Tipping the Balance of Power
Social Media and the Transformation of Political Journalism

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When, during a campaign visit to Rochester, a small town in Kent, Emily Thornberry tweeted a photo of a house covered with St. George's flags and a white van in front of it, she didn't imagine this swift and impulsive act would cause a scandal. "It was just trying to give, to the people who follow me on Twitter, a kind of picture of what the Rochester byelection is like", the British Labour MP and shadow attorney-general explained somewhat disconcertedly to the *Guardian* in November 2014. Her political opponents, ranging from UKIP leader Nigel Farage to Tory MPs and fellow Labour politicians, quickly responded on Twitter to disqualify her tweet as snobbish. Because the English flag and the "white van man" are considered emblematic for the British working classes, they argued that it showed how elitist and disconnected with the man in the street the Labour party is. "Derogatory", "dismissive" and "disgraceful", they called it, while Farage even suggested that the post let Labour leader Ed "Milliband's mask slip" (Mason 2014). While Thornberry's tweet went viral on Twitter, it was only a question of minutes until what would now become an affair was picked up by political journalists. Articles based on the postings from Twitter appeared on websites and somewhat later in the newspapers and broadcast news. The general sentiment was that the tweet "cemented the impression that Thornberry, who lives in a £3 million house in Islington, was part of the insufferable quinoa-munching metropolitan elite" (Wallop 2015). That same evening Emily Thornberry resigned from the shadow cabinet and was demoted to the back benches in Westminster.

This political gaffe might in itself seem insignificant but it illustrates well how the advent of social media has changed the dynamics between politicians and political reporters. In the era of mass communication, they had different aims but shared interests. Politicians needed entry to the news media to get their message out to the citizenry, while news outlets needed politicians as sources for the kind of news that is considered essential to citizens and key to legitimize a news outlet's role in democracy. To a large extent, this interdependence based on information distribution monopolies stabilized the press-politics power relationship and consequently the democratic system. The immediacy of social media, however, has made visible what used to remain hidden when instant publication by everyone was not an option. In the era of mass media, both journalists and politicians had the third player in the triangle of political communication – the audience, also known as the electorate – in the back of their mind when doing their job. But although the public's perceived wishes and needs influenced (strategic) behavior, it remained somewhat of an unconsummated love. Both political and media elites were to a large extent shielded from citizens and were able to negotiate the political and public agenda merely among themselves (cf. Brants and Voltmer 2011).

With the rise of the internet and social media the relationship between politics, journalism and the public changed into an actual *ménage à trois*. Reporters and politicians are very aware of the opportunities and challenges networked communication offers them in both relating to each other and reaching out to the public. This has become more important now that political parties have lost their relatively stable grassroots support and voters have become increasingly volatile. To make up their minds, these floating voters – who have become harder to reach through institutional channels – base their opinions on information from a diverse set of sources presented in mass media, the internet and now, on social media. A hybrid media system is taking shape where a mass media logic and a networked logic interact, and the various agents in the triangle of political communication "create, tap, or steer information flows in ways that suit their goals and in ways that modify, enable, or disable others' agency, across and between a range of older and newer media settings" (Chadwick 2013: 4; Klinger and Svensson 2014; see also the chapters by Chadwick et al. and Klinger and Svensson in this volume). The hybridization that occurs can create significant changes to established working practices. For politicians, impression management is thus increasingly important to win voters (see Enli in this volume). At the same time, journalists cope with the issue of how to attract the attention of this fragmented audience and how to profile their brand in a hybrid communication paradigm.

The possibility of direct and open communication with and to citizens, even when it is unidirectional, has changed the power structures in political communication for better and for worse, as becomes clear from the Twitter gaffe of Emily Thornberry, an avid tweep. However, to what extent and how the communicative space of politics will be transformed is still up for debate because the use of various social media platforms and their functions in an evolving hybrid media system are still very much in flux. Initially, in scholarship and public discourse high expectations reigned of the empowerment of citizens and a direct and vivid exchange of arguments between voters and their representatives (see Coleman and Blumler 2009). This would enrich the quality of public debate. The promise of direct communication with voters prompted the *Guardian* even to label the 2010 elections in the UK as "the first social media election" (Arthur 2010).

