandyopadhyay 1964: n.p.)

2.4 Comprehensible and objective: Gandhi's linguistic principles

Starting from the standards described above, Gandhi spent his journalistic career cultivating a linguistic style that matched his ethical principles. This section describes the key characteristics of this artisanal means, beginning with the principles of usefulness and truthfulness.

In line with the linguistic requirements of a text in use value journalism – clarity, objectivity and succinctness (Herzog 2004: 248-249) – Gandhi's ultimate objective was »to express [himself] in a way that the general public in the Indian population could understand« (Driessen 2002: 133). Gandhi's linguistic intention was never aesthetic, but always pragmatic. His American publisher John Hay-

nes Holmes writes that Gandhi expressed himself with disciplined simplicity, inspired solely by the desire to make himself understood (Bhattacharyya 1965: 97). As the following advice to an employee shows, Gandhi did not only demand clear and direct language from himself: »When you want to say a thing, don't beat about the bush, don't indulge in euphemisms and pin-pricks, but tell it in a straight-forward way« (Gandhi, quoted in Bhattacharyya 1965: 77).

In addition, not least thanks to the intensive exchange with his readers already described, Gandhi succeeded in communicating in a language that was not foreign to them. This enabled him not only to make his texts easier to understand, but also to create a basis of trust, thus reinforcing the influence of his messages. Krishnaswami Swaminathan, publisher of Gandhi's collected works and professor of English literature, noted that Gandhi's style was

> »[...] a natural expression of his democratic temper. There is no conscious ornamentation, no obtrusive trick of style calling attention to itself. The style is a blend of the modern manner of an individual sharing his ideas and experiences with his readers, and the impersonal manner of the Indian tradition in which the thought is more important than the person expounding it. The sense of equality with the common man is the mark of Gandhi's style and the burden of his teaching.« (Swaminathan, quoted in Guha 2003)

In Gandhi's view, a journalist's conscientiousness should be demonstrated in neutral language in which the writer takes a back seat, behind the thoughts of the text. For him, the writing process thus always meant a contemplative exercise in self-discipline – essentially a journey of self-discovery and reflection on one's own subjectivity. The following quote bears witness to this process:

> »The reader can have no idea of the restraint I have to exercise from week to week in the choice of topics on my vocabulary. It is a training for me. It enables me to peep into myself and to make discoveries of my weaknesses. Often my vanity dictates a smart expression or my anger a harsh adjective. It is a terrible ordeal but a line exercise to remove these weeds. The reader sees the page of Young India fairly well dressed up and sometimes, with Romain Rolland[8], he is inclined to say ›what a fine old man he must be,' Well, let the world understand that the fineness is carefully and prayerfully cultivated.« (Gandhi, quoted in Bhattacharyya 1965: 80)

Gandhi said that it was above all his natural shyness that taught him to use words sparingly; a thoughtless word therefore only rarely escaped his lips or his

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8   The French Nobel laureate published the book *Mahatma Gandhi* in 1925..

pen (Bhattacharyya 1965: 83). During his time in London, the moderate, precise and objective tone of the *Times* became his linguistic role model. In his view, the high-quality British newspaper was the polar opposite of the ›cheaper‹ press, with its less precise language rich in imagery (Bhattacharyya 1965: 71). A sensational, affecting tone in the style of the tabloids would have been incompatible with his standards – he said, he could not write »merely to excite passion« (Gandhi, quoted in Bhattacharyya 1965: 80).

Gandhi did not accept rudeness in his newspapers under any circumstances, adhering to the principle of non-violence even in his words. Although he was known for his fine sense of humor, considering harmless mockery legitimate in a difference of opinion, he would never have allowed an argument to cross the line into vulgarity (Bhattacharyya 1965: 72).

2.5 A duty to the reader: Gandhi's principles of journalistic independence

The idea that journalism has to be a service means that journalists must display unconditional loyalty towards their readers. Only if a journalist yearns to exclusively serve the reader through his work will he develop the will to follow the principles this demands. These principles were described in the sections above. In Gandhi's view, any other, primarily egoistic motivations for journalistic work had to have disastrous consequences. He wrote:

> »It is often observed that newspapers published any matter that they have, just to fill in space. The reason is that most newspapers have their eyes on profits. … There are newspapers in the west which are so full of trash that it will be a sin even to touch them. At times, they produce bitterness and strife even between different families and communities.« (Gandhi, quoted in Gupta 2001)

Only loyalty to the reader can be the driving force behind truthful journalism with use value. In order to protect the journalists on his newspaper against influences that could have stopped this being the top priority, Gandhi constantly tried to shield editorial work from political and especially economic interests. To prevent himself becoming the object of commercial interests, Gandhi therefore decided early on not to publish any advertising in his newspapers. If a product benefits society, he argued, the manufacturer should not have to spend money in order for newspapers to promote it. In his newspapers, Gandhi wrote free of charge and by his own conviction about products that he believed were useful and would improve the lives of poor people. He praised useful oil presses, promoted

a more efficient weaving loom, and wrote articles extolling the virtues of a mortar that husked red rice without destroying the vitamin content (Bhattacharyya 1965: 118-119). If a product was poor or could potentially harm the purchaser, on the other hand, Gandhi saw it as a journalistic sin to tempt the reader into buying it. He also viewed the advertising business as a critical moment in which the power of journalism could become destructive. He wrote:

> »It is now an established practice with newspapers to depend for revenues mainly on advertisements rather than on subscriptions. The result has been deplorable. The very newspaper which writes against the drink-evil publishes advertisements in praise of drinks. In the same issue, we read of the harmful effects of tobacco as also from where to buy it. [...] No matter at what cost or effort we must put an end to this undesirable practice or at least reform. It is the duty of every newspaper to exercise some restraint in the matter of advertisements.« (Gandhi, quoted in Gupta 2001)

Gandhi planned to compensate for the financial disadvantage that came with omitting advertising by increasing the number of subscribers. He intended Indian Opinion to be merely an instrument of service and pursued no financial interests with it. As such, he believed it was only logical that the newspaper's survival depended directly on the number of people who valued it sufficiently to support it financially (Bhattacharyya 1965: 117).

A watershed moment for Indian Opinion, which also underscored Gandhi's efforts to achieve economic independence, was the foundation of his first ashram, Phoenix Farm. As the fate of the newspaper was always closely intertwined with Gandhi himself, this key moment in his life also meant big changes for Indian Opinion. Gandhi had decided to organize his life in line with the principles of John Ruskin[9] and from then on to become self-sufficient by working the fields. In line with this quest for independence, the Indian Opinion printshop was moved onto the farm premises — the newspaper could now be produced self-sufficiently by ashram residents and was no longer dependent on external printers (Gandhi 1983: 124).

Gandhi refused to pursue commercial goals through journalistic activity. As the quote below shows, he saw this stance, which in turn placed the idea of service ahead of other motivations, as another essential condition for journalism with a positive effect:

> »In my humble opinion, it is wrong to use a newspaper as a means of earning a living. There are certain spheres of work which are of such conse-

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9   Gandhi was greatly influenced by Ruskin's work *Unto this Last*, in which the English author extolls the virtues of a »simple« life.

quence and have such bearing on public welfare that to undertake them for earning one's livelihood will defeat the primary aim behind them. When, further a newspaper is treated as a means of making profits, the result is likely to be serious malpractices.« (Gandhi, quoted in Gupta 2001)

However, Gandhi did not only resist economic dependency; he also fought against the influence of the state. In his view, the press should be able to pursue its role and obligations freely and without fear, and not allow itself to be intimidated by governments. He called on journalists to stand by and watch their editorial offices being closed, rather than to cooperate with the authorities (Driessen 2002: 147).

