Introduction: Innovations, Transformations and the Future of Journalism

The articles in this special issue comprise a selection from the seventh biannual 'Future of Journalism' conference that was hosted by the School of Journalism, Media and Culture (JOMEC) at Cardiff University on the 12th and 13th of September 2019. Focusing on the theme 'Innovations, Transitions and Transformations' the conference explored changing definitions of journalism in evolving news ecosystems, the role of artificial intelligence and big data in journalistic practice, changing standards of quality, balance and fairness accompanying the perceived decline of mainstream media, and the possibility of new cultures of experimentation and journalistic innovation. The underlying assumption of the conference theme was the transformative power of technological development as both an enabler and a challenge for journalistic practice. These critical questions in journalism were addressed in over 150 papers presented across 46 sessions in addition to keynote speeches from Andrew Chadwick (Loughborough University), Adrienne Russell (University of Washington), and Nikki Usher (University of Illinois).

The wide scope of the conference theme is reflected on the articles included in this special issue. They engage with a variety of topics, including journalism education, the reporting of scandals, humanitarian communication, deep fakes and newsroom routines. Rich in their empirical insights, they draw upon a variety of methodological tools, such as interviews, surveys, participant observation, narrative workshops and textual analysis. Most importantly, the articles are also geographically diverse, providing illustrations of journalistic developments in the UK, Sweden, Denmark, Colombia, Australia, the US, the Netherlands and Switzerland. Despite their wide variety, however, these articles address two main questions, central in the discussions about technology and journalism. First, they explore the evolution of journalistic practices enabled by technological innovation in a variety of forms. Such developments can be seen in the structure of the newsroom, the way journalists work, the content of the news, as well as the relationship between journalists and their publics (Pavlik, 2000). Second, they question how technological developments and their transformative potential have affected the ideology, self-perception and boundary work of journalism as a profession. Technological innovation and its affordances do not only challenge the boundaries of journalism (Lewis, 2012), but also invite journalists to reconsider their identities and ideology (Deuze, 2005).

Focusing on changes in journalistic practices in newswork, Oscar Westlund and Mats Ekström explore patterns of co-ordination among journalists, when producing Online Live Broadcasts (OLB). Such broadcasts entail not only different types of technology but also different epistemologies, combining epistemic practices of broadcasting and digital media platforms. The authors use an online-first news publisher in Sweden as their case study and combine participant

observation with interviews to build an analytical framework of what they describe as 'critical moments of co-ordination' over four distinct stages of production, namely 'initiating and committing', 'knowledge coordination', 'performing the live moment', and 'boosting'. Although journalists in this process develop the basic tacit technological knowledge through practical experience, they do not need specialised knowledge, as they can rely on their collaboration with other actors in the news production process. In this context, directives and co-ordination are crucial in newswork. Such forms of collaboration, enabled through technological innovations, the authors argue, can be seen as new forms of epistemic practice.

This hybridity of media systems within which journalism operates consists the background of Glenda Cooper's paper on the reporting of the #AidToo scandal in the UK in 2018. Combining an analysis of the coverage with interviews with whistleblowers, journalists, aid workers and social media experts, who contributed to the scandal breaking, the author sets out to explore why, although allegations against the aid sector had been 'open secrets' for a while, they were only transformed into a full-blown scandal in 2018. Cooper uses Greer and McLaughlin's (2017) scandal model to reflect on the different stages through which stories of sexual exploitation and abuse moved from the margins to the forefront of mainstream media coverage. She argues that, although legacy media were instrumental in bringing the story to the fore, it was the spaces opened up by social media, a lot of them private, that expanded the temporality of the stories beyond mainstream coverage and operated both as sources of information about the scandal and a platform for whistleblowers. It is, therefore, the process of intermediatisation, namely the viral interaction between legacy and social media, that enabled the exposure of aid agency scandals.

The technology explored in the next article is that of animation, which, albeit not new, is suggested here as an innovative way of journalistic storytelling. Stephen Jukes, Mathew Charles and Karen Fowler-Watt question how journalism can tell the stories of others and include their voices in post-conflict reporting, while avoiding a 'top down' approach of storytelling and the risk of 'othering' them. The authors draw upon an extensive research project conducted with children and young people from the indigenous Nasa community in Jambaló, Colombia, who had experienced civil conflict or had even been directly involved with armed groups as combatants. The project consisted of workshops, which reconstructed children's experiences as collaborative narratives that were then translated into an animation film that told their stories. Animation technology as a way of storytelling offers anonymity to vulnerable people and can build narratives of empathy and immersion. The authors suggest a journalism of 'storylistening' based on creating shared narratives of lived experience as a more inclusive and 'bottom-up' approach to telling the stories of others.

The question of emotional engagement with suffering others is also addressed in the article by Kukkakorpi and Pantti. The authors discuss virtual reality (VR) as a form of immersive journalism and explore whether the user-space interaction enabled by VR news allows for emotional responses and engagement with the characters' suffering. VR does not only create a sense of being-there but can also affect the users' overall perceptions and frame their understanding of narratives. The article closely analyses the construction of space in VR stories of humanitarian crises produced or distributed by the New York Times and identifies a variety in the ways user-space interaction is constructed in these stories. Despite such differences, however, the authors argue that, even when not focusing on the suffering of characters, VR opens up a space for reflection for users and can thus provide them with contextual and emotional understanding of the characters' situation. Spatial narrative, therefore, as constructed in VR is not only supportive of the users' experience but central in their emotional engagement.