However, it has become clear that Twitter, just as other social media, is only partly about deliberation. The majority of politicians' tweets broadcast opinions, updates about what they are doing, or messages to mobilize their base. At the other end, most users use the platform to get informed without feeling the necessity to get in touch with politicians or enter a debate. This seems to fit well with the affordances of the platform (Graham, Jackson and Broersma 2014). Gradually, Twitter has developed from primarily a social networking and messaging site with status updates by a relatively small circle of "friends" into first and foremost a news and information platform for a broad audience.

The company has successfully redirected the focus of use from tweeps' personal lives to the world around them. Since 2009, the Twitter interface no longer asks "What are you

doing?", which encourages personal status updates and chatter, but "What's happening?" which encourages sharing of eyewitness observations, opinions and other information. In this new networked space where various types of agents are connected, user patterns seem to be dominated by posting, referring and reading, and to a lesser extent, by interaction, engagement and discussion. This behavior is preordained and thus shaped by the economic interests and programmed affordances of the platform. Twitter's business model has been increasingly focused towards datafication and acquiring as much meaningful information as possible by persuading its users to post enriched information about questions of the day (Van Dijck 2013). Journalists and news organizations are thus important to have on board, which was publicly acknowledged in a series of tweets by founder Jack Dorsey on Twitter's ninth birthday: "Journalists were a big part of why we grew so quickly and still a big reason why people use Twitter: news. It's a natural fit. (…) We wouldn't be here without you" (21-3-2015).

For established news outlets the rise of social media is both an opportunity and a threat (Anderson, Bell and Shirky 2012; Broersma and Peters 2013). The network logic of social media sites erodes the information monopolies of news companies even more than relatively static publishing platforms such as websites and blogs do. The sharing of news on Twitter and Facebook challenges their role as society's gatekeepers for information on current affairs which is part and parcel of journalism, but also harms their business model. The upside of a hybrid system is that they can brand themselves, distribute their news on social media and this way direct many news consumers to their platforms. Especially Facebook, and to a lesser extent Twitter and Instagram, nowadays generate a large part of the traffic to news outlets' homepages (PEW 2014). Moreover, journalists gain instant and convenient access to a potentially unlimited amount of sources and information through social networks. Because of its affordances, focus on current information, and users Twitter is particularly important in this respect (Cision 2013b). Social media have therefore been integrated quickly into daily routines and have become increasingly important to news outlets.

The main question, however, is whether and to what extent social media fundamentally change political communication. Initially, a utopian discourse prevailed (Arceneaux and Schmitz Weiss 2010). Especially journalists who were early adapters of social media were enthusiastic about the opportunities these platforms offered to journalism. One senior *Guardian* journalist (personal interview), for example, called Twitter a "revolution" that is "redefining everything that the industry does and how it behaves". When journalists grasp the opportunities, she argued, Twitter "can act like a wire service, a fact checking service, a propaganda vehicle, an advertising vehicle – everything that you could possibly want from the internet is boiled down in Twitter – into one very, very simple service". Although the opinion touches upon important features of social media, these kinds of utterances might be emblematic for the discourse that comes with the introduction of every new medium. Conversely, other journalists have argued that social media do not change

journalism fundamentally. They contend that existing norms, routines and practices are simply migrated to an online context. These viewpoints are reflected in academic discourses around journalism and social media.

This chapter argues that the rise of social media has extended and simultaneously changed the playing field of political reporting. Although many practices journalists are familiar with in the offline world of national parliaments, state houses and town halls at first sight seem to stay in place, social media have extended their spatial and temporal dimensions. We argue that a distinctive repertoire of social media practices, grounded in the logic and affordances of networked media, is evolving. This functions according to a very different logic than the mass media logic that still partly underlies political reporting in the current hybrid media system. The pace of political communication processes has increased substantially now that it is easier to connect with sources and information flows and possible to post information instantly. Moreover, networked communication has blurred the distinctive but interdependent roles of journalists and politicians now that they can both broadcast information. The normalization thesis (Lasorsa et al. 2012; Hedman 2015) which contends that new media challenge traditional practices and routines, but that these are merely adapted to fit online and are not essentially changed, thus misses the point. We argue that the power balance between journalists and sources is fundamentally changing. To ground our argument we will focus on Twitter because it has developed into a daily and almost inevitable service to journalists. While Facebook is mainly used to distribute and promote news stories and – to a lesser extent – engage with readers, Twitter's affordances make it tremendously useful for reporting.