>>Keep your standards right. Everything else will follow.«
(Gandhi, quoted in Bhattacharyya 1965: 73)

3. Conclusion

Gandhi called himself a humble seeker of truth, impatient to realize his true self. His service could thus be seen as pure self-interest, he continued, as his service to the population is nothing more than part of the education he subjected himself to in order to release his soul (Gandhi 1983: 260).

As a result of his natural need to communicate, Gandhi sought out public attention early on in both internal and external conflicts. As a logical consequence, he quickly identified journalism as a suitable medium for this struggle. He used primarily his own weekly newspaper as an educational tool, to improve the living situation of the broad population and thus to win them over to his cause.

Gandhi's principles are not those of a journalist who idealizes practice at a hypothetical level, nor those of a theoretician who could be accused of implausible utopianism. Instead, they are testament to his practical approach. Gandhi's journalistic activities are solely based on his recognition of them as a suitable medium for his struggle. His search for publicity was a necessary consequence of his search for truth and justice. As such, this is the central message of his journalistic work: A journalist will only be able to have a positive effect on this world if he sees his work primarily as a means to an ideal end. Those who see journalism as a purpose in itself, who are not guided by a higher goal, will not have the strength to empower themselves to have a positive effect through journalism.

Even today, 150 years after his birth[10], Gandhi's principles still give us cause

10 Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869.

for reflection. A reader focus, care, conscientiousness, comprehensibility, independence – Gandhi preached virtues that are still considered features of high-quality journalism to this day. His publications' unconditional proximity to the reader, in both form and content, and the strict avoidance unnecessary affectation appear almost prophetic in the face of the increasing fragmentation and sense of outrage in today's society. Other aspects of his views seem strange: From today's perspective, journalism's legitimation comes primarily from its function in the system of society – informing the demos and helping them to form opinions, so that they can make political decisions (Kiefer 2010: 211). Gandhi's use value journalism appears almost apolitical compared to this, but it is important to evaluate it in its cultural and historical context. Gandhi's journalistic work in a rural society is more effectively compared with the standards of modern media development work, which focuses primarily on more existential issues than disseminating the latest political news.

The same goes for Gandhi's view that journalism as a profession and thus the existential dependence of journalistic activities are not compatible with the necessary independence from external influences. Of course, the modern media system is unthinkable without professional journalists, and indeed it was only the institutionalization of the profession – including training, organization, rights etc. – that made the professionalization of journalism possible in the first place. In turn, this institutionalization required a level of sophistication and development in society that simply did not exist in India in the early 20th Century. Here, too, Gandhi's views must be seen in the specific cultural and historical context in which they were formed. That makes it all the more astounding that his ethical principles – formulated under the conditions of a different world – can claim to apply even in today's complex media system. Gandhi's ethics are a plea for closeness to the audience. More than that: for loyalty to the audience rather than to the (advertising) customer; for sober, truthful reporting that attempts to elevate the readers and support them in their development instead of serving base instincts; for journalistic humility and keeping quiet when there is nothing to say; for a language that carries the spirit of non-violence; and, not least, for diversity and the conviction that even the weakest must be listened to if society is to work. What could be more contemporary than that?

About the author

Dr. Gerret von Nordheim (*1985) researches and teaches at the University of Hamburg and the TU Dortmund. His main research fields are digital journalism, intermedia effects in digital public spheres and computer-aided methods in content analysis. He studied journalism and social sciences. contact: gerret.vonnordheim@uni-hamburg.de

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Essay

Felix Koltermann

Moving towards photojournalism studies

A plea for applied research into photojournalism

Abstract: **Although photojournalistic images have long been an elementary part of journalistic media, communication science has always been guilty of neglecting research into the actors and structures of photojournalism. Addressing this will require the establishment of applied photojournalism research.**

Photographic images are now omnipresent, both in print and online journalistic media and on the relevant social media channels. Originating in various contexts, the images can be classified as everything from private amateur photography to stock photographs, advertising, art, and photojournalism. Despite the hype about amateur images and citizen photography, the majority of photographs found in journalistic media and its up-to-the-minute reporting still come from photojournalistic production. We can therefore state that professional photojournalism continues to have a vital impact on up-to-the-minute reporting in the 21st Century.

As the importance of images in public communication has grown, so has the body of academic work on photographic images. Especially since the academic shift towards images, known as the *iconic turn* or *pictorial turn* (Mitchell 1994; Maar 2004), count-less research papers have been published both in Germany and internationally. They examine questions as diverse as the photographic representation of individual actors and groupings, their visualization strategies, the emergence of image icons, and the phenomenon of citizen photography, as well as issues in media ontology related to terms like indexicality/iconicity, authenticity, and image action. Such research usually takes as its starting point the published image or individual photographic work complexes, and thus photographic representation.

Photojournalism in research

The interdisciplinary project of visual culture has established itself relatively successfully in Germany over the last twenty years (Sachs-Hombach 2003). Graduate colleges dedicated to photography and documentary methods, such as *The photographic dispositif* at Braunschweig University of Art and *Documentary practice. Excess and privation* at Ruhr-University Bochum are part of this tradition.[1] Interdisciplinary formats and approaches are also in vogue among the next generation of young academics, as the *Foto: Diskurs* network founded in early 2018 shows.[2] In 2017, the degree program *Photojournalism and documentary photography* at Hannover University of Applied Sciences and Arts created the discourse platform *Image Matters*, which aims to contribute »issues from photographical image practice and discourses in image and photographic theory to a dialog [...] that unlocks significant new perspectives for both sides.«[3]

In contrast, research into the actors and structures of photojournalism remains somewhat neglected in German academia, in both visual culture and communication science. Even in large-scale studies on journalism in Germany, photojournalists are not recorded as a separate professional group (Weischenberg et al. 1993; Weischenberg et al. 2006). The only relevant study – the Bildjournalisten-Enquete (Image Journalist Enquiry) – is from the pre-digital age (Ludwig/ Werner 1986).

Even visual communication research, which has predominantly established itself around the Visual Communication Division of the German Communication Association (DGPuK), has provided little assistance, also focusing largely on the photographic image. With a few exceptions (Grittmann/Amman 2008; Koltermann 2017), most of the latest findings on the professional field of photojournalism still come from other disciplines, such as visual history (Vowinckel 2016), studies by professional organizations (Thiemann 2009), or practical manuals (Bauernschmitt/Ebert 2015; Rossig 2014).[4]

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1   See also the colleges' websites: http://www.hbk-bs.de/forschung/graduiertenkolleg-das-fotografische-dispositiv/ and https://das-dokumentarische.blogs.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/.
2   See also http://www.foto-diskurs.info/
3   See also http://image-matters-discourse.de/
4   As this text focuses on the German research landscape, research papers from an international context are not covered here.

Locating photojournalistic training within a discipline

Examining where photojournalistic and photographic training is located in terms of discipline is useful in understanding the position of photojournalism research in Germany. Since the Postwar period, it has traditionally been largely as part of design or communication design programs at universities of applied sciences, or given a more artistic focus at art colleges (Gripp/Brudna 1993). In contrast, photojournalism is all but ignored in journalism degree programs in Germany. While radio and television journalism are taught as independent disciplines, photojournalism is left out in the cold.

