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Special Issue: Fresh Voices in European Media and Communication Scholarship

Hopeful and Obligatory Remembering: Mediated Memory in Refugee Camps in Post-War Germany
Philipp Seurferling

Distinctions Between Photographs Matter: Theorising the Artistic Legitimisation of Photography in Italy
Lorenzo Giuseppe Zaffaroni

"Three Drops of Blood for the Devil": Data Pioneers as Intermediaries of Algorithmic Governance Ideals
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Natasja Van Buggenhout, Wendy Van den Broeck and Pieter Ballon

Lobbying On The German Federal Level: The Unknown Shift Through Digital Transformation
Kathrin Stürmer, Gearoid OSullebhain, Pio Fenton and Lars Rademacher

Blind Spots in the Spotlight: Media Reporting on the National Bank of Romania's answers to Financial Crisis Aftershock
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Strategies of Middle-class Distinction and the Production of Inequality in Food Media Texts: Good Food and Worthy Food Culture in Mainstream Broadsheet Journalism
Kaisa Tiusanen

1/2020

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Journal for critical media inquiry

SPECIAL ISSUE: FRESH VOICES IN EUROPEAN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION SCHOLARSHIP

Based on the selected papers from ECREA doctoral students' summer school from 2019

Guest Editors:
Andra Siibak
Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt
Risto Kunelius

MEDIÁLNÍ STUDIA | MEDIA STUDIES

Periodicity: twice a year
Place of publishing: Prague
Registration number: E 19821
Online ISSN 2464-4846

Publisher: Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, Smetanovo nábřeží 6, 110 00 Praha 1
Company ID: 00216208, VAT No.: CZ00216208.
E-mail: medialnistudia@fsv.cuni.cz
Volume 14, Number 1, May 2020
For more information and the magazine content, please visit our website at https://medialnistudia.fsv.cuni.cz/

CONTENTS

Andra Siibak, Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt and Risto Kunelius
Fresh Voices in European Media and Communication Scholarship 7

STUDIES

Philipp Seuferling
Hopeful and Obligatory Remembering:
Mediated Memory in Refugee Camps in Post-War Germany 13

Lorenzo Giuseppe Zaffaroni
Distinctions Between Photographs Matter:
Theorising the Artistic Legitimisation of Photography in Italy..... 34

Maris Männiste and Anu Masso
"Three Drops of Blood for the Devil":
Data Pioneers as Intermediaries of Algorithmic Governance Ideals 55

Natasja van Buggenhout, Wendy van den Broeck and Pieter Ballon
Exploring the Value of Media Users' Personal Information (PI)
Disclosure to Media Companies in Flanders, Belgium 75

Kathrin Stürmer, Gearoid OSullebhain, Pio Fenton and Lars Rademacher
Lobbying On The German Federal Level:
The Unknown Shift Through Digital Transformation 104

Raluca Iacob
Blind Spots in the Spotlight: Media Reporting on the National Bank
of Romania's answers to Financial Crisis Aftershock 126

Kaisa Tiusanen
Strategies of Middle-class Distinction and the Production of Inequality in Food Media Texts:
Good Food and Worthy Food Culture in Mainstream Broadsheet Journalism 147

Mediální studia | *Media studies* 1/2020 byla podpořena dotací
Odboru médií a audiovize Ministerstva kultury ČR.

FRESH VOICES IN EUROPEAN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION SCHOLARSHIP

SPECIAL ISSUE BASED ON THE SELECTED PAPERS FROM ECREA DOCTORAL STUDENTS' SUMMER SCHOOL FROM 2019

ANDRA SIIBAK
University of Tartu

PILLE PRUULMANN-VENGERFELDT
Malmö University

RISTO KUNELIUS
University of Helsinki

> I will recommend this event to all young media scholars I know. It has been a life-changing experience, and I kind of wish I could join again :)
>
> Quote from the anonymous feedback form

In 2019, the European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer school took place 27th time. In 1992, the University of Stendhal-Grenoble III (Grenoble, France) led a consortium of ten (western-European) universities to start a summer programme for their PhD students in order to offer an opportunity to debate about contemporary issues in media, communication and cultural studies (cf. Parés i Maicas, 2008; Peja et al., 2018). Since then, summer school has had many phases of transformations - from with or without financial support, from a committed consortium of colleagues to an open initiative now hosted and supported by European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA).

The summer school has been held in many locations in Europe, including Grenoble, Lund, Barcelona, London, Helsinki, Tartu, Ljubljana, Bremen and Milano. In 2019, the summer school returned to Tartu where the Institute of Social Studies, at the University of Tartu, hosted all together 41 doctoral students and 17 senior scholars from 18 countries and 35 different universities.

The main emphasis of the ECREA doctoral summer school is not on focusing on a particular theme, but on providing structural and individuated PhD-support for young scholars, through a variety of working forms, including feedback seminars, workshops, and lectures. All through its many years of existence, the summer school

has aimed to provide a supportive international setting where doctoral students can present their ongoing work, receive feedback on their PhD-projects from international experts and meet students and academics from other countries, establishing valuable contacts for the future. In fact, when reflecting about the challenges young scholars face when they "walk into the unknown world of academia without much prior knowledge of the grammar of the field or of its implicit rules", the summer school alumni Anne Kaun, Benjamin de Cleen and Christian Schwarzenegger (2014, p. 23) favourably acknowledge the role of the summer school and ECREA's Young Scholars' Network (YECREA) in providing this secure space for solidarity and inspiration. The success of the summer school has largely been built on the ideals of its organizers who have always wanted to provide its participants with a "unique learning and networking experience, bringing together the less experienced and more experienced from all over the world to promote a constructive dialogue from which new research horizons emerge " (Peja et al., 2018, p. 17). In spite of the fact that media and communication scholarship have undergone significant changes, these founding ideals of the summer school have stayed the same. Furthermore, these ideals and values have been cherished for almost three decades. They also served when cornerstones when preparing the 2019 summer school in Tartu.

Although "media studies" or "media and communication" is viewed as a still relatively young discipline (cf. Nordenstreng, 2009), scholars (cf. Herkman, 2008, p. 156) have argued that it has become "'mission impossible' to define any clear-cut discipline of media and communication research". In fact, although some scholars (e.g. Carlsson, 2007) have critically noted that media and communication scholars are used to borrowing theories, perspectives and methods from other disciplines; the doctoral summer school has always emphasised its "utmost respect for academic diversity", i.e. "it recognizes the existence of a plurality of schools, approaches, theories, paradigms, methods and cultures within academia, which makes it suitable for conversation and dialogue, not conversion and conflict" (Peja et al., 2018, p. 14). Such deep respect for diversity can also be explained by the fact that the field of media studies has gone through considerable changes, in fact, Nordenstreng (2009, p. 254) suggests that "media studies has expanded more than any other academic field, apart from computer science and biomedicine". Such a fast multiplication has been viewed as rather problematic by some authors (e.g. Nordenstreng, 2009; Carlsson, 2007) who argue that the discipline might lose its healthy roots that can be found both in the basic disciplines of social sciences e.g. in sociology, political science, psychology, educational sciences; but also in humanistic research, e.g. history, philosophy and the study of literature (cf. Herkman, 2008).

All the academic advisors and senior scholars participating in the ECREA doctoral summer schools have, however, eagerly promoted the pluralism of methodological and theoretical approaches for studying contemporary mediated and mediatized societies and enabled the students to get inspired by the plethora of ways one can study the "proverbial elephant". Considering that the interest in interdisciplinary

research and multidisciplinary social science has been growing in recent years (cf. Loewenstein et al., 2019), the approach taken by the summer school almost 30 years ago could be considered a pioneer one.

In addition to providing the participants of the summer school with an opportunity to gain multi-voiced high-quality feedback to their doctoral projects, and engage in a respectful but critical dialogue between academics; the organizers of the summer school have always been aiming to provide the students with a chance to publish their research. Since the launch of the Researching and Teaching Communication Book Series in 2006, the lecturers, students and alumni of the summer school have published their intellectual work resulting from the discussions from the summer school in a format of an edited volume. This time, however, we have partnered with the journal *Media Studies* to provide the participants of the Tartu 2019 summer school with an opportunity to publish their research in a form of special issue "Fresh voices in European media and communication scholarship".

In the current special issue, our aim is to showcase some of the outstanding work from our summer school students. But staying true to the nature of the summer school, we are not preferring specific themes over the others, but are bringing you a diversity of topics and approaches. Furthermore, as the title of our special issue indicates, we aim to introduce you to some "fresh voices" in the media and communication scholarship, i.e. for most of the authors enlisted in this special issue, this special issue marks the very first peer reviewed academic publishing experience.

This special issue contains seven articles, which nicely illustrate the diversity of the current media and communication scholarship. The articles in the special issue not only contain a variety of approaches, theories and methods; but also stand for truly European scope as the empirical material as well as the background of the authors spans from north to south and from old and established Europe to new and struggling member-states. Below we will give a short overview of all the seven empirical papers.

In the first paper of the special issue, **Philipp Seuferling** brings life to archival materials of post-second-world-war refugee camps in Germany and discusses "how mediated memory and witnessing are fundamental components of refugees' media practices". Such practices, Seuferling argues, were characterised by an ambiguity of "hopeful" and "obligatory" memory, grounded by the structure and agency of the refugee camps.

In the second paper, **Lorenzo Giuseppe Zaffaroni** discusses the emergence of photography as an art form in the Italian context. Relying on qualitative interviews with photography professionals and ethnographic observations during field-configuring events, Zaffroni claims that the legitimisation of photography in Italy is still very much a work in progress as the members on the field have yet to adopt consensual legitimising ideology.

Adoption of a consensual ideology is also explored in another paper in our special issue, as **Maris Männiste** and **Anu Masso** explored how data pioneers from

Estonia practice, experience and express their ideals about algorithmic governance. Interviews with Estonian data experts indicated that social good, transparency and accountability were considered to be universal and normative ideals of data governance, universally accepted by the pioneering community of experts.

Natasja Van Buggenhout, Wendy Van den Broeck and **Pieter Ballon**, however, provide another angle to the data work when screening into the mindset of Flemish media professionals, marketers and advertisers. Relying on the results of the first round of e-Delphi method the authors not only investigate the value of disclosing personal information to media companies, but also propose a set of recommendations for media organisations of how to be more transparent when collecting media users' personal information.

Transparency is also a topic in the paper by **Kathrin Stürmer** and colleagues who have made interviews with federal parliamentarians of the German Bundestag, their employees and lobbyists so as to explore their perceptions and experiences with digital lobbying. The interviews are complemented by autoethnography allowing the authors to provide an insightful analysis of both the sender and receiver side of lobby-work.

Yet another angle about transparency in communication is explored by **Raluca Iacob**, who makes use of quantitative content analysis to investigate the manner Romanian online media framed the reaction of the National Bank of Romania to the "giving in payment" law in 2016. Iacob's research, anchored in media framing theory, is thus representative of a more traditional take on media and communication research.

The final paper of the special issue by **Kaisa Tiusanen** similarly represents a classical research paradigm in media studies as Tiusanen takes a discourse-analytical look at how *Helsinkin Sanomat*, largest daily newspaper in Finland, discusses organic and local food and in these discussions reinforces stereotypes about middle-class' cultural tastes.

We hope that the present special issue helps to illustrate both the new research horizons as well as some classical approaches of media and communication scholarship that have resulted from the discussions taking place during the ECREA doctoral summer school of 2019.

The ECREA doctoral summer school was possible thanks to the organizational and financial support of many institutions. We are grateful for ECREA for offering a number of scholarships for the participants and for providing invaluable support for this initiative. We also want to express our gratitude for the support of the Baltic Association for Media Research (BAMR), the institute of Social Studies at the University of Tartu, and the Doctoral School of Behavioural, Social and Health Sciences. We are also thankful for the help and kindness of Kateřina Kirkosová, the managing editor of *Mediální Studia/Media Studies*, for providing us with this opportunity to publish a special issue in the journal. And last, but definitely not least - we appreciate every one of the participants of the summer school - doctoral students and senior

scholars - who invested their time, energy, expertise and passion into making the ECREA doctoral summer school in Tartu and publishing this special issue a memorable experience.

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Risto Kunelius is a professor in Communication Research and the director of Helsinki Inequality Initiative at the University of Helsinki. Previously he has served as a professor of journalism research and the Dean of Social Sciences and Humanities at University of Tampere. His research interests include theoretical questions of media and power, mediatization and social theory, the changing role of journalism and development of public sphere(s). He studies these issues as they intersect with contemporary, complex social and political problems. Most recently he has published on global climate change coverage and on surveillance and journalism. He has participated in numerous doctoral summer schools as a lecturer and mentor.

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HOPEFUL AND OBLIGATORY REMEMBERING: MEDIATED MEMORY IN REFUGEE CAMPS IN POST-WAR GERMANY

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ABSTRACT

This article explores mediated memory practices in refugee camps in post-war Germany. In response to refugees experiencing a disjuncture of temporality materialized in the liminal space of the refugee camp, the article argues that media practices of camp residents include practices of remembering and witnessing. Drawing on memory studies, media practices are understood as forms of "management of change" and "mediated witnessing", enacting cultural and diasporic memory, as well as providing opportunities to remember, store the present and give witness to one's plight. Based on an analysis of archival records from camp structures in Germany (1945–1955), examples of mnemonic media practices are analyzed. Concludingly, the article argues that mediated memory in refugee camps is characterized by an ambiguity of "hopeful" and "obligatory" memory, affected by structures and control of media and mnemonic activities, as well as agency and initiatives to remember and create memories from below.

Keywords: media practices ▪ refugee camps ▪ memory studies ▪ mediated witnessing ▪ media history

1. INTRODUCTION: REFUGEE TEMPORALITIES AND MEDIA

The refugee experience is not only characterized by spatial displacement, but is also intertwined with a fundamental disruption of temporality: "here and now" clashes with "back there and then" – "before" and "after". Anthropology and migration studies have pointed out the relevance of suspended, discontinued, or "paused" temporalities[1] for forced migrants , which underlie experiences of uncertainty and instability

1 The terms 'forced migrant' and 'refugee' are used interchangeably in this article, acknowledging their various complex political connotations as constructed political labels (see Zetter, 1991). For readability's sake, I use these

in exile and diaspora (Brun & Fábos, 2015; El-Sharaawi, 2015; Griffiths, 2014; Lacroix & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2013). What is described as "in-between", in a "liminal space", in "protracted displacement", "stuck", in a "limbo" or "living in transit" not only captures the spatial dimension of forced migration as a mechanism where one falls out of the national, citizenship-based order – but also the altered experience of time a refugee encounters. The modern refugee regime, in turn, is characterized by contradicting refugee temporalities where processes of exception from certain human rights, of being cast into an indefinite limbo (cf. Agamben, 1998; Arendt, 1951/2017), intersect with humanitarian ideals of creating "durable solutions" (UNHCR's[2] lingo for resettlement, repatriation or naturalization) – based on a legal refugee status, which is by definition temporary (e.g. Article 1C of the 1951 "Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees" defines, when the regulations cease to apply). These disjunctural structures of temporality form experiential frames for refugees' imaginaries of past, present, and future. They affect hopes and expectations as well as relations to one's past, and ultimately shape the temporal dimension of "ontological security" (Giddens, 1991). While the significance of such temporalities has gained some anthropological and ethnographical attention, it remains to be explored, how refugee temporalities are dealt with and experienced through media and communication. Some researchers have put digital media uses among forced migrants in conversation with experiences of "waiting" and discourses of "memorializing" (Greene, 2019; Horsti, 2019; Twigt, 2018). However, historic roots and contexts of media-related practices of memory and witnessing in pre-digital media environments are uncharted. This article, therefore, seeks to rephrase these observations from a media and communication historical perspective, asking: How did historic refugees draw on media as technologies and practices in response to disrupted temporalities?

For approaching this broad question, two specific contexts are chosen: the refugee camp as a material and constructed space of temporal and spatial limbo, and the historical context of post-war Germany. These contexts thereby form a historicizing approach to both media and communication as well as migration, zooming in on the roots of the contemporary, modern Western refugee regime. Contemporary legal structures historically emerged out of the forced displacements in the aftermath of World War II in Central Europe. In Germany of the 1940s and 1950s, millions of refugees, expellees, and displaced persons lived in camp structures, administrated by various state actors, like government, Allied Forces, Red Cross, UNRRA, IRO, and UNHCR[3]. At that time, the refugee camp[4] had become a humanitarian management tool, a means of "solving" the "crisis" of displacement. Thereby, the camp is

terms for all forms of forced migrants throughout the text, regardless of the exact status of the specific group mentioned.

2 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

3 United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration; International Refugee Organization

4 By this term, I mean all forms of institutionalized accommodations for forced migrants in the empirical context of Germany. Exact terminology was very bureaucratic, frequently changing, and vast, therefore I use one term.

characterized by its definite temporariness: residents – then, often called "inmates" (also a term that implies eventual release) – enter a transient "time pocket" (Turner, 2016, p. 142), where a different temporal regime is in place, "an enduring moment of rupture from the space and time" (Ramadan, 2013, p. 73) of home.

While ample research has shown how vital media are for forced migrants (Gillespie et al., 2018; Leurs & Smets, 2018), we know less about how ruptures of time are mirrored and acted upon in uses of media technologies. Especially there is a gap of knowledge about historic practices around media technologies. In this article, I draw on notions of media practices around "remembering/mediated memory" and "media witnessing" to analyze archival material from refugee camps in Germany roughly between 1945 and 1955. The notion of media practices provides a holistic analytical entry point to explore how disrupted temporalities are dealt and coped with through uses of media technologies. It decenters the attention of previous research from memory discourses and textualities towards practices of diasporic and exilic remembering. Methodologically, the archival records can be analyzed as traces of camp residents' media practices and show media's roles for cultural and diasporic memory, documenting one's past and present, and giving witness to one's plight.

Arjun Appadurai (2019) recently re-emphasized how for migrants, "memory becomes hyper-valued" (p. 561). He argues: "memory of the journey to a new place, the memory of one's own life and family world in the old place, and official memory about the nation one has left have to be recombined in a new location" (p. 562). Being fundamentally mediated, these memories then take multiple forms, like archives or other media representations, privately or in (diasporic) public spheres. These are expressions of agency, Appadurai continues, in contrast to the frequent reduction of migrants to people with "only one story to tell – the story of abject loss and need" (ibid.). Koen Leurs (2017) confirms the relevance of media technologies for memory, calling refugees' smartphones "pocket archives", which store memories and identities. Yet, also historically, media technologies were an element of memory and witnessing practices of forced migration.

Against this backdrop, the goal of this article is to map out and analyze how refugees' experiences of disrupted temporalities were dealt and coped with through media practices of memory and witnessing. First, a theoretical section draws on the field of memory studies and media witnessing to build a conceptual framework to analyze media practices in refugee temporalities. Next, a methods section describes how the archival material was collected and analyzed. The analysis section draws on several examples from the archival records to demonstrate how media and communication were relevant for practices of (1) cultural and diasporic memory – giving the camp a past, and (2) giving witness to one's "refugee story" and documenting the present – giving oneself a past. The analysis leads to a discussion of how mediated memory incorporates forms of coping with and managing disrupted refugee temporalities through oscillating between two modes – "hopeful" and "obligatory" – of remembering practices.

2. MNEMONIC MEDIA PRACTICES: REMEMBERING AND WITNESSING

In her seminal essay on "travelling memory", Astrid Erll (2011) revisits the field of memory studies and argues for a renewed focus on mediation and border-crossing processes that shape cultural memory. The study of cultural and social memory as a construction has long shown how groups, like nations or religions, get stabilized through common references to a constructed and stored past (most famously Nora, 1984-1992/1996; Assmann, 1995). Later, a "media turn", has emphasized the impact of changing media technologies and mediation on collective memory (van Dijck, 2007; Erll & Rigney, 2009). Still, only recently we see more attention to the boundary-crossing, fluid nature of cultural memory: especially in the field of migration, memory is in constant movement, facilitated through media and communication, through an "incessant wandering of carriers, media, contents, forms, and practices of memory, their continual 'travels' and ongoing transformations" (Erll, 2011, p. 11). Having traditionally emphasized the place-making feature of collective memory, memory studies has often also implied a rather stable, constant temporality and a place-bound, settled imaginary of history. We should, however, refocus away from national "container-cultures" and their "roots", towards the "routes" which practices and meanings take (ibid.). This article is interested in camp-based mnemonic practices – which are inherently immobile, i.e. non-travelling. Yet, I suggest seeing memory in refugee camps as affected by "travellings", where forced migrants negotiate mobile pasts and futures, travelling in time and space. We can therefore ask: Which memory practices travelled in and out of refugee camps, in response to the experience of disrupted temporalities?

Studies at the intersection of media, memory, and migration have underlined the relevance of memory work and practices of memorialization within diasporic communities across media environments, journalistic cultures, and self-productions among families and individuals (Appadurai, 2019; Keightley & Pickering, 2018; Horsti & Neumann, 2019). Christine Lohmeier and Christian Pentzold (2014), for example, show how among the exiled Cuban community in Miami "mediated memory work" is a salient way of becoming a member of the diaspora through a mediated "experienc[ing of] attachment to places, people, objects and actions defined as Cuban-American" (p. 787). Disruptions of temporality are worked upon through memory and lost homeland (both in time and space) is passed on and reshaped through mediations across generations in exile. Moreover, Lynda Mannik's (2011) study of a photo collection of the Estonian refugee ship SS Walnut, which crossed to Canada in 1948, also emphasizes the role of mediated memory, especially through photography. These photos, as real-time documentations of the refugee hardship, are active productions of memory and identity, in a web of representations between public and private realms. A specific "refugee gaze", as "a way of looking at the ordering of knowledge about refugee movement by those experiencing this type of movement" (p. 26) emerges in Mannik's visual analysis,

showing the travelling practices and meanings of refugee memory in conjuncture with media technologies.

2.1. Media practices

Building on this notion of active working on social memory through media technologies, I further suggest understanding the phenomenology of disrupted temporality among forced migrants as being coped with through "media practices" (Couldry, 2004) of remembering and witnessing. Seeing memory as forms of media practice allows for a holistic, situated and contextualized analysis of open-ended practices "oriented towards media and the role of media in ordering other practices in the social world" (p. 115). The concept draws on practice theory to rephrase media not as texts and responses to them but rather as actions, rituals and habits oriented to media, thereby also interrelated to other social practices, such as remembering. Understanding memory as a media practice, hence, enables us to account for the varieties, hierarchies and orders of social practices that refugees engage in in relation to imaginaries of past, present and future.

Subscribing to a practice-take on media, further allows for focusing on agency within memory and its mediation, putting center stage what people actually do with media to remember. Of course, media practices in refugee camps are dependent on and limited by structural conditions of material and social kind. However, media practices can also be spaces for performances of agency (Wall et al., 2017; Seuferling, 2019), arguably also through memory. Ramadan's (2013) anthropological study of Palestinian camps in Lebanon states: "[T]raditions helped keep alive memories of Palestine as time passed, maintaining a connection with a place and time that are increasingly distant" (p. 73). Filling the open concept of "media practices" with memory as a specific analytical lens – mnemonic media practices – opens a space for looking at mediated ways of dealing with temporal ruptures. Starting the analysis from archival traces of media practices (more on methodology below) frames camp media practices from an agency-focused perspective of the camp residents as communicative actors. While we cannot gain direct access to lived experiences through archival material, widening the concept of media practices through memory locates the social practices not only in media technologies and their uses, yet also in their content: mediated narratives, stored experiences and reports of one's past. Practices of remembering are hence mediated in various ways, manifesting in uses of technologies but also in the very content, i.e. in genres or types of texts and visuals produced: practices of narrativization and storing experiences in photographs, diaries, or newspapers.

2.2. Media technologies: managing change

Media technologies, their affordances and environments are crucial for memory practices: be it traditional photography, as in Mannik's (2011) study, becoming

"vehicles of memory" (Keightley & Pickering, 2014), or mobile phones becoming wearable, prosthetic memory devices, which Anna Reading (2009) calls "memobilia", allowing for mobilization and shareability of mnemonic content. Photography, but also other media, like newspapers or cinema, as the examples will show, are technologies which mediate memory, or perform what José van Dijck (2007) calls "personal cultural memory" at the intersection of individual and cultural/collective forms of remembering. Here, Emily Keightley and Michael Pickering offer two interrelated concepts for capturing mnemonic practices of working through past, present, and future: "management of change" (2017) and "mnemonic imagination" (2012). They argue that in experiences of temporal disruption, "[w]hen continuity is broken and ripped apart, e.g. through a tragic event such as forced migration, the role of memory, mnemonic imagination, and coherent narrativity, becomes even more prevalent and is realized at large" (Keightley & Pickering, 2017, p. 11). Media technologies and practices obtain multiple functions for managing change, in "[d]eveloping new narratives and re-emplotting what has happened to us" (p. 12), in order to gain reconciliation, especially with painful pasts. "In doing so we draw on the mnemonic imagination to help us transform the pain, confusion and hurt we have endured and eventually turn the past towards other possibilities of being" (ibid.). Mnemonic imagination delineates how single experiences become worked into cohesive narratives through active labor processes of imagination. A sense of temporality and identity is constructed in "acting upon" (p. 5) memories in imaginative ways: "The remembering subject engages imaginatively with what is retained from the past and, moving across time, continuously rearranges the hotchpotch of experience into relatively coherent structures" (p. 43), thus re-negotiating the past self as linked to the now and the possible future. Past, present and future are (re)connected through the management of memory in imagination. These processes, I argue, take place and become observable in media practices. Media technologies are used and employed for actively managing, coping with and experiencing disrupted temporalities of forced migration.

The flipside of remembering and managing memories is of course forgetting. Paul Ricœur (2004, pp. 412–456) distinguishes between forgetting in a cognitive sense as the "erasure of traces", and in a pragmatic and social sense as forgetting "in reserve" as something able to be remembered again. The latter dimension ties into practices of use and abuse of forgetting, through manipulating and selecting memory. Here, forgetting can be understood as the active dis-remembering, a practice of non-mediating (a non-media practice) – which, however, is almost impossible to get hold of through archival methodologies. After all, Ricœur further notes that forgetting, unlike remembering, is not an "event" tied to actions or practices – and therefore not readable from archival sources. However, forgetting is of course necessary, remembering everything is impossible, and in the case of forced migration forgetting also opens up spaces of reconciliation and hope for the future – what Ricœur calls "forgiveness" (p.457). I see remembering and forgetting as intertwined forms

of "management of change" through media practices, being aware that my data is strongly biased towards what is remembered.

2.3. Mediated witnessing

As a last concept to understand media practices of remembering as managing temporal and spatial change, I refer to "mediated witnessing". Thereby, I do not mean "media witnessing" as a modality of audiences' relation to media texts, e.g. of distant suffering, but the active practice of giving witness to one's own experiences through forms of mediation. Mediated witnessing means moving experience into discourse, seeing into saying – thus, the "witness is the paradigm case of a medium: the means by which experience is supplied to others who lack the original" (Peters, 2009, p. 25). Mediated witnessing as media practice is intrinsically based on memory, on a re-presentation of past events, experienced and embodied by the individual and mediated within social frameworks into the present. Hence, collective memory, as a social construction of history, is essentially an accumulation of witnessing practices – which are media practices. When experiencing spatial and temporal disruptions and managing them through reworkings of the past, the act of giving testimony, is a mediated way of coping with change, as mediated witnessing means becoming narratable, and having voice. Mediated witnessing, in this sense, includes practices of documenting one's present, and giving testimony to immediate past and present, either for oneself, one's community (diaspora or just the camp), or wider audiences and publics beyond. Thus, mediated witnessing is a media practice of remembering in the present moment, in an attempt to mediate and store experiences of oneself and one's environment. In relation to refugee memories, Karina Horsti (2019) recently applied the concept to an Italian migrant archive, showing how mediated witnessing is tied to communicating injustices and giving them a temporal dimension, by storing and mediating experiences across time and making them available in the future – thereby, managing change also for the future.

3. METHODOLOGY: ARCHIVING POST-WAR GERMANY'S REFUGEE CAMPS

In what follows, I will explore the outlined conceptual pathways with analyses of archival records from refugee camps in post-war Germany. The method is based both on an inductive approach of source-critical close-readings of archival material and a parallel developing of theoretical entrance points for analysis. The records analyzed for this article have been collected from the following archives: Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Landesarchiv Niedersachsen (Hanover), United Nations Archives (New York City), Bundesarchiv (Koblenz), Staatsarchiv Bayern (Nuremberg). These are state or organizational archives, archiving documents on activities of governments, public authorities or NGOs. While the main perspective documented there is of

course the administrational one, various source collections reveal voices and activities from the refugees themselves. The documents thus give insight into administration procedures of the camps, and document events and the general camp life. They are photographs, letters/correspondences, forms, tables, reports, newspapers, leaflets, or just random sheets of papers with notes. I selected the file collections in the archives through key words, identifying relevant files which relate to specific camps and media in the widest sense[5]. Given this eclectic array of source material, I see the files as traces of media practices. They are either physical remains of media themselves or can be read as reports or reconstructions of media practices. The material was scanned for media practices related to memory, in reciprocal reference to the theoretical reflections outlined above. I am aware that archiving as a method is, of course, a media practice of memory in itself. Archives, in a Foucauldian sense places of power and construction of history, are media collections, giving access to interpretations of the past in the present (Sterne, 2011). Therefore, this approach is highly inductive; the examples can be seen as small case studies, analyzed in their situated historical context, in order to historicize phenomena of mediated memory practices in refugee camps. The ensuing analytical chapter will introduce examples and discuss them according to the previously outlined analytical framework.

4. ARCHIVAL STORIES

At the end of World War II, Central Europe experienced major population displacements. 14 million Germans left Central and Eastern Europe as refugees or expellees, 11 million "Displaced Persons" (DPs), which had been deported by the Nazis, and liberated from concentration or labor camps, as well as general war-related upheaval characterized the forced movements of the mid-late 1940s and early 1950s: 60 million in continental Europe in total (Gatrell, 2013, p. 3). Camp accommodation was the most common way of "managing" migrations within the re-ordering of postwar Europe as a whole (Beer, 2014). The Allied military governments, together with welfare organizations and local municipalities were central actors in designing and deploying this regime: UNRRA, which became IRO, which again became UNHCR in 1950; as well as the Red Cross, or local authorities within occupied Germany, and from 1949 the newly founded German states. These actors' imaginaries and practices informed the modern Western humanitarian and refugee regime, still in place today, cemented within the 1951 Refugee Convention. This ranged from concrete definitions

5 In searching the archive catalogues with keywords (word clusters denotating "refugee camps" and "media" in the widest sense (like "newspaper", "radio", "communication" etc.), I focused on files which indicate any relation to media (with a very wide notion). Then, snowballing from one file to the next got me an overview of the collections. Usually, I went through collections tied to specific camps. In the case of the UN Archives, I went through the "Germany" file (UNRRA's operations in the late 1940s), focusing on media-related files. Through inductive close-reading and immersion in the files and their contexts, mediated memory emerged as a productive lens to capture identified media practices. This material stands in a larger context of my ongoing PhD dissertation on historic media practices in refugee camps, where "memory" forms one conceptual result.

of who is legally a "refugee" to discourses of humanitarianism, that sees migration as something to be governed and solved through the goodwill of institutions and helpers, where migrants are mute victims to be "saved" (Gatrell, 2013, p. 8; Hyndman, 2000). Thousands of camp structures existed during this time period, ranging from improvised barracks, to repurposed buildings of any kind, both in urban and rural areas. Usually, the camp populations were separated according to refugee status and nationality. Some were transit camps, registering and redistributing forced migrants, others were more permanent until further housing was available (mostly German refugees and expellees), again others were meant as temporary preparation for resettlement or repatriation (mostly DP-camps). Living conditions in camps were generally dire, often tedious and highly controlled, as contemporary reports by governments (e.g. the very critical 1945 "Harrison report" about DP-camps), as well as voices from camp residents and historical research show (Gatrell, 2013, pp. 94–103): camp administrations had built spaces of what a contemporary Canadian psychologist for UNESCO in 1955 called a necessary "autocratic paternalism" (Murphy, 1955, p. 58), keeping the refugees on their toes, in preparation of "durable solutions", such as repatriation, naturalization or resettlement. As examples from archival collections show, mediated memory was deeply entangled with these experiences and imaginaries.

4.1. Cultural memory: giving the camp a past

Keightley and Pickering (2017, p. 115) note that "[s]pace and place are part of the stuff of memory; at the same time, they provide the topographical arrangement of remembering practices and processes in the present". For camp residents, the immediate camp structure is the material space and place, where management of spatial and temporal change takes place. Various forms of media can be encountered in the archival material, that shows how the at first meaningless, time-and-history-free camp space was made into a space with a past, through the memory of its inhabitants. Figure 1 shows a picture from a photo collection from DP-camps, meant for public relations of UNRRA. It comes with the description: "Here the camp barber shaves one of the men of the center. With the mirror framed by pictures of his native town, the barber thinks of the time when he will be home again." Photos as a small, mobile media technology were suitable carriers of memory, of references to the lost home or family and friends, always in one's possession, often pinned to the wall. Memory of the homeland is a classical trope in migrant memory (Lacroix & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2013). Appadurai (2019) foregrounds the role of the "migrant archive" as a crucial media project dealing with the confusion of dislocation, "ranging from the most intimate and personal (such as the memory of one's earlier bodily self) to the most public and collective, which usually take the form of shared narratives and practices" (p. 562). Photos are very well-preserved in the archives, giving insight into the camps' migrant archives of the residents' cultural memory. Often, mnemonic references

depicted and enacted focused on culturally specific, national, ethnic, or local points of identity: hometowns, landscapes, religion, handicraft, music, or literature. Such specific cultural references among the groups dwelling in the camps are omnipresent in archived photos, but also in other files, like documentations of arts and handicraft exhibitions (Figure 2), religious practices, or an invitations to events, such as a ballet show. Such cultural camp life was mediated across various technologies, like in photos and reports on "camp history" in this example. In the corresponding report to Figure 2, it is even mentioned how the camp residents, through practices, "have been able to retain their individuality, develop new traditional skills and contribute toward the educational, cultural, and economic life of the camp community."