Twitter as a Beat for Political Reporting

The easy availability of potentially interesting sources, information and opinions has turned Twitter into a convenient and increasingly important beat for reporters (Broersma and Graham 2012, 2013). To ensure steady and reliable news flows, reporters are traditionally assigned to beats which cover a specific topic, ranging from politics to crime, science and showbiz. Beats have both spatial and social dimensions. They usually include a specific geographic place (such as parliament, town hall or a court of law) where reporters go on a regular basis to gather, share and negotiate information with sources. Similarly, for many reporters Twitter has become a space to go, find information and talk with others on a daily basis. It offers a convenient way to build and develop online social networks which mirror and expand beats beyond geographical borders (Broersma and Graham 2013).

The platform has become indispensable for general reporting or foreign reporting in which journalists have to cope with sudden news events such as disasters, incidents and political uprisings (Bruno 2011). Twitter then becomes a one-off beat. In many cases reporters are not on the ground (yet) and thus have to rely upon the information that others put online.

Moreover, they do not have a network in place that supplies them with reliable information. Through Twitter they can easily get in touch with people who are not well known yet but suddenly interesting in the light of a certain news topic. This can extend the diversity of voices in the news beyond the usual elite sources. However, for other reporters, the use of the platform by many typical elite sources such as politicians and celebrities is a major attraction. In areas such as entertainment and sports, sources are not very easy to approach. Social media can compensate for this lack of sources, by providing reporters access to selected aspects of the daily lives, thoughts and emotions of celebrities and athletes (Broersma and Graham 2013; Paulussen and Harder 2014).

Since its start in 2006, Twitter has applied a deliberative strategy to encourage as many politicians, journalists and celebrities as possible to join. Because these groups attract other users and add valuable information to the network, the company has established teams that help them to set up and manage their accounts (O'Leary 2012). Accordingly, one of the main assets of Twitter is that it has succeeded in connecting ordinary people to the popular, powerful and rich. In addition to that, it has increasingly developed into a network in which professionals meet each other and exchange information. The fabric of the platform in which, contrary for example to Facebook and LinkedIn, reciprocity is not necessary to follow or to be followed, makes Twitter an easily accessible and valuable beat for journalists looking for information or contacts (Broersma and Graham 2013).

A vast body of survey research and a growing number of qualitative studies confirm that social network sites are nowadays part and parcel of the daily work routines of journalists around the globe. In 2013, 96 percent of 589 surveyed British journalists indicated that they used social media on a daily basis for reporting. Twitter was the most popular platform and used almost exclusively for professional reasons, as opposed to Facebook, Pinterest or Instagram which also have more private aims. While in 2011 seventy percent of the journalists used it for work-related reasons, this number rose to 92 percent in 2013. "Social media was an add-on originally, a little something extra you used to do", said one of the interviewed journalists. "Now it's intrinsic to everyday life, it's completely woven into the newsroom" (Cision 2013a). Whether and how social media are embedded in the institutional structures of newsrooms differs between news outlets. Some have strict social media policies while others leave it up to individual journalists to use platforms as they like.

There are notable differences between various national contexts. The UK (92%) ranks highest when it comes to the daily use of Twitter for reporting, with France (91%), Canada (89%), the Netherland (88%), Australia (85%), the US (79%) and Sweden (77%) in its slipstream. In Finland (61%) and Germany (59%) daily use is consistently lower (Cision 2013b). However, the percentages in these countries have more than doubled since 2011, suggesting that they are quickly catching up. Results from other parts of the world, notably South America and Asia, suggest that the numbers here are between forty and seventy percent, and also on the rise (Schmitz Weiss 2015). As an Indian journalist states: "These

days I see more journalists and editors go to social media in response to a major event. You have to use social media because the conversation online is way ahead of what's in the paper" (Bélair-Gagnon et al. 2014: 1068). In 2011, Twitter for Newsrooms was started, including an online resource and a team offering support to reporters and news outlets.

