

The story behind the tweet:

Factors that shape political journalists' engagement with Twitter

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Declaration

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Abstract

Political journalists are some of Twitter's most enthusiastic users and the platform has become one of the key social media tools in the news industry. While a growing body of research has addressed journalists' observable tweeting practices, we know little about the considerations and strategies that underpin their activities on the platform, how these manifest themselves in their engagement, and which benefits they yield.

This thesis examines US political journalists and the process of their Twitter engagement via an integrated conceptual framework that is organised by macro, meso and micro levels of investigation. On the macro level, it conceptualises the influence of organisational factors via a management of media innovation perspective. On the meso level, it uses the concepts of technology affordances and appropriation to analyse the role of journalistic routines and practices. On the micro level, it employs the uses and gratifications framework to examine individual-based motivations that drive Twitter engagement. The thesis further investigates how different socio-political environments and the type of news medium, that is, broadsheet and broadcast, moderate the factors located on each level as they impinge on journalists' Twitter engagement.

The empirical part of the study uses a mixed methods approach that combines expert interviews as the primary method with quantitative content analysis as the secondary method of (1) the Twitter profile pages of 120 political journalists and (2) 2,400 of their tweets, published during a mundane news period and the US Midterm elections in 2014.

Findings indicate that journalists experience organisational influences on their Twitter engagement most prominently when their employer is in an advanced stage of innovation implementation and Twitter use has been formalised on an institutional level. The empirical analysis further demonstrates that practices and routines are especially sensitive to changing news climates, and it is here where the perceived benefits of Twitter use are most clearly articulated. Findings on the individual level indicate high degrees of individualisation and personalisation that shape journalists' Twitter presence. Overall, the relationships and interactions between macro-, meso- and micro-level factors can create mutually beneficial outcomes for the employer, news product and journalist, but equally so, generate fields of tensions and significant conflicts of interest.

The empirical analysis and its novel integration of independent macro-, meso- and micro-level concepts into a combined framework provide a basis for advancing a theoretical understanding of the interplay of factors that motivate, shape and moderate political journalists' engagement with Twitter. This allows us to position and understand tweeting journalists, on the one hand, as employees bound by contractual agreements and occupational demands, and on the other, as autonomous agents who are not fully controlled by managerial strategies, organisational logics and professional workflows.

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Glossary of terms

API	Application programming interface
CMS	Content management system
FoMO	Fear of missing out
ICR	Intercoder reliability
U&G	Uses and gratifications
URL	Uniform resource locator

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I. Introduction

As the US Presidential race is in full swing in early 2016, a political reporter comes across what he believes to be a big story. But he has just not quite got to the bottom of it. For years, Donald Trump has been making claims about his charitable giving totalling millions of dollars out of his own pocket. In the absence of Trump's tax return statements, the political reporter sets out to reverse-engineer the then-candidate's record of donations. During the months to follow, the reporter contacts hundreds of charities in his investigation of Trump's personal donations, methodically tracking in a list what little evidence he is able to gather, 'old-school style' with pen and paper. In late June 2016 he starts sharing photos of his handwritten and colour-coded list on Twitter, which eventually runs 400 organisations long.¹ Again and again, the reporter tweets photographic updates of his list and ongoing investigation. He encourages his Twitter followers to send in tips and to suggest more charities to contact, and even challenges Trump himself to shed light on the mounting evidence of inconsistencies that continue to emerge from his own claims (Bilton, 2016; Fahrenthold & Rindler, 2016). While Trump never responds, the Twittersverse does.

The reporter's name is David Fahrenthold. In April 2017, just a few weeks before the submission of this thesis, his investigation of Trump's charitable giving won him the Pulitzer Price for national reporting. He works for US legacy media organisations both in print and broadcasting, as a reporter for *The Washington Post* and as a contributor to CNN. In its award announcement, the Pulitzer committee applauded his 'persistent reporting that created a model for transparent journalism in political campaign coverage while casting doubt on Donald Trump's assertions of generosity toward charities' (The Pulitzer Prizes, 2017). While Twitter did not initiate Fahrenthold's investigation, the platform played a significant role in how it was carried out, and in the end it made a crucial contribution to its overall achievement.

¹ See Appendix 12 for an example of the reporter's tweets and photos of his handwritten list of charities contacted in the investigation.

1.1. Journalism meets Twitter

Eight years earlier, in 2009, *The Washington Post*'s Paul Farhi wrote a feature for the *American Journalism Review* on what he called the 'Twitter explosion' (2009). He questioned whether the micro-blogging platform really was the 'world's most overhyped technology' and 'latest media obsession', and set out to argue for its value as a journalistic reporting tool. Eight years are a lifetime in the world of digital technologies, and today we do not need much convincing – if any at all – that Twitter has long since found its place in many newsrooms and journalists' digital lives (Hedman & Djerf-Pierre, 2013; Hermida, 2013). From the early days when Twitter was written off as a 'torrent of useless information' (Arceneaux & Schmitz Weiss, 2010, p. 1271), it is now viewed as a useful, if not essential, tool for journalists (Bradshaw & Rohumaa, 2013; Hill & Lashmar, 2014). A few years ago, already 42 per cent of reporters have said that they could not do their job without it and this trend was believed to only increase (Cision, 2013). Oftentimes, as we know from previous research, journalists have embraced Twitter to break news, disseminate content and source stories with an unprecedented immediacy (e.g. Cozma and Chen, 2013; Lasorsa et al., 2012; Lawrence et al., 2014; Parmelee, 2013). While none of these are genuinely novel elements in the news cycle, Twitter as a medium enables professional journalists to pursue these activities in a broader variety of ways and under profoundly different conditions than ever before.

But Twitter as a platform has evolved over the years, and so has journalists' engagement with it. Journalists themselves, like every new Twitter user at some point, had to go through a trial and error phase to discover where the benefits lie amidst the risks and opportunities of Twitter. While some remain reluctant or refuse to adopt the platform altogether (Canter, 2013), we have generally witnessed a learning curve that united early adopters, laggards and everyone in between at both the promise and pressure of capitalising on what Twitter can do for them and for news production as a whole. At the same time, Twitter offers novel avenues for journalistic pursuits, and David Fahrenthold illustrated precisely that. He appropriated Twitter as a means to advance his investigation and reporting beyond 'traditional' production routines, demonstrating novel affordances of Twitter such as journalistic transparency (Revers, 2014), and tapping into the platform's 'wisdom of crowds' (Surowiecki, 2005) by engaging audiences (Marwick & boyd, 2010). Fahrenthold created a new storytelling format for himself, creatively exploiting the

platform and finding ways around its limitations by mixing ‘old’ and ‘new’ reporting practices into a hybrid form (Chadwick, 2013) (e.g. by sharing photos of his handwritten lists as a way round the 140-character limit of tweets). Journalists have also been found to appropriate Twitter as a means to establish a brand (Brems et al., 2016; Hanusch & Bruns, 2016), and this may well have had a similar effect for Fahrenthold, as he incrementally made a name for himself on Twitter as his investigation into Trump’s claims of charitable giving progressed.

But there is more to Fahrenthold’s engagement with Twitter than we can *directly* observe on the platform, and this is precisely the starting point of this study. Since the early days of the sociology of news production (Cottle, 2003), we know that journalists do not operate in a vacuum, but within a range of organisational, occupational and individual structures and contexts that shape news products and journalistic behaviour. Given Twitter’s increasing relevance as a journalistic tool, this study views reporters’ engagement with the platform as having become part of that same realm of journalistic output that has always been subject to ‘influences on media content’ (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991, 1996, 2014). In other words, to understand journalists’ engagement with Twitter, we cannot just look at their tweets, but also need to consider *the story behind the tweet*.

Indeed, in a recent interview, Fahrenthold himself reflected on the covert influences and struggles that both preceded and accompanied how he used Twitter in his investigation, and that he was not entirely detached from his news organisation’s initial concerns: ‘The day I started doing it, the people here [at *The Washington Post*] who run social media were a bit sceptical of it’ (quoted in Bilton, 2016). However, his employer and superiors eventually let him get on with it, encouraged by the immense audience feedback to the unconventional format of the story, and after winning the Pulitzer, they praised his efforts as ‘pioneering a new form of investigative reporting’ by posting ‘photographs of his reporter’s notebook on Twitter, signalling the lengths he’d gone to’ (*The Washington Post*, 2017). What we cannot see on Fahrenthold’s Twitter profile is the hidden process of negotiation within his organisation that he was subject to in his role as a creative and largely autonomous journalist, but also as an employee bound by organisational structures and employment contracts that deem him to follow managerial directives. In the end, his employer had come around from their initial concerns to referring to his Twitter feed as his ‘notebook’, indicating the degree to which Fahrenthold’s engagement with the platform

was then favourably viewed as part of the journalistic repertoire and produced desirable outcomes for the news organisation.

In their approach, *The Washington Post* appears like many legacy media organisations (Canter, 2013): they have themselves been propelled into a time where they are now ever more strategic in identifying the prospects of platforms like Twitter, and this strategy readily includes employees (Armstrong & Gao, 2010). Amidst financial difficulties, eroding business models and the myriad opportunities of digital technologies, they are pondering new monetisation strategies linked to Twitter and the power of clicks (Poell & van Dijk, 2014), user-generated content (Allan & Thorsen, 2009), crowdsourcing (Willnat & Weaver, 2014) and reputation management (Hanusch & Bruns, 2016). While news organisations also run their own institutional accounts, journalists' Twitter presence is increasingly subject to managerial encouragement, rules, scrutiny and judgement. While David Fahrenthold's experience is certainly a positive example of negotiating employer influence, one does not need to look far to find evidence of how 'every story [and tweet] entails dangers for news personnel and for the news organization' (Tuchman, 1973, p. 662), and many journalists have lost their jobs over something they said on Twitter or were subject to formal disciplinary action.

But influences stemming from news organisations are not the only kind that may be relevant in journalists' considerations of how, when and to which degree they engage with the platform. Journalists' engagement with Twitter is one of the many signifiers of the shifting conditions and contexts of news production in an age of post-industrial journalism (Anderson, Bell & Shirky, 2012). Here, it is imperative to recognise journalists as situated in their social context, and that not all of the old journalistic assumptions, structures and practices have simply vanished. Quite on the contrary, many of them are still very much in effect, oftentimes co-existing with or being complemented by novel elements of 21st-century news production and storytelling. For example, a White House correspondent will still attend a Presidential press conference as they did before the times of digital technologies, but may simultaneously tweet about it and thus create an additional channel of information dissemination as an event unfolds. A political reporter will still rely on inside sources from Congress or State legislatures for exclusives and story scoops, but may welcome (and actively ask for) tips from their audiences on social media.

If journalists are amongst Twitter's keenest users and feel pressure (Parmalee, 2013) to constantly be active on platforms like Twitter, and to capitalise on the many affordances of digital technologies, what are the underlying forces that shape the conditions, degree and breadth of their Twitter engagement? Many of their activities on the platform are directly observable, but we know little about why, how and when they engage in one way or another, or which outcomes (both actual and sought-after) journalists' efforts on the platform ultimately generate. I began this Introduction with the example of David Fahrenthold's approach to Twitter, which illustrates how the platform can play a crucial role in journalistic workflows but is also subject to external influences. Yet more than that, it signals Twitter's role as a serious element of contemporary news work, one that deserves recognition for its potency to facilitate and support what, in April of 2017, has been recognised by the Pulitzer committee as award-winning journalism. This makes it worthy of further investigation.

1.2. Aims and motivations

Journalism is central to society, its functioning and sense of self, and it is of crucial importance to understand the influences that shape how it is performed (Deuze, 2008). While a growing body of research has addressed journalists' observable tweeting practices, we know little about the considerations and strategies that underpin their activities on the platform, how these manifest themselves in their engagement, and which benefits they yield. This project starts with the simple yet profound recognition that news is not produced in isolation and the manner in which this occurs must therefore be shaped by a range of factors, both large and small. From the early stages of this research, I have been conscious of distinct dimensions relevant in this endeavour: the influence that a manager may have over a journalist's work; how common ways of doing one's job and occupational duties shape journalistic conduct and priorities in the work place; and how individual attitudes and personal preferences may also play a role in a journalist's decision-making. I further find a tendency in existing research to treat journalists' Twitter engagement as an isolated event, when instead it needs to be understood as a process where journalists' observable behaviour on the platform is the consequence of a negotiation of influences that precede and moderate how and under which circumstances they engage, and which outcomes are pursued and materialised through that engagement. As a result, this study is

concerned with three different kinds of influences and their relationships, and asks the following research question:

**How do factors located at the macro level of the news organisation,
the meso level of practices and routines and the micro level of the individual
shape political journalists' engagement with Twitter?**

I organise these factors within a levels-of-analysis framework inspired by Shoemaker and Reese's model of the hierarchy of influences on media content (1991, 1996, 2014). On the macro level my analysis is concerned with news organisations' influence over how journalists engage with Twitter. I seek to identify how and to which degree employers facilitate or discourage certain practices, which underlying strategies exist that drive the implementation of formal structures, and in which ways journalists experience and are involved in any of these processes, if at all. On the meso level my investigation seeks to explore how factors and considerations stemming from the context of journalists' practices and routines shape and moderate their engagement with Twitter, and how they give meaning to such engagement in the context of the tasks and workflows they perform. It builds on the premise that Twitter is not an independent force influencing the work of journalists from the 'outside' (Deuze, 2008), but rather, must be seen in terms of its possibility to support, amplify and improve, but equally hinder, limit or challenge existing and novel ways of doing journalistic work. On the micro level my study is concerned with the individual-based characteristics and considerations of journalists and how these shape the ways in which they engage with Twitter. On this level of analysis, I examine the role of journalists' demographic characteristics and explore journalists' individual-based social and cognitive needs that motivate the nature of their Twitter engagement.

Another objective of this study is to then bring together key insights from the macro, meso and micro levels respectively for a joint analysis to examine how influences interact and relate to each other. This is motivated by the aim of gaining a better understanding of how factors that shape journalists' Twitter engagement may co-exist, but can also create, on the one hand, synergies and mutually beneficial outcomes and on the other, conflicts of interest and fields of tension. In doing so, I seek to explore how journalists perceive and experience influences to align or clash, and how they assess their relative importance vis-à-vis each other.

Scholarship on journalism and Twitter, despite growing exponentially, is still young. In my aim to contribute to filling in some of the under-explored areas of this novel research field and to add specificity, I place an explicit and deliberate emphasis on three further analytical dimensions in my investigation: (1) the research focuses on individuals working in political journalism as a specific news genre; (2) these individuals are employed by legacy media organisations in the US, both in print and in broadcasting; and (3) it investigates the role of changing news climates and socio-political environments by comparing journalists' Twitter engagement during a mundane news period with the 2014 US Midterm elections.

Thus far, existing journalism research has approached Twitter with relatively limited methodological variation and predominantly quantitative approaches. I argue in this thesis that in order to fully understand journalists' engagement with Twitter and the context in which it is embedded, we must not only study journalists' directly observable presence on the platform, but widen the methodological range of our investigations. Because this study recognises 'tweeting' as a process rather than treating it as an isolated event, this necessarily means it cannot solely rely on quantitative data to examine the overarching research question. The project's focus on micro-, meso- and macro-level factors and their influence in shaping political journalists' engagement with Twitter suggests a primary and secondary object of study: (1) journalists as agents and individuals, who are situated within and surrounded by structures and contexts that shape their actions, and (2) their de facto presence on the platform where such action takes shape. To gain a fuller understanding of the research problem and its primary and secondary object of study, I employ a mixed methods approach to help triangulate data and to corroborate findings (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989). This consists of in-depth, semi-structured interviews as the study's main method, which is complemented by a quantitative content analysis of journalists' tweets and profile pages. In my first goal to study journalists as agents and individuals, I seek to capture their own perceptions of different influences, how these are experienced, and the degree to which these underpin their engagement with Twitter. In my second goal to study journalists' de facto presence on Twitter, I seek to investigate where factors that stem from the macro, meso and micro levels of analysis manifest themselves on the platform, and how external factors, such as the type of publishing medium or news climate, moderate their presence and prominence.

1.3. Overview of the thesis

Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature and presents the theoretical foundations pertinent to the development of this thesis. It offers a critical account of the three dominant research paradigms in which studies of journalism are traditionally located, exploring what each has to offer for the present study. I draw on the legacy of newsroom ethnographies from the 1970s and 1980s as the formative period for our understanding of the factors and actors involved in news production. I then consider some of the key developments and conditions of journalism in the digital age, and explore the emergence of Twitter as a novel space for journalistic pursuits, including a discussion of which questions remain under-explored in contemporary scholarship. Insights from the literature review suggest that relevant factors that underpin journalists' engagement with Twitter stem from journalists' employment context with a given news organisation; existing practices and routines; and their individual traits, preferences and motivations. This reveals the utility of a levels-of-analysis approach for this study's investigation, and I review different perspectives that theorise the macro, meso and micro levels of journalistic production respectively.

In Chapter 3 I present the key concepts relevant to this study, and outline the study's integrated conceptual framework. I argue that there is no conventional framework to study the factors that shape political journalists' engagement with Twitter, and insights from the previous review of the relevant literature suggest Shoemaker and Reese's (1991, 1996, 2014) *model of the hierarchy of influences on media content* as an organising framework that guides the overarching analytical focus of this study in an integrated framework. I conceptualise organisational factors on the macro level of analysis via a *management of media innovation perspective*, which is informed by the key concepts of *institutional logics* and *organisational culture*. On the meso level I use the concepts of *technology affordances* and *technology appropriation* to understand factors that stem from journalistic practices and routines. On the micro level I employ a *uses and gratifications* perspective to investigate individual-based characteristics and considerations. Chapter 3 concludes with the presentation of the main research question and its subquestions.

In Chapter 4 I discuss the research design and methodological approach of this study. I outline how a mixed methods approach consisting of in-depth, semi-structured interviews as the primary method and quantitative content analysis as the secondary method

operationalise the study's conceptual framework to address the overarching research question and its subquestions. I further elaborate on the rationale for this study's explicit focus on political journalists in both editorial staff and editorial leadership roles, working for US legacy media organisations in print and in broadcasting. I then explain the basis for collecting data on journalists' tweeting activities during two different time periods that are distinct in their socio-political environment. The chapter then continues to outline the ethical considerations that underlie the design of this project, especially as they pertain to using Twitter as a data source in research, and interviewing journalists as media-trained professionals and experts. Finally, I present the practicalities and procedures of carrying out the content analysis and interviews, from recruiting participants, to the collection and coding of data, and my analytical strategy.

Chapter 5, the first empirical chapter, explores factors located at the macro level of analysis and how political journalists experience these as relevant in shaping their engagement with Twitter. I present and discuss findings via a management of media innovation perspective, and investigate news organisations' mechanisms of managerial control, such as the existence of organisational Twitter policies, efforts towards compliance and enforcement, journalistic skills development and measuring journalistic performance on Twitter. I further explore three key objectives that underpin organisations' Twitter strategies, how these manifest themselves in journalists' presence on the platform, and how journalists perceive the role of organisational culture that exists both within and beyond organisational structures and management.

Chapter 6, the second empirical chapter, presents and discusses findings from the meso level of analysis and how factors and considerations stemming from the context of journalists' practices and routines shape their engagement with Twitter. With a view to understanding Twitter's role in how journalists manage their tasks and workflows, I first investigate distinct engagement patterns that emerge along the dimensions of frequency and intensity of platform use. This leads to an examination of the effect that news events have on Twitter appropriation, and a discussion of how journalists navigate associated opportunity costs to give meaning to and evaluate Twitter engagement in the context of the tasks and workflows they perform. I then discuss journalists' active and passive approaches to Twitter, followed by a discussion of the experiences and behaviours that underpin managing journalistic relationships and networks on the platform. Finally, I investigate

which platform affordances are perceived as meaningful that lie beyond what we may understand as ‘traditional practice.’

Chapter 7, the third empirical chapter, presents and discusses findings on the micro level of analysis, that is, those related to journalists as individuals. I investigate how demographic factors relate to the nature of journalists’ Twitter engagement, and consider the role of age and gender in particular. To understand which needs individuals have to engage with Twitter, I explore two distinct motivations and their perceived gratifications that underpin platform use. I first present and discuss findings that stem from information and interest-driven motivations, and then explore the need for social connection, expressing opinions, and passing time and entertainment as three social motivations that may shape Twitter use.

Finally, Chapter 8 returns to the aim of this thesis and the overarching research question. In the previous empirical Chapters 5, 6 and 7, a separate examination and discussion of factors located at the study’s three levels of analysis was carried out, and this leads to a synthesis of the study’s key research insights. These are then brought together in a joint analysis to examine how they interact and relate to each other. I discuss how they co-exist, but can also create, on the one hand, synergies and mutually beneficial outcomes and, on the other, conflicts of interest and fields of tension. I further revisit the study’s conceptual framework, and continue with an examination and critique of the research design and methodology. Finally, to conclude, I reflect on avenues for further research, and offer some final thoughts.

2. Theoretical foundations: journalists and Twitter in context

This thesis is a study of journalists and Twitter at the intersection of technological innovation, organisational structures, occupational practices and news climates, as well as individual-based traits and considerations. It is motivated by an empirical focus on political journalists in the US who work for legacy media organisations in broadcast news and print. The aim of this chapter is to review what existing literature offers in terms of identifying, understanding and connecting the various factors that underpin and shape political journalists' engagement with the platform. I draw on the theoretical and empirical achievements of many researchers before me who have investigated the various ways in which news production takes place, which aspects influence such processes and ultimately, the nature of the (news) products that journalists create, both in more traditional settings and in the digital age. This brings to bear the relevant theoretical foundations that underpin my investigation into why, how and under what circumstances political journalists engage with Twitter. It further supports the argument presented in Chapter 1, which outlined the utility of a levels-of-analysis approach for this study's inquiry.

The chapter starts with a critical account of the three dominant research paradigms in which studies of journalism are traditionally located, and I explore what each has to offer for the present study: the political economy perspective, cultural studies and the sociology of news production. In Section 2.2 I draw on the legacy of newsroom ethnographies from the 1970s and 1980s as the *formative* period for our understanding of the factors and actors involved in news production. This early scholarship offers in-depth insights into the structural conditions, decision-making, news values and workflows that underpin traditional journalistic work. I argue that some of these insights that stem from the era of classic mass media remain, to this day, relevant in understanding journalists' occupational contexts in legacy media organisations, but I highlight how the advent of digital technologies has also induced substantial changes in professional journalism. Referring to this time as the *transformative* period, I review some of the key developments and conditions of contemporary news production, including the emergence of Twitter as a novel space for journalistic pursuits.

In Section 2.3 I take a closer look at the body of scholarship that addresses the relationship between Twitter and journalism. I present some of the milestones that this rapidly expanding research field has achieved thus far. I further discuss how this informs my investigation, and which questions remain under-explored. I argue that it is essential to consider journalists' Twitter engagement as a *process* rather than as an isolated observable event, with a range of factors that underpin the considerations that shape their approach to and behaviour on the platform. Here, insights from the literature review suggest that relevant factors stem from journalists' employment context with a given news organisation, existing practices and routines, and their individual traits, preferences and motivations. This reveals the utility of a levels-of-analysis approach, and in Section 2.4 I review different perspectives that theorise the macro, meso and micro levels of journalistic production respectively. Finally, Section 2.5 provides a chapter summary and conclusion, before I provide an outlook on Chapter 3, which brings together key perspectives in the study's conceptual framework.

2.1. Journalism as an object of study: an overview of the dominant research paradigms

Studying a phenomenon always involves choice, that is, studying some things and not others, and as these accumulate, they provide structure and focus to the inquiry. These choices rest within different paradigms,² which are broadly understood as dominant analytical lenses based on shared beliefs, expectations and assumptions to view the world and understand the human experience (Kuhn, 1962). Implicit in these research paradigms are significant differences about their ontology (i.e. the nature of their social reality) and epistemology (i.e. what constitutes valid knowledge of this social reality). They further bring to bear different methodological approaches to study each paradigm's social reality, as well as conflicting values and normative outlooks (Cottle, 2003).

² See Thomas Kuhn's (1962) work, *The structure of scientific revolutions*, for a detailed discussion of paradigms, dominant conceptions of science and the evolution of knowledge. Kuhn argues that science advances the most via occasional revolutionary expressions of new avenues of thought, that is, paradigm changes, rather than a steady progression of accumulation of ideas. This viewpoint has since become widely adopted and is known as the *Kuhn cycle*.

Researchers who study journalism and the underlying aspects of news production have done so from either an economic, cultural or sociological perspective, stemming from three dominant paradigms in this field of research: the political economy perspective, cultural studies, and the sociology of news production. As paradigms shape a researcher's approach of how to reflect and represent reality, and how to gather and interpret information, these perspectives are signifying determinants of the possible focus and structure of the present inquiry. After all, '[t]he answers we find, depend on the questions we ask' (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014, p. 23). The following subsections provide a brief discussion of how each one of the three dominant paradigms in journalism research concentrates on particular characteristics and factors, and what these have to offer for the present investigation into the factors that shape political journalists' engagement with Twitter.

2.1.1. A dividing debate: political economy versus cultural studies

Traditionally, the political economy and cultural studies paradigms have dominated research endeavours in the field of journalism (Cottle, 2003). Scholars belonging to either one have always been deeply divided over how each approach thinks about forms and structures of practices (Grossberg, 1995), thus they offer contrasting explanatory emphases. What constitutes the focus of one is precisely what the other (largely) ignores. The political economy paradigm mainly focuses on the production aspect of journalism as driven by the determinants of the marketplace. Its starting point is 'the recognition that the mass media are first and foremost industrial and commercial organizations which produce and distribute commodities' (Murdock & Golding, 1973, p. 205). It thus studies journalism with an explanatory emphasis on commercial aspect, and it accentuates news organisations as businesses, as sites of investment and sources of employment (Cottle, 2003). To explain journalistic behaviour, it emphasises institutional tactics to control work performance, managerial power and supervision (Dwyer, 2015). This thesis recognises that in their role as employees of news organisations, journalists are, naturally, subject to standardised and formalised rules that organise their occupational conduct.

While this feature of the political economy approach addresses relevant aspects of this inquiry, it is not the only one worth considering. This study shares the cultural studies' most common critique of the political economy perspective: it has a problematic tendency

to be both reductionist and economically determinist in that it over-generalises the explanatory power of economic considerations and forces, while ignoring others entirely (Grossberg, 1995). For example, the political economy paradigm does not recognise the cultural dimension of media production and downplays the importance of professional values in journalism, such as autonomy or its public service role (Hallin, 1994; Schudson, 1995). We further know from other studies (e.g. Lasorsa, Lewis & Holton, 2012; Molyneux, 2015) that while institutional structures matter, they do not necessarily overrule journalists' individual agency in their engagement with Twitter.

In contrast to the political economic approach, the cultural studies tradition³ focuses less on the underlying processes and more on the outcomes and products of journalistic work. This paradigm's scholarship links what has been emphasised as the *material* of journalism, that is, its symbols, ideologies, rituals, conventions and stories, with the larger environment and context in which journalism takes place (Dahlgren, 1992; Schudson, 1991, as discussed in Zelizer, 2004). If the present study were to adopt a cultural studies approach, its focus would rest on journalists' output on Twitter, such as the content they share and engage with on the platform. It would inquire into, for example, the meanings, symbols, rituals and ideologies said content conveys, and address questions around the forms and features of media representations or the nature of cultural power exercised in and through these.

While classic dimensions of cultural studies are indeed of concern to this study (e.g. issues of professional practice), this approach is limited by a disregard of the forces stemming from economic or sociological elements that constitute social structures and the strategic deployment of organised power (Cottle, 2007). The cultural studies perspective is thus problematic for its tendency to ignore the realm of the news industry, its organisations and the individuals involved as institutions of cultural production. Ultimately, it is similarly limited in its explanatory potential as the political economy perspective to constructively underpin this study's investigation into factors that influence journalists.

³ Most notably, there are three distinct strains within this tradition, which stem from the Frankfurt School, British cultural studies and American branch of cultural studies. A more detailed review of these is beyond both the scope and purpose of this discussion, but is provided in, for example, Robert Johnson's (1985) 'What is cultural studies anyways?' and Barblie Zelizer's (2004b) work on journalism's place in cultural studies.

2.1.2. The middle ground: the sociology of news production

While both the political economy and cultural studies paradigms offer valuable, albeit partial, perspectives for this study's inquiry into political journalists' engagement with Twitter, their theoretical differences are viewed as too deep-seated to accommodate them in a theoretical synthesis (Cottle, 2003; Grossberg, 1995). In addition, they by no means exhaust the field of relevant and more holistic theoretical frameworks. Between, on the one hand, the terrains of the economic determinants of the marketplace and on the other, the cultural discourses within media representations, there is what Cottle (2003, p. 4) refers to as a 'middle ground'. This locates the third dominant paradigm in journalism research: the sociology of news production.

This study is concerned with the content journalists put on Twitter and how they engage with the platform and its users, but even more so with the objectives and processes behind the origins of that content and engagement. A sociology of news approach allows the organisational structures and workplace practices that facilitate and drive certain behaviour to be explored, but also the cultural and practice-driven dimensions of journalism, as well as individuals' agency within this. Equally relevant for this study, it accounts for the possibility of change in the nature and conduct of journalism (Schudson, 1989), given the altered and continuously evolving conditions of journalistic production in the digital age. Thus, a sociology of news production perspective presents itself as a fruitful lens through which to elucidate the dependent, interrelated and possibly changing elements that shape journalistic considerations and workflows in the context of Twitter.

2.2. An overview of the changing conditions that shape journalism

Within the tradition of a sociology of news production, the story of journalism has been told in many ways, and this offers different points of entry into its investigation. In this section I set out to review what research has been done and how it has been instrumental in providing theoretical underpinnings for many studies of influences on journalism, of both the past and present. A discussion of this scholarship can, of course, be organised around a range of unique characteristics, for example, we could distinguish between different analytical foci, or the selection of research methods, sites of study and samples.

Here it is most conducive to structure the discussion around two distinct periods in the sociology of news tradition: the era of classic mass media and the digital age. Without falling into the trap of technological determinism, this allows the transformative role of technological change and innovation in newsrooms to be recognised, and how this impinges on the factors that underlie and drive journalistic production.

In the following subsection I first review the 1970s and 1980s as a distinctly formative period in journalism research, which produced pioneering insights into the production, organisation and output of journalism. I then follow the recently initiated trend of ‘revisiting’ (e.g. Tumber, 2006), ‘rethinking’ (e.g. Aldridge & Evetts, 2003; Carlson, 2012), ‘reconfiguring’ (e.g. Bruns, 2004), and ‘reconceptualising’ (e.g. Keith, 2011) earlier approaches to studying journalism in the digital age. I outline how the conditions of news production have changed, and which new theoretical understandings this transformative period has brought forth. The following subsections are by no means intended as a holistic or comprehensive review of the history of journalism.⁴ Instead, they set out to highlight some of the milestones the sociology of news tradition has achieved that inform the theoretical foundations of my study.

2.2.1. The formative period: insights from the era of mass media

The ‘roots of a sociology of news’ (Reese & Ballinger, 2001, p. 641) began in the 1950s, a time when the field was otherwise largely preoccupied with audience and effects studies. David Manning White (1950) and Warren Breed (1955) are considered pioneers in examining journalistic production and its forces through a sociological framework. White’s work famously explored how a wire editor – he called him Mr Gates – selected news and articles to publish, inspiring what is known today as gatekeeping theory.⁵ Breed’s study was concerned with managerial policies and how reporters get to understand them, and it critically established the role and influence of control in the newsroom. In the 1970s and 1980s other researchers followed the lead of White and Breed’s studies, marking a

⁴ For a more detailed exploration of the history of journalism, especially in the US context, see Michael Schudson’s (1978) historical account of American newspapers, Thomas Hannitzsch and Karin Wahl-Jorgensen’s *The handbook of journalism studies* (2009), John Nerone’s (2011) ‘Does journalism history matter?’, as published in *American Journalism*, or Silvio Weisbard’s (2013) chapter on journalists’ paths to professionalism in *Reinventing professionalism*.

⁵ See, for example, Shoemaker and Vos’ (2009) work for an overview of gatekeeping theory.

significant period in media sociology, which is often referred to today as its 'golden age' (Tumber, 2014). From a historical perspective, studies from this era 'represent a substantive literature, rich in empirical detail and theorisation of the mechanics of news production' (Cottle, 2003, p. 15), which played a formative role in establishing and developing the field of journalism research.

The most notable and extensive scholarship of this era originates from newsroom ethnographies in the US. These studies are significant in that they enable the relevance of rules and considerations that underlie news production within organisations to be determined. Work from this era largely observes news production as a bureaucratic process and in doing so it variously discovers how journalists experience and respond to routines, divisions of labour and decision-making processes, organisational hierarchies, professional cultures and ideologies. To provide a brief overview, Edward J. Epstein's (1974) *News from nowhere: Television and the news* shows how internal corporate policy and budget requirements shape the direction of television news coverage. David Altheide's (1976) seven-year participant observation at TV news stations, *Creating reality*, offers insights into institutional processes and dynamics of selecting and producing programmes, and explores the nature of bias. Gaye Tuchman's (1978) *Making news* proposes the theory of *strategic rituals* via which journalists organise their workflows and news output to manage the unexpected and ensure that newsrooms function. Michael Schudson's (1978) *Discovering the news* offers a social history of American newspapers, and deconstructs the journalistic ideal of objectivity that underpins considerations of news production. Mark Fishman's (1980) *Manufacturing the news* sets out to demonstrate how routine methods of gathering news, rather than any hidden (ideological) manipulators, determine output. A notable study, preceding the aforementioned body of US research conducted by scholars who knew and were influenced by each other (Reese & Ballinger, 2001), is Jeremy Tunstall's (1971) *Journalists at work*. It offers a profound and systematic analysis of specialist journalists in the UK, and examines the patterns of entry to the profession as well as how journalists experience their occupational realities. Tunstall's study made a crucial contribution to positioning and expanding the discipline of a sociology of news production (Tumber, 2006), and it is notable for its pioneering effort to produce a journalism literature⁶ (Zelizer, 2004a). Its

⁶ Tunstall's (1971) sociological work was a crucial contribution to the development of the field because until then, media research was mainly approached either from a social psychology or political science perspective (Tumber, 2006).

findings demonstrate the shared attributes of journalists' occupational and professional lives, regardless of specialisation.

These studies meant that we could get a better look behind the scenes of otherwise largely invisible workings and considerations of news organisations and their various actors. This work is particularly significant to my investigation in that it identified the presence of a range of forces that underlie news production, and demonstrated how understanding these is important for their power to shape journalistic behaviour and output. Here, Herbert Gans' (1979) extensive 10-year ethnographic study *Deciding what's news* and Todd Gitlin's (1980) interview-based study *The whole world is watching* offer a particularly insightful perspective. Their work suggests four theoretical categories that shape the content that media produce (as discussed in, for example, Reese, 2008; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Gans and Gitlin systematically outline different levels of analysis and argue that content is influenced by journalists' socialisation and attitude, media organisations and routines, other social institutions and forces, and it is a function of ideological positions and maintains the status quo.

These studies critically demonstrate that journalism does not, of course, operate in a vacuum, but rather amidst a range of factors that impinge on and shape the ways in which actors behave. But despite their significance to the development of a sociology of news, the studies reviewed here also share a shortcoming: their focus on behavioural patterns stemming from larger structures, routines and practices of news organisations means that they had spent less time focusing on the experiences of individual journalists (van Dijk, 1985). Their dominant reliance on newsroom ethnographies further produces limitations inherent in the methodology: while these studies were extensive (some of them span almost a decade), they only focused on one or a few news organisations rather than studying collectives of journalists across varying contexts, for example, news genre, type of medium, geographical locations, etc. Despite their pioneering character, these forerunner studies did not create more follow-up research (Reese, 2008) – neither to expand and deepen early insights into news organisations' macro structures, nor to zoom in on the generally under-explored dimensions of journalistic agency within those structures.

While I draw on a range of insights from what can be regarded as the formative period of research into journalistic production, my research is neither an ethnographic study (see

Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion of its research design), nor is it set in a remotely similar news environment as during the 1970s and 1980s, ‘a time when TV reigned on three channels and the daily newspaper was not yet seen to be in great decline’ (Usher, 2014, pp. 21–22). This demands rethinking the conditions of and influences on journalists in the digital age.

2.2.2. The transformative period: journalism in the digital age

The scholarship presented in this subsection is informed by the general observation that ‘[t]echnology has, for better or worse, exerted a fundamental influence on how journalists do their jobs’ (Pavlik, 2000, p. 229). Change in journalism is not unusual, however, and has historically always been tied to the emergence of new tools (Waisboard, 2013). Most prominent examples of technologies that induced shifts in the performance and output of journalism are the emergence of the printing press, the telegraph, typewriters, the telephone, radio and, most recently, the television (see, for example, Lasorsa, 2012; Murthy, 2011; Pavlik, 2001; Poell & van Dijk, 2014; Shirky, 2011). From a history of journalism perspective, these are considered as significant game changers in news production as over time their adoption and appropriation led to sweeping innovations in newsrooms and journalistic conduct. In other words, journalism has experienced periods before which were perceived as *transformative* and one may argue that the advent of the internet as well as its associated digital technologies and devices indicate just another era of periodic evolution in journalism. Yet the digital age is different than what we have witnessed before: the velocity and scope of ongoing transformations are unprecedented, reaching far beyond just one realm of society, creating entire new industries, institutions and products in the process.

As is common with new technologies, there is an ongoing negotiation between the challenges and opportunities posed to established ways of doing things. In the context of journalism, recent scholarship has pointed to a vast array of new platforms, tools and techniques to produce, publish, access and engage with news, and how this has repositioned some of the underlying assumptions derived from more traditional notions of journalism. For example, scholars outline how journalism’s relationship with an active and participatory audience is transforming the classic role allocation of creators and (relatively passive) recipients of news (Allan & Thorsen, 2009; Borger et al., 2013; Bruns, 2007,

2008b; Rosen, 2006; Zamith, 2015). Others highlight how journalists are faced with significant changes in skills and demands (Willnat & Weaver, 2014) due to multi-platform production expectations (Lim, 2012), trends of media convergence (García Avilés et al., 2009; Jenkins, 2008; Robinson, 2011), as well as 24/7 news cycles and deadlines that have shifted from 'once a day' to 'NOW!' (Usher, 2014, p. 11). Other work emphasises how the ongoing digitisation of news production and consumption has critically shifted sources of revenue and questioned the viability of established business models, as many news organisations struggle for profitability or, worse yet, survival (Berte & De Bens, 2008; Doyle, 2002; Grueskin, Seave & Graves, 2011; Harrington, 2011; Williams, 2016). This affects newsrooms in a variety of ways, some of which became more immediately apparent than others over time, such as layoff decisions and organisational restructuring to accommodate tight budgets, efforts to create synergies by merging genres and/or dramatically reducing staff (as was prominently the case for many investigative reporting teams), cultivating an environment where journalists generally feel like they have to do more with less (Usher, 2014).

Hyper-connectivity has become a key feature of contemporary society with an expectation of immediate, around-the-clock access to news and information at our finger tips. Given this study's concern with the genre of political journalism, this notion warrants a brief exploration of (online) political communication, and its significance in terms of how journalists access, interact and develop relationships with their (political) sources, as well as the actors and events they cover. Media are central to political life (Curran, 2005), and as such, political journalists occupy an especially salient space in the fabric of democratic societies. Generally, the emergence of modern political communication coincides with the development of mass communication in the 20th century, but with the advent of the internet a shift has occurred in how political communicators operate (Negrine, 2008; Staney, 2007).

Naturally, politics continue to be made up of various institutions and actors, and these have distinct relationships with each other, which are, at almost every point, mediated (Hjarvard, 2014; Lundby, 2008). But the digital age expanded the quantity and variety of accessible political information via the public sphere of the internet (Dahlgren, 2005). This has created unprecedented prospects for political operatives to strategically communicate 'their' messages. But citizens are equally able to communicate with peers about current events,

and such opportunities for political participation and communication materialise by joining interest groups, interacting with political institutions and candidates and exchanging and discussing political information with other citizens (Krueger, 2002). In particular, scholars have established social media as pervasive tools in negotiating public issues (Ausserhofer & Maireder, 2013) and for election campaigning (Jungherr, 2015), with various studies outlining how political communicators use platforms like Facebook and Twitter for individual-based marketing and personalised campaigning (Bode & Dalrymple, 2014; Enli & Skogerbo, 2013).

A key approach to understanding the changes between politics and news is the concept of media logic, which refers to ‘the assumptions and processes for constructing messages within a particular medium’ (Altheide, 2010, p. 294). The logic of the media has now embedded itself into political institutions and changed how they operate (Couldry, 2008) in such a way that they have become mediatised (Krotz, 2007; Schulz, 2004). This means that political institutions and actors are variously calculated, tactical and deliberate in capitalising on the distinct communicative properties of emerging tools and techniques to advance their cause, providing the kinds of events, quotes and story angles that they expect journalistic formats to prefer (Altheide, 2010). Overall, this raises important questions as to how political journalists approach and interact with politicians and the political content communicated in these novel digital spaces.

Witnessing the transformative developments discussed in this section, many have deemed journalism as a ‘profession under pressure’ (Witschge & Nygren, 2009) or ‘in crisis’ (Young, 2010), faced with mounting troubles of confidence and credibility (Tumber, Bromley & Zelizer, 2000). Much of this is deeply intertwined with the subversive shifts overarching the whole media industry outlined above, and symptomatised by eroding business models, declining revenues as well as harsh competition for markets and audiences. Anderson, Bell and Shirkey (2012) argue that the current, transformative state of the news media indicates a new era altogether. Termed the ‘age of post-industrial journalism’, they find that the broader shifts in the media landscape and the restructuring of the current media ecology requires the re-thinking and re-shifting of ‘every organizational aspect of news production, such as increased openness to partnerships; increased reliance on publicly available data; increased use of individuals, crowds and machines to produce raw material’ (Anderson et al., 2012, p. 3). Chadwick (2013) propels

the understanding of journalism in the post-industrial age further by highlighting the notion of hybridity as a central feature of this era. He refers to the current communications environment as a 'hybrid media system' that in essence conveys the idea of the strategic mix of the old and new, the traditional and innovative, and the long-standing and pioneering. Chadwick argues that journalism, as a key institution in Western media systems, is now 'built upon interactions among older and newer media logics – where logics are defined as technologies, genres, norms, behaviors, and organizational forms' (2013, p.4). One of those new 'media logics' that complements journalists' existing practices is the professional engagement with the micro-blogging service Twitter. Scholarship on Twitter and journalism is young, and while the platform is unique in its affordances, it is equally embedded in the wider shifts of a transforming news landscape.

2.3. Journalists on Twitter: locating the milestones and remaining questions

The scholarship on Twitter and journalism is young, although rapidly growing. This section is neither intended as a holistic review of existing works, nor does it set out to provide a typology or classification of Twitter studies. Instead, it seeks to add to the works already introduced in the Introduction, and aims to highlight some of the milestones this emerging research field has achieved thus far, how insights are instructive for the development of this thesis and which questions remain under-explored.

Twitter has gained a reputation for attracting the kind of people who are interested in, and engaged with, the news (Farhi, 2009). Be it breaking news, international crises, natural disasters or even sports and entertainment, much of the information cycle around these events evolves on and through Twitter. As a result, journalists have been quick to adopt the platform (Hedman & Djerf-Pierre, 2013) and today they are amongst its most enthusiastic users (Farhi, 2009; Hermida, 2010; Rogstad, 2014). A range of terms similarly capture this phenomenon, ranging from 'networked journalism' (Beckett & Mansell, 2008) to 'liquid journalism' (Deuze, 2009), 'social news' (Goode, 2009), 'ambient journalism' (Hermida, 2010) and 'social journalism' (Hermida, 2012).

The journalistic uptake of Twitter has sparked a great degree of interest amongst scholars and has become a rapidly expanding research field. A vast majority of studies have investigated journalists' observable engagement with Twitter, and focused on particular journalistic activities, such as content dissemination, sourcing and audience interaction, particularly during times of heightened political activity or crisis (Cozma & Chen, 2013; Holton & Lewis, 2011; Vis, 2013). Others have examined how journalists exercise their traditional professional norms, values and standards in this non-traditional media space, often with the effect to 'normalise' Twitter (Gulyas, 2013; Lasorsa et al., 2012). Classifications and typologies associated with the different journalistic user groups on social media have also resulted from the scholarly attention given to journalism on these platforms (see, for example, Hedman & Djerf-Pierre 2013; Rogstad 2013). Scholars have also looked at how user-generated content (UGC) is opening up the news processes to non-elite and non-traditional actors. Twitter's low barriers to entry and flat hierarchies allow for citizen journalism (Allan & Thorsen, 2009) – termed 'open-source' (Deuze, 2001), 'participatory' (Bowman & Willis, 2000) or 'grassroots' (Gillmor, 2004) journalism in the literature – to move into a space that was formerly controlled by professionals alone, contributing to and participating in the news process.⁷

News organisations have become keen platform users themselves and also act as facilitators of journalistic engagement. Many news organisations have invested resources and hired non-journalistic experts to help with shaping and optimising their presence on Twitter (Parr, 2009), and today, organisational Twitter policies have become common in newsrooms (Bloom, Cleary & North, 2016), often as part of wider social media strategies, which tends to be tied to economic considerations and imperatives (Lewis, Holton & Coddington, 2014). In this regard, efforts around audience engagement, generating traffic and platform analytics have come to play an increasing role in news organisations and journalists' considerations. Previous work by Napoli (2011, p. 95) argues that 'the concept of engagement has moved from the periphery to the center of how media organizations ... are thinking about audiences', and journalists have adopted an understanding of contemporary audiences on Twitter as 'active recipients' (Lewis et al., 2014, p. 231). Research that surveyed editors found that an overwhelming majority (90%) considered audience engagement a top priority when tweeting (Mayer, 2011). However, Usher (2014) argues against this notion, as her research findings suggest that while journalists follow

⁷ See Bruns et al. (2008a, 2012, 2011) for a discussion of this phenomenon as 'produsage.'

organisational imperatives to have a presence on social media, they do not make great efforts to engage their audiences in genuine conversations. Furthermore, the use of analytics has also become common in newsrooms (Cherubini & Nielsen, 2016), although Twitter only drives a small amount of traffic for news organisations. For example, active publishers in the US report only receiving 11 per cent of their traffic from tweets (Lichterhan, 2016), while it appears common knowledge that prolific usage as well as tapping into the 'internet culture' is more likely to 'go viral' and boost Twitter analytics (Cross, 2011).