Figure 1: Photo of camp barbers' mirror with photos attached around. Hersfeld, Germany, undated (1943–1948). [UN Archives, Germany Mission-Photographs #001-120, S-1058-0001-01]

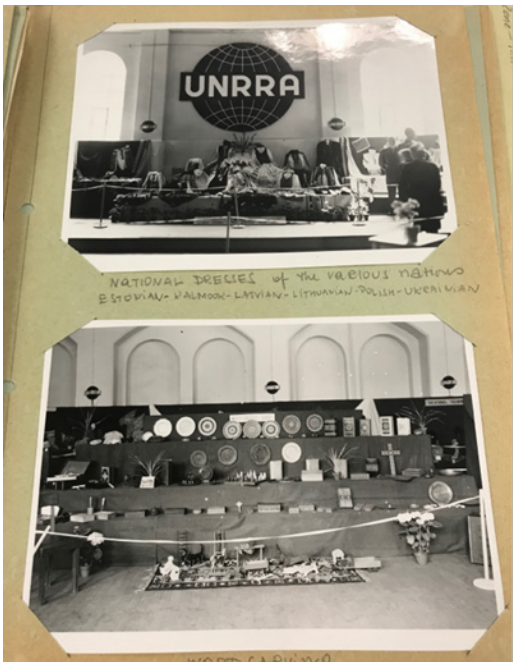
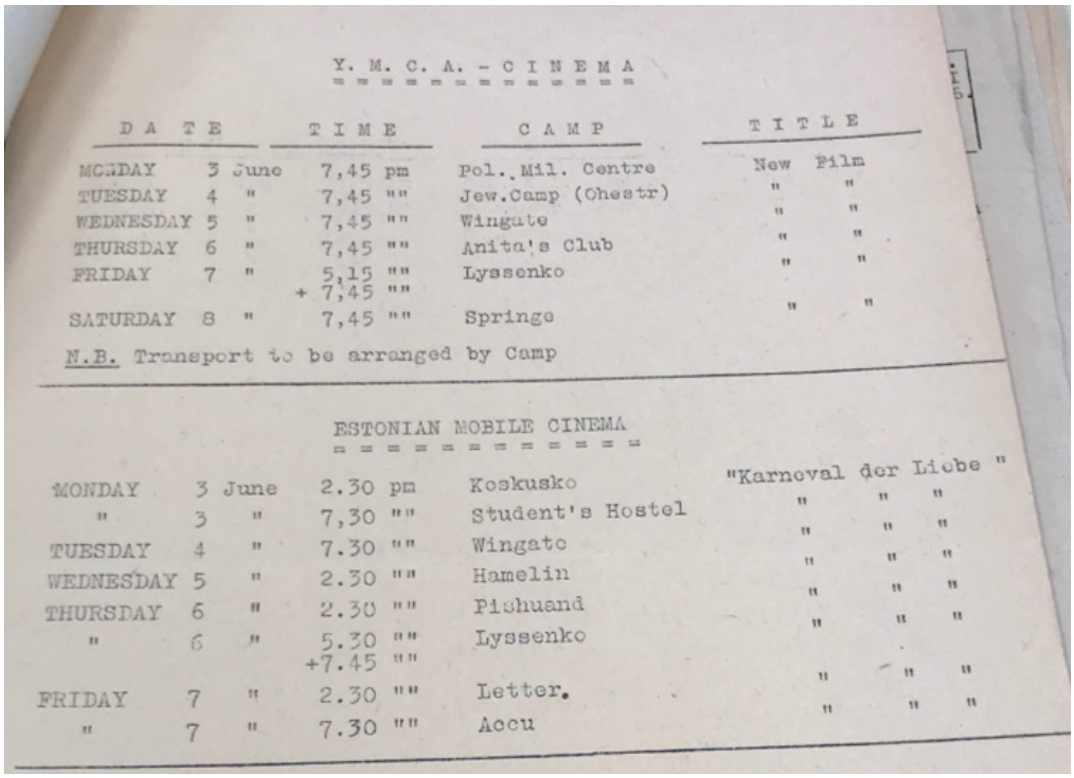


Figure 2: Photos in report on DP-camp life in Ingolstadt, 1947. Captions: "National dresses of the various nations. Estonian, Kalmook, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Ukrainian" and "Wood carvings". [UN Archives, Illustrated Histories, Daily Logs, etc. of Various Camps, S-0436-0016-01]



Y. M. C. A. - C I N E M A

D A T E		T I M E	C A M P	T I T L E
MONDAY	3 June	7,45 pm	Pol. Mil. Centre	New Film
TUESDAY	4 "	7,45 ""	Jew.Camp (Ohestr)	" "
WEDNESDAY	5 "	7,45 ""	Wingate	" "
THURSDAY	6 "	7,45 ""	Anita's Club	" "
FRIDAY	7 "	5,15 "" + 7,45 ""	Lyssenko	" "
SATURDAY	8 "	7,45 ""	Springe	" "

N.B. Transport to be arranged by Camp

ESTONIAN MOBILE CINEMA

MONDAY	3 June	2.30 pm	Koskusko	"Karneval der Liebe "
"	3 "	7,30 ""	Student's Hostel	" " "
TUESDAY	4 "	7.30 ""	Wingate	" " "
WEDNESDAY	5 "	2.30 ""	Hamelin	" " "
THURSDAY	6 "	2.30 ""	Pishuand	" " "
"	6 "	5.30 "" +7.45 ""	Lyssenko	" " "
FRIDAY	7 "	2.30 ""	Letter.	" " "
"	7 "	7.30 ""	Accu	" " "

Figure 3: Film screening schedule "YMCA – Cinema". 1946. [UN Archives, BZ/REG:WEL/Welfare-VS/Voluntary Societies-537-Camp Newspapers, S-0431-0007-07]

Not only photography and handicraft, but also films screened in camp cinemas were a platform for cultural memory. Theatre barracks with regular film screenings, often almost daily, were very usual in camps of that period. Schedules (Figure 3) show that newsreels, educational and blockbuster entertainment films were on offer.[6] These were highly popular, as a YMCA report from 1946 states: "Entertainment: 425,468 people have attended 1,221 cinema shows, theatre performances, concerts and sports competitions, which have been organized by the teams."[7] While the film program was of course supervised by the camp administration, it also left room for cinematic expressions of cultural memory or films with historical references. In the DP-camps of the late 1940s, in general a very active cultural life took place: organized "welfare programs" included films, theatre, music, handicraft classes, or sports tournaments. These activities reflect wider imaginaries of humanitarianism, emerging at the time, of managing the "needy" camp population (they hardly had any say in the general management of operations), and using cultural activities as part of a physical and

6 Staatsarchiv Nürnberg, "Gewerbebetriebe im Sammellager für Ausländer und Kantinen Allgemein" (Reg. v. Mfr. Abg. 1978, Nr.19856)

7 UN Archives, Z-181-Story Material Used, S-0405-0019-04

mental preparation for repatriation. This included cultural memory of all kinds, so that a connection to the "homeland" would not be lost and repatriation in a reordered Europe made easier for the Allies. A similar strategy was also applied in camps for German refugees and expellees living in West Germany, which long believed in a return to the ceded areas. The newly founded "Federal Ministry for Expellees, Refugees and War Victims" (1949–1969) even developed a stock of "Heimatfilme", which could be ordered for screenings.[8] Almost like an on-demand service, these 16-mm-films were made available as "historical documents from almost all expulsion areas in Central Germany[9]", as an attached leaflet advertises. Keeping cultural memory alive was thus also politically motivated, enabling further migration. Media here became a mnemonic tool for managing past, present and future, highly controlled by camp administration and in line with the development of the refugee regime at large (preparing repatriation or resettlement), upkeeping coherence, where memory as practices of managing change takes place within the media.


LAGER-CHRONIK

Wain cu a najer Lagerlarwaltung

Meldungen!

Der doktojrim-cuzamenfor in Landsberg


UNDZER LEBN IN BILD

Figure 4: Yiddish camp newspaper "A Heim", 1946, page "camp chronicle". Headlines: "elections of new camp administration", "announcements"

Figure 5: Yiddish camp newspaper "A Heim", 1946, page "Our life in pictures", photos from camp life. [both: UN Archives, Area Team 1062-Augsburg-Copies of Newspaper A Heim Published in Leipheim Camps, S-0436-0009-01]

8 Bundesarchiv (Koblenz), B150/3377

9 With "Central Germany" areas of the GDR and West Poland were referred to at that time.

A more self-organized form of mediating cultural memory was the production of camp newspapers. From DP-camps, these are well-preserved.[10] After a license had been granted by the camp administration, residents could start publishing newspapers from and for the camps. Depending on the material conditions, the papers ranged from typewritten sheets stapled together, to properly printed newspapers, if also usually rather short. The content of these papers usually included general news, which were relevant for the community, but also creation and documentation of a camp public, embedded in the specific refugee community: "our life in pictures" (Figure 5), a "camp chronicle" (Figure 4). The last part of the papers was usually a list of lost people and search ads. Again, cultural memory was performed in this camp media platform: commemoration of important events or religious holidays (especially in Yiddish papers, e.g. commemorating the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising), publication of photos with mnemonic meanings of any kind for the specific community, and sometimes even literature.

These examples showcase various media practices, actualizing and performing cultural memory. Cinemas, newspaper, photos, and other mediated cultural activities act as "vehicles of memory" (Keightley & Pickering, 2014, p. 589), as mediations where identificatory references to cultural memory manifest and materialize. In the diasporic and exilic context of refugee camps, such mnemonic media practices are enactions of "the migrant archive" (Appadurai, 2019, p. 561), reassuring identities and belongings during spatial and temporal upheaval. The examples show how this was practiced by forced migrants themselves, through photos, exhibitions or the production of newspapers, giving the timeless space of the camp a past. The migrants bring their pasts and roots into the space, travelling memories are transferred, thus giving the camp however not only a past, but also a present: a temporality for the space in in-between-ness.

Yet, the examples also point at the structural dependency and control of memory: film screenings were organized by administrational staff, not only as forms of entertainment to prevent camp fever, or as forms of democratic education. Correspondences between camp administration and operators of mobile cinemas reveal the purposes behind the selection of films that were screened: "soothing", as well as offering "cultural values" or a "moral upgrading" to the camp residents.[11] Control and active management of what content was allowed to be screened can be seen as a practice of mnemonic management: upkeeping cultural belonging, which was deemed important in the post-war re-ordering of Europe. Similarly, camp newspapers had to be licensed and were dependent on access to printers and other materials. In the direct post-war years newspapers in general had to be licensed in occupied Germany. Correspondences between camp administration and local authorities reveal, how

10 With "Central Germany" areas of the GDR and West Poland were referred to at that time.

11 Staatsarchiv Nürnberg: "Gewerbebetriebe im Sammellager für Ausländer und Kantinen Allgemein" (Reg. v. Mfr. Abg. 1978, Nr.19856)

the content of the papers was surveilled: fears of "anti-repatriation-propaganda" or even "anti-American sentiments" were voiced and affected licensing[12].

4.2. The refugee story: giving oneself a past, present and future

While the camp's media landscape incorporated mediated remembering on the collective level, it also provided spaces for mediations of individual pasts. Forced displacement always produces the loss and dispersion of families and loved ones. Staying in touch, finding, and identifying people is a relatively simple undertaking in digital environments; online platforms like "Refunite" even offer such reunification services for forced migrants today. After World War II, finding missing people relied on other technologies. Under Allied leadership, an international infrastructure was erected for this purpose: the "International Tracing Service", centered in the small town of Bad Arolsen in central Germany. It collected millions of documents on missing persons, with the purpose of enabling identification and reunification. A fundamental part of this operation was to create an archive: filing individual stories and contact details. Information could then be exchanged across Europe through a communication system of mail and telegraphy, in order to reunite people.

Figure 6: [UN Archives, Germany Mission - Photographs #001-120, undated (1943-1948) S-1058-0001-01]

Figure 6 shows a photo depicting "Sofia and Janusz Karpuk, sister and brother aged 10 and 6, two of 'unaccompanied children' who are being cared for in the UNRRA assembly centre at Kloster Indersdorf. Picture shows children being interviewed by officer of UNRRA's Tracing Bureau, whose job it is to establish the children's identity

12 UN Archives, Displaced Persons-Newspapers, S-0402-0001-12, 1946-1947

if possible. The Karpuk family came from Pensk, Poland. The parents died in exile in Germany"[13]. The practice of collecting and documenting stories (photo and interview) can be understood as a structural form of mediated witnessing, of documenting and storing refugee stories. It is these stories, and more exactly, these mediated witness accounts and memories, which make Sofia and Janusz "refugees" (or legally: "displaced persons"). They give account of histories, which qualify for the "making of the modern refugee" (Gatrell, 2013), and insert them into a media infrastructure, which archives their histories. Tracing missing people was a very common post-war media practice, discernable also in the previously mentioned camp newspapers, but also as paper notes posted on the walls of buildings, both in camps and in public places, e.g. on the walls of the German Museum in Munich[14].

The repetitive re-telling and performance of the "refugee story" as a media practice of witnessing is a constant trajectory of the modern refugee regime. Apart from this example of the International Tracing Service, the credible remembering of a refugee past happens in asylum hearings, as well as in magazines, protest leaflets or mass media. Looking through the lens of mediated memory and witnessing at such archival materials (as well as of course at contemporary manifestations of the same phenomenon) demonstrates how media practices construct the "refugee story" as an almost obligatory form of remembrance. Historical and contemporary legislations around asylum hearings manifest compulsory accounts of one's past as the basis for refugee status, e.g. in German law: "The foreigner must himself present the facts, which give rise to his fear of persecution or the threat of serious harm, and provide the necessary information" (§25 Abs. 1 Satz 1 AsylG, 2013, author's translation). Interestingly enough, this was formulated the other way around in the law's predecessor from 1953: "The recognition committee has to clarify the facts and collect the respective evidence" (§13, Ausländergesetz, 1953). Either way, mediated witnessing stands central to this legal regime. The cruel centrality of media technologies becoming tools for obligatory witnessing forms a historical trajectory directly into today's datafied asylum systems, where smartphone data, such as social media profiles – which are themselves performances and mediations of memory – are seized as evidence (Metcalfe & Dencik, 2019).

This history shows trajectories of structural factors shaping refugees' media practices of witnessing and remembering, forming almost a performative genre of "refugee story". Myria Georgiou has pointed out the performativity of refugees' voices, of how their stories get mediated in today's public spheres, arguing that their recognition is conditioned to specific frames of "the refugee story" in a "digital order of appearance" (2018, p. 55). Apart from the context of the hearing, such individual witness accounts of "what happened to me" have of course also historically been abundant in mass media stories, zines or leaflets. In the post-war material, such

13 UN Archives, Germany Mission-Photographs #001-120, S-1058-0001-01

14 UN Archives, Z-181 - Story Material Used, S-0405-0019-04

stories were often driven by the respective humanitarian or state organizations, trying to create solidarity, secure support for their operations and raise money. In his historicization of media witnessing, Günther Thomas (2009, p. 97) argues that "[p]hysical co-presence is central to witnessing, and the possibility of substituting such bodily presence with media is crucial for the development of the cultural form". In this sense, forced migrants transfer bodily experiences of forced migration processes into discursive, mediated structures, making their experiences available "second-hand" to others.

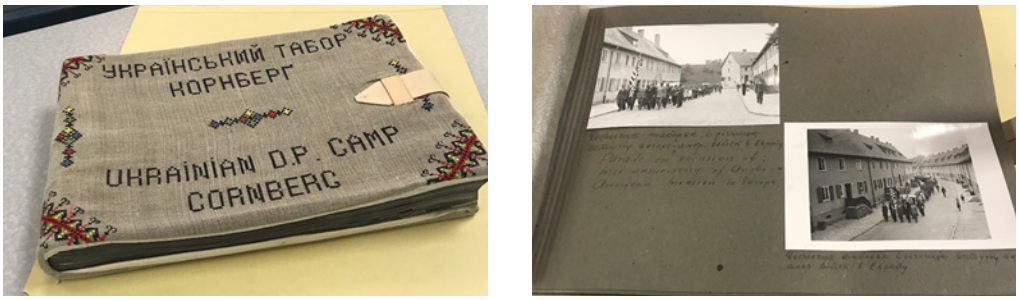


Figure 7: Photo album "Ukrainian D.P. Camp Cornberg", 1946 [UN Archives, Area Team 1023-DP Camp 566-Cornburg-Photographs and Copy of Newspaper-"For Liberty"-Ukrainian Camp Weekly, S-0436-0004-07]

While the examples so far emphasized the structural conditions of witnessing and remembering as a partly obligatory mediated relation to one's past, I want to lastly draw attention to more agency-focused media practices of giving oneself a past, present, and future: namely practices of documenting the present, and giving witness to the current situation in the camp, creating memories. This photo album (Figure 7) was created in 1946 in the Ukrainian DP-camp of Cornberg in Central Germany. The residents meticulously documented their life, including sports events, exhibitions, new buildings, festivities, but also protests. Each photo is accompanied by a Ukrainian and English description, and the album is wrapped in cloth with Ukrainian embroidery. This album, a media product of various practices (photography, writing, the documented events themselves, embroidery), can be understood as a way of acting upon the camp temporality: managing the disrupted life, creating coherence through sorting and ordering experiences. All of which becomes mediated and stored in the cultural form of the album, and through the technology of photography.

This practice of documenting the present, through forms of media memory and witnessing, can also be observed in other examples, like photo collections, the already mentioned camp newspapers, or the documentation of cultural activities in the camps. Experiences are stored and communicated in these media, be it the everyday, cultural life, or making public mistreatments and injustices. They create a present to be remembered in the future. We can interpret a similar intention – storing a memorable present – into this last example. This photo in Figure 8, of which similar ones were plenty in the archive, shows a group of DPs on the day of their departure

from the camp, moving towards a new place of settlement. They decorated the train, wrote messages of thanks and names and places with chalk onto the carriage and posed with flags for the photo. This was presumably a very important day, a caesura in the camp temporality, namely its end. A day to be remembered.

Figure 8: Photo of DPs departure on train, undated (1945-1948) [UN Archive, Germany-Children and refugees, S-0800-0034-0001]

5. CONCLUSION: HOPEFUL AND OBLIGATORY REMEMBERING

The archival records demonstrate how mediated memory and witnessing are fundamental components of refugees' media practices. Media technologies in post-war Germany's refugee camps were, similarly to today, used for managing the experience of spatial and temporal change. Media offered ways, and were drawn upon for re-imaginations of dissembled pasts, presents, and futures. The historical perspective on mediated memory practices among forced migrants shows how entangled diasporic identity negotiations are with media practices – and with changing media technologies. The mnemonic media repertoire in these examples included cinemas, newspapers, photography, documentations of refugee stories and cultural activities like art exhibitions. While we see continuities and ruptures of these technologies in the digital environment today, underlying practices remain constant: using media to remember, witness and manage change. Such mediated forms of "management of change" are positioned along a spectrum of group-individual, ranging from communal, diasporic memory practices, to individual practices of witnessing, storing one's own memory. From memory studies, we know that these levels are highly entangled, as cultural forms referring to each other in "personal cultural memories" (van Dijck, 2007).

Yet, what the historical context of the studied camps also shows, is how mediated memory practices can range along a spectrum of structure-agency in their socio-technological set-up: forms of remembering offered and controlled by camp administrations, like cinemas, dependent on material possibilities and permissions – and forms of active remembering as initiatives "from below", like newspapers or photography. Management of change, hence, also involves mnemonic practices that are "being managed" through certain power dynamics of the camp, where the refugee regime employs and steers cultural and individual memory, e.g. in film screenings or in asylum hearings. Access to technologies, permission, but also control of content, characterize structural dimensions, while urges to and execution of creative memory practices, as well as the popularity of many activities, demonstrates camp residents' agency.

Taking this interpretation of structure and agency one step further, the material points at how "management of change" in forced migration, as media practices of re-imagining past, present, and future, is characterized by an ambiguity of hope and obligation. Firstly, the examples show how memory was a way of reassuring one's identity and belonging in cultural, diasporic pasts, through media facilitating belonging and identity in the timeless space of the camp. Also, the present was documented: practices of creating and storing new memories along the way, remembering for the future. As practices of looking back as well as ahead, these memory practices can be interpreted as representing hope. Mirjam Twigt (2018) has shown how for Iraqi refugees in Jordan media technologies are providing "spaces of hope" during long times of waiting in exile. I argue that mnemonic practices of remembering past and present are part of hopeful refugee media practices: memory work that reassures past, present and future in coherent structures. They can be seen as an attempt to stabilize identity again, enacting a certain optimism towards something better *after* the camp, while stuck in dire conditions.

Yet, simultaneously, the outlined structural conditions show how media practices of remembering in forced migration can be obligatory at the same time. In exploring the pragmatic uses and abuses of memory, Paul Ricœur (2004, pp. 86-92) suggests the dimension of "obligated memory" to describe duties to remember. Obligations can come from outside, as something superimposed, as well as inside, something experienced subjectively. The field where memory work becomes a project with an imperative to remember, Ricœur continues, is justice. Obligation, here, is characterized by three dimensions: striving towards justice through memory is directed towards someone else, the other; it is derived from a debt, or heritage to previous generations; and the moral direction is towards victims. What my analysis suggests is that an obligated memory can also be directed towards oneself. In the current refugee regime, especially within the asylum hearing, giving witness to and credibly remembering one's own past, is what makes a refugee a refugee. Communicating one's "refugee story" is a mediated performance of memory, be it for the "International Tracing Service" in the 1940s, in the asylum interview, for a mass media interview, a self-produced newspaper, or in the seized smartphone and on social media.

The archival records offer us access to historical continuities that underlie experiences of obligated mnemonic practices. Becoming a refugee is a memory project carried out through media practices, in the respective media technological environment. The obligatory dimension becomes visible through control of media practices in the camp, such as film screenings or organized activities, which deliberately offer and steer cultural memory to prepare repatriation. Ultimately, Ricœur claims that justice combines internal and external obligated memory. And this is, what ties the ambiguity of hopeful and obligatory (or free and controlled) memory together: an obligation to remember and to give witness in order to achieve justice is intrinsically hopeful. The various mediated memory practices, therefore, are characterized ambiguities of hope and duty, agency and structure, that are grounded in the temporalities and spatialities that the contemporary refugee and humanitarian refugee produce in the liminal spaces of camps.

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DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN PHOTOGRAPHS MATTER: THEORISING THE ARTISTIC LEGITIMISATION OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN ITALY

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ABSTRACT

The paper investigates the collective efforts at legitimising photography as art by focusing on field-members' discourses. The analysis draws on in-depth face-to-face interviews with photography professionals and ethnographic data collected in Italy. Field actors adopt a strategy of discursive theorisation, namely differentiation, to promote the artistic legitimisation of photography. Differentiation is the discursive opposition between worthy and un-worthy individuals, groups and cultural products, sustained by referencing an artistic ideology. The analysis stresses how differentiation pertains to several analytical dimensions at the intersection of the social worlds of photography and art, and points out its limitations in legitimising photography when actors adopt differing legitimising principles.

Keywords: Artistic legitimisation ▪ categorisation ▪ theorisation ▪ photography ▪ differentiation ▪ cultural fields

1. INTRODUCTION

During the 20th century, the field of art photography developed by cutting its ties from commercial photography and by seeking recognition from the art world (Becker, 1982). Early photographers in the United States, France, the United Kingdom and Germany developed an artistic practice and questioned traditional view that deemed photography inadequate for artistic expression (Rosenblum, 1978; Christopherson, 1974; Bourdieu, 1965/1990). Over time, the recognition by art critics, the inclusion of photography in cultural institutions and the development of a market for fine art prints contributed to photography's status as a part of the "high" arts.

Although today a strict boundary between photography and art seems questionable (Fried, 2008), photography's artistic status is not ubiquitous across visual cultures (Seamon, 1997). As the Italian case demonstrates (Valtorta, 2009), photography occupies a peripheral position in the art world, and Italian photographers struggle

for recognition as artistic creators (La fotografia in Italia, 2011). Sociologists have not thoroughly studied the position of photography in the Italian context. This study seeks to elaborate the strategies field actors use in a situation where their products suffer from being only partially legitimised as art, despite their persistent efforts. I will show that the partial legitimisation of photography is linked to various historical and cultural reasons. For example, an elitist approach to art and the dominance of idealist art theories devalued photography as a "mechanical" art in Italy (Valtorta, 2009; Zannier, 2019). Over time, documentary or instrumental uses of photography were emphasized to the detriment of artistic considerations.

In Italy, it was only in the 1970s when socio-cultural changes and a desire for renewal in the art world began explicitly to consider photography as part of the major arts (Valtorta, 2009). Many artists began to use photography, and photographs entered Italian museums as works of art. Designated archives and the first commercial galleries for art photography also started to open. Italian art historians and critics began to discuss photography as an autonomous art, encouraged by a broader academic interest in photography that legitimised their efforts. However, despite collective efforts, between the 1970s and 1990s, the lack of a photography museum (until 2004), and the delay of legislative interventions which classified photography as part of the national cultural heritage (until 1999), hindered these initial efforts. Lacking institutional legitimacy, Italian private collecting and the market for art photography lost the opportunity to grow, unlike in other European countries.

This paper begins by discussing the relationship between discourse, categorisation and artistic legitimisation. By combining the sociology of arts (Baumann, 2007) and organisational studies (Durand & Khaire, 2017), I will address two understudied issues: 1) the relationship between categorisation (by field actors) and the legitimisation on photography as an art form, and 2) the role of different kinds of field actors (besides the traditional intermediaries) in producing a theorising discourse to support the legitimisation process. The empirical section draws on 23 face-to-face interviews with photography professionals and ethnographic observation during 20 field-configuring events in Italy.

By applying the idea of "mechanisms of status recategorization" (Delmestri & Greenwood, 2016), I have distinguished three strategies of legitimisation: differentiation, emulation and sublimation. In the case of Italian photography, differentiation consist of the symbolic distancing of photography-as-art from lower-status types of photography. Emulation implies the discursive and material presentation of photography so that it corresponds to the qualities of high-status contemporary art. Sublimation, in turn, consists of framing photography as an authentic member of the art world by linking photography to broader legitimating narratives of the contemporary art world. In empirical reality, these mechanisms are interrelated and intertwined. However, the theoretical objective of this article is to focus on the process of differentiation and discuss the analytical limitations of the concept. Thus,

I will analytically isolate the process of differentiation to argue why it *alone* is not a sufficient strategy to guarantee the full artistic legitimisation of photography.

2. THE ARTISTIC LEGITIMISATION OF PHOTOGRAPHY

2.1. Photography as a case of partial artistic legitimisation

Artistic legitimisation is a theoretical concept that explains how cultural products achieve the status of art through actions and discourses of social groups (Baumann, 2007; Heinich & Shapiro, 2012; Harrington et al., 2015). Such a theory adopts a constructivist perspective within the sociology of art (Alexander, 2003) where the label of "art" – and the distinction between "highbrow" and "lowbrow" genres – are seen as products of (culturally embedded) social processes. Since legitimisation does not affect the material features of already existing cultural products, I will not discuss what art photography "really" is or what kind of an object it becomes when it is legitimised as part of the field of arts. Instead, I will focus on nuances, discourses and practices of social construction that leave photography as only a *partially legitimate* art form.

Earlier sociological research on the production of photography as art offers evidence of its partial artistic legitimisation. Focusing on the opposition between groups of photographers (i.e. amateurs and professionals) and on what is considered "art" among photographers' practices (Christopherson 1974; Bourdieu, 1965/1990; Schwartz, 1986; Solaroli, 2016). previous studies demonstrate that photography occupies a position of incomplete legitimisation (Bourdieu, 1965/1990; Brunet, 2012; Heinich & Shapiro, 2012). However, despite these empirical analyses, theoretical reflections on these issues are underdeveloped. In particular, recent changes in art worlds, such as the progressive adoption of photography as an artistic language by contemporary artists (Valtorta, 2009) have not been taken into account.

There are three commonly cited reasons that explain the difficulties photography experienced to be recognised as a legitimate art form. First, the mechanical and reproducible nature of photography hinders an aesthetic appreciation based on traditional artistic criteria, such as subjectivity and uniqueness. For example, the art market distributes and evaluates photographic prints as material objects by adopting criteria of rarity and uniqueness that derive from the traditional arts (Sagot-Duvauroux, 2012).

Secondly, the democratisation of photography weakens its artistic ambition, as it is virtually impossible to isolate artistic production from mass uses of photography (Brunet, 2012). Thus, since the invention of photography (Battani, 1999), professionals legitimised photography by establishing conventions (Becker, 1982) that isolate artistic photography into a "sacralised" sphere (Douglas, 1966).

Third, scholars agree that the context of production, distribution and consumption determines photography's meanings, including aesthetic appreciation and

discussion (Becker, 1982; Alexander, 2003; Tagg 1988). Institutional discourse (Tagg, 1988), for example in museums (Edwards & Morton, 2015), is based on ideological notions that support particular meanings and interpretations of photography. The lack of institutions in charge of the transmission and diffusion of photography, as in the Italian case, prevents an understanding of photography as an appropriate component of legitimate culture (Bourdieu, 1965/1990).

Previous research has argued that the collaboration between photographers, critics, intermediaries, artistic institution, the market and the academia sustains the legitimisation of art photography. However, more emphasis should be devoted to understanding legitimisation mechanisms, and specifically how actors pursue legitimisation in fields where meaningful categories – such as photography and art – are strategically mobilised and often opposed in discourse. Theorising this processual explanation is my main task.

2.2. Theorising discourse and categories

Unlike previous studies that broadly assume the legitimising effects of critics and academics' public discourse, Baumann's (2007) artistic legitimisation framework accounts for the functioning of legitimising discourse by identifying which actors, discursive elements and mechanism play a role. Baumann (2007 p. 59) argues that successful artistic legitimisation is based on the widespread acceptance of an artistic ideology, as aestheticians "create ideologies of art, and critics frame particular works of art by appealing to the theories and values of specific ideologies". Finally, discourses provide a vocabulary and set of concepts that art world members exchange in oral and written communications (Baumann, 2007).

However, in focusing on how gatekeepers provide ideological support to legitimacy claims, Baumann devotes less attention to two crucial aspects. The first is the role of categorisation processes in discourse and their effects on legitimisation. The effects of discursive oppositions between categories (i.e. genres) on legitimacy are not explicitly addressed in Baumann's model. This is possibly because, as Scardaville (2009) suggests, Baumann's framework is more suitable for explaining success stories than cases of partial legitimisation. However, sociologists of culture have often underlined that categorisation processes and classification systems (Lena & Peterson, 2008; DiMaggio, 1987) affect the legitimacy of cultural products. For example, consecration (Bourdieu, 1993) is a process that confers legitimacy through the separation of deserving and undeserving categories of products or individuals as it "assert[s] the existence in a field of a reliable hierarchy of worthiness" (Accominotti, 2018, p. 7). Similarly, in organizational research, actors can legitimise or de-legitimise cultural products by mobilising, challenging, and contesting meaningful categories through persuasive theorisation (Delmestri & Greenwood, 2016; Grodal & Kahl, 2017). For example, Delmestri & Greenwood (2016, p. 25) point to "theorization by allusion" to describe discursive strategies – such as symbolic distancing,

or evoking culturally resonant social-level frames – that proponents of institutional change adopt to legitimise certain products. Besides, texts and discourses provide a narrative for the institutionalization of new categories (Khaire & Wadhwani, 2010) that challenge existing social and symbolic boundaries (Lamont, 2012). Specific categories, such as "painting", are perceived as more legitimate, and membership in them is considered desirable (Negro et al., 2010).

Second, Baumann's focus on artistic ideology overlooks the role of other field actors in producing a legitimising discourse. His emphasis on aestheticians and critics follows earlier theories and their identification as the traditional legitimisers of cultural products (Becker, 1982). However, several other field members also adopt framing, discourse and artistic ideologies to label, evaluate and categorize cultural products as art. Both studies on organisations (Delmestri & Greenwood, 2016) and cultural fields (Griswold, 2013; Lizé, 2016) agree that a host of field members – producers, intermediaries and consumers – take part in negotiating meanings in different institutional contexts.

3. METHODS

I draw from in-depth face-to-face interviews with Italian critics, historians, curators, art collectors, artists and professional photographers (n = 23, see Table 1), and ethnographic data collected through participant observation of field-configuring events (Lampel & Meyer, 2008) (n = 20), such as gallery openings, presentations, auctions, art fairs and festivals. Sampling, data collection and analysis were guided by Charmaz's (2014) Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT), for two reasons. First, as the field of Italian art photography is understudied, the analysis should start from empirical realities. Second, a nuanced analysis of the Italian context provides evidence that can support theory building by providing new insights. CGT theorises action by paying analytic attention to discourse and categories emerging from the data. Through constant comparisons between the data and co-construction of meaning with research participants, CGT help understand how different perspectives inform individual and collective meanings. Following Charmaz' epistemology, I used earlier theoretical concepts as sensitising concepts. They were adopted in the analysis only if empirical evidence clearly confirmed their significance. For example, Delmestri and Greenwood' (2016) concept of category detachment (section 4.5) was adopted in data analysis only as the categories emerging from data analysis demonstrated a correspondence with this concept.

Consistently with the CGT methodology, sampling was performed in two stages and according to two complementary criteria (Charmaz, 2014). Purposeful sampling enabled selecting respondents based on their ability to explain the mechanisms underlying the partial legitimisation of photography due to their professional involvement with photography. Specifically, it aimed at identifying subjects who occupy different positions within the fields of photography and art. Hence, the

sample included professionals involved in the production, intermediation and consumption of photography in Italy with the purpose to engage in discussions informed by various structural positions (Bourdieu, 1993, 1996). Based on the first rounds of interview and observational notes analysis, I adopted theoretical sampling to select further respondents who occupied professional roles which were ignored in the initial sample.

Data were collected in unstructured face-to-face interviews, which encouraged in-depth exploration of ideas, experiences, identities and relationships between meaningful categories (Charmaz, 2014). The opening question, "Could you tell me about your relationship with photography?", allowed to inquire meanings associated with photography and art by referring to interviewees' position in the field. Subsequently, I encouraged detailed discussions on sub-topics that emerged in the initial phase, asked for clarifications and exclusively focused on the categories expressed by respondents. The interviews lasted from 1 to 4 hours. In addition to interviews, I conducted participant observation in 20 events from November 2018 until November 2019. These events included 11 exhibitions, two conferences, three art fairs, two festivals, two auctions and one winter school for photography professionals. Observing these "field-configuring events" (Lampel & Meyer, 2008) revealed how they shape the emergence of collective meanings. Finally, a range of art history books, art magazines and newspapers, often suggested by interviewees, provided additional data to understand better the context in which the discursive categorizations are embedded.

The coding of interview transcripts and observational notes was conducted in two phases informed by the CGT methodology: preliminary mapping and the analysis of interviewee's discourses. In the initial coding phase, I used the "line-by-line" technique (Charmaz, 2014) to identify key actors and processes involved in the production, distribution and consumption of photography. The codes were grouped into thematic categories (such as "photographers", "critics", "gallerists") to map the relation between individuals and identify central aspects related to legitimisation. Subsequently, the emphasis centred on the social construction of labels and categories (Durand & Khaire, 2017). In this stage, I focused on how field actors mobilise, define and contest meaningful categories (such as photography and art) in their discourse. I established connections between specific actors (i.e. critics), conceptual categories (i.e. differentiating photographers' identity) and specific processes corresponding to the production, distribution and consumption of photography (i.e. evaluating photographers). To protect interviewee's privacy and professional interests, data were anonymised.

Table 1: List of interviewed professionals

Number of participants (T=23)	Profession	Age (min-max)
7	Gallerists (Art and Photo galleries)	30–60
4	Artists, Photographers, Art Photographers	25–80
4	Critics, curators, professors	30–60
2	Museums and Foundations Managers	50–60
2	Art Fair Directors	60–70
2	Collectors (Photography – Art photography)	50–80
1	Auction House Photography Consultant	50
1	Event Planner (Milan's Photo Week)	55

4. DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN PHOTOGRAPHERS (AND PHOTOGRAPHS) MATTER

4.1. Differences and categories

The relationship between photographs and discourse is a crucial element in understanding how photography, as a cultural product, competes for public attention and artistic recognition (Griswold, 2013). Cultural products require what Bielby and Bielby (1994) define as an "interpretative package", a discursive anchorage of cultural objects in the institutional contexts of production and diffusion. Photography's relationship with art in Italy is constructed by field participants through several discursive strategies which stress the artistic potential of the medium. Field participants recognise qualitative differences in photography by mobilising artistic ideologies which justify what counts as art. Discourse can produce a collective representation of the artistic value of photography through comparisons and oppositions which establish a hierarchy of the creative use of photography. The interviewees argue that images taken with a camera, albeit fabricated by the same instrument, are not all the same. Distinctions between photographs, and photographers, matter.

Hence, to understand which ideas and artistic notions come to be associated with photography, we have to look at how differentiation pertains to the production, distribution and consumption of photography. Below, I sketch a conceptual map to highlight how differentiation – between art and non-art photography – is performed along several analytical dimensions and actors (cf. Alexander, 2003; Griswold, 2013). First, I show how social worlds differentiation determines the distancing between the fields of photography and contemporary art, where actors adopt two competing ideologies to frame the artistic value of photography (section 4.2). Then my analysis highlights the discursive differentiation of producers, their identity and their

practices (section 4.3) and the differentiation of photographs as material objects that circulate into distribution channels (section 4.4). The final dimensions discuss how differentiation determines a separation between market distribution channels (section 4.5) and photography collectors (4.6).