For political reporters the presence of a large number of politicians has been an important asset attracting them to the platform. As a Dutch journalist reveals: "I resisted it for a long time, until I noticed it had become inevitable. I did not want to follow the 2012 elections without Twitter, risking that colleagues anticipate things they already know, while I don't because I'm too stubborn to be on Twitter" (Brands 2014: 76). Indeed, after the successful Obama campaign of 2008, which fully embraced the use of social media, joining Twitter has been seen as a major asset during elections for both politicians and political reporters. The company too actively promotes and supports the use of the platform in politics, for example by launching a Twitter Government and Elections Handbook (2014). It emphasizes that tweeting offers politicians the opportunity for a virtual "handshake" and direct conversation with voters. It advertises the platform as a virtual town hall meeting, easily accessible to all voters. But it also points to the value of the platform for developing contacts with journalists, for example by encouraging politicians to "engage with the reporter on Twitter" after an interview.

Nowadays, social media strategies have become firmly integrated into political practice and the PR policies of politicians (Graham et al. 2014). In 2013, about sixty percent of French, British, Swedish and Norwegian MPs were active on Twitter, while around one fifth to a quarter of the latter had a Facebook page. In the Netherlands, 93 percent of the MPs were active tweeps, while in the US ninety percent of Congress members had active accounts. Of the Dutch MPs, 86 percent indicated that they considered Twitter as the most important social network, while only 9 percent mentioned Facebook (Frame and Brachotte forthcoming; Larsson and Kalsnes 2014; Weber Shandwick 2014). Politicians use Twitter during elections and on a day-to-day basis to reach out directly to voters. However, they use it even more to put issues on the public agenda through legacy media. "Sometimes one tweet gets things going", Dutch MP Pieter Omzigt states. He was reading documents about a new tax policy which were just sent by the government to parliament while waiting for departure in an aeroplane. "I thought: this has an impact on five million citizens, so I quickly launched a tweet. I could not believe my eyes when I switched my telephone back on after the one hour flight" (Korteweg 2014). The overwhelming public response that the information on Twitter provoked and was picked up in news outlets firmly put the issue on the political agenda.

Dominant Reporting Practices and Routines on Twitter

For political reporters Twitter is not so much a replacement of personal contact, but provides them with a spatial and temporal extension of their geographical beat. For large parts of the

week they are physically present in and around parliament and the various departments, and immersed fully in the social network that constitutes the political beat. Usually they are in close contact with politicians, spokespersons, staff members and civil servants, and have developed long-term relationships based on mutual trust. This sense of closeness and mutual interdependence promotes the exchange of tips for news stories, comments and information, and facilitates the verification of information. Although there are differences in the frequency and patterns of use between reporters (Revers 2014; Hedman and Djerf-Pierre 2013; Engesser and Rumprecht 2014; Rogstad 2014), social media have been widely adopted as a tool that enhances existing practices and routines. What is often neglected, however, is the fact that social media simultaneously change them.

Based on a meta-analysis of Twitter research, we have developed a cross-national typology of seven dominant reporting practices and routines of political journalists on Twitter: monitoring, networking, engaging, sourcing, publishing, promoting and branding. Together these patterns of online behavior have developed into a new and consistent repertoire of how reporters use Twitter. Although they build upon established practices and routines, this repertoire has been shaped over time according to the affordances of Twitter; user behavior is to a large extent inscribed in the design of the platform. Features such as retweets, @mentions, hashtags, lists, and embedded links and content are closely connected to the professional roles political journalists adhere to on social platforms. While some research (Engesser and Humprecht 2014) has argued that journalists use Twitter frequently but not in a skillful way, we argue that many have developed a coherent repertoire and have adapted to the logic of Twitter very well over the past years.

Monitoring

Twitter is a very fruitful and relevant place to go for journalists because it provides them with an efficient tool for monitoring key debates and tendencies in society. Twitter has become an awareness system that facilitates "ambient journalism" in which journalists monitor public opinion, sources they follow and the instant unfolding of news events through small snippets of only implicitly related information (Hermida 2012). Reporters indicate that monitoring is an important reason for using social media; between 81 (Australia) and 66 percent (Germany) of the surveyed journalists in nine Western countries use Twitter for this reason (Cision 2013b). Political journalists describe Twitter as a thermometer that allows them to know the mind of the people. The frequency of tweeting about a parliamentary debate or a political topic, including Twitter's trending topic function, is factored in when deciding whether a topic is newsworthy and whether to spend time on covering it.