Previous studies also suggest Twitter's utility for journalists as a marketing and image management tool (Holton & Lewis, 2011; Lasorsa et al., 2012). Reporters use it for branding purposes (Molyneux, 2015a; Ottovordemgentschenfelde, 2016a), and even to build celebrity status (Marwick & boyd, 2011; Sanderson, 2008). While legacy media remain as powerful entities, individual journalists have become brands themselves (Hanusch & Bruns, 2016; Reimer, 2014), often due to a considerable degree of 'personalisation' of their presence on the platform (Brems et al., 2016).

Research on political journalists and Twitter is limited, as studies have explored journalism in general as an occupational umbrella group without differentiating between journalistic genres or specialisations. Notable exceptions are Nuernbergk (2016) and his exploration of political journalists' interaction networks on Twitter in Germany, Rogstad (2014) and her study of Norwegian political journalists' professional norms related to distance and neutrality on Twitter, and Parmalee's (2013) investigation into how Twitter changes norms and reporting practices amongst political journalists in the US. The lack of studies that investigate political journalists on Twitter as a particular news genre is surprising, given that Twitter tends to be driven by communities of interest, and the political community on Twitter is particularly strong. In addition to journalists, it is made up of politicians, their staff and other officials, who have risen as some of the keenest adopters of Twitter (Jungherr, 2015), and earlier observations establish that 'Twitter is the central news source for the Washington-based political news establishment' (Hamby, 2013, p. 2).

This section has reviewed some of the key findings of the scholarship on Twitter and journalism, and identified some gaps, such as a lack of comparative studies between, for example, journalists who work for different type of media. While many studies usefully

investigate breaking news events, elections and natural disasters, these are times of distinctly high political activity. In order to understand journalists' engagement with Twitter, there is also a need to look at the mundane. In addition, what many of these studies have in common is a dominant reliance on content analysis that merely investigates observable behaviour (and thus readily accessible data) on Twitter, rather than inquiring into those practices that are overt, but perhaps equally meaningful. These studies have made an important contribution to addressing a range of questions about the practices and conditions of journalism in the digital age, but given their little methodological variation, knowledge gaps remain, especially in regards to questions of journalists' own perceptions and experiences of Twitter engagement. Following this, I argue that there is a need to continue moving beyond questions of Twitter use as an *isolated event*, and to view engagement as a *process* embedded into and deriving from both larger and smaller structures and considerations that surround journalists (akin to some of the key findings from the formative period of the scholarship on news production, as reviewed in Section 2.2.1 of this chapter). My standpoint is one where journalists' engagement with Twitter needs to be seen as a consequence of underlying strategies, motivations and desired outcomes, which are instrumental in facilitating the de facto 'use' we then so readily observe on the platform. In order to understand how journalists engage with Twitter, it is necessary to view reporters' behaviour on the platform as a consequence of their social and occupational context. This raises the question – which concrete factors are then influential in shaping how, when and under which circumstances journalists engage with Twitter?

2.4. Bringing together factors located at different levels of analysis

To understand which factors underpin journalists' engagement with Twitter, we can recall (as reviewed earlier in this chapter) the ways in which Schudson (1989) observed various constraints imposed on individuals by organisations despite the private intentions of individual actors, or in which Tunstall's *Journalists at work* (1971) demonstrates the systematic nature with which occupational workflows are realised. Pairing this with insights from the literature review on journalism and Twitter suggests that an understanding of journalists' engagement with the platform demands considering factors situated in different spheres, contexts and structures of the environment in which news professionals are embedded.

One common approach to studying journalism is via practice theory, and Bourdieu's field theory has become a principal lens through which scholarship investigates the performance and conduct of journalism (Couldry, 2003). Bourdieu's field theory conceptualises media as a relatively autonomous institutional sphere, and suggests that journalism is a distinct space with its own ethos, recognising journalists as active and creative agents. Central to Bourdieu's field theory are the concepts of *capital*, *habitus* and *doxa*. In a Bourdieuan approach, the nature of capital is conceptualised either as economic (monetary), cultural (class-based knowledge, tastes and resources), social (the potential for opportunity based on relations among actors), or symbolic (honour and prestige) (Bourdieu, 1993; Swartz, 1997). As a general rule, the more capital one possesses, the more control and influence one may exercise (Barnard, 2016), with economic capital generally recognised as the most powerful type of capital. For example, journalists possess symbolic capital in that they form an occupational group that is presupposed to work altruistically for the common good with expert knowledge and in receipt of public trust. Over time, journalists have successfully achieved professional status, and this grants them extensive self-regulation and supremacy in order to guard and refine their expert knowledge (Wiik, 2009). Bourdieu's concept of habitus refers to the complex accumulation of experiences accrued through a journalist's practical and historical engagement with the social structures that surround him. It is through these experiences that he internalises the possibilities and constraints of social life (Bourdieu, 1990, 2005). In other words, the notion of habitus is what gives journalists a sense of how to act in a given context or situation (Compton & Benedetti, 2010). For example, professional standards represent a form of habitus insofar as they are important in giving occupational members a sense of belonging, as well as directing journalists' choices and behaviour in daily work (Wiik, 2009). Habitus demands a dialectical approach to social agency – it is both structured by given social contexts and structuring in the sense that it helps to reproduce the social (Compton & Benedetti, 2010). The Bourdieuan concept of doxa refers to 'the universe of tacit presuppositions that we accept as the natives of a certain society' (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 37). In other words, doxa are the values embedded in a field and taken for granted that go largely undiscussed and undisputed (Markham, 2009). For example, Schultz (2007, p. 190) calls this 'the journalistic gut feeling' and refers to a scenario in which journalists, for example, assess the news value of a story in silence, indicating how the decision-making process belongs to the universe of the undisputed and naturally embedded.

In summary, Bourdieu's field theory suggests that as journalists are socialised into the field, they acquire field-specific capital, form a situated habitus, and eventually become accustomed to the doxa of that field. The outcome of this process is *practice* (Barnard, 2016). While Bourdieu's field theory has become a popular framework to study journalistic practice, it is not an unproblematic one for this study. It is predominantly a structural macro-approach and treats journalism as one field, situated amongst the broader network of fields, such as politics, economics and other cultural fields that all have the potential to influence each other in various ways (Benson & Neveu, 2005), but it is unclear how a Bourdieuan approach conceptualises a plurality of actors within the field of journalism, possible (sub)fields and their interrelationship (Benson, 1998; Chalaby, 1998; Marlière, 1998). Some scholars also argue that Bourdieu's theory tends to overstate the conflict between making money, that is, acquiring economic capital, and being able to speak truth to power, that is, remaining independent as a journalistic field from outside influences (Ahmad, 2010). The prominence of such conflicts arguably diminishes in media systems where news organisations are largely privately owned rather than publically funded, as is the case in the US, which is this study's geographic focus. Field theory further displays a tendency to approach questions of control in a top-down manner and thus neglects a micro-perspective that accounts for journalists as individuals (as opposed to situated, strategic actors and members of the occupation). In doing so, its conceptual utility is limited in informing the analytical dimension of journalists as individuals with particular traits, preferences and predispositions as one of the key areas of investigation in this study. This work is further interested in processes of change (as previously outlined in Sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 via a discussion of the evolution from the formative to the transformative period in journalism), and a Bourdieuan perspective does not offer sufficient understanding for how, conceptually, to deal with the possibility of change beyond the assumption that a change in the possession of capital eventually changes the field (Compton & Benedetti, 2010). This is a particularly relevant limitation if one were to understand the ways in which the journalistic field is undergoing vast changes as journalists increasingly leverage actions that digital technologies such as Twitter enable through its design (Earl & Kimport, 2011).

If we are to understand how journalists' Twitter presence becomes what it is, we have to understand the individuals who create it, the relationships between them, as well as the smaller and larger structures and contexts in which this creation occurs. Thus far, the review of existing scholarship on journalism and Twitter (see Section 2.3) has elucidated a

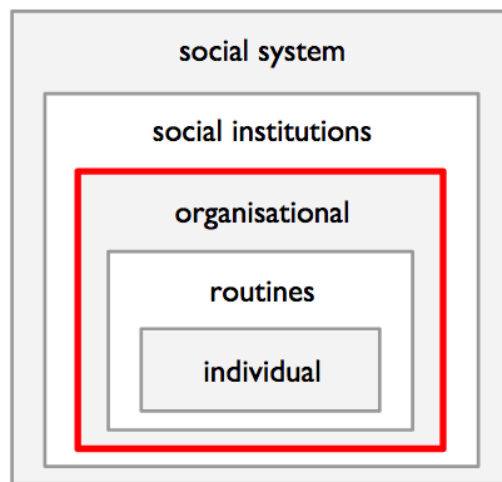
plurality of aspects relevant to how and under which conditions reporters tweet, ranging from organisational social media policies, to perceived opportunities of news gathering, and personal branding. These have different origins: social media policies, for example, are often imposed by journalists' employers, while Twitter's role in news gathering frequently stems from practice-related factors, and the personalisation of journalists' presence on the platform speaks to an individual-based dimension of their engagement. We can see how journalists' Twitter engagement is a process that operates under layers of forces and influences (Herman & Chomsky, 2002; Tandoc Jr, 2013), which demands bringing them together under one roof to organise this study's inquiry.

Shoemaker and Reese's (1996, 2014) model of the hierarchy of influences on media content is one of the most widely known attempts to elucidate such layers of forces that impinge on and shape journalism. Despite its content-centric name, the approach focuses in large part on five distinct factors relevant to journalistic production (Keith, 2011), and proposes a framework based on the classification of structural influences that operate both separately and in conjunction with each other. These are classified as nested levels of analysis, hierarchically arrayed from the smallest to the largest, thus giving the model its name. Figure 2.1 provides a visualisation of the model and further illustrates the five levels and their relative position to each other:

1. The *individual* level, which includes the characteristics and factors intrinsic to the journalist as an individual. This also encompasses the journalist's personal demographics, background and experiences, as well as personal attitudes, predispositions and preferences.
2. The *routines* level, which is concerned with how journalists rely on and demonstrate patterns of behaviour and repeated practices in response to common situations. This includes the most immediate structures, routines and repeated practices that journalists employ to do their job, and these can be both constraining and enabling.
3. The *organisational* level, which describes the influences of the larger organised entity within which the journalist operates and the larger routinised activities, organisational policies, and how the employing media organisation itself is structured.

4. The level of the *social institutions*, which encompasses the influences arising from the larger media field, transcending individual organisations, and describes how these combine into larger institutions that become part of structured relationships as they depend on and compete with other powerful institutions in society.
5. The level of the *social system*, which speaks to the influences on journalists from the social system as a whole, which includes ideological forces that concern ideas and meanings in the service of interest and power. This level reflects how all other levels come together and add up to a larger result.

Figure 2.1: Shoemaker and Reese's *model of the hierarchy of influences on media content*



The model builds on the social-constructivist premise that media content is a product of its wider context, and allows us to understand journalists and their engagement with Twitter as driven by a web of individual, organisational and social constraints. In Figure 2.1, the red outer box between the level of media organisations and social institutions reflects an analytical distinction between those elements that reside within media organisations (i.e. the level of the individual journalist and their characteristics, routines and the organisation's larger structures) and those forces that lie beyond their boundaries (i.e. the levels of institutional actors and the larger social system). It is those three levels that exist *within* media organisations that are relevant to this study's line of inquiry.

The model put forward by Shoemaker and Reese is not the only attempt to organise influences on journalism in a levels-of-analysis approach. Most prominently, Hanitzsch et al. (2010) conducted a survey of journalists from 17 countries to investigate perceived

influences on news work, and discovered a dimensional structure of six distinct domains: political, economic, organisational, professional, and procedural influences, as well as reference groups. McQuail (2000) suggests a model that is organised into five levels, ranging from the individual/role, to the organisation, the medium/industry/institution, as well as the societal and international levels. Donsbach (2004) distinguishes between individual, professional, institutional and societal 'spheres' of influences, while yet other researchers (see, for example, Ettema et al., 1987; or Whitney et al., 2004) variously propose to consider three levels, with a frequent distinction between the general domains of the individual, the organisation and the institution. In a discussion of these studies, Hanitzsch et al. (2010) point out that the conceptual overlap between these models is not particularly overwhelming (with the exception of the individual level), although they contain, by and large, similar sources of influence that are often placed on different levels. From a comparative perspective, it is also worth highlighting that Shoemaker and Reese first introduced their model in 1996, which not only preceded the introduction of any of the other models reviewed above (with the exception of Ettema et al., 1987), but possibly also inspired, to one degree or another, their initial development. As such, Shoemaker and Reese's model was not only the first of its kind, it was also recently updated for the media landscape of the 21st century (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014), countering recent critiques that demanded a degree of re-conceptualisation to account for the idiosyncrasies of multimedia and emerging media (Keith, 2011).

But Shoemaker and Reese's model does not remain without problems. It is often criticised for being somewhat US-centric (Hackett, 2006), although this is not a key concern for my work given its direct applicability to precisely this context as the study's geographic focus. More importantly, the model claims to explicate key concepts relevant to each of its levels (Reese, 2001), but tends to fall short in this ambition. It is occasionally vague, and struggles with definitional boundaries and overlaps. For example, 'organisations' are variously included as influential factors on both the organisational and routines levels, causing a conceptual and analytical predicament in locating appropriate measures to enable a clear conceptualisation and structured analysis. Other scholars have called into question the reasons behind the notion of organised 'hierarchies' between levels, that is, how one can empirically distinguish the effect of one level from that of another, and how one can achieve accurate comparison between those effects with one another (Lee, 2004). This suggests that the levels themselves are insufficiently theorised and the model's name is

easily misleading: 'hierarchy' merely refers to the relative position of levels in the model instead of a level's superiority over another.

Models, by definition, are meant to simplify, highlight and organise. It is important to recognise that the undisputed strength of the hierarchical model rests with its relative simplicity and systematic vigour via a levels-of-analysis approach. It is for precisely this reason that many other scholars have been inspired to ground their work in Shoemaker and Reese's model to study a range of influences on journalism located at one or a few of the five levels. For example, at the institutional level of analysis, Hollerbach (2009) uses content analysis to investigate the influence of market segmentation on the frequency, centrality and status of African Americans in television advertising. On the routines level of analysis, Carpenter (2008) utilises Shoemaker and Reese's model to carry out content analysis to understand the relationship between citizen and professional online journalists and their reliance on media routines, particularly in terms of objectivity and external sources. Keith et al.'s (2009) work is also grounded in Shoemaker and Reese's work and employs content analysis to investigate journalistic convergence and content differences among media platforms in the coverage of the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. Cassidy's (2006) national survey of journalists found that routine gatekeeping forces exert more influence on the professional role conceptions of print and online journalists in the US than individual-level forces. On the organisational and routines level of analysis, Silcock and Keith's (2006) study on newsrooms' convergence partnerships investigates language and culture-based challenges through interviews with former and current journalists. On the social system, routines and individual levels of analysis, Reynolds and Barnett (2003) use the hierarchical model to explore how breaking news functions differently than traditional news via a content analysis of the 'live' coverage of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the US. These studies provide a robust demonstration of the structural and analytical utility of Shoemaker and Reese's model, but their investigative focus also reveals the absence of holistic approaches that simultaneously take *all* of the model's five levels into account. While the ability to gather data at all levels within the same research study is desirable, Shoemaker and Reese (2014) themselves point to their model's limitation to achieve this within the scope of one research study. This is largely due to the complex and intricate interrelationships between the levels of the model, which pose various challenges in terms of methodological operationalisation, and locating appropriate and reliable measures across all dimensions.

In light of this, this study recognises the level of social institutions and the social system level as theoretically vital elements of the model, but they are practically challenging to include as part of this study. Especially social systems do not lend themselves to direct observation or reliable self-reporting within this study's methodological approach (see Chapter 4 for details), particularly as they speak to larger power dynamics and questions of hegemony and the nature with which these manifest themselves in journalists' Twitter engagement. Again, with its explicit focus on individual journalists, this study considers the model's three analytical levels that reside within media organisations as pertinent to its investigation: the individual, the routines, and the organisational level. In the following, for reasons of conceptual differentiation, these shall also be referenced based on their relative macro-, meso- and micro-level position *within* the news organisation.

Overall, despite the model's limitations outlined above, it is attractive for its simplicity and comprehensiveness, for it seeks to build on and bring together otherwise isolated assumptions in media sociology (Reese, 2001; Shoemaker & Reese, 2013), as well as for its preoccupation with media production and its idiosyncrasies. It also accounts, principally, for the interaction and relationship between different levels of influences. This underlines the model's utility as an organising framework, but requires each of the three levels pertinent to this study (i.e. the organisational, routines and individual levels) to be separately conceptualised. The following discussion builds on Shoemaker and Reese's model, and further outlines each of the three levels' conceptual significance, as it pertains to this study's specific investigation of journalists and their engagement with Twitter. While the sequence of those levels of analysis can be approached in different directions, the discussion starts with the organisational level, progressing from the macro and meso structure of practices and routines to the smallest micro perspective on the individual level.

2.4.1. The macro level: studying organisational influences

The macro level of analysis is concerned with the influences that organisations exert over journalists in their engagement with Twitter. Understanding the ways in which organisations are perceived as influential in shaping journalistic behaviour is necessarily a question of how news organisations are run (Deuze, 2011). Journalists are agents with a considerable degree of autonomy who engage in largely creative work. But they are also employees of news organisations and as such, they are bound by implicit and explicit

structures that organise their work (Breed, 1955; Redmond, 2006; Usher, 2014). And herein lies the duality of the journalistic process that is key in this investigation: while reporters need to be able to follow their professional ethos to work freely and creatively within news organisations, managers need to be able to ‘control the creative process without squashing it’ (Herbert, 2016, p. 22), in order to fulfil the production needs of privately-owned news organisations as commercial enterprises (Tuchman, 1978).

The scholarship for exploring the ways in which employers manage and interact with their staff is plentiful. Various schools of management, organisational theory and psychology, the sociology of work and human resources management are amongst the most prominent but hardly exhaust the list of relevant disciplines that contribute to understanding employer–employee relationships. While these approaches offer scope for adaptation to the particular contexts of news organisations, it is instructive for this inquiry to recognise that media as an industry are significantly distinct. For example, Laving and Wackman (1988) outline five characteristics that differentiate media industries from other types of businesses: the perishable commodity of the media product; its highly creative employees; the organisational structure; the societal role and influence of the media; and the blurring of lines separating news organisations. Taking these unique characteristics into account suggests the scholarship of media management (Caves, 2000; Ferguson, 1997; Mierzejewska & Hollifield, 2006) as useful to this study’s macro concern with organisational influences on journalistic staff and their Twitter engagement.

As outlined earlier in this chapter, journalism has undergone significant transformations in the digital age (Anderson et al., 2012; Klinenberg, 2005; Usher, 2014). How news organisations manage and successfully integrate platforms like Twitter and their employees’ use of them then becomes a question of strategic change management. Research into change management has gained particular prominence within the media management field, and scholars have commonly studied such phenomena via three approaches: organisational adoption of technology approach; diffusion of innovation theory; and management of media innovation perspectives.

The first approach, the adoption of technology, addresses the effects of organisational technology adoption on media work processes and media professionals (Achtenhagen & Raviola, 2009; Lawson-Borders, 2003). As reviewed in Mierzejeska (2011), this research is

limited in scope (Daniels & Hollifield, 2002; Russial, 1994; Russial & Wanta, 1998; Stamm, Underwood & Giffard, 1995) and tends to find an organisation's decision to introduce new media technologies in newsrooms initially has a negative effect on reporters before finding acceptance, such as decreased job satisfaction, role changes, forced development of new skills and increased production time at the expense of creating new content. Adoption-driven approaches on the level of the news organisations are limited for two reasons (Dogruel, 2015). First, the emphasis on adoption and acceptance of technologies narrows the focus of change management to the final phase of what is, in fact, a process. This leads to an oversight of earlier phases of development and design as crucial dimensions of change management. Second, its pull towards business-oriented frameworks implies a top-down approach in management (neglecting journalists' agency within an organisation's adoption mandate), and limits the scope for explanatory factors that reveal outcomes amongst reporting staff.

The second approach, diffusion of innovation theory, is concerned with the ways in which users adopt technological innovations. It originated in the early 20th century with a study that investigated farmers' adoption of agricultural processes and technologies (Rogers, 1995, 2003). Since then, the approach has been used by many social scientists to understand human responses to innovation and technological change, mostly with a focus on consumer behaviour (Lawson-Borders, 2003; Mierzewska & Hollifield, 2006). Others also maintain (Rogers, 2003; Taesung, 2015) its utility for understanding technology adoption and innovation within organisations, understanding it as a 'process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system' (Rogers, 1995, p. 5). For example, Arceneaux and Schmitz Weiss (2010) have employed diffusion of innovation theory to study Twitter in news organisations, although mostly from a media audience point of view. Swasy's (2016) study of the introduction, adoption and institutionalisation of Twitter at four US newspapers did not rely on diffusion of innovation theory alone, but required pairing it with social capital theory⁸ to provide a useful framework to explore journalistic Twitter use.

⁸ Social capital theory, as outlined by Lin (2001), posits how actors are motivated by instrumental or expressive needs to engage other actors in order to access their resources for the purpose of gaining better outcomes. The core proposition is that such accessed resources are embedded in social connections and relations, and constitute what is conceptualised as social capital.

Diffusion of innovation theory builds on the premise that news organisations can either collectively or authoritatively decide to implement an innovation, and their decision process progresses over five stages: (1) knowledge (when journalists learn about the innovation); (2) persuasion (when they are persuaded of the value of the innovation); (3) decision (when they decide to adopt it); (4) implementation (when the organisation puts the innovation into operation); and (5) confirmation (when journalists reaffirm or reject it). All of these stages are conceptually problematic for the present study, given that many journalists have been actively using Twitter for journalistic purposes long before their employers made any attempts to formalise its integration on an organisational level. Overall, the diffusion of innovation's focus on individual adoption as an outcome (Davis, 1989; DeLone & McLean, 2003; Roger, 1995; Venkatesh et al., 2003) falls short in elucidating the ways in which journalists can contribute to shaping the innovation process beyond accepting or rejecting a technology. For example, this is demonstrated by Zhou's (2008) work on the voluntary versus forced adoption of technology amongst Chinese journalists. As a result, insights that stem from studies that consider the diffusion of innovation within media organisations and adoption amongst its actors remains sparse (Dogruel, 2015; Mierzejewska, 2011).

The third approach is a management of media innovation perspective, which addresses how news organisations approach and negotiate opportunities of possible (technological) change. The underlying premise of this perspective views innovation as an integrative, dynamic and social process (Dogruel, 2015). The perspective has been usefully applied to understanding new communication technologies that are inducing tremendous changes in the 'legacy' media industries, especially journalism and publishing (Doyle, 2002; Mierzejewska & Shaver, 2014; Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009). This allows for an exploration of how and to which degree news organisations act as strategic entities that seek to ensure efficiency and predictability in achieving certain organisational goals, while also seeking to minimise uncertainty and risks. Because the perspective offers an understanding of organisational approaches to change and technology as a complex and dynamic process that exceeds the control of a single (organisational) actor (Dogruel, 2015), it acknowledges journalists' agency as a highly creative and autonomous workforce involved in social negotiations around change management in the workplace.

The perspective is not a formal theory, and as such, it relies on key concepts to underpin its application. Research on change processes in news organisations emphasises that journalism has always been shaped by technological innovation without falling into the trap of technological determinism (Boczkowski, 2004a; Gade, 2004; Gade & Raviola, 2003). Following these studies, the management of media innovation perspective is commonly informed by two key concepts: institutional logics and organisational culture. Institutional logics are socially constructed frames of reference that organisations use to infuse their work and decisions with meaning. Thornton et al. (2012) suggest that these are either material (i.e. managerial mechanisms and strategies of control) or symbolic (i.e. organisational objectives and the justification of procedures). Institutional logics stem from the perspective that while news organisations depend on journalists' creativity to produce quality products, there is also a strict understanding that '[y]ou need common knowledge and rules to keep everyone going in the same direction' (Redmond, 2006, p. 115). Furthermore, managerial mechanisms and strategies of control (Lavine & Wachman, 1988) are then used in such a way that it helps individuals transition into new or evolving tasks, and outlines strategies for best use of new technologies (Appelbaum, 1997). In principle, any kind of engagement with digital technology and platforms like Twitter is shaped by knowledge and the ability to use it (Deuze, 2008), although a study found that news organisations tend to struggle with updating employees' digital skills (Aris & Bughin, 2009), arguing that successful innovation management must encompass systematic talent development and investment in training.

Organisational culture captures covert influences in newsrooms, as it is constantly enacted and created through interactions with others, while also shaped by leadership behaviour via sets of structures, rules and expectations that guide and constrain behaviour (Schein, 2004). While members contribute to developing an organisational culture, it comprises both shared perceptions and practices rather than being solely based on values held by individual members. In the context of innovation management, organisational culture 'facilitates sense-making amongst a group of people sharing common experiences and guides individual behaviour at work' (Bloor & Dawson, 1994, p. 276). This conceptualisation of organisational culture is helpful in understanding the relationship between the various cultures that exist in the workplace, but also the process by which individual journalists attempt to remain autonomous from certain influences. While culture is an 'empirically based abstraction' (Schein, 2004, para. 7), it points to phenomena that are below the

surface, which are powerful in their impact, but largely invisible and to a considerable degree unconscious. Both concepts have been found as constituting elements of innovation processes in news organisations (Boczkowski, 2004a; Daniels & Hollifield, 2002).

2.4.2. The meso level: the role of routines and practices

The meso level of analysis is concerned with the role that routines and practices play in shaping journalists' Twitter engagement. The focus at this level is not which practices journalists perform on Twitter (as many studies have considered this before), but rather how Twitter helps (or hinders) in performing occupational tasks. In the digital age, journalists are increasingly under pressure to do more with less. Economic difficulties lead to cut-backs on resources and intensified workloads, causing a common expectation of 'multi-skilling' in newsrooms (Bromley, 1997). Boczkowsky supports this notion in his observation that 'there has been an acceleration in the flows of news production, a rise in the expectation regarding the volume of stories to be finished on an average workday, and either a static or a decrease in the temporal and material resources available to produce these stories' (Boczkowski, 2011, p. 129). Deadlines have become continuous and stories are updated whenever new information becomes available (Singer, 2011).

Amidst production pressures old and new, Tuchman's (1973) concept of strategic rituals is often employed to study journalistic practices, referring to concrete and deliberate practices that help journalists manage their workflows and tasks in such ways that mitigate pressure and risk. This stems from the core argument that rules, routines and norms persist for a reason: they simplify news work, they make it more efficient, and because of this, they are agreed on by the community of journalists. While these can be renegotiated and changed, they are group-based, relatively slow to amend and responsive in their nature, rather than proactive. Strategic rituals thus lack in their potential to account for how 'the most obvious change to journalism has involved the introduction and rapid incorporation of new tasks and the tools needed to accomplish them' (Singer, 2011, p. 103).

Here, the approaches of affordances and appropriation of technology lend themselves usefully to this investigation. Affordances are those features of a technology that make

certain actions possible (Graves, 2007), that is, they allow certain uses and restrict others. Affordances are understood as a technology's materiality that is independent of the user, but assumes meaning based on a user's social context (Faraj & Bijan, 2012), which signifies that it can have different meaning for different users. As such, it is a relational concept, that is, a relation between the technology and the socially situated user. This allows an understanding of how different journalists might perceive of Twitter's opportunities and limitations differently in the context of their work. The concept of appropriation is then connected to affordances – it is the procedural understanding of how journalists adopt and adapt Twitter to integrate it into their occupational practices and workflows (Djerf-Pierre, Ghersetti & Hedman, 2016). It offers insights into how users change and alter their technology use for their own preferred practices, and as such, it must be understood as a recursive process. Research by Djerf-Pierre et al. (2016) on Swedish journalists' appropriation of social media suggests four key assumptions that underpin the appropriation of technology: (1) social media have a materiality that allows and restricts specific usages; (2) the materiality of social media can evolve and change over time as a result of an actor's engagement with the platform; (3) social media as technologies have different meanings for different categories of users; and (4) the meanings and uses of social media are constantly negotiated and transformed across time.

2.4.3. The micro level: journalists as individuals

The micro level of analysis focuses on each journalist's individual traits and considerations that shape their Twitter engagement. Previous studies have widely established demographic characteristics as relevant factors to consider in 'profiling' journalists and their perspectives, predispositions and behaviour (Deuze, 2002; Willnat & Weaver, 2014; Willnat, Weaver & Choi, 2013). Similarly, more general studies of social media user groups also emphasise the explanatory power of demographic variables in individual adoption and usage patterns, especially in relation to age and gender (Correa, Hinsley & Zúñiga, 2010). Younger cohorts, that is, 'digital natives' and 'millennials', are typically assumed to embrace technology as a result from their ability to 'think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors' (Prensky, 2001, p. 2). These arguments stem from an understanding of their formative development as inextricably linked to the rise of information technologies as well as their daily immersion in digital environments (Peters & Allan, 2016).

Journalists as individuals, that is, isolated from their professional practice, have rarely been the subject of research into social media use, and there is limited scholarship within journalism studies to draw on. Here, it is most instructive to refer to the scholarship on individual media use and adoption, of which the uses and gratifications framework emerges as a key approach. This is concerned with the motivations that guide people's media use and how this, in turn, satisfies certain (social and psychological) needs (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973; Katz, Haas & Gurevitch, 1973; McLeod, Bybee & Durall, 1982; Palmgreen, 1984; Rosengren, 1974). In other words, the uses and gratifications framework assumes that certain motivations lead people to engage with media in a particular way or another (Katz, Blumler, et al., 1973). This yields certain benefits, which are described as *perceived gratifications*. The strength of the uses and gratifications approach lies in its focus on individual agency and active, deliberate media use, although it has historically been criticised for being too audience-centred and does not consider how technology itself can influence the selection of using media (Ruggiero, 2000).

Platforms like Twitter, however, bring about both altered and entirely novel patterns of media use that could not have possibly been accounted for in the initial development of the uses and gratifications framework during the 1970s. Scholars such as Morris and Ogan (1996), Newhagen and Rafaeli (1996) and most recently, Ruggiero (2000), argue that the internet and other digital technologies with their emphasis on individual agency and unprecedented media choice revive the uses and gratifications approach as a useful framework for research, bringing with it new motivations and gratifications (Sundar & Limperos, 2013).

While this perspective can be equally applied to journalists (Kim, Kim, Wang & Lee, 2016; Papacharissi, 2008), so far the framework has rarely been used to study journalists let alone journalists on Twitter. Research on other social media platforms shows how functions such as posting and sharing thoughts, and interacting with other users, offer different possibilities to gratify a user's need to interact and communicate with others (Kim et al., 2016). Other uses and gratifications studies on Twitter found that the more time a person spends on Twitter, the more the person gratifies a need for connection with other users (Chen, 2011). Following Granovetter's (1973) concept of weak ties, a connection on social media can be understood as a type of informal camaraderie between platform users. This further acknowledges connections of a more 'distant' nature, typical between users of an

online environment (Littau, 2009). Johnson and Yang (2009) examined Twitter in the US, Canada, the UK and Australia, and found two types of motives: social motives (i.e. have fun, be entertained, relax, see what others are up to, pass the time, express yourself freely, keep in touch with friends or family, communicate more easily, and communicate with many people at the same time) and information-driven motives (i.e. get information, give or receive advice, learn interesting things, meet new people, and share information with others). Overall, the uses and gratifications framework is generally used to describe and classify audience behaviour rather than predict it (Mierzejewska & Hollifield, 2006), and offers a fruitful lens through which to conceptualise individual-based needs that underpin and shape Twitter use. As Chen (2011) argues, the framework suggests that people can select from many media, and this invites the premise that if journalists pick Twitter and stick with it, Twitter must be meeting needs in some way.

2.5. Summary and conclusion

In this chapter I have reviewed what the existing literature offers to identify and understand the various factors that underpin and shape political journalists' engagement with Twitter. I provided an overview of the changing conditions that surround and shape journalism, ranging from insights from the era of mass media to the changing environment of the digital age. A review of the emerging scholarship on journalism and Twitter demonstrated achievements thus far, but also identified under-explored areas and research gaps. Insights further suggest that factors that shape journalists' engagement with Twitter stem from their employment context with a given news organisation, existing practices and routines, and their individual traits, preferences and motivations. This revealed the utility of a levels-of-analysis approach in this study's investigation. In the following chapter I bring these key perspectives together in the study's conceptual framework.

3. Conceptual framework and research questions

This is a study of political journalists and the factors that shape their engagement with the micro-blogging platform Twitter. The literature review has outlined some of the significant transformations that journalism has undergone since the advent of digital media and, more specifically, the ways in which the emergence of Twitter has impacted working individuals, their organisations, as well as the news industry at large. This section highlights the key concepts relevant to this study, and outlines its conceptual framework. It concludes with a presentation of the main research question and its subquestions.

This study's approach is aligned with Anderson, Bell and Shirky's (2012) assessment of the current time as an age of 'post-industrial journalism', where change, adaptation and innovation are necessarily on every journalist's mind. Hedman et al. (2013) once deemed journalists' engagement with Twitter as part of an 'ongoing social media hype', suggesting that it is merely an exaggerated phase bound to eventually end. Taking a contrary position, this study follows Lasorsa, Lewis and Holton's (2012) argument that Twitter has long become 'normalised' in the journalistic field. They offer an understanding of journalists' engagement with Twitter as an extension of their traditional occupational realm into a novel space. This perspective allows recognising the many new and altered ways of journalism and the individuals who perform it, and how many of the 'old' and established journalistic arrangements and structures that pre-date the existence of Twitter have not disappeared, but are still very much in place.

Because the relationship between journalism and Twitter is not only a relatively young one, but also a 'moving target' (in the sense that it is in the very nature of digital technologies and their associated products to continuously evolve), there is no conventional framework to study the factors that shape political journalists' engagement with Twitter. Insights from the previous review of the relevant literature suggest that key factors stem from journalists' employment context with a given news organisation, existing practices and routines, and their individual traits and considerations. These factors are located on the *macro, meso and micro dimensions of journalistic production* respectively, and invite the utility of Shoemaker and Reese's (1991, 1996, 2014) *model of the hierarchy of influences on media content* as an organising framework that guides the overarching analytical focus of this study.

While the model usefully organises this study's investigation into macro, meso and micro levels of analysis, each level is largely under-theorised and lacks clarity in conceptual distinctions (as discussed in Chapter 2). This requires each level of analysis to be individually conceptualised:

- *On the macro level*, I examine organisational factors via a management of media innovation perspective, which is informed by the concepts of institutional logics and organisational culture.
- *On the meso level*, I conceptualise factors stemming from routines and practice via the technology affordances and technology appropriation approaches.
- *On the micro level*, I conceptualise factors relevant to the individual via the uses and gratifications framework.

3.1. Building blocks of the conceptual framework

In this section I present the conceptualisation of this study's macro, meso and micro levels of analysis. The presentation of each level starts with a summary of the analytical dimension that the respective level addresses, followed by a summary of relevant key concepts. In the following section I bring the three levels of analysis together as the building blocks of this study's integrated conceptual framework, organised under the umbrella of Shoemaker and Reese's *model of the hierarchy of influences on media content*.

1) *The macro level*

On the macro level my analysis is concerned with how news organisations influence how journalists engage with Twitter. I seek to identify how and to which degree employers facilitate or discourage certain practices, which underlying strategies exist that drive the implementation of formal structures, and in which ways journalists experience and are involved in any of these processes, if at all.

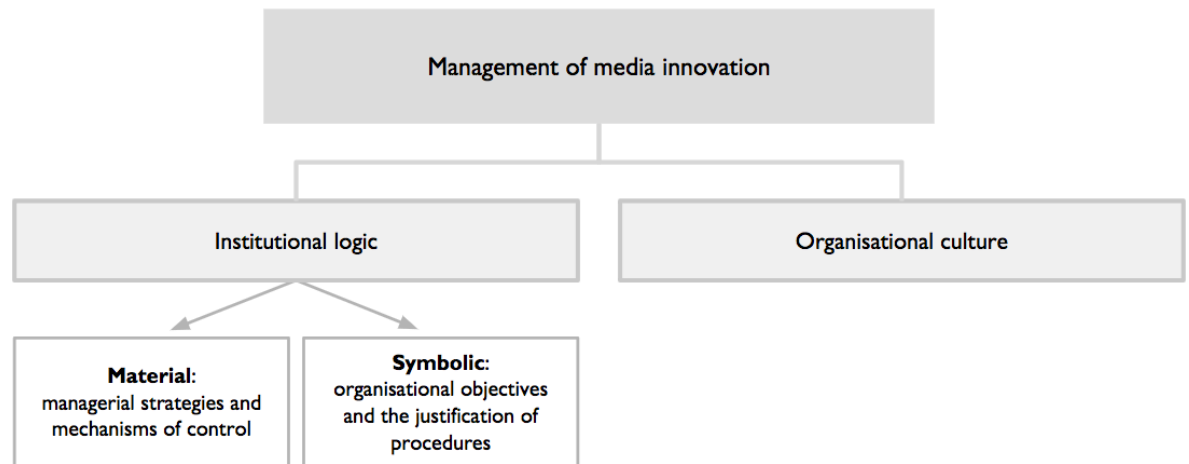
I conceptualise organisational factors that shape how journalists engage with Twitter via a *management of media innovation perspective*, which addresses how news organisations approach and negotiate Twitter as an opportunity of possible (technological) change. While

definitional notions of ‘innovation’ are complex, in this study it is understood as conditions in which media organisations face ‘the emergence of potentially disruptive technologies’ (Mierzejewska & Hollifield, 2006, p. 48) that have ‘the potential to create a new industry or transform an existing one’ (Day & Shoemaker, 2000, p. 2). This perspective allows an exploration of how and to which degree news organisations act as strategic entities that seek to ensure efficiency and predictability in achieving certain organisational goals, while minimising uncertainty and risks of undesired outcomes associated with journalistic Twitter use. Simultaneously, it offers an understanding of organisational approaches to Twitter as a complex and dynamic process that exceeds the control of a single (organisational) actor, acknowledging journalists’ agency as a highly creative and autonomous workforce.

The management of media innovation perspective is informed by two key concepts. First, I draw on the concept of *institutional logics*, which are socially constructed frames of reference that organisations use to infuse their work and decisions with meaning. Following Thornton et al. (2012), I conceptualise these as either material (i.e. managerial mechanisms and strategies of control) or symbolic (i.e. organisational objectives and the justification of procedures). Second, the concept of *organisational culture* offers a parallel dimension that complements the concept of institutional logics in understanding the ways in which the context of the news organisations impacts journalistic behaviour (Bloor & Dawson, 1994; Mierzejewska, 2011). Organisational culture as a concept captures covert influences in newsrooms, as it is constantly enacted and created through interactions with others, while also shaped by leadership behaviour via sets of structures, rules and expectations that guide and constrain behaviour (Schein, 2004). Figure 3.1 provides a summary of the conceptualisation of this study’s macro level of analysis.

[Figure appears on the next page]

Figure 3.1: Conceptualisation of the macro level of analysis



2) *The meso level*

On the meso level my investigation is concerned with how factors and considerations stemming from the context of journalists' practices and routines shape and moderate their engagement with Twitter, and how they give meaning to such engagement in the context of the tasks and workflows they perform. It builds on the premise that Twitter is not an independent force influencing the work of journalists from the 'outside' (Deuze, 2008), but rather, must be seen in terms of its possibility to support, amplify and improve, but equally hinder, limit or challenge existing and novel ways of doing journalistic work.

I conceptualise the factors stemming from routines and practice via the *technology affordances* and *technology appropriation* approaches. Affordances are understood as Twitter's materiality that allows certain uses and restricts others. While these are, initially, independent of the actual user, affordances are a relational concept in that they come to have different meanings depending on the social context of a user (Faraj & Bijan, 2012). This allows an investigation into how journalists might differently perceive of Twitter's distinct properties and utility. The concept of appropriation leads to a procedural understanding of how journalists adopt and adapt Twitter to integrate it into their occupational practices and workflows. Here, an appropriation perspective offers insights into how journalists may adjust Twitter use for their own best practice, and how the interaction with the platform is a recursive process allowing the nature of journalists' repeated and situated engagement to be captured.

Research by Djerf-Pierre et al. (2016) suggests key assumptions that underpin the appropriation of technology, which I usefully re-contextualise for this study's specific investigation of journalists' engagement with Twitter:

- Twitter has a materiality that allows and restricts specific usages
- Twitter's materiality can evolve and change over time as a result of a journalist's engagement with the platform
- Twitter has different meanings for different journalists
- the meanings and uses of Twitter are constantly negotiated.

3) *The micro level*

The micro level of the hierarchy of influences model is concerned with the individual-based characteristics and considerations of journalists and how these shape the ways in which they engage with Twitter. On this level of analysis, I examine the role of age and gender as journalists' *demographic characteristics*, and conceptualise factors stemming from the individual via the *uses and gratifications framework*, which proposes that individuals have certain social and cognitive needs that motivate them to engage with Twitter.

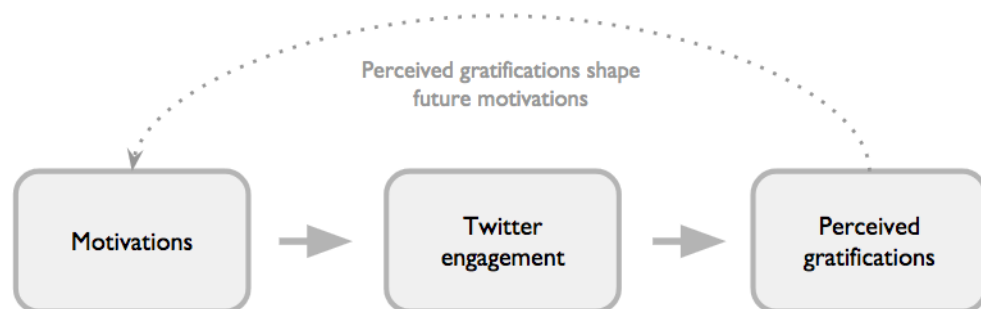
In its understanding of the motivations and gratifications (and the relationship between them) that shape journalists' Twitter use, the uses and gratifications perspective is built on three core premises: an active audience,⁹ that has a range of media to choose from, which compete with each other. This study adopts these core premises, but re-contextualises them within the realm of Twitter. It thus makes the following assumptions that underlie the study's empirical investigation:

⁹ The notion of an *active* audience is, historically, a contentious one: alongside support for the conceptualisations of audiences as active, a counter-tradition in media theory argues for an understanding of audiences as passive. Advocates of this more pessimistic view assess that audiences receive an undesirable influence from the too powerful media (Takahashi, 2002). Given the rise in social media platforms and ever-diversifying ranges of user-led activities, this study is aligned with arguments that 'communications research has moved on, irreversibly, from the assumption that media texts have fixed and given meanings, ... that media influence works through the linear transmission of meaning to a passive audience, [and] that audiences are a homogenous, uncritical mass' (Livingstone, 1998, p. 241).

- *Journalists actively choose to engage with Twitter for individual-based reasons.* Journalists are not overpowered by Twitter as a medium, but active, goal-oriented and deliberate in their individual use of the platform.
- *Journalists have other media to choose from,* particularly other prominent social media platforms. They engage with Twitter because it best fits their individual motivations. This includes the assumption that out of a range of motivations, the platform can fulfil more than one of them, while not every motivation may be satisfied by Twitter.
- *Twitter competes not only with other social media platforms,* but also with other sources of individual motivation satisfaction.

Figure 3.2 illustrates the uses and gratifications framework that this study has adapted to the specific context of Twitter. It shows how motivations facilitate journalists' engagement with the platform, and how this leads to perceived gratifications. It further illustrates the conceptual circuit between perceived gratifications, motivations and future use: whether or not specific motivations are gratified feeds back into strengthening or weakening those motivations that shape future engagement with the platform.