4.2. Differentiating social worlds

Social world differentiation consists of a discursive separation between groups and actors. This creates social distance and segmentation both *within* the world on photography and *between* the worlds of photography and art. Because of the historical development of the field, social worlds differentiation establishes specific ways of producing, understanding and evaluating photography that refer to competing legitimising ideologies. For example, in 2011, a group of professional photographers, editors, gallerists, educators and historians organised a conference to discuss the condition of photography in Italy, *La fotografia in Italia. A che punto siamo?* (Photography in Italy. Where are we now?, 2011). The proceedings show how differentiation within the field of photography was based on discursive opposition between insiders and outsiders supported by a common discipline:

> I'm not saying that there are no people who deal with photography [in Italy]. The mere fact that we've filled a room like this proves it. I am saying that a shared space doesn't exist, and the product of this absence is that outsiders are those primarily dealing with photography in Italy, who discuss, talk and communicate photography. Even brilliant outsiders: art critics, journalists, philosophers, advertisers, and writers sometimes foray into the field of the photographic. I have nothing against interdisciplinarity. Indeed, I welcome it: one of the conquests of modern culture is the connection between islands of knowledge. However, in order to have an interdisciplinary approach, there must be a discipline, perhaps to be shaken, to be destabilized with interventions that prevent it from sitting on itself. Because there are outsiders, there must be an inside. And because there is transversality, there must also be a territory to cross. (Smargiassi, 2011, p. 15)

The author here asserts his position within an in-group comprising several professionals who lack cohesion as they do not share a common legitimising ideology (Baumann, 2007), despite being all part of a specific collaborative network. The conference was sponsored by an established publishing company and photographic agency, which also runs a gallery of photographic prints. Significantly, such network does not include art critics, curators, or gallerists that do not exclusively identify with the meanings and values of the photography world. In this case, the separation between insiders and outsiders echoes the importance of segmentation in the legitimisation of social worlds (Strauss, 1982). Distancing is a strategy to sustain

"a growing conviction that 'what we are doing' is not just as legitimate but even more legitimate than those of another earlier, established, or more powerful SSW [sub-social world]" (Strauss, 1982, p. 175), that is the contemporary art world.

The excerpt above shows that discursive differentiation alone cannot produce legitimisation. Instead, it requires a discipline – what Baumann (2007) would call a legitimising ideology – to sustain the demarcation between insiders and outsiders, "us" and "them". Photography can be legitimised as an autonomous discipline only as long as its boundaries are sanctioned by a common ideological understanding, which prevents outsider from venturing too far into the field. A young art critic, who identifies as being part of the world of contemporary art while specialising in photography, spontaneously shares a similar oppositional view of the field:

> In Italy, there are a thousand facets [in photography], it's a bit like politics. (...) There are factions: you believe in a certain thing, and if you really believe it then you support that thing, but at the same time you cannot even enclose yourself in it, because otherwise the risk is that you only speak with yourself. Thus, you have to soften yourself and open up also to accept other people's thoughts, yet without compromising yourself. The world of photography is a world of people in their sixties and upwards, who don't want to give way to novelty and want to protect that handful of names, that handful of styles and approaches to photography. Because, obviously, these are elements of the world in which they grew up. They have to protect them because if they don't, then they would also lack the... the demand for their contribution. This is a cyclical thing. (Art and photography critic, 45, M, Milan)

This critic belongs to a new generation at the crossroad of the worlds of photography and art, and thus has to negotiate his ideas in a social space characterised by a *double differentiation*, relying on two competing legitimising ideologies. The first distinction is the opposition between historically renowned authors versus amateur and commercial photography. This has institutionalised an aesthetic appreciation of photography-as-art *within* the social space of photography ("that handful of names, ... of styles and approaches to photography"). This separation underlines that all photography is not the same: there are "masters" or "authors" – and then the rest. Great photographers possess specific abilities, a genuine vision, and these characteristics legitimise them as artists among other photographers and photography enthusiasts.

The second opposition is the one between the contemporary art world's understanding of photography and the traditional aesthetic appreciation of photography-as-art. Influenced by post-modern theories of art, the contemporary art world encourages the inclusion of photography among the several languages artists can adopt. In doing so, artists-photographers are compared to artists who work with different media. Accordingly, there are artists who *use* photography, just as there

are photographers who work *as* artists, and both can belong to the canon of art. Yet, this artistic contemporary ideology favours multi-media artists, as they are considered free to adopt photography at their needs. Photographers, again, are considered restricted by the exclusive use of the photographic language.

The consequences of the double differentiation between photography and art photography, and photography and art are evident in the art critic's further elaboration on the topic.

> There's no point in talking about photography from inside [the world of] photography. In fact, the most interesting things are outside. Then, it is clear that it is also due to the nature of the medium, because its beauty is that everyone is interested in it (...) Most contemporary philosophers may well mind their own business, but fortunately they don't. That is, fortunately they also mind our own business, they speak better about photography than – I even say this against my own profession – better than art critics or critics of the sector. You understand that it's something that interests everyone in a transversal way. Because photography is communication, photography is memory, and photography is history. Then it can become art if done well in one of these fields, [with one of these] motivations. Then the art world can absorb it in and give it a value, a different value. (Art and photography critic, 45, M, Milan)

The opposition between an "inside" and an "outside" structures different understandings (i.e. "our" and "their" business) of photography's legitimacy. Consequently, the legitimisation of photography through differentiation is challenged by photography's simultaneous presence in different social contexts. According to the art critic, what differentiates photography as art from other uses is its integration into a social environment – the art world – which labels photography as both *distinctive* and *included*. Drawing on Baumann (2007), one could argue that the constant competition between these different legitimising ideologies penalizes photography as an art practice.

In light of photography's presence in multiple social spheres, how do producers differentiate between artistic uses of photography and between different types of photography? Cultural objects require a theory, while photographers require a discipline.

4.3. Forms of photographic production and the identity of producers

According to the interviewees, there are multiple ways to produce art with photography. Field participants adopt discursive justifications that differentiate photographers through the opposition between photography-as-art and non-artistic

practices. At the same time, historical distinctions between photographic genres play an essential role in differentiating the artistic status of contemporary producers.

Producers adopt differentiation as a strategy of identity formation. Photographers who undertake both professional activity (e.g. work on commission) and personal projects try to disentangle the specific meanings associated with each practice. Differentiation allows them to distinguish personal work as a form of artistic experimentation, referring to photography as an autonomous expression:

> There is a difference, in my opinion, between being a good photographer, [that is] a good professional who reproduces what he has to do, through studio or product photography, and a more artistic approach, that is to use photography for a personal story. Then, things are not so clear but overlap very often. Regardless, it is useful to know not the purpose, but the reason why you do things. (Artistic and professional photographer, 35, F, Milan)

Notions of freedom, purpose and disinterestedness in commercial practices are familiar tropes for photographers who engage in artistic production (Christopherson, 1974; Schwartz, 1986). They are used in the (self-)definition of art photographers in several ways, for example, by problematizing the shared conceptions of photography as a constraining artistic tool. Others separate photography-as-art from other photographic practices to preserve the autonomy of artistic production as opposed to commissioned work, referring to the purpose and subjectivity associated with "personal" work.

In the case of photographers, the development of an artistic discipline demonstrates how differentiation can be a source of artistic theorisation for producers. Differentiation can be a tool for defining the boundaries between "insiders" and "outsiders" (as discussed above) and, at the same time, a structuring device among "insiders". Discipline acts as one of the "legitimating conceptualizations" (Strauss, 1982, p. 177), which "are needed not merely for defending the SSW [sub-social world] from outsiders, but to give justification and guidance to insiders, and also to shape a legitimized order *of* the SSW."

Moreover, other actors in the field of photography, such as collectors and critics, can differentiate producers by referring to the same ideological conception of photography-as-art:

> Even on the author's part, knowing how to use photography correctly in all its potential is not easy. You must have read Susan Sontag, all the classics about photography. Then you have fun. It's like when one plays the piano and the violin, you have fun when you know the technique and you know the expression of all the great artists, Bach and Chopin, and why do they make that kind of project with their piece. Why? It's extraordinary. Even reading music is the same thing. You can understand it, you can write it, and you

> can play and interpret it when you know the author's story in depth. So, it's the same thing in photography, only that while it's obvious that music is not easy if you want to perceive it in all its potential, photography seems much simpler. (Collector and former photography gallery manager, 70, M, Milan)

> How can you differentiate yourself, distance yourself? If you want to make yourself different as well, don't you? Your difference is in developing projects. Images overlap. Very often, they can't make a difference. The difference is made by the project. (Photography critic, 50, M, Milan)

Above, the collector differentiates producers based on theoretical and historical knowledge about the artistic discipline. The critic, in turn, identifies project management as a distinctive part of artistic practice. Both evoke differentiations (*within* the world of photography) between producers who strive for the same type of recognition and compete for the symbolic capital reflecting an ideology of photography-as-art (cf. Bourdieu, 1993, 1996).

At the same time, the differentiation between producers may refer to the distance between the world of photography and the world of art, which are structured according to different legitimising principles. For example, the separation between photography and art is reflected by the categorisations of a photography critic who divides art-photographers from photo-artists:

> The artist-photographer is the artist who employs the photographic medium as an expressive language, but in some way does not exclude other languages. In the sense that he finds in photography, let's say, the ideal medium to express one's project, one's work. He, however, does not preclude himself the use of other media, other languages. (...) The photographer-artist is the one who does not move beyond the photographic medium but acts in an artistic way. That is, he does not have a commissioned work, he lives by his own solicitation (Photography critic, 50, M, Milan)

In this quote, differentiation concerns both the intentionality of the producer and the context of production. The social definition of the photographer-artist is produced in opposition to amateur or professional uses of photography. Photography-as-art, therefore, differs from the common meanings associated with technique and commerce. Besides, photographer-artists are compared to multimedia *artists* who are "free" to express themselves using photography. Hence, the differentiation between artist-photographers and photo-artists refers to the legitimising principle of "art for art's sake" (Bourdieu, 1996). Confronted with such ideology, photo-artists are de-legitimised, since photography represents the limit of their practice, and therefore of their legitimacy as artists.

4.4. Types and qualities of photography

Differentiation affects the material dimension of photography by establishing a separation between the qualities of photographic prints. Once photographs are distributed in commercial venues as material objects beyond the control of producers, they are differentiated according to two legitimising principles that reflect the historical separation between the categories of photography and art (discussed in section 4.2), and the classification placed on photographers (section 4.3). For example, a gallerist recounts that the historical distinction between "professional photographers" and "artists who use photography" establishes a legitimate principle for evaluating photographic prints:

> There are photographs by authors who are considered more as artists and less as photographers that are offered, for example, in contemporary art auctions. Then there are auctions exclusively for photography. So, this is a gap that I hope will be filled sooner or later, in the sense that I think photography, even the most traditional, analogical, printed in darkrooms... is an expressive medium belonging to art, as painting and tempera and acrylics, sculpture and so on. The market still makes this distinction, so that Cindy Sherman goes to contemporary art auctions as well as Ruff, Struth, Candida Hofer, and so on. And all the others go to photography auctions. So, of course, it has to be said that many of these authors, or these artist photographers, as we want to call them, which are more historicized, were born as photographers and therefore never thought that sooner or later their photos would be hung in a living room or a museum. Being born as a photographer of another kind, maybe there is a bit of this distinction, while those who belong to the generations closer to us began to photograph because they really wanted to give artistic expression to their thought. Maybe they are more directed towards, let's say, the contemporary art market rather than the photography market. (Photography gallery manager, 45, F, Milan)

The differentiation between photography and art determines a division of distribution channels independent of producers' will and expectations. Discussions about the professional background of photographers institutionalise distinctions between those "born as photographers" and those "born as artists", that determine which markets will include their work. As such, the example confirms that "category meanings and value constructs are embedded in broader interpretations of the accepted cultural history of a field" (Khaire e Wadhwani, 2010, p. 1297).

The gallerist, however, tries to question the ideological principle behind this distinction, since photographers in the category of art receive higher economic and artistic valuations. Her ideological conception of photography as an "expressive medium belonging to art" opposes the differentiation criteria between photography

and art that auction houses adopt. This opposition has significant consequences on the artistic legitimacy of the medium, as demonstrated by the processes of differentiation that affect the distribution channels of photography.

4.5. Distribution channels and forms of intermediation

In general, distribution channels adopt the categorization of historians, critics and curators to frame the discourses associated with cultural products (Khaire & Wadhwani, 2010). In the Italian case, these categorisations are also performatively reinforced by discursive differentiation and have consequences on photography's legitimacy as art.

The analysis shows a separation between the distribution channels of photography and art that reflects the social distance between the respective social worlds. On the one hand, there are galleries specialised in photography and on the other hand ,contemporary art galleries that include photography. There are specialized photography auctions which are distinct form contemporary art auctions that include photographic prints. There are two specialized photography fairs that stand apart from modern and contemporary art fairs that often include photography in their specific sections.

Photography galleries are well aware of the status differential between the labels of photography and contemporary art. Thus, depending on their position in the field of photography, gallery owners either discursively highlight the distinction between the two genres or try to avoid it. The closer they are to a clientele of collectors who only buy photographic prints and ignore other artistic media, the more they consider their condition as a strategy of specialisation:

> When you start a business of this kind, you also have to go through a specific path to become an expert or someone specialized in a particular field. So, we started with a broader path of contemporary art, and in these initial markets we brought artists from other media and not only photographers. Over a couple of years, there was a growth of internal specialisation in photography, guided by the presence of some photography masters that we had the good fortune to know beforehand, and whom we gradually inserted in our group of artists. And then we opened the gallery in Milan with a whole new identity and with a whole other kind of programming that was very focused on photography, but with an international background not exclusively specialized in photography. (Photography gallery manager, 50, M, Milan)

By contrast, galleries that avoid explicit specialisation, but sell photographic prints, challenge the differentiation between art forms as something useless and unjustified. For example, the owner of a self-defined "contemporary art gallery" argues that:

> It's like photography needs an enclave of its own or it has been relegated to an enclave. And this bothers me. Because it's a waste of time, that's not the problem, let's move on. Then photography fairs are fine, but where's the painting fair, or the sculpture fair? (Contemporary art gallery manager, 50, F, Milan)

> We started with a group exhibition that analysed how photography has influenced the arts but not in an exhaustive way. From the Chinese painter who has a cut of the pictorial image that obviously has to do with photography, to the other one that talks about images, reproducibility etc. In short, this was our thought. And after that, in a natural way, we started working with artists who indeed used photography, but not only. This year we realized the first two projects of the year with two solo exhibitions that were not photographic, not even one of the two. We then did a project in Palermo. More than half of them were indeed photographers in some way, as they use photography, but the project was not purely photographic. (Contemporary art gallery manager, 50, F, Milan)

Inside material distribution channels, discursive differentiation has enormous practical consequences. It divides photography into two separate worlds that operate according to conflicting legitimising principles. For example, photography fairs bring together dispersed professionals to frame and legitimise photography as a collectable art form. The discursive separation between photography and other genres of art aims to facilitate the legitimacy of photography as an autonomous art through the accumulation of resources (such as visibility and circulation) specifically dedicated to photography:

> It seems that you have to treat photography as something else, and I understand the reasons. Especially when the market intervenes, so that we no longer deal with researches and studies on photography, but we speak of economics. Then, since photography is difficult to sell, it's ok to have fairs dedicated to photography as they bring together collectors who are hesitantly interested in this language and invite them to look at photographs, to tackle them. But fairs are, more than anything else, to be understood as a communication tool. That is, I create a container for photography as I want to shift attention to this language from a communicative point of view (Art and photography critic, 45, M, Milan)

Differentiation represents a "communicative strategy" because discourses in public events (Lampel & Meyer, 2008) frame photography as something separate from competing art forms, underlying its artistic autonomy. The photography fair determines the institutionalisation of collective meanings by orienting the public's attention to

photography's legitimacy as a collectable art form. Photographs demonstrate their distinctive qualities as they are isolated from impure meanings commonly associated with low-level (and non-collectable) photography. The phenomenon resonates with Delmestri and Greenwood's (2016, p. 25), concept of "category detachment", that is, "the presentation and signaling of an object in such a way that audiences have serious difficulty associating it with the meanings and practices of the undesired category" – i.e. those of the world of commercial photography.

However, differentiation could also be a double-edged sword and it could de-legitimize photography when art photography is compared to other established arts. During a modern and contemporary art fair, Arte Fiera 2019, some gallery owners expressed their discontent for having been "segregated" in the photography section. The "photography section" communicates an internal separation between art and photography, where the latter is "othered" through labelling. In particular, the separation communicates a condition that Accominotti et al. (2018, p. 1746) defines as "segregated inclusion", i.e. "a form of inclusion in which new types of boundaries emerge between previously separate groups". Consequently, the separation of photography from other institutionalized media (i.e. painting and sculpture) that do not require specific sections, calls into question photography's place into the arts and reduces its sense of integration and "purity".

4.6. Modes of photography consumption

Audiences are equally essential agents for the discursive legitimisation of photography through differentiation. For example, collectors bestow legitimacy on photography through the very act of collecting, which represents an institutionalised form of artistic consumption. By separating individuals "worthy" of being purchased from others, collecting works as an instrument of consecration (Accominotti, 2018) of specific authors.

At the same time, other actors in the field differentiate between photography collectors according to the collectors' different understanding of photography as art. For example, a gallery classifies clients according to the type of photography they collect, their orientation towards photography-as-art, and their cultural background:

> I have a friend who is a crazy collector of 20th-century art. I've been trying to sell him a picture for twenty years, but he says "I'll never buy a picture" (...) So, beyond the possibility of spending, there are some cultural barriers, if you like, which are in some cases totally insurmountable. (Photography gallery manager, 45, F, Milan)

The excerpt shows how collectors may have different conceptions of photography that can be detrimental to its artistic legitimisation. In this case, the collector of 20th century art reinforces the historical opposition between photography and art by

refusing to consider the former as a collectible piece. The following quote, instead, explains how the differentiation of collectors is also articulated according to two different principles of legitimacy:

> I always say that in the photography sector, collecting has two legs: the leg of the photography collector who loves black and white photography, vintage prints, etc., and the art enthusiast who expands his art collection, and consequently his interests, to the photographic sphere. In 2018 we participated in an art fair that was not specialized in photography (...), and we were confronted with a different kind of collecting by (...)art collectors, who perhaps for the first time, as it happened there, were also making acquisitions in the field of photography. Obviously, their needs are more sophisticated, so you also need to have an offering a bit more in tune, that is pieces of certain authors, maybe vintage, etc. (...) It's also true that (...) they often approach photography by buying a work that has a price that may not be too high, because they are not used to buying photography, and do not attribute to photography the value that a large international collector of photography is used to give. (Photography gallery manager, 50, M, Milan)

The gallerist compares two types of collectors that operate according to different artistic ideologies. Photography collectors attach more value to photography than multi-media collectors because of their specialization. The latter, instead, are more "sophisticated" and prefer pieces that conform to contemporary art standards. The excerpt hence shows that same types of photography can be evaluated according to two ideological principles depending on the position of the collectors within the social space. Consequently, the artistic legitimacy of photography is challenged by the lack of a consensual evaluation.

5. CONCLUSIONS: DIFFERENTIATION AND LEGITIMISATION

In this paper, I have discussed discursive distinctions operating in the partial artistic legitimisation of photography in Italy. From a theoretical perspective, concepts from the sociology of art (Baumann, 2007) and organisational research (Durand & Khaire, 2017) can be combined to underline the relationship between categorisation and legitimisation. Interviews and participant observation conducted in the field of photography demonstrate that photography producers, intermediaries and consumers adopt *differentiation* – and a complex set of overlapping distinctions – as a discursive legitimising strategy.

Differentiation is the discursive practice of making and sustaining categorical distinctions between social worlds, individuals, objects and practices. It relies on an artistic ideology that provides comprehensibility. The key oppositions entail an increase in the artistic legitimacy of the desired category and a decrease for

the undesired one. Specifically, differentiation strategies can legitimise photography-as-art to the extent that they can separate it from categorical meanings and values that could undermine its status as an art form, such as commercial and amateur photography. However, differentiation as a strategy has limitations when competing and conflicting ideologies are adopted to evaluate photography in comparison to other forms of art. I have highlighted the uses of differentiation on five analytical levels.

First, differentiation determines a separation between and within the social worlds of photography and art. The Italian world of photography is structured according to an internal distinction between professionalism and artistic autonomy. By contrast, the world of art imposes a distinction between artistic languages, whereby photography is delegitimised with respect to the traditional visual arts. Second, differentiation has consequences on the identity of photographer as artistic producers. In the world of photography, art-photographers are considered as autonomous creators who cut instrumental and commercial ties with photography. In the world of contemporary art, photographers are differentiated from multi-media artist due to their specific reliance on photography, which is understood as a limitation.

Third, photographs are cultural products that acquire different economic value in commercial setting depending on processes of differentiation and the adoption of a specific ideology. Photographs which are valued according to the ideology of contemporary art are sold at higher prices and are fully legitimated as art. Fourth, differentiation determines a separation between the distribution channels for photography. While specialised photography fairs legitimise photography by separating it from other media, contemporary art fairs can de-legitimize photography by segregating it in specific sections. Last, collectors help reinforce the differentiation between collectable art-photography and non-collectable photography through their collecting choices. Collectors are also differentiated by other field actors into categories, depending on their cultural understanding of photography.

A full artistic legitimisation of photography can be reached only if members in the field of photography and art adopt a consensual legitimising ideology. However, as the data demonstrate, the opposition between competing ideologies is often mobilised across the field in the different actors' (artists, critics, gallerist, audiences) discourses. While artist-photographers are successful in demonstrating that they operate differently from other low-status forms of photography, their claims are often contested or refused by members of the contemporary art world. Disputes between competing ideologies prevent photography from gaining widespread acceptance as an art form.

Although the paper only focuses on cases of *differentiation*, actors in the field can combine it with other legitimising strategies to reduce contestations. Emulation and sublimation increase the comprehensibility of the artistic legitimacy of *specific* forms of photography by embedding their artistic value in the artistic ideology of the contemporary art world. By increasing the compatibility between the legitimising

ideologies of photography and art, the limitations of adopting differentiation alone can be reduced.

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"THREE DROPS OF BLOOD FOR THE DEVIL": DATA PIONEERS AS INTERMEDIARIES OF ALGORITHMIC GOVERNANCE IDEALS

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ABSTRACT

Governance bodies formulated the universal ideals of algorithmic decision-making. But, the role of data experts acting as pioneers in developing, resisting, and implementing these ideals is not known. This study relies on in-depth interviews (n=24) conducted with Estonian data experts to explore data pioneers' understandings of algorithmic governance ideals. The results reveal dual transformations in the social datafication process where data pioneers develop technologies and intermediate their ideals towards algorithmic solutions. The study highlighted new sectorial 'algorithmic divides', in both data accessibility as well as ideals among data pioneers in public and private institutions. The resulting force majeure in datafication, which prevents private and public sector experts from forming a uniform community, can create a vicious circle of unforeseen negative consequences. Resolving the divides in algorithmic communities and advancing cross-sector cooperation is the basis for forming transparency, accountability and social good as the main ideals in algorithmic decision-making.

Keywords: Social datafication ▪ algorithmic governance ▪ algorithmic transparency ▪ accountability ▪ pioneer communities ▪ algorithmic ideals.

1. INTRODUCTION

Data collection and tracking are universal activities in the 21st century. Social datafication, as the quantification of all kinds of human behaviour and sociality, is disrupting many forms of the social world (Couldry & Meijas, 2019). Social datafication enables real-time tracking, monitoring and predictive analysis (Mayer-Scöhnberger & Cukier, 2013) and has numerous effects, many of them troubling, which could

result in an array of new harms (Kennedy, 2018). Increased use of data and algorithms both in private and public sector organizations have led to discussions about datafied governance and decision-making (Kennedy, 2018) and everyday algorithmic selection (Just & Latzer, 2017; Schäfer & Van Es, 2017).

The widespread hope of combined efforts of public and private institutions is that algorithms potentially increase the efficiency of services by rationalizing bureaucratic decision-making, targeting information and interventions to precise customer profiles, or by choosing the best available policy options (OECD, 2015). One common assumption is that the use of algorithms leads to more fair and objective decisions. In contrast to this normative approach, a more critical perspective has been adopted by many governing bodies and expert guidelines (e.g., Ethics guidelines for trustworthy AI, 2019 or Algorithm Watch & Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2019) as well as by academic research (Pasquale, 2015; Lyon, 2018; Dencik et al., 2019). Research has concentrated on relations between human lives and classification systems (Bowker & Star, 1999; O'Neil, 2016) showing how socio-material classification systems may sometimes, in unpredictable ways, affect human lives. However, there has been little research on how data experts, who use and develop data solutions, understand and practice the universal ideals formulated by governing bodies.

Hepp (2016, 2020) introduced the concept of "pioneer communities" as a framework to examine the perspectives and ideals of collectivities practising and developing technological innovations. This kind of research has emphasized the role of pioneer communities (Hepp, 2016; Hepp & Loosen, 2019) in initiating social shifts concerning social datafication and algorithmic governance, and in inducing new organizational forms and practices. Although we know research has examined journalist, hacker and coder communities and the quantified-self movement of pioneer communities, there is no evaluation of the practices of pioneer communities in actually using and developing data and algorithm solutions. We do not know the social changes, nor the organizational forms and practices induced by data pioneer communities. Lee and Björklund Larsen (2019) suggest the notion of "algorithmic normativity" as a framework for examining ideals in algorithmic governance. This specific kind of normativity, they argue, consists of and covers the technical, socio-technical and behavioural norms these systems may produce. Although research on algorithmic norms has examined both the politics of algorithms and the algorithms in practice (Lee & Björklund Larsen, 2019), the question of how politics and practice intersect has attracted little research. The practices of the pioneer communities in regard to the use and development of algorithms have been suggested as a significant research gap (Latzer & Just, 2020), that hinders defining appropriate governance mechanisms. Our work seeks to contribute to these discussions, which have so far mostly focused either on a theoretical exploration of algorithmic governance or on specific governmental institutions' practices (e.g., Redden, 2018). We view Estonian data experts as an example of a pioneer community engaged not only in the actual analysis and management of data but also actively proposing novel data solutions.

In Estonia, which is known as an advanced digitalized society and a hub for e-governance[1], a new strategy was recently launched to make the country a world-leader in the use of algorithms and artificial intelligence (e-Estonia, 2019). Moreover, Estonia has also stated its aim to serve as a possible test site, for use by other governments, for algorithmic or AI solutions. An example of this pursuit is the project "Kratt" (Artificial Intelligence for Estonia, 2019)[2], which focuses on identifying specific instances where artificial intelligence and algorithms could be used to offer more efficient and better services. During this project, experts intend to develop a near-future strategy for Estonia, defining what needs to be considered when developing artificial intelligence or algorithmic solutions, and which conditions are needed to do so (see Artificial Intelligence for Estonia, 2019). Hence, we can assume Estonian data experts are expected to be pioneers in algorithmic governance. Although Estonia shares a lot about its great success in overall digitalization with the international community, the pressures regarding algorithmic solutions, risks and challenges experts themselves perceive, have remained hidden from the wider public. Our study helps to understand which ideals and norms lead the development of algorithmic governance in Estonia. This study strives to answer the following research questions:

1. How do data pioneers practice, experience, and express their ideals about algorithmic governance?
2. How do data pioneers as intermediaries articulate their algorithmic ideals a) within their professional domain and b) in public – and, thus take part in developing *public algorithmic norms*?

2. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

2.1. Pioneer communities' role in algorithmic governance

In computer science, an algorithm is defined as a set of steps to process input to produce output desired by specific parties (Goffey, 2008). However, social science is critical of this approach (Williamson, 2015), since it does not take into account the socio-technical complexity of algorithms. In this study, we rely on the understanding that an algorithmic system is not just a neutral code but an assemblage of human and nonhuman actors. The algorithmic system refers to "institutionally situated

1 Several initiatives like the nationwide development of computer networks and internet accessibility "Tiger Leap" (established 1997); the technological platform which interconnects states information systems, "X-road" (2001); Virtual Data embassies to secure the functioning of governmental services from a public state cloud and remote servers in case of cyber-attacks or other emergencies (2017) and E-residency (2014) are part of building Estonia's digital society.

2 In Estonia, 'Kratt' is used as a metaphor for artificial intelligence (Artificial Intelligence for Estonia, 2019), representing both the possibilities new solutions may bring and their inherent risks. In Estonian national mythology, a Kratt is a magical creature - a servant made from hay or old household items, which need constant attention to ensure it does not become idle. The belief is that to revive a Kratt, a person had to give three drops of blood to the devil (Mihkelev, 2017).

code, practices, and norms with the power to create, sustain and signify relationships among people and data through minimally observable, semi-autonomous action" (Ananny, 2016: 93). People who produce algorithms impose their values and belief systems on them (Holtzhausen, 2016). They make value-laden choices during the modelling process of algorithms, which have both foreseeable and unforeseeable consequences (Veale & Binns, 2017). Consequently, a discourse has emerged (Snow, 2018; Hoffmann, 2019) emphasizing the need to make sense of how specific designers or data science teams reach decisions in using and developing algorithmic solutions.

Algorithmic governance as a phenomenon is part of a longer historical trend toward the mechanization of governance. However, the speed, scale, and ubiquity of the technologies that make algorithmic governance possible are qualitatively different now than they were in the past (Danaher et al., 2017). For example, many decisions for people and about people are increasingly made with the help of predictive modelling based on historical data (Žilobaite, 2017). Human designers and engineers maintain and regulate those data systems, and traditional corporate and bureaucrat decision-makers use the information acquired from these data systems. However, there is also a growing willingness to outsource various degrees of decision-making authority to algorithm-based automated systems (Dahaner et al., 2017), where algorithmically generated knowledge is used to execute or inform decisions (Yeung, 2017).

Yeung (2017) uses the notion of *algorithmic regulation* to refer to regulatory governance systems that utilize algorithmic decision-making, which in broad terms refers to regulation as an intentional attempt to manage risk or alter behaviour in order to achieve some pre-specified goal. For example, Facebook regulates the posting and viewing behaviour of users by using algorithmic decision-making systems to optimize the company's profits. Within this article, when discussing the use of digital systems to monitor citizens and give them automatic and personalized incentives to influence their behaviour, we refer to algorithmic regulation as opposed to algorithmic governance. Similar to Katzenback and Ulbricht (2019) we understand algorithmic governance as a broader term that covers a multiplicity of social ordering through algorithmic techniques with regards to all the actors, mechanisms, structures, degrees of institutionalization, and distribution of authority.

Advancements in machine learning and data collection increasingly enable the automation of processes. Researchers argue using algorithmic governance may enhance efficiency, speed, comprehensiveness, and the fairness of state or market (Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier, 2013; Zarsky, 2015). However, no matter how neutral these classification systems may seem, these methods may (re)construct social relationships and the identity of individuals or even vary the nature of the objects they classify (Bowker and Star, 1999; O'Neil, 2016). Moreover, categorizations do not just label people, they can also create groups and alter future outcomes of automated processes (Hacking, 1995). Automated processes are often invisible or 'black-boxed' and immune from scrutiny (Pasquale, 2015; Lyon, 2018). Thus, researchers have raised critiques against these invisible forms of governance and the socio-technical

shaping of citizenship (Dencik et al., 2019), in which public sector institutions adopt the processes, logic, and technologies of the private sector.

Principles of algorithmic governance are often introduced by 'pioneer communities' (Hepp, 2016; 2020) practising and developing technological innovations. In this article, we analyze data experts' perspectives and ideals and consider them to be 'pioneer communities', who act as intermediaries because they have important roles in both developing and implementing new tools and practices. Data pioneers acting as intermediaries (Hepp, 2020) connect producers and developers with users, and the arenas of research, politics and journalism and the economy. Data pioneer communities often share a rather positive view of technology in the public; they also tend to think about themselves as forerunners and therefore act as intermediaries both within a given domain and with the public. Moreover, data pioneer communities will stimulate the change in algorithmic regulation through their visions of possible futures related to algorithmic governance. However, data experts as pioneer communities may remain unnoticed by the general public, which lacks specific insider knowledge to understand the pioneers' role and their impact on algorithmic processes (Hepp, 2020).

2.2. Ideals of governance through algorithms

Implementation of algorithmic systems carries with it several ideals. These ideals have been formulated as responses to possible harms and concerns related to public interest perspective, human rights perspective, ethical issues and, epistemic ideals. From a *public-interest perspective* (Latzer & Just, 2020) risks associated with algorithmic applications include manipulation (Bar-Ilan, 2007), threats to data protection and privacy (Pasquale, 2015), social discrimination (O'Neil, 2016), violation of intellectual property rights (Colangelo & Torti, 2019), and increasing human dependence on algorithms (Danaher, 2018). All these concerns call for systematic risk assessment but also appropriate governance responses as these practices are mobilized to maximize economic and social welfare (Latzer & Just, 2020).

Another dominant set of ideals emphasizes collective and individual *human rights*, which may be violated by algorithmic decision-making (Lazer & Just, 2020). Discussions have concentrated on racial bias in data-driven policing (Ferguson, 2017), the regulation by algorithms of lived experience and identities (Cheney-Lippold, 2017) or data discrimination as a social problem, for instance, in biased algorithms of search engines (Noble, 2018). These concerns emphasize the need to implement universal human rights principles and ideals in algorithmic governance.

Human rights underlie the focus of *ethical debates* about the consequences of automation (Jaume-Palasi & Spielkamp, 2017). For example, Jaume-Palasi and Spielkamp (2017) contend algorithmic solutions could be developed from the publicness (social good) perspective, in the form of a societal frame or collective goods. They argue that as algorithmic services affect collectives, it is not enough if we concentrate just on

individual rights. For example, in the context of discrimination, ethical conflicts in algorithmic processes are inherently collective. Discrimination happens to the individual but is not directed at a specific person (Jaume-Palasi & Spielkamp, 2017). Therefore, they suggest ethics and legal critique that neglects collectives as groups and their logic will remain blind to a large proportion of the problems associated with automation. The publicness perspective's subcategory of 'societal frame' indicates algorithmic solutions as being the platform by which collectives may exercise their basic individual rights and access collective goods. While a few select groups or individuals shape and control a societal frame, it is accessed by many. Many algorithmic solutions developed by the state may be considered through this perspective, like predictive policing. The collective goods perspective, however, indicates services which are not just accessed by everyone, but also shaped and used by everybody. However, collective goods in terms of "justice" or "common good" are dependent on the context of a particular society to do so.

Certain *epistemic ideals* described by Latzer and Just (2020) also emphasize concerns about the quality of evidence gathered by algorithms, as it may be inconclusive, inscrutable and open to error. Focusing on the process of algorithms rather than on its consequences may lead to unfair outcomes (Latzer & Just, 2020) or harmful results (e.g. Eubanks, 2018). For example, automated data solutions may affect peoples' employment, ability to travel or access to benefits. Therefore, concerns related to informational privacy, autonomy and moral responsibility are rising, which is why Latzer and Just (2020) stress the need for the traceability of cause and responsibility for harm.

Several other ideals, like *transparency* and *accountability*, being tightly intertwined with the previously mentioned ideals, have strong relevance in debates about algorithmic governance (Pasquale, 2015; Diakopoulos, 2016; Ananny & Crawford, 2018; Lyon, 2018). A quick shift from rule-based algorithms to machine learning ones (van Dijck et al., 2018) creates specific problems concerning the transparency and opacity of those systems, especially when they are used in already-opaque governance structures (Danaher et al., 2017). The need for more transparency and accountability is emphasized in research but also reflected in policy discourses and regulations like EU's General Data Protection Regulation.

Calls for greater transparency assume that greater information disclosure also leads to greater trust and accountability (Albu & Flyverbom, 2019). Ananny and Crawford (2018) refer to this as a *transparency ideal* where there is a logic in the assumption that observation provides insights, which in turn create the knowledge required to govern and hold systems accountable. Such an idealistic view, Ananny and Crawford (2018) argue, places a considerable burden on individuals to seek out and interpret information about systems. Fung, Graham, and Weil (2007) suggest that transparency should be aimed at being meaningful, which means that not just more information is provided, but also how decision-makers could be held accountable is communicated.