There are different ways to monitor the political realm on Twitter. First, political reporters follow topics and debates through hashtags or by searching for keywords. Second, they follow a mix of politicians, other journalists and media outlets, as well as others in the political domain such as civil servants, interest groups and PR people. Third, they make lists

based on topics or distinctive groups such as political parties, which allows them to quickly scan for valuable tweets. Twitter offers a convenient and quick way to get a sense of what is going on in parliament and not miss out on current developments. An American political reporter compares it to a cocktail party 2.0: "you can listen to *all* the conversations you want to, that you are physically capable of following, you can participate in all of them at the same time and you don't have to overcome any shyness" (Revers 2015: 9).

Reporters use Twitter to find news and generate ideas for new stories. "The best part is any inside information that comes out or when a politician like Sarah Palin or someone else makes news with their comments", an American reporter says (Parmelee 2014: 438). "As a journalist, that's what I look for in tweets: nuggets of interesting, new and exclusive information." Tweets also give them a sense of what competitors are working on, so they will not miss out on important news. It generates story ideas and enables them to decide quickly if they want to pick up on issues in the news coverage. What are the topics on the political agenda and how are representatives of various parties thinking about pressing issues? When a topic breaks, using Twitter is much faster to develop an impression of what is going on (and gauging politicians' opinions) than making phone calls or even following the wires. "It is my first and last stop online every day", an American political reporter said (Parmelee 2013: 299).

Networking

A second function of social media is that they are used to build and maintain professional networks. Journalists compare it to a rolodex, an old-fashioned address book, or call it "the modern equivalent of the phone book" (Heravi, Harrower and Boran 2014: 25). Political journalists indicate that they consider Twitter as an important means to follow their beat. "It is our job to closely follow politicians", a Dutch reporter argues. "Part of their public life takes place on Twitter, so a parliamentary journalist who takes himself seriously can't do without it anymore" (Brands 2014: 75-76). The platform offers journalists a convenient way to get an impression of politicians' daily activities, opinions and experiences, without giving them the feeling that they have to sacrifice their independence or get too close with their sources. An American political reporter put it like this: "I'm comfortable 'following' a source [on Twitter] but not comfortable 'friending' one [on Facebook] because of perceptions that go along with being 'friends' with someone I cover" (Parmelee 2014: 442).

The direct messaging function of Twitter is a key affordance of the platform for journalists who want to establish exclusive relationships with sources. It is much quicker and more direct than email and in daily practice it often functions as chat software. Reporters can easily approach MPs for direct comments, also when they want to circumvent spokepersons, even if they are in parliamentary meetings. A Dutch political commentator relates that he sometimes watches the live broadcast of a debate from home and then can see on his television when an MP gets his message and is typing a response (private interview). A large

extent of political communication thus takes place behind the scenes and is not available to other users. Reporters often indicate that they are reluctant to communicate openly with politicians and other sources because they are well aware that their competitors are watching them closely on Twitter. As a senior political correspondent at the *Guardian* (private interview) reveals: "People often address things to me via Twitter openly, but I usually reply by the direct message that only they can see - just 'cause I think most people are not really interested in our exchange, and it's probably better done just between me and that person". This refers both to the fact that sources might be more willing to share detailed information in private and to reporters' needs to get a preferred position and publish exclusive news.

Interacting

Social media offer political journalists an opportunity to engage with readers and sources in a public forum. Whether they actually do so is very much dependent on their personal stance towards social media. Some journalists, mainly at legacy media organisations, feel they should remain objective and detached on social media and thus not personally engage with readers and sources. Others, especially at "born digital" news outlets, feel they have to develop personal bonds on Twitter to engage readers in news production, but also to become a "hub" in the network and thus attract news consumers to their work and platforms (Zeller and Hermida 2015; Rogstad 2014). Retweets offer an opportunity to distribute interesting news and simultaneously engage with the sender of the original tweet, whose message gains more credibilty and a wider circulation. This is done passively by simply retweeting or adding a comment to the original post. A more active way of interacting is entering into a dialogue with other users. Political reporters indeed get in touch with the audience to ask for their imput and to discuss political events such as election debates (Reis Mourão 2014).