A brief look at other countries is all it takes to show that this is a German phenomenon. In the USA and Denmark, for example, bachelor's degree programs are located within journalism faculties as a matter of course.[5] Of course this does not in itself prove the existence of applied photojournalism research, but it does say something about the subject and its position. A glance at the English-speaking world is also interesting from a research perspective, revealing the comparatively frequent publication of articles on this topic area in academic journals such as *Journalism*, *Journalism Practice* and the *Newspaper Research Journal*.[6]

The status as a photographer and artist, which is repeatedly ascribed to photojournalists in Germany to this day and is also often part of the way they define themselves, is in part due to the training situation described above and the German understanding of the subject. The fact that photojournalism is forced to legitimize itself almost exclusively through the aesthetic of the image, rather than its journalistic quality, is also down to the discipline in which it is positioned. It is therefore no wonder that issues of aesthetics and visual culture are so important in shaping the way photojournalism and its image worlds are addressed. The attempt to use images to clarify the question of whether we need professional image producers continued for much too long. Instead, the question needs to be answered based on the contribution to society made by photojournalism that uses photographic means to aid society's self-observation and provides topics for public communication.

Plea for applied photojournalism research

In the title of arguably the best-known essay critiquing documentary photography, the American art historian Abigail Solomon-Godeau (2003) asks the question *Who speaks like this?*. But there are many other questions to add: when, where,

5   See the range of programs offered by the *Danish School for Media and Journalism*
6   It is a different story in German academic journals such as *Publizistik*, *M&K* and the *Global Media Journal*, making it all the more desirable in the new journal *Journalistik*.

how, in what way, with what legitimation and by whom images are created, how and by whom they are distributed, and why and in what context they are published. Essentially this is all about the topic area of image-related (photo)journalistic action. The aim should be to detect power asymmetry and the privileges of individual actors within this framework. The actor configurations that prevail in the system of journalism need to be extracted in order to understand the conditions under which photojournalists and other actors involved with images act. This would demand a radical shift in the way photojournalism is considered and a departure from the fixation on images seen in both practical and academic discourse on journalistic photography. Photo theory, albeit usually inspired by and oriented on aesthetics, is important, but it needs to be enriched with other perspectives in order to aid understanding of the complexity of contemporary photojournalistic practices.

Tackling these challenges will take the development of applied photojournalism research that examines production conditions and routines and feeds its results back into practice. In line with the theory perspective of communication science, this should be dedicated to photojournalism as a subsystem of journalism and part of the system of the formation of mass media statements, analyzing image-related organizations, programs and roles. The ideal location for implementation would seem to be universities which themselves train photojournalists – examples in Germany include Hannover University of Applied Sciences and Arts and Dortmund University of Applied Sciences and Arts. Their outstanding access to publishers and editorial officers would enable them to act as an interface between academia and practice. Unfortunately, however, the history and structure of research at these universities has made it more of a niche activity. As well as a lack of mid-level teaching staff, the high number of teaching hours offered by lecturers undoubtedly plays a role here. Universities are also failing to fill this gap, only rarely looking at photojournalistic practice.

From journalism studies to photojournalism studies

With the subject having become established in Germany in the 1960s, experience from journalism studies could serve as a template for the development of applied photojournalism research. In contrast, experience from the development of the project of interdisciplinary visual culture – both general and specific – is less suitable. The aim of establishing journalism studies as a subject was both to academize journalistic training and to examine the actors, structures, and performance of journalism in an applied, academic way. Academic research at German institutes of journalism studies, such as Dortmund and Leipzig, is conducted in this tradition to this day. Other aspects of theory could be borrowed from orga-

nization-related journalism research for the differentiation of photojournalism as a journalistic subsystem (Grittmann 2007) and from visual communication research for a production analysis (Müller/Geise 2015) and the process of image communication (Bock et al. 2010). In order to gain a broader theoretical basis, it would also be useful to take inspiration from the current debate about new theoretical approaches in communication studies.

There are numerous specific questions to research within a photojournalism studies to be established as applied photojournalism research – with regard to production, distribution, and publication. Potential topics are as diverse as investigating the training situation between traineeships and universities in Germany with regard to the methods and curricula used, examining role models and self-definitions to freelance and employed photojournalists, examining photojournalistic practice in local journalism, and clarifying the importance of social media for marketing and career development among photojournalists. The results found would be ideal for a transfer of knowledge between academia and practice, as they are both of interest for an academic understanding of photojournalism and its products and an important resource for the professional field and its self-reflection.

This text is based on a lecture entitled »Actor not image« at the »Images in Conflict«« conference held at Han-nover University of Applied Sciences and Arts in 2017.

About the author

Dr. Felix Koltermann (*1979) works as a Postdoc on the study course »Photojournalism and Documentary Photography«. He is a freelance journalist and instructor in adult education. From 2016 to 2019, he was a research associate at the Institute of Media, Drama and Popular Culture at the University of Hildesheim. Following a degree in Photodesign at Dortmund University of Applied Sciences and Arts, he completed his doctorate on international photojournalism in Israel/Palestine at the Media and Communication Studies seminar at the University of Erfurt. His research focuses on international photojournalism, the actions of picture editors, visual media competence, and photobooks. Contact: felix.koltermann@hs-hannover.de

Translation: Sophie Costella

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Debate

Werner D'Inka

A small word with a great impact

The first person in journalism: exemplary transparency or a line crossed?

Abstract: **Long frowned upon, use of the first person form is now becoming more prevalent, especially in reportage journalism. Potential causes include the media transformation, a change in the way journalists see their role, and erosion of the credibility of established media.**

»Foul weather, wind whistling through coats« is a quote from a reportage in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Höll 2019). What would be gained by the sentence being: »Foul weather, wind whistling through *my* coat« or »Foul weather, I'm absolutely freezing?« Nothing. It is neither clearer nor more authentic. The first person form has its place in literature and autobiographies, but in journalism it is at the very least superfluous, usually self-important, and in many cases crosses a line. Why? Because the role of journalists is to report not on themselves, but on an event, person, or issue – about what they experience, see, hear, smell, taste. The sentence »I drive through the mountains in a rattling old minibus» is not the style of a gripping reportage, but a trivial *Making of*. The readers do not need to know which means of transport the reporter used, but what the mountains look like and what exactly is making the minibus rattle. They should be safe to assume that the reporter really was there and is not just reporting on something he has heard second-hand.[1]

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1 Smart explanations about ›scenic reconstructions‹ by reporters who give the impression that they were there although they were not, are still considered to break the rules. René Pfister of *Der Spiegel* was stripped of the Henri Nannen Prize in 2011 for writing a reportage that described situations and rooms in which Pfister had not been present, but which he reported in such a way that implied that he had experienced them. Specifically, the topic was a toy railway in the basement of Horst Seehofer, a leading CSU politician. Most German chief editors consider scenic reconstructions only permissible if they are unambiguously labelled as such (Seiler 2019: 14f.).

If done with poor style, the first person form even produces bloopers: »If I turn my gaze back towards the North, rugged rocky mountains rise up behind Lecco, topped with glittering snowcaps« (Luther 2019: R7). The fallacy that the rocky mountains only rise up when the author looks at them is easy to avoid: »Rugged rocky mountains rise up behind Lecco, topped with glittering snowcaps.« The first person author is as unnecessary as stage directions: »I want to take a look at that,« announced a reporter from *Hessen-Fernsehen* (Hurtzig 2019). Golly!

Distance was once considered a cardinal virtue – including concerning the journalist's own role

It is not all a question of style, however; after all, writing can be kitsch without using the first person. It is also about how journalists see their own role. For a long time, there was a consensus that journalists lend their eyes and ears to the readers, but remain in the background as a person. Readers would learn from a reportage that the weather was scorching, but did not need to read, »Even early in the morning, I am sweating« (Sontheimer 2014). The opinion that prevailed for a long time was that journalists should act as professional observers, communicating to their audience the state of the world outside when considered in a non-prejudiced way, and, as reporters, allow their readers to take part in events that they cannot experience themselves.