Figure 3.2: Conceptualisation of the micro level of analysis



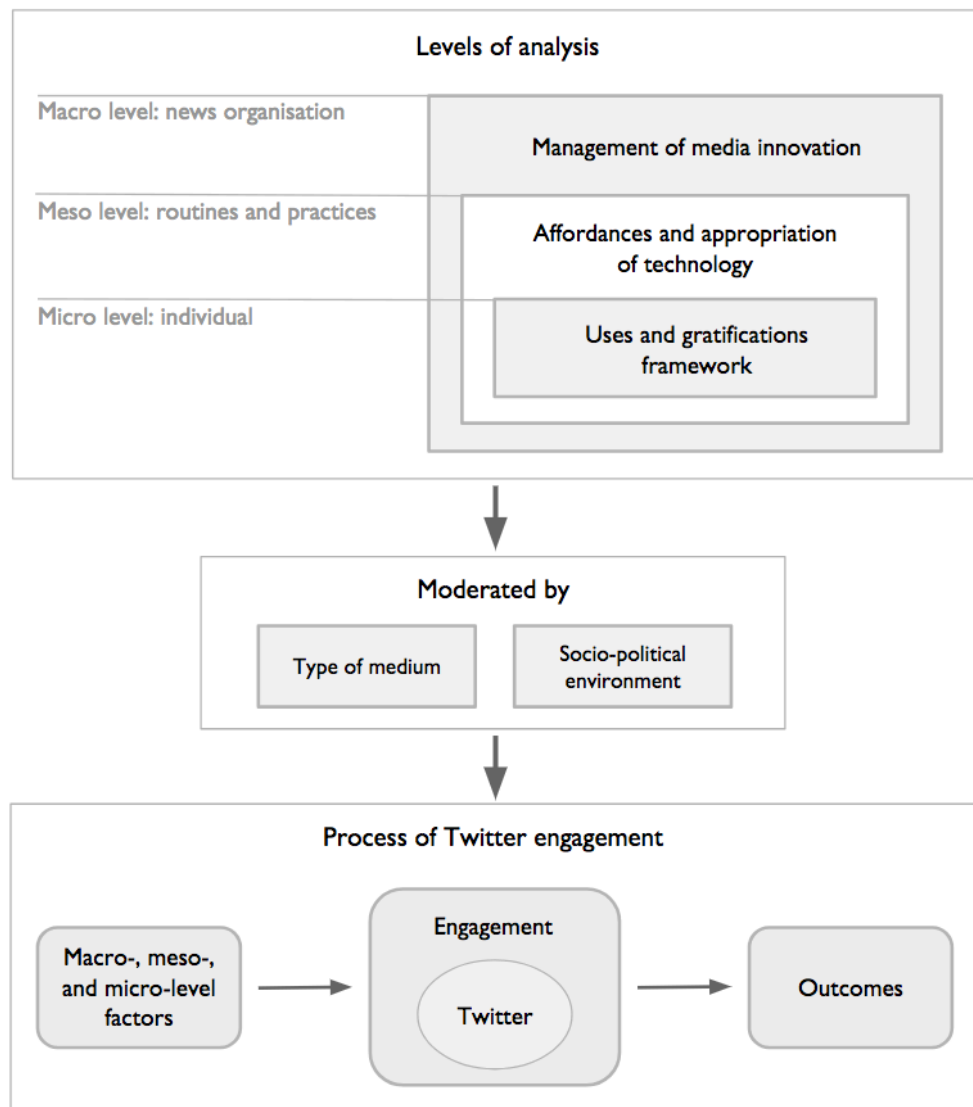
3.2. The integrated conceptual framework

Journalists in this study are framed as subjects of managerial power and bound by contractual agreements, but also as a highly creative workforce with a considerable degree of autonomy and agency within organisational structures, professional procedures and individual preferences. Holding this study's analytical framework together is the understanding that both media organisations and the individuals who constitute them are not freely floating actors (Marjoribanks, 2011). Instead, it builds on the dynamic interplay between journalists' agency as professionals and individuals, and the structures that surround them, which manifest themselves in issues of authority and control, opportunities for cooperation and contestation, but also efforts of resistance and emerging fields of conflict.

The three levels of analysis – macro, meso and micro – are the main building blocks of the study's integrated conceptual framework. They conceptualise the various factors that influence the process of journalists' engagement with Twitter. This study is further interested in how the type of publishing medium that a journalist works for, and changes in the socio-political environment and news climate moderate their Twitter use. Figure 3.3 visually summarises this study's conceptual framework that instructs the subsequent collection, analysis and discussion of empirical data.

[Figure appears on the next page]

Figure 3.3: Integrated conceptual framework



Finally, in light of Shoemaker and Reese’s model’s (easily misleading) name, it is imperative to point out that the *hierarchy of influences* merely speaks to each level’s location within a micro, meso or macro structure. Its name does not suggest that the relative influences of each level can be arrayed to indicate supremacy of one level over another, which is an analytically relevant feature of the model. Instead, Shoemaker and Reese (2014, p. 243) suggest that ‘one level *constrains* or *conditions* or is *contingent* on the influences at another. Just because one level is *higher* or more *macro* than another, doesn’t mean that it’s more determinative or more important theoretically.’ This study follows the understanding that the model takes the multiple forces into account that simultaneously impinge on media,

and one of its goal is to investigate how influence at one level may interact with that at another.

Taking the preceding presentation of the conceptual framework as a basis, this study is driven by the overarching theoretically informed research question:

**How do factors located at the macro level of the news organisation,
the meso level of practices and routines and the micro level of the individual
shape political journalists' engagement with Twitter?**

The research question is further investigated through the following five subquestions:

1. At the macro level, in which ways do news organisations manage tweeting journalists and how does the newsroom environment influence their considerations and behaviour on the platform?
2. At the meso level, how do journalists approach and manage Twitter amidst other established occupational tasks and workflows?
3. At the micro level, how do journalists' individual characteristics and predispositions come to bear in their engagement with the platform?
4. Which role does the socio-political environment play in shaping how political journalists engage with Twitter, and in which ways does a journalist's primary medium of publication moderate the influence of macro, meso and micro factors?
5. How can we understand the relationships between factors located on organisational, practices and routines, and individual levels?

The following chapter discusses the study's methodology and research design, and outline the operationalisations of the conceptual framework presented in this chapter.

4. Methodology and research design

In this chapter I present the methodological approach and research design for this project. As laid out in Chapter 3, the guiding research question for its inquiry is:

**How do factors located at the macro level of the news organisation,
the meso level of practices and routines and the micro level of the individual
shape political journalists' engagement with Twitter?**

This study brings together elements located on three levels of analysis. I previously outlined how news organisations, routines and practices, as well as journalists' individual traits and considerations are the key analytical dimensions considered in this study. I explore these further in this chapter, resulting in a discussion of the research design and choice of methods.

In Section 4.1 I discuss the rationale underlying the choice of the research design. I begin by elaborating on the research focus and why this study further places an explicit and deliberate emphasis on (1) investigating political journalists working in both editorial staff and leadership roles, (2) print and broadcasting legacy media organisations in the US, and (3) the role of changing news climates by exploring Twitter engagement during a period of 'mundane' news and during the 2014 US Midterm elections. I then present the study's mixed methodological approach consisting of interviews with journalists as the primary method, and content analysis of their de facto presence on the platform as the secondary method. I include a discussion of the research operationalisation by outlining the relationship between the elements of the conceptual framework, the chosen methods and material acquired to illustrate the basis on which empirical insights are generated.

In Section 4.2 I outline my ethical considerations in designing this project and the procedures I undertook to strive for its highest scientific standard, both in my responsibility to the research community, and also to the individuals I studied. In Sections 4.3 and 4.4 I outline the concrete design and practicalities of research for my Twitter content analysis and interviews respectively. Here, I present the procedures of sampling, data collection, coding and analysis. This chapter concludes with Section 4.5 in which I

summarise the overall methodical approach and research design of the study, and I outline the structure of the subsequent empirical chapters that present the study findings.

4.1. Rationale

4.1.1. Research focus

Thus far I have argued that the area of interest for this study is the little-understood relationship between journalists' engagement with Twitter and the factors (i.e. organisational, practices and routines, individual) that underlie and shape their presence on the platform. Since the early days of the sociology of news production (Cottle, 2003), we know that journalists do not operate in a vacuum, but within a range of organisational, occupational and individual structures and contexts that shape news products and journalistic performance. Given Twitter's increasing relevance as a journalistic tool, this study views reporters' engagement with the platform as having become part of that same realm of journalistic output that has always been subject to 'influences on media content' (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991, 1996, 2014). I organise these influences within a levels-of-analysis framework (see Chapter 3), ranging from macro factors located at the level of the news organisation, to meso factors related to journalistic practices, to micro factors stemming from the journalist's individual traits and considerations. I find a tendency in existing research to treat journalists' Twitter engagement as an isolated event, when instead, it needs to be understood as a process, where journalists' observable behaviour on the platform is the consequence of a negotiation of influences that precede and moderate how, to which degree and under which circumstances they engage, and which outcomes are pursued and materialised through that engagement.

In the literature review (see Chapter 2) I concluded that scholarship on journalism and Twitter, despite growing exponentially, is still young. I highlighted some of the key research findings to date, but also identified a range of underexplored areas that call for more focused scientific investigation. In my aim to contribute to filling in some of these knowledge gaps, I place an explicit and deliberate emphasis on the following analytical dimensions in my investigation:

- the research focuses on individuals working in political journalism as a specific news genre, in both editorial staff and editorial leadership roles
- these individuals are employed by legacy media organisations in the US, both in print and in broadcasting
- the role of changing news climates and socio-political environments is explored.

Journalists' engagement with Twitter is one of the many signifiers of the shifting conditions and contexts of news production in an age of post-industrial journalism (Anderson, Bell & Shirky, 2012). Yet many of the profession's traditional structures and assumptions have not disappeared, but are still very much in place, including journalistic genres and distinct occupational roles, organisational structures, traditional means of publishing news output and associated publishing deadlines. In the following I outline why a consideration of these elements is a fruitful lens through which to elucidate further dynamics that mediate the process of journalistic Twitter engagement.

Political journalists in editorial staff or leadership roles

My rationale to focus on political journalists stems from three observations that make this group and genre particularly attractive to study. First, existing research on political journalists and Twitter is limited,¹⁰ as studies have explored journalism in general as an occupational umbrella group without differentiating between journalistic genres or specialisations. But while journalists generally share many values and standards of production (Waisboard, 2013), actual day-to-day tasks and reporting practices vary based on which beat a reporter covers, or indeed, what level of responsibility the reporter holds within the news organisation (Deuze, 2008). Thus, there is a need for specificity, and in addition to its focus on political journalism, this study also differentiates between individuals working in editorial staff and editorial leadership roles. Second, political journalism is a hallmark of quality journalism, as it traditionally represents the occupational ideal of 'hard news', the 'iron core of news' and 'accountability journalism' (Anderson et al., 2012, p. 7). Understanding how political journalists engage with Twitter then becomes a productive inquiry for the likely desire to uphold their perceived status while capitalising on

¹⁰ See the following authors for recent and notable contributions in this field: Nuernbergk (2016), for an exploration of political journalists' interaction networks on Twitter in Germany, Rogstad (2014), for a study of Norwegian political journalists' professional norms related to distance and neutrality on Twitter, and Parmalee (2013), for an investigation into how Twitter changes norms and reporting practices amongst political journalists in the US.

the features and affordances of Twitter, and how consequential political journalism can be for affecting the democratic process (Parmalee, 2013). Finally, political journalists emerge as a particular focus in this study for their very close and dependent relationships with politicians as a powerful source group (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001; Rogstad, 2014). Research shows that politicians themselves have become prolific Twitter users (Reis Mourão, 2015), thus making the platform ever more attractive to the reporters who cover their actions.

Print and broadcast legacy media in the US

Traditionally, the market for news was served by classic mass media, and not all commercial news organisations survived the advent of the internet, given the mounting economic pressures outlined earlier in Chapter 2. Today, the surviving organisations are referred to as ‘legacy media’ (Anderson et al., 2012). These make for a particularly interesting journalistic area to study because they not only stem from the pre-digital era with a history of established institutional and occupational traditions, but they also successfully managed change and digital transformations in newsrooms in such ways that saved them from becoming online-only outlets or having to close their doors altogether. Political journalists who work for such legacy media were selected for this study because it is within those organisations that we can often find ‘a tension between tradition and change’ (Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009, p. 562) that is worthy of study. Given the research interest in how journalists negotiate their employer’s management of Twitter as an object of media innovation, digital native organisations (which did not exist until the new millennium) were excluded from the study. I further focus my examination on the US as a distinct geographic context. The commercially-driven and market-dominated media system in the US (Hallin & Mancini, 2004) represents a dynamic site to investigate macro and meso factors in particular that impinge on journalistic behaviour, but also reporters’ struggle for agency and autonomy within that. American journalists were further the first to adopt Twitter on a large scale across the news industry. As recent research indicates, to this day, both reporters and their news organisations remain the most prolific and largest journalistic user groups in international comparison (Cherubini & Nielsen, 2016). A focus on journalists in the US thus promises particularly rich insights given their unique exposure to and experience with Twitter.

I consider both print and broadcast journalists in this study, and due to the focus on political journalism, I specifically include those individuals working for broadsheet newspapers and cable news channels for their content emphasis on ‘hard’ news (Reinemann et al., 2012). This rationale follows the general observation that differences between types of content influence the adoption and use of new technologies by its actors, and these differences are found to be especially prominent between various types of media, such as print and television (Boczkowski, 2004b). This is a comparative dimension that remains largely understudied in contemporary scholarship on Twitter and journalism, with the exception of recent research in Germany by Engesser and Humprecht (2014), which suggests that the type of publishing medium is influential in moderating journalists’ Twitter use.

Changing news climates and socio-political environments

Finally, this study recognises that the performance of journalism is highly situational, and that external events moderate journalistic practice: during key news events journalists follow different rhythms and work patterns than during slow news phases. Much research has established Twitter’s utility during breaking news scenarios (see, for example, Hu et al., 2012; Petrovic et al., 2013; Vis, 2013) or significant political events (see, for example, Broersma & Graham, 2013; Burgess & Bruns, 2012; Ottovordemgentschenfelde, 2016; Thorsen, 2013). Yet little work has been done to juxtapose these ‘times of heightened political activity’ to the ‘mundane’ in an effort to examine in which ways external conditions and the changing nature of socio-political environments moderate journalists’ engagement with Twitter. After all, slow or regular news phases – that is, those times when major political events are neither scheduled, nor anticipated nor happen unexpectedly – are just as much part of journalists’ occupational realities. Following this argument, I collected some of this study’s empirical data during two distinct periods in time to control for how the socio-political environment might moderate engagement with the platform. First, I selected the week of 15–19 September 2014 as a mundane news period. During this time, no major political events occurred, but US Congress was in session. While this study could not feasibly account for local political developments affecting journalists who were sampled from across the country, I selected a week during which the regular political process commenced on a national level. Second, I selected the week of the 2014 US Midterm elections (i.e. 3–7 November) as representative of a busy news period for political journalists.

4.1.2. A mixed methods approach to studying journalists' engagement with Twitter

Thus far, existing journalism research has approached Twitter with relatively limited methodological variation and predominantly quantitative approaches. Given the relative ease with which Twitter content is accessible on the platform, it is understandable how researchers keenly collect large datasets from a medium whose relative youth offers many possibilities for novel angles of quantitative inquiry. I have argued in this thesis earlier that in order to fully understand journalists' engagement with Twitter and the context in which it is embedded, we must not only study journalists' directly observable presence on the platform, but also widen the methodological range of our investigations to explore the antecedents and structures that precede and facilitate their engagement, and the outcomes this yields. This study recognises 'tweeting' as a process, and this necessarily means it cannot solely rely on quantitative data to investigate the overarching research question. Given this study's interest in micro-, meso- and macro-level factors at play in political journalists' engagement with Twitter, this leads to a primary and secondary object of study: journalists as agents and individuals, who are situated within and surrounded by structures and contexts that shape their actions, and their de facto presence on the platform where such action takes shape. To gain a fuller understanding of the research problem and its primary and secondary object of study, I employ a mixed methods approach (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989). This consists of a qualitative technique as the study's main method, which is complemented by a quantitative research method, to help triangulate the data and to corroborate findings.

In my first goal to study journalists as agents and individuals, I sought to capture their own perceptions of different influences, how these are experienced, and the degree to which these play a role in their engagement with Twitter. This could have been achieved in two ways: via an ethnographic approach from within a news organisation, or via interviews with journalists. This study stems from the sociology of news paradigm, which has strong roots in the tradition of ethnographic research (Cottle, 2007; Tumber, 2014). Ethnography's potency lies in the researcher's participation in and observation of the research subject over a period of time (Berry, 2011; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), and would allow for the collection of incredibly rich and detailed insights into the objectives, decision-making and processes that surround and underpin journalists' Twitter engagement as it occurs. But given its

imperative to provide a ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1975), ethnographic research can only focus on a small number of cases, or even just one case, in detail (Reeves, Kurper & Hodges, 2008). Due to this study’s objective to examine a variety of journalists working in the genre of political news across a range of print and broadcast legacy media organisations in the US, an ethnographic approach – despite its rich history and recent renewal in journalism and news production research (see, for example, Anderson, 2013; Boyer & Hannerz, 2006; Ryfe, 2012; Usher, 2014) – was not deemed a suitable method to address the overarching research problem.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews offer an access point to journalists’ own accounts and experiences desired by this study, within and across a range of different news organisations. By listening to how journalists perceive of the ways in which employers and their organisational structures, their professional tasks and routines, as well as individual-based traits and considerations factor into their approach to Twitter, interviews offer significant empirical and analytical explanatory power. Their focus on participants’ own understandings of their actions and the underlying motivations, incentives and pressures generates ‘precise and substantial descriptions’ (Kvale, 2007) that are key to understanding Twitter engagement as a process facilitated by different influences. In conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews, I further pursued a degree of openness and flexibility on my behalf to respond to journalists’ revelations and reflections – however anticipated or unexpected these were – and in doing so, the technique of interviewing allowed practical adaptability towards new avenues of inquiry and interpretations (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012).

The types of interviews I conducted are often also referred to as expert or elite interviews,¹¹ given journalists’ generally ascribed position of power in society and their expert knowledge as media professionals. Expert interviews are distinct in that they investigate key actors within their environment of specialist knowledge, and they yield not only colour, context and chronology, but also exclusive pieces of insider information that is otherwise inaccessible (Goldstein, 2002). This type of interview was assessed as an exceptionally attractive method for this study, as it aides in developing ‘an understanding of

¹¹ See Littig (2008) for a comparative discussion of the difference between elite and expert interviews as a qualitative research method. Littig finds that they share significant commonalities, and concludes that based on the sociology of knowledge, the (professional) functional elite – given their positions of power – should be considered as a specific group of experts.

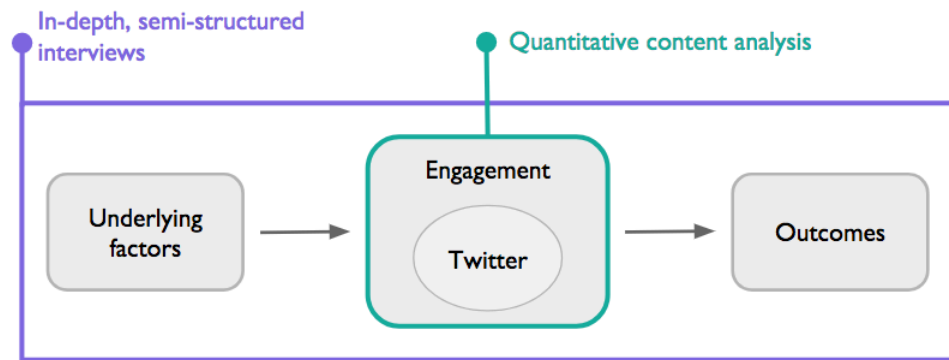
the relations between social actors and their situation’, by facilitating ‘a fine textured understanding of beliefs, attitudes, values and motivations in relation to the behaviours of people in particular social contexts’ (Gaskell, 2000, p. 39). The emphasis of interviews rests with producing understandings and analyses of journalists’ contexts that derive from the interpretations and reflections participants offer themselves (Bryman, 2012). This was considered an especially strong feature of the interview method, as it reflects this study’s conceptualisation of journalists as agents who are capable of contestation, resistance and negotiation of the factors that surround and impinge on their considerations and actions in relation to Twitter.

In my second goal to study journalists’ de facto presence on Twitter, I sought to investigate where factors that stem from the macro, meso and micro levels of analysis manifest themselves on the platform, and how external factors moderate their presence and prominence (i.e. type of publishing medium and news climate). My consideration of appropriate textual analysis techniques was driven by three methodological requirements of the research design: to collect and systematically code *representative data* on political journalists’ engagement with Twitter; to identify *common phenomena and patterns* within and across journalists’ activities on the platform; and to explore *the relationships between these*. Drawing on the methodological insights of previous large-scale research on Twitter and journalism (Bruns & Burgess, 2012; Bruns & Stieglitz, 2013), my study mirrors their approach of employing quantitative content analysis. This technique is especially attractive for its merit to code and analyse large bodies of text (Weber, 1990), and to ‘identify and count the occurrence of specified characteristics’ (Hansen, 1998, p. 95), especially as these are variously located within Twitter’s distinct message properties, for example, textual, visual and hyperlinked elements. Content analysis as a technique allows making inferences (Holsti, 1969) between organisational, task- or routine-based, as well as individual-based characteristics in journalists’ presence on Twitter, beyond merely counting their frequency. In doing so, it allows me to detect general patterns (Deacon et al., 1999) in journalists’ Twitter presence – both in the design of their profile page and in their tweets – and permits me to explore how different elements relate to each other (Neuendorf, 2002, 2016).

In bringing together in-depth, semi-structured interviews and quantitative content analysis in a mixed methods approach, this study sought to capture the complex covert and overt dimensions and manifestations of influences on journalists’ Twitter engagement in the

most fruitful way. While the study's main method is interviewing, insights from the content analysis of journalists' profile pages and tweets create powerful synergies of context, nuance and interpretation (Greene et al., 1989). This offers rich data and scope for triangulating journalists' own understandings of their organisational, occupational and individual life worlds (Gaskell, 2000) with any such elements present in their de facto output on Twitter. Figure 4.1 visualises the process of journalists' Twitter engagement as it is conceptualised in this study (see Chapter 3), and highlights how in-depth, semi-structured interviews and quantitative content analysis interrogate different dimensions of this process.

Figure 4.1: The analytical domains of the study's mixed methods approach mapped onto the process of journalists' engagement with Twitter



4.1.3. Research operationalisation

As outlined earlier, this study uses a levels-of-analysis approach inspired by Shoemaker and Reese's (2014) model of influences on media content. 'Media content' is conceptualised here as an umbrella term that refers to all of journalists' publications and output, including their Twitter engagement. While the model serves as an organising framework for this study, each of its analytical levels are, although interrelated, individually conceptualised. In this subsection I first outline how interview topics and quantitative measures are relevant across all levels of analysis, before presenting how key concepts are operationalised in the study's research design within each levels of analysis.

Topics and measures relevant across all levels of analysis

For the semi-structured, in-depth interviews, I deliberately designed the interview guide in such a way that questions neither explicitly refer to the conceptual framework nor to the research questions themselves. This is important to note, as it implicates that key concepts mostly do not directly map on to specific interview questions. Instead, questions purposefully inquire into various topics that are informed by and stem from key concepts. It is the nature and content of participants' responses that speak to concepts on one or more of the levels. Table 4.1 provides an overview of the study's key concepts and interview topics across all levels of analysis.

Table 4.1: Overview of key concepts and interview topics across the study's levels of analysis

Level of analysis	Macro	Meso	Micro
Key concepts	Institutional logics and organisational culture	Affordances and appropriation of technology	Uses and gratifications
Interview topics	Landscape and context of journalists' work Engagement history, patterns and approaches to managing use Utility of platform features and functionalities Motivations and benefits of engagement Experiencing changes in the socio-political environment Perceptions of opportunities vs. risks/limitations of engagement Developing digital skills and experience-based learning Sentiments of and responses to change and technological innovation		

Similarly, for the content analysis some measures are relevant across all three levels of analysis. These record key characteristics that stem from the study's conceptual framework, such as the type of publishing medium (V2 in both profile and tweet codebooks), and whether a tweet was sent during a mundane or busy news period (V8 in tweet codebook), reflecting the two factors I conceptualise to moderate journalists' process of Twitter engagement.

Operationalisation on the macro level

On the level of the news organisation, I approach factors that shape the process of journalists' Twitter engagement via a management of media innovation perspective. This is informed by the key concepts of *institutional logics* and *organisational culture*. Institutional logics are either material (i.e. referring to managerial strategies and mechanisms of control) or symbolic (i.e. referring to organisational objectives and the justification of procedures). I operationalise material institutional logics via:

- the existence of organisational Twitter policies
- mechanisms of enforcement to ensure compliance with any such policies
- the provision of skills training and professional development and
- the use of analytics data to monitor Twitter performance.

Symbolic institutional logics are operationalised via objectives that news organisations pursue through journalistic Twitter engagement: the organisational goal of generating traffic to the news organisation's website; the organisational goal of audience engagement and fostering customer (i.e. reader or viewer) relationships; and the goal of organisational branding. Through the method of interviewing, I inquire into every element of the process of journalists' Twitter engagement while I use content analysis to examine how symbolic institutional logics manifest themselves in journalists' de facto engagement with the platform, that is, on their profile pages and in their tweets. Table 4.2 provides an overview of the measures that record relevant characteristics on the macro level of analysis.

[Table appears on the next page]

Table 4.2: Operationalisation of the key concept and its quantitative measures on the macro level of analysis

Concept	Operationalised via	Measures for profile page	Measures for tweets
Institutional logics	Organisational goal of generating traffic	Display of organisational link in Twitter's dedicated URL field (V13), inclusion of link to organisation in bio statement (V29)	Calls to action to engage with content (V18), nature of accounts that are retweeted (V22), inclusion of organisational links (V31)
	Organisational goal of audience engagement	Listing contact details (V33), actively asking for Twitter users to get in touch with tips, story, ideas, questions, etc. (V34)	Calls to action to engage with content (V18), asking for tips, story ideas and additional footage (V19), nature of accounts that are tweeted at or mentioned (V29)
	Goal of organisational branding	Organisational name or acronym in Twitter handle (V10), reference to news organisation as primary employer (V21), listing of organisational link in Twitter's dedicated URL field (V13), inclusion of link to organisation in bio statement (V29), organisational elements or setting in profile (V40, V42) or header photo (V41, V43)	Nature of accounts that are retweeted (V22), tweeted at or mentioned (V24, V26), organisational links (V31), organisational elements in visuals (V38), types of hashtags (V42, V43)

Finally, I operationalise the concept of organisational culture via perceptions of workplace atmosphere, collegial relationships within and across teams, as well as informally shared practices and knowledge.

Operationalisation on the meso level

On the level of routines and practices, I employ the concepts of *affordances of technology* and *appropriation of technology*. As argued before, affordances and appropriation are relational and recursive concepts, and this also links them in their operationalisation. Affordances are operationalised via Twitter's unique materiality, in particular:

- Twitter's socio-technological, interactive and connective design features
- its properties in the context of news and information
- the nature and characteristics of its user base.

Appropriation is understood as approaches to Twitter engagement that stem from perceived affordances. I operationalise appropriation via the nature, context and scope of journalists' Twitter engagement, as well as how their Twitter use relates to and interacts with existing occupational workflows. Again, I use the method of interviewing to explore all aspects of the process of journalists' Twitter engagement, while I use content analysis to investigate which appropriation behaviour can be observed in journalists' de facto presence on the platform, that is, on their profile pages and in their tweets. Table 4.3 summarises the measures that record relevant characteristics on the meso level of analysis.

Table 4.3: Operationalisation of the key concept and its quantitative measures on the meso level of analysis

Concept	Operationalised via	Measures for profile page	Measures for Tweets
Appropriation of technology	Information sharing strategy	/	Contains hard news (V12) or soft news subject (V13), breaking news (V15), number (V41) and types of hashtags (V42, V43, V44, V45, V46)
	Information seeking strategy	Contact details listed (V33), asking for tips (V34)	Asking for tips, story ideas and additional footage (V19)
	Journalistic relationships and networks	/	Nature of account that is retweeted (V22), mentioned or tweeted at (V24, V25, V26, V27, V28, V29)
	Professional branding and meta discourses	Verified account (V8), professional website listed in Twitter's dedicated URL field (V13), reference to professional role (V20), employment relationships (V21, V22), other forms of employment (V23), education (V24), professional URL listed in bio statement (V30), professional setting in profile (V42) and header photo (V43)	Comment or reflection on journalistic practice and tasks (V20)

Operationalisation on the micro level

On the level of the individual, I utilise the *uses and gratifications framework* that proposes that individuals have certain social and cognitive needs that motivate them to engage with Twitter. I operationalise these as:

- information and interest-driven motivations
- social motivations related to connecting with other platform users, expressing opinions, and passing time and entertainment.

Through the method of interviewing, I examine journalists' individual motivations underpinning their Twitter engagement, as well as the perceived gratifications this yields. I further explore the role of age and gender as individual-based demographic characteristics in the journalists' platform use. I draw on content analysis data to examine how such motivations manifest themselves in journalists' de facto engagement with the platform, that is, on their profile pages and in their tweets, and further examine their behaviour in light of their age and gender. Table 4.4 provides an overview of the measures that record relevant characteristics on the micro level of analysis.

Table 4.4: Operationalisation of the key concept and its quantitative measures on the micro level of analysis

Concept	Operationalised via	Measures for profile page	Measures for Tweets
Uses and gratifications	Information and interest-driven motivations	/	Contains personal subject (V14), use of hashtags that indicate a theme or topic of a personal nature (V45)
	Motivation of social connection	Inclusion of details about one's home (V25), family (V26 and V27), hobbies (V28), personal setting (V42) and personal objects (44) in profile photo, personal setting (V43) and personal objects (45) in header photo, emotionality displayed in profile (V50) and header photo (V51)	/
	Motivation of expressing opinions	First-person perspective as the narrative mode (V19)	Contains opinion statement or judgement (V17), first-person perspective as the narrative mode (V16)

4.2. Ethical considerations and procedures

Research is driven by the objective to contribute to the creation of knowledge, and any project has a responsibility to the research community to strive for the highest scientific standard. But research also bears a responsibility to the subjects it studies, and the conditions and implications of their participation. In designing and carrying out all stages of this project, I carefully reviewed and reflected on the ethical considerations and procedures to achieve its highest integrity. As outlined in the previous section, this is a mixed methods study and the ethical considerations pertain to both quantitative (content analysis of Twitter data) and qualitative (interviews) dimensions of data gathering, management and analysis.

4.2.1. Twitter as a data source in research

There is much enthusiasm for Twitter as a data source in research. This requires both access and the technical infrastructure to collect tweets, which have become relatively easy to obtain, process and store via Twitter's own application programming interfaces (APIs) and related third party services. While issues of scale or resources are often addressed in Twitter-based studies, there is little acknowledgement of the crucial ethical implications involved in using users' data for research purposes (Zimmer & Proferes, 2014).

In 2010, the Library of Congress recognised the potential of Twitter for research and announced that '[e]very public tweet, ever, since Twitter's inception in March 2006, will be archived digitally at the Library of Congress' (Raymond, 2010, para. 2). Many researchers have since taken a view of Twitter data as public information. For example, Bruns et al. (2012) maintain that in light of other social media platforms' complex privacy settings that are often considered in terms of research ethics, 'publicly visible Twitter messages are guaranteed to have been published to the internet at large, at least technically, and archiving them in the course of research activities is therefore substantially less problematic' (p. 13).

But privacy and informed consent persist as central ethical concerns (Beurskens, 2014) at the core of Twitter research with human subjects. While users voluntarily publish their everyday activities and opinions, often by 'acting in a "publically private" manner'

(Ackland, 2013, p. 43), they do not automatically also agree to a third party's use of such data. And the very act of tweeting does not indicate informed consent to being the subject of scientific research, despite the contents of Twitter's user agreement, which informs of the collection and use of every account's data.¹² For researchers, Twitter research remains a field of ethical ambiguity and even legal uncertainty contingent on a user's geographical location (Beurskens, 2014). In other words, questions of how and to which degree it is ethical for scholars to follow and systematically capture public Twitter streams without first obtaining informed consent from a study's subjects have not yet been resolved.

In light of this, this study follows Ackland's (2013) suggestion and makes a crucial distinction between private and public personas, and considers journalists as members of the latter group. The individuals included in this study explicitly use Twitter in a journalistic capacity and often in affiliation with their employing news organisation, akin to the ways in which they publish content in more traditional news media. As public personas, they cannot make claims of expectations of privacy (Zimmer, 2010) in the same manner that private individuals are able to. This study thus views journalists' profiles and activities on the platform as true and intentional public records, similar to how it has become common (and ethically approved) practice to use newspaper articles and broadcast segments in research without first seeking permission from the author or producer.

4.2.2. Reflections on interviewing journalists as experts

Given this study's interest in the perceptions and experiences of political journalists on Twitter, it is important to reflect on how such insights were generated at the qualitative level of investigation and in direct contact with human subjects. During all stages of the interview, I made every effort to ensure interview participants' wellbeing, both physical and emotional, the confidentiality of their data and personal information, and privacy.

Written consent (see Appendix 3) was obtained from all participants before the interview commenced, following a detailed explanation of the research goals and use of the data

¹² See <https://twitter.com/tos?lang=en#usPrivacy> for details on Twitter's terms of service, privacy policy and so-called Twitter rules, applicable to individuals residing in the US. Those who live outside of the US, as well as residents of the European Union (EU), are subject to different user agreements.

gathered, including its protection and security. Participants were actively invited to ask questions about the study, and I sought their permission to audio-record the interview. Each participant's preferences were confirmed in writing on the consent form upon signing it. In the case of phone interviews, I asked participants to verbally state their preferences again at the beginning of the audio recording.

As experts, political journalists have a unique social bond. They are interconnected with and know of each other (especially those individuals working in areas of high news media density for politics, such as Washington DC or New York City), and their work necessarily intersects as they often simultaneously participate in and cover the same news events. Because of their role as experts in an exclusive community of known and identifiable elite members, I offered each interviewee three levels of anonymity. They could select full anonymity, partial anonymity (i.e. to be described using just their job title) or identifiability (i.e. to be referred to with their name, job title and news organisation). Many participants chose to be identifiable, referring to their own professional ethos of accurately referring to sources. In the end, I decided to anonymise all interviewees, not only to ensure analytical coherence, but also to protect those individuals who preferred partial or full anonymity (and whose identity could possibly be deduced by association or reference to expert knowledge). Participants' personal and contact information were stored separately from the interview data and its analysis. All names used in this thesis are pseudonyms created for reading coherence.

At the end of the interview, I outlined the study's next steps and shared my contact details with each interviewee to indicate my availability to discuss all aspects of the study beyond the interview. I further ensured that every participant understood that they could withdraw themselves and their data from the study at any time without giving a reason. Within a day of each interview, I emailed thank you notes to participants, which outlined these points one more time. All journalists will be informed of the completion of the research project, and I will provide them with access to the published thesis.

Journalists' unique position as experts further induced more general considerations in relation to the practice of conducting the interview. The questions guiding the conversation accounted for journalists as media-trained professionals, who are very accustomed to interview situations, oftentimes leading the conversation as the inquirer rather than the

respondent. Because journalists considered in this study are based all over the US, some interviews had to be conducted via phone. Because of the lack of visual cues, I took some extra time when introducing the project and myself, and asked an 'icebreaker' question at the beginning to establish a pleasant and welcoming atmosphere. I further acknowledged that environmental factors unknown to me could impact responses (e.g. the journalists may feel like they are being overheard by colleagues or a boss). In this regard, many journalists seemed to have made arrangements to privately speak with me and while away from the office, either outside of work hours or while on assignment. Overall, phone interviews were neither shorter nor less productive than those conducted in person. This may be due to journalists' general level of comfort with telephones, a tool they readily use in their everyday work.

The research subject and interview questions were not excessively sensitive, but there was possible scope for a respondent's discomfort or concern when, for example, speaking about employer and co-worker relationships, or conflict in the workplace. To ensure participants' wellbeing, I made it very clear that they could indicate at any time during the interview if they wished to not respond to a question. I equally emphasised that there were no 'correct' or 'incorrect' answers, but that responses should instead originate from their own experiences and perceptions. As a young, female and foreign researcher, I was further sensitive to latent power relations that may feature in the nature of the interview and the findings that emerge from it. I found maintaining a demonstrably friendly demeanour to be a crucial element in prompting responses from journalists, and establishing researcher-participant trust. In the majority of the interviews, participants had no reservations in speaking with me. In fact, their level of comfort seemed to grow as the interview progressed, leading to a willingness to expand and independently elaborate on responses. Later on, many actively admitted that they had not yet thought about some of the questions I had posed, and thanked me for the opportunity to contemplate them in the interview. This suggests that they tended to offer sincere accounts, perhaps especially so under the trust of confidentiality and protection of their anonymity, rather than telling me what they thought I 'wanted to hear as a researcher'.

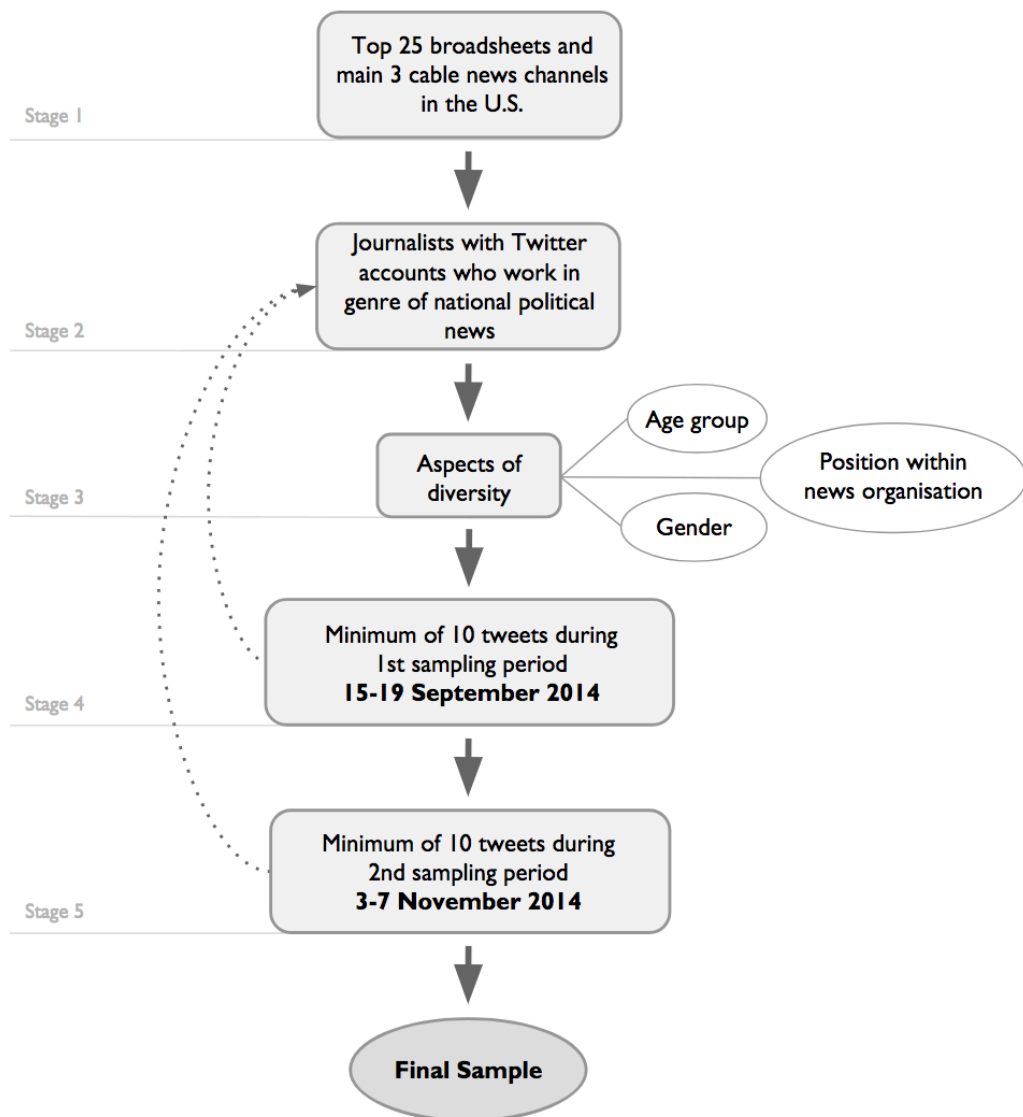
4.3. Content analysis

Within the mixed methods approach of this study, interviews serve as the more nuanced and rich dataset to offer insights into journalists' subjective experiences as to how macro-, meso- and micro-level factors influence their engagement with Twitter. Yet, both interviews and content analysis are closely linked – not only in how they complement one another to gather different types of empirical data crucial for answering this study's research question, but also in the practicalities and sequence of obtaining such data. More specifically, the sample of journalists whose tweets and profile pages were content analysed was created first, to then allow recruiting interview participants from the said sample. Because of this, I first discuss the practicalities of carrying out this study's content analysis, before outlining the steps undertaken in conducting interviews and analysing the data in Section 4.4.

4.3.1. Sampling

Political journalists are at the focus of this study, and relevant individuals were selected via the technique of relevance sampling. Elsewhere in the literature this strategy is also referred to as *purposive sampling* (see, for example, Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 1998, 2014), because it is a study's analytical focus that defines the resulting sample. The goal of relevance sampling is the deliberate selection of units that contribute to answering a given research question (Krippendorff, 2004). To achieve this, sampling occurs via a multi-stage process during which the researcher reviews the units collected during each sampling stage. This study's sample was created over the course of an eight-week period via an iterative, five-stage process. In the initial stage it started from the broadest category – that of the legacy news organisation – and with each proceeding stage, it narrowed the focus on the individual and those characteristics immediately relevant to this study's inquiry. The sampling procedure was only able to move on to the next stage if the preceding stage's sampling criteria were fulfilled. The flowchart in Figure 4.2 visualises the sampling process, and each stage is further explained in what follows.

Figure 4.2: Flowchart of sampling process and stages



Stage 1

The first stage of the sampling process identified relevant news organisations from which to select journalists. As stated earlier in this chapter, I was interested in individuals specialising in the genre of political news at commercial US legacy media organisations, both in print and broadcasting. For the sample of journalists to be drawn from newspapers, I selected the top 25 daily commercial broadsheets¹³ (Edmonds et al., 2013), excluding digital natives and tabloids from consideration. For the sample of journalists to be drawn from broadcast news, I selected the three major cable news channels (Holcom & Mitchell,

¹³ By online and print circulation size, as of 31 March 2013. These numbers are periodically compiled by the Alliance for Audited Media (see www.auditedmedia.com) and available for purchase. The data from 2013 was used because it was publically accessible via the Pew Research Center's *State of the news media 2013* report at the time of sampling.

2013), that is, Fox News, MSNBC and CNN. I excluded network television due to its minority of news programmes and majority of entertainment content in light of this study's explicit concern with political journalism and news. I further decided to not include the US Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) due to its public funding. Given this study's interest in privately owned and commercially-run news organisations, PBS stands in stark contrast to this model given its status as a non-profit organisation. As argued earlier in this thesis, resource availability and allocation play a crucial role in how journalists perform their occupational tasks, and in a publically funded organisation journalists operate under arguably distinct structural and economic parameters, as well as strategic outlooks. While this line of inquiry is certainly one worthy of investigation, considering PBS as part of this study is beyond the scope of the already existing comparative dimensions of this project.

Stage 2

Within each of the 28 selected news organisations, stage 2 identified journalists with Twitter accounts specialising in the genre of political news. This was ascertained by drawing on a combination of four resources: each news organisation's website and directories of their political news staff; recurring authorship of political news stories; news organisations' institutional Twitter profiles that contain so-called Twitter lists of political journalism staff members and their respective Twitter accounts; and the independent online database MuckRack,¹⁴ which compiles digital directories of journalists and their accounts on Twitter as well as other social media platforms. A sampling key was developed to account for the likelihood of variance amongst the 28 selected news organisations in terms of composition of political newsrooms and number of reporting staff. The rationale underpinning this decision was based on each broadsheet's placement in the national ranking (see Table 4.3), and the estimated number of political reporters it employs relative to its size, reach and distribution. Based on this, the sampling key defined the following three groupings: from each of the top five newspapers in the country, five journalists were included in the sample; from each newspaper in ranks 6–10, four journalists were included in the sample; and from each of the remaining newspapers, that is, ranks 11–25, three journalists were selected. This resulted in a sample size of 90 journalists from broadsheets. From the three major cable news channels, 10 political journalists were selected, each generating a sample of 30 individuals. The combined total sample consisted of 120 political journalists. Table 4.5 provides an overview of the sample and sampling key for

¹⁴ See <http://muckrack.com/> for details.

broadsheets, with Figure 4.3 showing their geographic location across the US, while Table 4.6 shows the sample drawn from the three cable news channels, which are all based in New York City.

Table 4.5: Overview of sample drawn from broadsheets

National rank*	News outlet	Primary distribution	Journalists selected per outlet
1	Wall Street Journal	Nationwide	5
2	New York Times	Nationwide	5
3	USA Today	Nationwide	5
4	Los Angeles Times	Los Angeles	5
5	San Jose Mercury News	San Jose	5
6	The Washington Post	Nationwide	4
7	Denver Post	Denver	4
8	Chicago Tribune	Chicago	4
9	Dallas Morning News	Dallas	4
10	Houston Chronicle	Houston	4
11	Orange County Register	Santa Ana	3
12	New Jersey Star-Ledger	Newark	3
13	Tampa Bay Times	Tampa Bay area	3
14	Plain Dealer	Cleveland	3
15	Philadelphia Inquirer	Philadelphia	3
16	Minneapolis Star Tribune	Minneapolis	3
17	Arizona Republic	Phoenix	3
18	Honolulu Star-Advertiser	Honolulu	3
19	Las Vegas Review-Journal	Las Vegas	3
20	U-T San Diego	San Diego	3
21	Boston Globe	Boston	3
22	Atlanta Journal-Constitution	Atlanta	3
23	Seattle Times	Seattle	3
24	Oregonian	Portland	3
25	San Francisco Chronicle	San Francisco	3

* By online and print circulation size as of 31 March 2013, data gathered by the Alliance for Audited Media.

Figure 4.3: Geographic overview of sample drawn from broadsheets



Colour code: green dots indicate 5 journalists sampled per outlet, yellow dots indicate 4 journalists per outlet, and red dots indicate 3 journalists per outlet.

Table 4.6: Overview of sample drawn from cable news channels

National rank*	News outlet	Primary distribution	Journalists selected per outlet
1	Fox News	Nationwide	10
2	MSNBC	Nationwide	10
3	CNN	Nationwide	10

* By viewership numbers as of December 2012, data gathered by Nielsen Media research.

Stage 3

During stage 3 of the sampling process, journalists were further selected based on the distribution of three individual-based characteristics across the sample:

- 1) *Gender*. Individuals were selected based on their gender, and the male-female sample distribution is closely aligned with the current gender representations in the news industry of around 38% of female staffers in US newsrooms, a number that has been largely consistent since the new millennium (Pew Research Center, 2015; Women's Media Center, 2014). This was done to examine whether gender explains patterns of engagement with Twitter.