Political journalists indicate that they interact relatively little with politicians via public tweets (Revers 2014). They say they do not have the time to get into discussion and emphasize that they, unlike citizens, can speak to MPs personally. Moreover, they want to avoid communication via tweets because their competitors from other media watch them closely and they do not want to show openly what they are working on. Research that analyses the interaction patterns of political journalists on Twitter specifically is still lacking. However, from analysing political candidates' tweets during general elections we know that they do "talk" on Twitter. During campaigns, politicians interact mainly with members of the public (between 60 and 65 percent of the interactions during the 2010 Dutch and UK, and 2012 Dutch general elections) and fellow politicians (between 16 and 22 percent). However, journalists follow in their slipstream. In the 2010 campaign, ten percent of politicians' online interactions in the British and twelve percent in the Dutch case were with journalists, dropping to seven percent during the 2012 Dutch elections. In tweets directed at reporters, candidates mainly talked about their political views, critiqued or acknowledged journalists' articles, or gave updates from the campaign trail. Interestingly, about 15 percent of the

exchanges were of a personal nature, suggesting close and friendly relations between politicians and reporters (Graham et al. 2014; Graham et al. 2015).

Sourcing

Survey research indicates that between 93 (France) and 79 percent (Germany) of journalists use Twitter for sourcing the news; between 78 (Australia) and 60 percent (Germany) use it to verify information (Cision 2013b; see also the chapter by Skogerbø et al. in this volume). Political reporters often state that although Twitter can be a useful start for a story, whenever possible, journalists have to talk to politicians in person. "I always use Twitter as the start of something", a Dutch reporters states. "Just to see what somebody has already said, so you can refer to it when you call them. Sometimes they'll tell me: I already tweeted about it" (Brands 2014: 77). For MPs, a tweet often replaces a press release. It provides a convenient way to convey information or a political viewpoint, in the hope that it will be picked up by legacy news outlets. Media say they are reluctant to use tweets, however, because information is not "exclusive" when it is published on Twitter. Basing a story on a tweet is broadly considered a last resort if time runs short or a politician does not pick up the phone. And when a tweet is used in news coverage, whether as a primary source that started off a story or as an illustrative quote, it is not always attributed. Some political reporters consider it redundant to mention Twitter as the source because they believe that it does not matter where a politician said something. Only when it is relevant to understand the context of a story, they argue, the platform should be mentioned (Parmelee 2014; Brands 2014).

In spite of professional rhetoric, using tweets as quotes in news reporting has become a widely used textual convention. Tweets themselves can trigger news stories, as becomes clear from Thornberry's inappropriate tweet. Not only gaffes are newsworthy. Especially information posted on Twitter that is not available in another way, because the source cannot be contacted directly or refuses to answer questions, is able to trigger stories. This provides opportunities for sources to set the media agenda, to promote themselves and their work, and to influence public opinion. Dutch right-wing politician Geert Wilders, for example, is very medium-savvy in this respect. He tends to avoid talking to journalists and instead sends out opinionated tweets that he knows will be controversial. When these are picked up by reporters and political opponents comment on them, his take on the particular issue takes center stage. In 2011, for example, 52 of his 333 tweets were published in Dutch newspapers (Nederlandse Nieuwsmonitor 2011). In most cases, however, tweets are quoted to illustrate broader news developments. They add flavor to a story because they convey personal impressions and experiences, or *couleur locale*. In other cases, tweets are presented as "stand-alone". Many newspapers now include "tweets-of-the-day" columns that sum up remarkable, witty or funny tweets. For journalists, Twitter thus offers a sea of potentially interesting information that can be remixed into news stories. Journalists do not have to "get out on the streets" any more to

find information. The world is on hand from behind the desk (Broersma and Graham 2013; cf. Paulussen and Harder 2014).

Publishing

Due to its limitation to 140 characters per message, Twitter is not the most suitable platform for publishing news stories. The vast majority of political reporters therefore do not use it in this way. They indicate that they object against "instant sharing" and save "exclusives" for more substantial stories on their "mother" platforms. Snippets of information which are interesting in themselves, but do not immediately trigger coverage, are posted on Twitter, however. Moreover, reporters publish by curating information on Twitter. By retweeting, mentioning and linking to content posted by others, they present remarkable opinions, humorous posts and source material about the news of the day (Molyneux 2014). As a US political reporter reveals: "there is no quicker way to get a piece of news to an audience of that size. And it's very organic—you send it out there and then it gets retweeted. It's like an echo and each time it echoes it reaches another audience. And if they see your name pop up two or three times they start following you; it kind of builds on itself" (Revers 2014: 8).