Distance was considered a cardinal virtue and a mark of serious journalism – distance from the issues and the actors being reported on, and distance from one's own role. The subjectivity permitted and desired applies to the access to the material – to how a reportage is composed or how the argumentation in a comment piece is set up. It does not apply to the exhibition of the author. The author's restraint is not merely an aesthetic category – it guarantees credibility by making clear that the author is the servant of his material and the trustee of his audience, but not a self-publicist. The reporter »does not post, does not communicate himself, but his perception of the world – what he can see and bear witness to« (Grossarth 2017).

However, the first person singular has recently been spreading, especially in reportages: »The first fish appeared diagonally from under the boat. I saw white belly and an enormous bubble of air rising to the surface« (Meyer 2019). A one off? Stephan Seiler asked reporters about their views on the first person form for the *Medien-Werkstatt* [Media Workshop] series: Nine were somewhat or definitely in favor; one was undecided; six were more or less against (Seiler 2019: 12f.). Michael Haller reflects arguably the prevailing opinion when he writes, »If events change (in terms of content) as a result of my presence, the first person

form is not only legitimate, but necessary« (Haller 2008: 177).[2] As a result: »›I‹ is being used more and more in German newspapers and magazines. ›I‹ is used an awful lot,« sighed Michael Sontheimer as long as five years ago (Sontheimer 2014). Why? Sontheimer cites the psychologizing theory that many journalists want not only to laud significant people, but also occasionally to be lauded themselves. If necessary, »they do it themselves. And in an age of progressive individualization, ›Me incorporated,‹ and self-stylization, many journalists view vanity as an important part of their capital stock« (Sontheimer 2014).

Digitalization and the crisis of credibility

In Ursula Weidenfeld's view, »digitalization and the crisis of credibility in journalism [have] brought back the ›I‹« (Weidenfeld 2017: 331). »Brought back« implies that it was there once before. In the 1960s, Tom Wolfe, Truman Capote, Norman Mailer, and other authors published literarizing reportages in a forced subjective narrative style under the signet *New Journalism*. Although the protagonists of *New Journalism* maintained the separation between fictional literature and journalism that remains true to the facts, the latter tapped topics that journalism had so far left untouched: pop music, the drugs scene, subculture. They wrote about these in an incredibly subjective style because, in their view, journalism had withdrawn into a questionable objectivity in which the desired vividness was buried under facts (cf. Haller 2008: 55f.; Wolfe/Edwards 1973: passim). A skeptical view of the first person form of course does not necessary equate to an appeal for tedious graveyards of facts. However, the belief that the first person singular is the only way to write vividly and authentically about a pop concert or the drugs scene is highly flawed.

There is no doubt that the media world has changed. In the analog world, anyone who wanted to share something with his fellow citizens had only a small circle of efficacy – in the workplace, among friends, in a bar. Today, anyone who wants to can reach an audience of millions. Whatever happens, anywhere in the world, can be spread and received on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and other channels without passing through an editorial office.

This is what Weidenfeld means when she argues that one of the reasons why the first person has spread so much is the fact that, in a world of so many voices, journalists are more likely to be heard if they actively turn their name into a brand. In the *Like* economy of the digital channels, journalistic items are beco-

2   There was a time when comment – at least in written media – meant that reporters tried to stay in the background in order not to influence events through their presence. Of course the presence of a camera or even merely a radio microphone changes any scene, but does that mean that every radio or television reportage has to use the first person form?

ming increasingly distant from their original carriers – who pays attention to whether an article shared by friends comes from *Der Spiegel* or the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*? As a result, the importance of strong authors (or author brands) is rising. Most likely to gain attention is a distinct ›I.‹ According to Weidenfeld, this in turn results in journalists having to draw ever greater attention to this ›I,‹ be it on talk shows or on Twitter. »For editors in chief, the journalist's frowned-upon ›I‹ is being overlaid with the necessary ›I‹ of the editorial manager« (Weidenfeld 2017: 335). [3]

No patented formula against fakes

There is something that appears even more relevant here than the question of how journalism may change if editors in chief also become conférenciers of their media houses: Weidenfeld's indication of the crisis of credibility in journalism in general. There is no doubt that the profession's image has been damaged by fakes such as those by Claas Relotius, and it is worth taking every precaution to prevent attempts at fraud. This difficult area is made all the more unclear by the fact that, with its flamboyant nature, reportage has always been the most vulnerable to fudging of all journalistic forms (cf. Haller 2008: 167 ff.).[4]

The first person form is not a remedy for fakes, however. If a journalist wants to make up stories, he will do it in the first person, too. Nor does it help to counteract media skepticism among the population – those who fundamentally distrust the media will not be persuaded simply by reporters addressing the outside through ›I.‹ Besides, cases like that of Relotius play only a small role in creating mistrust in ›the media.‹ This discussion »is just one for the sector. The population is not interested at all. It is important to make that distinction,« assesses the television entertainer Harald Schmidt (Schmidt 2019). In addition, only a minority of people in Germany fundamentally mistrust the media (cf. Blöbaum 2018; Simon 2018; Jackob et al 2019), and their skepticism is fed by other sources: sloppy work, a lecturing tone that talks down to people, partiality and prejudice (cf. Haller 2018).

3   The theories of Julia Bönisch show that the way the role is understood is beginning to change. The (former) member of the main editorial office at *Süddeutsche Zeitung* responsible for digital issues, she posits that the future belongs not to the kind of managing editor that is used to composing »bulky texts,« but to those who think in marketing categories (cf. Bönisch 2019). This triggered a lively debate and some conflict in the main editorial office of the *Süddeutschen Zeitung* (cf. Messner & Wiegand 2019).
4   This has not only been the case since Relotius – Egon Erwin Kisch was also found to be making up stories (cf. most recently Raue 2019) and the work of Ryszard Kapucinski, allegedly the reporter of the century, is also subject to doubt over whether it was always whiter than white (cf. Ruß-Mohl 2010).).

Is the first person form more honest?

The question remains, whether the first person form demonstrates that, however much a journalistic author might strive to achieve distance, he is still a discerning, active subject who shapes his material anyway – whether ultimately the first person form is not more honest or at least creates more »transparency about the production conditions in reportages« (Seiler 2019: 13).[5] The argument that some of the semantic acrobatics required to avoid the use of »I« appear very labored is also worth listening to.

On the other hand, at the moment, there are more arguments in favor of adhering to a certain strictness of form that for abandoning it. Journalism based on professional standards is becoming more blurred at the edges, with semi-professional actors entering the scene. In terms of style, good authors will always find an elegant way out of the first person dilemma anyway. From a normative point of view, the imperative to maintain distance, and the will to achieve this, is not self-delusion on the part of journalists with regard to their own role. The idea of the distanced observer, who follows Grossarth in sharing not himself, but his perception of the world, is – for all the justified objections – not merely a fiction. Instead, it yields useful guiding principles, even in an age of rapid change in the media. To put it another way in the year in which we commemorate 50 years since the moon landings: ›I‹ might be a small word in a text, but it has giant consequences for journalism.

Translation: Sophie Costella

About the author

Werner D'Inka (*1954) has been a journalist at the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* since 1980. He was Managing Editor from 1991 to 2005 and became a member of the Editors' Committee in March 2005. Since the mid-1990s, he has regularly taught in the Media degree program at the University of Siegen. He studied Communication Studies, Politics and History in Mainz and at Freie Universität Berlin.