- 2) *Age*. Journalists were selected to reflect four different age groups within the sample. This was done to allow testing for age-based patterns in the analysis and how these might explain different perceptions of and engagement with Twitter. This rationale draws on research that make generational arguments to explain difference in technology adoption (Peters & Allan, 2016; Prensky, 2001).
- 3) *Editorial responsibility within the news organisation*. Journalists in both editorial staff and editorial leadership roles were selected to examine how the level of seniority and editorial responsibility has explanatory power in the analysis of empirical data. Other socio-demographic characteristics (such as ethnicity or salary-based income) could not be accurately established and were not included in the sampling rationale.

Stages 4 and 5

Sampling stages 4 and 5 coincided with each of the two data collection periods in September and November 2014 (see Subsection 4.1.1. for a discussion of these timeframes as the study's sampling periods). Due to the study's concern with journalists' *active* engagement with Twitter and to ensure the availability of sufficient data per journalist, only journalists with a minimum level of engagement of 10 tweets per sampling period were sampled.

During the September sampling period, 42 journalists failed to meet the minimum activity criterion, and were re-sampled through iteration of sampling stages 2–4. During the November sampling period, another 7 journalists did not make the threshold and had to be re-sampled. The final sample consisted of 120 journalists. Table 4.7 shows the sample distribution across broadsheet and broadcast outlets by gender, age group and editorial responsibility.

Table 4.7: Overview of sample distribution by characteristics and type of news outlet

Sample characteristics	Broadsheet	Broadcast	<i>Total sample</i>
Gender			
Male	56 (62.2%)	18 (60%)	74 (61.7%)
Female	34 (37.8%)	12 (40%)	46 (38.3%)
Age group			
25–34	23 (25.6%)	8 (26.7%)	31 (25.8%)
35–44	32 (35.6%)	14 (46.7%)	46 (38.3%)
45–54	21 (23.3%)	5 (16.7%)	26 (21.7%)
55–64	14 (15.6%)	3 (10%)	17 (14.2%)
Role within news organisation			
Editorial staff	80 (88.9%)	20 (66.7%)	100 (83.3%)
Editorial leadership	10 (11.1%)	10 (33.3%)	20 (16.7%)

4.3.2. Data collection and creating the corpus

In this subsection I address the practicalities of data collection for the content analysis of journalists' Twitter profile pages and their tweets. In the case of the latter, I further present the steps I undertook to create the final corpus considered in this study, by combining tweets collected during the two sampling periods (i.e. the mundane news week of 15 September 2014 and the week of the 2014 US Midterm election), creating a representative subsample that was manageable for human coding.

Twitter profile pages

The collection of journalists' Twitter profile pages as one quantitative data set of this study occurred in July and August of 2014, that is, immediately before the first of the two periods during which tweets were collected. A generic screenshot software tool was used to capture, annotate and archive the desktop version of every political journalist's profile page on Twitter. The 120 screenshots were stored as image files for manual coding (see Subsection 4.3.3).

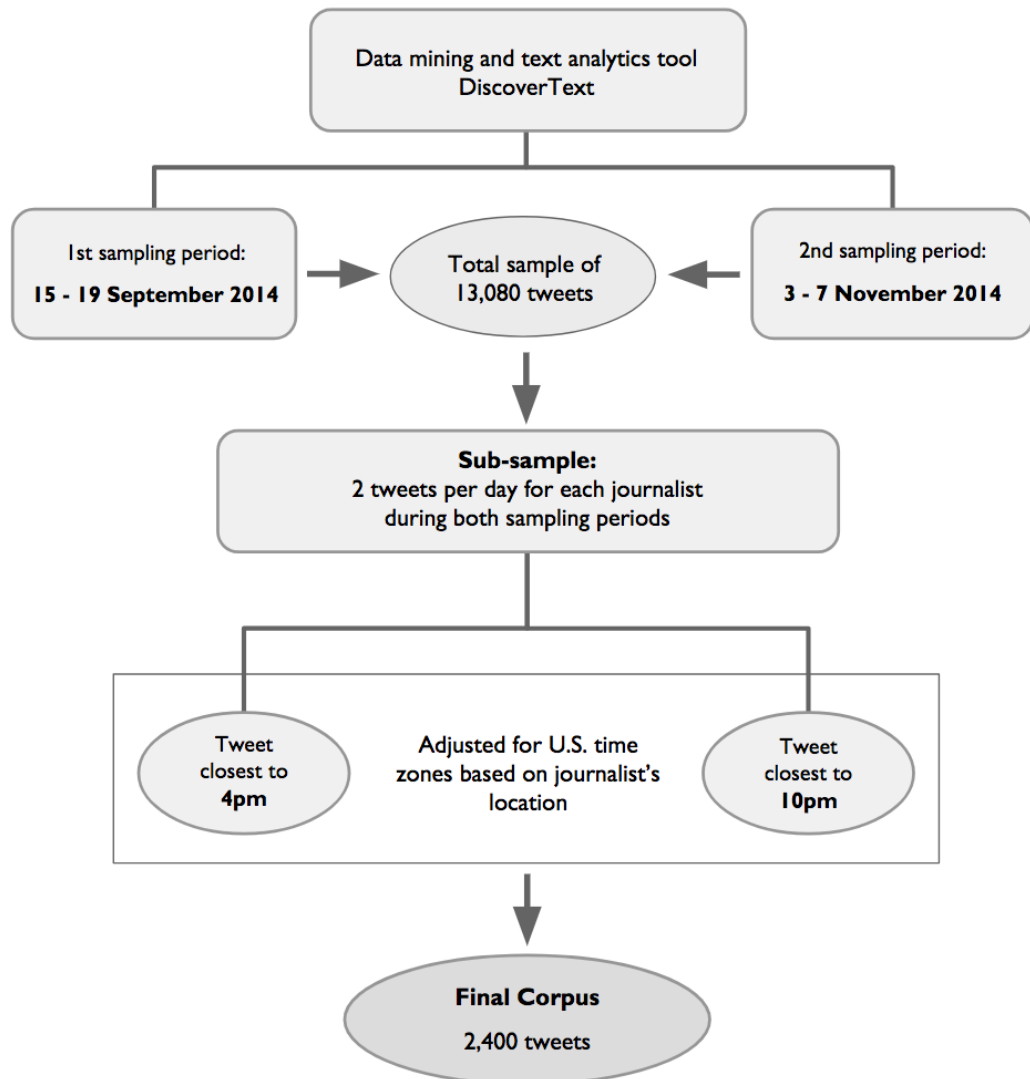
Tweets

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the tweets of 120 journalists were collected during two time periods that are deliberately distinct from each other in their news environment and socio-political nature. The first round of data collection occurred during the week of 15–19 September 2014. This week is characteristic of what this project considers a ‘mundane news period’ for the reasons outlined earlier in this chapter. The second round of data collection was carried out from 3–7 November 2014, that is, the week of the US Midterm elections, as a predictably busy news period, characteristic of what this study considers a ‘time of heightened political activity’. Given the known access-based limits of Twitter’s free application programming interface (API)¹⁵ (Morstatter et al., 2013), it was deemed necessary to pay for a web application that provides, in partnership with Twitter’s own Gnip service, search-and-retrieve access to every undeleted tweet in the platform’s history. Tweets were collected via *DiscoverText*,¹⁶ a third-party data mining and text analytics tool that provided the required access to and storage facility of Twitter data. During both data collection periods, a combined sample of 13,080 tweets was gathered. Because I intended to use human coding – as opposed to computer-based coding – to glean more nuanced attributes and issues (Conway, 2006), a representative subsample was created that was manageable within the scope of this study. This necessity further tackled a technology-based limitation of using tools such as *DiscoverText*: despite accessing tweets via precisely defined search parameters through Twitter’s API, it is difficult to check how complete a given data set is captured and what else flowed through Twitter at the time it was compiled (Gaffney & Puschmann, 2014). While this limitation was considered part of the study’s review of available research tools, it was dismissed due to the interest in *representative* rather than complete data. Figure 4.4 depicts the process from tweet collection to the creation of the final corpus, which will now be elaborated on.

¹⁵ APIs are data interfaces that provide software developers with an unambiguous, data-only version of a given site’s content for use in their own software. See Gaffney and Puschmann (2014) for a more detailed discussion of different types of APIs, as well as their properties and functionalities.

¹⁶ See <http://discovertext.com/> for details.

Figure 4.4: Flowchart of tweet collection and creation of final corpus



As previously outlined, this study uses strategic sampling, and this was continued during this stage of the project. Given the previously introduced sampling criterion of a minimum level of engagement of 10 tweets per week based on which journalists were chosen for this study, this rationale was reproduced in the process of creating the tweet subsample. For each journalist, I selected two tweets per day for each five-day sampling period, that is, 20 tweets in total for both sampling periods combined. These tweets were picked based on time of day – adjusted for US time zones based on the journalist's location – and, theoretically at least, traditional working hours and leisure time were juxtaposed. On the one hand, the tweet closest to 4pm was selected, a historically busy time for journalists as the deadlines for the day approach. On the other hand, the tweet closest to 10pm was selected given the reasonable expectation that journalists may no longer be at work, and

not quite ready for bedtime. Here, it is important to note that these times were instructive for their historic meaning, while recognising the now fluid nature of journalistic work that ‘softens’ the boundaries of deadlines and working hours. Overall, journalists differed significantly in the volume of their tweeting activity – some barely made the threshold with exactly the required number of tweets during a given sampling period, while others tweeted up to 180 times. The final corpus contained 20 tweets from each of the 120 journalists, and comprised a total of 2,400 tweets.

4.3.3. Coding and analytical strategy

Mirroring other content analysis studies, I began by developing a codebook for human coding to be applied to each of the collected samples, that is, the screenshots of Twitter profile pages and the corpus of tweets. For the Twitter profile pages, each screenshot was considered as an individual coding unit with textual, visual and hyperlinked elements to be coded. Overall, the codebook was broken down into three categories, which reflected the various elements of the profile page: (1) the Twitter profile details and history; (2) the user’s biography statement; and (3) its visual elements (see Appendix 6). Each category was coded with a range of variables that recorded the presence of specified characteristics (refer back to Subsection 4.1.3 for how the study’s conceptual framework was operationalised via measures applied in the content analysis). A pilot study was conducted in January 2015 to test the robustness of codes and their application, accounting for the notion that there is ‘no perfect reliability where human judgment is involved’ (Bauer, 2000, p. 144). I trained an independent second coder to code 20 screenshots of the sample (i.e. 17% of the total corpus, $N=120$). The intercoder reliability (ICR) was calculated per variable and yielded some of the codes as not sufficiently reliable. To revise and refine the codes to better reflect the study’s overarching research question and theoretical underpinnings, an informal mini-focus group was conducted with four other junior researchers. The discussion addressed some of the critical dimensions of variables that had initially yielded insufficient levels of ICR, and enabled more thorough revisions of the profile page codebook. I carried out a second pilot study. A different independent second coder was recruited and trained to code another randomly selected sample of 20 screenshots in order to validate the revised codes (Neuendorf, 2002, 2016). This produced a high overall ICR of 97%. The most subjective or highly evaluative codes (e.g. variables that coded for level of emotionality in a

journalist's header and profile photo) all possessed an ICR of 81% or higher (see Appendix 7 for the ICR testing results for the Twitter profile page codebook). In general, an obtained reliability over 80% is considered high and indicates a well-defined, robust codebook that fulfils the expectation of replicability (Krippendorff, 2004).

For the corpus of tweets, each tweet was considered as a coding unit. Here, the codebook was broken down into six categories, which reflected various elements of each tweet: (1) ID and general account owner details; (2) meta data; (3) tweet content; (4) platform interactions; (5) embedded media; and (6) hashtags (see Appendix 8). Overall, I followed the same steps as laid out above for the Twitter profile page and here, only one pilot study was required to test the codebook's robustness. I again recruited and trained an independent second coder, who coded 240 randomly selected units (i.e. 10% of the total sample of 2,400 tweets). The calculated ICR yielded a very high overall result of 96%, with variables that coded the presence of hard and soft news receiving the lowest ICR of 80% (see Appendix 9 for the ICR testing results for the tweet codebook). This established the tweet codebook's robustness and expectation of replicability. For reasons of transparency it is worth noting that many of the variables are binary, which reduces the probability of disagreement, and the ICR tends to be higher than in, for example, ordinary variables. Further, nominal variables were excluded from the pilot (e.g. number of hashtags, counts of retweets and 'likes' of a tweet, etc.), as well as those that were not reliant on ICR because they were already known (e.g. type of medium the journalist works for, gender, age group, etc.).

I used the statistical software program SPSS (version 21) to analyse the study's quantitative data as a secondary source of evidence to complement findings from this study's primary method. I used both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. To gain an overview of the data and to report on its characteristics, I used descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions and measures of central tendency. I further used the technique of cluster analysis to find groups (i.e. clusters) in the data. The goal of cluster analysis is to form groups in such a way that objects in the same group are similar to each other, while objects in different groups are as dissimilar as possible (Kaufman & Rousseeuw, 2005). This was driven by the objective to reveal which structures are present in the data that allow classifying journalists based on shared and distinct patterns in measures of their engagement. To investigate and model the relationships between variables, I used linear

and logistic regression analysis, depending on the type of response and outcome variable(s) (Montgomery, Peck & Vining, 2015; Peng, Lee & Ingersoll, 2002). Regression analysis allowed me to investigate the effect of a specified variable on an outcome variable. For example, I used regression analysis in the dataset of tweets to understand the effect that different news periods (i.e. the week of mundane news in September 2014 and the week of the 2014 US Midterm election) have on the outcome of specific macro-, meso- and micro-level characteristics in journalists' engagement. Overall, these types of statistical analysis served to clarify and triangulate interviewees' reported perceptions, experiences and approaches, as well as to examine how related and relevant characteristics manifest themselves in journalists' de facto presence on Twitter.

4.4. Expert interviews

As argued earlier in this chapter, semi-structured expert interviews were chosen as this project's primary method to gain insights into journalists' experiences and perceptions of factors that shape their Twitter engagement. While they provide the main empirical focus of this thesis, they were conducted after the Twitter sample was created, because interviewees were recruited from within that sample. In the following I outline my recruitment strategy and the procedures of conducting interviews, before presenting my strategy for data coding and analysis.

4.4.1. Recruitment and interviewing

The preparation for the interviewing stage commenced with a draft of a theoretically informed, semi-structured interview guide. To determine if there were any flaws, limitations or weaknesses (Kvale, 2007), and to further assess the order of themes and questions, as well as the approximate duration of the interview, I carried out a pilot test. Following Turner's (2010) recommendation to conduct pilot interviews with participants of similar interests or backgrounds as those participating in the study, I was able to recruit a London-based BBC journalist. Both participant feedback and my own impressions from piloting the interview guide yielded valuable insights to refine the structure and flow before its

implementation. Shortly after, I left London for three months of fieldwork in the US, during which time interviews were conducted between October and December 2015.

I initiated the process of recruiting participants on my arrival in New York City, where I was primarily based for the duration of my fieldwork. Recruitment occurred via email, in which I outlined the research project, its goals and the journalist's desired role in it. For reasons of transparency, and to provide my inquiry with the necessary scientific authority, I hyperlinked to my researcher profile on my university's homepage, as well as a previous publication, for optional further reading on my research subject. I considered every journalist in my existing Twitter sample (see Section 4.3) as a potential interviewee.¹⁷ Overall, I reached out to more than 100 of those journalists and often followed up three more times. Recruitment was challenging at first, as access proved difficult. This was not unexpected given that journalists are an elite group of interviewees and busy professionals (Littig, 2008). Even amongst those who initially accepted, some interviews fell through because of continuing scheduling conflicts, and others required a few attempts as journalists were pulled into covering news stories as they emerged. To alleviate these challenges, I always made myself available to conduct the interview at a time and in an environment that was most suitable for each participant.

The final sample consisted of 26 participants from 24 different news organisations, of which 20 were male and six were female. Twenty-three journalists were employed by a broadsheet newspaper, but only three worked for a cable news channel. While a higher number of broadcast respondents would have been desirable, even this 'relatively small sample of individuals may produce evidence that is considered to provide an understanding of the inter-subjective meanings shared by the whole of a community' (Elliott, 2005, p. 28). Finally, 24 of those journalists worked in editorial staff and two in editorial leadership roles. Table 4.8 shows the sample distribution by gender, age group and role within the news organisation:

¹⁷ In my strategy to 'win' study participants, I intended to exhaust recruiting journalists from the existing Twitter sample first. If unsuccessful, I was prepared to consider other political journalists who fulfilled the sampling criteria (as outlined earlier in this chapter), but this was not necessary.

Table 4.8: Interview sample distribution by characteristics and type of news outlet

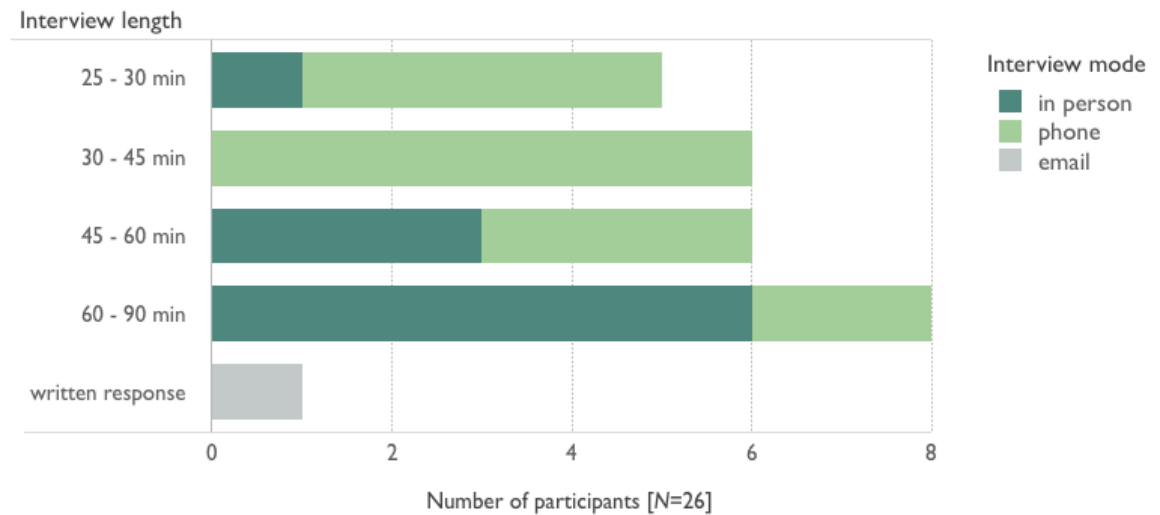
Sample characteristics	Broadsheet	Broadcast	<i>Total sample</i>
Gender			
Male	18 (78.3%)	2 (66.7%)	20 (76.9%)
Female	5 (21.7%)	1 (33.3%)	6 (23.1%)
Age group			
25–34	5 (21.7%)	2 (66.7%)	7 (26.9%)
35–44	10 (43.5%)	1 (33.3%)	11 (42.3%)
45–54	4 (17.4%)	/	4 (15.4%)
55–64	4 (17.4%)	/	4 (15.4%)
Role within news organisation			
Editorial staff	22 (95.7%)	2 (66.7%)	24 (93.3%)
Editorial leadership	1 (4.3%)	1 (33.3%)	2 (7.7%)

In every interview, I prompted journalists with questions related to four general topic areas: (1) the landscape and context of their work; (2) their uses and sentiments of Twitter; (3) the motivations and perceived benefits of their Twitter engagement; and (4) their accounts of the journalistic past, present and future (see Appendix 4 for the interview guide). The interview started with broad questions that were aimed at establishing a conversational atmosphere and an understanding of the journalist's individual circumstances. As the interview progressed, questions became more probing and included follow-up questions to elucidate more detailed responses and explanations from interviewees (Creswell, 2007).

In-person interviews were the preferred method, given how they allow for intra-personal and non-verbal cues that can support and inform the data gathered, and I was able to recruit 10 participants for face-to-face interviews. As participants were based all over the US, limited financial resources did not allow extensive travel, and 15 interviews were conducted via telephone. I was conscious that this restricted the interview to the verbal part of the communication (Christman, 2009), and that external factors can moderate the dynamic between conversation partners (e.g. the reception might be bad, background noise may disrupt or distort understanding, etc.). I made every effort to formulate questions as clearly and precisely as possible (Burke & Miller, 2001), and was prepared to amend the flow of the interview guide to obtain additional flexibility if necessary. In the majority of telephone interviews, this precaution did not come to bear. Finally, one participant

provided a written response via email to a select number of key questions. Overall, no interview was shorter than 25 minutes, more than half lasted longer than 45 minutes and eight interviews lasted between 60–90 minutes. Figure 4.5 provides an overview of the length of each interview, by interview mode.

Figure 4.5: Interview length by mode of interviewing



Following the conclusion of each interview, I outlined the next steps in the research process for participants, and provided my contact details for further questions and correspondence (as presented in detail below). The audio recording was fully transcribed and anonymised in the process.

4.4.2. Coding and analytical strategy

I then performed thematic analysis on the textual material that resulted from the transcription of interviews, which enabled me to elucidate the specific nature of the journalists' 'conceptualisation of the phenomenon under study' (Joffe, 2012, p. 209). This was driven by the goal to identify themes and patterns that emerge as important to the description of the research problem (Daly, Kellehear & Gliksman, 1997). I followed an approach that Fereday and Muir-Cochrane describe as 'hybrid' (2006), as it includes both deductive and inductive codes. Deductive codes were driven by theory, stemming from the literature review in Chapter 2, and especially from the conceptual framework presented in

Chapter 3. Because the interview guide was designed along those established themes (while questions did not explicitly refer to them), there was the assumption that these could be deduced as codes to assign to the interview material. Inductive codes were not defined in advance, but driven by insights from the empirical data. Overall, designing the coding frame occurred in several iterative stages, where I applied a working draft of the coding frame to different material, allowing me to revisit and refine existing codes, and to add new ones as they emerged. This was done to enable analysis in a methodical and robust manner (Boyatzis, 1998), and to achieve an understanding of the issues, perceptions and significance of journalists' experiences within the texts' overt structures and underlying patterns.

After the interview transcripts were cleaned and standardised, I uploaded them into the data analysis software tool Dedoose¹⁸ to carry out the coding process. Dedoose was chosen over other more commonly used qualitative data analysis and research software, such as NVivo or ATLAS.ti, for its data accessibility via synced web-based and desktop applications, and its secure and encrypted cloud storage option. This was a crucial determinant of my choice of data analysis tool, as I was spending an extended period in the US for fieldwork, and travelling frequently to different interview sites.

At the beginning of the coding process, all transcripts were indexed with six descriptors (participant ID, gender, age group, role within the news organisation, ID of the news organisation, and interview mode) to generally allow determining characteristics-based patterns. The final coding frame consisted of 40 different codes, organised under six main headings and with up to two levels of hierarchies (see Appendix 5 for an overview of the coding frame).

¹⁸ See <http://dedoose.com/> for details.

4.5. Summary and conclusion

In this chapter I discussed the research design and how a mixed methods approach consisting of in-depth, semi-structured interviews as the primary method and quantitative content analysis as the secondary method operationalise the study's conceptual framework to address the overarching research question and its subquestions. I further elaborated on the rationale for this study's explicit focus on political journalists in both editorial staff and editorial leadership roles, working for US legacy media organisations in print and in broadcasting. I also explained the basis for collecting data on journalists' tweeting activities during two different time periods that are distinct in their socio-political environment, and the choice for examining the week of 15 September 2014 as a week of 'mundane' news and the week of the 2014 US Midterm election in November as a time of 'heightened political activity'. I outlined the ethical considerations that underlie the design of this project, especially as they pertain to using Twitter as a data source in research, and interviewing journalists as experts. Here, I outlined the necessary steps and precautions that were taken to ensure the project's ethically responsible conduct. Finally, I presented the practicalities and procedures of carrying out the content analysis and interviews, from recruiting participants, to the collection and coding of data, and my analytical strategy.

The following four chapters are dedicated to exploring the study's empirical data. Their focus and sequence is aligned with the levels-of-analysis approach that this study takes, and they serve as the organising elements that structure the presentation, analysis and discussion of empirical findings. In doing so, a chapter each is dedicated to the macro, meso and micro levels, respectively, and a fourth chapter brings findings from these levels together in a joint discussion that addresses how factors stemming from each level interact, complement and conflict with one another in shaping journalists' Twitter engagement:

- **Chapter 5** investigates factors located at the macro level of analysis and how political journalists experience these as relevant in shaping their engagement with Twitter. I present findings on how journalists perceive of and experience news organisations' mechanisms of managerial control. I explore the objectives that underpin organisations' Twitter strategies and how these manifest themselves in journalists' presence on the platform, and which role journalists ascribe to

newsroom cultures that exist both within and beyond organisational structures and management.

- **Chapter 6** presents and discusses findings from the meso level of analysis and how factors and considerations stemming from the context of journalists' practices and routines shape their engagement with Twitter. I investigate distinct engagement patterns, how news events impact platform appropriation, and how journalists give meaning to and evaluate Twitter engagement in the context of the tasks and workflows they perform.
- **Chapter 7** presents and discusses findings on the micro level of analysis, that is, those related to journalists as individuals. I investigate how demographic factors relate to the nature of journalists' Twitter engagement, and to understand which needs study participants have for engaging with the platform I explore individual-based motivations that underpin Twitter use.
- **Chapter 8** brings together insights from Chapters 5–7 for a joint analysis of how macro-, meso-, and micro-level findings interact and relate to each other. I discuss how they create, on the one hand, synergies and mutually beneficial outcomes and, on the other, conflicting interests and fields of tension. Following this, I present the overall contribution of this thesis and take a critical look at the implications this has for the study's research design and its overall limitations.

A final remark of this chapter relates to the project's balance of methods in the subsequent presentation of findings. The empirical chapters primarily draw on qualitative data from the in-depth, semi-structured interviews with journalists as this study's main research method. Insights from the quantitative data are used to corroborate qualitative findings. The aim here is to contextualise and investigate journalists' actual, observable practices on Twitter, and to see how influences they reported in interviews manifest themselves in their de facto presence on the platform. Finally, a guiding principle in the following presentation and discussion of findings is to present data as it pertains to the research question addressed in this study, as opposed to including findings simply because it is possible and I have collected large volumes. While much of the data is interesting in its own right, it does not necessarily align itself with the research problem this thesis addresses.

5. The macro level: news organisations and political journalists on Twitter

“It’s all about social first editorial storytelling,” Sarah states without hesitation, as if this was the obvious response to my question. She works for one of the major US cable news channels in an editorial leadership position, and I had just asked her to tell me a bit about her organisation’s Twitter strategy. “Our organisation’s presence on Twitter has become one of the largest across the world, we are a digital organisation now,” she adds. Today, her employer almost exclusively hires tech-savvy journalists. A formalised policy outlines how the organisation’s values and standards of production apply across all media and channels, including Twitter, as she continues to outline the promoted shared understanding of innovation in the newsroom, and that “the days of taking what you’ve done on another platform and putting it on social are over.” While journalists get to run what she calls “personality” accounts based on individual preference, the organisation has taken disciplinary action before when a journalist crossed the line of what it considered acceptable behaviour. “Google it, it’s well documented online,” Sarah concludes her response.

In her brief answer to what could have been, admittedly, interpreted as a rather complex question, Sarah touched on a range of significant factors in considering how news organisations manage journalists’ engagement with Twitter. While Sarah’s employer is located on the more advanced end of the spectrum of managing the platform as an object of media innovation, she tells us about elements that underpin the examination of all news outlets considered in this study. Viewed through a more analytical lens, she refers to her employer’s institutional logic (Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury, 2012) and organisational culture (Schein, 2004), mechanisms of managerial control (Lavine & Wachman, 1988), and the dynamic character of innovation development, while recognising journalists’ individual agency in the process (Dogruel, 2015) – all of which are key elements in understanding an organisation’s management of media innovation.

Sarah’s example also foreshadows the focus of this chapter, which presents and discusses the study’s findings at the macro level of analysis. Its objective is to outline journalists’ concrete experiences and perceptions of how news organisations shape their engagement

with Twitter, how, if at all, journalists are involved in any of these processes, and to trace how organisational elements manifest themselves in their presence on the platform.

The chapter first discusses journalists' accounts of and experiences with news organisations' mechanisms of control, presented in Section 5.1. With reference to an organisation's general desire to manage their workforce to achieve particular objectives (Redmond, 2006), this encompasses an examination of how institutional policies formalise behaviour on Twitter, and how such rules are enforced. This section further investigates how news organisations equip and train their workforce with the appropriate skills sets to enable them to comply with an organisation's policy to best achieve the goals that underlie it.

To understand the underlying rationale of such managerial mechanisms of control, Section 5.2 explores the symbolic dimension of organisations' institutional logics. It discusses concrete organisational objectives that trigger efforts to manage journalistic Twitter engagement, specifically those related to generating traffic to the news organisation's website, those targeted at audience engagement, and finally, those aimed at branding efforts and market positioning. This section also explores how and where traces of these organisational objectives manifest themselves in various elements on journalists' Twitter profile pages and in their tweeting practices, and which shared perceptions and patterns exist across news organisations.

Following the discussion of organisational objectives related to Twitter, Section 5.3 brings together the ways in which news organisations use managerial mechanisms to evaluate tweeting journalists. It explores the role of Twitter analytics data as indicators to assess journalists' performance on the platform, and its alignment with an organisation's institutional logic. To complement the preceding discussion of institutional logics and how organisations enact these, Section 5.4 explores the role of organisational and newsroom culture, particularly in situations when institutional logics and their mechanisms are neither clearly communicated nor formally enforced. The chapter's key findings are summarised in Section 5.5, leading to the suggestion that insights from the macro level of analysis merit further discussion in Chapter 8, to bring them together with the meso (see Chapter 6) and micro (see Chapter 7) levels of analysis of this study for a joint investigation of the relationships between all analytical levels.

5.1. Mechanisms to manage a tweeting workforce

News organisations depend on journalists' creativity to produce quality products, but there is also a strict understanding that '[y]ou need common knowledge and rules to keep everyone going in the same direction' (Redmond, 2006, p. 115). This is certainly true for a platform like Twitter, which still causes many organisations growing pains. How, if at all, employers then approach journalists' Twitter engagement on a level of innovation management becomes the central question addressed in this section. This is a study of tweeting journalists working for commercial US legacy media, and it views these organisations as strategic entities with mechanisms in place to ensure efficiency and predictability in achieving certain organisational goals, while minimising uncertainty and risks of undesired outcomes. The following subsections explore journalists' experiences with three such managerial mechanisms salient to the context of Twitter. The first presents findings in relation to Twitter policies and how these communicate to reporting staff what their organisation wants them to do or not do on the platform. The second explores how such policies are enforced to warrant compliance, illuminating how employers ensure that journalists follow organisational rules and punish overstepping the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. The final subsection investigates the role of skills development and training, addressing how news organisations equip journalists with the expertise to engage with Twitter in desirable ways. The discussion of findings further elucidates the strategic interrelationships between policies, enforcement and skills development, and how, if at all, journalists perceive of them as influential in shaping their engagement with Twitter.

5.1.1. A formalised stance on Twitter: organisational policies

Since the professionalisation of journalism, news organisations have always put rules and structures in place to manage journalists, their workflows and output (Redmond, 2006). Given the fluid nature of news as a product, such rules generally stem from an institutional logic aimed at minimising uncertainty and risk, while providing structures that optimise efficiency in achieving organisational objectives. Twitter is a fairly recent addition to journalism,¹⁹ and as such, it generates new avenues for the very uncertainty, risks and benefits organisations seek to manage in their day-to-day operations. This raises questions

¹⁹ See Chapter 2 for a review of the emergence and role of Twitter in journalism.

about how and to which degree news organisations recognise Twitter as an object of media innovation that demands management.

This study's empirical findings corroborate insights from earlier research which suggest that organisational Twitter policies have become common in newsrooms (Bloom, Cleary & North, 2016). But my analysis also suggests a more complex picture of the nature of such policies and how journalists experience their implementation in practice. Thematic mapping of the interview data reveals four distinct cases of how political journalists perceive of and understand their employer's given Twitter approach as managerial mechanisms that discourage and facilitate certain practices (McChesney, 2013). These cases are determined by a journalist's knowledge of the existence and content of an organisation's Twitter strategy, and the degree to which it is formalised and integrated into existing or new organisational frameworks and workflows.

The first case is one where journalists know of the existence of an organisational policy, and its contents are clearly communicated and understood. If we recall Sarah's account presented at the beginning of this chapter, of how her employer manages journalists' Twitter engagement (i.e. via a concrete policy that outlines how organisational values and standards of production apply to Twitter), we can reasonably deduce how her experience is characteristic of this case. Sarah further indicated how her news organisation actively promotes a shared understanding of innovation in the newsroom, of which journalistic Twitter engagement is considered a part. Rufus, a national political reporter at a broadsheet newspaper, experiences a similar degree of managerially driven formalisation and integration of Twitter in his workplace. He describes his organisation's approach as follows:

“We do have a social media policy and we get it the first day we sign up.... Well, it's an agreement of hiring. And so, when you formally start the position, you agree to the company's policies. You don't necessarily sign a document for social media. But they're saying if you want to work here at all, you're going to abide by these policies and rules.”

Not only has Rufus' employer strategically integrated Twitter into existing structures and procedures, but following the organisation's Twitter strategy has also become a condition of employment for every journalist. Sarah and Rufus belong to the largest subgroup of journalists in this study, providing accounts of similarly formalised policies that shape their

Twitter engagement. While they differ in their precise contents, and how they are circulated amongst staff, they all have in common that they are clearly communicated and understood amongst tweeting journalists.

In the second case, journalists speak of their organisation's Twitter approach with less certainty and confidence, referring to how it is only partially or sporadically communicated to reporters. While journalists possess some knowledge of its existence, their grasp of its substance is less concrete. For example, James, a veteran political reporter at a broadsheet newspaper, tells me the following:

"I can't remember if there was a policy when I started tweeting. It's been a while. I think there is one now. I can't recite it to you here. You know, it basically says, you know, you're representing [name of news organisation], you know. We've got standards. We're not out there tweeting rumours and things like that so, yeah."

James is aware that a policy exists with a rough idea of its contents, but his account indicates a lack of precision in his understanding of it.

The third case applies to journalists who perceive of their organisational Twitter rules as implicit. Walter, a print journalist covering city hall in a major urban area, tells me that his organisation merely has an ethics policy, which "sort of encompasses an understanding of how we engage with social media." Andy, another broadsheet reporter who covers city hall in a different part of the country, explains:

"I mean, I'm not – I mean my impression is that – I'm saying my impression just – well, let me think of a way to answer that. I mean I think it's a general policy. I mean, I don't think it's written down or anything like that. But it's just kind of a practice."

Andy's response is hesitant and ambiguous, suggesting how he has not previously engaged with the subject at length, if at all. While he initially speaks of a "general policy", he ultimately settles on referring to it as "kind of a practice." Both Walter and Andy's accounts indicate how their employer's Twitter approach is suggestive, rather than directly or even partially expressed.

In the final case, journalists say that their employer has not enacted or communicated any organisational stance on Twitter. Russell, an investigative reporter who often works on political stories for a legacy newspaper, outlines the following:

“One of the great frustrations is that there is no road map, because we’re at the beginning of this new curve in this big transformation. So there is not a road map on how to do [Twitter] right, or how not to do it right. And some people have mastered it better.”

His account tells us of the absence of any effort to manage tweeting journalists within his organisation. It further suggests that Russell would, in fact, welcome some organisational guidance and management in this regard, rather than observing more skilful colleagues and competitors. Connor, a watchdog reporter for another print outlet, similarly explains how his organisation leaves him to his own devices:

“My Twitter engagement [is] a decision I made on my own, I’ve never been spoken to about Twitter. I’ve asked about Twitter and been told, just use your common sense. Don’t do anything that you’ll regret in the morning – that kind of thing.”

Connor generally appears more comfortable than Russell to tweet without any organisational interference or direction. But he is suspicious of the absence of any managerial rules that govern his engagement, referring to how his employer tends to have clear rules in place for other journalistic procedures, and how he has heard of other news organisations’ Twitter policies. He wanted to be “better safe than sorry”, and chose to proactively inquire about his superior’s stance on his engagement with the platform, only to be told to use his “common sense”.

Overall, the majority of the 26 journalists considered in this study are subject to at least some rules that shape their engagement with Twitter, and the analysis revealed that reporters’ experiences can be mapped on to four distinct cases. Eleven journalists provide concrete accounts of formal Twitter policies that are clearly communicated and understood in their newsrooms. Another four generally report on the existence and at least partial communication of such rules. Six journalists work in newsrooms where the organisational approach to Twitter is suggestive and implicitly understood, and three have no knowledge of any policy or their employer’s stance on Twitter.²⁰

²⁰ Two individuals did not provide sufficiently indicative accounts of the nature and existence of their organisation’s Twitter policy to be included in this analysis.

5.1.2. Managing compliance

As outlined above, many news organisations considered in this study have introduced various policies that guide journalists' use of Twitter, some more explicit in their nature than others. But no rules, however formalised they are, mean much if there are no mechanisms in place to ensure reporters' compliance. In principle, news organisations that make efforts to oversee the practical implementation of policies are better able to manage and control the spectrum of journalistic behaviour on Twitter. From an optimistic standpoint, rule enforcement provides reporting staff with a behaviour-oriented frame of reference within which they can feel empowered to perform their highly creative and largely autonomous day-to-day work. In more negative circumstances, enforcement regulates the boundaries of what is deemed acceptable behaviour and, when overstepped, triggers disciplinary action to prevent future violations. The analysis of interview data revealed that news organisations make different efforts to ensure that journalists follow rules.

Many journalists I interviewed for this study started tweeting independently, often long before news organisations caught wind of the platform's future role in the news industry. Other reporters were not interested in joining Twitter at all – until their employer told them otherwise. Jake, a reporter who covers state and national politics for a print outlet, says that “I felt like I had a gun to my head” when a superior pulled him aside one day to make him sign up. He has been using the platform ever since. Michael shares a similar experience:

“[A] year-and-a-half ago I changed newspapers and they are much more forceful with their social media use and as soon as I joined up they converted my pretty much non-existent Twitter account, they got it verified, they got me going, they kinda got me set up and kinda laid down the law that I need to be using this more often.”

Michael's experience highlights the different approaches to Twitter between his previous and current employers, and the significant influence his job change had on his presence on the platform. Contrary to Jake and Michael's experience, city hall reporter Kristina works for a broadsheet that is less vigorous with Twitter. She says that her management is casual in letting each journalist decide how they want to tweet, but she also admits that changes in managerial strategy occur in waves, and that “there are periods when there's a big Twitter

push.” While Melinda, another print reporter, joined a few years ago, following a concerted effort in the newsroom to get all journalists on Twitter, she asserts that nothing at all has happened since in terms of administering and overseeing her usage.

During times of heightened political activity, a few reporters frequently get assigned Twitter duties to cover key events on social channels, while other journalists experience occasional interference and “checking in” by their superiors. Brody, a broadcast reporter, generally perceives of his employer’s Twitter attitude as strict, but also admits that there are moments of surprise when they let him be:

“I mean, sometimes it’s a weird balance. I’ve been waiting for the day to come when an editor walks up to my desk and says, ‘You’ve been tweeting like 50 times in row about this stupid vine that someone posted, get to work.’”

Brody’s account indicates that there are also organisational concerns about managing the quantity of Twitter use amidst other employer expectations. Like Brody, many journalists hint at Twitter’s power of frequently “pulling them in” in unproductive ways. While Brody says he has not yet experienced any pushback from his employer, he is conscious of having to manage his time as a resource that is valuable to his superiors. Grayson, a veteran reporter and White House correspondent, is ever more conscious about the repercussions his Twitter presence can have for his news organisation, and thus for keeping his job. He describes in detail how he feels that anything he says on Twitter reflects on more than just him personally, and is immediately connected to his employer, too. He still appears startled as he tells me about a recent anecdote demonstrating his superior’s laid-back and trust-based Twitter approach, leaving him with a considerable degree of autonomy and agency:

“I’ve never gotten in trouble with my boss for anything I’ve ever tweeted. There has been a time when I’ve gotten some pushback on the platform [from other users]. So I went to my boss and I said ‘Oh, I tweeted this thing and now it’s getting, you know, it’s become controversial and it’s a whole thing.’ And he just said ‘Well, just tweet something else. Change the conversation, apologise; do whatever you want to do. I’m not worried about it.’”

Grayson’s awareness of the negative consequences his tweets can have for both himself and his employer resonate with many other journalists I spoke to. Indeed, an increasing number of news organisations in the US have made national headlines for firing journalists over (both small and large) mishaps on Twitter, whether these were foreseeable or not. What this has created amongst many journalists in this study is a ‘the next tweet could get

you fired’ mantra that is perceived as a significant influence on their engagement with Twitter, as Brody describes:

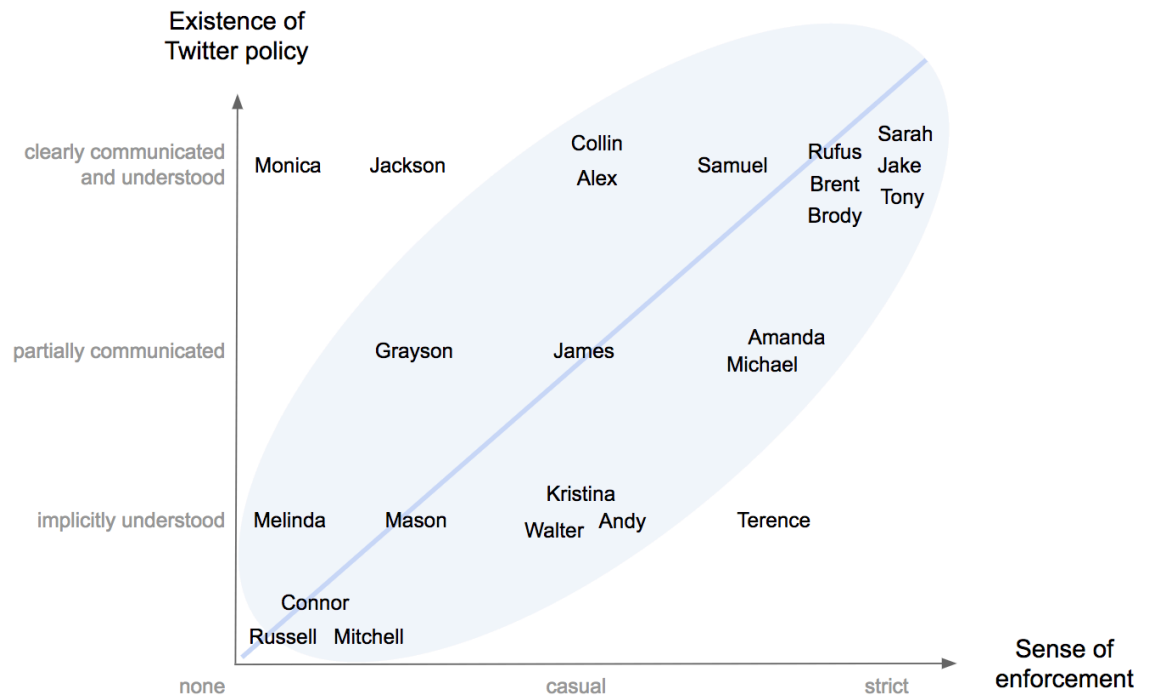
“I mean everybody lives in terror of knowing that you’re one tweet away from everything going down. And a lot of people have gotten fired for tweeting something they shouldn’t have. Because it’s not at all an uncommon occurrence, I mean, it’s just a matter of public record. You could look it up, it’s happened at my company. It’s a very scary thing. So everyone always has to be on eggshells that way and obviously editors and higher-ups are all acutely aware that they have to be very careful about this. It’s just things can go very wrong. It’s not just with politics, it’s with everything. One of the most terrifying developments that I really do not like at all is now you could have the level of vitriol that is usually reserved for politics, it can spread through Twitter like that. Drives me crazy to see that but those are really the stakes. It’s just nobody’s safe if you say something stupid.”

Mason, a White House and national politics reporter for a broadsheet, confirms this sentiment of risk that many associate with Twitter. Because his organisation is as similarly ‘hands off’ as Grayson’s, he has come up with his own rule of thumb to protect him from likely disciplinary action: “If you feel like you have to check it with somebody else, you probably shouldn’t tweet it.” This demonstrates how the mere anticipation of a negative consequence imposed by his employer moderates his approach to Twitter.

Overall, the empirical data suggest a considerable degree of diversity of how journalists experience efforts towards compliance with organisational rules, requiring some of them to navigate managerial ambiguities when engaging with Twitter. To determine how and where individuals are subject to such ambiguities, I revisit the analysis of journalists’ knowledge of their employer’s Twitter policy (see Subsection 5.1.1), and cross-examine it with their sense of how strictly a given policy is enforced. Figure 5.1 maps journalists interviewed for this study²¹ on to different dimensions, when we consider the interplay of a given Twitter policy and its enforcement.

²¹ Again, two individuals did not provide sufficiently indicative accounts of the nature and existence of their organisation’s Twitter policy and its enforcement to be included here.

Figure 5.1: Journalists' knowledge of their organisation's Twitter policy and their sense of its enforcement



From a standpoint of effective innovation and workforce management, the nature and content of a given policy should – logically – match its enforcement, that is, a clear policy allows proper enforcement, while compliance is irrational to expect when rules are not communicated or are non-existent to begin with. As a result, one would expect a relatively linear relationship between the two. The blue line and surrounding lighter blue ellipse in Figure 5.1 visually mark the area of such linearity. We can see that in the experiences of journalists highlighted in this section so far, policy and compliance align to map on to different parts of this area. For example, Melinda works for a news organisation whose approach to Twitter she only implicitly understands, and it is not surprising to find that such inexplicit rules do not result in concrete or strict enforcement by her superiors. Jake's employer, on the other hand, moderates journalists' Twitter engagement via a clearly communicated policy, and he is fully aware of the ways in which they ensure his compliance. While Melinda and Jake differ in their experiences, they are similar in how they perceive of the *coherence* of their employer's approach to managing Twitter.