Moving away from journalistic practices, the next article engages with the dark side of technological innovation and its potential threat on journalistic authority. Wahl-Jorgensen and Carlson explore journalistic discourses on 'deepfakes' through a thematic analysis of English language news stories over a period of 18 months, between January 2018 and July 2019. These discourses, the authors have found, illustrate deep anxieties about the future of news and the role of journalists, as the audiovisual nature of deepfakes renders them more believable than other forms of fake news. What is interesting, though, is that given the nascent stage of deepfake technology, journalists focus on potentialities and speculations about the technology as a future threat rather than existing cases. By employing concrete but largely fabricated examples to illustrate how deepfakes can undermine public trust in the news and belief in visual truth, journalists construct collective expectations of dystopian scenarios whereby 'bad actors' weaponise deep fakes to undermine democracy, based on the assumption that citizens are ill equipped to exercise critical reasoning. The solutions suggested for this projected future include contributions from technology and social media companies but mostly highlight the importance of journalists as gatekeepers. Ultimately, then, instead of reporting established facts, these narratives of deepfakes function as attempts to reaffirm journalistic authority.

Boundary work and self-perceptions of journalists and their profession are also explored in the next two articles through the lens of journalism education. Marcel Broersma and Jane Singer employed surveys among journalism student in the UK and the Netherlands to explore their perceptions of innovation and entrepreneurialism, two concepts highly valued currently in industry discourse. As traditional revenue streams for news media are plummeting, while digital transformations push for innovations in the newsroom and entrepreneurial forms of journalism, the expectation is that new journalists can act as change agents, challenging and shifting the

boundaries of traditional journalism. The survey results indicated that entrepreneurship does not appeal to journalism students, because it is seen as a disruption of the field due to outside forces and therefore perceived as negative. Innovation, on the other hand, is perceived as positive but only insofar as it includes applying mostly existing digital technologies within the existing doxa of the field rather than substantive transformation of journalistic culture. Such perceptions did not differ considerably between British and Dutch students. Ultimately, journalism students do not see themselves as disruptive innovators but reproduce dominant normative ideas, which seems to be in contrast with prevailing discourses among employers and expectations of innovation in news organisations.

In a similar vein, Fiona Martin and Colleen Murrell question how education prepares young journalists. They combine a qualitative survey with interviews with recent graduates from six Australian universities to explore how well journalists are trained to talk with their audiences online, in spaces like comments sections, branded social media channels, emails and chat. The authors argue that there seem to be gaps between digital journalism curricula and on-the-job demands, as young journalists report challenges in dealing with their audiences' comments and responses. They seem to respond, when it is useful for their work and their personal brand, but often struggle to keep up with responses due to structural and organizational constraints. At the same time, they struggle with issues of abuse, as well as personal privacy and safety. These findings are illustrative of a journalistic culture whereby the assumption of journalism as authority monologue still dominates, and conversation with audiences is negligible. Adopting Bakhtin's (1982) concept of the dialogic, the authors argue that news conversation needs to be thought of in terms of the behaviour of actors within specific interactional settings and situational expectations. They thus propose a form of 'dialogic journalism' as a future framework for analysing news conversations and their complex dynamics online.

The last two papers in this special issue further explore the question of how journalists understand themselves in contemporary hybrid media environments. Jannie Møller Hartley and Tina Askanius explore the self-perceived roles of journalists covering the #MeToo movement in Denmark and Sweden and question how they negotiated ideas of objective reporting and activist imperatives. The empirical material combines interviews with journalists, editors and activists with participant observation at #MeToo events in the two countries. The authors find considerable differences between the two countries, which they analyse at the individual, organisational and societal level. Although objectivity is understood in Denmark as 'balanced reporting', which presents both sides in an argument, in Sweden journalists were more willing to take up a more activist role in reporting the movement. Furthermore, unlike Sweden, in Denmark #MeToo was not seen as an opportunity to scrutinise the media industry. These differences, the

authors argue, echo the different approaches to gender equality in the two countries: while in Denmark gender equality is considered fait accompli and is thus marginalised from the political agenda, in Sweden the issue is politicised and filtered into mainstream politics and institutions. Ultimately, what the paper highlights is that the coverage of #MeToo in the two countries is underpinned by differences in their respective journalistic cultures.

In the final article, Cancela, Gerber and Dubied also explore self-perceptions of journalists by focusing on the concept of investigative journalism. The authors conducted interviews with journalists in Switzerland in an attempt to clarify how professionals themselves understand investigative journalism and what criteria they apply to distinguish it from other forms of journalism. The responses indicate that journalists had difficulties in clearly defining investigative journalism, despite their shared sense that it constitutes a 'higher form of journalism'. In describing it, they drew upon normative assumptions about commitment and occupational ideology, that were not, however, always met in practice. The authors suggest that in these layered descriptions, journalists employed three types of defining criteria, namely the 'motive' behind it, the 'extent of efforts' and its 'technique'. In this context, investigative journalism is to be understood as a continuum rather than clearly defined professional practices and identity.

Overall, the articles in this special issue construct a story of continuity rather than change in journalism practice. In continuously evolving news ecosystems, despite the perceived decline of mainstream media and assumptions about the scale and force of technological innovations, journalistic authority perseveres and dominant journalistic doxa remain. In this context, innovation can be found in practices of co-operation between journalists and new actors or between legacy newsrooms and new spaces, opened up by digital technologies, or through the questioning and critique of traditional practices of storytelling. As Barbie Zelizer reminds us, 'it is journalism that gives technology purpose, shape, perspective, meaning and significance, not the other way around' (2019, p. 343). This does not mean that there is no space for change, self-reflection and questioning of whether long-held ideas and practices fully take advantage of technological affordances and best serve the public and democratic ideas. The future of journalism, however, seems to be one of continuous evolution rather than technological revolution.

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