Some journalists cover parliamentary debates, briefings or other meetings by live-tweeting them (Artwick 2013). Their tweets can be followed through the use of hashtags but are usually also gathered in feeds on a news outlet's website. Twitter offers convenient widgets for this. The move to digital-first publishing might foster this trend further. Andrew Sparrow, the *Guardian*'s political correspondent, writes a daily political blog with "rolling coverage" about the political events in Westminster. Sparrow, who has almost 40,000 followers, not only integrates many tweets of politicians into his blog, and directs readers to it via Twitter, but also uses the platform to distribute snippets of news from parliament. "If journalism is the first draft of history", Sparrow argued after the 2010 UK elections, "live blogging is the first draft of journalism" (Newman 2010: 17). Social media enhance the opportunities to publish evolving news on a rolling basis instead of presenting complete stories.

Promoting

Social media are not only new publishing platforms, but also new distribution channels. Promoting stories on social media is more and more important now that news consumption has become increasingly social. Currently, the majority of users do not come directly to the homepage of a news outlet, but access its site through links shared on social media. This is important for legacy media, but even more so for online-only media such as *MediaPart* in France. These outlets all have institutional Twitter accounts, or even multiple accounts for different beats, which distribute headlines, teasers and links during the day. Typically these accounts are automated, using tweet bots that send tweets as soon as news stories appear on line. Due to the mechanic "feel" of these accounts, more substantial news outlets, especially

in the US and the UK, have hired social media editors or even teams to manage news distribution on social platforms. But individual reporters also actively promote their stories on Twitter to build an audience, and sometimes this is even a result of editorial policy. Studies have shown that if journalists retweet or include links, these mainly refer to content from their own news organization (Artwick 2013).

Branding

While promoting is about directing readers to distinct news stories, branding relates to the opportunity social media offer to freelance and staff journalists to brand themselves and develop a more personal relation with their audience. When done successfully, this does not only increase reader loyalty, but also helps to strengthen the profile and market value of the journalist. Now that journalism is in flux and employment opportunities are getting precarious, it is increasingly important to be "visible" online and to become a "hub" in online networks where people go to be informed. As one political reporter says: "If you are looking at a beat or a job in 5 years you don't want to lose out because the other guy has 10,000 Twitter followers and you abstained from that" (Revers 2014: 9). Acquiring authority is one strategy that journalists apply. It helps when their posts are retweeted while they retweet users who provide comments on their work. Preferably, positive remarks are retweeted, but reporters increasingly understand that they also benefit from redistributing tweets that are critical of their work (Molyneux 2014; Hedman and Djerf-Pierre 2013). Most political journalists are hesitant, however, to include personal information in their tweets.

Normalization or Shifting Power Relations?

Research on how Twitter has changed journalism often im- or explicitly argues that social media are *normalized* to fit established professional practices and routines. The normalization thesis thus links up with journalists' discourse in which Twitter is commonly referred to as a new "tool" in journalism's "toolkit", too. It would first and foremost allow reporters to do what they have always done when working their (political) beat, but more effectively and in an online environment. In other words, Twitter is for 21st-century journalists what the telephone was for 20th-century reporters: a helpful tool to make news production easier and quicker (Lasorsa, Lewis and Holton 2012; Reis Mourão 2014). In contrast, results from a content analysis of tweets suggest that professional norms might change because journalists, or at least some of them, are experimenting with "what works" on Twitter. Although there is no clear trend at this stage, reporters might become more transparent and responsive, more humorous, opinionated and personal on social media. However, scholars usually conclude that reporters will try to align these new features and behavioral patterns with the norms of impartiality and objectivity that guided journalism in the era of mass communication – which brings us back to normalization theory (Lasorsa 2012; Lasorsa, Lewis and Holton 2012; Parmelee 2013; Lawrence et al 2013; Hedman 2015; Molyneux 2014)