The analysis further revealed that three individuals in Figure 5.1 are located outside the light blue ellipse that indicates the space where an organisation's policy and its enforcement are aligned in terms of coherence: Terence, Monica and Jackson. Terence is a national reporter for one of the three major US cable news channels, and as Figure 5.1 illustrates, his employer's approach to Twitter is merely implicit, while he reports experiencing relatively strict enforcement. Terence explains that he often feels like he is tapping around in the dark and is worried about doing something wrong, while it is not clear to him where, in fact, the boundaries of 'wrong' lie. His employer's ambiguous management creates a large margin of possible error for him, and he relies on familiar hierarchical structures – arguably at the expense of some of his journalistic agency – to play it safe on Twitter:

“Because the one thing you learn here is that there is no one reporter bigger than [name of his news organisation]. So you don't bring any reproach to it. You're not going to embarrass it, you know what I mean? You just don't, because it will still be there when you leave.”

Both Jackson, a broadsheet domestic policy journalist, and Monica, a state government reporter for a print outlet, outline a management situation that provokes the startling question of why a news organisation would go through the trouble of formulating and communicating a concrete policy but then fail to ensure it is followed. Monica readily tells me about her organisation's general corporate structure and processes, and yet, she has no sense at all how strictly their Twitter strategy is enforced:

Monica: “Yeah we do, I mean, I work for [name of employer], and they are very organised. There is a whole corporate structure for certain guidelines.”
Interviewer: “Do you have a sense of how they're enforced?”
Monica: “I've never been pulled back or called off, or saying you've gone too far here. So no, I have no sense if they are enforced at all.”

Monica's account demonstrates the difference between proactive and reactive enforcement, the latter of which her employer follows. She has never got into trouble herself, so it seems disciplinary procedures are unknown until they become necessary from the organisation's perspective.

Overall, the empirical data suggest a spectrum of journalistic experiences with organisational efforts aimed at creating rules of Twitter engagement and ensuring compliance. Yet within this spectrum, the majority of journalists experience their

employer's approaches as relatively coherent, providing them with a stable frame of reference in their behaviour on the platform. Unsurprisingly, journalists who are subject to explicit Twitter policies and strict enforcement report their news organisations as more influential in shaping their Twitter engagement than those who are subject to no rules or merely implicit Twitter rules, which come with no efforts to uphold them, or casual compliance. The analysis further identified three exceptions in the sample, where journalists reported their employers mismanaging Twitter as an object of innovation in the newsroom. These journalists are faced with organisational ambiguities and possible fields of conflict, as their organisations fail to help them transition into or even navigate new or evolving tasks (Appelbaum, 1997).

5.1.3. Managing expertise and building skills

The adoption of digital tools such as Twitter not only requires structural change management in the newsroom, but also new socio-technological proficiencies on behalf of the reporters engaging with the platform. In principle, any kind of engagement with digital technology and platforms like Twitter is shaped by knowledge and ability to use it (Deuze, 2008). Employers can play a key role in facilitating employee skill development and, by extension, impact their use of the platform. From an organisation's perspective, the rationale underlying employee training is simple: a more skilful and qualified workforce will contribute more productively to achieving given strategic goals. Throughout the analysis of the interview data, two distinct strategies emerged through which news organisations seek to develop Twitter expertise: external skill recruitment, and internal skill building efforts, the latter of which I classify as either formal, peer-driven or passive.

External skill recruitment

This strategy refers to news organisations' efforts to bring external talent and skills into the newsroom. Journalists perceive of the strategy of skills recruitment as particularly salient during times when expertise does not yet sufficiently exist within the organisation, and as such, it can be interpreted as a crucial step in initiating an organisation's innovation management process. Once that process is more advanced in terms of expertise distribution within the organisation, a comparable level of expertise becomes the new norm for future employees. Sarah's account, outlined at the beginning of this chapter, already

demonstrated this, as her news organisation has adopted a recruitment strategy that seeks to almost exclusively hire tech-savvy journalists. Other journalists I spoke to have been directly affected by employment opportunities that sought out a certain level of ‘Twitter literacy’. Michael, a broadsheet reporter in a major urban centre, explains his awareness that “being good at Twitter is now a prerequisite of what we do as journalists.” To him, digital media skills have become an expectation rather than an added benefit of what he can offer to his employer. He has experienced first hand how his news organisation favours journalists with a certain presence on the platform for job openings: when he applied for his current position, his narrow Twitter engagement was a key concern. Contrary to Michael, Rufus benefited from such a skills-driven recruitment approach. Even though he started using the platform at his previous job following an editor’s request, he has since built up a significant presence, for which he is known amongst both his colleagues and competitors. He tells me that he was hired by his current employer specifically for the reputation he had built on the platform, bringing not only his skills, but also his nearly 80,000 followers with him, into the new job. The interview data further indicates that some news organisations hire social media experts as non-journalistic support staff to create or join social media departments and ‘social teams’, which work across newsrooms in an organisation. They specialise in managing Twitter and other social channels on an organisational scale, providing what Grayson perceives of as crucial support:

“There are people who handle social media at my news organisation, they are on social media constantly. They’re managing streams of it, they’re monitoring what our reporters are tweeting, what’s going on out there in the world, looking for the next viral story, and trying to manage our own social channels. And that’s actually one of the things, you know, one of the advantages I think for me working at a national newspaper of this size: I get great Twitter support from our social media team so that I don’t have to worry about it.”

Grayson is glad to receive such support from his organisation, but his worry-free Twitter presence perhaps comes at a price: as his employer’s (or social team’s) influence increases, he admits that his autonomy in how it is run decreases. Grayson’s account further indicates just how keenly his employer has integrated Twitter into everyday workflows and the investments they have made to facilitate this. However, what is curious and possibly even contradictory is that Grayson reported earlier that he only has partial knowledge of his organisation’s Twitter policy, and that it is loosely enforced at best (see Subsection 5.1.2). Rather than viewing this inconsistency as a communication failure on behalf of the organisation, it can be interpreted as an example of successful innovation management in

practice: the organisation's Twitter approach is so organically integrated into Grayson's workflows and tasks that he may no longer fully grasp the managerial mechanisms in place that facilitate and shape his engagement with the platform.

Internal skill building

The strategy of internal skill building encompasses organisational efforts aimed at providing learning resources and training to those reporters who already work for the organisation. The analysis of interview data revealed a subgroup of 10 journalists who provided specific accounts of the nature and circumstances of their employer's efforts to build Twitter skills and digital expertise in the newsroom. Because this analysis is driven by the underlying premise that policies, their enforcement and skill building need to coherently work together to effectively manage processes of media innovation, these journalists and their accounts can be visually presented by mapping them on to Figure 5.1. Figure 5.2 thus indicates four colour-coded levels of training and support available to the ten individuals in the subgroup: no training or support; some voluntary training; training subject to existing skills; and mandatory training.

[Figure appears on the next page]

Figure 5.2: Formal training and skills development available to journalists



Figure 5.2 visually demonstrates how in the sample subgroup of 10, the three managerial mechanisms (i.e. policy, enforcement and training) largely align. The bottom left and top right corner of the distribution are particularly indicative of this. For example, Connor and Mitchell have reported that there is no Twitter policy in place in their organisation that they need to abide by, and thus their employer offers no training or support. Sarah and Jake, on the other hand, are subject to clearly communicated and enforced policies, which requires their participation in mandatory training. While this pattern is slightly more diverse between these two ends of the spectrum, it is still indicative enough to emphasise the coherence in an organisation's effort how to, if at all, (a) formulate and communicate a policy, (b) ensure its compliance and (c) provide training and support to equip journalists so they productively contribute to achieving an organisation's goals.

The data further indicates that each level of training available to journalists often consists of different types of skill building, which I classify as formal, peer-driven and passive.

Formal skill building refers to official human resources initiatives such as Twitter workshops and seminars. For example, Jake explains his organisation's mandatory Twitter education, which has already been assessed as successful in creating a Twitter-literate workforce in his newsroom:

“We absolutely have in-house training. We hardly ever do it anymore, because everybody here is now well versed enough in it that they don't really need refresher courses and most people who come to us from outside the company were already using it in their previous roles. But until [recently], yeah, we had periodic basic and advanced Twitter courses that were done here in our newsrooms. I think there even was one specifically on TweetDeck and stuff like that.”

Jake's account tells us how his news organisation made a formal effort to train its workforce, while it remained receptive to recognising employees' advances and improvements in skill development. His employer thus adjusted its training strategy over time, indicating a responsiveness to the dynamic nature of innovation as a process (Dogruel, 2015). But Jake also refers to both the context and content of the training provided, and this invites a perspective that views formal skill building as serving a dual purpose for his news organisation: on the one hand, it is a straightforward means to develop and scale expertise within and across newsrooms, and on the other, the material taught can also operate as a vehicle tailored to instilling an organisation's overall Twitter strategy into the minds, and by extension, actions of employees.

Peer skill building represents a tactic in strategic management that makes use of resources already present in the organisation, and as such, it is concerned with 'working with and through people to accomplish organizational objectives' (Albarran, 2006, p. 11). News organisations draw on already skilled journalists to teach their colleagues about Twitter, as James experienced in his newsroom. He considers himself an early adopter amongst his colleagues, and had started using the platform at a time when “not a lot of other people had figured out yet that it was an asset for journalism.” When it took off in the newsroom, and colleagues as well as the news organisation started to catch up, he was approached to share his expertise and skills to get others on board and up to speed. James' experience demonstrates how the influence of managerial mechanisms is not absolute, even though many journalists in this study highlight the role of top-down approaches. James' example shows the scope and opportunities for interactive learning, where the news organisation learns from its employees, and the latter from each other. James ultimately describes coming up with his organisation's (loose) stance on Twitter as an “evolution,” to which he

feels he contributed. In this regard, we may understand James as a creative leader in his organisation's innovation process.

Finally, *passive skill building* refers to how news organisations casually, but deliberately, distribute Twitter knowledge and resources amongst staff, such as via newsletters, brown bag lunches or best practice case studies. These often serve as reminders, as Amanda, a government and politics reporter for a print outlet, explains:

“I mean at this moment in time, for instance, you know, we get an internal company newsletter where they tell us, okay, great tricks of the day. What they tell us is learn this and learn that, and more learn this and learn that.”

While a regular social media newsletter can certainly support best practice on Twitter, Amanda's experience also suggests that it serves as an informal, often covert, signpost of the company's Twitter approach.

In sum, amongst journalists whose employer has created social media departments or 'social teams', their specialist purpose and often-extensive involvement in Twitter-related matters is perceived as instrumental in driving how and to which degree reporters embrace the platform. This supports earlier arguments (Parr, 2009) that some news organisations have invested resources and hired non-journalistic experts to help with shaping and optimising their presence on Twitter. At the same time, the perceived influence of the different internal skill building strategies is more difficult to assess solely based on the data gathered for this study. Some journalists appreciate top-down formal skills training for providing knowledge of organisationally preferred behaviour and pointers in a strategic direction, while others recognise bottom-up and peer-based learning as more enabling and instructive. Individuals in this study did, however, agree on one thing: the mere existence of any kind of training carries symbolic meaning which, in principle, communicates both Twitter's relevance and salience in the wider organisational strategy.

5.2. Organisational objectives and elements of Twitter engagement

Whichever mechanisms news organisations put in place to manage their tweeting workforce, these do not come out of nowhere. Any organisational Twitter strategy is, naturally, driven by underlying objectives, and these are often tied to economic considerations and imperatives (Lewis, Holton & Coddington, 2014). As news organisations' modes of product delivery and dissemination are changing, this has significant implications for their models of revenue creation, customer retention and acquisition, as well as competitiveness. As outlined before, my inquiry builds on three common organisational goals associated with Twitter: (1) generating traffic to the news organisation's website; (2) audience engagement; and (3) organisational branding. The analysis here is twofold: first, how do the 26 journalists I interviewed perceive of and experience such organisational objectives (if at all), and second, where do elements that assist in achieving such objectives manifest themselves in the Twitter presence of the 120 political journalists I investigated via content analysis?

Each of the following subsections explores one of those organisational objectives. In my presentation and discussion of the findings I draw on both interview data and analytical insights offered by the study's quantitative data. This elucidates where such elements that reflect and can support organisational Twitter goals become visible in journalists' observable engagement with the platform, both on their profile pages and in their tweets. For the analysis presented here and moving forward, it is important to highlight that the aim of my analysis is not to compare tweets and profile pages against each other based on which characteristics they feature. I view them as two separate but complementing components of journalists' Twitter presence, and both of their distinct properties offer possibilities to feature elements that assist in realising organisational objectives. Given this study's further interest in how the type of publishing medium and the socio-political environment moderates journalistic Twitter engagement, I also examine these here. Finally, I explore shared perceptions and patterns of engagement between the 28 news organisations considered in this study based on the tweeting practices of the 120 journalists they employ.

5.2.1. Generating traffic

Many journalists confirm that driving traffic to their employer's website has generally become a key (economic) goal for their news organisation in the digital age. For Jake, such considerations immediately transfer to his Twitter engagement:

“Probably about 80% of what I use Twitter for is just pushing out links to content to try to drive people to our websites. And that's why our company was very keen for all of us to create Twitter accounts some years ago. Back then I didn't, but now I recognise that it can be a potent force for driving traffic to your copy.”

If we recall some of the findings presented earlier in this chapter, we can see how Jake's experience is distinct: his employer has a clearly communicated Twitter policy and strictly enforces compliance, while digital media skills training is mandatory. In light of this, it is of little surprise that Jake reports engaging in such a way that corresponds with this particular organisational goal. In both his tweets and on his profile page there is ample evidence of what I refer to as *elements of generating traffic*, that is, a combined measure I created that records the characteristics²² that encourage Twitter followers to exercise their 'power of clicks'. However, my analysis of quantitative data indicates that many journalists differ significantly from Jake in their engagement:

- The majority of the 2,400 analysed tweets (61%) contain no elements that aide generating traffic. In tweets that do contain such elements (39%), the most common feature is sharing a link to the news organisation's website. Yet journalists only include this in less than a fifth of all tweets (15%).
- Elements of generating traffic are more common on journalists' profile pages. At least one such element is present in 83% of them, with links to the organisational website in Twitter's dedicated URL field as the most used feature in 70% of all profiles.

Overall, given the absence of any elements that aide generating traffic in the majority of journalists' tweets, my study findings support insights from recent research which showed

²² These characteristics were recorded by individual measures related to generating traffic in tweets [calls to action to engage with content (V18), nature of accounts that are retweeted (V22), inclusion of organisational links (V31)] and on profile pages [display of organisational link in Twitter's dedicated URL field (V13), inclusion of link to organisation in bio statement (V29)]. For details, please refer to the study's research operationalisation in Chapter 4.

that Twitter only drives a small amount of traffic for news organisations, for example, active publishers on Twitter report only receiving 11% of their traffic from tweets (Lichterman, 2016). While it is unclear to which degree this is a result of, for example, audiences simply not clicking on links, it can be argued that the absence of links altogether certainly disables the possibility of driving any traffic to a news organisation's website. Some interviewees report how their employer makes deliberate efforts to make it as easy as possible for journalists to share elements on Twitter that drive traffic. This commonly occurs via social media plug-ins added to an organisation's publishing software that make it "really simple for me to tweet my story, because I don't have to even separately call up my Twitter account... I just click on the button, and boom, it's done," as Samuel explains. While organisational links feature more prominently on journalists' profile pages than in tweets, many interviewees ascribe a minor role to their power of generating traffic. Individuals report that these are for "background info" (e.g. via organisational staff pages), and given the more permanent and static nature of the profile page, journalists find this yields a low expectation of creating any meaningful traffic for the news organisation.

The quantitative analysis further finds that journalists with different editorial responsibilities (i.e. editorial staff or editorial leadership) do not differ in their inclusion of elements of generating traffic. On both the profile page and in their tweets, the maximum variation between the groups is less than 4 percentage points. Here, the statistical analysis suggests that there is no association between a journalist's editorial responsibility within a news organisation and the presence of elements in tweets that aid generating traffic ($\chi^2(1) = 1.82$; $p = 0.177$ for tweets, and $\chi^2(1) = 0.48$; $p = 0.827$ for profile pages). Interview data also implies that no argument can be made that either supports the notion of editorial leadership seeking to set a 'positive' example (in terms of behaviour aimed at realising organisational goals) for editorial staff to follow on Twitter, nor one where editorial staff feel pressured to contribute to achieving organisational objectives more compliantly given their inferior role within an organisation's hierarchy.

Because this study is particularly interested in how two external factors moderate journalists' Twitter engagement, I conducted a logistic regression analysis²³ to estimate the

²³ Logistic regression analysis allows us to predict the odds of a dichotomous outcome variable. This was chosen as the suitable statistical technique because the combined measure *elements of generating traffic* was coded with only two categories, i.e. 0=no elements, and 1=one or more elements (given the measure's highly positively skewed distribution).

effect of the *type of medium* and *news period* on the odds of journalists including *elements of generating traffic* in their tweets. Table 5.1 presents the model.

Table 5.1: Logistic regression model estimating effects on *elements of generating traffic* in tweets

Variable	B	SE	Odds ratio
Type of medium [^]	0.616**	0.103	1.852
News period ^{^^}	0.221*	0.085	1.248
(Constant)	-1.041	0.101	
Model $\chi^2 = 44.531, p < 0.001$			
Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.034$			
Base: Complete dataset of tweets, $N=2,400$.			
[^] coded as 0=broadcast and 1=broadcast			
^{^^} coded as 0=mundane news period and			
1=week of the 2014 US Midterm election			
* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.001$			

The model shows that for *elements of generating traffic* in all tweets:

- Both the *type of medium* and *news period* are significant predictors ($p < 0.05$) of the odds of including elements that encourage traffic generation in a tweet.
- Broadcast journalists' odds are 1.85 times higher (i.e. almost twice as high) to include such elements in their tweets than those of broadcast journalists.
- Journalists' odds are 25% higher of including elements that drive traffic during the week of the 2014 US Midterm election than during the mundane news period in September 2014.

5.2.2. Audience engagement

Previous work by Napoli (2011, p. 95) argues that 'the concept of engagement has moved from the periphery to the center of how media organizations ... are thinking about audiences,' and in this subsection I explore efforts towards audience engagement on Twitter. Many journalists I interviewed readily articulate a sense that audience engagement has become a key concern on behalf of their organisations, one of which is actively

(although often informally) welcomed. For example, Amanda describes that at her organisation, “they encourage it very strongly because [it is] seen as a means to build up a loyal base of followers, a means to build up the paper’s audience.” This suggests that for her employer, audience engagement is a key tool to increase both the loyalty of an existing audience and also to connect with those followers who belong to the *potential* audience. Other journalists provide analogous narratives, and my interview data indicates that news organisations tend to think of ‘followers’ and (possibly paying) ‘customers’ along similar lines. This corroborates insights from other research that highlight that the rationale underlying such efforts is crucially linked to considerations around the economic sustainability of news models (Fallows, 2012). Jackson illustrates this point as he ponders: “I think it’s, you know, in the modern era of journalism I think it helps drive interest and sell newspapers, right? Or subscriptions.” Jackson’s perception suggests that Twitter – which offers a range of interactive and participatory features – becomes a crucial realm to pursue organisational objectives around customer relationship management, loyalty and acquisition, especially during financially unstable times.

Audience engagement appears to have become a key pursuit of news organisations (Lewis et al., 2014), but is it also one that journalists themselves actively pursue on Twitter? My analysis of quantitative data examines what I call *elements of audience engagement*, that is, a combined measure of individually recorded characteristics²⁴ that facilitate interacting with the audience on Twitter. This yields the following results:

- Just over a fifth of all tweets (22%) contain at least one *element of audience engagement*, while the vast majority (79%) contain none. Here, the most common element of audience engagement is including a ‘call to action’ that encourages the audience to proactively participate and respond to content (8%).
- Given how the profile page requires deliberate navigation on behalf of followers, it is arguably more difficult for journalists to actively engage the audience. Here, one *element of audience engagement* is present in 15% of profile pages, and even two are observable in 13% of profiles. Listing contact details that allow followers to get in

²⁴ These characteristics were recorded by individual measures related to audience engagement in tweets [calls to action to engage with content (V18), asking for tips, story ideas and additional footage (V19), nature of accounts that are tweeted at or mentioned (V29)] and on profile pages [listing contact details (V33), actively asking for Twitter users to get in touch with tips, story, ideas, questions, etc. (V34)]. For details, please refer to the study’s research operationalisation in Chapter 4.

touch with a journalist is the most commonly used feature in all profiles that list any such elements (28%).

- Again, there is almost no difference between journalists with either editorial responsibility (i.e. staff or leadership) and their respective inclusion of *elements of audience engagement* in tweets. Here, the statistical analysis suggests that there is no association between a journalist's responsibility within a news organisation and the presence of elements related to audience engagement ($\chi^2(1) = 0.024$; $p = 0.876$ for tweets, and $\chi^2(1) = 2.245$; $p = 0.325$ for profile pages).

These findings do not support insights from other research that surveyed editors, of whom an overwhelming majority (90%) reported that they consider audience engagement a top priority when tweeting (Mayer, 2011). The research design of this study does not allow inferences to be drawn let alone suggest causality between quantitative and qualitative datasets, but it is worth highlighting a common concern shared by some interviewees that hinders efforts towards audience engagement. While journalists report a general recognition of understanding contemporary audiences as 'active recipients' (Lewis et al., 2014, p. 231), they admit to not truly interacting with the public (i.e. non-journalistic Twitter users and those who do not belong to the political elite). For example, Connor explains:

"I used to have far more interactions and conversations with people on Twitter, I'd go a little back and forth. Now with readers, especially the political readers, I generally don't respond to them. It's just not worth it."

Connor describes how his approach to audience engagement has changed over time, and attributes its decline to unclear benefits that such interactions yields. My findings here corroborate recent research by Usher (2014) who suggests that while journalists follow organisational imperatives to have a presence on social media, they do not make great efforts to engage their audiences in genuine conversations.

To further understand factors that influence journalists' de facto efforts of audience engagement on Twitter, I conducted a logistic regression analysis.²⁵ Table 5.2 presents a model that estimates the effect of *type of medium* and *news period* on the odds of journalists including *elements of audience engagement* in their tweets.

²⁵ Again, logistic regression analysis was chosen as the suitable statistical technique because the combined measure *elements of audience engagement* was coded with only two categories, i.e. 0=no elements, and 1=one or more elements (given the measure's highly positively skewed distribution).

Table 5.2: Logistic regression model estimating effects on *elements of audience engagement* in tweets

Variable	B	SE	Odds ratio
Type of medium [^]	−0.295*	0.111	0.744
News period ^{^^}	−0.074	0.1	0.928
(Constant)	−1.044		
Model $\chi^2 = 7.5, p < 0.05$			
Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.005$			
Base: Complete dataset of tweets, $N=2,400$.			
[^] coded as 0=broadcast and 1=broadsheet			
^{^^} coded as 0=mundane news period and			
1=week of the 2014 US Midterm election			
* $p < 0.05$			

The model shows that for *elements of audience engagement* in all tweets:

- Only the type of medium is a statistically significant predictor ($p < 0.05$) of the odds of including *elements of audience engagement* in a tweet.
- Broadsheet journalists' odds are 26% lower than broadcast journalists to include such elements in their tweets.

5.2.3. Organisational branding

News organisations have long-established branded institutional accounts on Twitter (Bruns, 2012), but they also appear keen for their brand to find its way into the Twitter presence of the journalists they employ (Ottovordemgentschenfelde, 2016a). Akin to considerations around generating traffic and engaging the audience, many interviewees outline how they experience their news organisations animating concrete efforts of organisational branding targeted at realising a key market opportunity to establish competitive superiority (Keller & Lehmann, 2006).

Branding is arguably a more elusive feature to observe in a journalist's Twitter presence. After all, one might argue that the existence of a Twitter presence in and of itself already contributes to establishing a certain brand image. My study acknowledges this, but I focus

my analysis here on elements that concretely relate to the organisation as a brand, that is, what I cumulatively refer to as *elements of organisational branding*, another measure that combines individually observed characteristics.²⁶ The quantitative analysis of such elements shows the following for journalists' presence on Twitter:

- About a quarter of all tweets (26%) contain at least one element of organisational branding, and slightly less (20%) feature at least two. Well over half (54%) of all tweets contain no element of organisational branding at all.
- Only a fraction of profile pages contain no elements of organisational branding at all (1%). Some contain one element (10%), others two (21%), while almost half (48%) of all profiles contain three such elements, yet others four (14%), or even five or more (7%). Across all profiles, the most commonly used feature is highlighting one's employment status with a news organisation in the bio statement (93%). It is also worth noting that despite the prominence of elements of organisational branding on journalists' profile pages, visual elements appear to play a minor role for branding purposes, as only a small number of profiles feature visually branded elements (such as logos) in either their profile (7%) or header photos (6%).
- For both profile pages and tweets, journalists in editorial leadership roles share more *elements of organisational branding* than those in staff roles. 90% of editorial leaders share three or more such elements on their profile pages (compared to 64% for staff), and at least one such element in 51% of tweets (compared to 45% for staff). Here, the analysis suggests that there is a statistically significant association between a journalist's responsibility within a news organisation and *elements of organisational branding* in tweets ($\chi^2 (1) = 10.676$; $p < 0.01$), but no association for profile pages ($\chi^2 (1) = 6.36$; $p = 0.273$).

²⁶ Characteristics were recorded by individual measures related to organisational branding in tweets [nature of accounts that are retweeted (V22), tweeted at or mentioned (V24, V26), organisational links (V31), organisational elements in visuals (V38), types of hashtags (V42, V43)] and on profile pages [organisational name or acronym in Twitter handle (V10), reference to news organisation as primary employer (V21), listing of organisational link in Twitter's dedicated URL field (V13), inclusion of link to organisation in bio statement (V29), organisational elements or setting in profile (V40, V42) or header photo (V41, V43)]. For details, please refer to the study's research operationalisation in Chapter 4.

I further conducted a linear regression analysis for the whole sample of tweets with *type of medium* and *news period* as predictors of *elements of organisational branding*. Table 5.3 presents the model:

Table 5.3: Linear regression to predict *elements of organisational branding* in all tweets

Variables	B	t	R ²	F test
Tweets			0.008	9.67**
(Constant)		14.67		
Type of medium [^]	0.107	2.854**		
News period ^{^^}	0.108	3.347**		

Base: Complete dataset of tweets, N=2,400.

[^] coded as 0=broadcast, 1=broadsheet

^{^^} coded as 0=mundane news period, 1=week of 2014 US Midterm election

** $p < 0.001$

Table 5.3 shows that for elements of organisational branding:

- Both *type of medium* and *news period* were found as significant predictors of *elements of organisational branding* ($F(2,2397)=9.67, p < 0.001$).
- Broadsheet journalists are slightly more likely to include *elements of organisational branding* in their tweets than broadcast journalists. For every 10 tweets broadcast journalists send, the model predicts that they would include one (rounded from 1.07) more element of organisational branding in their tweets than broadcast journalists, when holding all other variables constant.
- Journalist were more likely to include *elements of organisational branding* during the week of the 2014 US Midterm elections than during the mundane news period in September 2014. For every 10 tweets journalists send, the model predicts that they would include one (rounded from 1.08) more such element, when holding all other variables constant.

Interview data support findings from the study's quantitative analysis, and Brody, who works for a broadcast outlet, explains his employer's perspective on branding efforts:

"It almost always is considered a positive when you're on Twitter because [my news organisation] gets a lot out of it.... With most of what you do, they expect that you're waving the flag of the company on it."

He further outlines that this becomes even more important to his news organisation when the news environment intensifies, that is, during an election or even a breaking event, further supporting the study's quantitative findings. Here, branding as a strategy rises in importance when the market becomes more populated and increasingly competitive (Nilson, 1998), as journalists cover the same stories, and audiences follow news more closely. It is especially during those busy news periods that Sarah's employer takes a more creative stance and experiments with novel journalistic formats:

“If you take the Democratic Debates that we had in Vegas [in 2015].... I'm really proud of what we're doing in terms of social first editorial storytelling. We're trying to do that more and more for political events.... We turned a two-hour TV event into a two-day, trending affair across Twitter and Facebook. We used it to try different ways of storytelling, such as Twitter Moment collections, an Instagram movie series, and backstage from the debate we went live on Facebook.”

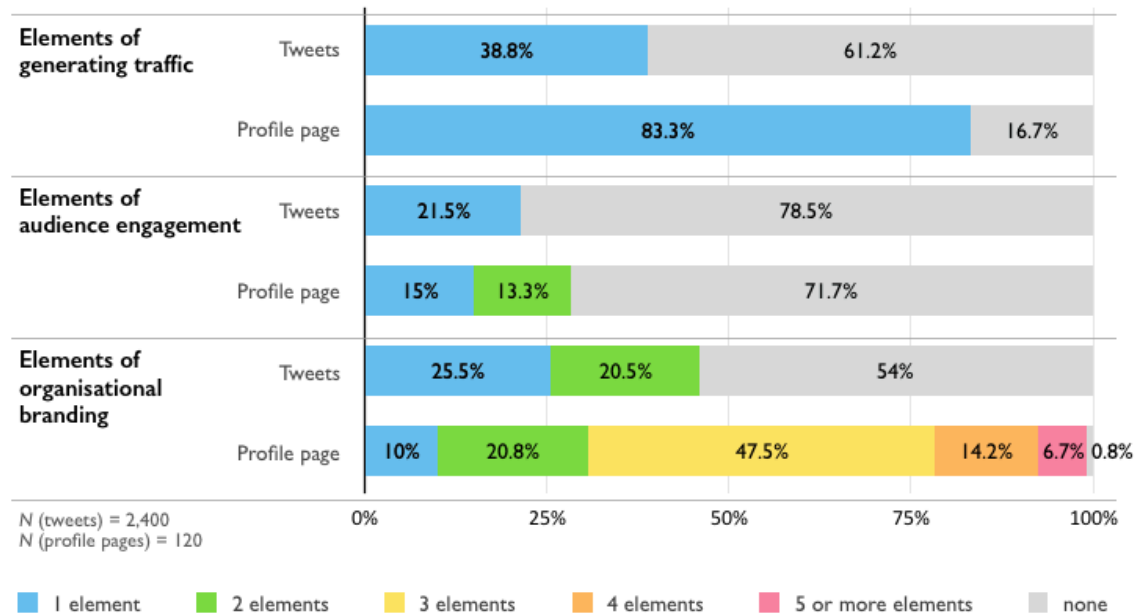
Her account illustrates how Twitter is productively managed as an object of media innovation, and facilitates distinct journalistic practices that set Sarah's news organisation apart from others. The rationale behind this reaches beyond mere Twitter engagement and includes other social channels as well, yet it is simple, as outlined at the beginning of this chapter: “The days of taking what you've done on another platform and putting it on social are over.” Sarah further tells us of the overwhelming audience responses her news organisation receives in this regard. While this speaks to the perceived success of journalists' efforts to establish competitive superiority through a strong and positive brand image, her news organisation certainly remains an exception rather than the rule in this study.

5.2.4. Shared perceptions and patterns across news organisations

In this section thus far I have separately examined three objectives news organisations are keen to pursue via journalistic Twitter engagement: generating traffic, audience engagement and organisational branding respectively. My analysis of quantitative data indicates that elements that assist in realising such goals are variously included in reporters' de facto presence on Twitter. While relevant elements appear, overall, more prominently on profile pages than in tweets, the socio-technological features of the profile page are arguably less

powerful in achieving any of the organisational objectives. Figure 5.3 provides a visual summary of these findings.

Figure 5.3: Sample distribution of elements that support achieving organisational objectives



To contextualise the findings presented in Figure 5.3, my qualitative data offers some further insight. While many journalists generally recognise how Twitter can be salient to organisational (economic) goals that their employers encourage them to contribute to, they present a striking narrative of the intangibility of associated long- and short-term outcomes. Interviewees outline not only how concrete benefits of their practices that support organisational objectives are unknown, but also how this, in effect, significantly mitigates their willingness to make any supporting efforts. For example, Jake outlines his concerns:

“The industry is still looking for a way to become profitable again. And social media is certainly not hindering that process. I think it can be helpful but we can’t really see how yet, you know, we spend all of this time using Twitter to try to drive people to our websites, engage with people on the platform.... Well, that’s great. So we get page clicks, we get unique visitors, we get engagement time. But how does that translate into paying the bills? Well, it’s still not completely clear, right? Because we simply cannot make the kind of money on internet advertising that we did with national display ads and classifieds decades ago. And we’re still trying to wrap our heads around that.”

Jake’s account tells us of the industry and his organisation’s economic struggle, and he cautions against the belief that it may singularly be solved by platforms like Twitter. I

outlined before how Jake readily follows his employer's clear and coherent Twitter strategy, and he is highly aware of the objectives that underlie it. But other interviewees are not as able to pinpoint either organisational strategies or goals that drive considerations around journalistic Twitter engagement. The pattern here is clear and not surprising: journalists whose employers do not clearly communicate and enforce their Twitter approach, including its sought-after benefits, tend to experience an organisation's influence over shaping their engagement as less powerful.

To better understand how journalists not only vary from each other, but how the 28 news organisations considered in this study are (dis)similar based on their respective employees' behaviour on Twitter, I used cluster analysis as a technique to detect organisational subgroups in my data. I performed an agglomerative hierarchical cluster analysis²⁷ of news organisations using four variables: *elements of generating traffic*, *elements of audience engagement*, *elements of organisational branding*, and *organisational elements*, a novel combined measure of co-existing characteristics of the previous three variables. This joins pairs of news organisations that are most similar (based on how their employees include elements in their Twitter presence that aide in realising organisational objectives), and continues to join clusters of news organisations into larger clusters.

Using information from both the agglomeration schedule and the dendrogram²⁸ helps determine the cut-off point of clustering stages in the absence of a formal stopping rule (Yim & Ramdeen, 2015). The goal is to increase within-group homogeneity and between-group heterogeneity, and the analysis here reveals a five-cluster solution. For example, the dendrogram shows that the largest cluster in the solution has nine members (as indicated on the y-axis, it consists of IDs 10, 22, 4, 15, 21, 23, 8, 6 and 28), while the smallest clusters consist of three news organisations (IDs 5, 18, 20 and IDs 7, 17, 25).²⁹ An examination of the dendrogram from left to right shows how clusters that are more similar are grouped together earlier, and this also demonstrates the distance between clusters. For example, the

²⁷ Hierarchical clustering combines cases into homogeneous clusters by merging them together one at a time in a series of sequential steps (Blei & Lafferty, 2009). Agglomerative hierarchical clustering separates each case into its own individual cluster in the first step so that the initial number of clusters equals the total number of cases (Norusis, 2010). In successive steps, similar cases are merged together until every case is grouped into one single cluster (Yim & Ramdeen, 2015). In my analysis, similar clusters are systematically merged together using squared Euclidian distance and centroid linkage measures.

²⁸ See Appendix 11 for the agglomeration schedule and the dendrogram.

²⁹ A previous analysis suggested six clusters with ID 19 (*Las Vegas Review Journal*) as a single-cluster solution, which is excluded from the five-cluster solution presented here.

distance is largest between clusters 2 and 5 (i.e. these are the most different from each other), while the distance between clusters 4 and 3 is smallest (i.e. these are the most similar). To better understand the underlying structure of each cluster, it is instructive to take a closer look at the means for the four variables based on which the analysis was performed. Table 5.4 orders clusters based on their means for each of the variables into terciles.

Table 5.4: Ordering of distribution of cluster means by terciles

	Generating traffic		Audience engagement		Organisational branding		Organisational elements	
Top tercile	Cluster 5	0.628	Cluster 3	0.357	Cluster 5	0.948	Cluster 5	1.463
	Cluster 3	0.523	Cluster 4	0.253	Cluster 4	0.790	Cluster 3	1.420
Mid tercile	Cluster 4	0.457	Cluster 1	0.211	Cluster 3	0.680	Cluster 4	1.220
Bottom tercile	Cluster 2	0.391	Cluster 2	0.170	Cluster 2	0.646	Cluster 2	1.009
	Cluster 1	0.268	Cluster 5	0.165	Cluster 1	0.496	Cluster 1	0.818

The ordering of means in Table 5.4 suggests distinct cluster characteristics, as further emphasised by the colour coding. Based on their average efforts to include various elements that aide realising organisational goals on Twitter, I refer to cluster 1 as *the careless*, to cluster 2 as *the unconvinced*, to cluster 3 as *the supporters*, to cluster 4 as *the inclined*, and to cluster 5 as *the promoters*. Here, it is worth highlighting two clusters in particular. First, outlets who belong to *the unconvinced* (i.e. cluster 2), the largest group, employ journalists who, on average, make the least observable efforts to contribute to realising organisational goals on Twitter, as they score consistently low in all measures. In contrast, journalists who work for organisations in top-scoring clusters include, on average, more than 1.5 and up to twice as many elements in their tweets than *the unconvinced*. Second, journalists who work for organisations who belong to *the promoters* (i.e. cluster 5) on average score highest in terms of efforts around generating traffic, organisational branding and overall presence of organisational elements, but are at the very bottom of the sample in terms of including *elements of audience engagement* in their tweets. Table 5.4 provides an overview of the news organisations and their cluster memberships.

Table 5.5: News organisations and cluster membership

Cluster 1: <i>the careless</i>	Cluster 2: <i>the unconvinced</i>	Cluster 3: <i>the supporters</i>	Cluster 4: <i>the inclined</i>	Cluster 5: <i>the promoters</i>
Wall Street Journal	Los Angeles Times	San Jose Mercury News	Denver Post	Dallas Morning News
New York Times	The Washington Post	Honolulu Star-Advertiser	Arizona Republic	New Jersey Star-Ledger
USA Today	Chicago Tribune	U-T San Diego	San Francisco Chronicle	Plain Dealer
Orange County Register	Houston Chronicle			Oregonian
Tampa Bay Times	Philadelphia Inquirer			
Minneapolis Star Tribune	Boston Globe			
Fox News	Atlanta Journal-Constitution			
MSNBC	Seattle Times			
	CNN			

Overall, the results of the cluster analysis suggest that there are five meaningful subgroups within the sample of 28 news organisations I consider in this study. After identifying and describing those meaningful subgroups, I now briefly explore other known characteristics of news organisations and how these relate to the clustering result. While the top three broadsheets (i.e. *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *USA Today*) cluster together, no pattern in terms of an organisation's relative position in the national ranking (by daily circulation size) and respective cluster membership emerges. A similar observation can be made for type of medium. There further seems no relationship between cluster membership and an organisation's geographical location and/or reach. For example, the four organisations in cluster 5 are based in four distinct areas of the US: in the South (*Dallas Morning News*), on the East Coast (*New Jersey Star-Ledger*), in the Midwest (*Plain Dealer*) and on the West Coast (*Oregonian*). Finally, amongst the 25 print outlets, the type of business model (i.e. subscription-based or freely accessible content) does not appear to relate to the clustering result. My interview data offer some context in this regard, as many journalists' accounts indicate that organisational considerations around generating traffic, audience engagement and branding exist regardless of business model. For example, on the one hand, journalists whose news organisations offer 'free' content generally report a rationale where increasing

website user numbers and their time spent on it also increases revenue from digital advertising. On the other hand, for employers with subscription-based models,³⁰ sharing links and other organisational content on Twitter emerges as a strategy towards upping subscription numbers by incentivising potential customers to access content behind paywalls. Some journalists report further employing this strategy by occasionally sharing ‘teasers’ in the form of articles that are freely accessible (often when an employer’s subscription model is metred or offers what is called ‘freemium’ access).

5.3. Measuring Twitter engagement and journalistic performance

Following the previous discussion of organisational objectives that underlie Twitter strategies and how these manifest themselves in journalists’ actual presence on the platform, this section explores how news organisations manage the outcomes and consequences of such engagement. Viewership and readership numbers have long been key indicators that measure news media reach and ‘impact’. In an age of post-industrial journalism (Anderson, Bell & Shirky, 2015), digital metrics have been added to the mix, such as clicks and page views, which have become ever more accessible and nuanced (Usher, 2014). This section considers how news organisations use Twitter analytics data to assess and evaluate journalistic performance in light of respective organisational objectives. The discussion addresses if and how employers refer to such analytics as measures that help them understand the news landscape, and how this can influence journalists’ approaches to the platform.

Web-based analytics provide news organisations with the ability to track their published news products and to understand how audiences engage with it. In principle, the availability of quantitative data on traffic and where it comes from, clicks, page views and visitor numbers, to name just a few of the increasingly sophisticated measures via which it is possible to collect such data, promise a significant improvement in news organisations’ capacity to understand the media environment in which they and their journalists operate.

³⁰ In general, subscription-based models require readers to pay to access content, but these differ in their deployment. The most common models are, in descending order: (1) metred subscriptions that allows readers to view a certain number of articles before requiring a paid subscription; (2) ‘freemium’ subscriptions, where most of the content is available for free, with only premium material requiring payment; and (3) hard paywalls, where no content is available without purchasing a subscription. See Williams (2016) for an overview of digital subscription models at US newspapers.

While recent research (Cherubini & Nielsen, 2016) suggested that the use of analytics has become common in newsrooms in the US, journalists in this study paint a more diverse picture of how their Twitter analytics are monitored and used as part of larger analytics efforts in their workplace, and how they perceive of such measures as influential in shaping their engagement.

Many journalists I interviewed are aware of how important analytics have generally become in newsrooms across the country, and how their diligent collection and analysis are perceived as potent in informing organisational business strategies and editorial decisions. Yet, when asked about their concrete experiences, a surprisingly high number of 11 journalists reported that their employer does not, to their knowledge, collect any data on their Twitter activities. This group is juxtaposed by another group of nine journalists whose employers strictly observe and analyse their engagement with the platform. Sandwiched between those two groups are merely three individuals whose news organisations casually monitor their Twitter analytics.³¹ This suggests that insights from Twitter analytics are not yet a prominent element in all news organisations' efforts to collect web-based data. Given this section's overarching concern with individuals for whom such Twitter analytics do play a role, the following analysis focuses on their experiences. One key finding here is that amongst those who are subject to either casual or strict consideration of quantitative data on their engagement with Twitter, mixed responses and a considerable degree of ambiguity prevail for two reasons.

First, for many journalists it is unclear how such data is interpreted and evaluated by their employer. While any journalist can check their own data via Twitter's analytics service, many are uncertain how such data is understood through the lens of the organisation, or if it is combined with any other kind of data the organisation collects. For example, Andy tells me that while his organisation considers insights from analytics, "they don't share those analytics for individuals, and I think that's conscious." Given how his news organisation deliberately leaves him in the dark, he continues to articulate his suspicion about what parameters his organisation uses to evaluate his Twitter presence against, and what conclusions they might draw from it, especially as his employer rather implicitly communicates its stance on Twitter. While others in the sample have access to analytics –

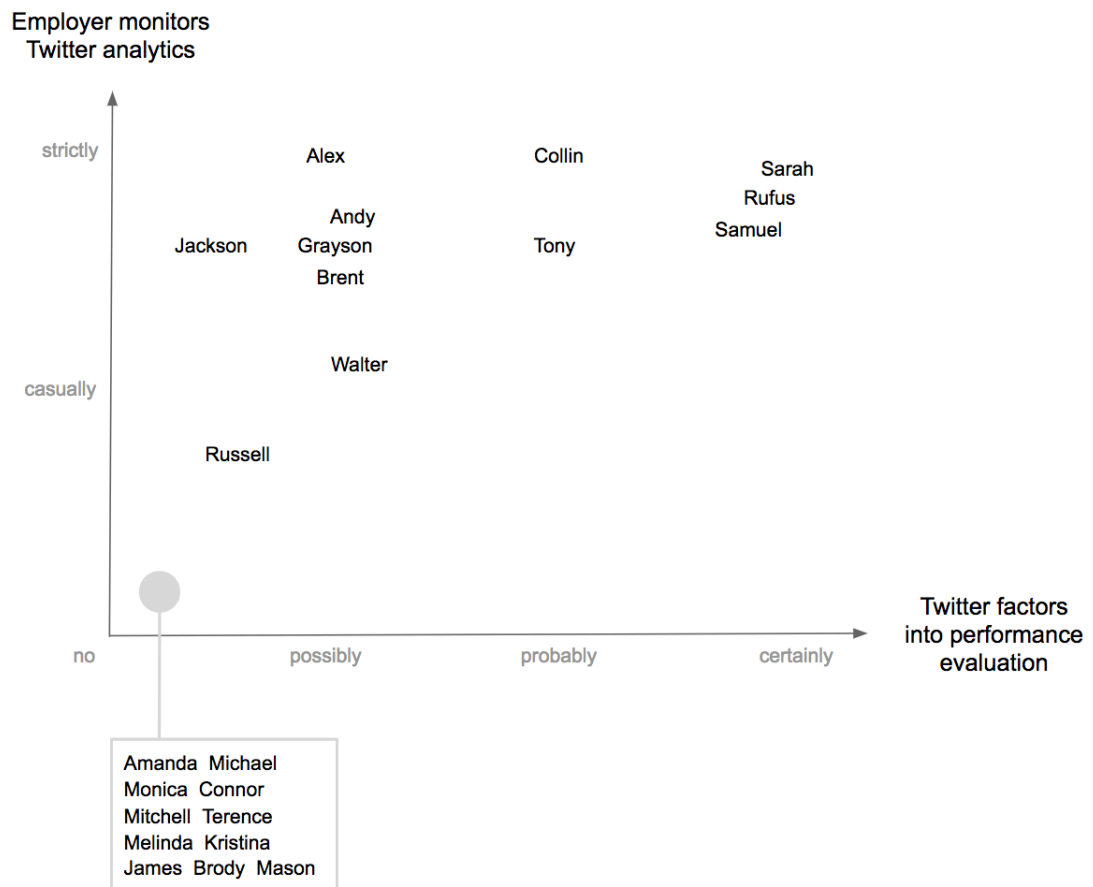
³¹ Three individuals did not provide sufficiently indicative accounts of their news organisation's Twitter analytics approach to be included in this analysis.

frequently via software tools implemented throughout their organisations, such as Chartbeat, Parse.ly or NewsWhip – and receive them via newsletters or even through personal accounts for those software tools, management tends to be elusive about how meaning is ascribed to them.