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5 Surely anyone who answers this question with »yes« would have to call for the first person singular in comment pieces, i.e. in a form in which the subjectivity of the author has a very different and much greater power? And surely the imperative for transparency also applies to other styles, such as news and reporting?

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Reviews

Stephan Russ-Mohl: *Die informierte Gesellschaft und ihre Feinde. Warum die Digitalisierung unsere Demokratie gefährdet.* [*The informed society and its enemies. Why digitalization threatens our democracy.*] Series: Edition Medienpraxis, Vol. 16. Cologne [Herbert von Halem] 2017, 368 pages, EUR 23

Reviewed by Guido Keel

Stephan Russ-Mohl greets the reader on the inside of the cover with a broad smile. But the book is far from cheerful. What he describes on the next 300 pages of *Die informierte Gesellschaft und ihre Feinde* leaves the reader feeling both alarmed and ultimately helpless.

The book's sub-heading reveals what Stephan Russ-Mohl is worried about: »Why digitalization threatens our democracy.« Anyone who has followed the public discourse about exactly this over the last few years, however briefly, will be familiar with the issue. A lot has been said and written recently about the demise of quality journalism, filter bubbles, the news-deprived, and fake news deciding elections. Stephan Russ-Mohl's book takes a wide view of the topic, bringing together various aspects to create an overall picture. Throughout the entire book, it is clear how worried the author is. But he is also angry – about sloppy journalists, unscrupulous providers of social media platforms, power-hungry politicians, and blinkered experts in communication studies.

Although the publication's list of sources – running to 28 closely written pages – gives it a broad base, the argument is chiefly driven by the author's zeal. Russ-Mohl has written a book targeted at a wide audience: academics in media and communication studies, journalists and media managers, economists and social psychologists, media users and the wider public. In an almost apologetic introduction, he describes it as a very personal book, whose writing and presentation are more in line with journalistic than academic standards. This does not have to be a bad thing. On the contrary – the book delivers something that he proposes towards the end as a potential solution to the problem: academia's involvement in the public debate with generally comprehensible contributions in public media.

But let us return to the beginning. Taking fake news and malicious false information as his starting point, Russ-Mohl addresses the issue of general disinformation in a society stuck in an attention trap. He identifies further trends in journalism such as the increasing loss of trust in journalism and its acceleration through digitalization, before addressing the responsibility that journalists bear for this malaise. This is the subject of a significant part of the book, entitled *The lost innocence of mainstream journalism*. The next topic is the role of populists in public disinformation. The book ends by discussing potential countermeasures – a section to which Russ-Mohl dedicates around 100 pages. His plea is addressed to media managers, journalists, academics, and, last but not least, media users – citizens in a democracy i.e. all of us.

This brief outline of the content makes it clear that the book leaves no stone unturned. Russ-Mohl picks from an embarrassment of riches to demonstrate the wider contexts. At the same time, he backs up his arguments with references to sources, many of them academic, others newspaper articles and personal interviews.

As Russ-Mohl himself writes, academics have a tendency to retreat into the safe niche of their research focuses and to publish work for a limited audience. In this book, Russ-Mohl does the opposite. Of course this makes him a target. Some of his observations appear overly simplistic, losing some of their analytical teeth – for example when he tars various types and cases of fake news with the same brush, regardless of whether they are audacious lies from the Trump election campaign, satirical media critique, or Orson Welles' 1938 radio program about a Martian invasion (cf. 22ff.). The epistemological discourse of the last few decades has made many journalists and almost all academics frightened to use the word ›truth‹. Russ-Mohl, on the other hand, is not afraid to stand by it and to communicate his assessment in incisive style. In places, his choice of words is puzzling. For example, the author writes consistently of the ›mainstream media‹ without once examining the dubious instrumentalization of the term by the populist forces he criticizes so strongly.

Russ-Mohl almost seems to derive pleasure from scolding journalists. Taking Uwe Krüger's findings on the causes of public mistrust in the media as his starting point, the author makes no secret of his low opinion of journalistic quality. He describes exaggerated teasers, such as a cover story that showed Angela Merkel in a blue and white nun's habit and the headline »Mother Angela,« as serious errors and fake news. When he lists other examples of poor performance, however, it is sometimes unclear what exactly the problem is – for example in his reference to a story in the *Guardian*, which apparently published a dubious translation of an interview with Julian Assange (cf. 136).

Some of what Russ-Mohl sees as dramatic errors appear somewhat pedantic. For example, he considers it »thoughtless, perhaps even cynical« (181) when jour-

nalists – and academics – talk of the commercialization of journalism when, he claims, actually entire markets are disappearing and they should therefore be talking of de-commercialization. He ignores the fact that commercialization refers to the focus on commercial rather than journalistic goals and is therefore an entirely appropriate term. At times, the author's personal opinion is all too clear – he laments the »unimaginative programming« (192) of ARD and ZDF, who he says show too much sport and crime drama, while ignoring challenging educational and cultural offerings from talk shows like Maischberger.

The sometimes polemic tone does not help his cause, for example when he refers to journalists who are enable to take criticism as »sensitive little souls« (169). Building on the tradition of communication studies expert Hans Mathias Kepplinger, he also complains that journalists do not conduct unbiased research and only quote experts that back up their own opinion – only to write that the nuclear disaster in Fukushima only killed three people and quote Kepplinger as an expert, without noting that other experts put the number of cancer victims at anywhere between 14 and 1,100 due to the increased levels of radioactivity.

Furthermore, while Russ-Mohl dedicates several pages to Kepplinger, it is not until the end of his journalist scolding that he mentions Kepplinger's opponent, journalism researcher, Siegfried Weischenberg, in order to relativize Kepplinger's statements. There is no question which findings Russ-Mohl prefers. While he quotes Kepplinger's work over numerous pages, calling it a »particularly persuasive example of what journalists could have learned over the last few decades if they [...] had had the tiniest spark of interest,« he merely describes Weischenberg as someone who »tended to flatter and glorify journalists« (169). No more of Weischenberg's findings are included – indeed, he is not even mentioned in the register of persons, in which Kepplinger appears eight times. Russ-Mohl cannot be accused of completely ignoring contradictory positions, but the extreme one-sidedness of the sources chosen does make a dubious impression.

Given the countless assertions and hypotheses presented in the book, the occasional contradiction is forgivable. At times, the author appears to have lost track of his own arguments – for example when he states that the media generate a fear of terrorism on the one hand (cf. 146), yet keep the mass population quiet and docile and have a pacifying effect on the other, only to complain in the next sentence that television viewers are constantly confronted with murder (cf. 159). Although the reader can easily understand the contradictory views, one could expect the author to have dealt with these observations in a more deliberate and nuanced way. In addition, the author has a tendency to repeat himself when outlining shortcomings, for example in the titles on page 162 (»Foreign reporting: Gaps and translation errors«) and 164 (»Illusions of competence and translation errors«).

Instead of merely indicating the shortcomings of journalism, it would also have been fair to honor the initiatives with which journalism is attempting to address

them. For example, Russ-Mohl accuses the media of allowing itself to be instrumentalized by Islamist terrorists by willingly spreading their message of blind terror (cf. 145); but there is no mention of the fact that media have publicly stated that they will no longer communicate certain images and content in order to deny the terrorists a platform.

The potential solutions he Russ-Mohl offers start off pessimistic: The subheadings »What can be done?« (233) and »What each of us can do« bookend around 100 pages on which in which the author searches and finds little. He sees no help at all coming from the state; he is also skeptical about financing through crowd funding and foundations; he takes a dark view of promoting media competence; social media platforms are of little use for serious fact checking. All that remains are closer collaboration with an academia that is willing to cooperate and a return – in journalism to the old virtues and in society to »people with backbone« (330) who repeatedly stand up for their basic rights.