All these ideals – public interest, human rights, ethics and epistemology, as well as transparency and accountability – appear in research and in the public (policy) discourse as necessary elements supporting the legitimacy of algorithmic governance. This study strives to contribute to these discussions by examining the perceived ideals of the data pioneers who use and develop algorithmic solutions in their everyday work.

3. DATA AND METHOD

3.1. Sample

We conducted in-depth interviews with Estonian data experts who deal with *migration data* in one way or another. As migration data is one of the most contested fields of algorithmic solutions, we used that as the main homogenous characteristic for our purpose sampling (Suri, 2011). We identified experts working with migration data by job title or using previous knowledge. The respondents work in the public and private sector, as well as in third-sector, research institutions in Estonia. The sample consisted of both female and male interviewees equally, and all interviewees had higher education (none with less than a master's degree). Our interviewees (N=24) comprised proportionally three groups of data experts: (1) analysts, (2) managers of analysis divisions (who were responsible for some kind of migration data analysis), and (3) developers of software and algorithms. The experts were involved with traditional register data as well as with more recent digital trace data on migration.

3.2. Method

In Spring 2018, we carried out 90-120 minutes long in-depth face-to-face interviews with data experts. A semi-structured interview plan was developed for this study. First, open-ended questions encouraged the experts to express their experiences in using the algorithms, and their opinions about using and developing solutions with large-scale data and algorithms. Secondly, more focused questions examined the experts' understandings of the potential advantages and disadvantages related to big data and algorithmic governance. To encourage the experts to express their experiences and understandings on algorithmic governance, we used several projective techniques (e.g. Soley and Smith, 2008). The experts were asked to reflect upon some of the most typical examples of algorithmic governance implemented in the field of migration: a matching algorithm for refugee resettlement and the use of algorithms in policing. We also used examples of Twitter chat-bots and social media filter bubbles, as sites where algorithmic control is most visible in everyday lives. The interviews also involved questions concerning the experts' understandings about big data and their use of the algorithmic approach when managing migratory groups.

All interviews were conducted in Estonian, the mother-tongue of the experts.

All the interviews were recorded and transcribed by the authors of the article. The interview extracts presented in this article have been translated into English by the authors.

3.3. Analysis

We analyzed the interviewees' (1) responses to spontaneous questions about the use of algorithms in governance, and (2) comparisons and arguments expressed about the presented cases where the algorithmic approaches are used for managing immigration mobility. We used the thematic coding method (Woolf & Silver, 2017) to analyze the textual data of the interviews and MAXQDA to code the text into meaningful categories, and for comparing text extracts within and between categories. After the text was structured thematically, according to the general in-vivo codes, the more conceptual core categories that emerged in the analysis were formulated.

In the following analysis, the positions regarding the algorithmic approaches are evaluated. The researchers' generalizations and conclusive statements are illustrated with extracts from the interviews. To protect the experts' anonymity, all the names of the institutions and organizations which might identify specific experts have been replaced with generic characterizations of people and organizations, but to differentiate the interviewees (INT) we used numbers (1-24) and the interviewee's sector (private, public, third). For example (INT 1, private).

4. RESULTS

4.1. The ideals of efficiency and social good

Efficiency as the core ideal of algorithmic governance (Goffey, 2008), was often discussed by the interviewees. The interviewees understood efficiency in algorithmic governance as the main means for quickening the decision-making process. In response to this ideal of normative efficiency, the unintended social consequences may follow, as interviewees suggested. Therefore interviewees discussed social good as the alternative ideal of algorithmic governance. The ideal of social good as part of the public interest was seen as a solution to the epistemic ideals (Latzer & Just, 2020), that exclusively focus on the efficient process of algorithms rather than on its (possibly unfair) consequences.

Most of the interviewees expressed efficiency as the core ideal of algorithmic governance. However, they did not always emphasize either the potential harm in using algorithms in their work or the exclusive focus on efficiency. Instead, many of them considered algorithms inevitable in certain situations, for example, in public sector authorities and institutions providing vital services. In these situations, efficiency can be enhanced by automated services, which have been sufficiently standardized to be offered through algorithmic calculations. One example of this was applying for

a residence permit, where algorithms could be used to check the criteria based on what a specific person is allowed to stay in the country:

> As residence permits usually are these standard things that you have to check something from databases. And there's the question of whether this decision is made by a human or a machine. (INT15, public sector)

Similarly, in instances of emergencies or critical situations, interviewees say that the use of algorithms has proved helpful. They make the system more efficient and quicker, through prioritizing the calls, this interviewee indicated:

> Here I see potential in such situations when the vital service institution is receiving calls. ... there are certain numbers, which sometimes call ten times a day and nothing is wrong ... Here I see potential ... to prioritize this queue for getting on the line. Which to prefer ... (INT5, private sector)

These examples illustrate the potential of algorithms and automated decision-making in the contexts of resource allocation and efficiency of the services, as also suggested by researchers (Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier, 2013; Zarsky, 2015).

Jaume-Palasi and Spielkamp (2017) elaborate the importance of efficiency as an important ideal. They argue algorithmic regulation examples are often justified not only because they are economically beneficial for the wider public, but also speed up the decision-making processes. Such justifications also point seeing algorithmic regulation through the perspectives of social good. Certain concerns, which may arise are rather oriented towards specific groups or collectives, rather than one particular individual. For example, according to Jaume-Palasi & Spielkamp (2017), discrimination as a consequence of algorithmic regulation happens to the individual but is not directed at a specific person. Our study confirmed this idea, as the public sector experts referred to data analysis being interested in patterns in the data, rather than a single individuals' information. Moreover, certain risks with algorithmic applications, like manipulation, threats to data protection, and privacy (Pasquale, 2015) were associated mostly in association with private corporations like Facebook. Therefore, our study also highlights the concerns regarding institutional privacy when public sector institutions are using individuals' data.

However, the potential risks acknowledged by data experts are more concerned with anonymization and aggregation of data. For example, analysts could, in some data solutions, easily identify certain people, as this interviewee indicates:

> This subject of aggregation and anonymization is quite tricky in Estonian society. We have a small society, but when looking at educational data, we can remove names, higher education institutions. When we are talking about male candidates with a Doctoral degree in the field of arts obtained

> within [the last – authors] three years, this information can be traced back to the person quite easily. (INT1, public sector)

Our interviewees' vision of societal transformations is related to using data and algorithms for better governance and in developing new services and solutions. In this way, the results differ from previous research by Hepp (2020), who argues that scepticism of possible technological futures may be absent among pioneer communities. In our sample, the data experts, especially those working with data about marginalized groups (e.g., refugees), were actually rather cautious. They acknowledged the risks related to categorizations (Hacking, 1995) and data discrimination (Noble, 2018) of data subjects.

Based on our interviewees, the uses of certain algorithms or algorithmic regulations are justified through their publicness - social good (Jaume-Palasi and Spielkamp 2017). Most services are meant to be used by the public, so data experts seeing certain services inevitable and justified may be explained through the collectiveness of those data solutions. However, this study has indicated that the algorithmic collectivities, which data pioneers formed using and developing algorithmic solutions, do not constitute a coherent group. Data pioneers are active in experimenting with the efficiency and effectivity of data solutions and possess not only a sense of mission (Hepp, 2016), but also express conflicting ideals within a single organization, or between private and public sector institutions.

4.2. The interrelated ideals of transparency and accountability

In the context of using automated decision-making and algorithms, several interviewees considered the need for both transparency in decision-making and responsibility of experts for any decisions. We may conclude that these interviewees saw the algorithmic approach as a solution that can be used for supporting decision-making processes. But as algorithms cannot be accountable for wrong decisions, as indicated by the interviewee from a third sector organization, it should be clearly defined who will be responsible:

> It's important that the algorithms are transparent. Or when a certain decision is made that, in the end, a person is responsible. Or, at least ideally, it should be so that if there are decisions that influence people or their lives to a significant extent, it would be good if a person is liable for this decision. (INT12, third sector)

Nevertheless, transparency of algorithms, as expressed by the interviewees, means there is an understanding of what is the basis of a specific decision. Similar to Pasquale (2015), several experts in our study compared algorithmic approaches to a "black box", referring to the notion that how a specific algorithm reaches a

conclusion cannot constantly be checked and understood. Interviewees explained potential biases on the basis that the algorithm may be biased or the person who created might have had a predisposition, as expressed by this interviewee:

> It should be transparent for the decider. (…) If the method itself is a so-called black box method from which nothing can be seen through (…) the creator of the algorithm has no confidence about what basis this decision was made on. Perhaps it learned totally insignificant features. (INT12, third sector)

The importance of the acknowledged impact, by principles like transparency and accountability on various issues, is related to human rights. Experts expressed concerns about racial bias related to data-driven policing (Ferguson, 2017) or social discrimination (O'Neil, 2016; Noble, 2018) that tend to affect already marginalized groups. Indeed, the interviewees emphasized that issues with discrimination arise more from biased algorithms rather than from missing data. The experts associated data discrimination with faulty services or solutions rather than with the choices and values developers of the algorithms may have. One example mentioned by several interviewees was the face recognition algorithm, which has been criticized for its inherent bias. The algorithm gives more false-positive results for people of colour than for Caucasians, as this interviewee indicated:

> It was revealed that the system gives more false-positive hits for the so-called criminals with black people than the white. Well, this could be seen as a racist algorithm. The algorithm is evil. Actually, this is a poorly made algorithm … They are not intrinsically bad. (INT6, third sector)

Clearly, the interviewees do understand that algorithms are simply tools or technological solutions, which cannot be developed and critically evaluated without humans' intervention. However, one interviewee argued the use of data is justified for specifying certain needs and services because that specificity helps service providers to identify those who "actually" need help. Some of the interviewees believed the use of algorithms leads to an increase in fair decisions, which has been one of the norms argued in the context of algorithms (OECD, 2015). This interviewee expressed it this way:

> It seems to me that there are certain features and things which enable us to say that this person needs help. I don't know this yet. I believe that data can be helpful too. We can distinguish those who want a better life versus war refugees – we can distinguish between them. (INT3, private sector)

Transparency and accountability are important ideals mentioned by most of the interviewees. However, they did express some concerns about how certain

information is made visible to the decision-makers rather than the individuals about whom algorithmic decisions are made. Although research has expressed concerns about governments adopting the processes, logic and technologies of the private sector (Dencik et al., 2019), which is only partially supported by our research. Whereas algorithmic regulation is seen to be leading to more efficient governance, public and third sector experts do not seem to share private sector experts' understanding that algorithmic governance leads to more decisions being fair.

4.3. Data pioneers as intermediaries of algorithmic ideals

We also examined how the interviewees, when acting as intermediaries between their field and the public, positioned themselves as a specific pioneer community. The analysis indicates data experts may take on the role of pioneers in their organizations and even see themselves distributing the new type of "data culture", as explained by this interviewee:

> And quite often it is here rather like educating like I have been in this organization for three years. ... I just walked around and introduced what data analytics is, why it is used, and where it can be useful. Distributing this kind of culture so that we could have a data-based organization. (INT11, public sector)

This example highlights how the focus is mostly on skills and specific software when practising and expressing the unique intermediating role of the pioneer communities. By contrast, private-sector experts were more focused on developing new services and solutions, which indicates that lack of both skills and access to data is of concern to the public or third sector data experts, rather than those experts in the private sector.

The data experts see themselves as a community, which has analytic resources for assuring and intermediating the 'social good' through data. However, our interviewees indicated the central problem in their mission and role as intermediaries was the limited access to the data. For example, experts described situations where data may be available only for specific institutions or provided in non-appropriate formats. From the perspective of governmental institutions that outsource their need for analysis, data access limitations complicate the process of assuring 'social good'. For example, this interviewee indicates:

> Quite often, there is a problem when a research institution or university wins the procurement. It is very difficult to get access to the database because, for this, you will need the consent of the Data Protection Inspectorate... (INT15, public sector)

Some of the interviewees also expressed interest in cooperation between public and private institutions. Experts saw this as one of the ways to solve any problems, and to develop algorithmic expert communities. However, in the context described in the next extract, one of the public sector experts notes that private companies may not share data, and collaboration may fail. Since associated parties prefer to support the needs and interests of their own institutions, not only does the cooperation fail but also the intermediation of the public ideals.

> But we cannot have this data. The bank does not share ... once we almost had an agreement with the bank, but it failed because they were afraid that maybe something would not be following their economic interest, comes from it... (INT14, public sector)

Some of the interviewees also wanted to improve access to data and create possibilities for the data to be used by scientists, as well as various officials and analysts in public institutions. Opening up data for these interested parties is seen as a positive solution, although it confers the aspect of a commercial product on data, as this interviewee indicates

> Includes many interesting databases, such as census data, which covers a large part. As a result of that, we can actually interconnect and combine a great database about the whole Estonia ... this would then enable us to make some kind of a product for attracting interest ... (INT2, third sector)

Our analysis indicates data experts treat data as an entity owned by corporations and public institutions and used to create new algorithm-based services and solutions.

Although the human rights perspective and concerns in this relation arise mostly through asking who and how is accountable, the economic and other associated interests of different parties are still prioritized when developing data and algorithms as a "product". Public sector institutions are also adopting specific processes and logic used by the private sector and are thus changing the nature of governance and socio-technical shaping of citizenship (Dencik et al., 2019).

Our interviews highlighted significant differences across types of data experts concerning how they act as intermediaries in the social datafication process. Data experts in Estonia's public sector institutions expressed the importance of developing software and related analytical skills as a means to assuring the mediation of "social good" through data solutions. In this way, public sector experts may be more focused on the technical analysis process where their focus should be on meaning-making through being informed by data (Haardörfer, 2019). Third sector actors expressed collaborative forms of intermediations – cooperation with private companies is seen as the key to supporting social datafication. However, these cooperative forms of intermediations may fail if not viewed economically or in other ways

sufficiently beneficial for the private sector, or in the case of failed cooperation to assure access to the data.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This research strove to contribute empirically to earlier discussions (Hepp, 2016; Lee & Björklund Larsen, 2019; Hepp, 2020) on current tensions in algorithmic governance from the perspectives of data pioneer communities, i.e., actors and experts using and developing novel data solutions. We tackled two questions: (1) how data pioneer communities express their ideals on algorithmic governance, and (2) how do they intermediate their understanding of algorithmic ideals, as part of developing public algorithmic norms. Qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted among data experts in Estonia to evaluate their expressed norms and ideals on algorithmic governance.

Social good, transparency and accountability were expressed as the main ideals by data pioneers in response to the universal and normative ideals on data governance formulated by the governing bodies. These particular expressed ideals are tightly intertwined with the general ideals proposed in previous studies related to public interest perspective, human rights perspective, ethical issues, and epistemic ideals (Latzer & Just, 2020).

Our analysis revealed that algorithmic governance is not just perceived through its potential to enhance *efficiency*, but also through the lens of *social good* (Jaume-Palais & Spielkamp, 2017) of the services and solutions. In the expert interviews, algorithms were mostly viewed from the societal frame. This means that institutions decide by whom, why, and how access to certain services is provided and regulated. This kind of approach allows states to justify some services as inevitable but does not take into account the individual concerns previously expressed in research (Noble, 2018) like data discrimination. In contrast to earlier research (Holtzhausen, 2016), possible problems of algorithmic governance like data discrimination in the case of migration data solutions are explained by bias in the data rather than through the values and ideals developers or experts may impose on algorithms.

The experts interviewed in this study emphasized transparency and accountability as the ideal principles of algorithmic governance supporting previous research (see Pasquale, 2015; Diakopoulos, 2016; Lyon, 2018; Ananny & Crawford, 2018). The study's data experts emphasized the need for a more precise understanding of who is accountable and how, as certain decisions made with the help of algorithms may not be transparent to the decision-makers. Therefore, the results of our study highlight that although legislation may address some of the accountability, there are still "grey areas". This may leave too much room for interpretation for experts in both the private and public sector, which in some situations may lead to new negative consequences.

The results of this research highlighted that data experts act as intermediaries

in developing public algorithmic "normativities" (Lee & Björklund Larsen, 2019), a framework for norms and ideals for using and designing algorithmic solutions. The data pioneers expressed their role as intermediaries not only within their domains and institutions but also in society and among the general public, particularly when communicating the advancements of algorithmic solutions. The dual role of pioneer communities, as Hepp (2016, 2020) suggests, in developing data solutions and acting as intermediaries of their ideals towards technological solutions, was confirmed in this study. Similarly, in the context of mediatization (Hepp, 2020), the duality of social datafication is visible not only in data pioneers' reflexive activities and in the interpretation of their actions but also dealing with unintended consequences when using and developing data solutions.

However, dual transformations in the social datafication process tend to force data experts to act according to the sector, in which they work. Algorithmic pioneer communities do not constitute a coherent collectivity, as suggested in previous studies (Hepp, 2016), but an internally divided community, with different ideals on algorithmic governance. The resulting *force majeure* in datafication, when private and public sector experts do not constitute a unified pioneer community, may lead to a vicious cycle of unforeseeable negative consequences. A united community would, by contrast, be able to realize the ideals of algorithmic governance. Private-sector data experts do not have constraints impeding their development and use of new algorithmic solutions and realize any of the technological futures with all of the unseen consequences they do bring. Public sector data experts are constrained by legislation and institutional rules which the government applies to protect the rights of the data subject that the private sector ignores.

Moreover, we have to take into account the specific field of application as some algorithmic solutions may be more influenced through national and cultural contexts. The conflicting understandings on algorithmic governance ideals, as expressed by private and public sector experts, are visible in the case of the migration data solutions considered in this study. Pioneers' visions of suitable data solutions in the case of sensitive migration data may not always be correct, and they may fail (Hepp, 2020). Irrespective of whether or not their ideas will result in working models for algorithmic governance, the data pioneers push current changes forward in experimenting with the new technological futures. Private and public sector data experts need to seek common grounds and possibilities to work together beyond their institutions and organizations. Hackathons, for example, may be a specific space where the two sectors can practice bringing their disparate ideals together. Questions remain whether and how newly developed innovative solutions can be implemented, especially in the public sector context.

Therefore, as the title of this article suggests, data experts need to be aware of the "devil" e.g., the risks and concerns, or taste at least a couple drops of the "devils medicine", in order to revive public and private faith in algorithmic solutions. However, the aim of the activation of the magical creature of an algorithm is to strengthen the

possibilities for new solutions and to avoid any risks concerning algorithmic governance solutions (Artificial Intelligence for Estonia, 2019). Serving the "social good" assumes increasing cooperation in developing and implementing algorithmic solutions in public and private sector institutions.

Our study focused specifically on Estonian algorithmic pioneer communities but could not discuss whether and how disciplinary backgrounds and skills may also be altering the experiences of data pioneers. Data sharing practices between public and private institutions (e.g. to analyze self-isolation measures), as well as conflicting ideals, are essential in light of the 2020 corona virus pandemic, where specific regulating policies are missing. Therefore, we find it crucial that future policies go into more detail on how and for which purposes algorithms could be used and how this should be regulated during the unforeseen events. This could help in assuring that when in need, the use of algorithms for the collective good is valid.

Acknowledgements

This research was financed by ddevelopmental program ASTRA of Tallinn University of Technology for years 2016-2022 (2014-2020.4.01.16-0032), Estonian Research Council (IUT20-38) and Center for the Information Society at University of Tartu. We also would like to thank all of the interviewees for readiness to participate in this study. We are also grateful to Marcus Denton of Derettens OÜ for language editing the article.

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EXPLORING THE VALUE OF MEDIA USERS' PERSONAL INFORMATION (PI) DISCLOSURE TO MEDIA COMPANIES IN FLANDERS, BELGIUM

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the value of media users' personal information (PI) disclosure to media companies, from the perspective of media organizations in Flanders, Belgium. The central research questions are: 1) How do media organizations define the value of personalised products/services for media users? 2) How is value operationalized, communicated, and delivered to media users? 3) To what extent is the 'value proposition' *(Osterwalder et al, 2014) linked to PI-collection/processing?*

Applying the e-Delphi method, we surveyed twenty Flemish media professionals, advertisers and marketers. From the media companies' perspective, personalisation primarily offers functional value to media users. Offering ease of use is more important than time-efficiency or exclusivity. Personalisation 'benefits' are predominantly improved service quality and user experience. 19 of 20 respondents collect PI for developing a personalised offering. Most respondents collect more PI than necessary for personalisation and the connection between PI-collection/processing is often unclear.

Keywords: media and communication studies ▪ media user and producer relationship ▪ e-Delphi ▪ personal data collection ▪ data protection ▪ privacy ▪ personalisation ▪ personal data commodification ▪ value proposition ▪ USP ▪ value-based marketing

1. INTRODUCTION

Big data holds vast opportunities for media companies – consumer data collection is crucial and will become the cornerstone of business models (Evens & Van Damme, 2018; Stone, 2014). Big data are "huge amounts (volume) of frequently updated data (velocity) in various formats, such as numeric, textual, or images/videos (variety)" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2019, p. 17). Media companies are aware that big data is an 'information asset' and transforming data into 'value' requires specific technology and analytical methods (De Mauro, Greco & Grimaldi, 2016). "Utilizing big data analytics, media organizations can engage with their audience more deeply by suggesting personalized content recommendations" (Evens & Van Damme, 2016, p. 25).

Media companies set to 'unlock the value of personal data' increasingly transform audiences into commodities, treating people as objects of "economic value", "intended for exchange" (WEF, 2013; Malgieri & Custers, 2018; Appadurai, 2005, p. 35). In our data-driven economy, PI represents monetary value, it can be expressed in a 'currency' like dollars or euros, and it is considered an exchange for free or discounted online products and services (Malgieri & Custers, 2018). Transforming PI into value is yet not without risk for media users. The combination of their individual data points can lead to new insightful information and new opportunities for audience commodification from the perspective of the media companies (WEF, 2013, p. 3; Khajeheian, 2016, p. 41).

Users lack awareness about the value of disclosing PI to media companies. They often do not realize PI holds monetary value, underestimate their economic power in the data-driven economy, and "passively succumb to the propertization of their digital identity" (Malgieri & Custers, 2018, p. 301). Media users often do not understand the consequences arising from disclosing versus not disclosing PI, i.e., a reduced level of service offering, while media companies struggle to explain the advantages of personalisation to users (Robinson, 2017; Van Zeeland, Van Buggenhout & Pierson, 2019). Personalised products and services are promoted towards consumers as useful or valuable, while it is often unclear to users that they are paying for the personalised offering with their PI (Kuneva, 2009). The lingering issue is "selling personalisation" (Van Zeeland, Van Buggenhout & Pierson, 2019, p. 8). In order to increase consumers' trust, companies need to focus on better communicating the purpose and relevance of PI-collection, such as targeted advertising and personalised news experiences (see Figure 1) (Van Zeeland, Van Buggenhout & Pierson, 2019; Evens & Van Damme, 2016).

EXAMPLE: NEWS PERSONALIZATION	The European Horizon 2020 research project Content Personalisation Network (CPN) developed a personalised news application that is "a new, trustworthy approach to personalise digital content, delivering the right information, at the right time". CPN puts users in control of their personal data with the personal data receipt (PDR). Every new user who signs up to CPN receives a structured email containing a record of the permissions they gave the CPN platform to hold and process their data (CPN Consortium, 2019). https://www.projectcpn.eu/

Figure 1: News personalisation

Media organizations insufficiently develop solutions to enhance trust because media users are no longer the primary revenue source; the balance has shifted from consumer interests to business-to-business markets (Van Zeeland, Van Buggenhout & Pierson, 2019). The business model of most news media companies is Business-to-business (B2B), focused on advertisers and advertising money, and based on *'click'* – the total number of website visitors and pages visited by users (Brcković, 2019). Consequently, "there is a temptation to manipulate consumers into handing over more personal data than is in their best interest or in accordance with their wishes ('dark patterns')" (Ibid., p. 9).

The abovementioned insights originate from a roundtable on PI protection challenges in the Belgian media sector (Ibid.). This article reports on a follow-up study. We investigate the value of disclosing personal information (PI) to media companies, from media organizations' perspective in Flanders, Belgium. The central **research questions** are:

1. How do Flemish media organizations define the value of personalised media products and services for media users?
2. How is this value operationalized, communicated, and delivered to media users?
3. To what extent is the value proposition, the personalised offer of media organizations in terms of value for (potential) customers, linked to collection and processing of media users' PI?

The findings discussed in this article are the results of an online survey of twenty experts, which is the first round of a triple-phased e-Delphi method (Slocum, 2003; Cole, Donohoe & Stellefson, 2013) that we applied for this study. In this first phase, twenty media professionals developed *'value propositions'* (Osterwalder, Pigneur, Bernarda, & Smith, 2014) for a fictional bundle of personalised media products/services and reflected on the necessity of PI-collection.

Based on the findings, we develop **recommendations** for media companies to communicate the value of a personalised offering to media users and explain the

benefits and potential risks of PI-disclosure. This study takes the initiative to provide a baseline in formulating solutions for media organizations' struggles with "selling personalisation" (Van Zeeland, Van Buggenhout & Pierson, 2019). By developing guidelines to explain PI-collection purposes to users in a compelling way, we motivate Flemish media organizations to create codes of conduct for enhancing user trust that will make people "more amenable to consent to sharing their data" (Ibid., p. 9). If media companies inform data subjects about the value of PI, this "may increase their awareness of their own personal information and about their power in the digital market and thus effectively empower them for the protection of their information privacy" (Malgieri & Custers, 2018, p. 301).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Media Markets, Users, and Usage

Media markets are multisided markets where commercial and public service media companies and platforms such as broadcasters, publishers, and internet companies interact with two relevant sides, the advertising industry and audience (Lindstädt, 2010). The audience consists of TV viewers, newspaper readers, radio listeners, and internet users (Lindstädt, 2010). We refer to audience(s), consumers, customers and people who use – users of Flemish media companies' products and services in this study as "media users" (Picone, 2017). We use the term media users to reflect audiences' agency in this discussion and "address 'people in relation to (new) media' in a more encompassing way than audience ever could" (Picone, 2017, p. 382). This study does not result in knowledge about the actual media user's position (Litt, 2012). We survey media experts to investigate the value of media users' PI-disclosure to media companies, from a media companies' perspective. Experts' positioning of media users departs from the idea of the imagined audience, "the mental conceptualization of the people with whom we are communicating, our audience" (Litt, 2012, p. 331). In today's media ecosystem the knowledge about media users is however more extensive than in the mass media era, media companies have a fairly good idea of their audiences main characteristics based on the PI users share with them and based on the behavioural data media companies collect from their audiences (e.g., viewing patterns), but this doesn't mean they have a complete view of their audience yet.

2.2. PI and Media User Commodification

Conceptualizing media users' PI, we adhere to defining personal data as stated in the EU-legislation, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) art. 4 (1):

> 'personal data' means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'); an identifiable natural person is one

> who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person (European Commission, 2018).

One decade ago, PI was declared the new oil and currency of the digital world as consumers pay for online services with ad exposure and with their PI (Kuneva, 2009, pp. 2-3). From a political economy of communication perspective, it is since then undeniable "the commodification of digital identities is an emerging reality in the data-driven economy" (Malgieri & Custers, 2018, p. 301). For example, in early 2019, the European Council and Parliament endorsed the Digital Content Directive (DCD) (EUR-Lex, s.d.). Thereby, acknowledging PI can be used like money to pay for digital content in the digital economy (Council of the EU, 2019).

Media user commodification is defined as "a concept that highlights how the audience and its members are exploited by the media industry through their usage of digital and connected technologies" (Jennes, Pierson, & Van den Broeck, 2014, p.71). It was introduced by Dallas Smythe in 1977 and regained relevance in the debate on internet providers and media companies' exploitation of media user and media usage data (Fuchs, 2015). 'Audience commodification' is opposed to user empowerment, referring to the idea that with the advent of digitization, users are increasingly able to exert agency and control over their media usage, content, and production (Jennes, Pierson, & Van den Broeck, 2014). We acknowledge the aforementioned theoretical dichotomy oversimplifies the dynamics of actual audiences/users' engagement with media. Not all the actors in media audiences are able to exercise the same level of power or can equally participate in PI-disclosure decision-making processes (Carpentier, 2006). We recognize media users perform different actions and have different relations with their material positions, identities and roles when being asked to share PI with media organisations (Carpentier, 2006).

Previous critical studies indicate user empowerment can be used by the media industry to facilitate innovation in commodification practices (see Jennes, Pierson, & Van den Broeck, 2014; Khajeheian, 2016). Considering users as tradeable assets is the basis of some innovative business models in which users are persuaded to provide certain information or conduct certain actions for the service provider while still maintaining their user autonomy and choice (Khajeheian, 2016, p. 40; Jennes, Pierson, & Van den Broeck, 2014, p. 84). This is also referred to as "self-commodification" in which consumers "offer themselves as a commodity to receive value from businesses", for example watch advertisements and share certain PI in return for a value offerd by the organisation (e.g. unlocking premium profiles in a dating app (Khajeheian, 2016, p. 44).

2.3. The Value of Exchanging PI

We conceptualize the value of PI created by media organizations and offered to media users in this study in the economic sense (Graeber, 2001), focusing on the use of information and consumer insights to create economic value (De Mauro, Greco & Grimaldi, 2016, p.131). We explore the degree to which media companies think media users desire a personalised offering and how personalised media products and services deliver customer value to users who are "willing to give up" PI getting them (Graeber, 2001, p. 1; Van Leeuwen, s.d.). The value a company offers to its customers can refer to a combination of functional, emotional, economic, symbolic, and end value (Van Leeuwen, s.d.). From a media users' perspective "customized services are the heads of a coin whose tails show the necessary use of personal data. [...] the trade-off between anonymity and personalized, more useful, services" (Gómez-Barroso, 2018, p. 1482). Correspondingly, we incorporate the notion of personalization-privacy paradox to describe contradictions between media users' privacy concerns and media use –PI trade-offs people undergo (Wang, Duong & Chen, 2016). For example the use of personalised media services while risking personal information loss (Wang, Duong & Chen, 2016, p. 532). We also include the privacy calculus model (Laufer & Wolfe, 1977), referring to the idea that people weigh the benefits of the service they receive against the risk they take in disclosing personal information (Gimpel, Kleindienst & Waldmann, 2018, p. 478). This model allows us to delineate personalisation vs privacy trade-offs media users consider when media companies ask them to disclose PI in exchange for access to personalised products/services, defined from a media companies' perspective.

It is, however, a misrepresentation to only put forward the trade-off argument, claiming media users make conscious 'cost-benefit calculations' when providing PI to companies (Turow, Hennessy & Draper, 2015). Media users do not always have the necessary knowledge and skills to make informed choices about ways media companies and marketers use PI (Ibid.). For example, only one in five Flemish users read the general and privacy conditions before registering online (Vanhaelewyn & De Marez, 2018). Media users also think phrasing PI-collection as trade-offs is unfair (Turow, Hennessy & Draper, 2015). Acknowledging the tradeoff fallacy, media companies and marketers can prevent giving "false justifications (to policymakers) for allowing the collection and use of all kinds of consumer data often in ways that the public find objectionable" (Ibid., 2015, p. 3).

2.4. Value-based Communication and Customer Value Propositions

Demonstrating the value of products and services to customers is important for companies (Doyle, 2008). Yet, most organizations "sell product features rather than demonstrating the value of their product to the customer" (Doyle, 2008, p. 294). It is not sufficient media companies have a good personalised offering, its value needs

to be communicated to media users "to create awareness", "build an understanding of its benefits", and "develop positive attitudes towards it" (Doyle, 2008, p. 323). Companies should, therefore, develop a value-based communications and marketing strategy (Doyle, 2008).

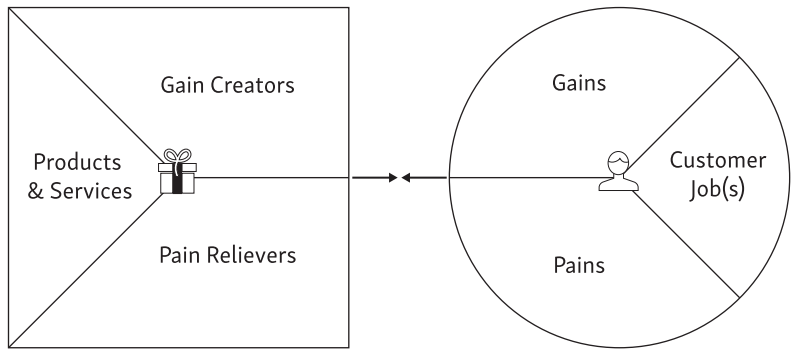
We adopt the concept and terminology of the customer value proposition (CVP) in this study, to conceptualize how media companies communicate how they aim to provide value to customers (Payne, Frow & Eggert, 2017). Accordingly, the theoretical framework includes the Value Proposition Canvas (VPC) (Osterwalder, Pigneur, Bernarda, & Smith, 2014). The value proposition of an organization "describes the benefits customers can expect from [its] products and services" (Osterwalder et al, 2014, p. 6).

VALUE-BASED COMMUNICATION AND CUSTOMER VALUE PROPOSITIONS

Value-based marketing strategy: "the firm's approach to the market (...) The decisions concern the choice of customers the business will seek to serve, how it will meet their needs, how it will create a sustainable competitive advantage, and the resources it will commit to these markets" (Doyle, 2008:189).

Customer value proposition (CVP): "(...) a strategic tool facilitating communication of an organization's ability to share resources and offer a superior value package to targeted customers (...) CVP's critical role as a communication device [...] emphasizes the role of resources and resource sharing (...) stresses the need for an appropriate "package" of value that is differentiated from and superior to competitive offerings" (Payne, Frow & Eggert, 2017:472).

Value Proposition Canvas (Osterwalder, 2012):



"With the '**Customer Profile**' you clarify your customer understanding. With the '**Value Map**' you describe how you intend to create value for that customer. (...) You achieve '**Fit**' when your value map meets your customer profile — when your products and services produce **pain relievers** and **gain creators** that match one or more of the **jobs, pains, and gains** that are important to your customer" (Osterwalder et al, 2014:2-8).

Figure 2: Value-based communication and customer value propositions

By adopting the value proposition ontology (Figure 2), we support the idea "modelling and mapping value propositions helps better understanding the value a company wants to offer its customers and makes it communicable between various stakeholders" (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2003, p. 1). Value propositions positively impact customers' value perceptions and resultant attitudes and behaviours (Payne, Frow & Eggert, 2017). In our empirical research, we start from the VPC to explore the value of PI-disclosure for media users, from Flemish media organizations' perspective.

3. METHODS

We apply a qualitative research strategy to answer our research questions related to the benefits of PI-disclosure from media companies' perspective. It is above all media companies' responsibility to explain the benefits and potential risks of PI-disclosure to media users:

> The most important source of unclarity for consumers has to do with what 'data controllers' tell them, or rather, do not tell them about the data processing. Media companies are often the touch points with data subjects so the responsibility to explain rests with them. (Van Zeeland, Van Buggenhout & Pierson, 2019, p. 7).

3.1. Research design

We conducted an online survey of twenty experts, which is the first round of an e-Delphi method (Slocum, 2003; Cole, Donohoe & Stellefson, 2013) that we apply for this study. The full study will consist of three consecutive rounds to elicit opinions and attitudes from an expert panel representing Flemish media companies, consumer organizations, lawyers, policymakers, independent media regulators, and academics. Participants were recruited from within the researchers' networks. Purposive sampling ensures we include representatives of all the quadruple helix actors, a framework of interactions between media industry, university, government, and representatives of civil society that drives innovation within the knowledge economy (Carayannis & Campbell, 2009). Thereby meeting the recommendation of encouraging closer collaboration between different stakeholders and taking different levels of action to address PI-protection challenges in the media sector (Van Zeeland, Van Buggenhout & Pierson, 2019).

Figure 3 provides a graphic overview of the full methodological circle in this study. Data collection and analysis for this first round took place from September to November 2019. The second Delphi round took place January-March 2020, and the third Delphi-round will take place later this year. This article reports on the results of the online survey with 20 media experts.