Second, many journalists do not know how and to which end their employers use insights from Twitter analytics data. These journalists are readily able to describe the *theoretically* pursued aims behind analytics: to assess how and to which degree organisational objectives materialise and yield benefits, and how this can, in turn, inform strategic decision-making as the organisation moves forward. Yet the concrete implications and how these affect them remain vague, with the exception of five reporters: Collin and Tony, on the one hand, and Sarah, Rufus and Samuel, on the other, report how their news organisation not only strictly monitors their Twitter analytics, but also uses those insights as factors in their employee performance reviews. Following the accounts of these five individuals, I mapped all journalists in the sample on to two analytical dimensions: the degree to which their employer monitors Twitter analytics, and the role these are perceived to play in evaluating their performance at work. Figure 5.4 illustrates how 11 journalists do not experience forces stemming from any one of those analytical dimensions, while it highlights the unique position that Collin and Tony, as well as Sarah, Rufus and Samuel have in the sample.

[Figure appears on the next page]

Figure 5.4: Journalists' perception of Twitter analytics and how these factor into performance evaluations



When asked about the nature and implications of his employer's Twitter analytics approach, Collin explains:

"I know that we're encouraged to tweet and we get a report each week; at least I do. It breaks down page views, where traffic comes from, etc.... So I know they very much track it. It might well be part of any sort of job performance evaluation, but I'm not sure how people are rewarded or punished for it. But page views obviously are more and more important each day."

Collin's experience indicates the degree to which his employer collects quantitative data on him and how he is made aware of this. While Collin reveals that it is probable that Twitter data factors into how his job performance is evaluated, Rufus is certain this is the case:

Rufus: "Twitter is a huge part of the job and they encourage that. And all your bosses and editors are on Twitter as well, monitoring what's going on."

Interviewer: "Right. Do they also monitor what their employees are doing?"

Rufus: "Oh, very much so."
Interviewer: "How so?"
Rufus: "It is 100% part of your job and they evaluate it. It should be evaluated. That's why having a large following and using Twitter in a very straightforward, aggressive way to share reporting has really helped my career, because it is considered part of what I do as a daily job. It's not just some sideshow."

Rufus' account not only outlines his employer's strict stance on monitoring and evaluating journalists based on their Twitter engagement; it also discloses the degree to which he experiences Twitter to have been incorporated into his everyday work, so that its consideration as part of his performance evaluation is only a natural development for him. Rufus welcomes this management strategy (he again refers to the fact that his employer hired him specifically for his Twitter presence), and is confident it will produce beneficial outcomes for him. But others are not as positive about the prospect of Twitter-based performance measures.

Grayson's Twitter presence is not yet subject to such scrutiny that counts followers, likes and retweets, traces links, their reach and traffic, or measures interactions with other platform users, as well as the depth and density of his social network on Twitter. But he deliberates that this may soon become a reality, and worries about the consequences it might bring:

"I don't think there's anybody at our headquarters making layoff decisions based on social media necessarily. But I can see how this can certainly become a factor."

As Grayson signals, many others anticipate unclear repercussions if (or when) Twitter analytics become more incorporated into employee assessments. Some variously speculate these might range from contributing to introducing new compensation practices, to offering promotions, or merely deciding which staff to keep around during a time when newsrooms still tend to downsize faster than they find some stability. In the end, all, some or none of these factors might play a role, but journalists' presumptions make one thing very clear: it puts many of them under pressure. As a result, organisations' perceived preoccupation with analytics does not come without undesired side effects. Both the awareness of how easily data can be collected, and the possibility that it might be done without their knowledge, makes some journalists uneasy, and they admit to occasionally adding a performative element to their Twitter activities to "get the numbers right" – just in case.

While many journalists agree with analytics' general utility and power in helping with editorial decision-making and better understanding audiences, there is a shared concern over the limitations of what analytics can achieve. One key concern focuses on the relationship between the quantity and quality of journalistic output, as Brody describes:

"I used to cover immigration and lot of my followers still are immigration activists, people who are very interested in the topic.... But no matter how well you cover immigration, it's a niche topic and the best immigration reporters in the country are just not going to have like 100,000 people following them on Twitter. But these are spectacular reporters, period. You know, it would be lunacy to judge them on that basis because they're covering a narrow topic.... Metrics only tell you a small fraction of the whole story of what you're doing on Twitter. So in that way you have to be very careful. Also there's things like, for example, if you work in a major outlet you might have a ton of followers just because you have the prestige of the outlet behind you."

Here, Brody highlights three significant limitations of Twitter analytics. First, they can disadvantage those journalists who work on niche topics with audiences and constituencies that are naturally smaller in numbers. To illustrate Brody's argument, think, for example, about the hundreds of thousands of followers that sports journalists easily attract on Twitter, and how a reporter covering the arts scene could never measure up to this, if simply judged by comparing numbers. Second, Twitter analytics cannot quantify a journalist's quality of reporting. We might hope that great journalism may be shared more widely on Twitter than poor content, but we also know from other research that prolific usage as well as tapping into 'internet culture' are more likely to 'go viral' and boost Twitter analytics (Cross, 2011). Finally, being associated with a news organisation alone might already boost a journalist's Twitter analytics, regardless of what they actually do on the platform. Adding to the worry that analytics might measure and, by extension, emphasise the wrong thing, some journalists also articulate a shared concern over their volatile and circumstantial nature. For example, analytics can be subject to external influences, such as breaking news events. This can paint a skewed picture, one that journalists are then judged against in future performance cycles. The consequence here is perhaps simple: if analytics are used as a means to evaluate journalists on Twitter, they must be seen in relation to other measures and definers. Sadly, most journalists in this study report that this is not the case.

5.4. Newsroom culture

The vast majority of journalists interviewed for this study share an acute awareness of how their news organisation's changing structure and management determine how they act in the workplace, and by extension, on Twitter. But many journalists also highlighted how their peer relationships, collegial contexts and interactions in the newsroom (or even in smaller units, teams or topic communities) can play a role in their engagement with the platform. What journalists variedly described in their conversations with me lies beyond the managerial objectives and mechanisms of control investigated through the conceptual lens of institutional logics in this chapter thus far. What journalists frequently refer to is a sentiment of what surrounds them at all times, being constantly enacted and created through interactions with others, while also shaped by leadership behaviour via sets of structures, rules and expectations that guide and constrain behaviour (Schein, 2004). This sentiment invites a discussion of journalists' accounts via the concept of organisational culture.

As reviewed in Chapter 2, an organisation's culture is historically and socially constructed (Mierzejewska, 2011), and as such, it includes shared practices, knowledge and values that experienced members of a group transmit to newcomers through socialisation. Here, we should think of 'experienced members' of a group as well versed journalistic Twitter users, and of 'newcomers' as those who have either recently joined the platform or those with poor or limited digital skills. The core argument I make here is that organisational culture, despite being covert and embedded, is enacted through its members, and thus a key factor in shaping a group's processes, output and ability to survive (Bloor & Dawson, 1994). The latter should, of course, not be taken in literal terms. But one can see how 'survival' in an organisation, from an employee's perspective, refers to keeping the employer happy enough to prevent losing one's job.

Many journalists in the sample talked about the culture in their newsroom in such ways that gave testimony to its largely informal, implicit and unstructured nature. While it is impossible to single out the many nuances and gradations of a given organisational culture, three distinct practices emerged in journalists' discourses. These are perceived as instrumental in shaping how, and to which degree, some journalists engage with Twitter, and are summarised in the following:

1) Peer recommendations are perceived as authentic and experiences as reliable points of orientation

Some of the journalists in this study were early Twitter adopters, who envisioned the journalistic utility of Twitter and encouraged colleagues to join the platform. Others belonged to the opposite group of laggards, but were convinced by their early adopter colleagues to sign up. This was, of course, before the dawn of the many guidelines or policies that now often mandate having a profile (as discussed in Section 5.1), and illustrates the power of peer recommendation amongst journalists. Brent, a broadsheet reporter, shares his experience:

“[One of my colleagues] was a really, really early adopter and converter and is just a big, big believer. So we started out having Twitter chats a few years ago. He would explain how the apps work and give me tips how to not be obnoxious and hashtag, and all the regular caveats – not to engage with people who were just trying to get your goat, you know?”

Following the many Twitter talks Brent had with his colleague, and coming to trust his experience, he eventually followed his colleague’s recommendation and signed up. Other journalists needed concrete, practice-oriented input and turned to the people surrounding them, such as Melinda, who reflects on her colleagues’ instrumental role in her Twitter evolution:

“It definitely was a learning curve. I think that I didn’t take any classes or training. I mostly just learned from doing and also from looking at who I thought was particularly good at Twitter in my newsroom and using that as a model of what I wanted to do.”

Melinda’s account indicates her initial insecurities in using Twitter. Drawing on the de facto experiences of colleagues around her, she used their proficiencies as reliable points of orientation to “get a grip on Twitter over time,” as she further says. Yet other journalists have established unofficial collaborations where they point each other towards and share resources, such as lists of Twitter accounts they recommend to monitor or follow, but also tips and tricks of ‘what works’ and lessons learned.

2) Colleagues provide or receive ad hoc and occasional mentoring

As discussed earlier in this chapter, organisations often make various skill-building efforts, for example, via social media training or the distribution of organisational newsletters with

best practice examples. However, a few journalists have also indicated how informally initiated mentoring relationships in the newsroom have become a valuable resource to them, as Mitchell, a political reporter for a broadsheet, explains:

“I remember when I first started using Twitter. I wasn’t an active Twitter user until 2011.... I was talking to another journalist ... and I was asking him advice about how to use Twitter. I remember this really well for some reason; it just stuck in my mind because we were having these conversations ... about what should your Twitter mix be?”

While Mitchell’s account identifies him as a recipient of memorable ad hoc mentoring, Kristina acts as the provider of occasional mentoring in her news organisation: “there are a lot of ... journalists now getting on Twitter and I’m teaching them how to use it.” Her mentoring and peer support appears especially common amongst those colleagues who got a late start or who are not as digitally skilled on Twitter.

3) *When in doubt, colleagues can be sounding boards*

While informal mentoring relationships, as discussed above, always stem from an asymmetry of information and/or skill, there are instances where colleagues see eye to eye, but still turn to each other for support. For example, some journalists told me about checking in with their peers about the content and nature of a tweet, to see if it hit the right nerve. As Jackson explains:

“I think if I have a brilliant or not so brilliant thought about the news I do think, ‘okay, this is something, if I put this out there, is it going to get attention?’ And then I think, ‘okay, but is it good attention? Is it bad attention?’ You know, sometimes I’ll talk to people and say, ‘Hey, what do you think about this tweet? Is this okay? Is this not okay?’”

Jackson sees his colleagues as sounding boards for feedback in circumstances when he himself is unsure about his course of action on Twitter. His discourse reflects the very nature of organisational culture: he is drawing on his experienced colleagues’ shared values and knowledge to jointly determine what is acceptable behaviour within the rules and structures that their organisational leadership has put in place.

While culture as such is an abstraction, these study findings support the notion that forces created in social and organisational situations that derive from culture are powerful (Schein,

2004). As such, the concept of organisational culture helps illuminate innovation processes in newsrooms as it becomes a crucial point of reference for journalists that stabilises and provides structure to how they approach their engagement with Twitter. Finally, when taking a closer look at journalists' discourses around the perceived role of organisational culture, the co-occurrence of applied codes in the thematic analysis of interview transcripts further showed that whenever interviewees spoke about organisational culture, they most frequently also spoke about Twitter policies, followed by issues of enforcement and compliance.³² The examination of journalists' reported experiences revealed that it is especially in the absence of a reporter's clear grasp of an organisation's stance on Twitter that organisational culture aides in deducing what is desirable or punishable workplace behaviour, and thus, navigating risks and opportunities. This supports the premise of this chapter that organisational culture and institutional logics, exercised through managerial mechanisms of control, are interrelated and complementary. As such, they may indeed be understood as 'two sides of the same coin' (Schein, 2004, p. 1).

5.5. Summary and conclusion

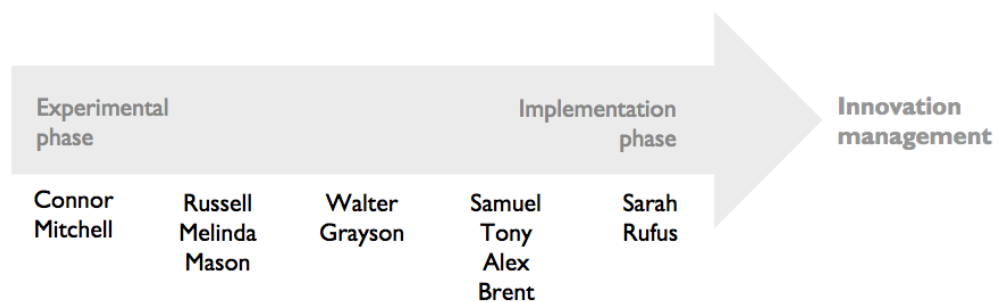
This chapter investigated how factors located at the macro level of analysis are relevant in shaping political journalists' engagement with Twitter. I explored how the existence of Twitter policies, organisational enforcement and efforts towards compliance, journalistic skills development, and measuring journalistic performance on Twitter serve as concrete managerial mechanisms of control that aide news organisations in managing Twitter as an object of innovation in the newsroom. Journalists in this study report diverse experiences in how their employers approach the platform, and the respective influence this exerts over how, when and to which degree they engage with it.

Bringing these qualitative findings together suggests that journalists in this study generally belong to one of two groups: the *ambiguously managed* or the *strategically managed*. In the first group there are those journalists whose employers exert influence over their Twitter engagement in unclear and confusing ways. The lack of coherence across mechanisms via which the platform is organisationally managed (or not) sends vague and/or conflicting

³² The co-occurrence of these themes arose without prompting any reflection on their relationship through interview questions (see the interview guide in Appendix 4 for details).

messages to reporting staff. This creates behavioural insecurities, possible fields of structural conflict in the workplace, and challenges in navigating the many perceived risks associated with Twitter engagement, while struggling to benefit from its opportunities. In the second group of the *strategically managed* we find those journalists whose employers manage their tweeting workforce via a range of managerial mechanisms that work in tandem and complement one another. While the emphasis in this group is placed on managerial coherence, I observe considerable variance in the nature and sophistication of such mechanisms. This indicates that news organisations and their reporters find themselves in different stages of the innovation management process, along a continuum ranging from the experimental to the implementation phase (Chesbrough, 2010). On one end of the continuum are those who are still exploring how and to which degree Twitter can or should be formalised within the newsroom as part of a wider strategy, while on the other end are those where its integration in everyday work has been formalised and executed in line with organisational objectives. Recalling some of the journalists' distinct accounts presented in this chapter, I identify 13 key individuals representative of the group of the *strategically managed*. Figure 5.5 shows how they map on to the said continuum of innovation management.

Figure 5.5: The nature of coherent managerial strategies place journalists into different phases of innovation management



Findings strongly suggest that journalists who work for organisations where a formal Twitter approach is strategically and coherently aligned across all managerial mechanisms (i.e. policy, enforcement, skills development and measuring performance) tend to perceive of their employer as more influential in shaping their engagement with Twitter. Unsurprisingly, this perceived influence increases as an organisation is more advanced in the process of managing Twitter as an object of media innovation.

I further investigated three underlying objectives that inform organisational Twitter strategies, and these were found to be strongly tied to economic considerations and imperatives: generating traffic to the news organisation's website; audience engagement; and organisational branding. My analysis of quantitative data indicates journalists variously include elements that aide in realising these goals in their de facto presence on Twitter, but significantly more prominently on profile pages than in tweets. Statistical analysis further revealed that journalists are more likely to include elements that aide achieving organisational objectives during a time of heightened political activity (i.e. the 2014 US Midterm elections) than during a mundane news period. The type of medium is also a statistically significant predictor of the inclusion of such elements: while broadsheet journalists are more likely to include elements of generating traffic and audience engagement, broadcast journalists are more likely to make efforts towards organisational branding. A cluster analysis revealed which of the 28 news organisations in this study are similar to each other based on their employees' behaviour on Twitter. This produced five groups with distinct engagement patterns, although results do not relate to other sample characteristics, such as an organisation's audience size or where it ranks in national comparison, type of medium, geographic location or business model.

This chapter further discussed the perceived importance of newsroom culture that exists both within and beyond organisational structures and management. My analysis elucidated that many journalists recognise their peer relationships, collegial contexts and interactions in the newsroom as potent in their Twitter engagement. The empirical data showed how this is particularly relevant in terms of the perceived authenticity of peer recommendations, peer mentoring and peer feedback. This suggests that newsroom culture can become a crucial point of reference for journalists that stabilises and provides structure to how they approach engaging with Twitter, especially in the absence of clear and formal organisational strategies.

While the analysis of macro-level factors highlights various considerations, contexts and conditions in which journalists perceive their news organisations as more (or less) influential in shaping their Twitter engagement, this also raises questions about how journalists enact their agency as a creative and relatively autonomous workforce to navigate this, and which other influences outside of the macro level of analysis play a role in shaping their engagement. In this chapter I have shown that organisational influence matters, but it

varies. Most importantly, it is not absolute. This suggests that insights from the macro level of analysis merit further discussion given the potential scope for other relevant factors that shape journalists' Twitter engagement. In the following chapter I offer a focused interrogation of how meso-level factors, that is, those related to practices and routines, shape the ways in which journalists engage with Twitter, followed by an investigation of micro-level factors, that is, those related to the individual, in Chapter 7.

6. The meso level: Twitter amidst journalistic practices and routines

“I remember the first time someone told me about it. They said there’s this new thing: Twitter. I said, how does it work? They said it’s got 140 characters, and I wanted to know what you use it for, and who actually cares about it? Back then, we had no clue about the power it would have.” Kristina laughs incredulously at memories that appear more distant to her than they really are, as she recalls her first professional encounter with Twitter in 2009. Since then, both Twitter as a constantly evolving platform and Kristina’s engagement with it have come a long way. Today, she undoubtedly conceives of Twitter as powerful, and this indicates the significant role the platform has come to play in her work as a professional journalist. It is precisely this notion that I set out to explore in this chapter.

My presentation and discussion of findings here build on the premise that Twitter is not an independent force influencing the work of journalists from the ‘outside’ (Deuze, 2008), but rather must be seen in terms of their deliberate appropriation of the platform which affords extending, supporting, amplifying and improving existing ways of doing things. In other words, my investigation here is concerned with how factors and considerations stemming from the context of journalists’ practices and routines shape and moderate their engagement with Twitter, and how journalists give meaning to such engagement in the context of the tasks and workflows they perform.

In this chapter I first discuss how journalists manage Twitter appropriation amongst their occupational tasks and processes of production, presented in Section 6.1. With reference to the general scarcity of resources that inevitably require journalists to effectively manage workflows, I examine Twitter’s relative place and space in journalists’ daily work. After presenting shared patterns around the frequency and intensity of Twitter use within five distinct groups of journalists, I investigate the perceived effect that key news events have on their use of the platform. This section further includes a discussion of journalists’ perceptions of the opportunity costs associated with Twitter engagement, and how journalists navigate the trade-offs between prioritising some tasks over others in their workflow management.

To understand the factors that shape and underpin journalists' behaviour on the platform, in Section 6.2 I explore journalists' passive and active engagement as distinct, yet interrelated, adoption approaches. I further examine how journalists manage news and information on Twitter, and which of its socio-technological design features afford supporting such endeavours. I then present four imaginaries of how journalists think of Twitter as offering concrete possibilities for optimising journalistic work. Finally, building on the premise that journalism relies on close and interdependent relationships with a variety of actors from the social context of their reporting genre, I examine Twitter's role in managing relationships and journalistic networks via its interactive and connective features.

In Section 6.3 I explore how journalists perceive of the novel affordances that Twitter provides beyond what is considered 'traditional' journalistic practice. Finally, I summarise the chapter's key findings in Section 6.4, and suggest that (akin to Chapter 5) findings from the meso level of analysis merit further discussion in Chapter 8, to elucidate how these interact with macro- and micro-level findings for in a joint investigation of the relationships between all analytical levels.

6.1. Managing tasks and workflows

In the digital age, journalists are increasingly under pressure to do more with less. Economic difficulties have led to cut-backs on resources and intensified workloads, causing a common expectation of 'multi-skilling' in newsrooms (Bromley, 1997). In their daily routines journalists have always had a range of expected tasks to perform and unpredicted demands they need to respond to, depending on a given day's news climate. With Twitter having been 'normalised' (Lasorsa, Lewis & Holton, 2012) as a tool of journalistic production, this naturally raises questions about how reporters constructively manage their engagement with the platform. In this section, my presentation and discussion of findings is concerned with how frequently and intensely journalists engage with Twitter, and how they navigate platform affordances and appropriation amidst limited resources and workflow constraints placed on them. I further explore how these are evaluated against other core tasks, and what effect key news events have on journalists' appropriation of Twitter.

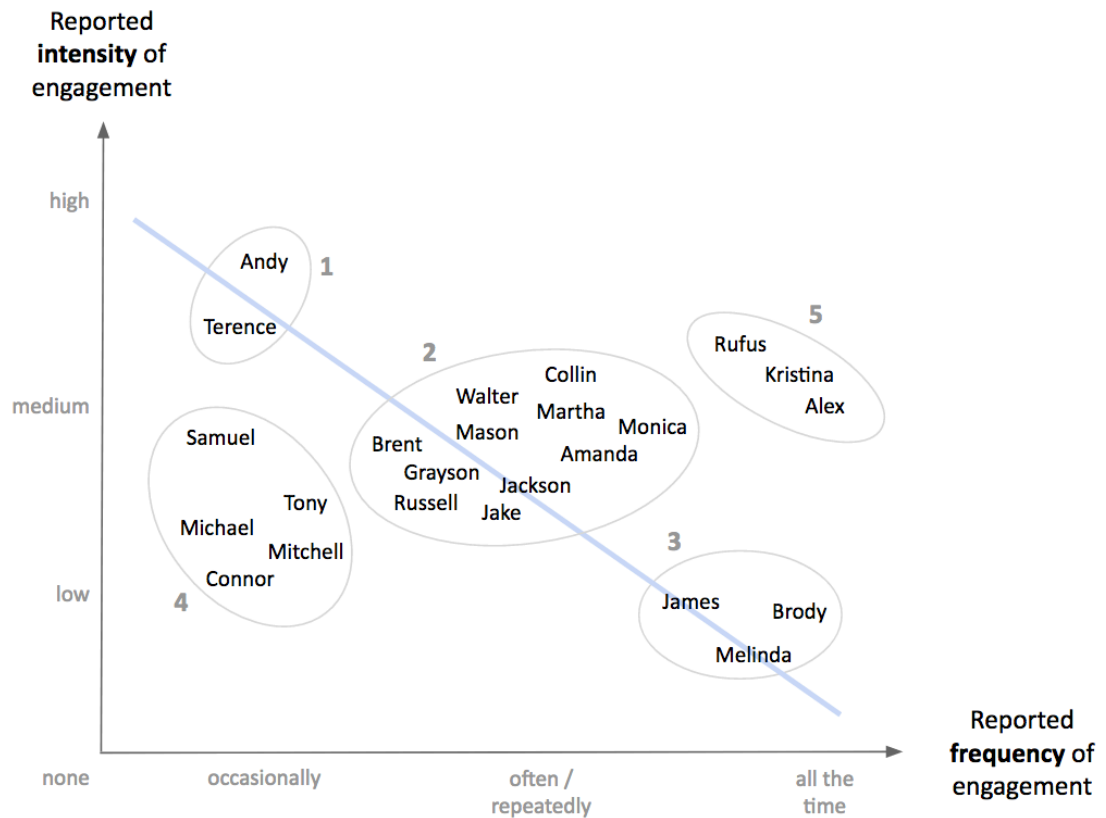
6.1.1. Twitter's place and space in daily work

While all journalists I selected for this study share a minimum level of engagement with Twitter, they differ considerably in their description of Twitter's prominence and salience within their regular tasks and workflows. Simply reporting on how they estimate their *accumulated time spent* on the platform emerges as an inappropriate measure to capture the diversity and nuances of Twitter's relative place and space in journalists' daily work. Instead, my analysis of empirical data reveals that Twitter's role in journalists' day-to-day operations needs to be understood along two key dimensions: frequency and intensity of engagement. The examination of journalists' narratives unveils that these are significantly distinct. The *frequency* of engagement refers to quantitative patterns of usage, and while the measure is temporal, it conveys how their engagement is distributed across a given work day. The *intensity* of engagement refers to a more qualitative dimension, capturing how deliberate and focused their attention is placed on Twitter when engagement occurs.

In light of the myriad tasks journalists carry out during a given work day and their necessarily limited resources to do so, it is key to also consider the *relationship* between frequency and intensity of Twitter engagement. The empirical data indicates that these affect one another, and the direction of their relationship tends to be negative. As many journalists report, this means that as the frequency of their engagement increases, its intensity decreases. For example, some journalists engage with Twitter consistently throughout the day, but their usage might not be very intense given that they have a range of other duties – outside of and unrelated to Twitter – to attend to. Conversely, other journalists suggest that their use becomes more intense as they engage less often. To identify patterns in the qualitative data, I examine each journalist's narrative³³ of Twitter's place and space in their daily work, and map all individuals on to a graph with two axes, indicating the nature of their engagement in terms of frequency and intensity. Figure 6.1 illustrates how the majority of journalists and their engagement can be located along the expected negative relationship between frequency and intensity of engagement, as indicated by the blue line.

³³ Two individuals did not provide sufficiently indicative accounts of the frequency and intensity of their Twitter engagement to be included in this analysis.

Figure 6.1: Journalists and their reported frequency and intensity of engagement



The data visualisation in Figure 6.1 reveals further insights and scope for analysis. While journalists across the sample vary considerably in terms of their reported engagement habits, their distribution suggests that individuals can be combined into groups, as indicated by circles 1 to 5. Because of their distinct usage patterns and within-group similarities, I refer to group 1 as *the selectivists*, to group 2 as *the regulars* and to group 3 as *the connected*, while group 4 are *the sceptics*, and group 5 are *the aficionados*. In the following I take a closer look at each group and their engagement with Twitter to better understand its nature in terms of frequency and intensity.

Group 1: The selectivists

This group is the smallest in the sample and consists of merely two individuals who report to only occasionally use Twitter throughout their work day. Yet, when engagement occurs, it is purpose-driven and they focus their exclusive attention on the platform. In other words, they are selective in how they adopt Twitter as part of their day-to-day operations. For example, Terence engages with Twitter a handful of times a day to deliberately check what's going on on the platform, but also admits that "there are days when I don't actively

post anything.” Similarly, Andy signs on every now and then, and explains how his usage changes over the course of his day: “You know, I mean I check it out religiously first thing in the morning, and then I turn it off to a large degree. It’s kind of an addendum to my job. It’s not my main job.” Andy’s account indicates that he is deliberate in using Twitter to check news as he starts his day, but he clearly prioritises other items and attention points as his work day progresses.

Group 2: The regulars

With 11 journalists, *the regulars* are the largest group and represent the ‘middle ground’ of the self-reported frequency–intensity distribution in this sample. Individuals in this group repeatedly engage with Twitter throughout their work days, but do not intensely focus on it every time they sign on. Grayson, for example, reports that he checks Twitter in “little micro increments throughout the day” and that “it’s impossible to add up”, indicating how regularly he uses the platform. Martha describes a similar routine:

“It’s kind of hard to say, I mean, often I’ll glance at it, and put it down again. Other times I’ll scroll through. It’s overall probably an hour or two tops each day, just kind of looking at things.”

Her description indicates that Twitter adoption is relatively prominent in her daily work, where ‘glancing’, ‘scrolling through’ and ‘kind of looking’ occur repeatedly, although these practices are rather casual in their nature. For Monica, Twitter is also key in getting her work day started:

“It’s probably the first thing I open up on my computer in the morning. I want to see what the top tweets are. Then, working for a media organisation, I want to get our product and our stories out there in the earlier morning hours before people get launched into their work day. So I use it both to scan it quickly and to send out a few tweets that promote my work or the work of my colleagues.... I maybe tweet 10 times a day, I’m not prolific.”

Monica’s day starts with a strong focus on Twitter, but she continues to tell me that it decreases over the course of the day as she moves on to other key tasks, which, in her narrative, she clearly locates outside of Twitter’s realm. While she uses Twitter often, she describes her engagement as ‘quick’ and self-qualifies as moderate in her sharing practices.

Group 3: The connected

It is a central feature of *the connected* that group members have Twitter open most of the day, but it merely runs in the background. Three journalists make up this group, who report that they use Twitter all the time, although the nature of their engagement with the platform is of little intensity. For example, Brody refers to Twitter as a “constant”, and James similarly outlines that he “usually ha[s] Twitter open somewhere”, and that he finds it “one of the best ways to get quick alerts to things that are going on.” This indicates that James attributes his frequent engagement to Twitter’s immediacy, and his use is motivated by an interest in seeing what people are talking about on the platform. This affordance resonates with Melinda as well:

“I actually follow it more as a consumer of news.... And I tend to be logged in most of the day to keep an eye on it to know what’s going on around the world, around the country, around the state. I tweet out whatever I publish of my own work, but mostly I just want to know what’s going on.”

Melinda’s account speaks to how her use is mostly passive in that it is targeted at frequent monitoring rather than driven by active sharing practices, although these do take place to a lesser degree. For *the connected*, being consistently (rather than intensely) connected is key, and allows for quick glances over Twitter again and again during the day to alert them to anything of interest.

Group 4: The sceptics

Contrary to the journalists discussed thus far, this group’s engagement pattern does not map on to the negative relationship between frequency and intensity of Twitter engagement characteristic for groups 1, 2 and 3. I refer to these five individuals as *the sceptics* because their use of Twitter is both relatively infrequent and not very intense. For example, Michael reports that, “if I get a tweet out a day, it’s a good day”, which qualifies his use as sparse compared to all the other journalists in this study. For Samuel, Twitter doesn’t even make it on to his daily ‘to do’ list:

“Well, I mean it’s kind of an afterthought. I will write a story and I might tweet to let people know it’s out there. But I look at Twitter in sort of down moments, moments when I don’t have something going on just to see what’s new. I really don’t spend a massive amount of time on it, I mean I’d say maybe 10–15 minutes a day? Yeah, I’ll be just sort of like, okay, I’ve been writing, I need to clear my head, what’s happening on Twitter?”

Samuel's account demonstrates how Twitter takes a minor role in his day, both in terms of frequency and intensity of engagement. For him and other *skeptics* alike, engaging with the platform predominantly becomes relevant during down times or when he needs to get his mind off other tasks.

Group 5: The aficionados

This final group not only consistently engages with Twitter throughout the day, but the nature of their engagement also tends to be quite intense. In this group, Twitter is neither merely running in the background nor simply an attention point during downtime on the job. Instead, Twitter's place and space in the journalists' daily work is significant. The three journalists in this group exhibit significant enthusiasm for Twitter, which suggests referring to them as *the aficionados* is appropriate. Rufus easily tweets 200 times during a given week, and explains:

"I think Twitter is probably the most natural way for me to communicate my news stories. So I don't love writing long stories. I can and I often do. I just love reporting in real time and finding out new information. And Twitter is such a great way to do that."

This indicates the degree to which Rufus has adopted Twitter into his regular workflows and style of reporting. He perceives of Twitter as offering distinct affordances that lead him to prefer tweeting increments of news over more 'traditional' journalistic tasks such as writing them up in (long) stories. Alex shares Rufus' considerable 'embeddedness' into Twitter, both in terms of scope and intensity, but for slightly different reasons: he runs two accounts, one of which he shares with a colleague, and he describes how much this requires him to concentrate on the platform during his day:

"I mean I check Twitter all the time on my way in to work. If I'm going to be covering something or I'm interested in a story I will tweet it in the morning. You know, we have kind of a not regimented schedule, but we're trying to get our content in front of readers at times that they want it, so we'll tweet out our stories in the morning when people are going into work. We do it again later and tweet out the same links around lunchtime, and then on my professional account, I have, like, 6,000 plus followers and so I check my mentions a lot. We're always interacting with people. It can get pretty intense, and it's something I use all the time."

Here, Alex outlines how he follows a pseudo tweeting schedule throughout the day – he purposefully coordinates tweeting responsibilities with his colleague for their shared account, and monitors and manages audience feedback for his professional account. This

demonstrates the substantial space and place that Twitter receives as part of his daily routines. The interview data suggests that Alex's account is a variation on a theme, which all of *the aficionados* experience in one way or another.

Overall, this analysis highlights that all five groups display distinct usage patterns in terms of frequency and intensity of Twitter engagement. Yet, when revisiting the data visualisation in Figure 6.1, we can also see how each group relates to the others. For example, *the regulars* are not only the largest group, but also the most moderate and balanced in their engagement, and thus emerge as the middle ground around which all other groups centre. *The aficionados* and *the sceptics* are counterparts in terms of the characteristics of their engagement, as are *the selectivists* and *the connected*. But there are also similarities between some of the groups. For example, *the aficionados* have a similar level of intensity in their Twitter engagement as *the selectivists*, while they engage as frequently as *the connected*. In terms of shared engagement characteristics, the analysis further elucidates how, irrespective of group belonging, many journalists share one distinct temporal usage pattern: mornings tend to be a key point in time for all journalist to engage with Twitter, regardless of how frequently or intensely they engage with the platform during the rest of the day.

6.1.2. The effect of key events on Twitter's place and space in daily work

Thus far my analysis has focused on journalists' frequency and intensity of Twitter engagement during their regular day-to-day operations, that is, what this study conceptualises as 'the mundane'. But we know from previous research (Bennett, 2012) that journalistic production is highly situational and responsive to external circumstances, such as changing news climates and socio-political environments. This study's findings uphold insights from such earlier research, as journalists report that a key news event – be it a scheduled, predictable or breaking event – has a considerable impact on their engagement with Twitter. The majority of journalists readily outline how Twitter provides key affordances during busy news periods, predominantly referring to information immediacy, real-time commentary and access to user-generated content (see subsequent sections of this chapter for a more detailed discussion of these perceived affordances). In these instances of heightened political activity, journalists' accounts clearly indicate that Twitter's perceived

affordances become more prominent, and this leads to an overall increase in reporters' platform appropriation.

Linking this to the interest in Twitter's place and space in journalists' work suggests how key news events tend to have a significant effect on journalists' frequency and intensity of Twitter engagement. For example, Walter, who belongs to the group of *regulars*, explains:

"My Twitter use depends on the day and what I'm covering.... It can be everything from, you know, there could be days where I tweet two or three times, it's just what we have on the political team that's interesting that day or what I'm reading that day. On other days, there could be 20 or 30 tweets just depending on what the news is. Obviously if I'm covering an election or I'm in the middle of a campaign I'm using it a lot more. So it depends on the day and the news really."

Walter juxtaposes his mundane use of the platform with how a key event significantly elevates his active tweeting practices. Jake outlines how this is also the case for his passive use of the platform in terms of monitoring practices:

"So if there's a plane crash or a terrorist attack or some local civil unrest here I would spend a lot more time looking at Twitter as opposed to a day when it's just sort of business as usual and I'm sort of running the traps to see if I can find something to write about."

Their accounts tell us that the platform gains in importance when there is 'more' politics going on in a day's news climate. During those days, engagement becomes both more frequent *and* more intense than during a mundane news period. As one of *the aficionados*, Kristina is already frequently and intensely plugged into the platform, but even she reports how changes in the news environment further increase her engagement with the platform:

"I mean, I tweet quite a lot throughout the day anyways, but when there's a breaking news situation the dynamic changes.... If you're in a breaking news situation you monitor things in real time on Twitter in ways that we couldn't before. So in that regard, it makes our jobs easier. But the expectations for how quickly you react to things now are a lot higher, you have to be so fast. In some ways it's more chaotic, it's easier to obtain information, but we also have to generate so much more."

She refers to both her deliberate and heightened focus on the platform to monitor a key event as it unfolds. Her account also indicates her awareness that access to information on Twitter comes with an increased demand to produce and share news, both on the platform and elsewhere.

Overall, individuals across the study sample echo Walter, Jake and Kristina’s experiences and approaches, including *the sceptics*, although to a lesser degree. This suggests that a change in the socio-political environment has an overall effect on the relationship between frequency and intensity of their Twitter engagement, leading to an overall increase in Twitter’s place and space in journalists’ workflows during busy news periods. Figure 6.2 visually summarises this effect:

Figure 6.2: The effect of a change in the socio-political environment on frequency and intensity of engagement

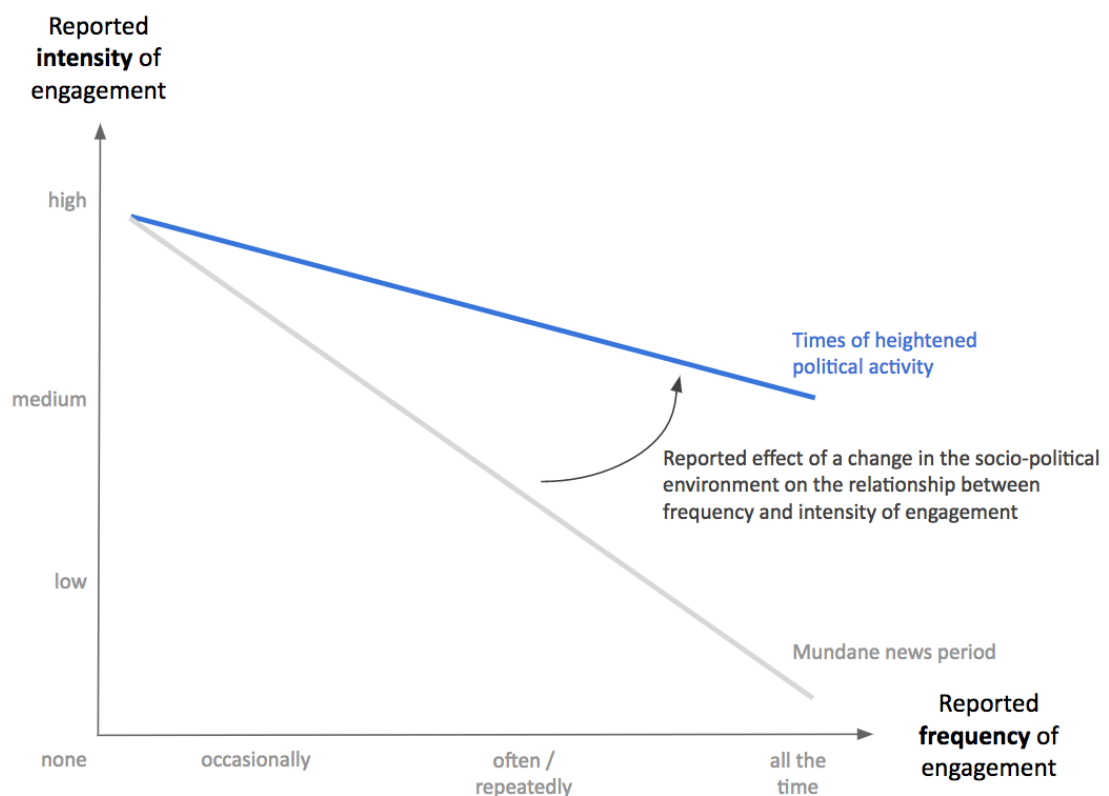


Figure 6.2 demonstrates how journalists on Twitter tend to be on higher alert during periods of key news events, which leads them to engage both more frequently and more intensively with the platform. Yet reporters’ accounts indicate that the overall direction of the relationship between frequency and intensity of engagement remains unchanged under different conditions of the news environment: as engagement becomes more frequent, its intensity still decreases, although to a lesser degree than during a mundane news period. Drawing on journalists’ own accounts, the reason behind this is rather practical: although Twitter’s affordances become more concrete during times of heightened political activity, journalists simply cannot focus *all* of their attention on the platform at *all* times. There

simply would be no resources left to engage in any other of their occupational tasks that remain to be completed, no matter what the news climate. Finally, it is instructive to note here that while this is an indication of a general pattern in the data as reported by study participants, how exactly journalists' engagement plays out in practice depends (a) on the nature and circumstance of a news event and (b) is likely to differ on a case-to-case basis.

6.1.3. Weighing opportunity costs of engagement

Thus far in this chapter I have focused my presentation and discussion of findings on the relative space and place that Twitter occupies in journalists' daily workflows. The analysis shows that journalists make conscious choices in their day-to-day operations, both in terms of frequency and intensity of engagement, to navigate the affordances they perceive Twitter to provide amidst the constraints that limited resources place on them. Journalists readily report trade-offs between prioritising to do one thing over another, and this suggests that they constantly grapple with weighing the opportunity costs³⁴ of their Twitter engagement. Here, my analysis reveals two distinct narratives that underpin journalists' choices in how to engage and to which end: one centres on the perception of Twitter engagement as a distraction, and the other reveals concerns over missing out when not engaging. In the following I examine these two narratives further and elucidate how they relate to and impinge on each other.

1) Twitter as a distraction and disruption

Many journalists in this study articulate an acute awareness of Twitter's potential for distraction, where the platform not always contributes to, but competes with, more traditional operations and production goals. There are only so many hours in a given work day, and this means that journalists need to make decisions as to how best to allocate their resources, especially temporal ones, as Monica explains: "I got a job to do and a lot of my job is to do original research. You can't do that if you're just spending all day tweeting." Monica is aware of time constraints that moderate how she performs her occupational

³⁴ Opportunity costs generally describe the relationship between scarcity and choice, and the concept provides an understanding of how individuals use limited resource efficiently (Buchanan, 1979, 2008). While 'costs' are often understood in monetary or financial terms, they also refer to lost time or a forgone chance to produce output, and are deemed as particularly relevant for this study's inquiry.

duties, and does not allow her Twitter use, despite its regularity, to interfere with getting her work done – much of which remains outside of the platform’s realm. Monica’s rationale here is simple: the more space Twitter takes up in her day, the less disposable time and energy remain for other items she needs to deliver. Samuel offers an extensive account of Twitter as a constant stream of not only distracting information, but also ‘noise’ that impinges on his productivity. He describes his experience as follows:

“It’s sort of like telling me that I should be watching 15 TV channels at the same time. I’m sorry, but I’m going to report and write and give you something of value, and I’m going to turn all that crap off that’s not going to matter to me.”

Here, the distraction that Samuel experiences is not only temporal, but also of a cognitive nature. Twitter’s vast stream of information is not necessarily conducive to his production routine, but he perceives it as overwhelming and disruptive. As his interview continues, he outlines that he does not effortlessly switch off, but needs to get his “head back into the game” when turning to tasks unrelated to Twitter, increasing opportunity costs in terms of time lost beyond the duration of his engagement.

Unsurprisingly, narratives of Twitter as a potential distraction from and disruption to core tasks are particularly common amongst *the sceptics* as well as *the selectivists*, and to a lesser degree amongst *the regulars*. Martha says that while Twitter is “an overall really valuable tool”, she is strict in managing her resources at work: “I try to be responsible with my time and I know my deadlines and what I need to get done, when. If I want to look at Twitter, I’ll look at it, but if I’m busy I’ll get off.” Like Martha, many journalists admit that they benefit from consciously ‘unplugging’ from Twitter in order to immerse themselves in other tasks, especially those of a creative nature, such as writing and editing. Here, many highlight an understanding of journalism as a craft and to do it well takes time and focus. Yet, minimising distraction and disruption creates opportunity costs elsewhere, which leads us to the second narrative.

2) Twitter and the *fear of missing out*

The majority of reporters recognise Twitter’s affordance as a space of ‘ambient journalism’ (Hermida, 2010, 2013), which offers diverse means to collect, communicate, share and display news and information. This causes a common worry amongst a range of individuals in this study that abstaining from Twitter for long periods of time or turning off push

notifications may lead to missing crucial news as they unfold or are shared by key individuals. This phenomenon is termed *fear of missing out* – popularly referred to as *FoMO* – and is fuelled by people’s increased connectedness in the fast-moving environment of social media platforms like Twitter. More specifically, it refers to the ‘pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent, [and it] is characterised by the desire to stay continually connected with what others are doing’ (Przybylski et al., 2013, p. 1841). While this has mostly been studied from a psychological needs perspective for individual social media use, my findings suggest that journalists’ information-driven concerns can be understood as *professional FoMO*, given just how vital access to knowledge is for them. In this study, it is especially *the connected* and *the aficionados* who are oriented towards such a continual connection with Twitter and who experience professional FoMO the strongest. As Brody explains:

”I feel like I’m never fully off Twitter, ... but I’m usually doing other things at the same time. Somehow, I manage to usually file a story almost every single day while working on features, while traveling, while working on logistics so something is getting done. But it’s always on in the background because you really – I mean, you can never leave it long without the fear that you’re missing a breaking news story. It’s just very stressful to be away from it for too long without at least poking your head in to make sure that everyone’s not tweeting about something crazy.”

Brody’s account indicates how he juggles a variety of daily tasks, and acknowledges that this can be challenging to manage in light of his continuous commitment to Twitter. Yet this is a compromise he readily accepts over the stress of professional FoMO he experiences when disconnected.

Overall, navigating Twitter’s potency as a distraction and disruption versus its role as a key information tool is everything but a smooth ride for the majority of journalists in this study. The constant reconciliation of Twitter’s place and space in managing occupational tasks and workflows can create what I call a *Twitter engagement dilemma*: on the one hand, the opportunity costs of engaging ‘too much’ with Twitter manifest themselves in lost time to focus on and achieve other occupational tasks. On the other hand, engaging ‘too little’ leads to opportunity costs in terms of a forgone chance to pick up on a scoop or story to produce a news piece. While journalists across the sample vary in how they navigate Twitter’s opportunity costs in their platform appropriation, they share at least one commonality. Unsurprisingly, feeling distracted is more of an issue during mundane news periods, while professional FoMO becomes a crucial concern during key news events when

everyone focuses on Twitter more intently and there is simply more to be missed. This is fuelled by journalists' desire to avoid falling a step behind colleagues and competitors, especially when news breaks and might not (yet) be available elsewhere.