The book does not strike a hopeful tone. Even in the introduction, the author warns that his work inspires not so much optimism as speculation about an oncoming disinformation disaster. It is a broad-based, passionate call to arms that does not sugarcoat anything. Every page makes it clear that the situation demands a book like this. We can only hope that journalism, media houses, policymakers, audiences, and society heed it.

This book review was first published in rezensionen:kommunikation:medien, 4th of December 2018, accessible under https://www.rkm-journal.de/archives/21561.

About the reviewer

Prof. Dr. Guido Keel is Head of the IAM Institute of Applied Media Studies at ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences. The focuses of his research include quality in journalism, change in journalism, and journalism in non-European contexts.

Translation: Sophie Costella

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.: *Analyzing Analytics. Disrupting Journalism One Click at a Time.*
London und New York [Routledge] 2019, 82 pages, approx. EUR 40

Reviewed by Stephan Mündges

What do users click on? How much time do they spend on an article? Do they watch a video all the way to the end? In the digital world, the use of content can be analyzed with a great deal of precision – a process that has become known as ›analytics.‹ Journalists themselves also use data, learning ever more about how many people access their page, how often which articles are read, and how intensively users interact with a post on Facebook. For more than a decade now, journalism research has also focused intensively on how journalists use these new possibilities and how they are changing journalism.

There can be few researchers who have published more studies on this than Edson C. Tandoc Jr. from Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. Now the former newspaper journalist has also published a book: In Analyzing Analytics, he provides an overview of the literature that has been published so far, reports on his own ethnographical and survey-based studies, and discusses how the use of analytics data affects journalism.

The slim book is divided into six easy-to-read chapters. Readers with limited time will find the first chapter useful, containing as it does a concise summary of the status of research. More detail is provided in the five chapters that follow. In »Changing audiences« (Chapter 2), the author traces how great the influence of the audience, especially on editorial decisions, has been so far and explains why journalists in the analog age displayed little or no interest in audience feedback. Largely based on studies and literature from the English-speaking world, this finding is not entirely applicable to German-language media. In Germany, media began paying greater attention to the interests of the audience and to findings from audience research even before the spread of the internet and the associated spread of analytics (Hohlfeld 2002; Blöbaum et al. 2010). However, Tandoc offers an enlightening diagnosis of how digitalization has changed the relationship between journalism and the public and the effects this has had on journalism.

His definition of ›web analytics‹ as set out in Chapter 3, is also fascinating. Journalism research uses a variety of terms that refer to the application of analytics in journalism but set different focuses. Tandoc himself uses the term ›web analytics‹ in this context, by which he means the recording and analysis of usage data that a media organization collects about its own website (cf. 27) – a very narrow definition. Other authors take a broader approach to the field, with Rodrigo Zamith, for example, referring to the field of research as ›audience analytics‹, by which he means systems that record the usage behavior of audiences (Zamith 2018). This

term is broader and also includes data gained from social media channels, for example. Unfortunately, it is not made entirely clear what effect these conceptual differences have when it comes to assessing the influence of analytics on journalism.

Chapter 4 is really the core of the book. In »Journalists adapting,« the author reports with a great deal of detail and insight on the empirical results now available in the field of research. The influence that analytics data has throughout the various steps of news production is carved out in an outstanding manner. In doing so, the author emphasizes that analytics is yet to fully replace journalistic intuition – there remain »wide spaces for editorial judgement« (39). It is also worth highlighting his observation that the use of analytics in journalistic work – and thus its effects on journalism – have constantly changed, as research from the past ten years shows. This is in part due to the progress of technology (analytics software is being developed further all the time), but mainly to changing patterns in the way it is used by journalists.

In the final two chapters, the author pursues the question of how analytics is changing journalism. Some of the changes are perhaps negligible: Few would criticize the fact that news websites choose the times at which content is published based on when the largest possible audience can be achieved. More relevant are questions of how analytics drives commercialization: When reach is optimized to the detriment of journalistic standards, journalism risks losing its legitimacy as an institution in society. Tandoc is keen to stress that this is a very real danger: »In my interviews, observations, and surveys, I find that the adoption of web analytics is an economic rather than a journalistic strategy« (64). But he also provides some positive examples: situations in which journalists have used analytics to increase the reach of content that is relevant to society. He therefore calls for journalists to reflect more on the use of analytics and for journalism not to limit itself to describing the situation as it is, but also to balance it against normative standards.

Unfortunately, this is where the book ends. More considerations would have been welcome: How exactly could journalists use analytics to fulfill their function in society? Should common parameters such as unique users and engaged time be replaced? Cherubini and Nielsen advocated this approach in a report published in 2016. Is the use of analytics perhaps not really essential in order to safeguard the existence of journalistic organizations? Not in order to maximize range, but in order to sell digital subscriptions successfully. Which normative standards should research apply to journalistic practice when it comes to the use of analytics? Is journalism with a wide reach not vital in order to be heard on digital platforms and in the battle for attention? The book answers none of these questions. There is only one solution, as Tandoc himself writes in the final sentence of his book: »We need to continue analyzing analytics.«

This book review was first published in rezensionen:kommunikation:medien, 23th of July 2019, accessible under https://www.rkm-journal.de/archives/21889.

About the reviewer

Stephan Mündges is a research associate at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at TU Dortmund, where he conducts research into the digital transformation of journalism. He also works as a reporter and deskman for ZDF, focusing on new technologies.

Translation: Sophie Costella

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Ingrid Stapf, Marlis Prinzing, Nina Köberer (Eds.): *Aufwachsen mit Medien.*
Zur Ethik mediatisierter Kindheit und Jugend. [*Growing up with media. On the ethics*
of mediatized childhood and adolescence.] Baden-Baden [Nomos] 2019, 363 pages,
EUR 69

Reviewed by Hans-Dieter Kübler

Today, we still find ourselves in the opening stages of digital development. Ref-
lecting on and discussing how children and adolescents grow up with it, in it, and
creating it, presents numerous dimensions and aspects – some of which actually
do justice to this radical and much cited transformation. There are undoubtedly
normative decisions to be made and education questions to resolve – but this
needs to be done in as up-to-the-minute a way as possible, which is rarely the case
in this book.

The classic, most commonly used definition of media, which is still subtly
reminiscent of the technologization of public communication, mass communi-
cation and the mass media, i.e. the reception and appropriation of professionally
produced content and formally available push devices, is problematic and already
eroded. Blanket terms like »childhood« and »adolescence« also appear outda-
ted – famously invented as artifacts of jurisprudence and pedagogy in the 19th
and 20th Centuries, they can today only be used in an institutional context. From
an empirical and analytical perspective, they need to be differentiated by a diverse
range of social, cultural, ethnic and gender-specific factors in today's pluralistic
societies, in which the technical and media-related situation and forces are driving
them ever further apart.

Those active in practical education – both parents and professionals – are
therefore likely to be able to think of and suffer under numerous requirements
and burdens with which they have to deal in relation to digital devices and their
use. At times, they may be overwhelmed or left baffled by the challenge. They
are unlikely to be helped by the abstracts of so many ethical debates and models
on responsibility, normative principles and justifications of media actions, on
»ethically informed media education,« on media competence, or even on the basal
media-anthropological nature of humanity (cf. M. Rath).