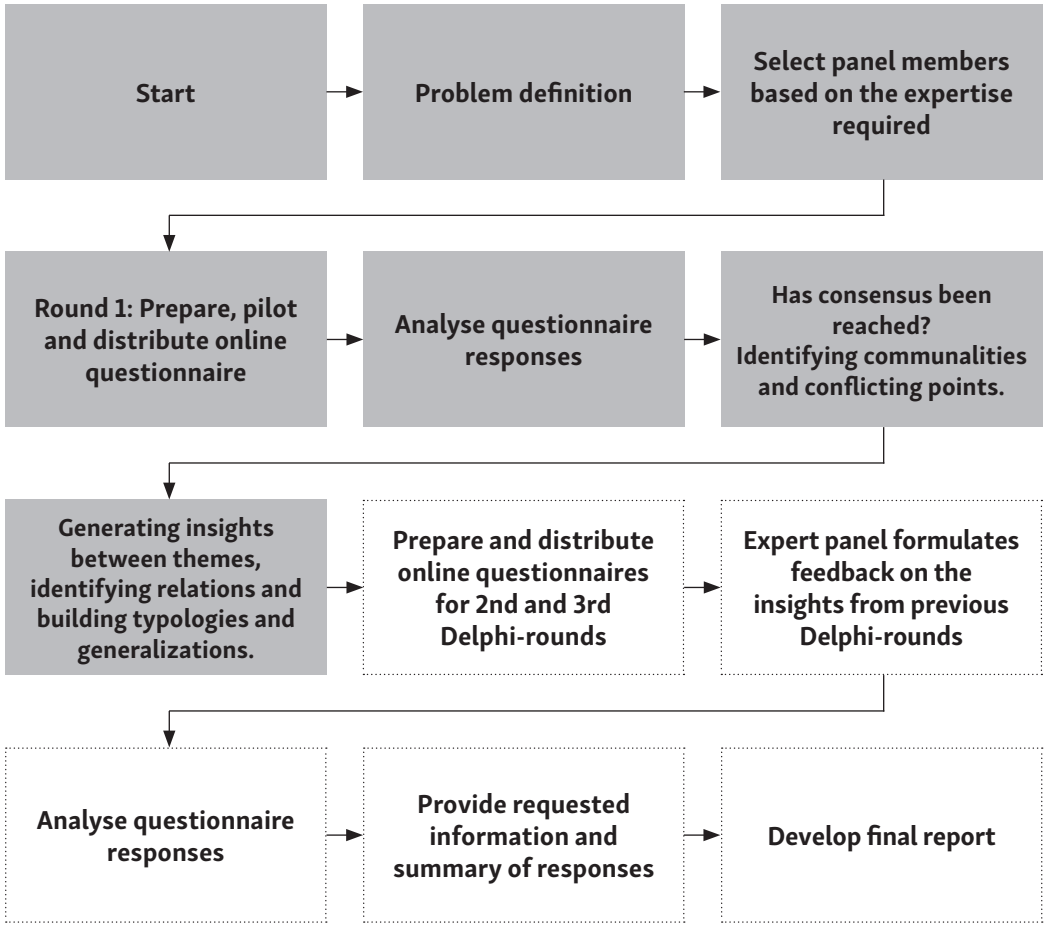


Figure 3: Delphi Method Flowchart

3.2. Questionnaire

We developed a qualitative questionnaire in Qualtrics (est. 20 minutes completion time). This allowed respondents to participate online, via a web browser application on their personal computer, laptop or mobile. We piloted the questionnaire before distributing it to optimise the question formulation and operationalization with user researchers from imec-SMIT who are external to this study.

3.3. Participants and procedure

We identified experts based on knowledge, experience and position in the Flemish media industry (Van Audenhove & Donders, 2019). We invited 86 experts as panel members for the first Delphi-round. 31 people confirmed their willingness to participate. We recorded 25 responses: 20 completed and five blank surveys. 11 people dropped out. The final survey response rate was 23,26%.

4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Our analysis was two-fold:

1. *Thematical level*: identifying communalities, divergences, and conflicting points;
2. *Cross-theme level*: generating insights between themes, identifying relations, building typologies and generalizations (Van Audenhove, 2007).

We constructed a value proposition-template (in PowerPoint) to analyse the survey answers (Figure 4), inspired by Osterwalder's (2012) VPC. We exported the questionnaire answers from Qualtrics to pdf-documents and copy-pasted respondents' answers into value proposition-templates. We constructed a value proposition-template for each respondent (twenty value propositions=twenty slides). We printed the slides in A4-dimension (two slides per page=ten pages) and divided each page in half (one value proposition per page=20 pages in A5-dimension). This provided an easy overview while manually clustering, sorting and analysing the (different elements of) respondents' value propositions.

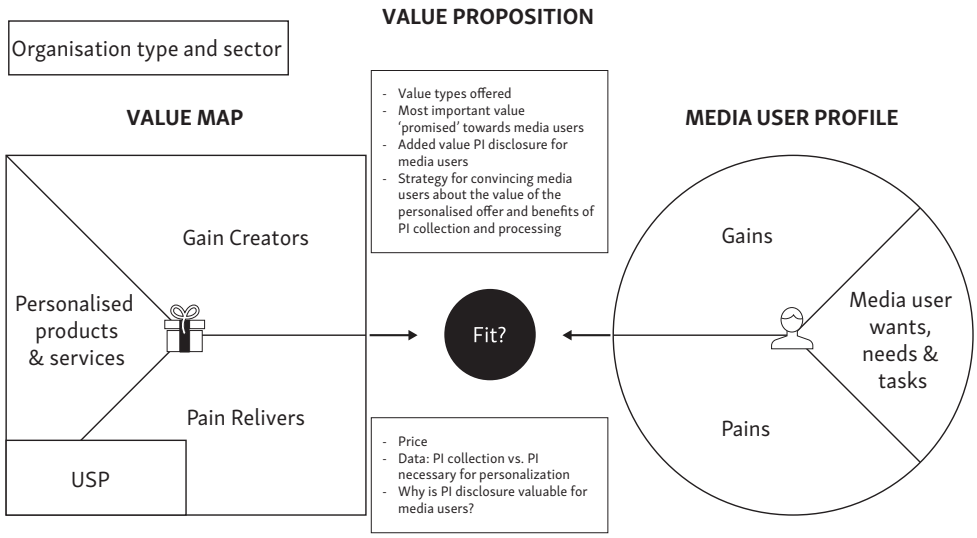


Figure 4: Value proposition template

4.1. Media organisation characterization

Respondents freely pictured their media organisation type and industry sector. From the results, one respondent positioned itself as a public media company working in television, while 19 of 20 respondents selected a commercial media company's perspective. Eight respondents identified their commercial media organisation as working in one media industry sector, whereas 11 respondents stated their organisation is active in two or more media industry sectors. We sorted respondents' imagined media organization characterizations in five media industry sector clusters. Respondents

positioning themselves as commercial media organizations were working either exclusively or primarily in press (nine respondents) followed by commercial television broadcasters (five respondents). Online discussion forums and news websites and media companies working in telecommunication and distribution share third place (both two respondents). One respondent positioned itself as working in marketing and advertising.

4.2. Media user profiles

We summarize customer profiles respondents composed per media industry sector below, delineating customer segments, target audiences for the personalised offering and describing jobs – why media users need personalised products/services defined from media companies' perspective (Osterwalder et al, 2014). We clustered respondents' answers in three themes: media practices, user needs, and socio-demographic characteristics (Figure 5).

4.3. The value of a personalised offering

We outline below how respondents constructed value propositions (Osterwalder et al, 2014) and defined the value of personalised products/services for media users, from media companies' perspective.

We list the fictional personalised products and services (Osterwalder et al, 2014) respondents develop and offer to users in Figure 6. We notice a diverse set of products and services, ranging from broader (e.g., applications and websites) to more specific services (e.g., online mobile urban news). Respondents thought mainly about existing services as we find no real innovations in this overview.

Of the participants, 19 of 20 collect and process PI for the development and optimization of a personalised media offering. There is a discrepancy when comparing respondents' answers pertaining to which PI-types they collect, and PI-types essential for personalisation according to the media experts (Figure 6). Most respondents collect more PI than is necessary for personalisation. The connection between PI-collection/processing purposes is often unclear. For example, respondents collect PI such as age, gender, location, and social media use, while also indicating these PI-types are not necessary for the development and optimization of personalised products/services. One respondent even states no PI is necessary for personalisation, but collects "(stated) preferences, reading history, and location data". There may be several explanations for this, for example, processing purposes other than developing personalised media products and services like marketing or selling to third parties. It is also possible user research is still done in more traditional ways via demographic market segmentation.

Only eight respondents develop a personalised offering with a fit (Osterwalder et al, 2014) between media user PI-collection and PI-types essential for personalisation.

CUSTOMER PROFILES AND USER JOBS

MEDIA PRACTICES

Television
- Cord cutters
- Streamers
- TV and video consumers

Press
- Digital media users of all ages
- Existing media users
- Frequent visitors of the website and apps

Telecommunication and distribution
- Companies who deliver the media content and want to improve advertising efficiency
- People who are very demanding about the technology they use and want to use new technologies

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Television: all age categories

Press
- Young adults
- Working population, families and retired people
- High profiles and investors
- Women

Online discussion forums and news websites
- Urban media users ages 18 to 35

Telecommunication and distribution
- Adults, B2B and B2C

USER NEEDS

Television
- Need for a new way of media consumption
- Need for unique or new content
- Information overload/(un)willingness to pay for content
- Need for relevant and personalised media content and platform (focus on social value)

Press
- Need for information
- Need for entertainment
- Need for specific news (e.g., local or investor-specific news)
- Information overload
- Need for relevant and personalised news
- Advertising fatigue/need for personalised advertising

Online discussion forums and news websites
- Need to process information quickly
- Need for local information and experiences

Telecommunication and distribution
- Need for relevant advertising
- Need for personalised experiences

Figure 5: Customer profiles

PERSONALISED PRODUCTS & SERVICES	MORE PI-TYPES COLLECTED THAN NECESSARY FOR PERSONALISATION	
	PI necessary for personalisation	**PI collection**
Information and entertainment (mainly fiction)	Sociological data about the time of day and method of viewing	Receptive study viewing behaviour and duration, **sociological composition of the audience and relevant differences between different target groups**
News application without advertising	Not specified which types	**Yes**, but not specified which types
News in all formats	Interests	Interests, **age**, **gender**
Qualitative news	Reading history	Reading history, **device type, geographic region, socio-demographic data (on request)**
Website or application with personalised content based on stated preferences and additional recommendations from Machine Learning	Socio-demographic data, interests	Socio-demographic data, **behaviour**
Personalised advertisements with opt-in	Opt-in data, viewing behaviour (advertisements)	Data offered by media users when they opt-in, **browsing behaviour**, viewing behaviour
Lifestyle application offering content tailored to the media user	Age, gender, interests	Explicitly ask for media user interests and complement this data with **consumption behaviour (reading behaviour and purchases)**. Raw data for acquisition.
Quick and short news messages	None	**(Stated) Preferences, reading history, location data**
Online, mobile urban news on a local level with local news and events	Location	Location, **age, gender, social media data**
Advertising tailored to media users, interactive health products, speech technology	Mainly consumption data of current products	**Identification data**, media usage data, **location data, purchasing data**
PERSONALISED PRODUCTS & SERVICES	**PI COLLECTION = PI NECESSARY FOR PERSONALISATION**	
TV on demand	Viewing behaviour	
Relevant content for viewers and advertisers	Postal code, gender, age, email	
Paying video on-demand service	Viewing behaviour	
Platform providing access to a maximum of content through curation and aggregation	Viewing behaviour, socio-demographic data	
Personalised news application	Socio-demographic data, behavioural data (reading behaviour), explicit and implicit preferences and interests	
Applications and websites	Socio-demographic data, online behaviour, preferences	
Print and online	Postal address, email, social class, age, interests	
Personalised TV advertising, replacing traditional commercial blocks	Non-sensitive demographic data, derived interests and characteristics	

Figure 6: Personalised media products/services with discrepancy versus 'fit' between PI-types essential for personalisation and PI-types collected

4.3.1. The 'value' of personalisation for media users defined from media companies' perspective

Respondents indicate personalised products/services offer the following types of *customer value* (Van Leeuwen, s.d.) to media users, ranked in descending order of response count:

1. Functional value (16 mentions): A more comfortable, easier to use, problem-solving, extensive or faster media experience in comparison to non-personalised media products/services;
2. Emotional value (14 mentions): Personalised media products and services promise to be more fun, attractive, surprising and relaxing, or stress-reducing in comparison to non-personalised media products/services;
3. End value (10 mentions): By offering a personalised experience media companies promise media users excellent service quality;
4. Economic value (9 mentions): Personalised media products/services promise financial benefits, save time or energy, or are innovative;
5. Symbolic value (6 mentions): Personalised media products/services promise status and prestige for example, aiming at social responsibility as well as the feeling of wanting to be part of a certain media brand;
6. Other value (2 mentions): *Geographic value* by relevant reporting (local news) and *Content value* through quick processing of relevant news.

Functional value, mostly described as ease of use, was considered the most important value of a personalised experience for media users. This relates to media user-profiles and needs (see 4.2). For example, respondents described users suffering from advertising fatigue and information overload, users in need of more relevant advertising and users looking for innovative ways to find unique and tailor-made media content.

We summarize respondents' descriptions of the most important value personalised media products and services promise media users below, sorted per media industry sector (Figure 7). Although this was an open-ended question, respondents do not mention the notion of public value (choices for the public interest) (Benington & Moore, 2011, p. 4), even not the one respondent that positioned him/herself as a public broadcaster.

THE MOST IMPORTANT 'VALUE PROMISE' FOR MEDIA USERS	**Television** ▪ Public broadcasters: quality ▪ Commercial broadcasters: emotional value (move consumers to watch content and advertising), economic value (innovation) and functional value (helping with finding something to watch)
	Press ▪ Functional value: informative, ease of use, and trust ▪ Economic value: Return on Investment (ROI), relevance, meaningful and pleasant time-spending ▪ End value: everything needs to be presented in the right way ▪ Emotional value: become a "love brand" that knows the viewer
	Online discussion forums and news websites ▪ Functional value: ease of use, relevance, and accessible style ▪ Symbolic value: integrity
	Telecommunication and distribution ▪ Economic value: clearly demonstrable and least subjected to subjectivity ▪ Symbolic value: being a company which media users expect it will lead the way and want to be part of

Figure 7: The most important value promise of personalised media products/services for media users, defined from media companies' perspective (categorized per industry sector)

4.3.2. Do personalised media products/services offer Return on PI (RoPI) to media users?

Why is PI-disclosure valuable or worth the effort for media users, what is the added value when sharing PI to media companies in exchange for a personalised experience? These questions inquired most explicitly personalisation vs. privacy trade-offs users need to consider when media companies ask people to disclose PI in exchange for access to personalised products/services, defined from media companies' perspective. It is striking how most respondents in our sample do not take on media users' viewpoint when describing the benefits of PI-collection/processing for the purpose of personalisation of media products and services. A few respondents mention media users' perspective and emphasize comfort, time efficiency, or price benefits for users. Yet, most respondents contribute reasons why it is necessary users share more PI for development and optimization of personalised products/services or operation of the media company itself. From the media companies' perspective, respondents relate the importance of users disclosing PI mostly to the optimization of the quality of personalised products/services provision.

Some respondents substantiate why it is valuable to share PI for media users by stating generalities for example, "better service provision" or "free, relevant content and advertising in return for PI". However, respondents do not clearly define

'relevance', and therefore, its meaning remains vague. One respondent explains why there is no risk for users disclosing PI: "Media users only share PI during the moment that they are using the service".

Respondents often define personalisation not as the means to enhance customer satisfaction, but as the goal in itself. For example, nobody explains why personalisation is desirable for media users. The same is true for relevance. Furthermore, respondents mention the ease of use, quality, not missing out on the news, and more effective advertising multiple times when considering the added value of PI-disclosure and personalisation for media users.

4.4. "Selling" personalisation

In this section we focus on the importance of a clear communication of the benefis of PI-disclosure to media users and transparency on how the data is being used. We start from the specific risks or pains as well as the pain relievers that were identified by our respondents. Next, we focus on the gains and specific gain creators of personalised media product and services. We look into the distinguishing USPs of personalised media products/services for Flemish media companies. Finally, we discuss strategies that media companies can apply to communicate towards and convince media users about the value of a personalised offering.

4.4.1. PI-disclosure pains vs pain relievers and personalisation gains vs gain creators

Figure 8 illustrates the potential risks and barriers for media users, pains (Osterwalder et al, 2014), when disclosing PI to media companies, as well as the what PI-protection solutions or pain relievers (Osterwalder et al, 2014) that media companies can implement or apply, to prevent or mitigate potential risks of PI-disclosure for media users. PI-protection pain relievers considerably 'fit' PI-disclosure pains (Osterwalder et al, 2014). Measures such as adhering to the principle of purpose limitation (GDPR art 5.1 b) prevent the misuse of personal data or sharing data with third parties without user consent. Additionally, the experts emphasize the need for transparent communication towards media users about the means and purposes of data collection and processing.

PI DISCLOSURE PAINS FOR MEDIA USERS	**Data collection and processing** ▪ User profiling ▪ Aggressive customer acquisition ▪ Misuse of personal data ▪ Share data with third parties without user consent
	Personal data breaches ▪ Data leaks ▪ Data "falling into the wrong hands"
	User experience ▪ Filter bubbles ▪ Insufficient relevant or irrelevant advertisements ▪ Pushy and invasive advertising
	Communication ▪ Purposes of data processing not mentioned to users
	Data literacy ▪ Insufficient knowledge about how data is used
PI DISCLOSURE PAIN RELIEVERS	**Internal media company data protection policies** ▪ Estimation of benefits and risks and built-in data protection ▪ Enhanced IT security
	Data collection and processing ▪ Adhere to principle of purpose limitation ▪ Process data only when users are using the service ▪ Pseudonymization ▪ Disconnection of user profiles and source data ▪ Create sub-profiles per media user
	Data storage ▪ Local data storage ▪ Short retention periods for behavioural data
	User consent and control ▪ Explicitly ask user consent ▪ Give media users control over their data and user profile: allow insight, adjustment and deletion of data ▪ Allow opt-out for advertisements
	Communication ▪ Transparent communication about means and purposes of data collection and processing ▪ Provide information on media user privacy rights according to GDPR

Figure 8: Comparing PI-disclosure risks and barriers (pains) for media users with PI-protection measures (pain relievers) to prevent or remedy risks of PI-disclosure, defined from media companies' perspective

Two themes stand out when questioning what benefits or gains (Osterwalder et al, 2014) media users expect from personalised media products and services (Figure 9):

1. Personalisation benefits linked to improved content quality, creativity and recognisability;

2. Personalisation benefits linked to improved user experience for example, flexibility, ease of use, time-efficiency, relevance, and reduced information overload.

Noteworthy, along with describing the benefits personalised media products and services provide for media users, one respondent emphasized the gains (Osterwalder et al, 2014) of creating a personalised offering for media companies. For example, "better spending of marketing budget and higher return on investment".

Investigating personalisation gain creators (Osterwalder et al, 2014), some respondents differently understood the question of how personalised media products and services create benefits for media users. Some respondents provided a technical answer and focused on the how-part of the question. For example, they were describing how media companies apply personalisation techniques. Other respondents answered what they perceived as gains of a personalised media experience for media users. This question does not seem well operationalized; we inquired both how personalised media products and services create benefits for media users (gain creators) as well as media user expectations (gains). Yet, respondents' answers still allowed us to discern from a media companies' perspective, additional benefits and reasons why it is valuable for media users to share PI in return for a personalised media experience (Figure 9).

4.4.2. Unique selling proposition of personalisation

To explain the advantages of personalisation to data subjects and support Flemish media companies in developing codes of conduct for trustworthy practices in "selling personalisation" (Van Zeeland, Van Buggenhout & Pierson, 2019, p. 8), we inquired respondents to which extent their personalised offering is unique. By constructing a unique selling proposition (USP), respondents explicitly described at least "one compelling benefit not offered by competitors" (Payne, Frow & Eggert, 2017, p. 471). For example, how to distinguish their offering from personalised products/services offered by other Flemish media organisations or international players like Facebook, Amazon, Netflix and Google (FANGs).

Respondents mostly relate the USP of personalised products/services developed by television broadcasters to a balanced offer of Flemish and international content. USPs of personalised press products and services are primarily linked to the promise of quick, reliable and trustworthy news delivery followed by user experience and control i.e., "a tailored offer but not determined by algorithms". A personalised online discussion forums and news websites experience is unique when it is new or does not yet exist in the Flemish market. The USP of personalised products/services developed by telecommunication and distribution organizations is mostly associated with a competitive advantage in knowledge about audience composition and viewing behaviour.

How can Flemish media companies communicate the advantages of personalisation in a compelling way which will help media users see the relevance and benefits

GAINS OF PERSONALISED MEDIA PRODUCTS AND SERVICES FOR MEDIA USERS	**Content** ▪ Information quality ▪ Reliability and trustworthiness ▪ Creativity ▪ Local recognisability ▪ Tailored content and advertisements ▪ Fair deal between free content and advertising ▪ Broad content catalogue ▪ Up-to-date and local information
	User experience ▪ Flexibility, comfort and ease of use (UI) ▪ Time efficiency: quick access to and delivery of content ▪ Less information overload ▪ More relevant information and advertising relating to media user interests ▪ Improved media user experience
GAIN CREATORS OF PERSONALISED PRODUCTS AND SERVICES	**Technical descriptions of how personalisation creates benefits for media users** ▪ Profiling and automation ▪ Digital technology ▪ Good editorial team with expertise in different fields ▪ Make recommendations ▪ The product type depends on and is adapted to the target group ▪ Opt-in lists with products, sectors and brands combined with advertising management system which only shows opt-in advertisements ▪ Analyse existing viewing behaviour and link this to the people behind this viewing behaviour
	Personalisation benefits for media users ▪ Quality of information ▪ Recognisability ▪ Relevance based on media user interests ▪ Local news and information based on location ▪ Free content ▪ Effective advertising ▪ Possibility to follow topics, themes and authors ▪ User-friendly platform ▪ Increase frequency and depth of media use ▪ Enhanced feeling of value-for-money ▪ Media brand fills in a 'purpose' for media users ▪ Presence across all platforms (smart TV, Android, iOS, PlayStation, online)

Figure 9: Comparing expected benefits (gains) of personalised media products/services for media users with personalisation gain creators, defined from media companies' perspective

of PI-collection (Van Zeeland, Van Buggenhout & Pierson, 2019)? We inquired from respondents which strategies and practices media companies can apply to convince media users personalised media products and services deliver on the promise of offering value to media users. We distinguish three themes in respondent's answers:

1. Focusing on content, quality and innovation, by quickly providing the right information, fact-checking, personalisation and relevance combined with societal value, unique and locally anchored content;
2. Demonstrating user experience, exclusivity and control with (free) trials, easy user experience, not selling a product but time/experiences, personalised and exclusive offers for media users;
3. Marketing and communication practices: i.e., creating media user interest, making the product available and accessible, explaining the benefits of personalisation, and linking a personalised media experience to the media brand image.

Finally, respondents' answers notably provide more insight into the underlying meaning of relevance of a personalised media experience for media users, defined from media companies' perspective. For example, "meaningful and pleasant use of time", "Return on Investment (ROI)", "content is key", "not selling a product but rather time and experiences", "ease of use linked to a media user's location and social media activity".

5. DISCUSSION

Concluding our exploration of the value of PI-disclosure from Flemish media organizations' perspective, we discuss the practical study implications and integrate the main findings with literature and theory.

RQ1: How do media organizations define the value of personalised products/services for media users?

The expert panel defined the *'value'* of a personalised offering mostly in terms of functional, emotional and end value. Respondents think ease of use for media users is the most important value promise of personalised media products and services. We join value-based marketing theory in recommending media companies "invest in communications to make people aware" of the value of personalised products/services, to "persuade" users of "advantages over competitive products, and to reassure customers once they have bought it", or exchanged their PI (Doyle, 2008, p. 300). Communication efforts towards media users should focus on functional and emotional attributes (Doyle, 2008, p. 300), such as ease of use and comfort, but also highlight improved level of service offering - end value in exchange for disclosing PI.

Addressing the question of why disclosing PI in exchange for a personalised offering is valuable for media users, respondents link added value of PI trade-offs mainly to relevance. However, descriptions remain vague throughout the first Delphi-round. The only insight we found in the underlying meaning of relevance is "meaningful

and pleasant use of time", "return on Investment", "time and experiences", and "ease of use" in relation to media users' location and social media activity. Most respondents only describe why it is necessary from media companies' perspective that users share (more) PI. For example, to improve the quality of the personalised service offering. It is important that media companies create sustainable business models by offering added value to media users, this permits premium pricing and consistent revenues in the long-term (Doyle, 2008). We recommend Flemish media companies apply added-value strategies (Figure 18) when developing and optimizing personalised products/services (Doyle, 2008).

RQ2: How is value operationalized, communicated, and delivered to media users?

Respondents constructed value propositions to communicate how the personalised offering aims to deliver value to media users (Osterwalder et al, 2014). The gains of personalised products and services for users (Osterwalder et al, 2014) are mainly described in regard to improved content quality, creativity, and recognisability and user experience. For example, more relevance and less information overload. The benefits of personalisation for media companies are "better spending of marketing budget and a higher return on investment". Correspondingly, we explored how a personalised offering creates benefits for media users - gain creators (Osterwalder et al, 2014). Media companies apply personalisation techniques like "profiling and automation" to create gains for media users, for example "relevance based on media user interests" and "enhanced feeling of value for money". The literature on audience commodification and business model innovation recommends "a clear trade-off between the requested action and value delivery" for media users (Khajeheian, 2016, p. 45). If media companies request PI-disclosure in exchange for personalised products/services, users should receive value. This could be for example the ability to unlock premium content or pay with attention rather than money (Khajeheian, 2016).

To communicate the benefits of personalisation and help media users see the relevance of PI-collection (Van Zeeland, Van Buggenhout & Pierson, 2019), respondents suggest media companies apply the following strategies to demonstrate a personalised media experience delivers on its *'value promise'*:

1. Content, quality and innovation;
2. User experience, exclusivity and control;
3. Marketing and communication practices to create consumer interest.

The expert panel recognizes the importance of experiential and commercial information sources as factors influencing buying behavior (Doyle, 2008), in this case, media users' PI-disclosure decisions (Doyle, 2008). Respondents advocate it is useful if media companies effectively demonstrate economic value to media users (Doyle, 2008).

Inquiring how the personalised offering is unique in comparison to competitors, respondents distinguish oneself focusing on Flemish and international content; reliable, trustworthy information; improved user experience and control, new,

innovative media products and services; and exclusive insights in media user viewing behaviour. Respondents support the idea that encouraging media users' trust in media companies, their personalised offering, and PI-policies positively influences users' attitude towards disclosing PI online (Robinson, 2018). Constructing a USP is vital for media companies aiming to "sell" the benefits of personalisation to media users (Van Zeeland, Van Buggenhout & Pierson, 2019, p. 8), considering this is often the only benefit explicitly communicated and advertised toward consumers (Payne, Frow & Eggert, 2017). Even if the value proposition contains more than one benefit overall, it is an implicit promise and not necessarily communicated to consumers (Payne, Frow & Eggert, 2017).

RQ3: To what extent is the value proposition linked to PI-collection/processing?

The study found 19 of 20 respondents collect PI for development and optimization of personalised media products and services. Most respondents collect more PI-types than necessary for personalisation. The question still remains if Flemish media organizations are able to responsibly utilize the collected data and for what. The connection between PI-collection/processing purposes is often unclear. Businesses today often "cast a wide net" to collect more PI than they need or analyse (Gemalto, 2018). Considering literature insights on self-commodification, this is problematic since "users should be presented with a clear value proposition for doing something that will benefit the deliverer of that value" (Khajeheian, 2016, p. 44) such as disclosing PI. Collecting irrelevant data lessens consumer trust and sets the company for even greater fall-out if they are hacked, breached, or the data is fraudulently obtained – anyone caught with more data than truly needed will suffer great losses. Identifying potential PI-protection risks – PI-disclosure pains for media users, respondents mainly describe privacy concerns pertaining to PI-collection/processing, personal data breaches, user experience, communication, and data literacy. Respondents are aware that Flemish media users have a negative attitude and perception towards how media companies use PI (Vanhaelewyn & De Marez, 2018). PI-protection risks such as, identity fraud, discrimination, or disclosure of sensitive information are not mentioned in this study (GDPR recital 75).

PI-protection *pain* relievers considerably *'fit'* PI-disclosure pains (Osterwalder et al, 2014). We discern five categories of PI-protection solutions media companies can implement to prevent and mitigate potential risks of PI-disclosure for media users internal media company PI-protection policies; PI-collection/processing measures; data storage solutions; user control and consent; and communication strategies. Respondents highlight the importance of transparent communication about the means and purposes of PI-collection and processing. The ability of effectively being able to communicate the benefits of PI-disclosure is however not mentioned. This is the most opportune communication strategy media companies can apply to enhance consumer trust (Vanhaelewyn & De Marez, 2018) - especially considering trust in a better level of service is the decisive factor when media users decide to disclose

PI or not, rather than frustration in the lack of transparency in media companies' PI-policy (Vanhaelewyn & De Marez, 2018).

To recapitulate the first Delpi-round recommendations for media organizations, we created a hands-on-scheme (Figure 10) to indicate how media companies can communicate the value of PI-collection/processing in a more transparent way.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEDIA COMPANIES	
1. Invest in value-based communications (Doyle, 2008) to make people aware of the value of personalised products/services and persuade media users of the benefits of PI disclosure.	Highlight ease of use, comfort and improved level of service offering in communication efforts towards media users.
2. Offer added value to media users by applying added-value strategies (Doyle, 2008) when developing personalised products and services.	Improve operational excellence, "increasing the perceived efficiency of the current offering to media users"; customer intimacy i.e., by offering "a tailored solution made and delivered to meet individual needs"; develop new products, "products that meet unmet needs or meet current needs in a superior way"; and create new marketing concepts, "changing the way existing products are presented or distributed" (Doyle, 2008:295-296).
3. Define a clear trade-off between asking media users to disclose PI and the value of the personalised products and services that media users will receive in exchange.	The benefits of personalization-for-PI exchanges for media companies, advertisers and service providers are "engaged customer attention", "audience interaction" and "the ability to provide users with value (without paying them)" (Khajeheian, 2016:45).
4. Construct an USP to "sell" the benefits of personalisation to media users.	This is often the only benefit explicitly communicated and advertised toward media users (Payne, Frow & Eggert, 2017).
5. Collect only the data you truly need. This increases consumer trust and a sense of transparency.	In the threat of fraud or hacking, you only lose that data – not the potentially, great unnecessary data you might have collected.

Figure 10: Recommendations for media companies

Limitations of the study and future research

This qualitative study is a theoretical exploration, aimed at discovering and describing new knowledge, exposing previously unknown insights or unmentioned viewpoints about the value of PI-disclosure, from media companies' perspective (Baarda et al, 2013). We applied theoretical, purposeful sampling (Baarda et al, 2013). The

expert panel in this study imagined themselves in a hypothetical situation in which they work for a media organization, selling personalised media products/services. The respondents characterised their organisation type and sector, regardless of their actual organizational affiliations. To guarantee anonymity, readers cannot discern how many participants in this study are actually working in a public or commercial media organization (sample composition). The findings are not to be generalized towards the Flemish media industry. The results of this online survey are not yet validated and refined through an iterative process (Slocum, 2003). The expert panel will provide feedback on the findings during the second and third Delphi-round.

The questionnaire was purposively designed for media professionals, advertisers and marketers. We will include all quadruple helix actors (Carayannis & Campbell, 2009) in the sample of the next Delphi-rounds. Since the research is based on expert opinions, we do not discuss actual Flemish media users' positioning (Litt, 2012). To meet this lack of representation, we will include consumer organizations in the next Delphi-rounds' expert panels. Furthermore, we will follow-up the Delphi-study with user research to explore if actual users perceive the benefits of personalisation described in this study as value in return for their PI.

Finally, we identified **new research directions** for the next Delphi-rounds based on the abovementioned findings:

- We further delineate the meaning of relevance;
- We go more in-depth into why media companies collect more PI than is necessary for personalisation and in which specific cases (investigating links with media, communication and advertising practices/activities). Correspondingly, we explore which ethical issues arise when media companies collect unnecessary data and how that affects media users' trust and brand/industry perceptions;
- In addition to Delphi-surveying our expert panel;
- We apply other research methods such as face-to-face expert interviews to collect in-depth, additional research data;
- We investigate actual communication strategies concerning the value of PI for Flemish media companies by performing a content/text analysis of these organizations' statements.
- We include the audience perspective to complement the experts' view.

The current and future results of this mixed-methods study will allow us to provide in-depth insights into the positioning of the different stakeholders involved in the ongoing debate on the value of PI.

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LOBBYING ON THE GERMAN FEDERAL LEVEL: THE UNKNOWN SHIFT THROUGH DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

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ABSTRACT

Against the background of technological change, increasing information flow, and a rising number of communication channels, new opportunities and challenges are arising for communication between interest groups and federal policymakers in Germany. To keep up with further technological developments and the increasingly fast-paced political communication system, it is crucial to analyze lobbying in the context of digital transformation in greater detail.

Lobbying as a traditionally non-public part of political communication has been a challenging setting for research. Understanding the general contours of this activity is an important public need - especially for digital lobbying, where a lack of academic research exists. This paper therefore provides an in-depth analysis with emphasis on both communicating sides - lobbyists and federal parliamentarians of the German Bundestag as well as their employees.

This analysis is based on a qualitative, explorative stance drawing from 15 semi-constructed interviews and an enriching ethnographic approach. The first authors´ exclusive experience from working inside a lobby agency and also inside the German Bundestag helped this study to contribute to lobbying research with the focus to better understand how the effect of digital transformation in lobbying is perceived in Germany.

Keywords: (Digital) Lobbying ▪ digital transformation ▪ German Bundestag ▪ empirical research

1. INTRODUCTION: GERMANY IN BETWEEN DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES

Digital transformation has arrived in all sectors of today´s life, affecting the core of society (Conroy & Vaughn, 2018; Wallner, 2017). In particular, the internet and social media -understood as "digital networked communication tools" - have put a mark on society (Lindgren, 2017, p. 4). This development has resulted in increasing information flow and a rising number of communication channels that bring new challenges and opportunities for communication between lobbyists and federal policymakers in Germany (Baxter, 2017; Katzenbach, 2018; Sargut & McGrath, 2011). Even opportunities ultimately build challenges through the consequent change to the usual political communication system (Couldry, 2012). Therefore, it is of utmost importance to analyze lobbying in times of digital transformation, especially as the influencing of policymakers is an accepted institutionalized activity (Busch-Janser, 2004).

The present article aims to give insights into the perception of the shift caused by digital transformation in lobbying on the German federal level since emerging actors are starting to enter the field. A look at German politics in 2019 shows that there is certainly influence from digitally organized movements (Jungherr et al., 2019). In this article, we thus look at how transmitter and receiver perceive digital lobbying, challenging first-hand observations with their own assessments. More specifically, by analysing 15 semi-constructed interviews with lobbyists, federal parliamentarians of the German Bundestag and their employees, the article which is enriched by an ethnographic approach, attempts to answer the question of "how the effects of digital transformation in lobbying are perceived by federal policymakers and lobbyists in Germany."

The project is centred on the Bundestag, the most important organ of legislative power on the German federal level. The Bundestag passes laws that fall within the competence of the federal level. In Germany, Members of Parliament, parliamentary groups (fractions), the government and the Bundesrat can introduce bills or revise passed ones (Bundestag). This project focused only on Members of Parliament and their employees as they symbolize the largest group to lobby with 709 parliamentarians (each bureau has about 3-5 employees).