6.2. Approaches to Twitter engagement

Thus far in this chapter I have explored journalists' perceptions of Twitter's place and space in their workflows, and how the platform triggers key choices in managing (limited) resources and occupational demands. In this section I shift my focus of inquiry away from considerations that *surround* Twitter in the face of other relevant tasks of journalistic work towards those that shape and underpin journalists' behaviour *on* the platform. In doing so I explore how journalists perceive of Twitter's socio-technological design features, and discuss the distinct, yet interrelated, approaches of passive and active engagement. I then present four imaginaries of how journalists think of Twitter as offering concrete possibilities for optimising journalistic work. Finally, building on the premise that journalism has always had close and interdependent relationships with a variety of actors from the social context of their reporting genre (Louw, 2010), I present and discuss key findings on Twitter's role in managing relationships and journalistic networks.

6.2.1. Passive and active uses of the platform

Amongst journalists in this study there is an overwhelming agreement that the key affordances provided by Twitter relate to the very core of journalistic production: news and information. The vast majority of interviewees readily report (1) Twitter's immediacy, (2) the platform as an information-driven environment and (3) its politically interested user base as the top benefits yielded by the platform, irrespective of whether journalists work for broadsheet or broadcast outlets. Unsurprisingly, these perceived affordances are not only closely linked, but also expected to affect and amplify one another, for example, given how Twitter allows an instantaneous sharing of short snippets of information, the platform likely attracts users interested in those very bits of information, who then, in turn, may contribute to sharing information in the future. Again, many journalists recognise that not all content on Twitter is useful, but findings here largely suggest that Twitter increases in

utility the more people use it. While journalists similarly recognise the three key affordances outlined above, they vary in how they act on these in terms of platform appropriation. Here, two distinct, although interrelated, approaches emerge from the analysis of empirical data: *passive* and *active* Twitter use.

Based on interviewees' own accounts, passive use stems from an *information-seeking strategy*, where Twitter engagement means monitoring, but not actively sharing, content. For example, Connor describes his professional approach to Twitter as follows:

“Generally, I would describe myself as a lurker. I read Twitter for stories that are happening, it’s a great place for that. But in terms of sharing content and posting things, that’s really not a priority for me.”

Connor is quite aware of his own engagement as passive, referring to himself as a ‘lurker’, that is, someone who observes but does not actively participate. In my interview with him, he continues to outline the benefits this yields, including the possibility of effortlessly tapping into what people are talking about and “what’s on their minds”, to monitor the competition (especially to see which stories they are covering), and other key individuals, such as politicians, their staffers and government officials. Across this study’s sample many journalists confirm Connor’s approach as their own, particularly in regard to information-seeking practices. Given how a range of studies have already established similar insights (see, for example, Broersman & Graham, 2016; Paulussen & Harder, 2014; Wardle, Dubberley & Brown, 2014), I will not explore this notion further here.

Instead, it is worth highlighting a distinct exception to the journalists’ generally positive perception of the possibility of monitoring news, the competition and key individuals on Twitter. Michael highlights how in principle he pursues novelty in his work, and reveals how he views the majority of information on Twitter, irrespective of whether this provides new insights or not, as a constant reminder of the “stories he could have written.” He argues that once something is on Twitter, it is not new anymore. Rather than picking up a story from Twitter, Michael seeks to get to that story *before* it finds its way on to Twitter. He concludes that while he recognises Twitter as generally informative from a news consumer perspective, it is not necessarily instructive to how he covers a given story as a news producer.

Interview data further reveals how journalists perceive of passive engagement as distinct from active engagement, but that one can trigger the other. Here, many journalists report how tweets can be powerful in prompting attention and teasing their journalistic instinct, propelling them from a state where they just want to see what is going on on Twitter to one where they need to find out via Twitter what is going on in the world outside of the platform. Journalists describe how this tends to occur during times of unexpected news, and often takes the form of actively asking Twitter followers for details, supporting footage, eyewitness accounts, etc. For example, Collin describes Twitter's affordance of supporting his sourcing practices:

“I mean, Twitter is a great way to find and cultivate sources. I’ve developed many sources on Twitter. Sometimes I just ask Twitter followers for input, other times, people just reply to tweets or reach out and sort of follow up with me on something – with a tip or, you know, with just some perspective on whatever I’m covering at the time. It’s something that probably is happening more now than it did when I first started using Twitter. I guess maybe because it’s become more widespread or maybe it’s just because I’m better at it than I was three, four years ago; I don’t know. But it’s definitely a great advantage.”

Collin’s account indicates Twitter’s distinct role in his sourcing practices as he frequently taps into the ‘collective intelligence’ (Sunstein, 2006) or ‘wisdom of crowds’ (Surowiecki, 2005) of platform users. Collin further suggests how this has become a common experience for him, ranging from followers providing him with quick tips, and in even more deliberate circumstances, proactively contacting him with more extensive input. This corroborates findings from previous research that highlights the role of such citizen journalism (e.g. Allan & Thorsen, 2009) and user-generated content (e.g. Bruno, 2011; Johnston, 2016) in reporters’ newsgathering practices.³⁵ However, the analysis of the study’s quantitative data paints a slightly different picture of the extent of such practices. It reveals that in only about 2% of tweets, journalists actively ask³⁶ their Twitter followers for such input (e.g. tips, story ideas, supporting footage, eyewitness accounts, etc.). Here, the analysis indicates a statistically significant association between type of medium and asking followers for input in tweets ($\chi^2(1)=4.376$; $p<0.05$), with broadsheet journalists accounting

³⁵ While beyond the scope of my discussion here, it is instructive to highlight that a considerable body of literature has addressed these changing dynamics between professional journalism and its audiences, exploring the phenomena of boundary blurring and the efforts of boundary drawing (e.g. Lewis, 2012; Revers, 2013), observing the emergence of phenomena such as *produsage* (Bruns & Highfield, 2012; Bruns & Schmidt, 2011), revisiting Toffler’s (1980) notion of *prosumers* (e.g. Compton & Benedetti, 2010), and investigating the implications for journalistic and professional identities (e.g. Bogaerts, 2011; Wijk, 2009).

³⁶ As coded for V19 in the codebook ‘Tweet analysis.’ See Appendix 9 for details.

for the majority (61%) of those information-seeking practices over broadcast journalists (39%).

Contrary to information-seeking goals that journalists report as underpinning their passive use, active engagement is driven by an *information-sharing strategy*. For example, Kristina outlines the degree to which she uses the platform as a means of both immediate and phased publicising of news:

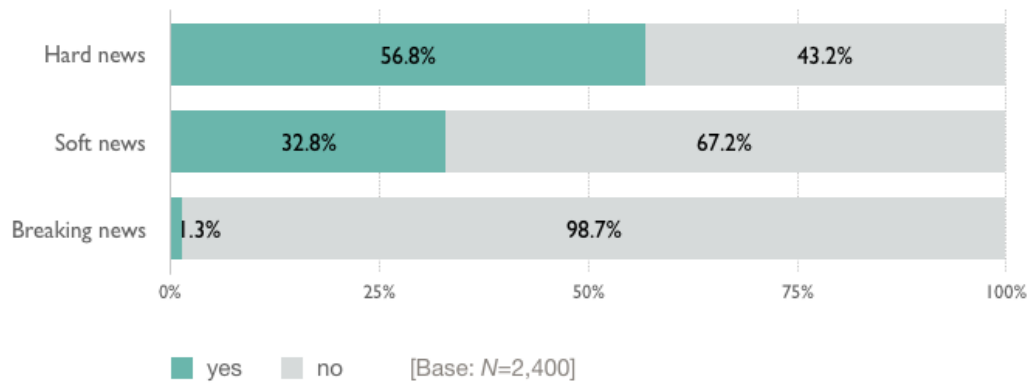
“If it’s a breaking news thing I will tweet the initial scoop. And then, when I get something posted as a big story, I’ll use Twitter again to tweet out its shortened version and then later in the day or the next morning – or both – I will tweet a link to the much more complete story.”

Kristina’s approach to Twitter reflects what existing research has widely established as Twitter’s affordance as a professional content dissemination tool (e.g. Bloom, Cleary & North, 2016; Hermida, 2013), and in her platform appropriation, she recognises its benefit for both breaking news and more mundane news periods. As the majority of journalists in this study, above all else, highlight Twitter’s professional utility for their concern with news and information, this invites an exploration of the presence of news in journalists’ de facto engagement with Twitter. My analysis of quantitative data shows that more than half (57%) of tweets contain ‘hard news’, while almost a third (33%) contain ‘soft news’.³⁷ In about 10% of tweets, soft and hard news were simultaneously present, while all news clearly declared as ‘breaking’ was about hard news subjects, although these only feature with little prominence (i.e. 1% of tweets). However, the low proportion of breaking news in tweets is not surprising, as half of the sample was deliberately collected during a mundane news period (a time when no breaking news occurred). The analysis of quantitative data further indicates that about a fifth of tweets (20%) do not relate to any news subjects at all.³⁸ Figure 6.3 provides a visual summary of the distribution of the type of news in all tweets.

³⁷ Following generally accepted classifications of news types, ‘hard news’ is understood as news with a high value for the genre of political journalism that demands immediate publication. ‘Soft news’ is understood as information with a lower news value that does not require timely publication, such as entertainment news or gossip, human interest stories and off-beat events (Lehman-Wilzig & Seletzky, 2010; Reinemann et al., 2012).

³⁸ I explore this observation further in Chapter 7, which presents and discusses findings on the micro level of analysis, that is, those factors related to journalists’ characteristics and considerations as individuals.

Figure 6.3: Frequency distribution of *type of news* in tweets



To further understand factors that influence political journalists' hard news sharing practices on Twitter, I conducted a logistic regression analysis. Table 6.1 presents the model that estimates the effect of *type of medium* and *news period* on the odds of journalists including *hard news* in their tweets.

Table 6.1: Logistic regression model estimating effects on *hard news* in tweets

Variable	B	SE	Odds ratio
Type of medium [^]	0.378**	0.095	1.460
News period ^{^^}	0.192*	0.083	1.211
(Constant)	-0.103	0.092	
Model $\chi^2 = 21.247, p < 0.001$			
Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.012$			

Base: Complete dataset of tweets, $N=2,400$.

[^] coded as 0=broadcast and 1=broadsheet;

^{^^} coded as 0=mundane news period and
1=week of the 2014 US Midterm Election;

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.001$

The model shows that for all tweets:

- Both the *type of medium* ($p < 0.001$) and *news period* ($p < 0.05$) are significant predictors of the odds of tweeting *hard news* content.
- Broadsheet journalists are 1.46 times (i.e. almost 50%) more likely to include *hard news* in their tweets than broadcast journalists.
- Journalists' odds are about a fifth (21%) higher for tweeting *hard news* during the week of the 2014 US Midterm elections than during the mundane news period in September 2014.

But sharing news – and hard news especially – can also be a fine line to walk for journalists, as the analysis of interview data further reveals. I quoted Kristina earlier in this section in her praise of Twitter as a means to share scoops, but Jackson provides a counter-narrative. He argues that it is precisely this behaviour that makes a journalist vulnerable to losing the very competitive advantage a scoop offers. From his own experience, he outlines how giving things away on Twitter tips off competitors:

- Jackson: “I think [name of journalist] on social media gives away too much. I mean, he’s really plugged in with certain politicians and we know all know about it. And I can watch his Twitter feed and know about what he’s on to before he gets anything onto the [his news organisation’s] website. He’ll have tipped me off. I don’t want to do that. I don’t want to be like him. But bless him, you know, he’s helping me.”
- Interviewer: “Yeah. Do you sometimes feel like you’re stealing stories based on that he tipped you off?”
- Jackson: “No, because he’s putting it into the social realm. I mean, I don’t feel like I’m stealing anything from him. I feel like he’s handing it to me.”

Jackson’s anecdote illustrates how one journalist’s (overly) enthusiastic sharing strategy can certainly benefit another in his information-seeking strategy. Here, Twitter’s affordance of immediacy can shift from being a strength to a weakness, depending on which side one is on.

Overall, whichever appropriation strategy journalists choose as their professional approach, many highlight two of Twitter’s concrete socio-technological design features as crucial in managing relevant news and information on the platform:

- *Hashtags.* These are categorising keywords that classify tweets to belong to a particular topic. Hashtags make content searchable (and thus discoverable), and interviewees report two uses: (1) journalists search hashtags to find more information on a given topic, especially from users they don't follow (as these don't show up on their timelines); and (2) the use of hashtags makes journalists' tweets more visible for others to find when searching for particular keywords on the platform. Hashtagged words are often those that become 'trending topics' on Twitter, indicating the overall popularity and volume of tweets associated with the hashtag of a given topic. However, my quantitative analysis of tweets suggests that journalists infrequently include hashtags. An analysis of means shows that journalists include 0.37 hashtags in a tweet – in other words, of 100 tweets, only 37, on average, contain a hashtag.
- *Twitter lists.* Another perceived key affordance of Twitter is the list feature, a curated group of Twitter accounts, which journalists can either create themselves or subscribe to those created by others. These lists can be viewed as a timeline, and this shows a stream of tweets from only the accounts on that list. A significant group of journalists report that this feature is particularly useful to them for two purposes: (1) they allow the following of key institutions and individuals; and (2) they allow a concentrated stream of information during breaking news events as a means to productively filter through the 'flood of information' that tends to overwhelm Twitter during such times, and better isolate signals from all the noise.

Finally, while journalists in this study demonstrate a ready ability to outline how they perceive of Twitter's affordances as relevant to their work, they also experience the limitations of the platform's socio-technological design. There is recognition of what the platform does *not* allow them to do, that is, its 'negative' affordances. The empirical data shows that one of the most common reference points here is Twitter's 140-character limit. There is only so much one can say and include in a tweet, and this necessarily involves choices on behalf of each tweeting journalist. When drafting a punchy hard news tweet (many journalists, in fact, admire this as a concrete and distinguished skill similar to writing headlines), and seeking to include an @mention, two #hashtags and an URL that links to external content, the 140-character limit is reached in no time, possibly even requiring further edits to the tweet to make its elements 'fit'. Some journalists report that they neither have the time nor the patience to bother with carefully crafting tweets in this manner, and

simply leave things out (a possible explanation as to why connective features aren't as prominently used). Others report that they routinely make efforts to find creative ways around these limitations, such as including photographs or screenshots of supporting material, text and documents that provide the necessary context a tweet lacks.

6.2.2. Possibilities for workflow optimisation

While I previously examined how journalists navigate various opportunity costs associated with choices for or against Twitter engagement (see Subsection 6.1.3), some individuals also provide optimistic perspectives that speak to how Twitter use affords possibilities for optimisation in managing practices and workflows. My analysis indicates that the aspects underpinning this are not dissimilar from those previously discussed: journalists also refer to occupational and temporal pressures to manage workflows, for example, or competitive forces to identify, produce and disseminate news pieces. But rather than considering Twitter a distraction or disruption from any one of such objectives, these journalists view the platform as an extension of or an addition to the available means of efficiently achieving occupational goals. Given their rather optimistic perception, it is not surprising to find that these individuals predominantly belong to the groups of *the connected* and *the aficionados* (as well as many of *the regulars*), and what sets them apart is how they appropriate Twitter in such a way that it 'fits into' the tasks and procedures they are already working on, rather than competing with them. To them, Twitter represents a 'high efficiency low friction path' (Przybylski et al., 2013, p. 1841), and allows for plugging into what is happening on Twitter in such a way that optimises their journalistic performance and productivity. In my analysis, four distinct imaginaries emerge of how journalists perceive of Twitter and some of its key affordances in their work:

1. *Twitter as an early warning system*, which immediately signals breaking news and alerts journalists to big stories. For example, Kristina describes the following:

"I like the immediacy of Twitter. I can get the news that I want from various sources all at the same time, and I get it quickly. I feel like when something big is happening, I know it instantly – 20 minutes before you're going to get the breaking news or an email from a news organisation."

Kristina refers to Twitter's speed and immediacy as a key affordance, one that easily beats her employer to alerting her of key events as they occur. It is the anticipatory nature of the medium, very much in the sense of an early warning system, that allows her to pick up on a story instantaneously as and when it unfolds.

2. *Twitter as a modern wire service*, which already provides a curated feed of stories. This selection of stories is naturally biased as it is determined by the users and conversations every journalist chooses to follow. Yet, to Grayson, it is immensely useful:

"In the past, we used to have a constant feed of wire services, right? You would call up the AP wire service, you'd call up Reuters and you saw things as they were coming in that way. And we can still do that. But I tend to use Twitter as kind of crowd-sourced wire service. Depending on whom you follow ... if you're heavily following political reporters or political editors or members of Congress, or the President, you're going to get the news as it comes and Twitter has become kind of our wire service. So it is such an important source of information."

To illustrate his view of Twitter, Grayson's thinking follows a path that leads back to classic and familiar journalistic services of the past, and he draws an analogy between traditional wire services such as AP or Reuters and Twitter. He arrives at the conclusion that the micro-blogging platform is similar to those, yet faster, more flexible and immediately accessible, which suggests imagining Twitter as a modern wire service.

3. *Twitter as a digital notebook*, which allows journalists to record and immediately publish short snippets of information (in a note-taking style – after all, a tweet is only 140 characters long). Rufus shares his approach:

"I initially did not want to use Twitter at all.... But my editor at the time said 'we really need to adapt to social media. Use it as your notebook.' And so I have really taken that to heart. A reporter's notebook traditionally has always been where they keep their notes, their asides, observation, colour, different scenes.... And they eventually call from their notebook and put it into a story. Twitter to me is ground-breaking for political reporters especially, because you can now share your notebook with the whole world. If I know something is accurate, I've seen it with my own eyes, or I've heard them say it to me, I put it in my notebook and I have it there. Now I can also put it on Twitter. So it enables me to build a bigger story. As such, Twitter, I think, is now a component of your storytelling as a reporter."

Post-industrial journalism or not, journalists still take notes, and Rufus outlines how he has adapted his traditional, pre-Twitter routine to both meet and shape the demands of his present work context by appropriating the platform as his digital notepad. He

highlights Twitter's immediate, participatory and interactive nature to record and share his reporting, and to him, the platform has become synonymous with contemporary storytelling. His appropriation of Twitter as a digital notepad enables him to realise a competitive advantage in terms of being fast (possibly the first) to push out content, and to be able to go back to his Twitter timeline and use its content as the backbone of the actual story he is tasked to write. Overall, this approach creates powerful synergies that journalists perceive as rendering the interaction of Twitter engagement and traditional production workflows more efficient.

4. *Twitter as a space filler*, which allows journalists to use downtime and gaps in the work day as a productive way to catch up with what is happening on the platform. As one of *the selectivists*, Andy finds that, "in an elevator or in the subway or whatever, Twitter can be a place to put your eyes." It is during gaps in his day and when he is unable to work on other things that methodical Twitter engagement provides him with a constructive means to pass the time. Andy's experience resonates with many other journalists' imaginaries of Twitter as a means to kill time productively, either when in transit, in between appointments or simply when having to wait.

Despite journalists' extensive and elaborate accounts of Twitter's place and space in managing tasks and workflows, it is striking that only a handful of reporters use content management systems (CMS), such as TweetDeck or SocialFlow. Especially in light of the many concerns over managing scarce resources, weighing opportunity costs and optimisation of engagement, and the general trend to have to produce more with less, CMS would be a readily available tool to administer and organise Twitter engagement via a centralised platform, which further facilitates keeping tabs on relevant topics and key individuals as and when needed. Many journalists readily admit that they 'probably should' be using CMS, but are reluctant to go through the trouble of setting it up, despite expecting it to yield long-term benefits that would pay off. Here, *the sceptics* particularly stand out, confessing their fatigue with the constant evolution of technology and scarcity of resources, leading to an unwillingness to proactively learn how to use yet another (possibly short-lived) tool, however useful it might be.

6.2.3. Journalistic relationships and networks

Journalism is, in its very nature, inextricably linked to institutions and individuals: they are the subjects of its coverage, the sources it relies on, and the audiences affected by its reporting. Professional journalists have always exhibited a strong dependency on relationships with a variety of actors, especially with those from the very social contexts of their reporting genre (Berkowitz, 2009; Louw, 2010). Twitter offers a range of interactive and connective features to build and maintain relationships with other platform users, and in this section I explore how journalists perceive of these as relevant in shaping their Twitter engagement, and with whom they interact on the platform.

Twitter tends to be driven by communities of interest, and the political community on Twitter is particularly strong. It includes politicians, their staff and other officials, who have risen as some of the keenest adopters of Twitter (Jungherr, 2015), capitalising on the platform as an immediate and interactive tool for public dialogue, outreach and mobilising. My interview data shows that a range of journalists recognises Twitter as an access point to these individuals and institutions who are key to doing their jobs. Here, many highlight just how active some politicians are on the platform when removed from their staff and communications teams, and personally share updates, as Amanda explains:

“I think for politicians, I’ve seen it especially in the past two or three years, that’s how they like to break news. They are getting a huge amount of political capital from Twitter – however hollow that might be – but they can certainly raise their profile from a single tweet. I think people see that; politicians see that. And it’s almost like a snowball effect. They see someone get some real mileage off a tweet, a series of tweets or an active Twitter presence, and they do the same.”

Amanda’s account illustrates how being connected to politicians on Twitter primarily affords access to the news they preferably break on the platform (as opposed to elsewhere). While this generally reflects common monitoring (i.e. information-seeking) practices I discussed earlier in this chapter, some journalists report this to afford yet more: Twitter provides a degree of visibility of each user’s actions, and this allows them to be put on the spot, which plays into reporters’ cards. They deliberately tweet at politicians to get a statement or a reaction on an issue because they feel they cannot be as easily shaken off. While tweeting at a politician is a publicly visible inquiry that often garners a response, Amanda also cautions that many politicians tend to use it as an image management tool. She explains that she has “definitely used Twitter to reach out to politicians,” but she is

also careful about the nature of their tweets, explaining that she “tend[s] to lose interest in those that just strictly use it as a PR tool.”

Yet, a subgroup emerges amongst interviewees for whom the role of Twitter in the context of political networks is particularly relevant. The empirical data reveal that journalists who are located in and cover the ‘power centres’ of politics perceive of Twitter’s affordance as a networking tool as significantly more important than journalists like Amanda who work in (geographically) more removed contexts. This is a key narrative produced by the overwhelming majority of political reporters who live and work in Washington, DC, and Grayson explains that, “you think of like LinkedIn as the dedicated professional medium, but in Washington, Twitter is the professional medium.” Journalists report variously using Twitter to connect with the political elite in a city with both the highest density of political events and with people who are involved in covering it in the nation. For example, Andy outlines:

“In Washington, it’s just different [than in other parts of the country]. I mean, there is just such a high concentration of especially political journalists there, the universe there is so much bigger than elsewhere.”

While this relates to earlier observations, that ‘Twitter is the central news source for the Washington-based political news establishment’ (Hamby, 2013, p. 2), Andy’s perspective also acknowledges how this, in national comparison, is an exception rather than the rule. Insights from other interviews highlight that journalists located outside of such political centres and major metropolitan areas report a significantly less ‘intense’ experience in terms of Twitter’s role in relationship building and journalistic network maintenance.

Overall, journalists outline how the production of news relies on their often covert, continuous efforts to establish, maintain and manage their professional networks, which is vital in providing them with access to insights crucial to their work. My empirical findings suggest that while ‘connecting’ with politicians is an affordance pursued by journalists on Twitter via its interactive features (i.e. retweeting and mentioning), interviewees insist that meaningful relationships are primarily built on trust and professional integrity (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001), and thus, relationships and networks outside of Twitter remain more exclusive and significantly more powerful.

My quantitative findings support those that emerge from the qualitative data. A descriptive analysis of all tweets based on who journalists retweet and mention shows that only limited interaction occurs between journalists and the political elite on Twitter. Journalists mention political users in only 13% of all tweets, yet, this is still about four times as often as they retweet (3%) them. Figure 6.4 provides a summary of the frequency and nature of accounts that journalists retweet and mention.

Figure 6.4: Frequency distribution of types of retweets and mentions in all tweets

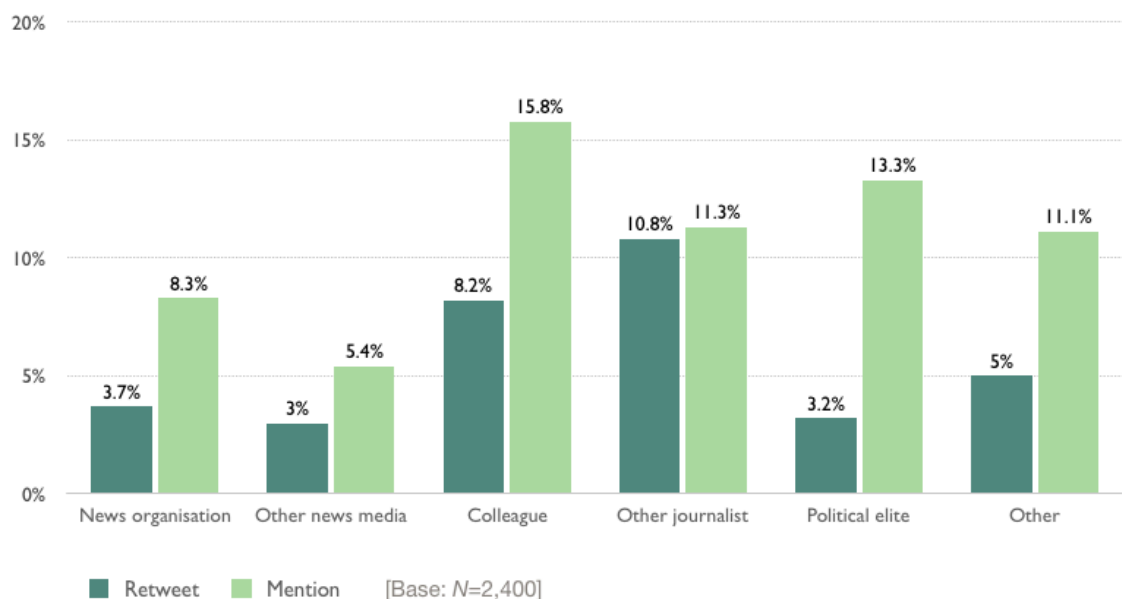


Figure 6.4 also indicates that journalists make more frequent use of the mention feature than the retweeting one, and overall they interact most with the collective journalistic community (i.e. their own news organisation, other news media, colleagues and other journalists). In my interview with Brody, he offers an insight into this:

“Political journalism on Twitter, for the most part, is a conversation between journalists. We all follow each other. I do have a lot of readers who follow me, but a lot of the conversation is just amongst ourselves and it doesn’t necessarily represent the conversation outside of Twitter.”

His account supports insights from previous research that journalists largely engage in ‘insider talk’ on Twitter with other professionals, and, to lesser degree, with the political elite (Lawrence, et al., 2014). In his interview, Brody further highlights that despite the naturally intense competition between reporters, there is a shared professional atmosphere

of recognising when someone else has produced high-quality work. This is perhaps one possible explanation for why journalists retweet both colleagues' (8%) and other journalists' (11%) tweets most often, as these might be instances of showcasing such recognition. It is also worth noting that journalists tend to frequently change jobs, possibly increasing their journalistic network with each new position, and intensifying those interactions with individuals from within the industry. Finally, Brody's experience further speaks to how journalists tend not to make full use of Twitter's interactive features beyond their own expert groups. While Figure 6.4 shows that journalists in this study do interact with 'others' (i.e. members of the public and those users who are neither part of the journalistic nor political elite) on the platform, the proportion of such interaction is relatively low, especially when considering that those 'others' are likely to be journalists' largest group of followers on Twitter.

6.3. Beyond 'traditional' practice

Amongst the whole range of social media available to them, journalists in this study overwhelmingly agree that Twitter has become the key platform for their professional endeavours. Thus far in this chapter I have explored Twitter's role amongst and within some of the cornerstone practices of journalism (e.g. news gathering and sourcing, content dissemination, etc.). None of these are genuinely novel elements in the news cycle, but many journalists recognise how Twitter as a medium enables them to pursue professional tasks and activities in a broader variety of ways and under profoundly different conditions, although overall, journalists vary considerably in their *de facto* appropriation. In this section I take a look at perceived affordances of Twitter that lie beyond what we may understand as 'traditional' considerations around journalistic tasks and workflows, how these shape journalists' approaches to Twitter, and which benefits this may yield.

In the past, both the process and individuals involved in the production of news were largely hidden from (audiences') sight. With the exception of news anchors who often rose to fame given their frequent media appearances (Chan-Olmsted & Cha, 2008), the vast majority of professional journalists operated covertly in the background. While newspapers or television channels and their shows were household names, individual journalists tended to be unknown outside of local contexts, with their reputation primarily built on their

affiliation with such legacy media organisations. In the current age of post-industrial journalism, the individual journalist has become ever more visible and moved to the foreground of the news industry. While legacy media remain as powerful entities, individual journalists have become ‘brands’ themselves (Hanusch & Bruns, 2016; Reimer, 2014), recognised for aspects of their work rather than merely for their employment relationship with a given news organisation. In this context, my analysis of empirical data reveals two key narratives amongst journalists. The first is one that recognises Twitter’s affordances as a reputation-building tool. The second concerns the possible outcomes of such efforts when having a ‘breakthrough moment’ on Twitter, and here I explore to which degree journalists perceive of the platform as a career asset.

1) Twitter as a reputation-building tool

Many journalists in this study confirm how building and maintaining a reputation has become a key concern as part of their contemporary occupational realities, and journalists are highly aware of how Twitter is a realm where their behaviour immediately reflects on their assumed journalistic qualities. For example, Grayson tells me how he capitalises on the platform as a tool to scout other journalists:

“Often when I come across another reporter from another outlet, I wonder who this reporter is, what beat they cover. My first thing is I usually go on Twitter to just get their capsule bio, what they tweet, how many followers they have, and why have I never heard of this person. And if they’re not on Twitter, are they really a credible journalist in this day and age? I mean, it’s almost like I can’t trust their work because they’re not on Twitter, which is a little crazy. But it makes me wonder why they’re so disconnected from the world that they’re not on Twitter.”

Here, Grayson outlines the extent to which he judges other journalists based on how they present themselves on Twitter (or not). His account provides a glimpse into the conclusions he draws merely based on what is visible on the platform, even calling into question the quality of their work (the bulk of which is, in fact, published outside of the platform). While only few interviewees jump to conclusions as readily as Grayson, many support the general notion that efforts around reputation management and branding become a central strategy in an environment that is easily (and publically) accessible, as well as highly competitive. Here, journalists highlight how not only their tweets, but also the profile page in particular, can be an important reference point for their actual and potential Twitter followers. As a result, many journalists admit to deliberately designing and

engineering their presence on Twitter in such a way that it supports building their ‘professional brand’ on the platform. Quantitative data supports this narrative further, and a descriptive analysis shows the following for the presence of *elements of journalistic branding*³⁹ on journalists’ profile pages:

- *Elements of journalistic branding* are present on almost all (99%) profiles pages, with more than three-quarters (78%) featuring at least three and up to seven of such elements.
- Most prominently, journalists clearly state their employment relationships (93%) and specify their journalistic expertise (78%). Considerably more than half (58%) of journalists also get their profile officially verified by Twitter. This is an add-on feature that journalists need to proactively apply for, and that is used to establish the authenticity of the identities of key individuals on the platform.
- Visual elements appear to only play a secondary role for efforts around professional branding, with 20% of profile photos and 10% of header photos showing journalists in a clearly identifiable professional and/or work setting.
- Broadcast journalists in this study tend to include slightly more elements of professional branding on their profile page, although the analysis suggests that there is no statistically significant association between *type of medium* and the inclusion of *elements of professional branding* ($\chi^2(1)=10.588$; $p=0.102$).

In my interviews I prompted the journalists to tell me about their underlying rationale of including such elements in their profile page design. While many acknowledge that the outcome of their efforts (i.e. whether they successfully establish a certain brand image and how this is received by the audience) is unclear, a few have at least a desired effect in mind. For example, Jackson lists previous employments in his bio statement, and hopes that this will draw attention to his successful career as a professional journalist and his authenticity. Kristina explicitly states her educational background, referring to her degree from a well-respected university. She anticipates that this will give testimony to the quality training and professional socialisation she underwent to become a journalist. Overall, my findings here

³⁹ These characteristics were recorded by individual measures on profile pages [verified account (V8), professional website listed in Twitter’s dedicated URL field (V13), reference to professional role (V20), employment relationships (V21, V22), other forms of employment (V23), education (V24), professional URL listed in bio statement (V30), professional setting in profile (V42) and header photo (V43)]. For details, please refer to the study’s research operationalisation in Chapter 4.

strongly support insights from previous studies that suggest Twitter's utility for journalists as a marketing and image management tool (Holton & Lewis, 2011; Lasorsa et al., 2012), and that reporters use it for branding purposes (Molyneux, 2015a; Ottovordemgentschenfelde, 2016a), and even to build celebrity status (Marwick & boyd, 2011; Sanderson, 2008).

2) Having a breakthrough moment can turn Twitter into a career asset

While many journalists report carefully designing and steadily engineering some elements of their Twitter presence to aide building a desired reputation, key events can propel journalists' image management efforts on Twitter to new heights. For example, Rufus had what he calls a 'breakthrough moment' during the US federal government shutdown in 2013. He covered the almost three-week period live on Twitter from within government walls:

"I was providing colour and details to what was happening in the hallways, how people sounded, what people were saying behind the scenes. And people who were political junkies really were drawn to that and wanted to follow it minute by minute. And I was giving them what they wanted with fresh information. I never had to make a correction and I was breaking news."

Rufus' anecdote illustrates how he strategically used Twitter in an attempt to stand out from the crowd of political journalists reporting on the very issue. His appropriation of the platform opened novel avenues of storytelling, both in addition to and beyond more 'traditional' means of coverage. As a then novice reporter in the nation's capital, his somewhat experimental take on Twitter allowed him to turn what was then a "solid, but unimpressive" Twitter presence into one of the key journalistic Twitter accounts at the time, and this increased his audience from 10,000 followers to 50,000 within just one week. Rufus tells me that he seized this opportunity to make himself seen and heard, and this paid off: "that Twitter explosion and all the scoops I had in 2013 led directly to me getting a job at [one of the top newspapers in the country]."

Of course, Rufus' experience of Twitter as such a distinct career asset is, in its scope, by no means shared amongst individuals in this study, although many readily share smaller professional 'success stories'. Most interviewees generally agree that reputation management on Twitter matters, but for most there is neither a concern nor an expectation

that their brand on Twitter alone will make or break their careers. Instead, their perspectives and the relative prominence of *elements of journalistic branding* on their profile pages invite thinking of their presence on Twitter as a digital portfolio. Given the platform's media-richness and hybrid nature (i.e. textual and visual elements, static content and hyperlinks to external sites, etc.), it offers an introduction to the journalist and their work, akin to a portfolio. In a recent study of Dutch and Flemish journalists' branding efforts on the platform, Brems et al. (2016, p. 4) observe, with reference to Shakespeare, that '[a]ll the world's a stage, and so is Twitter.' And while many recognise that Twitter encourages 'performing' journalism, a small subgroup of journalists, *the selectivists*, divert from this perspective in that they recognise how Twitter is neither their only, nor their most important, stage when considering the bigger picture of their occupational contexts.

6.4. Summary and conclusion

This chapter has investigated how factors located at the meso level of analysis, that is, those related to practices and routines, are relevant in shaping political journalists' engagement with Twitter. I explored how journalists manage their tasks and workflows, and which role Twitter takes within this. Here, I examined Twitter's place and space in daily work, the effect that key news events have on its place and space in daily work, and which opportunity costs of engagement underpin journalists' considerations around platform appropriation. Findings here suggest five groups of journalists with distinct usage patterns and within-group similarities based on the relationship between the frequency and intensity of their engagement: (1) *the selectivists*, (2) *the regulars*, (3) *the connected*, (4) *the sceptics*, and (5) *the aficionados*. Further analysis revealed that journalists perceive key news events – be it scheduled, predictable or breaking events – to have a considerable effect on their engagement with Twitter. It is during those times of intense political activity when journalists are on high (news) alert that affordances become more prominent, and this leads to an overall increase in reporters' platform adoption, both in terms of frequency and intensity. Yet findings also show that journalists must make conscious choices in their day-to-day operations to navigate the affordances they perceive Twitter to provide amidst the constraints that limited resources place on them. Here, my analysis revealed that journalists constantly weigh the opportunity costs of their engagement. Narratives of Twitter as a potential distraction from and disruption to core occupational tasks are particularly

common amongst *the sceptics* as well as *the selectivists*, and to a lesser degree amongst *the regulars*, while *the connected* and *the aficionados* who are oriented towards a continual connection with Twitter produce narratives of professional FoMO.

I further investigated which meso-level factors shape and underpin journalists' behaviour on the platform. The analysis elucidated that Twitter's immediacy, the platform as an information-driven environment, and its politically interested user base are three key affordances related to journalists' core concern with access to news and information. Journalists variously pursue these via both (passive) information-seeking and (active) information-sharing strategies. I examined journalists' news sharing practices, and statistical analysis of quantitative data revealed that journalists are more likely to share hard news in tweets during a time of heightened political activity (i.e. the 2014 US Midterm elections) than during a mundane news period. The type of medium is also a statistically significant predictor of the inclusion of hard news in tweets, with broadcast journalists almost twice as likely to share these than broadsheet journalists.

This chapter also established how journalists perceive of Twitter's utility in managing relationships and journalistic networks. Findings elucidate that journalists recognise the utility of Twitter's interactive features to connect with others on Twitter, but journalists tend not to make full use of these beyond their own expert groups. Descriptive statistical analysis of quantitative data confirmed the prominence with which Twitter is mostly used for insider talk with the journalistic community, and to a much lesser degree, the political elite.

Finally, I demonstrated how journalists approach Twitter in ways that lie beyond what we may understand as 'traditional' considerations around journalistic tasks and workflows. I established that many journalists in this study view building and managing a professional reputation as a key concern in their contemporary occupational realities, and perceive of Twitter as a tool for such branding efforts. The analysis of quantitative data indicated the prominence with which broadsheet and broadcast journalists similarly include elements of journalistic branding on their profile pages, and this led to the suggestion to think of a journalist's Twitter presence as a digital portfolio.

In this chapter I have shown how influences stemming from journalistic practices and routines are powerful in shaping reporters' engagement with Twitter. Here, the influence of

key political events was established as a particularly strong mediator of Twitter appropriation. I elucidated distinct usage patterns and demonstrated how journalists, as creative and relatively autonomous agents, vary considerably in their perceptions of Twitter's affordances in the context of their work. This suggests that insights from the meso level of analysis merit further discussion given the potential scope for other relevant factors that shape journalists' Twitter engagement. In Chapter 7 that follows I offer a focused examination of how micro-level factors, that is, those related to traits and considerations of the individual, shape the ways in which journalists engage with the platform, before bringing insights from all levels of analysis together in Chapter 8.

7. The micro level: political journalists' individual characteristics and considerations

“I think that there’s a very individual aspect to how I use Twitter”, Amanda explains after I ask her to describe what motivates her to engage with the platform. Unsurprisingly, our conversation begins with her speaking about work – after all, this is a study of journalists like her – but she continues to explain that she uses her Twitter account beyond her job, too. She likes how it lets her “show a little bit about who you are”, and wonders whether to “get over some of my worry about engaging people on a more personal level ... to be personally more open and transparent.” She uses it to keep up with the local arts scene, and as a parent, she keenly follows various parenting magazines and organisations. Eventually, she concludes that to her, “Twitter is just an incredible amount of fun.”

The question I asked Amanda did not prompt her to reflect on her personal interests or choices in her Twitter use. Yet in her response she voluntarily offers glimpses into aspects of her engagement with the platform that stem from considerations and preferences unique to her as an individual. It is precisely these micro-level factors and their role in shaping journalists' Twitter engagement that I present and discuss in this chapter. Amanda's perspective on Twitter already touches on a range of significant dimensions in considering how journalists approach Twitter as individuals. From an analytical standpoint, she referred to how information and being interest-driven, as well as social motivations (Johnson & Yang, 2009) led her to engage with the platform, and which perceived gratifications this yields (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973; Palmgreen, 1984).

In this chapter I first investigate demographic factors and how they relate to the nature of journalists' Twitter engagement, presented in Section 7.1. I specifically explore the role age and gender play in journalists' Twitter use on the basis of their reported frequency and intensity of engagement (as presented in Chapter 6). I observe distinct patterns related to these demographic characteristics, and this leads to a discussion of how and to which degree journalists themselves perceive of their age and gender as relevant in their approach to Twitter.

To understand which ‘needs’ (Katz, Blumler, et al., 1973; Katz, Haas & Gurevitch, 1973; Rosengren, 1974) individuals have for engaging with Twitter, I explore concrete individual-based motivations that underpin journalists’ Twitter use. In Section 7.2 I present and discuss findings that stem from information and interest-driven motivations, and explore how journalists variously engage in active and passive uses of the platform to seek gratifications related to personal interests and topics they care about. In Section 7.3 I examine how motivations stemming from social needs underpin journalists’ engagement with Twitter, and offer an investigation into those resulting from a need for social connection, those related to expressing opinions, and finally, those linked to leisure time and entertainment needs. The chapter’s key findings are summarised in Section 7.4, leading to the suggestions that insights from the micro level of analysis merit further discussion in Chapter 8, to bring them together with the macro (see Chapter 5) and meso (see Chapter 6) levels of analysis of this study for a joint investigation of the relationships between all analytical levels.

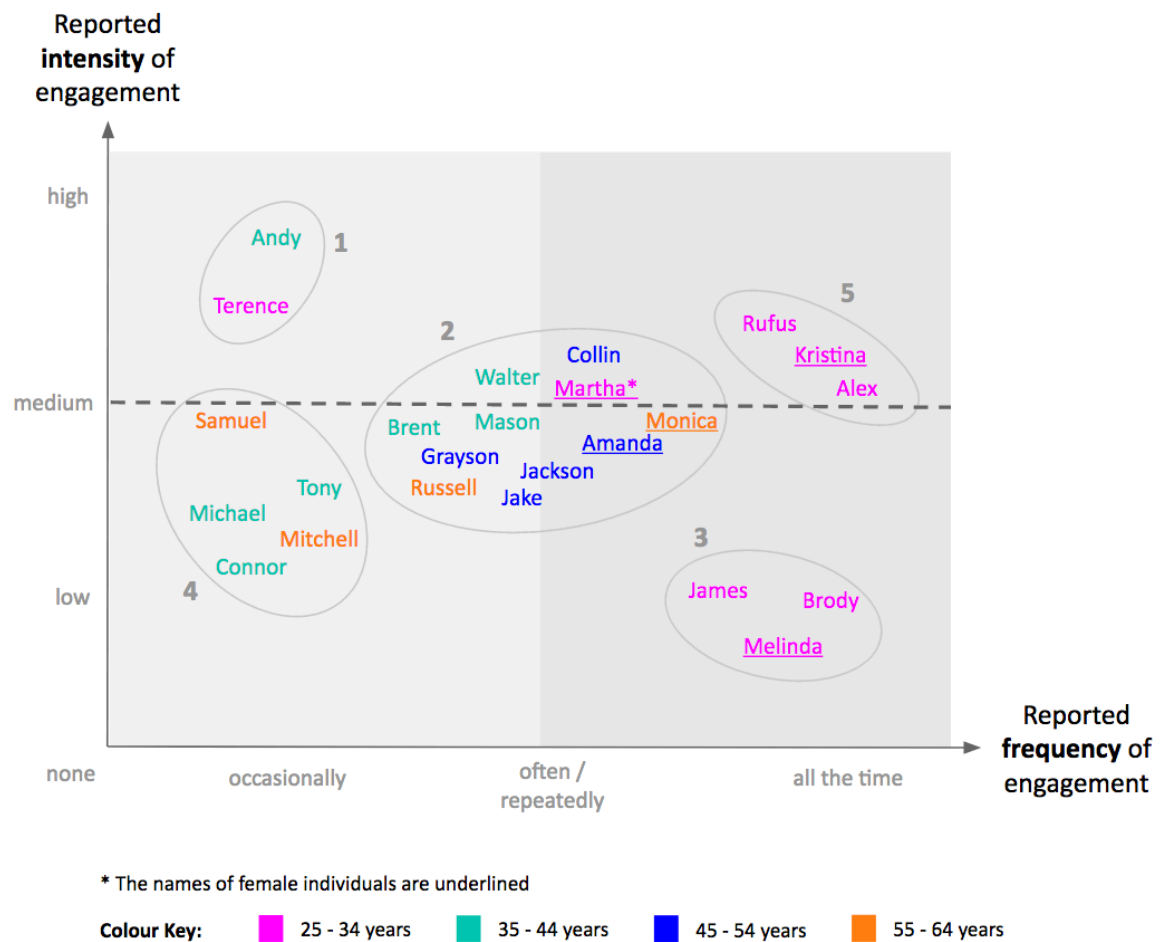
7.1. Demographic factors

In this thesis so far I have explored journalists’ roles as employees (Chapter 5) and professionals (Chapter 6). This chapter seeks to understand journalists as individuals, and this requires their unique characteristics being taken into account. Demographics have been widely studied and established as relevant factors to consider in ‘profiling’ journalists and their perspectives, predispositions and behaviour (Deuze, 2002; Willnat & Weaver, 2014; Willnat, Weaver & Choi, 2013). Similarly, more general studies of social media user groups also emphasise the explanatory power of demographic variables in individual adoption and usage patterns, especially in relation to age and gender (Correa, Hinsley & Zúñiga, 2010). Following these insights, in this section I explore how *age* and *gender* play a role in journalists’ considerations, experiences and engagement with Twitter.