This kind of analysis and (self)reflection in relation to objects and inten-
tions, or at least an introduction thereto, is sadly lacking from the 24 articles
(including the introduction) in this work. They originate from an eponymous
conference at the Munich School of Philosophy in February 2018, and are also
intended to honor the theologian and media ethics expert Rüdiger Funiok, who
once taught there, as a »central pioneer of communication and media ethics in
the German-speaking world« (14) on the occasion of this 75th birthday and to

celebrate the 20th anniversary of the »Netzwerk Medienethik« [Media Ethics Network] that he cofounded.

The reader gains the impression that media ethics has become a rather insular specialist discipline, focused in on itself, that cultivates its own paradigms, approaches and debates in abstract form and debates them self-referentially, only occasionally daring to peer out into social, digital and virtual reality. Various articles in the first section, for example, argue that, with its establishment as a pragmatic, applied area of ethics, the ethics of the audience and recipients has become the focus, rather than the ethics of producers and journalism, as in the past.

There is a marginal, in some ways declamatory attempt to examine the question of whether these categories are even appropriate – what is an audience and what is a recipient? – in an age of shitstorms, malicious tirades, stalking campaigns, filter bubbles, pornographic abuse, personalized advertising, the long-standing blurring of private and public communication, monopolies of international IT corporations, user platformers, blogs, YouTube, Instagram influencers etc., and whether they are adequately perceived and defined by the allegedly active user, whom one hopes to see using his smartphone, tablet, iPad, social media, apps and other platforms in a confident, autonomous, self-determined, responsible, critical and competent way. However, this question is largely ignored in the rest of the arguments. Ethical requirements and tasks for producers and providers are noted only sporadically. The only time they are systematically addressed is in a short section of the introductory article by Funiok, under the brief maxim »Managing customer data transparently and paying taxes – the responsibility of media companies.« It is not enough!

Further irritation comes from formulations that reduce pedagogy to an intervention into everyday actions and, in an objectivizing way, call for media competence to be taught to some extent like abstract, compact knowledge, including an ethical basis ex cathedra. Much reference is made to one of the founders of media competence, Bielefeld-based Dieter Baacke. This is inappropriate given that he originally derived his understanding of competence from the language-based approach of Noam Chomsky and the communicative approach of Jürgen Habermas, both of whom assume that the individual is able to communicate per se and develops further with his development and socialization, as he appropriates the symbolic, technical and media-related world.

Competency must therefore be conceived as both a skill that has always been there and one that develops itself. It is a premise that adults can constantly observe in children from a very young age, as they learn and communicate through their use of digital means of communication. In contrast, other articles take a very generalized look at ethical-normative and pedagogical questions, look for new paradigms in the justification of children's rights, attitudes or narrative ethics, and address media-related dimensions more or less only as proven fields of contemplation.

The articles are divided into three sections. The first covers »theoretical principles« and contains five articles that discuss the aforementioned premises and posits. Examining »fields of application,« the second and most extensive section includes thirteen articles covering three very different, apparently randomly chosen sectors: »games and entertainment,« »monitoring and welfare,« and »authenticity, reality and virtuality.« Finally, the third section contains three articles with »consequences for society, politics and education.« The second section begins with theory, providing explanations of theories of entertainment and on general ethics of media entertainment. It is considered in principle as »precarious« (111), as it is unable to elude the posit of responsibility. It remains »specifically precarious« (113) for children and young people, resulting in »particular needs for protection and demands for education« (ibid.). This article is supported by a later one, which provides a wander through the history of philosophy and its various perspectives on play and creativity. Before this, digital games, known as »serious games,« are addressed as a medium of learning that can be the subject of little complaint when it comes to ethical questions. They specify the two subsequent articles, which use selected games to look at the potential of digital games for media education and value education. The final article picks up on recent controversy surrounding online gaming addiction, about which the WHO is also concerned, and argues that the criteria are too closely based on pathological gambling and fail to take the player's social environment sufficiently into account.

China demonstrates the way that digital technologies can be used perfectly and threateningly to control and monitor allegedly dangerous or even just unreliable people in a more large-scale and inhuman way than any other state. In Germany, these uses are applied only in very limited cases and are widely criticized. A detailed explanation of why they are addressed here as a second field of application for media ethics is sorely missed. Instead, the first article complains about the relationship between welfare and monitoring and the potential limits. At the end, it calls for surveillance methods to be »compatible with the context, situation and relationships« (195).

The next article aids this intention with the paradigm of the »leading strings« and once again circles the dual character of control and surveillance. Again taking a theoretical, abstract approach far removed from the topic of the book, the next article examines the development and endangerment of the private sphere in »surveillance societies organized by algorithms« (211). Taking a more specific approach, the next article looks at the dangers facing children and adolescents from IT security and calls for them to be educated as an essential part of the solution, such as in the training offered under Chaos Computer Club e.V.'s initiative »Chaos macht Schule«.

The final section is all about »authenticity, reality and virtuality.« The first article understands this concept as a »challenge of adolescent identity formation

in the digital space« (237), as it only permits collective evaluation mechanisms of general categories such as likes, shares, clicks etc. and thus impedes the development of a personal identity. The challenges that influencer and content marketing on social media present for children and adolescents are the subject of the next article, albeit not in a concrete, empirical way, but instead as a problem of media ethics. In contrast, the final article is entirely descriptive, outlining how technologies of extended reality (virtual, augmented, mixed reality) can be used to create learning situations and the »development of a new culture of roles« (269).

The first article in the final section is the first to finally provide a sober introduction to the issues of contemporary education, addressing the »consequences for society, politics and education.« It questions the distinction between digital natives and digital immigrants – originally made by Mark Prensky in 2001 and widely repeated in Germany – and calls for relevant skills and usage habits to be perceived in a more accurate and realistic way. After all, these are not confined to specific generations, nor are they homogeneous throughout specific generations. Diverse concepts, such as mentors on a case-by-case basis, are to be trialed and applied in the Digital Pact between the federal and state governments that is to take effect in 2019.

The next two articles support these pedagogical, didactic objectives: on the one hand, that those responsible should demand and explicate that political education ensures that young people handle the new media being formed and the information it provides both properly and critically, as they can no longer rely on the quality and authenticity of traditional journalism; on the other, that the use of digital media and reflection on its social and normative dimensions be included in teacher training in order to enable authentic participation in its use. A report on a qualitative survey of older adolescents and young adults in the next article supports these attempts in education policy. Finally, the last paper demonstrates that humoristic points of access, such as visual jokes and puns, can also stimulate reflection on media ethics. Problems in media ethics are thus only touched upon in this section.

»Who (person, institution) is responsible for what (action, lack of action) to whom (those affected, shareholders, stakeholders) for what reason (standards and values) before whom (own conscience, public)« (32) – this is the posit that Funiok presented in the introduction as guidelines for justifying and guiding ethically correct action, including in media ethics. There are now plenty of manuals and guides on this topic. If the aim of this volume is to reformulate and spell it out again for children and adolescents at the start of the digital age, it has little success. A lot of relevant points are overlooked or culpably ignored, while other aspects of little expedience are exaggerated and given excessive space. This book does not sufficiently explain or establish what media ethics specifically means, or should mean, in the age of digitalization, the transformation of media and society,

and serious maldevelopment in children and adolescents. Current debates indicate a need for something more and something different.

This book review was first published in rezensionen:kommunikation:medien, 24th of June 2019, accessible under https://www.rkm-journal.de/archives/21835.