The paper is divided into four main parts. The following section is an overview of the relevant literature, including definitions. In the second part, we introduce the methodology and data samples. The third part looks into limitations, and ethical aspects and the final part focuses on the empirical results, which include data analysis and a discussion. Here, we summarize findings from the interview phase between October and December of 2019 and draw upon the first author´s experience from working in the parliament.

2. DEFINITIONS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital transformation stands for the use of new, fast, and frequently changing digital technology that affects society as a whole (Gimpel & Röglinger, 2015). The rapid

change within a system is largely triggered by the emergence of new technological infrastructures (networks, computer hardware) and applications (apps on smartphones, web applications, social media). Coping with digital and social evolution is often considered as the most important issue for institutions. Dealing with "the ever-growing information flow, the need to address ever more audiences as well as building and maintaining trust is expected to be important issues" and will likely become even more important for the future (Zerfass et al., 2017, p. 53). "Digital society", "information society", "postindustrial society" and "network society" are only some examples of the many names for this phase (Lindgren, 2017, p. 4). Regardless of the name, it is important to recognize that the use of digital media in "any society, group, or individual will simultaneously have elements of digitally analogue, digitally enhanced, as well as digitally transformative outcomes" (Ibid., p. 295). All in all, the digital transformation brings tools, channels, platforms and strategies which are used to obtain, produce and share knowledge and is thereby extremely important for communication and interaction with the political field (Ibid.).

This section also addresses the terminology and interpretation of lobbying itself as well as the latest combinations "digital lobbying" and "electronic lobbying". Some scholars say, that "the word lobbying has seldom been used the same way twice by those studying the topic" (Baumgartner & Leech, 1998, p. 33) showing the need for more clarification especially regarding new combinations of the term. Scholars and practitioners in Germany define lobbying as a more private, non-mediatized representation of interests achieving political goals (Kleinfeld et al., 2007; Krebber et al., 2016; Weiler & Brändli, 2015), and also as a media-mediated communication process with the same goal except including the public (Filzmaier & Fähnrich, 2014; Krebber et al., 2015). In either way: the lobbyists can be seen as transmitters and policymakers can be viewed as receivers. Considering the fact that communication is a two-way road, these two may also switch roles, even though the above mentioned direction is considered most common (Michalowitz, 2004; Milbrath, 1960). Alongside the difference in publicity another acknowledgement between the English and German use of the word "lobbying" has to be made. In German, lobbying is a somewhat negatively connotated term which is often used as a synonym to Public Affairs to up value it (Einspänner, 2010; Filzmaier & Fähnrich, 2014). Whereas in English speaking countries, lobbying is a part of Public Affairs surrounded by a regulated political system; hence, it is less negative (Shapovalova, 2015; Thimm & Einspänner, 2012).

Some researchers predicted that reaching the political field in the future is only going to be successful with an increase of public channels e.g. social media (Bender, 2010). Einspänner (2010) describes the internet as a "substantial instrument" for lobbying (Einspänner, 2010, p. 34). Achieving one's political goals through digital communication and social media use is described as more than a new lobbying style. "Digital Public Affairs" or "lobbying in the virtual world" (Miller-Stevens & Gable, 2013, p. 52) enriches and revolutionizes the field of classic lobbying (Thimm & Einspänner, 2012, p. 185). The objective of convincing policymakers on individual

interests or a policymaking-process continues to be the same (Krebber et al., 2015). Although now, the difference is to illuminate the practice more (Thimm & Einspänner, 2012) alternating the active involvement of various participants in "a stronger public presence" (Einspänner, 2010, p. 20). Addressing the German context and considering these aspects "digital public affairs", "social-media lobbying" and "interest representation 2.0" are considered as synonyms for "digital lobbying" in this paper.

The German term *Politik* stands for the overall action to create and enforce binding rules (Patzelt, 2001) and is translated as "politics" for this study. In its broadest sense, politics stands for the human action to create and preserve general rules to live under (Heywood, 2000). The distance that politics has kept between creating rules and the public is now being reinterpreted. Leading scholars in Germany state that through the digital transformation, anyone who has been carefully kept at a certain distance from policymakers (or vice versa), is now able to get very close (Zerfaß & Pleil, 2017). Institutions and organizations suddenly get the opportunity to create or maintain a direct relationship with policymakers (Zerfaß & Pleil, 2017). The change in internet use and digital communication is well discussed in literature (Dohle et al., 2014; Henn et al., 2015). Scholars who have analyzed these developments see a chance to close the "digital gap" between businesses, lobbyists and politics (Argenti & Barnes, 2009, p. 219). They see the increasing usage of digital communication by lobbyists and policymakers as a chance for more transparency, openness, authenticity and collectivity (Einspänner, 2010; Fleisher, 2012). It is by contrast also argued that the core of an organization, relationship or movement does not automatically change by "going digital". Zerfaß and Pleil (2017) also doubt that direct digital communication is more efficient and claim that new technologies are no guarantee for constructive communication relationships. Thus, more empirical research is needed to study these developments in greater detail.

The publication *Digital Public Affairs* (Thimm & Einspänner, 2012) symbolizes the start for digital lobbying in German literature. The authors see the internet and digital communication as a "special [...] form of political PR" through "the mediation and representation of interests of companies, institutions, associations and organizations" (Thimm & Einspänner, 2012, p. 185). Leading scholars recognize digital communication activities to coordinate internal and external actions with policymakers as an opportunity for change (Zerfaß & Pleil, 2012). Through this new quality of communication, it is argued that dialogues, personalization and also general communication are on the one hand easier to handle than ever before (Zerfaß & Pleil, 2012). On the other hand, it also demands new strategies that have to be analysed further.

Hillebrand (2017) understands the use of digital communication as more than just complementary to the "old world", he argues that such involvement enables a new method of exerting power (Hillebrand, 2017, p. 67). Involving the public creates a more democratic framework of lobbying as the disclosure of the public´s will increases the weight of digital lobbying (Hillebrand, 2017). This weight can also be understood as a "shift, in terms of increased speed, impact, reach, and efficiency"

(Lindgren, 2017, p. 294). Here we argue that especially efficiency and impact depend on the perspective. Therefore, the receiver´s view must be included in a conclusion.

Expending one´s reach on social media platforms is considered to create public pressure. Thus, a stronger public presence on the transmitter side is also expected (Einspänner, 2010). Social media platforms enable the transmitter to present and the receiver to discuss political opinions and concerns publicly. Circulating information between users through the mobilization via, e.g. online-petitions is only one example (Krebber et al., 2016). Without many filters and universally accessible, social media presents its unique selling point (Köppl, 2017). More precisely, monological- and dialogical communication, passing on simple information as well as persuasive communication, can be done for example via Twitter and Facebook (Krebber et al., 2015). On the website of lobby control (a German club for more transparency) digital lobbying is declared "to convey an innovative and transparent image and [to] make lobbying more dialogue-oriented" (Müller, 2019). However, it is still unclear how effective these strategies are and what role transparency plays to policymakers in Germany.

To summarize: There is no doubt that lobbying literature identified a specific transformation of the field as the communication infrastructure changes (Diederich, 2015; Harris & Fleisher, 2005; Joos, 2016). Hence, scholars and practitioners studying lobbying agree that digital lobbying becomes more important for research (Krebber et al., 2016; Thimm & Einspänner, 2012). Thimm and Einspänner (2012, p. 185) even argue that it is a "young discipline that enriches and revolutionizes the areas of classic political PR". The overall academic research perspective seeks to improve the understanding and evaluation of these developments in the political context (Fischer & Miller, 2017). Especially since digital instruments not only present new opportunities to mobilize the public, but are also seen as a risk because public communication can be "reinterpreted" by anyone (Hofmann, 2010, p. 301) or appear "one-sided" (Rhodes, 2007, p. 1258). These arguments of the "fundamental and far-reaching [...] change" (Henn & Frieß, 2016, p. 11) will be discussed further in the paper and elaborated upon in the context of Germany.

3. METHODOLOGY AND DATA

The strategy of inquiry of this research has an exploratory focus as it tries to discover categories and not verify an existing theory. Using an inductive methodological approach to identify patterns and connections in the data we aim to develop explanations for the research context. Based on this qualitative, explorative stance, we make use of data collected during semi-structured interviews (n=15). We analysed the data through memo-writing and coding rounds, both of which were used as a process that could lead to the emergence of conceptual categories (Cho & Lee, 2014, p. 1; Institute, 2008).

The non-public aspect of lobbying has previously created challenges for the

researchers in generating reliable data. Considering that practical work experience helps to provide a better understanding of the overall research ground (Danelzik, 2018; Nothhaft, 2017), the first author of this study decided to use her unique access and experience to contribute to the research field. Thus, her experience of working inside the German Bundestag as an employee for a parliamentarian will be used complementary to the interview material. Most ethnographic notes we will rely upon in this paper were collected through shadowing i.e. following someone (at work) like a shadow (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2007). The first author of the paper "shadowed" a member of parliament during several lobby meetings and for the complete spectrum of his time table during one session week a month in 2019. The first author´s unique experience as insider-researcher therefore contributes to understanding transmitter and receiver perspectives not only from a theoretical angle but also in the context of practical everyday business. Thereby, the given context is one of the most important aspects in a work based investigation that "inevitably makes a difference to [this] research" (Costley et al., 2010, p. 1). Shadowing limits the research material to manageable proportions as it allows the first author of the paper as a practitioner – and the researcher in this case - to select material (Nothhaft, 2017, p. 58). In short, it is up to the researcher to decide what they find relevant for their research (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2007, p. 10). Reflections about the time the first author of the paper was working in a lobbying agency (2016–2017) as a consultant responsible for preparing lobbying meetings with politicians, has allowed her to observe the "other side" quite extensively. The ethnographic observations were used to challenge the interview guide and later the coding process to gain a deeper understanding of the overall research ground. Nevertheless, as our aim was to explore interviewees' perspectives of the topic, the main analytical focus of the article is still based on the interviews.

The selection of interviewees reflected our intention to talk to both the transmitter and the receiver of lobbying communication, i.e. we aimed to interview lobbyists as well as parliamentarians and their employees. Due to the ongoing climate debate in Germany, we decided to focus on two committees that have become a more significant target for lobbyists: The Committee on Transport and Digital Infrastructure and the Committee on Food and Agriculture of the German Bundestag. As only full members of the committee have a voting right, the first author of the paper requested an interview with these MPs and the members of their staff and was able to schedule interviews with politicians of every fraction in parliament.

We also aimed to interview different institutions to represent the lobbyists side, e.g. a representative from a lobbying agency, a member of a law firm, a lobbyist for an association in Berlin, etc., as well as capture different age and experience levels of the lobbyists. The first author of the paper then sent an invitation to participate in the study to lobbyists whom she had met before via email and the ones accepting the request were included in the sample.

All in all, fifteen interviews were conducted (see Table 1). Seven interviews were

done with members of the parliament, five with the employees working in the parliament and three with lobbyists. Eleven face-to-face interviews in the respective offices of the parliamentarians as well as four phone interviews were conducted (Loosen, 2014). Each interview lasted from 30-60 minutes.

Table 1. Overview of the interview sample

Nr.	Male	Female	Age	Political Side			Non-Political Side	Work Years	Form
				Member of Parliament (MP)		MP Employee	Agency/ Law firm/ Association/ NGO		
				Govt	Oppos				
1	x		40+	x				10+	Direct
2	x		40+	x				5-	Phone
3		x	50+		x			20+	Direct
4	x		40+		x			5-	Direct
5		x	50++		x			10+	Direct
6	x		40+		x			5-	Direct
7	x		30+			x		5-	Phone
8	x		20+			x		5-	Direct
9	x		30+			x		5-	Direct
10	x		20+			x		5-	Direct
11		x	30+			x		5-	Direct
12	x		30+				x	5+	Phone
13	x		40+				x	10+	Direct
14	x		40+				x	20+	Direct
15	x		40+		x			10+	Phone

The interviews covered the main topics: definitions, digital communication, transparency and lobbying success. As the interviews were semi-constructed (Loosen, 2014), they contained further dialogues depending on the interviewee. Some of the sample questions are visible below:

- Has politics changed through the digital transformation, and if yes, how?
- Has lobbying changed through the digital transformation, and if yes, how?
- Do you use social media and if yes, which channel for which content?
- What does "transparent lobbying" mean to you, and where do you see opportunities and risks through the digital transformation for it?
- How can the success of lobbying or digital lobbying be measured?

The interviews were first transcribed - five to eleven pages each - and then analysed manually. While transcribing, we pre-coded the data by in vivo coding (Charmaz, 1996). In addition to coding the discourse with short phrases, the pre-coding phase included highlighting, emboldening, underlining rich or significant quotes

(Saldaña, 2015). These "codable moments worthy of attention" (Saldana, 2009, p. 16) were the first indicator for the detailed coding process. The broad coding phase was important for further steps as it gave an initial indication of the overall status of the topic. The second coding round was thematic, where each question was compared to the respective others (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Among the various indices proposed in the literature, we employed manual coding, which is considered a valid measure in qualitative research (Saldana, 2009). Table 2 demonstrates the main codes and sub-codes that resulted from the coding procedure.

Table 2: Overview of sub-codes for main codes

Code	Sub-Code
Sentiment	Positive impression
	Critical impression
	Negative impression
Knowledge on digital lobbying	Has an understanding
	Has no understanding
Transparency	More transparent
	Less transparent
Lobbying Success	Successful
	Unsuccessful

4. LIMITATIONS AND ETHICS

This study seeks to create reliable data in accordance to transparency and sincerity principles (Tracy, 2010). Consequently, limitations of the study and its ethical aspects have to be discussed. This is especially important in the context of "insider-researcher" perspective as part of the research took place "within the researcher's own work practice" (Costley et al., 2010, p. 1), i.e. the first author of the paper played a dual role in this study. Considering that research context always affects the researcher, it needs to be acknowledged that the culture and structure of the first author´s individual work situation as well as that of her colleagues, have shaped her overall experience (Costley et al., 2010). Still, the work in parliament enabled her to speak to many different people inside the system and provided a look behind the scenes both of which allowed us to add several reflexive layers to the analysis.

We decided not to include the first author´s former colleagues to the sample as we did not want her to be biased with any question or jeopardize the results due to a personal relationship. At the same time, we used her former contacts to recruit lobbyists for an interview. The political interviews were requested without any indication or knowledge of her position in parliament. Only during the interviews, this information was shared as a sort of "ice breaker" for a trustworthy conversation.

Due to the busy schedules of the parliamentarians we had to combine face-to-face interviews with phone interviews, which could be considered as one of the limitations of the study. In comparison to the face-to-face interviews the phone interviews were shorter as the lack of visual indicators might have grounded a deeper conversation (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004).

Nevertheless, we believe the chosen methodology enabled us to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. A basis of trust gave the interviews and all conversations a competitive edge in sincerity which incorporates authenticity and genuineness (Tracy, 2010). The reciprocal relationship between understanding a phenomenon and coding became evident while working with the transcripts in several rounds (Weston et al., 2001). Finally, new aspects evolved and helped to transform our understanding which also helps to prove the value of the chosen approach.

5. ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS: LOBBYING IN THE GERMAN BUNDESTAG

5.1. Interviewees perceptions about lobbying as a practice

The interviews confirm an entire sentiment-spectrum on lobbying. When actively asked for a lobbying definition, many participants included *legitimate* (Interview 9, Interview 14*)* as a defence of the business. Such a wording confirms the awareness of the rather negatively-connotated field. Interest representation was also differentiated as not critical and lobbying as negative even though it actually had the same meaning as the following quote shows:

> Well, I separate lobbying from interest representation. Representation of interests is: when I explicitly say what would be important for me from my point of view and put it into an overall context. Lobbying is: I try to get someone to represent my interests with hidden or open means. And that is why lobbying is problematic for me, representation of interests is not - I need it. I need to know what other people affected by the laws think about it. That´s why I think representation of interests is perfectly fine, it just has to be transparent and lobbying is often an attempt to manipulate someone, so to speak, so only to provide them with information that are positive in their own interest. (Interview 5)

This view is shared by another politician using the term "PR" saying:

> I often don´t see it as lobbying at all, but more as PR. (Interview 15)

Although most of the interviewees defined lobbying as positive at first, their

perceptions changed to be more critical later on. In fact, some used negative attributes or clichés to talk about the practice:

> Yes, I think the term itself is always directed to these backroom conversations, where people in the non-public make sure that the influence that not everyone should know about happens. (Interview 10)

Some politicians in our sample even associated the practice with far worse scenarios.

> But then to accept the fact that so to speak completely concealed networks are emerging which can also blackmail us as politicians, plus large slaughter groups, three large food trading companies which determine, let´s say, what goes on here in the state, and politicians can only say: "Yes, please, please". That is a catastrophe. And that, of course, has something to do with lobbying, because their interests suddenly play a completely different role. Because they are the economic players, and they are sitting at control points where you no longer have any alternative. (Interview 5)

As well as:

> Yes, you can recognize it by the voting behavior. Because there are drafts of motions or changes in the law that would make more sense otherwise, but then you notice that there is more money behind the way it is actually done. (Interview 6)

Based on the first author´s ethnographic research, we noticed a positive working attitude of politicians towards lobbyists if their request fell inside their political perspective. The first author of the paper also noticed a remarkable difference in the actual amount of lobbying requests between the members of the opposition and governing parties. Her insider knowledge suggests that politicians from the opposition are naturally less likely to be lobbied, hence they also have less working experience with lobbying. The same applies to politicians working in committees which attract fewer public interest. The first author of the paper has also noticed that politicians without frequent contact to lobbyists have relied more upon clichés compared to than the ones working with lobbyists regularly.

Another finding from the ethnographic notes is confirmed: negative sentiments towards lobbyists due to their intermediary function. When someone is personally concerned in the matter and addresses a politician directly, they are perceived more positively – in contrast to an intermediary who represents a third party who is sometimes not even present. The first author of the paper has actually seen lobbyists use this situation by bringing clients along to their political appointments. One lobbyist explained his strategy in the interviews and mentioned this aspect:

> We talk to all stakeholders. We try to form alliances - and then we approach politicians, talk to them, in the ideal case this helps already. We always have the client with us during the appointments. So, we don´t do it without the client. (Interview 12)

This phenomenon was confirmed by a politician saying that he did not have any problem when one would, e.g. tell him his or her request directly:

> I am with the foresters, and they chose me to come here and represent their opinion and my own (...) and we have a problem. Can you help us? (Interview 6)

The above indicates that when one openly communicates their position, background and goals, it is more positively viewed by the politicians. However, overall, opposition politicians were still more likely to be critical towards lobbying per se. The interviewed lobbyists were aware of their work being negatively connotated and tried to defend their job by including the adjective "legitimate" or "neutral" when defining it:

> Lobbying is the legitimate representation of interests of individuals and organizations towards political decision-makers in the ministerial and parliamentary spheres. (Interview 14)

> Relatively boring and neutral, simply that one tries to enforce political interests. So, there is a representation of interests, and that is a representation of interests towards politics. And that´s in relation to politics because you need politics to make something happen. (...) Yes, so I would say, seen that way, completely neutral, it is a political representation of interests. (Interview 13)

5.2. Knowledge and awareness on digital lobbying

Even when interviewees were hesitant to define digital lobbying, their understanding of the concept emerged from the discussion. Most participants were, however, not able to structure and categorize their experience in concrete examples like the following quotes indicates:

> Yes, I don´t know. Humm... I think the line between information and lobbying is more difficult to draw because you usually receive digital information or invitations to meetings. I don´t know if it is really tangible in this form. So of course, one can do lobbying in the digital area, that is, via the digital medium. Usually, it is more the establishment of contact, and then I think it

> becomes a lobbying discussion in the concrete event because I think it´s too impersonal to do direct lobbying via digital media. (Interview 10)

The perspective is shared by:

> The whole thing via Email. (...) More enquiries come in digitally. (Interview 11)

The lobbyists were also quite diverse in their answers. The oldest, with most experience, referred to digital lobbying as:

> (...) simply adding social media as a channel, no more and no less. (Interview 14)

The two younger lobbyists had a very clear understanding of the potential the data could provide in addressing politicians. However, as confessed by one of the interviewees such things did not happen yet in Germany, only in the USA. Their definitions were:

> Good question. (...) I thought like: oh crazy! AI, Big Data and Co. now regarding lobbyists, that´s interesting. And then I realized that it´s actually different these days because somehow, they say: Do you use Twitter and Facebook for lobbying work? And I thought to myself, hmmm...Digital Humhumhum is not Facebook and Twitter. It just means to work differently. To be able to work better or simply more efficient or whatever. It just surprised me that it was about communication. Now lobbying is also about communication, but at the beginning, I thought about digital lobbying. In Digital Public Affairs, we use data analysis and stuff like that. (Interview 13)

And also:

> Yes, difficult, there are completely different approaches. (...) Well, I´ll say everything with a publicity effect on the internet to spread your political messages to politicians. I could also do that with certain paid content; I can work towards certain target groups. For example, politicians at some level, seeing my messages more than any other people or other messages. That would be one possibility. It´s also very much about the public sphere. (Interview 12)

A change in the field is recognized by the lobbying side where digital opportunities are identified as practical activities like using social media as a lobbying tool, creating emotions online and using the public digitally to reach stakeholders. The political side also mentioned social media in context to their work for direct or widespread

communication which shows that there is a general awareness of its importance. Surprisingly, no political participant mentioned anything about data or being targeted more than others. Even when one employee checked his boss's Facebook during the interview and found proof that the politician was actually involved in digital targeting strategies, he still denied that it was happening to the politician:

> I have now taken a look at the Facebook page. What I just noticed on Facebook, the "ProBahn" (pro-German railway association) here from the region, regularly links us to their Facebook and then expects us to react to it. But that´s normal Facebook work; I wouldn´t describe that as lobbying. (Interview 8)

The above quote reveals the surface understanding of digital communication possibilities as mobilization and emotionalization. Even though the employee understands the crucial difference between classic and digital lobbying and what it can do to politics in terms of policymaking, he could not see how to be affected by it. Another politician also denies such developments to be happening in Germany by explaining:

> Well, but that´s really... we don´t have anything to do with such big lobbyists in Germany. There we are, the German Bundestag, with our ass too far down. (...) It will go to Brussels or to America... (Interview 6)

More often the political side mentioned negative consequences concerning personal temporal aspects when talking about digital communication channels:

> Processes have become much faster, an enormous acceleration of communication. Sometimes too fast. There is too little room to weigh things up, too much pressure to react immediately to everyone involved. It may not have changed for the better. (Interview 3)

During her ethnographic fieldwork the first author of the paper noticed that, in particular, politicians who were already using social media before entering the German Bundestag made more active use of digital channels so as to demonstrate their work in parliament. They were responsible for their own social media posts and they were mostly not discouraged by the velocity. Parliamentarians whose social media posts were constructed by their employees made more comments about the temporal pressure of this new working field.

In short, it seems as if there is a discrepancy between superficial meanings and profound knowledge of the core activities of digital lobbying, dominantly on the political side. Table 3 summarises how the political side perceives the theoretical and the practical realization of lobbying and digital lobbying. The first line demonstrates

the initial but surface perception and the second line demonstrates how the examples came out to be perceived later in the interviews:

Table 3 Sentiment overview of the political side (Source: Author)

	Example lobbying	Example digital lobbying
Surface	Theoretical legitimization of lobbying as a democratic tool: positive	Theoretical knowledge of Digital Lobbying: positive
Underlaying / Core	Practical realization of lobbying as a democratic tool: negative	Practical knowledge of Digital Lobbying: negative

5.3. Role of Transparency: tool or attitude?

The statements in this category were clear: digital transformation is seen as a chance to make lobbying more transparent. The majority of the interviewees believe lobbying becomes more transparent through digital transformation. However, during the interviews, several concerns were mentioned and helped to reveal another underlying attitude. The following data extracts demonstrate the diversity of the opinions regarding transparency through digital transformation:

> ...anonymization, which also takes place through the digital transformation... (Interview 5)

> Well, I would say it is even more difficult because it is even more covert and often gives the impression that it comes from "social media" and has a "social" context. You have to be very careful here because the sources are often not clearly recognizable. (Interview 5)

> ...The digital transformation is rather a risk. In my opinion, this is to hide things because in the digital world it's possible. Sometimes I explain it by the adoption of different profiles, a variety of profiles. I don´t want to say fake profiles but that I have to do research first to analyze whether they are real and or not... (Interview 1)

There was also a more overarching explanation from the lobbying side, such as:

> I just noticed that ten years ago everyone still thought "Great, the internet and even social media democratizes everything. Access to information and knowledge. Everyone can talk to everyone, and we all get a lot more information, and then we can all form a better opinion." (...) And at the moment

> you actually get the feeling that people think "No, that doesn´t lead to a better, informed discourse it actually poisons the discourse". (Interview 13)

Looking closer into the answers and comments reveals phenomena like anonymization and fake profiles contradicting transparency. These comments countered our first impression that many interviewees had the simple assumption that just because something is posted online means that it is transparent as well. Nevertheless, only one parliamentarian actively questioned whether the digital transformation was really a chance for more transparency finalizing his thoughts with:

> In my opinion, the digital transformation is, therefore, more risk of concealing (transparency). (Interview 1)

However, politicians, employees and lobbyists agreed that it was not enough to simply publish, e.g. names of participants, meeting dates, legislation texts, etc. as it was "too much information" (Interview 13). To them, transparency should rather be an "educational aspect" (Interview 13) and *a* "higher culture of political co-determination" (Interview 10) with more profound information, especially on how the legislative process works. One employee and a lobbyist agreed that so far "it is not directly [the lobbyists´] responsibility..." (Interview 10) and asked: "...is that rather an obligation of lobbyists or politicians?" (Interview 13).

The first author´s ethnographic fieldnotes also reveal instances of the "political opportune thinking" i.e. of situations where politicians make information public when it suits their positive image. Thus, during the fieldwork she experienced transparency rather as a tool than as an attitude. Many politicians hire a social media manager in the team to support them with their social media appearance. These communication channels should suggest the public as if they "shadowed" a politician – the difference is: the parliamentarian decides what is being published and filters the images in an exclusive perfect way.

5.4. Perceptions of lobbying success

The discussion about lobbying success is strongly questioned in terms of power as it suggests to influence the legislative process. Overall, lobbying success was described as being "difficult to measure" (Interviews 8, 11, 12, 13, 15). Only one lobbyist from our sample believed their work to be measurable by saying:

> Lobbying activities focus on very concrete changes in legislation. They are either achieved or not achieved. Period. That's a given point. (Interview 14)

The answer was given by an owner of an agency arguing that one needs to justify the work to one's clients. The other two lobbyists attached less importance to success by

explaining that it is possible to succeed even if a lobbyist sometimes delivers poor work. And also, even if one delivers the best work and dedicates a lot of energy to a piece of legislation for a large period of time it might not be successful due to other indefinite factors:

> In the end, you never know what exactly a legislative change is based on. It is never understandable that it is based exactly on the arguments of interest representative XY. That´s what makes it so difficult. (...) So, one thing that is very well measurable, is the activity. But as a lobbyist, I can really do anything within the possible scope...Do the perfect job and still simply have no impact on the process – and this might be due to completely different reasons. (Interview 12)

And also:

> Then it may be a success, but it may not be my success causally. Nothing might have happened not because of me, but just because nothing happened. Imagine I am a lobbyist in the waste industry and nothing happens in the field for a year... no new regulation or anything... yes, was I successful? I think that is difficult to measure. (Interview 13)

On the political side the attention was driven towards personal trust and the "good old" way as Table 5 demonstrates:

Table 5: Code "lobbying success" examples

Example Quote	MP	Employee
Yes, uh, digital transformation is important, please don´t misunderstand, but I believe in politics it is important, very important, ***to have personal conversations, the personal appearance****, in front of voters, in front of colleagues, also in front of colleagues from other fractions. Conversations are very important, and a personal conversation can never be replaced by a digital medium.* (Interview 6)	x	
Because the problem is, with lobbying it is important that there is ***personal contact and this is virtually not possible****. Because the most important currency in politics is trust.* (Interview 4)	x	
You can exchange ten emails with a politician, but this ***will never replace one lunch****.* (Interview 9)		x

Based on the first author´s ethnographic field work, we argue that for the political side, lobbying success was often dependent upon personal conversations in contrast to digital aspects. We noticed that politicians interpreted personal meetings as an appreciation towards them. The conclusion of a personal conversation was mostly a concrete

to-do-list for the employees who also attended the meetings. These tasks were then quickly accomplished which was not necessarily done when digital requests came in. These kinds of requests were often postponed and sometimes not even taken seriously. The non-digital way seems to be more successful than new digital strategies.

At the same time, the presented quotes indicate that all of interviewees see and feel a change happening in lobbying due to digital transformations.

> Politics has absolutely changed through the digital transformation because society has changed through the digital transformation and politics mirrors society. (Interview 1)

6. DISCUSSION

The continuous developments suggest the increasing importance of lobbying as Zerfass et. al (2017) suggested. Increasing publication possibilities and resulting information flow, and more active involvement of public actors as Thimm and Einspänner (2012) explain were also highlighted by interviewees.

At the same time, a concrete meaning of digital lobbying as a practice and its potential impact were still difficult to define for most of the interviewees in the study. Thus, exerting power, as Hillebrand (2017) argues, still has to be discussed further. In the interviews for this study politicians and their employees mostly connected success and power with classic lobbying means and not with digital ones. The lobbyists, however, mentioned digital communication strategies in the targeting methods they described.

The argument of a greater democratic framework of lobbying through public involvement (Hillebrand, 2017) cannot be backed as comments only scratching the surface of society and democracy at this point. To examine the chance of a democratic framework appropriately transparency has to be discussed involving the public.

The more transparent, dialogue-oriented image of digital lobbying as described by Müller (2019) was recognized by the participants in this study in relation to the changes in digital communication, rather than in the context of digital lobbying. Einspänners (2010) argument that social media platforms are considered to lead to a stronger public presence on the transmitter side was also confirmed by the interviewees, just not in the context of digital lobbying. Even though knowledge of these practices exists by nature, they were not connected. Here, contrary to the first two aspects where communication with the political field as a whole is seen as something in transformation, lobbying that is inevitably influenced by its original form, is mostly not actively perceived in a digital context.

Digital transformation has an impact on lobbying. The following table summarizes sentiments towards the major aspects of the paper. By comparing the first positive statements - on the surface - and later rather negative comments - underlying/ core - on the political side, a massive change was identified as Table 6 summarises:

Table 6: Surface and underlaying sentiments of interviewees on interview aspects

Sentiments	Lobbying	Digital Lobbying	Influence of lobbying	Influence of digital lobbying
Surface	positive	positive	positive	negative
Underlaying / Core	negative	negative	negative	positive

The table reveals the level of bewilderment in the core understanding of digital lobbying and how the statements of the interviewees changed during the interviews. First, the practice of lobbying, digital lobbying and the influence of lobbying are confirmed and mostly seen as positive. When the interviews progressed the participants however, either neglected the practical realization of it or when still confirming it, it was through negative comments. However, the influence of digital lobbying was not confirmed in the beginning but later on actually described.

These massive differences demonstrate that the digital transformation started to shift how lobbying and its influence is perceived. It symbolizes first indications of a power shift towards digital lobbying. Therefore, we argue that classic lobbying has to empower itself to use digital tools and strategies to keep up in terms of their perceived influence.

As these first findings do not contribute to a full understanding of the field, we suggest increasing the interdisciplinary dialogue in lobbying research as an important area for future research. Focusing on digital lobbying in, e.g. data science will produce more insights. It is also important to further investigate these first findings through quantitative data analysis. Regarding limitations, more studies in Germany are needed. Studies about new actors that make use of digital means are also important to compare their approaches to classical lobbying.

Acknowledgments

The first author of the paper thanks Pille Pruulmann Vengerfeldt, Professor of Media and Communication at Malmö University, Sweden and Andra Siibak, Professor of Media Studies at University of Tartu, Estonia for the support in ethnography during the ECREA Summer School 2019 and for the valuable comments that greatly improved the manuscript.

Notes on the contributors

All authors conceived of the presented idea, discussed the results and contributed to the manuscript. OSuilleabhain, Fenton and Rademacher verified the analytical methods and supervised the findings of this work. ECREA Summer School encouraged Stürmer to investigate the double role as insider-researcher more so that Stürmer carried out the ethnographic part of the study. Stürmer wrote the manuscript with

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BLIND SPOTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT: MEDIA REPORTING ON THE NATIONAL BANK OF ROMANIA'S ANSWERS TO FINANCIAL CRISIS AFTERSHOCK

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ABSTRACT

The financial crisis started in 2008 generated aftershocks that lasted years and affected economies everywhere, among other things, leading to a deeper erosion of the public trust in central banks. This paper examines the manner Romanian online media framed, in 2016, the reaction of the National Bank of Romania to the "giving in payment" law initiated by a member of the second largest party, and one of the most visible topics involving the central bank during post-crisis period for the local audience. The study sheds light upon the way media uses different frames – focusing on conflict, economic consequences, responsibility, human-interest and ethical issues – in making sense of the crisis to their audiences. The research here concentrates on a quantitative content analysis of a corpus of 420 articles from four highest-ranked financial and general online media: zf.ro, bursa.ro, adevarul.ro, and hotnews.ro. Main findings indicate a clear prevalence of economic and conflict frames.

Keywords: media frames ▪ framing theory ▪ online media ▪ giving in payment law ▪ National Bank of Romania

1. INTRODUCTION

After more than a decade since the beginning of the financial crisis in 2008, central banks are facing a low level of public understanding and trust. By taking responsibilities that exceed their traditional mandates, the central banks became "the only game in town" (El Erian, 2016), suffered from a trust erosion (Ehrmann, Soudan & Stracca, 2012), paid the bill for a defective communication during the crisis (Blinder, 2013) or for a low level of the public's knowledge about these institutions (Ehrmann, Soudan & Stracca, 2012). Romania is one of the East-European emerging markets where

banks have not gone bankrupt after 2008, unconventional monetary policy measures were not applied at all, only prudential supervision measures. However, the National Bank of Romania (NBR) became highly visible in the media, participating in debates unrelated to the communication of its monetary policy tasks, extending to the banking industry regulation and supervision. During post-crisis, as result of a growing transparency and a descending trend in public trust (INSCOP Research, 2016; INSCOP Research, 2019), NBR broadened further its communication practices.

The study at hand describes the way Romanian online media reported, in 2016, about the "giving in payment" law, one of the most visible topics that engaged NBR in public debates. Using the model of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), the analysis reveals how the financial and general online media used conflict, economic consequences, responsibility, human interest and moral frames, when covering the NBR official statements and actions related to changing law. The research is anchored in media framing theory, which provides an extensive discussion on how media frames can affect and shape public opinion, on how media can influence individual interpretation by magnifying the importance of a particular topic's features, and on the manner their audiences perceive reality regarding various topics through accessibility and interpretation schemas (e.g., Cohen, 1963; Gitlin, 1980; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; McCombs and Shaw 1993; Shah, Domke & Wackman, 1996; Iyengar, 1991; McCombs, 2002; de Vreese, 2002; de Vreese, 2005; McLeod & Shah, 2015 etc.). Framing theory leaves room for the assumption that the way the media frame the public statements of central banks could have had a major impact on the audience's trust in these institutions as well. The results of this study could be used as starting point to analyze the possible transition frames from media to the general public.

2. FRAMING, PUBLIC OPINION AND NEWS PRACTICES

2.1. Framing paradigm

Over the last four decades, the concept of "frames" has been defined in many ways and research on the effects of framing has been anchored to distinct theoretical assertions. Defining the original idea, the sociologist Erving Goffman explained frames as "schemata of interpretation" that render "what would otherwise be a meaningless aspect of the scene into something that is meaningful" and "allows its user to locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its terms" (Goffman, 1974, p. 21). Building on this perspective, researchers have focused on frames as interpretation schemas originated in culture and society, which are linked to individual consciousness, using "framing" to describe "the power of a communicating text" (Entman, 1993, p. 51). Todd Gitlin (1980) sees frames organizing the world equally for journalists and for the readers. Robert Entman underlines *selection* and *salience* as the main actions that "promote a particular problem definition,

causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman, 1993, p. 52). When referring to the frames applied by the journalists, Van Gorp (2007, p. 64) introduces frame package – "a cluster of logical organized devices that function as an identity kit for a frame", leading to the next level the term media package launched by Gamson and Modigliani (1989), and conceived with an internal structure built around an organizing idea or frame.