We argue that normalization theory as a conceptual framework sells short the fact that coherent and distinct social media repertoires have emerged in the past decade. These follow from the affordances of social media platforms, and more broadly, a networked logic that fundamentally differs from the industrial mass media logic which underpins legacy journalism (Broersma and Peters 2013; see also Klinger and Svensson in this volume). The way in which information becomes news and resonates among users does not depend on the power to monopolize and control distribution channels here. It depends on the ability to push information through the network by persuading other users to share, like, remix and annotate data. In other words, in the industrial logic news derives its credibility and authority from the platform and the institutional context in which it is produced, but in a networked form of communication it does so from the users who push it through the network. This implies that the social media practices and routines as described above have a function and character that is fundamentally different from their counterparts in mass communication. Although they might look alike on the outside, they are not being *normalized*. They are essentially different categories of diverging but interlinked repertoires.

In the current hybrid system agents partly capitalize upon the legitimacy and authority acquired in offline environments (like parliament) and mass communication (news outlets). Simultaneously, their social, cultural, and economic capital is increasingly dependent on the way in which they succeed in successfully converting their institutional assets to these new interwoven social media networks. In the classic triangle of political communication the three groups of agents (politicians, journalists and citizens) are sharply distinguished categories with distinctive aims, characteristics and behavioral patterns. Conversely, in a network these agents, as hubs or nodes, are essentially similar. The diminished significance of institutional structures and authority forces both journalists and politicans to position themselves, by means of newly developed social media repertoires, in relation to others in the network, and thus to anticipate a quickly transforming and fundamentally unstable environment.

Systematic studies of how politicians integrate social media into their daily political practice are still quite scarce (cf. Svensson 2011). Much of the research here tends to build on network analysis and the analysis of the content of tweets that are posted during elections or other political events, often through event-related hashtags. But interestingly, what the literature here does suggest is that the use of Twitter by politicians tends to mimic that of journalists. They have developed a repertoire of practices and routines that is similar to that of the journalists. Politicians monitor; they indicate that they use the platform to get a sense of the important issues of the day. In an environment in which it is incredibly important to quickly anticipate new information and in which one does not want to be surprised by the critical questions of reporters, social media offer a far faster way than traditional media to obtain news and provide politicians with a way in which to gauge public opinion. "On Twitter everybody is watching the timeline in real-time", Dutch Christian-Democratic MP Pieter Omtzigt states (Weber Shandwick 2014). Politicians network with reporters, and they interact

with citizens and journalists. They utilise social media to harvest the stories and experiences of citizens to use in parliamentary debates. They publish information about the viewpoints of their political party and promote their activities and websites not just during election time but also increasingly in their regular political work. Finally, they use social media to brand themselves and to acquire a more prominent position in the party-politicial pecking order (Frame and Brachotte forthcoming).

Politicians who are less prominent and get little journalistic coverage have a pronounced interest in social media because it allows them to relate to voters directly and because it can position their message on the radar of reporters. Their lack of media experience combined with the desire to become newsworthy does bear the risk of gaffes. Especially more centrally directed parties on the far left and far right therefore have strict social media policies that prohibit overly active tweeting by politicians who are not part of the inner party circles (Skovsgaard and Van Dalen 2013; Graham et al. 2014). For influential politicians, such as party leaders or members of government, who attract a lot of attention from the established news media and already have a strong position in social media networks, social media allow them to either place issues on the public agenda or to communicate with voters directly, both in the form of broadcast messages and through actual interaction.

Politicians thus use social media to bypass and manipulate journalists, communicate their message and set the public agenda themselves. When social media are used effectively, politicians gain more control over whether and when they get a voice in public, which topics are addressed, and how public issues are framed. When they "publish" strategically, either by broadcasting their own stances or by attacking opponents, and their message attracts attention in social networks, journalists usually will follow and pick up on the trending topic. When a news outlet distributes the message, both a broad audience and authority are guaranteed. Similarly, political reporters use the emerging social media repertoires to critically approach politicians, political parties and the government. They aim to gain the upper hand in the reconfigured power structure to serve both their democratic and commercial aims. The democratic system is thus slowly moving away from the interdependence between political reporters and politicians that has stabilized it for over a century. While the basis of political communication largely remains the same, power relations change fundamentally because of emerging social media repertoires.

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