About the reviewer

Hans-Dieter Kübler, born 1947, Dr. rer soc., was a Professor of Media, Cultural and Social Sciences at Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (HAW), Faculty of Design, Media and Information, and is Chair of the Institute of Media and Communication Research (IMKO). His work focuses on media and cultural theory; empirical and historic media research; and media pedagogy. He has published numerous works, most recently the following books: *Mediale Kommunikation* (2000), *Medien für Kinder* (2002), *Kommunikation und Medien* (2003), *Mythos Wissensgesellschaft* (2005, 2nd ed. 2009); (co-ed.) *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschriften heute* (2009); (ed.) *Bildjournalismus – Grundlagen und Grenzfragen* (2010); *Interkulturelle Medienkommunikation* (2011), together with Joachim Betz *Internet Governance. Wer regiert wie das Internet?* (2013). Since October 2012, he has been co-editor of the biannual journal *Medien & Altern* (Munich).

Translation: Sophie Costella

Giovanna Dell'Orto, Irmgard Wetzstein (Eds.): *Refugee News, Refugee Politics. Journalism, Public Opinion and Policymaking in Europe.* **New York, London [Routledge] 2019, 228 pages, approx. EUR 39**

Reviewed by Gabriele Hooffacker

At the start of 2015, there was no way of knowing that the issue of refugees in the media and the relationship between the European community and the refugees would continue to shape political debate to this day. By the time the events of New Year's Eve came around, society's view and the media resonance had changed beyond all recognition – as is shown by the term »refugee crisis« and the way refugees and migration are framed as a security problem for European countries. This makes the issue ideal for research into political events and the dynamics of media and society.

The point at which the reception changed was the events of New Year's Eve 2015 in Cologne. They brought forth an increasingly aggressive mood, initiated by certain groups on social media platforms and eventually feeding into a discussion about the role of the media as a whole. The edited volume *Refugee News, Refugee Politics* examines this change, the relationship between social media and traditional media, and the role of journalism in society at a time in which it faces its own crisis of change.

Back in 2017, the editors of this publication invited colleagues to two symposia at the University of Vienna and the University of Minnesota. The findings are collected in this volume, which focuses on two key topics: »borders« and »integration« – in Greece, through which most of the refugees travelled, and in Germany and Austria, where they settled.

As well as writings by academics from politics and sociology, the volume also includes numerous contributions from representatives of journalistic practice and civil society. This linking of the different worlds – political science, civil society, and journalism – is one of the book's main merits. Perspectives from communication and journalism studies receive only limited coverage.

In their introduction, the two editors, Giovanna Dell'Orto and Irmgard Wetzstein, state that »the ›refugee crisis‹ is reported on by a profession itself in crisis« (7). This is demonstrated particularly in the second half of the volume, Parts 3 and 4, which look at journalism. Parts 1 and 2 examine developments in politics and society.

Migration research provides the theoretical framework for the political events. »Welcoming Citizens, Divided Government, Simplifying Media«: The retired Münster historian and migration researcher Dietrich Tränhardt introduces the volume by providing a historical overview and context for the contradictory

events between 2015 and 2017. His contribution is complemented by a journalistic view of the period from Peter Riesbeck of *Tagesspiegel*. Vicki L Birchfield and Geoffrey Harris examine the »expectations-politics-policy conundrum« in the EU between populist nationalism and support for the EU project. Sabine Lehner and Markus Rheindorf make the connection between this and the media landscape in Austria during this period, while Irmgard Wetzstein focuses her investigation on the issues of gender and security, carving out the stereotype of the young male migrant and the suppressed Muslim woman, compared to the helpless young European woman. The first section ends with a study by Andreas Panagopoulos and an essay by Costas Kantouris on the wave of migration through Greece and how it was received in the media.

The second section of the volume looks at civil society in the three countries under investigation. All the authors work actively with refugees: Sophia Ioannou and Valia Savvidou from »SolidarityNow« write about Greece; Kerstin Lueck and Leonhard Dokalik-Wetzstein about educational programs for teachers who teach refugees; Claudia Schäfer and Andreas Schadauer about the fake news and hate speech faced by refugees in Austria.

The third section is dedicated to journalism in Greece during the investigation period, and provides arguably the most new material for German-speaking readers. Ioannis Papadopoulos, Kathimeri, named his summary »Trying to find the right words.« In it, he argues that, until 2015, Greek media had largely used negative connotations when reporting on »illegal immigrants.« This did not change until the death of three-year-old Alan Kurdi.

The traumatic experiences faced by journalists in Idomeni, where many of the refugees became stranded after the closure of the Balkan route, are described by Phoebe Fronista and Sofia Papadopoulou in their paper, while Jeanne Carstensen explains the challenge of presenting the topic to an American audience.

The Afghan journalist Mustafa Mohammad Sarwar from *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* writes about his reporting, which is mainly aimed at an audience of immigrants, and appeals for refugees to be not idealized, but recognized as people with weaknesses, too. Elena Becatoros and David Rising (*AP*) highlight the problem of getting bogged down in statistics and trying to avoid distortion in international reporting.

The fourth and final section of the volume analyzes reporting in Austria and Germany. Edith Meinhart, Martin Staudinger and Peter Unger from *profil* provide an analysis of the change in public opinion in the Austrian press and on television, entitled »From Empathy to Hostility in 127 days.« Jan Bieliecki from *Süddeutsche Zeitung* examines the watershed moment of New Year's Eve in Cologne. Carmen Valero reports from Berlin for *El Mundo* and here writes about »Fake News and a Profession in Crisis«. Caterina Lobenstein calls for »Widening the Focus: Why Writing About Migration is More Than Writing about Migrants,« while Melissa

Eddy from *The New York Times* writes about »Telling Stories of Integration in Germany«.

Still topical today, this volume shines a light on the topic from the perspectives of various actors from academia, civil society and journalism. The authors use a range of methods to do so – everything from essays to reflections on subjective experience to content analysis.

The paper by Eva Thöne (*Spiegel Online*), »Torn between Transparency and Stereotypes. How to Report About Refugees and Crime,« demonstrates just how topical the journalists' reflections on this topic are. In it, she draws a direct link between increasing reporting on criminality among migrants and the loss of trust in traditional media, before appealing for more sophisticated reporting.

There is one thing this volume cannot do: highlight solutions. It does not attempt to. How can we avoid stereotypes and the framing of »criminality?« How can we escape the trap of personalization? And how can journalism, while still demonstrating empathy, locate events within both national and supranational contexts? How should we handle the loss of trust in the media? And how can journalism continue after this experience?

This is a shame – new findings and more specific conclusions for journalistic practice from journalism practitioners would undoubtedly have been useful in places. What remains is a kaleidoscope of the upsetting years of 2015 to 2017; a documentation of the challenges facing journalism and civil society. The fact that all the papers in the volumes are published in English will undoubtedly boost the reception of the topic in the international community..

This book review was first published in rezensionen:kommunikation:medien, 16th of August 2019, accessible under https://www.rkm-journal.de/archives/21932.

About the reviewer

Gabriele Hooffacker (*1959), Dr.-phil., is a teaching Professor at the Faculty of Computer Science and Media at Leipzig University of Applied Sciences. She is co-editor of the journal *Journalistik*.

Translation: Sophie Costella

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BLexKom möchte der Kommunikationswissenschaft im deutschsprachigen Raum ein Gesicht geben. Vorgestellt werden die zentralen Akteure: Professoren, Habilitierte und andere Personen, die einen gewichtigen Beitrag für das Fach geleistet haben – von Karl Bücher bis zu den frisch Berufenen.

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rezensionen:kommunikation:medien (r:k:m) versteht sich als zentrales Rezensionsforum für die Kommunikations- und Medienwissenschaften. *r:k:m* will seinen Lesern einen möglichst vollständigen thematischen Überblick über die einschlägige Fachliteratur ermöglichen und Orientierung in der Fülle des ständig wachsenden Buchmarkts bieten. Aktuelle Rezensionen erscheinen in regelmäßigen Abständen.

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