Scheufele & Iyengar (2011) underline two main traditions in the framing research foundation. A psychological approach - labeled as "equivalence framing" – argues that "framing refers to differential modes of presentation for the exact same piece of information" (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2011, p. 5). A sociological tradition defines framing "as information that conveys differing perspectives on some event or issue", and "this tradition can also be labeled 'emphasis' framing, since the observed framing effects represent differences in opinion that cannot be attributed exclusively to differences in presentation" (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2011, pp. 6–7). Current paper will make use of "emphasis" framing.

2.2. Framing and public opinion

There is an extensive literature on how media frames could influence public opinion. Nisbet (2010, p. 47), for instance, consider that "media frames work by connecting the mental dots for the public. They suggest a connection between two concepts, issues, or things, such that after exposure to the framed message, audiences accept or are at least aware of the connection". Framing research is often set in agenda setting structure. As Cacciatore, Scheufele and Iyengar (2016, p. 11) emphasize, "framing has been said to overlap with or, in some cases, be subsumed by theories like priming and agenda-setting". Some researchers include agenda setting, priming and framing under the same theoretical "umbrella" (e.g., Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; McCombs, 2002).

Other researchers see framing and agenda setting as distinct theories (e.g., Domke, Shah & Wackman, 1998; Price, Tewksbury & Powers, 1997). Priming is seen as a result of agenda setting, while framing corresponds to the second level of agenda setting. Price, Tewksbury & Powers (1997, p. 486) use, for instance, "applicability effects" when describing framing, "but once activated, ideas and feelings retain some residual activation potential, making them more likely to be activated and used in making subsequent evaluations – these are called "accessibility effects". Scheufele & Iyengar (2011) consider agenda setting and priming - as the logical extension of agenda setting -, as accessibility-based effects. "An issue can be primed or made salient among mass audiences, even if they have never heard about it before", while "applicability models, in contrast, assume that effects, such as framing, are contingent or at least variant in strength, depending on an audience member's pre-existing schema(s)" (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2011, pp. 13–14).

Regardless of these differences, most of the researchers indicate that media frames can influence audience frames (e.g., Scheufele, 1999). Dietram Scheufele

(1999) develops a process model of framing, taking into consideration four processes: frame building, frame-setting, individual level effects of framing and a link between individual frames and media frames. Other researchers show that framing can have limited impact on individuals, especially when they are exposed to "competitive frames of varying quantities and strengths" (e.g., Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 104). This research is based on framing as a factor influencing public opinion.

2.3. Framing and journalistic practice

Journalists have a significant role in constructing the news as they professionally value some narrative elements over others. Journalism research has identified several values that shape the news. In their classic study, Galtung and Ruge (1965) identified twelve factors and their dynamic combinations in shaping the news output. Shoemaker and Reese (2014) consider that news values become predictable and influence what receptors would find interesting. They formulate six news values: prominence and importance, conflict and controversy, the unusual, human interest, timeliness, and proximity. Contemporary news values, as identified by Harcup and O'Neill (2017), are exclusivity, bad news, conflict, surprise, audio-visuals, shareability, entertainment, drama, follow-up, the power elite, relevance, magnitude, celebrity, good news, and news organization's agenda.

2.4. Framing the financial crisis

In media studies, framing was primarily used to understand the role media play in the political life. However, researchers extended it and applied it to financial crisis started in 2008 (e.g., Damstra & Vliegenthart, 2018; Falasca, 2014; Bach, Weber & Quiring, 2013; Mylonas, 2012; Radu, 2012; López & Llopis, 2010; Fuchs & Graf, 2010; etc.). Damstra and Vliegenthart (2018) investigate how print media framed the crisis in the Netherlands and identify five major frames: business, financial, individual, Euro-zone and moral system frame. Falasca's (2014, p. 12) work from Sweden shows that "two major governmental frames emerged, the bank crisis frame in the second phase and the crisis of economic growth frame in the third phase emphasising the financial rather than the political dimension of the crisis". Analyzing the coverage of German newspapers at the onset of the financial crisis, Bach, Weber & Quiring (2013) point to several frames: complexity-risk frame, globalization, solidarity, greed, regulation, self-regulation, systemic-threat, and moral-hazard frame.

3. CENTRAL BANKS COMMUNICATION

3.1. Transparency and trust, decisive for central bank in(ter)dependence

Since 2008, as the crisis driven communication efforts increased, the central banks'

reputation began to stumble, on the background of a "global trust crisis" (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2017). The results of the Edelman Trust Barometer (2017, data collected in 2016) disclose the largest-ever drop in trust across the government institutions, business, media and NGOs and a 15 points gap between the trust held by the informed public and that of the mass population[1].

Central banks are, along with finance ministries, regulators, and departments, at the top of the (Adapted) Trust Pyramid for Retail Financial Markets adjusted by Bourne (2011) when analyzing trust production during turbulent times. Bourne (Ibid., p. 6) explains that "national central banks sit at the apex of this financial trust pyramid, providing guarantees to money and sustaining the trustworthiness of banks and financial companies at lower levels". Owens (2012, p. 142) analyzes the shifts in Americans's confidence in financial institutions, banks, Wall-Street and the public perceptions of the ethical and moral practices of their leaders and notes that "it is the economic contractions that correspond to major scandals in the financial sector that motivate the largest shifts in confidence and provoke the most public outrage".

Mervin King (2016), former governor of the Bank of England (2003–2013), explains what caused the reputation damage of these institutions:

> Central banks were seen as heroes for delivering the decade of the Great Stability and for preventing a relapse into a second Great Depression after 2008. They were seen as villains for having failed to rein in the excess of the banking system in the first place and then for creating money on a massive scale. (King, 2016, p. 162)

Mario Draghi (2014), former governor of the European Central Bank (ECB) (2011–2019), has highlighted the role of communication as one of the monetary policy tools due to its major impact on financial markets, and, therefore, on people's savings. Communication is instrumental for transparency, accountability and credibility, which, in turn, are crucial for public support and central banks independence. As a side note, anthropologist Annelise Riles (2018) argues that, since central bankers' decisions, choices and networks of personal relations intertwine with the political process, central banks should not be viewed so much as independent, but rather as interdependent institutions within the economic and political spheres.

3.2. Communication as a monetary policy tool

Over the last decades, most central banks worldwide followed the course towards an intensive communication activity, descending from their ivory towers and even

1 According to Edelman Trust Barometer (2017), the informed public must meet four criteria: age 25–64; college educated, in top 25 % of household income per age group in each country; report significant media consumption and engagement in business news, while mass population is defined by all population not including informed public

in the online Agora (Haldane, 2017; Shin, 2017; Bjelobaba, Savic & Stefanovic, 2017; Vardy, 2015). The major switch from secrecy to transparency originates in the strategy of targeting inflation. This policy was adopted first by the central banks in New Zealand, Canada and the United States of America thirty years ago and used nowadays by other central banks worldwide (e.g., Vega & Winkelried, 2005). Such strategy of fixing an annual inflation target includes recurring announcements to the public (press releases, press conferences, publications of minutes, periodical reports).

Woodford (2005, p. 4) shows that "the public's understanding, not only of what the central bank is currently doing, but of what it can be expected to do in the future, is critical for the effectiveness of policy". Indeed a transparency index, using the available data for 100 countries, until 2010, demonstrates that central banks independence and transparency significantly affect variability of inflation (Dincer & Eichengreen, 2014). Nevertheless, there is no consensus yet regarding the effects of an increased transparency. Many researchers (Kool & Thornton, 2015; Kool, C., Middeldorp, M., & Rosenkranz, S., 2011; Mishkin, 2004; Morris & Shin, 2002) share the idea that increased transparency does not necessarily increase the effectiveness of a monetary policy, and that central banks should also pay attention to the possible adverse effects of transparency.

3.3. A second communication revolution

Following the financial crisis in 2008, central banks faced new communication challenges, such as the deflation risk, lower bound of nominal interest rates and uncertainty about the economic perspectives (Cournède & Minegishi, 2009). Central banks seemed to communicate even more actively when stepping on this uncertain terrain. A survey showed that 90 percent of the academics and more than 80 percent of the governors stated that communication intensified compared to the pre-crisis period (Blinder et al., 2016). Central banks also began applying negative interest rates and started or intensified the practice of forward guidance, to communicate to the public about the future monetary policy decisions. Even though the usefulness of the unconventional measures is not fully proven yet, it is anticipated that some of them will remain (such as forward guidance), and that central banks will continue to intensify their communication activity (Blinder et al., 2016).

The trust crisis emerged after 2008 revealed another communication vulnerability of the entire financial sector, a "Great Divide between the views of financial insiders and outsiders (...), between the echo chamber of the elites and the voting chamber of wider society" (Haldane, 2016, pp. 2–3). In the case of the National Bank of Romania, the loss of trust didn't occur right after the crisis started worldwide, but the trend points down. In March 2016, for 44.2 percent of the Romanians, the trust level in NBR was high and very high as compared to 51.3 percent in December 2014 (INSCOP Research, 2016) and the level has not recovered since. Only 35.6 percent of the Romanians still have a high and very high trust in their central bank (INSCOP Research, 2019).

The process of transforming communication into a monetary policy tool, started thirty years ago, requires a follow-up. Researchers and central bankers ask for a second communication revolution, this time based on engaging with the public at large (e.g., Haldane, 2018; Riles, 2018). Despite the increasing relevance of this audience category and the extended communication activity of the central banks, the way these institutions reach non-experts and the way media could influence their perception remains one of the least studied topics in the academic literature. This paper aims to identify the prevalence of the media frames used by the Romanian online media. The data on how the NBR's messages were made visible and framed during turbulent times could be of importance, as media remain the main information source about the central bank for the general public and can influence its opinion.

4. ROMANIAN CONTEXT

The Romanian banking system didn't need to be saved with public money during the 2008 financial crisis but experienced several negative effects due to the difficult context. NBR was in the public spotlight during debates unrelated to the communication of its monetary policy tasks but which drew the attention of wider audiences due to their importance. For example, the Romanian central bank officially took stand regarding the changes to the Tax Code (2014); the Swiss franc loans crisis (2015-2016); the Greek-owned banks crisis (2015); the changes to the law of mortgage lending (giving in payment law, freezing of the Swiss franc/CHF – Romanian leu/RON exchange rate, 2015–2017), the NBR's role management of foreign reserves, particularly of the gold reserve (2018); market mechanisms (depreciation of the RON, and the rise in interbank market rates – ROBOR, 2017–2018); the taxation of the banking sector (2018); the cap on indebtedness (2018). More communication was required from the NBR who experienced an ascending transparency trend and, at the same time, a descending trend in public trust.

In Romania were 474,420 individuals with mortgage-backed loans in 2015, and the loan stock amounted to RON 77.27 billion (over EUR 17 billion), according to the NBR's data (National Bank of Romania, 2015). Most borrowers (316,941 individuals) contracted foreign currency-denominated mortgage loans, their stock amounting to RON 53.89 billion. Borrowers with Swiss francs denominated loans account for 10 percent of total borrowers with foreign currency-denominated loans. At the same time, the national currency depreciation against the euro, Swiss franc and the US dollar set the ground for the "giving in payment" law initiated by the National Liberal Party. The giving-in-payment law stated that a debtor with a mortgage loan of up to EUR 250,000 nominal value can terminate the loan agreement by transferring to the creditor the collateral without paying any other potential difference in cash (Law no. 77/2016).

5. METHODOLOGY

This research focuses on a frame analysis of a corpus of 420 articles published in 2016. The sample comes from two main online financial newspapers in Romania (*bursa.ro*, 133 articles, and *zf.ro*, 139 articles), one online quality newspaper in Romania (*adevarul.ro*, 59 articles); and from the Romanian economic news portal *hotnews.ro* (89 articles). According to Reuters Institute (2019, p. 104), the financial print title Ziarul Financiar (with the online version *zf.ro*), which has existed for 21 years, is the second most trusted media brand in Romania. The economic news portal *hotnews.ro* (exclusively online) is ranked 6th, and the generalist news portal *adevarul.ro* (the online version of a printed publication with 131 years of tradition in Romania) is ranked 7th. *bursa.ro* is the online version of the financial newspaper Bursa print title, which celebrated its 29th anniversary in 2019.

The analysis assesses all the articles returned by the two main keywords: "giving in payment law" and "National Bank of Romania" when searching on the four online platforms. The selected time frame (January 1 – December 31, 2016) includes important events for the case study, such as the amendments proposals sent to the Parliament, a European Commission report on Romania, a Swiss francs debtors march, Romania's Senate vote on giving in payment law (February 2016), various press conferences and public debates organized by lawyers, journalists, bankers, academia, and by the central bank and debate in Chamber of Deputies (March 2016). It also includes the official warning from the central bank about risks on economic stability, the adoption by the Parliament and the publication of the law (April 2016), news about giving in payment law coming into force (May 2016), negative reactions against the law addressed to the Romanian Government by the commercial banks (August 2016), the second Swiss francs debtors march (September 2016), the decision of the Constitutional Court regarding the implementation rules (October 2016); and a new warning from the NBR (December 2016). The framing analysis consists in a deductive approach, using a grid that quantifies the economic consequences[2], responsibility[3], conflict, moral[4]

2 The economic frame "reports an event, problem or issue in terms of the consequences it will have economically on an individual, group, institution, region or country" (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000, p. 96) and it was assessed by answering three questions: "Does the article mention financial consequences (losses or gains) for other institutions/companies/consumer groups generated by the NBR previous actions/decisions?"; "Does the article mention expenses/costs for consumers/institutions/companies?"; "Does the article refer to economic consequences due to NBR action/decision/inaction?"

3 "The responsibility frame presents an issue or problem in such a way as to attribute responsibility for its cause or solution either the government or to an individual or group" (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 96) and it was assessed by using four questions: "Does the article attributes the responsibility for this issue/situation/problem to NBR?"; "Does the article suggest that the NBR can alleviate the situation/problem of consumers/institutions/companies?"; "Does the article suggest solutions to solve the situation/problem?"; "Does the article suggest that the problem requires urgent action from the NBR?"

4 "The morality frame places the reported event in a religious or moralizing perspective" (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 96) and the questions used where: "Does the article contain any moral message?"; "Does the article refer to morality, God, and other religious tenets?"; "Does the article offer specific social prescriptions about how the NBR representatives should behave?"

and human-interest[5] frames according to the criteria developed by Semetko & Valkenburg (2000) when investigating the reporting of political themes by the Dutch news media and adapted to the topic. The current analysis uses a total of 19 questions grouped in sets of 3 to 5 questions, coded as "1" for "Yes" and "0" for "No", where "Yes" means the frame is present in the news item, in the particular dimension reflected by each question. The intensity of the frame was computed as the mean of the values of all items in one frame. For example, adapting Semetko & Valkenburg (2000, p. 100) series of questions to which the coder had to answer Yes (1) or No (0), the questions used in this analysis in order to assess the conflict[6] frame are the following:

- Does the article reflect disagreement/conflicts between the NBR and other institutions, companies, consumer groups, lawyers, etc. related to the giving in payment debates?
- Does the article present specific reproaches directly targeted to the NBR from other involved parties in the debate (such as other institutions, companies, consumer groups, lawyers, etc.)?
- Does the article include both perspectives or all the aspects of the situation/problem?
- Does the article refer to winners and losers?

The research questions guiding the media frames analysis are:

- RQ1: How do the Romanian online media framed the "giving in payment" law in 2016?
- RQ2: How do the Romanian online media differ in their use of those frames?

6. FINDINGS

The analysis focuses on mean values of identified frames because they measure the intensity of each frame. The results indicate a clear prevalence of economic frame and conflict frame over the human-interest and moral frames. The main frame used was the economic one, which registered a total mean of 0.35. The conflict frame reached a mean of 0.29, while the moral frame reached the mean of 0.06 (Table 1).

5 The human-interest frame "brings a human face or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue or problem" (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 95) and it was assessed by using these questions: "Does the article emphasize if consumers/institutions/companies are affected by this situation?"; "Does the article provide case studies or a 'human face' on the issue?"; "Does the article make use of adjectives, metaphors etc. that can generate feelings of outrage, empathy, sympathy, or compassion for those affected by the situation?"; "Does the article go into the private lives of the people affected by the situation?"; "Does the article contain visual information that might generate feelings of outrage, empathy, sympathy, or compassion for those affected by the situation?"

6 The conflict frame "emphasizes conflict between individuals, groups, or institutions as means of capturing audience interest" (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 95)

Table 1: Intensity of frames by Romanian online media for news stories about the NBR' official statements and actions regarding the "giving in payment" law

Media frames		Giving in payment law (2016)				
		Economic frame	Conflict frame	Responsibility frame	Human interest frame	Moral frame
bursa.ro	Mean	**0.39**	**0.40**	**0.20**	**0.15**	**0.10**
	N	133	133	133	133	133
	Std. Deviation	0.30	0.36	0.27	0.21	0.19
zf.ro	Mean	**0.34**	**0.22**	**0.08**	**0.02**	**0.01**
	N	139	139	139	139	139
	Std. Deviation	0.16	0.28	0.16	0.09	0.06
hotnews.ro	Mean	**0.34**	**0.21**	**0.07**	**0.06**	**0.06**
	N	89	89	89	89	89
	Std. Deviation	0.15	0.27	0.19	0.16	0.19
adevarul.ro	Mean	**0.30**	**0.33**	**0.02**	**0.05**	**0.09**
	N	59	59	59	59	59
	Std. Deviation	0.11	0.32	0.11	0.16	0.20
Total	Mean	**0.35**	**0.29**	**0.11**	**0.07**	**0.06**
	N	420	420	420	420	420
	Std. Deviation	0.21	0.32	0.21	0.17	0.16

The quantitative analysis of the frames indicates a clear difference between the two financial online portals assessed. The main intense frame used by *bursa.ro* was the conflict frame, which registered the highest mean among all the publications (0.40). However, the economic came second, at an insignificant distance (0.39). At the same time, *zf.ro* focused more on the economic consequences (mean 0.34), and the conflict frame followed at distance (0.22). The amount of coverage was the same, but the two most relevant financial websites in Romania framed the conflict frame differently. This speaks against the expectation that all financial news report on the economic aspects more than the general newspapers, due to the economic specificity of the topic. In fact, the conflict frame, which placed the NBR in a difficult spot during the debates, was reflected even more intensely in the financial *bursa.ro* than in the generic portal *adevarul.ro*. Striking differences can be noticed between the responsibility, human interest and moral frames as well when comparing *bursa.ro* intensity of frames to the other three online websites. Thus, the Romanian public had access to various perspectives and interpretations of this topic.

The popularity of the frames (Figure 1) reveals similarities between the four online media: the economic consequences and conflict were the most popular frames in either financial, economic or general media. The appearance of the responsibility frame comes third for financial media only, while in economic and general media the most popular were human interest frame (*hotnews.ro*), and moral frame (*adevarul.ro*).

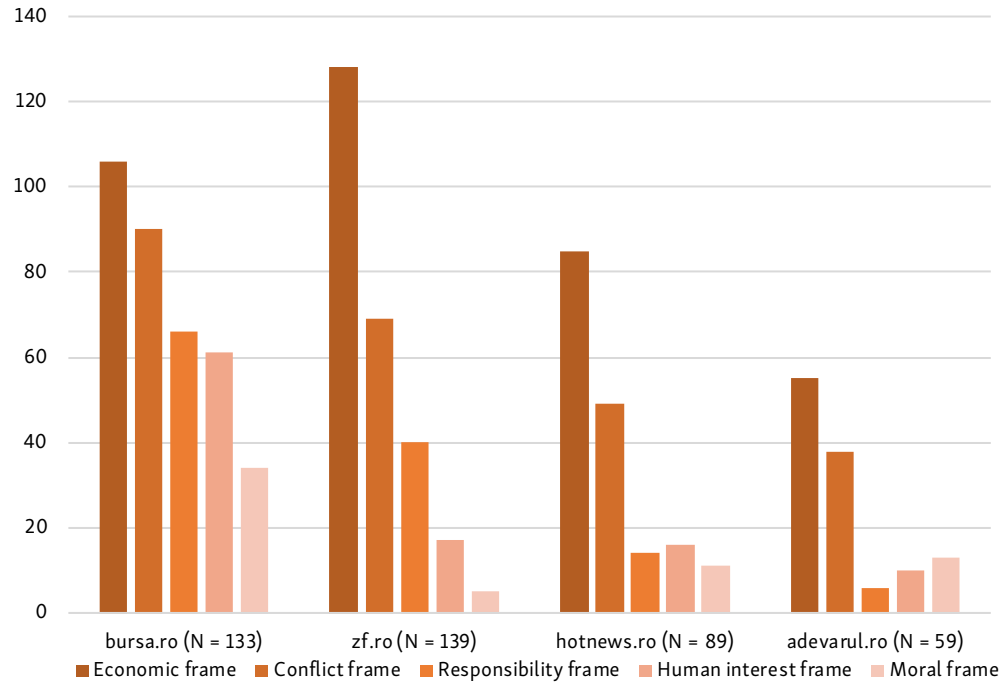

Figure 1: Frame presence by online media (N = 420)

During the analyzed period, the economic frame was the most visible, a result easy to anticipate given the economic impact of the law analyzed by various studies (e.g., Morosan & Scurtu, 2019; Petrescu & Stan, 2017; Badiu & Niță, 2016). This result could be explained by the fact that the economic consequences were the most common arguments invoked by both the promoters and the opponents of the law. The frame registered the highest values in relation to financial losses for debtors, for the banking sector and other businesses, as the law's promoters and the NBR made different official evaluations:

> The "Giving in payment" law is not only for the tens of thousands desperate people whom the NBR and the banking lobby despise, but also for the future debtors. The increase of the interest rate in the next period will also lead to rise of the non-performance rate in the First Home program", stated lawyer Gheorghe Piperea. (zf.ro, February 28, 2016)

> Upon the NBR request, the European Central Bank sent an opinion regarding the giving in payment law, in which it warned that this would jeopardize the legal certainty, that it may generate problems regarding the payment discipline, but it may also affect the confidence of the foreign investors and the stability of the banking system. (adevarul.ro, January 7, 2016)

Some articles also pointed to the general economic consequences, which would have been favored by the central bank itself:

> It seems that the center of the European Union has thrown its garbage on the shoulders of the citizens living at the outskirts, and our central bank seems to be doing everything to keep the situation under control, with the help of the European Union, and above our Parliament. (bursa.ro, March 15, 2016).

The focus on the economic consequences confirms the results of the researchers analyzing how the financial crisis was framed (e.g., Damstra & Vliegenthart, 2018; Falasca, 2014; Mylonas, 2012).

Three kinds of conflicts were identified. The main conflict frame is between the commercial banks and the NBR on one hand, and the debtors and law's promoters on the other. Two other secondary divergences emerged during the evaluated period: one between the central bank and the credit institutions and another – between the NBR and the Government.

Media constantly framed the NBR as the defender of commercial banks against the initiators of the law and against the debtors, issuing recurrent accusations:

> The giving in payment law (...) has produced a real war between the banking system (including the NBR), on one hand, and the initiators of the law and consumers, on the other. (bursa.ro, January 5, 2016).

> On the field it looks like there are two football teams fighting: one that has 11 superstars, but is completely disconnected and annoyed by opponents' assertiveness, and the other with semi-amateurs who play the game of their lives. And the public is definitely cheering for the amateurs (...) In this disproportionate conflict with the promoters of the law, the banking sector is clearly still suffering - and this is due to the bad image that the banks have. They should do something about this, not other matters. Maybe hire a PR professional. (hotnews.ro, March 8, 2016).

The media used terms from the semantic area of conflicts, such as "war", "battle", "attack", and the most frequently used word was "conflict" itself (20 times in *bursa.ro*; 10 times in *zf.ro*; 7 times in *hotnews.ro* and 1 time in *adevarul.ro*). During the debates, the NBR Governor Mugur Isărescu and other NBR representatives repeatedly explained the role of the central bank (I have to say this very clearly, so that all Romanians hear me out: NBR is not the lawyer of any bank. NBR is protective and it protects Romanians' money. - *hotnews.ro, March 7, 2016*) and even pointed to the credit institutions (He mentioned that banks and the Romanian Association of Banks have a big part of the blame because they totally forgot which are the basics of the

banking activity. - *zf.ro, February 25, 2016*). The absence of the credit institutions from the debate was condemned by other financial industry representatives:

> The bankers hid behind the National Bank of Romania, hoping that the degree of confidence enjoyed by the NBR will be enough to turn the debates in their favor. However, during the Swiss franc crisis and the credit loan crisis, the confidence in the NBR diminished. (zf.ro, February 8, 2016)

The intensity of conflict frame shows once more a resemblance between the financial *bursa.ro* and the generalist *adevarul.ro*, as on both portals this frame ranks first.

In the NBR representatives' opinion, the "bank defender" tag attached in 2016 might have two explanations: the NBR interfered too loudly and repeatedly during the debates, and the commercial banks lacked an appropriate reaction (Iacob, 2018).

According to Capella & Jamieson (1997), the conflict frame is most commonly used in political news, during elections. Considering the eroded confidence in central banks, a question raised by these authors can broaden horizons for future studies on effects of the frame building process in relation to economic news and institutional actors:

> Is the public's lack of confidence in institutions justified? If leaders are motivated solely or even primarily by self-interest and if an inherent conflict exists between their self-interest and the public good, then press reports of self-interested political action are not cynical but realistic, and the rising public lack of confidence in its leaders and institutions is a repudiation of Pollyannaism. This conclusion seems supported by the finding that cynicism may be grounded in experience with those who are more active and more informed — more cynical. (Capella & Jamieson, 1997, pp. 19–20)

The findings are in line with previous researches pointing to *conflict and controversy* ranked second in the news values (Shoemaker and Reese, 2014) or to *bad news* listed by researchers Harcup and O'Neill (2017, p. 1471) on the inventory of the requirements the news stories must meet, and defined as "stories with particularly negative overtones, such as conflict or tragedy".

All the financial and economic portals ranked similarly the responsibility frame on the third place while general *adevarul.ro* placed it on the last position. The central bank and credit institutions were held accountable by the law's promoters for the financial losses of indebted Romanians and, at the same time, criticized for not supporting the law and urged them to find solutions. In their opinion, the regulator relaxed the lending conditions and the credit institutions lured the population with low interest rates. At the same time, the commercial banks were accused for excessively promoting their new financial products in Swiss francs and the credit officers were made accountable for not clearly exposing the risks of financial products backed by this currency. The responsibility frame pointed prominently to possible

solutions to the given situation and to several blind spots to the NBR both prior and during the financial crisis:

> Some members of the Parliament addressed several questions to the NBR as follows: "What was the NBR's position when those loans were granted, and the real estate assets were evaluated by the commercial banks? Why didn't the NBR interfere when loans in foreign currencies suffered following the exchange rate? I suppose that there are working (n.a. within the NBR) well-paid professionals able to predict what's going to happen on the foreign exchange market. Nowadays, commercial banks are trying to cover up the mistake of evaluating assets ignoring the reality, without leaving their offices. The NBR should have intervened back then. (bursa.ro, March 21, 2016).

The human-interest frame registered lower values compared to other frames and was ranked on the fourth position by all the publications. Even though the human-interest frame is frequently used in social news, this analysis surprisingly reveals that the highest intensity (mean 0.15) among all the online media was reached by the financial *bursa.ro*.

The journalists gave a human face to their stories and exposed case studies of indebted individuals organized in associations or groups which attended public debates of the law and took the streets several times in 2016, marching against the banking sector and the central bank:

> The NBR cannot and does not have the right to legitimize the abuses, it cannot stand up for those who are guilty for the drama of the Romanians' who wanted to own a three-room apartment and ended up committing suicide because of the situation prompted by the financial crisis, the abusive clauses in the contracts, and the exotic currency loans granted by the commercial banks, in their attempt to lure the customers, but without explaining them the tremendous risks to which they were exposed. (bursa.ro, March 15, 2016).

> The protesters left a funeral wreath on the front door stairs and lit candles at the NBR main building. (adevarul.ro, September 25, 2016).

Some of the news in human-interest frame revealed even the loss of human lives:

> There were 32 people who committed suicide because of the banks (...) But to those who committed suicide, who gives them something in return?. (hotnews.ro, February 17, 2016).

The results are consistent with Shoemaker and Reese's (2014, p. 171) emphasis on prominence and importance as key news values: "The importance of an event is measured in its impact; how many lives it affects. Fatalities are more important than property damage. Actions of the powerful are newsworthy, because they have more ability to affect the general public". The influence of the recession on mental health and suicidal ideation was investigated by several researchers (e.g., Alicandro, Malvezzi, Gallus, La Vecchia, Negri, & Bertuccio, 2019; Economou, Madianos, Peppou, Theleritis, Patelakis & Stefanis, 2013).

Within the moral frame, the least present in the coverage, media mainly covered the official statements made by the promoters of the law and their recurrent "labels" attached to the NBR ("blackmail", "lies", "manipulation", "lobby"):

> The promotor of the law, Daniel Zamfir, member of the National Liberal Party (n.a. at that time), said that, during the legislative procedure, the banks and the NBR carried out a real manipulation campaign. (bursa.ro, April 13, 2016).

> Let's make clear the mafias we are working with" said Anghel (n.a. Cristiana Anghel, senator) suggesting that behind every parliamentarian who tries to assume an NBR amendment lies the banking lobby. (hotnews.ro, February 17, 2016).

The moral frame was also identified by researchers who analyzed how the financial crisis was framed - see, for example, greed frame (Bach, Weber & Quiring, 2013) or moral frame (Damstra & Vliegenthart, 2018).

Even though the ranking of the moral frame is the same for *bursa.ro*, *zf.ro* and *hotnews.ro*, the frame reached a mean of 0.10 in *bursa.ro*, a mean of 0.06 in *hotnews.ro*, while in *zf.ro* had the lowest mean of 0.01. The intensity of the frame signals a resemblance between the financial *bursa.ro* and the generalist *adevarul.ro*.

7. CONCLUSIONS

In 2016, the Romanian online media covered the "giving in payment" law with a relatively similar combination of the five frames under the scrutiny: conflict, economic consequences, responsibility, human interest and moral frames. The dominance of the economic consequences and conflict frames reveals a resemblance between the four online media, as these frames were the most popular in either financial, economic or general media. The economic frame was the most visible, a result easy to anticipate given the economic impact of the law and the fact that the economic consequences were the most common arguments invoked *both* by the promoters of the law and by its opponents. The popularity of the responsibility frame comes third for financial media only, while in economic and general media the third most

popular was the human-interest frame (*hotnews.ro*), respectively, the moral frame *(adevarul.ro)*.

The analysis of the intensity of frames indicates a clear difference between the two financial online portals assessed, *zf.ro* and *bursa.ro*. Even though the amount of coverage was the same, the fact that the two most relevant financial websites in Romania framed differently the conflict frame ruled out the expectation that all the financial news outlets report more on economic issues than general newspapers, due to the economic specificity of the topic. In fact, the conflict frame, which placed the central bank in a very difficult position during the debates, was reflected even more intensely by the financial *bursa.ro* rather than by the generic portal *adevarul.ro*.

Even though the human-interest frame is frequently used in social news, this analysis reveals another unexpected result: this frame was ranked fourth on all the online media and the highest intensity was reached by the financial *bursa.ro*. For the financial and economic online media, the moral frame was the rarest and the least intense, while in the generic *adevarul.ro* came third. The moral frame usage showed again the differences between the two financial media, as the maximum value was identified in the financial *bursa.ro*, while the other outlet, *zf.ro*, is at the other end. The differences in how the frames were used between the financial online media could suggest the existence of a possible breakage within this media segment and opens a path for questioning, on the one hand what influenced in each case the frame building process and, on the other hand what in particular differentiates the readerships profiles of the two main financial outlets.

A critical limitation of the deductive approach applied in this study could be the fact that the five frames used were set beforehand. Secondly, the research focuses exclusively on media frames, and, for the big picture, a link to the frames used by the audiences in interpreting media texts could be revealing. A third potential weak spot of this research might be that it builds on manual analysis, and a computer-assisted method could cover a larger number of articles and eliminate completely the subjectivity lens.

Starting from the results in this study, there is room for analyzing the possible transition frames from media to the general public, the links between news coverage and its effects upon readers. At the same time, future research could focus on how the individual media outlets influence each other and differentiate from each other in their interpretation of the giving in payment topic. This research could be complemented also by in-depth interviews with journalists who covered the giving in payment topic as social actors, a radiography of their positions determined by economic, social and cultural capital. Finally, this research and future findings could contribute in revealing some of the blind spots of the central bank in relation to its target audiences.

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STRATEGIES OF MIDDLE-CLASS DISTINCTION AND THE PRODUCTION OF INEQUALITY IN FOOD MEDIA TEXTS: GOOD FOOD AND WORTHY FOOD CULTURE IN MAINSTREAM BROADSHEET JOURNALISM

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ABSTRACT

This article examines discourses connected to distinction and the middle class in the journalistic context of organic and local food. The analysis investigates how good food and worthy food culture are understood in the Finnish newspaper Helsingin Sanomat. Through discourse analysis, the article asks how economic or cultural privilege is made visible or invisible in the texts, and do these strategies utilize middle-class ideals in legitimizing hegemonic food culture.

This article focuses on a) discursive strategies employed in upholding class-related inequality and b) the aesthetics through which middle-class culture is portrayed as legitimate. The analysis introduces four discourses present in the data: Reassurance of equality, Cultural strategies of distinction, Authenticity, and Nostalgia. The article concludes that these discourses secure the hegemony of contemporary middle-class food culture that relies on depoliticized understandings of food practices as being merely manifestations of individual lifestyle in contrast with relating to cultural or economic resources.

Keywords: Journalism ▪ Middle class ▪ Taste ▪ Distinction ▪ Discourse analysis ▪ Food ▪ Ethical eating

1. INTRODUCTION

Food is a convenient cultural field when it comes to *distinction*: to stay alive we all need to eat and to eat we need to consume and so, through food consumption, the values that unite us with culturally like-minded people and simultaneously separate us from others are visible in our daily practices. In addition, in the contemporary

culture where conspicuous consumption is quickly becoming unfashionable, through food consumption – that is performed out of necessity compared with purchasing jewellery, for example – we can exhibit our unique identities, make distinctions and simultaneously reject any moral suspicion relating to reckless consumption. Food media yields considerable power in bestowing symbolic capital and in distinguishing particular foods as worthy food choices. The cultural struggle over food is widely fought in the public discourses of journalism.

This article examines the discourses connected to taste, distinction, and the middle class in the journalistic context of organic and local food. The analysis delves into hegemonic and 'classed' evaluations of what constitutes legitimate food culture, and aims to map the ways in which good food and worthy food culture are discursively produced in Finnish mainstream journalism: how meaning-making regarding food is connected with social class and what kind of aesthetics are deployed in depicting certain foods or food practices as legitimate. The article approaches journalistic food texts by focusing on the themes of, firstly, the discursive strategies employed in upholding class-related inequality and secondly, the aesthetic characteristics through which middle-class culture is portrayed as legitimate. The article asks the following: How is economic or cultural privilege made visible or invisible in the texts? Do these discursive strategies utilize middle-class framings or aesthetics in legitimizing hegemonic food culture?

In the context of Finnish society, only few studies have focused on mediated meanings of food (see Väliverronen, 2007; Jauho, 2013), and food media's relation to legitimate taste or class cultures has received very little scholarly attention. This article aims to fill this gap and bring new insights into the existing international research on classed discourses of contemporary foodsphere as well. According to Johnston and Baumann, the study of food culture can help us better understand the complexity of inequality, and how it is socially reproduced through mundane, everyday practices (2015, p. viii). In the public sphere of journalism and other media, these everyday practices become a crucial part of lifestyle politics that affect the nature of our social identities and citizenship. In a mediated culture saturated with food talk, central questions of today's society can be examined through tracking the discourses and the taken-for-granted ideologies produced in food media texts (van der Meulen & Wiesel, 2017, p. 22) – the discourses connected with food function as windows to social and cultural hierarchies.

2. JOURNALISM, THE MIDDLE CLASS AND ETHICAL FOOD DISCOURSE

Food pages have been a part of newspapers for over hundred years (Voss, 2014, p. 1), both as helping hands for cooking mothers and as investigative reports looking into food scams. Food journalism has transformed itself into a valued part of the newspaper with sophisticated stories and critical exposés (Brown, 2004, p. 50). For the most part, food journalism falls into the category of *lifestyle journalism*, which serves the

public by providing judgements of taste and by arbitrating "taste cultures", spotting culinary trends and identifying particular foods as worthy food choices (Fürsich, 2013, p. 12; Johnston & Baumann, 2007, p. 170). Food media frames also dictates what the environments of food consumption should be, how they should operate, and for whom they exist (Johnston & Goodman, 2015, p. 209). The analysis of food media texts pays attention to both the culinary lifestyles and legitimate aesthetics of contemporary food culture as well as the distinctions that are based on (mostly class-, gender-, and race-related) cultural and social power.

The study of class investigates the power relations in our societies. Classes are not so much based on the personal qualities of individuals but rather on their positions in the social sphere and on the relative distance of these positions in relation to each other (Purhonen & Roos, 2006, p. 36). This article focuses on the cultural contexts of social class: cultural hegemony rests on ideologies and structures that ultimately either support or restrict people's access to economic, social, and cultural resources. Cultural mechanisms have an essential role in the shaping of class positions, and class status is affirmed and distinction created especially through consumption (Melin, 2010, p. 225).

(Good) taste is an essential stake in the class-based struggle on cultural hegemony as well as a central instrument of symbolic power: through taste, we classify others and become classified ourselves (Purhonen et al., 2014, p. 16; Bourdieu, 1984, p. 11). Gronow states that the lifestyles of the members of a social class are more or less homogeneous, and tastes are thus class tastes. The legitimate taste of a society is identified with the taste of its ruling class (2002, p. 28). In cultural studies, middle class is understood as the hegemonic class (f. ex. Skeggs, 2004).

The journalistic perspectives on lifestyles are mainly formed through middle-class understandings in the discourses of influential media. That is why the theories on middle class in particular play an important part in my analysis. The standpoint of my article is grounded on British and US cultural studies (e.g. Skeggs, 2004; Lawler, 2004; Shugart, 2014) where the middle class refers to a hegemonic culture and the values it upholds rather than on individual existing members of the middle class. In addition, the concept of middle class does not refer to middle-income, but points to middle class as an identity with the power to transfer other, less privileged identities to the margins of our culture.

Since the 1960s, the expansion of the welfare state in Finland can be thought of as a middle-class project that emphasised universal public services, benefit schemes and better education (Karonen et al., 2017, p. 47). Culturally, this welfare state narrative gave birth to a strong cultural myth of 'classlessness' of Finnish culture. In the 2000s, social and economic trends of increasingly uneven distribution of wealth and insecurities in the labour market have brought the classes back into public discourse (Kolbe, 2010).

In the context of class structures, one major difference between Finland and many other European societies is the lack of a historical feudal nobility (Wright et

al., 2013, p. 335) and thus the dominant class culture does not stem from a historically elite upper class but from the professionals of the upper middle class. In academic accounts, the upper middle class is often (see Kahma, 2010, p. 35; Melin, 2019) depicted as the highest stratum in Finnish class hierarchy. In this context, it is relatively safe to assume that the cultural hegemony and life-stylistic legitimacy in Finland is mainly produced according to urban, upper-middle-class tastes.

Helsingin Sanomat as the number one newspaper for urban Finnish professionals relies on a practice of the middle classes producing news for the middle classes. The class structure of Finnish journalism has not been adequately studied, although in one study journalists were reported of being a central part of "the core of the new middle classes" (Melin & Kehälinna, 1988, p. 30). In saying this, my aim is not to verify some middle-class mentalities of journalists and thus journalism in Finland but to try and draw some sort of picture of the potential norms and lifestyles that might influence the lifestyles portrayed in *Helsingin Sanomat*.

Examining middle class as a political entity gains us access to the ideological meanings imprinted onto middle-class culture. Middle-class lifestyle – agency, temperance, respectability, and good taste – appears in our culture simultaneously as ordinariness and as the criterion for good life. The hegemonic cultural practices entangled with middle-class existence obscure the fact that material disparities impact the stakes with which we try to pursue the middle-class ideal of "good life" in our contemporary culture (Lahikainen & Mäkinen, 2012, p. 8). The middle class classifies itself through difference, and in this analysis as well the distance from others defines the existence and the place of the middle-class standard.

The middle classes have gained a significant foothold in legitimate food culture in recent decades and this shift can partly be credited to the rise of *omnivorousness* in the global cultural sphere. The cultural evaluations previously based on stark boundaries between high-brow culture and popular culture have experienced a transition to cultural omnivorousness (Peterson & Kern, 1996). In food culture, omnivorousness manifests itself as an emphasis on democratic ideals as well as through the transformed understandings of good taste. This ideology of democratic cultural consumption refers to a cultural backlash against snobbery. Within the democratic ideal, the appreciation of different identities and ethnicities is celebrated while conservative taste and formal fine-dining seem to be out of vogue (e.g. Johnston & Baumann, 2015). However, omnivorousness does not imply indifference to distinctions. Rather its emergence suggests that the rules governing symbolic boundaries are changing, and *high-brow* and *low-brow* are being replaced by more complex hierarchies between legitimate and illegitimate (see Peterson & Kern, 1996, p. 904).

In contemporary culture, both middle-class distinction and omnivorous inclusivity are linked to ethical consumption. Ethical consumption can be defined as purchasing and using products according not only to the personal pleasures they provide but also to ideas of what is right in a moral sense (Johnston et al., 2011, p. 295). Ethical consumption is dubbed as sustainable, ecological (or eco-), natural, or green,

depending on the context. A correlation between high education, high income or high cultural capital and positive attitudes towards ethical consumption has been identified in various studies (e.g. Carfagna et al., 2014; Niva et al., 2014). Highlighting both individual consumer choices and the common good is characteristic of the cultural discourse of ethical consumption (see Johnston et al., 2012). The discourse portrays ethical consumers as active agents who bring about change. What makes this portraying conflicting is the fact that ethical eating discourse has an undeniable moral tone, as well as a connection to class privilege (p. 1092).

Privileged groups are generally better positioned to engage with this discourse (Johnston et al., 2012, p. 1092). According to Zimmerman (2015), ethical consumerism provides resources for a new kind of classed lifestyle that promises to mitigate anxieties about the ecological and social harm caused by class hierarchies, middle-class lifestyle and capitalist "business as usual". Many of the implementations of ethical eating can be regarded as elitist: cooking, gardening and visiting farmers' markets all require significant leisure time, physical and geographic mobility, and financial resources inaccessible to many working-class individuals. Zimmerman (Ibid., pp. 33-34) points out that this results in a moral hierarchy where only those with the means to take up these practices can self-realize as moral selves and good citizens. Narratives around eating habits are central to contemporary debates about what kind of subjects are socially valued (Cairns et al., 2010, p. 596).

3. DATA AND METHODS

This article is based on data drawn from the digital archives of the newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*. The data consists of news articles mentioning *organic food* and/or *local food*, entailing a total of 414 news texts published in 2011–2013 and 2016–2017[1]. *Helsingin Sanomat* was chosen for this analysis because it is the most widely distributed daily newspaper in Finland (Media Audit Finland, 2017). As the only national newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* represents authoritative publicity and journalism that can be seen as having power determining the influential phenomena in the Finnish society (see Lounasmeri, 2006, p. 3). In its ethics policy, *Helsingin Sanomat* stresses a stand for a society of a multitude of values, democracy, and social justice (2013).

This article is based on a combination of two separate analyses that draw from the data depicted above. The analysis and results presented here are therefore based both on news articles chosen on the grounds of 1) food being mentioned in connection with social class, standard of living, other economic factors or cultural status as well as on the grounds of 2) the material generating positive publicity towards organic and/or

1 The data is comprised of two separate time spans due to separate instances of data collection, firstly for Master's thesis material in 2013 to 2015, secondly for dissertation material in 2017. News images have not been analysed for this article. News texts on radio and television programming, literature, theatre and music reviews, as well as recipes for meals were excluded.

local food. These samplings direct the analysis 1) toward meaning-making practices, the production of distinctions, and the significance attributed to social class and 2) toward understandings of food defined as good, legitimate, and worthy. The data sets were formed using content analysis focusing on the content topics an on the tone of the texts, respectively.[2] The two samplings together amount to 123 news articles (see Figure 1).

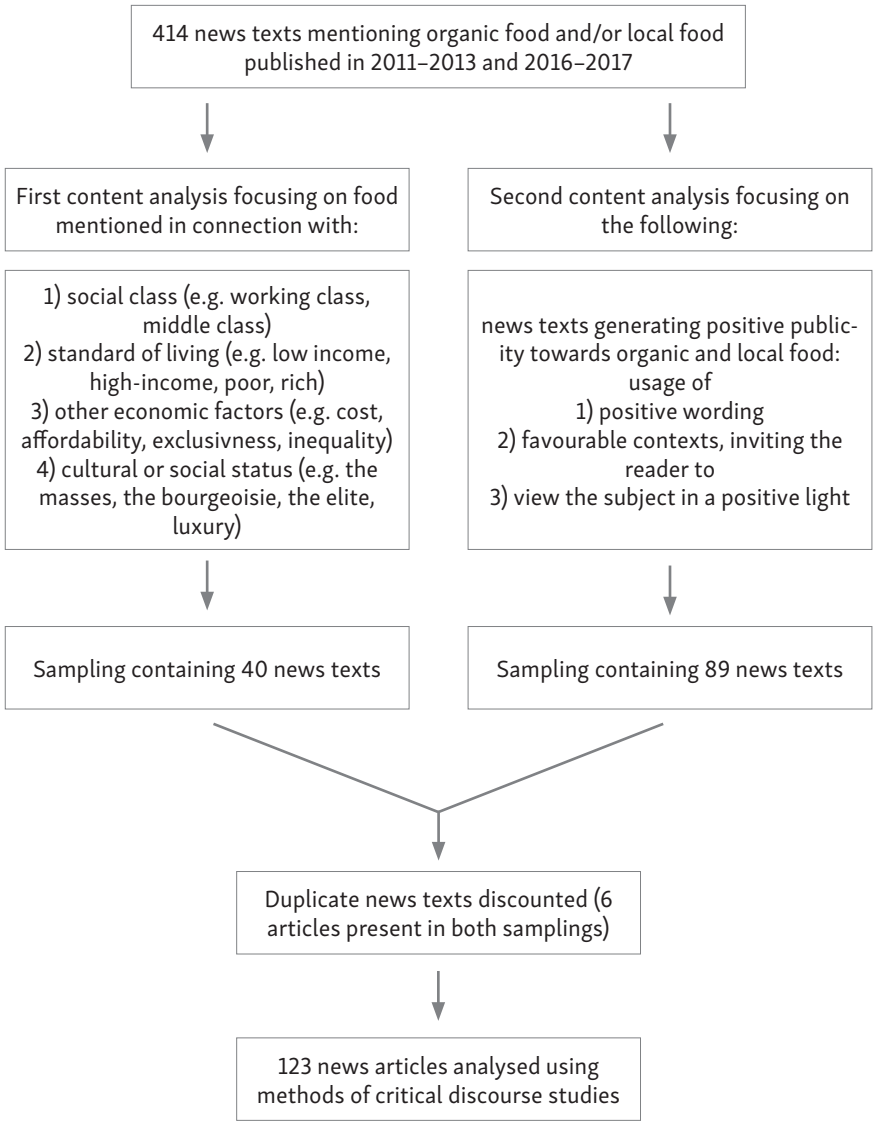

Figure 1. Sampling procedure.

2 Due to the restricted space assigned for this article, parts of the primary analyses have been left out. Regardless, the analysis presented here is representative of the material analysed.

The analysis of these 123 texts utilizes the methods of critical discourse studies. The concept of discourse is understood in this article as a pattern of communication representing our social reality from a specific point of view, and as always historically produced and interpreted. Discourse is essential to cultural and political action, and discursive practices both constrain and enable ways of thinking and thus writing about the normalities of everyday life (see Foucault, 1981). In critical discourse studies, discourses are thought to take part in structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power, and control (see Wodak, 2002, p. 2). Critical discourse studies aim at unveiling the mostly invisible dynamics and specifics of power by concentrating on their linguistic manifestations (Wodak & Meyer, 2015). In this analysis, I have relied on a toolkit of critical discourse analysis by Machin and Mayr (2012) and on a listing of ideological structures of discourse by van Dijk (2015).

Attention was paid to the following lexical and ideological choices: Are individuals or groups framed as active or passive or as "possessing individuality" in general? What kind of actors are understood as active subjects? What seems to be sayable, i.e. what are the discursive limits that determine the range of statements that are discursively possible? What kind of collective symbols (cultural stereotypes) relating to food culture(s) are utilized in the material and how those symbols affect the way their context can be perceived? What kind of evaluative statements concerning groups of people are present? Special attention was given to statements and values presented as "given" (and as such, especially ideological in nature).

The analysis in this article is not limited to the textual parts mentioning organic or local food, but it treats and analyses every news article as a whole, regardless of whether organic or local food is the central topic of the text or more of a side note. Organic and local food function more as windows to food media than as limitations restricting the discursive findings.

4. STRATEGIES OF CLASS DISTINCTION

The following two sections focus on the discursive strategies that are employed in justifying class-related inequality. These discursive strategies operate through redefining differences between the middle class and the lower classes, as well as by insisting on the high moral standards and morally superior lifestyles of the middle class. This cultural and moral differentiation is created and maintained by 1) insisting on the democratic and classless nature of middle-class food culture and by 2) utilizing cultural stereotypes favourable to the middle class.

4.1. Reassurance of equality: Insisting on the democratic and classless nature of middle-class food culture

In the sphere of omnivorous food culture, the ideology of democratic cultural consumption (see above) influences the definitions of good taste. In the *reassurance of*

equality discourse, this appropriate democratic life-stylistic ideal is constructed and emphasized through obscuring economic inequality, through "appreciating difference", and by depicting poverty and wealth as cultural equals ("close together rather than far apart", see Johnston & Baumann, 2015, 161) that merely result from different choices and preferences.

One news article (A1) discusses the recent cultural shift from exclusive to democratic through expert commentary:

> [On the other hand] many luxury items seem to be available to many. A seven-euro loaf of organic rye bread can be purchased by nearly anyone. A dinner in a top restaurant can be achieved by saving some money. By saving money for a decade, one can, for instance, purchase an expensive design dining table.[3]

What kind of consumers make up these groups of many or nearly anyone who are affected by a new and equal food culture? In practice, if a person needs to save money for a decade to purchase a dining table, and another person needs to save for three months for the same table, they can hardly be called equal. Privileged understandings are often presented as normal or "classless" in food talk – even though structural inequality makes distinctive eating remarkably difficult for marginalized groups (see Johnston et al., 2011, p. 296). Instead of ideologically reinforcing the differences between *us* and *them*, the reassurance of equality discourse naturalises economic differences by characterizing poverty and wealthiness as culturally equal states of being, and thus defining economic privilege meaningless, as one alternative among numerous equivalent lifestyle choices.

In addition, the highlighting of equality is brought to the fore by redefining the concept of "everyday food" and by rejecting the characterization of "an elitist". In one article (A2) a middle-class interviewee speaks of a food co-op he founded in order to secure a steady supply of "good Finnish everyday food" to his family.

> The bland tasting vegetables and the ready-made, marinated meat cuts of the super market felt uninspiring, and so the family decided to opt for something better.

Defining better than normal food as merely normal food is emphasized by pointing out the commonness and relaxed habitus of the interviewee, who "takes it easy" and exhibits "neither the passion of a pioneer nor the fanaticism of a revolutionist leader". Distinction is often reinvented under the guise of simplicity (see Paddock, 2014): Branded as simple and straightforward, good Finnish everyday food that apparently everyone can and should eat becomes simultaneously exclusive.

3 Direct quotes translated be the author of this article

Simplicity is not inherent in the food itself but a social construct, and emphasis on the simplicity of a given food enables safe navigation between two conflicting cultural strategies of elitism and pluralism (Kaplan, 2013, p. 246).

Elitism is turned down rigorously within the discourse. In one opinion piece (A3) the (alleged) elitist nature of ethical food culture is refused through moral and economic stances. Between immoral poverty and equally immoral snobbery remains a narrow space for moral action, where morality refers to know-how, interest, care, and effort:

> Berries and mushrooms are free of charge. One can easily access top quality products through local food groups.
>
> People who really care about what they eat are usually also able to prepare their food themselves.

In the food texts upholding middle-class hegemony, material expenses of ethical eating are rarely considered. In *Helsingin Sanomat*, the cost of food is obscured in the arguments relating to cost-efficiency are left ambivalent – according to the writers (of, in particular, A3 and another opinion piece (A4)), organic and local food are both more affordable, of similar cost, and more expensive than "regular" food. High cost is not, in itself, a problem, since the food is anti-elitist *in principle* and thus in a way achievable for everyone. The opinion piece writers aim to distinguish some pompous lifestyle from simply preferring high-quality produce – the wealthy elite from those who just want to spend a bit more money on food.

The discursive strategies utilized in the reassurance of equality discourse rely heavily on *redefining* collective understandings related to economic and cultural means. In this discourse, affordability, expensiveness, equality, and luxury are defined in remarkably different ways depending on the chosen viewpoint: on one hand, rye bread is described as luxurious, on the other hand a 72-euro restaurant dinner in a pop-up restaurant originated from a will to "prepare good food that people can afford" (A5). Instead of reinforcing normative, pre-existing discursive limits, this discourse shifts the limits of what can be said through symbolic redefinition. The omnivorous culture with its merging and blurring of high-brow and low-brow culture is present: luxury is anything named as such, and exclusive items are available for anyone, as long as you save enough money. The individual addressed by this discourse might be quality-conscious but not a snob, prudent but not poor.

4.2. Cultural strategies of distinction: Utilizing cultural stereotypes favourable to the middle class

In the *middle-class distinction* discourse class differences are introduced and used by employing lifestyle choices connected to class tastes, and classes are differentiated

from each other by utilizing meanings connected to classed cultures. In the data of *Helsingin Sanomat*, class difference is produced via ample examples of distinctive eating as well as by highlighting the opposite nature of different class lifestyles and stereotypical class habitus. Food culture appreciated by the middle class is in the centre of this discourse, and other tastes and lifestyles are being defined by comparing them with the middle-class norm.

In the analysed data, organic food functions as a symbol of the middle class and as a locating agent of middle-class lifestyle. In one travel article (A6) the status hierarchy of Swedish residential neighbourhoods is alluded to by referring to organic consumption:

> Organic food is selling fast. This is not a surprise, since located next door is a contemporary but colourful Bo01 neighbourhood. It is home for the bohemian bourgeoisie.

In one article (A7), Michelle Obama and Judy Oreck (spouse of former US ambassador to Finland) are named as examples of a "new upper middle class that grows organic carrots and keeps bees like any other down-shifting hipster". In a travel article on Berlin (A8), a subspecies of middle class – *hipsters* (see Cronin et al., 2014) – are connected with organic food, and after finding the "new hipster neighbourhood" it might be difficult to determine which came first, the hipster or the organic market. The appeal of ethical eating among affluent consumers is well documented (see above), and organic or local food pass as markers of middle-class lifestyle without much need for argumentation.

Middle-classness is presented in the discourse through depicting specific "life-stylistic" attributes. In one article (A9) showcasing the selection of a middle-class suburban grocery store, the status of an educated middle class is being argued by listing various lifestyle-appropriate culinary products until their exclusivity becomes "proven" through cumulation:

> The fish counter offers living lobsters and oysters. There are blinis and roe: sturgeon, trout, self-smoked Arctic char.
>
> There is an abundance of cheeses, exceeding the variety of sausages. There is organic food, local food, fair-trade on offer. Gluten-free, low-carbohydrate, additive-free.

The above-mentioned grocery store is acceptable to the educated middle class due to its diverse selection of both traditional bourgeoisie culinary pleasures as well as contemporary (authentic and ethical) high-status produce. Traditional high-brow foods are paired with authentic and cosmopolitan tastes of the omnivorous era. A broad repertoire of culinary experience has symbolic value among fractions of the middle class with high levels of cultural capital (see Cappellini et al., 2015, 1096).

In a reportage on one local kiosk (A10) class differences are made visible through subtle comparisons. The village of Långvik, where "wealth oozing from the city meets the spirited can-do countryside", is inhabited by both local blue-collar people and middle-class cottagers. The presence of class distinction is implied by bringing up well-known class symbols, and so working-classness with its Ferrari baseball caps, Saab cars and cigarette packs is being compared with the red wine and high literature of the affluent city-dwellers. The same archetypes are divided into the sellers of their labour and the buyers of that labour:

> "There seems to be something wrong with the steering wheel since our car always veers to this place", says Westlin-Latomaa and commissions, in passing, some dock repairs from Stjernberg.

In the middle-class distinction discourse, distinctions are put to good use by employing cultural stereotypes (or *topoi*) that have been repurposed as symbols of class cultures. Even though it seems that the Italian wood ovens being advertised on the kiosk's message board coexist peacefully with a product range of meat pies and cheap beer, the article makes it clear that Långvik is populated by lower-class locals and upper-class holiday residents. In addition, the middle-class cottagers do not primarily visit the local kiosk out of necessity, but as a manifestation of their high morals and authentic taste and thus of the ideal of "reviving local cultures" typical of the ethical eating discourse.

5. AESTHETICS OF LEGITIMATE MIDDLE-CLASS FOOD

The following sections focus on the aesthetics and stylistic strategies deployed in portraying organic or local food as legitimate. As mentioned in the second section of this article, cultural legitimacy – appropriateness, goodness, cultural and symbolic worthiness – is based on understandings of good taste. In an omnivorous food culture, good taste does not necessarily refer to only high-class quality food (that is exclusive or rare), but good food is defined through more diverse and complex evaluations.

In the initial content analysis that centred on the positive framings of organic and local food, the aesthetic and evaluative categories of *authenticity* and *nostalgia* were most prominent and featured frequently in the sampling. This is why the following sections ask what kind of discursive strategies are utilized in qualifying food defined as authentic or nostalgic and how these characteristics are deemed legitimate and desirable.

5.1. Authenticity: Legitimating traditional, hand-made, and simple food

Authenticity is broadly understood as referring to all things genuine, unadulterated, without hypocrisy, and honest (see Reisinger & Steiner, 2006). The symbolic

appeal of authenticity is grounded on its role as a tool for cultural dominance: any group that can legitimize the authenticity of its own tastes in contrast to others' can claim moral superiority (Zukin, 2010, pp. 2–3). According to Vannini and Williams (2009, p. 3), authenticity is not so much a state of being as a set of qualities that people in a particular time and place have come to agree represent an *ideal* or *exemplar*.

Authenticity is usually evaluated from outside looking in, and in food culture authenticity primarily indicates an urban appreciation of rural cuisine (Weiss, 2011, p. 75). Food journalists implore authenticity when offering particular foods as legitimate parts of the contemporary gastronomic scene. In *Helsingin Sanomat*, discursive construction of authenticity relies heavily on general buzzwords (see Smith, 2020) of the contemporary legitimate middle-class food culture. The journalistic texts tap into a pre-existing Western discursive repertoire of authentic food in educating the Finnish (middle-class) public. Here, these buzzwords and aesthetics are related to tradition, history, artisanship, and simplicity.

One way of qualifying something as authentic is to prove that the artefact or custom originates from a specific time, place, or *terroir*. Both food enthusiasts and food journalists value foods prepared and consumed in specific locations and grant less status on placeless foods that come from nowhere special or specific (Johnston & Baumann, 2015, p. 65). In one *Helsingin Sanomat* article (A11) the menu of an upscale food restaurant is reported to include "meat from the Bosgård estate", "delicacies from Malmgård" and "whitefish from the fishermen of Pellinki". Giving a name to the food or its origin functions as proof of authenticity.

Ways of preparing food that have remained the same for decades and centuries function as strong legitimizers in the news articles. Food is defined as authentic by associating it with *historical tradition*. In an article on travel in Italy (A12), contemporary fads are outshined by tradition and heritage: in the Marche territory, "the freshness of the produce is taken for granted, and organic and local food have been served for centuries before it became fashionable". In the French territory of Calvados (A13), "the tradition of making cider stretches back to the Middle Ages", and in Lyon (A14), a vinery "has been making their Beaujolais Nouveau since the Renaissance era". The connection of food with historical or ethno-cultural tradition demonstrates that the authentic food has stayed true to its origins and maintained its integrity (Johnston & Baumann, 2015, p. 78), which grants the food moral and aesthetic value.

In addition to geographical specificity and historical continuity, authenticity emerges through the themes of artisanship and simplicity in the analysed material. In the upscale local food restaurant depicted above (A11), the restauranteur named "Kallio has hand-picked hundreds of litres of raspberries and wild strawberries near his father-in-law's summer house", whereas "wood sorrel, fireweed, and spruce sprouts have been gathered by Kallio's father". Authenticity becomes proven by differentiating multinational and artificial products from foods prepared *with love*, by hand, and thus appreciated by the (middle-class) community.

The evaluative polarization between *made with love* and made without love (for profit) relies on a commonplace trope where a sincere individual goes against the faceless corporate machine (see also Chen & Eriksson, 2019). In *Helsingin Sanomat*, mass production and especially markets (as well as *the* market) are met with suspicion. Products sold in markets damage unborn babies (A15) and their beverage selections are comprised – instead of genuine English cider – of carbonated watery liquid impersonating cider (A16). Even children wonder mistrustfully about the origins and production conditions of super market products in an article covering urban farming (A17). If an actor defined as profit-driven (market chains, (multi)national businesses) wants to capitalize on the favourable frame of *the hand-made*, it needs to make a lot of effort: in one article (A18), the CEO of a national liquor company insists that "only organic barley and bilberries picked from Kainuu territory are good enough" for their new organic liquor.

The philosophy of *simplicity*, "uncomplicated food" or "simple Finnish food" is a unifying element in many of the news texts. Simplicity refers often to food's visible characteristics. When food is framed as simple, seediness is no longer ugly but a sign of sincerity and authenticity and thus desirable (Zukin, 2008, p. 727). For example, in the coffee lounge of one organic food store (A19) all "coffee cups have been collected from flea markets and received as donations" and in one restaurant (inspired by the "parochiality of French cafés") in the Turku archipelago "dishes are served on ceramic plates that [restauranteur] Smeds has fudged together in his little foundry" (A20). The sincerity of simple aesthetics obscures the consumerist reality of the restaurant industry and symbolically transfers a café or a restaurant to something less consumerist – if not completely outside the margins of consumer-based society ("the market") then at least in the periphery of it.

Mere simplicity requires beside it something that can be used to differentiate between "rustic in a good way" from just commonplace food. With the aid of specific discursive strategies, simple foods soar from normality to distinction, and food established as rustic can at the same time be both distinctive and "simple home cooked food" (see Paddock, 2014, p. 37). The mix of familiarity and extraordinariness is clearly present in the news texts of *Helsingin Sanomat*. Mere "everyday food" is held in high esteem, even though it is rarely good enough as such in the eyes of restauranteurs or home cooks. In one article (A21) covering the life of a food blogger, simple and honest food – real butter, real cream, fish, and potatoes – needs by its side examples of exotic and trendy food, including organic food, hand-made caramel ice cream, gin tonic sorbet, and lamb lollipops. A commentary on Finnish eating habits by a home cooking expert added to the article leaves little room for misunderstanding the difference between legitimate simple food and just simple food:

> I have noticed too distinct cultures. Others are into organic and local food, others could not care less what is on their plate, as long as it is food.

According to Johnston and Baumann, simplicity is brought up even when the food itself seems rather complicated (2015, p. 68). In the kitchen of a traditional restaurant in Lyon (A14) "they have not skimped on the butter" and the food "tastes homespun, as it should, in a bouchon". The journalist describing the food – "Quenelle, that is, a palm-sized ball made of Northern pike in béchamel-sauce is steaming in the casserole" and "the menu is topped by caramel ice with raspberry coulis" – as homespun demonstrates how simplicity can be a flexible concept in connection with food.

5.2. Nostalgia: Middle-class performances of rural escape

Differing from the buzzword-driven authenticity, nostalgia relies on comprehensive cultural narratives that build on class-based identifications. Another significant difference between authenticity and nostalgia in the analysed texts concerns the existence of a given object or phenomenon. Portraying something as authentic stresses the continuance of tradition and the preservation of "the natural" whereas the nostalgic point of view centres on the themes of the lost purity of nature and the irretrievable past. *The pastoral*, meaning nostalgic and idealized longing for the innocence and happiness of a lost place, is utilized in the framings of *Helsingin Sanomat* (see Santesso, 2006, pp. 27–40).

Nostalgia for the untainted countryside is a common reaction to the hectic modern life. The return to nature or to the "peasant's way of life" simmers in the cultural imagination of many nations. According to Banet-Weiser, nostalgia often becomes a normative trope in political discourse as a way to mask anxiety about change. Nostalgia represents a longing for a time (which never really existed) when it was simpler to decipher a constantly changing world (2012, p. 128).

According to Mikulak (2013), the western culture has a long tradition of "the rural escape". This pastoral tradition has valued a cultivated, rural, and peaceful "middle landscape" that situates between the violent and uncertain wilderness and the complex modern civilization (p. 98). One article (A20) relies on a portrayal of the archipelago as a place for ascetic but romantic living that inhabits the idyllic space between nature and the city, and guests of a rustic but comfortable inn can almost see how "the nature is slowly reclaiming the island".

The joys of the countryside often function as counterbalance for the urban life. In an article on the hunting activities of an opera singer (A22), hunting as gentlemanly pastoral pursuit acts as a way to connect with nature and to be able to do something with one's own hands in the midst of a busy work and home life. The country life feels tempting in our culture especially when the countryside is perceived as a playground for "the gentry" and the actual farm labour is erased from the equation (Mikulak, 2013, p. 105). The ethical discourse is shaped by nostalgia for preindustrial food production methods and by images of rural utopias liberated from the risks of global food production systems. Food practices are reframed as pleasurable and moral

choices (and as "rediscovering traditional food") rather than as laborious domestic drudgery (Phillipov, 2016, p. 112).

In addition to hobbies, the rural escape is connected to travel and luxurious pampering. In an article on travelling in Estonia (A23), even the middle-class Finn gets to have a taste of the high-class life of country elegance:

> During most of my travels I head to the countryside, to ride horses on the island of Muhu. While there, we lodge in taverns where the hostesses cook homely fare for us. When one has been riding cross-country in the hazelnut groves with a sea breeze from dusk till dawn, food truly tastes good.

In the analysed texts, the appeal of pastoral nostalgia seems to be in the social hierarchies of the good old times, through which privileged tourists can almost inch towards the idle gentry class and thus detach themselves from the burdens of everyday life.

Romanticizing the past and the country life often comes with dubious aspects as certain issues fall outside the limits of discourse. The cognitive dissonance between the imagined landscapes of pastoralism and the actual landscapes of capitalist agriculture is maintained by sentimental and selectively nostalgic versions of country life (Mikulak, 2013, p. 100 and 115). The social arrangements of ownership and labour tend to disappear behind nature. Issues of social inequity, patriarchy, and class are disregarded in the appeal to values (pureness, naturalness) conveniently outside of history (p. 99).

One contemporary American author often critiqued by scholars (e.g. Lynch & Giles, 2013; Zimmerman, 2015) is Michael Pollan, whose demands of a shift to clean and pure food are regarded as having a narrow and conventional view on the realities of food production and consumption. In one article (A25), the reporter ends up agreeing with Pollan on the excellency of pure and self-grown food:

> Pollan prepares a meal straight from nature: by cultivating, hunting, fishing, and gathering. He even dries salt from the sea and makes yeast by himself!
>
> I open my fridge: self-picked strawberries and bilberries, vegetables from our own land, moose from Kymenlaakso, and wild fish from the Gulf of Finland. Once again, I can feel pleased that many of the things lost in the modern world are, for us, still possible and real every day.

Both the "us Americans" addressed by Pollan and the "us" addressed in the article leave a significant number of consumers on the outside of both the preferred lifestyle and a position of an active subject in this discourse. In the article, culinary self-sufficiency is connected with sustainability and earthiness as opposed to the modern world. Amidst the choices – and necessities – of food, the possibilities and

realities of the everyday are determined by way of capital and economic resources. The natural and the authentic are often intertwined with old distinctions and with historically masculinized, whitened and middle-classed performances of taste preference (Zimmerman, 2015, p. 46). Food journalism, too, can either critique existing and unequal ways of food production or work within their discriminatory neoliberal tenets (Phillipov, 2016, p. 112).

6. CONCLUSIONS: DEPOLITICING FOOD THROUGH FOOD MEDIA

The aim of this analysis has been to map the ways in which good food and worthy food culture are understood in Finnish mainstream journalism. In *Helsingin Sanomat*, the legitimation of food culture works through utilizing middle-class tastes, values and aesthetics, and class is made both visible and invisible depending on the current strategy: middle-classness is ingrained in food journalism through blurring the economic or cultural privilege of the middle class and at the same time reproducing the superior morality of middle-class values (*reassurance of equality* discourse), through highlighting the boundaries and differences between the middle class and others (*cultural strategies of distinction* discourse), and through implanting new, privileged middle-class aesthetics as the stylistic attributes which to aspire toward (discourses of *authenticity* and *nostalgia*).

In the journalistic discursive practices of *Helsingin Sanomat*, culinary distinction is maintained, among other things, by tapping into both the pleasure and the morality of ethical middle-class food practices. According to Johnston and Baumann (2015, p. 113), the contemporary field of ethical consumption is characterized by a tension between ideologies of consumerism (that maximize individual choice and pleasure) and citizenship (that emphasize responsibility to a larger social and ecological collective) . The aspect of citizenship and social or ecological responsibility is largely absent from the discourses introduced in this paper, and the "morality of it" seems to refer to middle-class agency as (at its best) salvaging traditional foods from being forgotten to (at its worst) utilizing a moral stand point in order to differentiate oneself from the immoral lower classes. As Lynch and Giles (2013, p. 489) point out, food is often presented as providing opportunity for moral action by means of constructing oneself and others as good or bad human beings, or as the "right" and "wrong" sorts of people.

The ideological power of middle-class evaluations in *Helsingin Sanomat* in particular and food media in general come from the seemingly apolitical nature of its subject: stories on food travel, restaurants or food co-ops are understood as being as far away as possible from the "hard" news and serious subjects of business or politics, and the politics relating to inequality, hunger, global warming, unethical practices, or food security are left mainly unreported. The legitimating discursive strategies operate by depoliticing food in the media – by concealing the privileges connected with practices and values and by defining good food as being (only) a matter of choice, identity,

lifestyle, and personal taste. Cultural power in a concealed and apolitical form is particularly influential, and that is why food journalism and other food media need to be taken seriously in studying mediated culture. Despite the depoliticing strategies of the hegemonic ethical discourse, food is a question of politics – carrying with it complex relationships of power and privilege.

Funding
This work was supported by The Finnish Cultural Foundation. The funding source has no involvement in the study design, the analysis of data, the writing of the report, or the decision to submit the article for publication.

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A6: Euroviisuhuuma leviää Malmössä estoitta. Matka (*Travel*), 4.5.2013.
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A9: Käpylästä oli loppua kampasimpukka. Kotimaa (*Finland*), 22.1.2012.
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A23: Hyvää lahden takana. Ruoka (*Food*), 7.6.2012.
A24: Se maukkain ateria. Ruoka (*Food*), 23.2.2012.