In my presentation and discussion of findings, I revisit some key findings from Chapter 6, in which I outlined how journalists’ overall Twitter usage (based on reported frequency and intensity of engagement) produces five distinct user groups: (1) *the selectivists*, (2) *the regulars*, (3) *the connected*, (4) *the sceptics* and (5) *the aficionados*. To investigate the role of demographic factors in journalists’ engagement patterns, I re-examine these findings with *age* and *gender*

as novel analytical dimensions. I carry out this analysis by overlaying journalists' demographic data over the previously introduced Figure 6.1, creating Figure 7.1.⁴⁰ The journalists in this study belong to one of four age groups (i.e. 25–34, 35–44, 45–54 and 55–64) as indicated by the age-based colour key. While journalists' pseudonyms were chosen to clearly indicate an individual's (biological and self-identified) gender, female names are additionally underlined in Figure 7.1 to highlight patterns between men and women. To aide detecting and interpreting age- and gender-based patterns in the data, two further elements were added that divide Figure 7.1 into four quartiles: along the axis of frequency of engagement, the light and dark grey boxes indicate a separation between journalists who engage less or more than 'often/repeatedly', and on the axis of intensity of engagement, the dotted horizontal line indicates which journalists report their engagement to be below or above 'medium' intensity.

Figure 7.1: Twitter usage patterns, with age and gender as analytical dimensions



⁴⁰ Two individuals did not provide sufficiently indicative accounts of the frequency and intensity of their Twitter engagement to be included in this analysis.

Figure 7.1 shows how the cross-examination of journalists' reported Twitter usage with their demographic characteristics reveals further patterns in the data. In terms of gender, the visualisation of data in Figure 7.1 shows that while male interviewees are diverse in their Twitter use, female interviewees belong to only three of the five user groups: *the regulars*, *the connected* and *the aficionados*. This suggests that while female interviewees vary from each other in the intensity of their engagement, they are similar in that they are all in the dark grey box, that is, they gravitate towards engaging frequently. The data visualisation further reveals for interviewees' different age groups:

- Out of all age groups, the youngest journalists (those aged 25–34) report engaging with Twitter *most often*, with the exception of Terence. These individuals are all in the dark grey box, demonstrating their frequent platform use. Distinctly, the analysis reveals that both *the connected* and *the aficionados* are user groups exclusively made up of 25- to 34-year-olds, indicating that this age group is the most 'plugged in' with the platform.
- Contrary to how the youngest age group predominantly falls into the dark grey box, the 35- to 44-year-olds are all in the light grey box, which shows that while individuals differ in terms of how intensely they engage, this age group shares a *low frequency* of Twitter use.
- The 45- to 54-year-olds are the *most homogenous and balanced* age group in this study. All of them are *regulars* in terms of their engagement pattern, and they are in the middle of the frequency-intensity distribution, where the four quartiles meet.
- The most senior interviewees, that is, journalists in the 55–64 group, fall below the dotted horizontal line in terms of their Twitter engagement pattern, and this indicates that they gravitate towards *low intensity* use of the platform.
- As the 'middle ground' of the frequency-intensity distribution of interviewees and the largest cluster, it is unsurprising that *the regulars* are the only group made up of journalists of *all ages and genders*.

The analysis suggests demographic patterns in the data, with age-related findings more distinct than those for gender. However, empirical data suggests that individuals in this study tend to not consciously perceive of and reflect on their individual engagement patterns with Twitter in terms of their own unique demographic characteristics, although

two narratives emerge from the analysis of data that suggest how generations of journalists perceive of each other differently:

1) Young journalists tend to perceive older journalists as less skilled to engage with Twitter

Drawing on experiences with their own colleagues, many of the younger journalists, that is, especially those aged 25–34, report noticing generational divides between themselves and how knowledgeably and willingly older colleagues engage with the platform. For example, Brody, one of the 25- to 34-year-olds, outlines the following:

“This actually scares me because I always feel that I’m going to reach some point where suddenly I’m the old fuddy-duddy. And then some new technology comes that I just feel no connection to. I already feel that a little bit with Snapchat, you know, I just do not get this app yet. So many young people use it, but I don’t. For me it’s still sort of strange, so that’s how older people must feel all the time. I feel weird interacting with it. Things like that worry me.”

Brody’s account indicates not only how he clearly distances himself from colleagues he thinks of as old-fashioned, fussy and conservative, but also how this makes him aware of getting older himself, worrying about one day becoming the “fuddy-duddy”. Other journalists in this age group similarly share anecdotes of older colleagues’ clumsy and unwieldy behaviour with technologies like Twitter. For example, James concludes after a distinctly negative experience with a more senior colleague: “For me the lesson was, don’t give the new tools to the old guys.” While stories like these are benevolent in their nature, younger journalists find this amusing, reflecting how significantly they perceive of the contrast between different generations and their digital skills. Although it remains unclear to which degree this contrast is real or imagined, these findings partially support arguments of young cohorts as ‘digital natives’ and ‘millennials’, who are typically assumed to embrace technology as a result of their ability to ‘think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors’ (Prensky, 2001, p. 2). This stems from an understanding of their formative development as inextricably linked to the rise of information technologies like Twitter and their daily immersion in digital environments (Peters & Allan, 2016). However, while younger journalists perceive of older generations as less skilled to use platforms like Twitter with both eagerness and ease, older interviewees themselves do not necessarily self-report experiencing such a lack in ability or confidence. This may be explained by the second narrative:

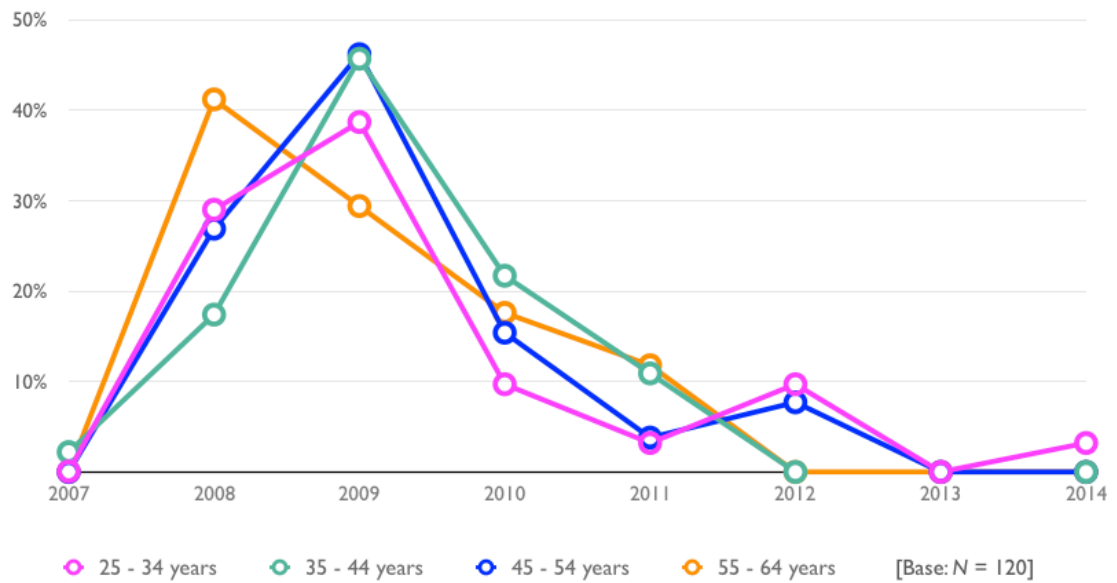
2) Older journalists appear more laid back in their approach to Twitter and tend to perceive of young journalists as too immersed

Journalists who have had longer careers tend to exhibit a more relaxed personal attitude that underpins their engagement with Twitter. While they share an appreciation for the platform, they do not feel like they need to jump on every new tool or gadget. For example, Samuel explains:

“There’s probably also a difference in perceptions and use of Twitter between those who are sort of early stage journalists and those like me who are, I call myself a late stage journalist, you know, I’m 60 years old I’ve been doing this awhile. And as I said, my value is in my ability to do work that I don’t think others at my organisation do.... And that’s fine. But therefore I’ve always sort of viewed it as, you know, I’m not the guy using gadgets and coming up with cool things, I do thoughtful in-depth journalism and that has a very different value. So therefore it’s like, you know, I’m thinking we, the people in my age group or my cohort, might, in fact, have a very different view of Twitter than others.”

Samuel’s account indicates that he gladly lets others take a stab at Twitter, and he feels that he has something to offer of different value. He thinks of himself as a journalist of another generation, socialised into the profession at a time when typewriters were still used. With a view to how older cohorts of journalists have likely experienced a wider range of change and technological innovation in newsrooms over their careers, it is perhaps little surprising that they tend to report a more laid back approach to Twitter, as outlined by Samuel above. The analysis of empirical data further suggests that while older journalists tend to be more relaxed in their attitude towards Twitter, they do not necessarily fall behind in its adoption. In fact, the opposite emerges when taking a look at Twitter adoption patterns amongst the 120 journalists whose de facto Twitter presence I analysed. Figure 7.2 shows that the 55–64 age group were the earliest adopters amongst all generations of journalists studied. While most journalists in other age groups joined the platform in 2009, more than 40% of journalists in the oldest cohort had already signed up for Twitter in the previous year.

Figure 7.2: Year of Twitter account creation by age groups



My findings here only partially support other studies that find that younger age cohorts tend to be early adopters (Peters & Allan, 2016). While my insight suggests that younger journalists exhibit distinct usage patterns compared to all other age groups in this study, the empirical data does not suggest that, in comparison, older journalists necessarily fall behind, although they have distinct attitudes that lead them to engage *differently*.

7.2. Information and interest-driven motivations

As outlined before, my investigation in this chapter builds on a premise that recognises journalists not only as professional media workers, but also as individuals. In my investigation I follow a research tradition which proposes that people engage with media to satisfy certain social and psychological needs (Katz, Blumler, et al., 1973; Rosengren, 1974; Sundar & Limperos, 2013), and this perspective can be equally applied to journalists (Kim et al., 2016; Papacharissi, 2008). Social media platforms like Twitter offer novel avenues for individual use, and thus for the gratification of certain needs. In my analysis, I investigate how journalists' individual-based needs for Twitter engagement stem from two types of motivations, that is (1) information and interest-driven motivations and (2) social motivations. In this section, I present and discuss findings on journalists' information and

interest-driven motivations, before exploring those of a socially motivated nature in Section 7.3.

All journalists in this study readily acknowledge that Twitter allows for both personal and professional use of the medium, although journalists vary considerably in the degree to which they are motivated by non-journalistic factors to engage with the platform. While one journalist in this study deliberately separates his Twitter use by maintaining two accounts for professional and personal purposes respectively, this is an exception, as all other journalists manage their presence on the platform via a single account. Analysis of empirical data indicates that information and interest-driven motivations are key explanatory dimensions for individual-based approaches to Twitter. Akin to findings from Chapter 6, journalists variously engage in active and passive uses of the platform to seek gratifications related to personal interests.

Passive use refers to monitoring and/or information-seeking practices, and every journalist in this study reports using Twitter in such a manner to follow users and topics on the platform that they personally care about. Many journalists highlight their understanding of Twitter as an interest-driven medium, and this allows them to also seek out other (i.e. non-professional) communities and topics of interest to connect with. In a rather simple and straightforward way, the overwhelming majority of journalists tell me of the range of accounts and topics they keenly follow, often via dedicated Twitter lists. The interview data offer insights into an eclectic assortment of participants' hobbies, spanning from sports to music, literature, cooking, photography and travel. But it is also location-based topics relevant to a journalist's private life and social contexts (such as the Twitter updates by local organisations, communities, restaurants and shops) that strongly motivate engagement.

While all journalists in this study report following a range of Twitter users based on personal interests – a behaviour largely invisible to their own followers on the platform – far fewer journalists also actively engage with and tweet about such topics. Journalists who actively tweet about and engage in conversations on topics of personal interest primarily attribute this to wanting to “find out about what matters to me” or enjoying “tell[ing] others about things that matter to them”. For example, Jackson often shares what he calls “interesting reads” on Twitter and has a “book club”-inspired list of accounts he interacts

with to exchange literary recommendations. Unsurprisingly, sport is one of the most prominent interest-driven reasons that leads journalists to engage with Twitter in more personal capacities. For example, Andy explains:

“I’m a [name of American football team] fan and just love following what people are saying on Twitter during a game. If you can’t be there to watch it live, there’s this whole other community of fans... and they know all of these things about the players and decisions that you’d otherwise never know about... I’m not an expert as much as many of those guys are, but I sometime tweet an interesting observation, too.”

As an avid sports fan, Andy describes how his engagement with Twitter during a game is motivated by the conversations that happen simultaneously on the platform, to which he occasionally contributes. My quantitative data recorded the content of such tweeting practices as *personal subjects*, that is, elements and commentary that speak to individual-based interests and activities, and descriptive analysis shows that only about 15% of all tweets contain such *personal subjects*. To further understand factors that influence journalists’ de facto practices of tweeting about personal topics, including demographic factors, I conducted a logistic regression analysis. Table 7.1 presents the model that estimates the effect of *type of medium*, *news period*, *gender* and *age*⁴¹ on the odds of journalists tweeting about a *personal subject*.

[Table appears on the next page]

⁴¹ Age was recorded as a categorical variable with four values representing each one of the age groups. Here, the logistic regression model produced an odds ratio on the basis of the age group of 55- to 64-year-olds. The results should thus be interpreted as the odds of an effect based on this age group.

Table 7.1: Logistic regression model estimating effects on *personal subjects* in tweets

Variable	B	SE	Odds ratio
Type of medium [^]	-0.642**	0.124	0.526
News period ^{^^}	0.198	0.115	1.219
Gender ^{^^^}	0.415**	0.117	1.514
Age			
Age group 1: 25–34	0.139	0.199	1.149
Age group 2: 35–44	0.048	0.192	1.049
Age group 3: 45–54	0.152	0.205	1.164
(Constant)	-1.63	0.201	
Model $\chi^2 = 44.364$, $p < 0.001$			
Nagelkerke $R^2 = .032$			

Base: Complete dataset of tweets, $N = 2,400$.

[^] coded as 0 = broadcast and 1 = broadsheet;

^{^^} coded as 0 = mundane news period and 1 = week of the 2014 US Midterm Election;

^{^^^} coded as 0 = male and 1 = female

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.001$

The model shows that for *personal subjects* in all tweets:

- The *type of medium* and *gender* are significant predictors ($p < 0.001$) of the odds of tweeting about a *personal subject*. However, the *news period* ($p = 0.088$) and a journalist's *age* ($p = 0.543$) are statistically insignificant predictors.
- Broadcast journalists' odds to tweet about *personal subjects* are almost 1.5 times those of broadsheet journalists.
- Female journalists' odds to tweet about *personal subjects* are almost 1.5 times those of male journalists.

Overall, every journalist in this study reports being motivated by personal interests to passively engage with Twitter, while significantly fewer report that this leads them to also engage actively. Findings here suggest that individual-based factors that lead to active engagement are more prominent in broadcast and female reporters. In light of this, study participants do not appear to differ from non-journalistic Twitter users in seeking out interest-based networks and information, as insights from earlier research with more

general (i.e. non-journalistic) Twitter user groups suggest (Johnson & Yang, 2009; Mo & Leung, 2014).

7.3. Social motivations

Following the exploration of information and interest-driven motivations in the previous section, I now examine how motivations stemming from social needs underpin journalists' engagement with Twitter. In particular, I investigate motivations resulting from a need for social connection, from those related to expressing opinions, and finally, from those linked to leisure time and entertainment needs.

7.3.1. Social connection

In the past, journalists were publically recognised merely as professionals, and operated as largely invisible and removed from the people who were otherwise not involved in news production (Deuze, 2008). Twitter allows for journalists to also act as individuals, to show glimpses of their personalities and lives, and thus establish a novel social connection with other users on the platform. Following Granovetter's (1973) concept of weak ties, a connection is understood here as a type of informal camaraderie between platform users, including those connections of a more 'distant' nature between users of an online environment (Littau, 2009). Previous research on social media via a uses and gratifications perspective has established how motivations to seek social connections are meaningful in understanding user engagement with Twitter (Liu, Cheung & Lee, 2010). Findings from this study do not support such earlier insights, but instead suggest that such motivations are only relevant to some journalists. The analysis of interview data reveals that study participants belong to one of two distinct groups: those who are keen to seek social connections on the platform, and those who have no motivations to establish such connections.

1) Those who are keen to seek social connections on the platform

Journalists in this group report that they are keen to be recognised on Twitter as individuals. These interviewees perceive of Twitter, in its essence, as a ‘social network’, and observe that everybody else on the platform is connected in one way or another. Amidst a ‘Twitter culture’ that often feels casual, many report a stronger need to demonstrate that they are “not being a robot”, to show “glimpses of being human” and to appreciate “feeling closer” to the people who are otherwise far removed from them professionally. For example, Collin describes how he deliberately connects with other users on the platform for social purposes:

“I generally follow the practice of if someone follows me and they seem like a legitimate person – not a bot or a business or, you know, a fake account – I’ll generally follow them back. To me that’s just kind of good manners. I mean... and also it allows me to expand my network to see what a whole different array of people are thinking and saying on Twitter.”

This suggests that his approach is driven by his personal attitude: he believes that it is “good manners” to reciprocate following relationships. He articulates that he is keen to expand his network of what he considers legitimate accounts, and his motivation to seek such social connections is quite strong, to the point that he only considers the size, rather than the quality, of his network on Twitter. As the analysis in Chapter 6 established, journalists only rarely interact with other platform users, that is, those who do not belong to the journalistic or political elite, and as such, Collin’s example is not a common pattern within this study.

Like many others, Jake seeks out Twitter as a means to show off his personality. He has experienced first hand how this generates social connections on Twitter that have translated to meaningful connections outside of the platform:

“I see Twitter a little bit like... It sort of lets you put your personality out there a little bit. My photo’s recognisable and quite unique, so I’ve had people walk up to me at events and they said ‘You must be [name], I recognise you from your Twitter photo.’ So it helps sort of identify my work with me which is important to me because I may not necessarily be with this company forever. I may choose to do other things. I bet if I can build a personal reputation, on top of a professional one, and a network, this helps me with that.”

His account indicates how his engagement with Twitter is not only motivated by the possibility of showing off his personality, but also as a strategic tool to build a personal brand recognisable beyond interactions on the platform. Many journalists further report seeking to appear as personable, likeable and approachable via such social connections on Twitter, corroborating similar insights from a recent case study with a regional news outlet in the UK (Canter, 2015). This particular narrative invites an investigation into where elements that aide establishing such social connections manifest themselves in journalists' de facto presence on Twitter. Statistical analysis suggests that journalists include a range of elements on their profile pages that display distinct personal and individual-based characteristics. Most prominently, 40% of journalists describe their hobbies and personal interests, 23% indicate where they live, and 11% provide details about their families. In terms of visual elements, 22% feature a profile photo that clearly depicts the journalist in a personal and/or private context (e.g. with family, on holiday, while pursuing a hobby, etc.).

In my analysis, I also accounted for varying degrees of emotionality⁴² displayed in photos on journalists' profile pages. Here, most journalists select photos of a neutral demeanour and composed nature, with only 7% expressing emotion openly in their profile photo, while even fewer (5%) do this in their header photo.⁴³

2) Those who have no motivations to establish social connections

A considerable number of journalists belong to the second group who have no motivation to engage with Twitter in order to establish social connections with other platform users. Martha explains why this is not meaningful to her: "I mean I think some of my personal friends follow me on Twitter, but a lot of the people who follow me on Twitter are just news consumers, and I like to keep my distance with personal things." She is aware that other journalists make different choices and are thus more "popular" on the platform, but she is not tempted to loosen her stance on the clear distinction she makes between her private and professional life, of which she views her engagement with Twitter as relevant to the latter.

⁴² As subjective and physiological experiences, emotions match distinct facial expressions that can either be controlled or openly expressed. 'High' emotionality refers to instances when the subject openly expresses emotion, e.g. eyes wide open in surprise, tears resulting from sadness, etc. Emotions are classified as the following six basic ones: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness and surprise. These can be supported by body language. Refer to Appendix 7 (Codebook – Twitter profile analysis) for details.

⁴³ This was only measured for photos that depict the journalist themselves.

Other journalists attribute their caution and reluctance to seek social connections with others on Twitter to previous negative experiences, which underpin and impact their present engagement. Many interviewees readily share anecdotes and experiences on Twitter that turned sour, and this appears to be a twilight zone that many journalists find difficult to manage. Mason explains that “[f]or no apparent reason, people can be really vicious to you”, and is worried about offering a degree of transparency of his private life that makes instances of conflict, abuse, harassment and trolling even worse. Some journalists implied that they feel there are no proper mechanisms in place to help them deal with these instances, and that they are left to their own devices. Within my interview sample, this predominantly affected female reporters, who, if not personally affected, could often share an anecdote of a colleague who had experienced gender-related abuse. Melinda says:

“Yeah, I definitely have seen it with other people, but I don’t think I’ve dealt with that as much because I have a relatively small Twitter presence.... I know there have been instances where I felt like.... I don’t know so much that it’s my gender that comes into play or my looks.... I can’t think of the last time that I have felt unsafe or threatened. However, I’m aware how quickly that can happen, I see it all the time with other people.”

Melinda’s account shows how gender is a particular dimension that can motivate and moderate how and to which degree journalists engage with Twitter. In the context of motivations related to social connection, both genders perceive of females as the more likely subjects of verbal conflict and abuse on Twitter, and thus slightly less inclined to share glimpses into their private lives, as Kristina concludes:

“For what it’s worth, I’m not married, but I’m pretty sure people think I never go on a date because you’ll never find evidence of a gentleman on my social media. I just would never do that – no.”

Although Kristina is one of the very ‘plugged in’ journalists in this study, this is where she draws the line of what she is comfortable and willing to share about herself on the platform. This suggests that her otherwise keen motivation to socially connect with other platform users has clear boundaries.

7.3.2. Expressing opinions

As Marwick and boyd (2010, p. 1) argue, '[w]e present ourselves differently based on who we are talking to and where the conversation takes place.' In more traditional circumstances of news production, journalists overwhelmingly follow values of objectivity, neutrality and balanced reporting. On Twitter, however, they have been found to express opinions more freely (Lasorsa et al., 2012). This raises questions about how journalists in this study experience and perceive of opinion sharing on the platform, what motivates them to engage in such practices, if at all, and which gratifications this yields.

The empirical data suggest that journalists overwhelmingly and expressively deny sharing any opinions on Twitter, often referring to how they seek to uphold their professional ethos and values of objectivity on the platform. At the same time, they point fingers and readily observe how others engage in such practices. For example, Samuel explains:

"I'm trying not to express my opinion about something, you know, and I'm trying to have my objectivity in check, I'm still a journalist on Twitter. So I tend not to attack areas of conflict. Opinions are definitely out there and some journalists I know take a different approach, you know?"

Samuel clearly distances himself from colleagues who are more inclined to be opinionated on the platform, demonstrating his attitude that such behaviour tends to conflict with his standards and values as a journalist. Monica shares his approach and vocally defends her choice for her tweets to not have "snark or cute stuff", while Grayson's approach is motivated by possible (unforeseen) consequences this can bring:

"We have younger reporters who cover similar beats who have a much different sort of Twitter presence than I do. And they're comfortable with that, too. So part of it is just what I put on myself... When I sit down to tweet something, I'm not thinking about how does this reflect my personal brand. There's sort of a shortcut, I think about, you know, how might this be taken and could this be taken the wrong way? Could this be perceived as me expressing an opinion that I don't even have necessarily?"

Grayson provides a glimpse into the thought process that underpins his engagement, and outlines his concern over the unintended and not necessarily accurate conclusions that recipients of his messages might draw. To him, being opinionated as part of what he calls his "personal brand" bears risks, although he acknowledges that others, especially younger

journalists, have different comfort levels. Walter offers another perspective in relation to age and attitudes towards sharing opinions:

“I wonder sometimes whether that is a generational thing or a training thing, maybe a little bit of both. You know the Millennials... and I’m on the edge of being a Millennial, but they grew up in this digital era where they share everything now and everybody has to have an opinion to be relevant, so I think sometimes that gets prioritised.”

Walter’s account indicates how he perceives of generational differences and attitudes (that stem from both personal and professional socialisation at different points in time) playing a role in shaping journalists’ approaches to tweet opinion statements. His account also breaks with previous perspectives presented in this section where journalists largely denied seeking to share any kind of opinions on Twitter. Instead, Walter suggests that it is the youngest cohort of contemporary journalists who appear to use opinion as a personal signifier in the race for attention on Twitter.

Contrary to insights from interview data, the quantitative data paints a different picture. While interviewees predominantly articulate that they have no motivations to share opinions on Twitter, statistical analysis of their de facto engagement indicates that opinion statements are present in 28% of all tweets. This does not support earlier arguments that journalists infrequently pass along strong opinions (Molyneux, 2015b). While this study does not account for the relative strength of an opinion statement, journalists are still found to articulate a stance on an issue in more than a quarter of all tweets. This behaviour does not qualify as ‘infrequent’, especially not in light of the common and traditional expectation that they keep their politics and personal opinions to themselves (Rogstad, 2014).

Because this study is further interested in how two external factors and demographic characteristics moderate journalists’ Twitter engagement, I conducted a logistic regression analysis to estimate the effect of the *type of medium* and *news period*, as well as *age group* and *gender* on the odds of journalists including *opinions* in their tweets. Table 7.2 presents the model.

Table 7.2: Logistic regression model estimating effects on *opinion* in tweets

Variable	B	SE	Odds ratio
Type of medium [^]	−0.562**	0.102	0.57
News period ^{^^}	−0.110	0.092	0.896
Gender ^{^^^}	0.072	0.096	1.075
Age			
Age group 1: 25–34	−0.247	0.151	0.781
Age group 2: 35–44	−0.152	0.142	0.859
Age group 3: 45–54	−0.264	0.157	0.768
(Constant)	−0.355	0.153	
Model $\chi^2 = 35.510$, $p < 0.001$			
Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.021$			

Base: Complete dataset of tweets, $N = 2,400$.

[^] coded as 0 = broadcast and 1 = broadsheet;

^{^^} coded as 0 = mundane news period and 1 = week of the 2014 US Midterm Election;

^{^^^} coded as 0 = male and 1 = female

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.001$

The model shows that for *opinion* in all tweets:

- Only the *type of medium* is a statistically significant predictor ($p < 0.001$) of the odds of tweeting an *opinion*.
- Broadcast journalists' odds to tweet opinions are about 1.4 times those of journalists who work for broadsheet newspapers.

Opinion statements reflect having a voice and displaying a distinct, that is, opinionated, personality on Twitter. This is further supported by the use of the first-person narrative perspective, even though previous research suggests that journalists tend to not tweet in their own voice (Molyneux, 2015b). Findings here do not fully support this perspective. The analysis shows that broadcast journalists use personal pronouns such as 'I' in over a fifth (22%) of their tweets, while broadcast journalists do this less, that is, in only about 13 out of 100 tweets (13%). The analysis shows a statistically significant relationship between *type of medium* and the first-person *narrative perspective* ($\chi^2(1) = 28.301$; $p < 0.001$). While journalists tweet slightly more often in their own voice during the week of the Midterm

election (in 16.2% of tweets) than during the mundane news period (14%), here the analysis suggests that there is no association between *news period* and *narrative perspective* ($\chi^2(1)=2.755; p=0.097$).

Social media encourage opinion-oriented journalism, and Twitter in particular has garnered attention as a space of ‘less news [and] more opinion’ (Molyneux, 2015b, p. 929). Quantitative findings corroborate this understanding, and more prominently so for broadcast journalists than for broadsheet journalists. However, journalists’ own perspectives only acknowledge that ‘other journalists’ are engaging in opinionated ways, while the majority of journalists say of themselves that they do not actively seek out opinion-sharing opportunities on Twitter.

7.3.3. Passing time and entertainment

As outlined before in this thesis, journalists generally perceive of Twitter as a useful means to kill time when bridging short gaps in the day, both in professional (see Chapter 5) and personal circumstances. Many further acknowledge how Twitter is widely appreciated for being a source of humour, as well as what Michael refers to as a “repository of clever” and a place of “witty internet culture”. For a select few, such as Kristina, it then becomes a source of entertainment that she seeks to engage with at any possible time:

“I’ve become a little – I mean I hate to say addicted, but it’s just become much like we are. Our phones are always in our hands, or our pockets. I pick up my phone and I go through Twitter. In the middle of the night when I wake up, I go to Twitter. When I wake up in the morning I check Twitter.... So it’s become kind of like a – I don’t know, it’s a constant in my life. It’s my favourite. And it’s so fun, I mean, I use it for so much – getting information, of course, but also it’s a way to engage with other people and I like talking, real-time conversations, sometimes about just casual and silly things, musings.... There’s so much stuff on Twitter that often just makes me laugh.”

Her account indicates not only the breadth of her individually motivated engagement, but also the varied gratifications she perceives to obtain through her use, resulting in an overall experience she describes as “so fun”. Here we can also see the circuit between motivations, gratifications and future use: because she perceives of the platform as “casual”, “silly”, “fun” and making her laugh, it is likely those reasons that fuel her future engagement and cause her to feel “addicted” to the platform, using it during all hours of the day and night.

However, Kristina remains an exception in this study. Most other journalists overwhelmingly indicate that there is little individually driven motivation to engage with Twitter for entertainment purposes or to pass time. While these interviewees outline that 'being entertained' is a welcome and appreciated side effect of scrolling through their Twitter feeds, it is just that and nothing more. Instead, a prominent narrative emerges that challenges Twitter and its entertainment gratifications: rather than seeking to engage with Twitter as a leisure time activity, journalists are motivated to actively *disengage*. For example, Alex confesses:

"I mean we all feel this way, and it's not really about journalism at this point, but all of social media – they're apps, but they're worlds. They're platforms, but they're actual worlds and communities. I think this creates a level of mental noise that might be unhealthy. There are always these conversations happening everywhere. I think the big challenge for me will be knowing when to unplug. So that when I wake up in the middle of the night I'm *not* reading Twitter."

Alex and Kristina both belong to *the aficionados* in terms of their overall usage patterns, but they differ in their worries over how immersed Twitter has become into their lives. Alex readily admits that he struggles to unplug from the platform, and how this has become a source of (health) concerns for him. While he has not yet acted on those concerns, Mitchell is very clear about how he has no motivations to engage with Twitter on such a level:

"I'm not Twitter obsessive, I don't roll out of bed and the first thing I do is look at my Twitter.... I mean, as a personal decision, I decided that if I was going to use Twitter, and get involved, I wasn't going to do it – it wasn't going to be the kind of thing where I became obsessed with it. Where I felt, if I hadn't checked it in five minutes, or I hadn't done a post in ten minutes, it was a big deal. I wanted to manage it, rather than having it take over my life."

Mitchell's account indicates how he made a deliberate choice about how he wanted to manage Twitter as part of his private life, leading to clear boundaries around which sought-after gratifications do and do not matter in shaping his engagement. Unlike Kristina and Alex, Mitchell is in control rather than feeling somewhat 'overpowered' by the platform, and many journalists share similar perspectives. Here, one thing crystallises: overall, Twitter is not journalists' medium of choice to spend their leisure time with to satisfy entertainment needs. While previous research has shown that motivations related to passing time and entertainment are amongst the most prominent factors that lead people to engage with social media platforms (Liu et al., 2010; Sundar & Limperos, 2013), findings from this study do not support such insights for Twitter. Instead, many journalists produce

a more prominent counter-narrative of a motivation to actively disengage with the platform. Other social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram clearly beat Twitter in offering such motivation satisfaction, while yet other forms of media-based entertainment, such as Netflix, trump them all.

7.4. Summary and conclusion

This chapter has investigated how factors located at the micro level of analysis, that is, those related to individual characteristics and considerations, are relevant in shaping political journalists' engagement with Twitter. I first explored age and gender as key demographic factors and how they relate to the nature of journalists' Twitter engagement. A cross-examination of journalists' reported Twitter usage with their demographic characteristics revealed that male study participants are relatively diverse from each other, while female journalists are similar in that they gravitate towards frequent Twitter engagement. Findings further suggest distinct age-based patterns, with the youngest group of journalists (i.e. those aged 25–34) as the most plugged in with Twitter, while those aged 45–54 emerge as the most homogenous and balanced group in the study in terms of their frequency and intensity of engagement. The analysis further revealed that, in general, individuals do not consciously perceive of their own demographic characteristics as influential in their engagement with Twitter, but instead prominently perceive of generational differences between themselves and their colleagues. Findings also challenge arguments of younger cohorts as early adopters of technology (Peters & Allan, 2016).

I further investigated how Twitter offers novel avenues for individual use stemming from information and interest-driven motivations. While all journalists in this study report following a range of Twitter users based on personal interests – a behaviour largely invisible to their own followers on the platform – far fewer also actively engage with and tweet about such topics. Here, statistical analysis shows that broadcast journalists have higher odds of including personal subjects in their tweets than broadsheet journalists, while female journalists' odds are higher than those of males. Overall, content and personal interest-driven motivations are perceived as key gratifications, and this corroborates insights from previous research with more general Twitter user groups (Liu et al., 2010).

Yet, reporters make a clear distinction between following and actively participating in interest-based conversations and communities.

This chapter also explored the role of social motivations in journalists' Twitter engagement. It investigated journalists' needs for social connections on Twitter and found that these are only relevant to some. Those who have no motivations to establish such connections report varying comfort levels, value their privacy, and seek to prevent negative experiences and abuse by sharing too much about themselves. I then examined journalists' perceptions of and approaches to expressing opinions on Twitter. The empirical data suggest that journalists overwhelmingly and expressively deny sharing any opinions on Twitter, often referring to how they seek to uphold their professional ethos and values of objectivity on the platform, but readily observe how other journalists engage in such practices. Statistical analysis revealed that opinion statements are significantly more prominent in tweets that journalists report, with broadcast journalists having higher odds of including issue perspectives than broadsheet journalists. Finally, this chapter explored journalists' motivations to seek out Twitter for passing time and entertainment purposes, and established that 'being entertained' is a welcome and appreciated side effect of scrolling through their Twitter feeds. Instead of seeking to engage with Twitter as a leisure time activity, many articulate their motivation to actively *disengage* and switch off.

Overall, empirical findings on the individual level of analysis show that journalists vary considerably in the prominence and nature of individual-based motivations that lead them to engage with Twitter in a non-journalistic capacity. Findings further indicate that non-journalistic Twitter engagement is an active and deliberate choice, and for some journalists, Twitter fulfils a range of different, but co-existing, motivations, while others report far less enthusiasm for its ability to satisfy certain interest-driven or social needs. Finally, reporters further reflected on how they perceive of Twitter as great for some things but not others, and that they prefer other social media platforms like Facebook or Instagram for personal need satisfaction, often in an attempt to keep Twitter more professional.

8. Bringing the levels of analysis together and discussion

This chapter brings the empirical findings together in a joint discussion and then presents the overall contribution of this thesis. In the previous empirical Chapters 5, 6 and 7, I carried out an individual examination and discussion of factors located on this study's three levels of analysis. In Section 8.1 I provide a synthesis of the study's key research insights on the macro, meso and micro levels respectively, and then bring them together in a joint analysis to examine how they interact and relate to each other. I discuss how they co-exist, but can also create, on the one hand, synergies and mutually beneficial outcomes and on the other, conflicts of interest and fields of tension. In Section 8.2 I revisit the study's conceptual framework, and then continue with an examination and critique of the research design and methodology in Section 8.4. Finally, to conclude, I reflect on avenues for further research and offer some final thoughts.

8.1. Synthesis of research insights

This thesis set out to open up the 'black box' of US political journalists' engagement with Twitter to offer a critical, detailed and empirically grounded investigation of the factors that underpin and shape their approaches to and presence on the platform. My study aimed to explore the little-understood relationship between journalists' engagement with Twitter and how influences stemming from organisations, practices and routines, as well as individual objectives and considerations, underlie and shape their presence on the platform.

I organised my investigation within a levels-of-analysis framework, ranging from macro factors located at the level of the news organisation, to meso factors related to journalistic practices, to micro factors stemming from the journalists' individual traits and considerations. I sought to conduct a critical and fine-grained analysis of the relevant factors on each levels of analysis, but also of the dynamics and interplay between them. The main research question of this thesis asked:

**How do factors located at the macro level of the news organisation,
the meso level of practices and routines and the micro level of the individual
shape political journalists' engagement with Twitter?**

The research question was further investigated through the following five subquestions:

1. At the macro level, in which ways do news organisations manage tweeting journalists and how does the newsroom environment influence their considerations and behaviour on the platform?
2. At the meso level, how do journalists approach and manage Twitter amidst other established occupational tasks and workflows?
3. At the micro level, how do journalists' individual characteristics and predispositions come to bear in their engagement with the platform?
4. Which role does the socio-political environment play in shaping how political journalists engage with Twitter, and in which ways does a journalist's primary medium of publication moderate the influence of macro, meso and micro factors?
5. How can we understand the relationships between factors located on organisational, practices and routines, and individual levels?

I start by summarising the key findings on each of the three levels of analysis (subquestions 1–3), including insights into the roles that socio-political environment and the type of medium (subquestion 4) play. I then explore how factors located on each level relate to, interact and impinge on each other (subquestion 5).

8.1.1. At the level of the news organisation

On the macro level of analysis, the study explored journalists' concrete experiences and perceptions of how news organisations shape their engagement with Twitter, how, if at all, journalists are involved in any of these processes, and how organisational elements manifest themselves in their presence on the platform. Findings show that concrete managerial mechanisms of control aide news organisations in managing Twitter as an object of innovation in the newsroom, although journalists in this study report diverse experiences in how their employers approach the platform. Consequently, the respective

influence this exerts over how, when and to which degree journalists engage with Twitter varies amongst the study participants.

This study's empirical findings corroborate insights from earlier research which suggests that organisational Twitter policies have become common in newsrooms (Bloom, Cleary & North, 2016) as a rational result of managerial decisions that both discourage and facilitate certain practices (McChesney, 2013). While the majority of journalists in this study experience at least some rules that 'govern' their engagement with the platform, my analysis suggests a complex picture of the nature of such policies and how journalists experience their implementation in practice. The analysis reveals that reporters' experiences can be mapped on to four distinct cases: (1) existence of formal Twitter policies that are clearly communicated and understood in the newsrooms; (2) existence of rules that are at least partially communicated; (3) an organisation's approach to Twitter is merely suggestive and implicitly understood; and (4) no knowledge of the existence of any policy or indication of an organisation's stance on Twitter.

This thesis further made the argument that no rules, however formalised, mean much if there are no mechanisms in place to ensure journalists' compliance. The analysis of interview data showed that news organisations make different efforts to ensure that journalists follow Twitter policies, and these efforts range from strict to casual, to absent. Here, journalists describe employer efforts around compliance from two perspectives: proactive and reactive enforcement. Journalists report experiencing proactive enforcement as a visible and direct influence, referring to how news organisations are forceful in initiating and/or increasing a journalist's presence on Twitter, how it can be a requirement of a signed hiring agreement or institutional ethics policy, but also how superiors assign Twitter duties to cover key events and frequently 'check in' to ensure desired conduct. Reactive enforcement is implicit and covert in that procedures and consequences are unknown until they become necessary from the organisation's perspective. Especially in the absence of clear rules that provide journalists with a behaviour-oriented frame of reference within which they can feel empowered to perform their highly creative and largely autonomous day-to-day work, some journalists are concerned about where the boundaries lie of what is deemed 'acceptable behaviour' on the platform. Findings indicate that this creates a 'the next tweet could get you fired' mantra amongst journalists in their approach

to Twitter, suggesting how powerful the threat is of possible disciplinary action on behalf of the employer in moderating these journalists' engagement with the platform.

Findings further show that the majority of news organisations play a key role in facilitating journalists' skill development and, by extension, shape their use of the platform (following the rationale that a more qualified workforce will contribute more productively to achieving strategic goals). Whatever the nature and scope of how news organisations manage training and skills development, journalists differ considerably in their response to it: some report appreciating top-down formal skills training for providing knowledge of organisationally preferred behaviour and pointers in a strategic direction, while others recognise bottom-up and peer-based learning as more enabling and instructive. Findings indicate, however, that the mere existence of any kind of training carries symbolic meaning, which, in principle, communicates both Twitter's relevance and salience as part of the wider organisational strategy. Finally, amongst journalists whose employer has created social media departments or 'social teams', their specialist purpose and often-extensive involvement in Twitter-related matters is perceived as instrumental in driving how and to which degree reporters embrace the platform.

Many journalists I interviewed are aware of how important analytics have generally become in newsrooms across the country, and how their diligent collection and analysis are perceived as potent in informing organisational business strategies and editorial decisions. Qualitative findings indicate that this is not yet a prominent practice for Twitter, as only slightly more than half of all news organisations considered in this study monitor relevant analytics data to measure and evaluate journalistic performance on the platform. However, organisations' perceived preoccupation with such analytics puts journalists under pressure: both the awareness of how easily data can be collected, and the possibility that it might be done without their knowledge, makes some journalists uneasy, and many admit to occasionally adding a performative element to their Twitter activities.

Overall, these findings strongly suggest that journalists who work for organisations where a formal Twitter approach is strategically and coherently aligned across all managerial mechanisms (i.e. policy, compliance, skills development and measuring performance) tend to perceive of their employer as more influential in shaping their engagement with Twitter. I refer to these individuals as the *strategically managed*, and the nature and sophistication of

such coherent strategies places news organisations and their reporters in different stages of the innovation management process, along a continuum ranging from the experimental to the implementation phase (Chesbrough, 2010). Opposing this group are the *ambiguously managed* who experience employer influence in vague and/or conflicting ways. Here, the lack of managerial coherence results in behavioural insecurities, possible fields of structural conflict in the workplace and challenges in navigating the many perceived risks associated with Twitter engagement.

It is particularly in these instances that journalists perceive of their newsroom culture as a crucial point of reference that can inform, stabilise and refine how they engage with Twitter, especially in the absence of coherent and formal organisational strategies. Journalists overwhelmingly describe the importance of relationships, collegial contexts and interactions in the newsroom, and the empirical data shows that this is particularly relevant in terms of the perceived authenticity of peer recommendations, peer mentoring and peer feedback.

Any strategy is driven by underlying goals, and findings suggest that three organisational objectives that inform employers' Twitter strategies are strongly tied to economic considerations and imperatives: (1) generating traffic to the news organisation's website; (2) audience engagement; and (3) organisational branding. The analysis of quantitative data showed that journalists variously include elements that aide in realising these goals in their de facto presence on Twitter, but significantly more prominently on profile pages than in tweets. Statistical analysis further revealed that journalists are more likely to include elements that aide the achievement of organisational objectives during a *time of heightened political activity* (i.e. the 2014 US Midterm elections) than during a mundane news period. The *type of medium* is also a statistically significant predictor of the inclusion of such elements: while broadsheet journalists have higher odds of including elements that assist in generating traffic and audience engagement, broadcast journalists are more likely to make efforts towards organisational branding. Findings further suggest that news organisations cluster into five distinct groups based on their employees' tweeting patterns on the platform, although results do not relate to the type of medium or other sample characteristics, such as an organisation's audience size or where it ranks in national comparison, its geographic location or business models.

8.1.2. At the level of practices and routines

On the meso level of analysis the study explored how factors and considerations stemming from the context of journalists' practices and routines shape and moderate their engagement with Twitter, and how journalists give meaning to such engagement in the context of the tasks and workflows they perform. Journalists are under immense pressure to 'do more with less', and the individuals in this study articulate an acute awareness of having to constantly manage scarce resources. Findings show that journalists vary considerably in the prominence and salience they allow Twitter to take in their regular tasks and workflows, amidst other occupational demands and constraints placed on them. Simply reporting on how they estimate the *accumulated time spent* on the platform emerged as an inappropriate measure to capture the diversity and nuances of Twitter's relative place and space in journalists' daily work. Instead, my analysis suggests that this needs to be understood in terms of the negative relationship between *frequency and intensity as two key dimensions of engagement*. This revealed five groups of journalists with distinct usage patterns: (1) *the selectivists*, (2) *the regulars*, (3) *the connected*, (4) *the sceptics* and (5) *the aficionados*.

Further analysis demonstrated how journalists perceive key news events – be it scheduled, predictable or breaking events – to have a considerable effect on their engagement with Twitter. It is during these times of intense political activity when a platform's (predominantly news- and information-related) affordances become more prominent. This leads to an overall increase in reporters' platform appropriation, both in terms of frequency and intensity. Yet journalists simply cannot afford to focus *all* of their attention on the platform at *all* times, as other occupational tasks remain to be completed, irrespective of the news climate. Journalists readily report trade-offs between prioritising to do one thing over another, and this suggests that they constantly grapple with weighing the opportunity costs of their Twitter engagement. Here, findings indicate that perceptions of Twitter as a potential distraction from and disruption to core occupational tasks are particularly common amongst *the sceptics* as well as *the selectivists*, and to a lesser degree amongst *the regulars*. *The connected* and *the aficionados* who seek a continual connection with Twitter offer narratives of professional 'fear of missing out', or FoMO. Overall, feeling distracted by Twitter is perceived as a greater issue during mundane news periods, while professional FoMO becomes a central concern during key news events when many feel a need to follow Twitter more intently.

Journalists' core objective in relation to their engagement with Twitter is access to a realm of news and information. Findings suggest that journalists perceive of Twitter's immediacy, the platform as an information-driven environment, and its politically interested user base as the three key affordances. Journalists variously appropriate the platform via both (passive) information-seeking and (active) information-sharing strategies. An examination of the latter revealed that journalists are more likely to share hard news in tweets during a time of heightened political activity (i.e. the 2014 US Midterm elections) than during a mundane news period. The type of medium was also found to be a statistically significant predictor of the inclusion of hard news in tweets, with broadcast journalists' odds of sharing these almost twice as high as those of broadsheet journalists. In addition, broadcast journalists also engage more prominently in information-seeking practices on the platform than broadsheet journalists.

Findings further suggest that while journalists recognise the utility of Twitter's interactive features to connect with other platform users, they make only little use of these beyond their own expert groups. Statistical analysis shows that journalists in this study do interact with members of the public on the platform, that is, users who are neither part of the journalistic nor political elite. Yet this occurs relatively infrequently, even though these individuals are likely to be journalists' largest group of followers on Twitter. Here, statistical analysis of quantitative data demonstrated the prominence with which Twitter is mostly used for insider talk with the journalistic community and, to a much lesser degree, with the political elite. Journalists who are based in 'power centres' of US politics (i.e. predominantly in Washington DC) are found to be an exception, and perceive of Twitter's affordance as a political networking tool as significantly more important.

Findings further show how journalists appropriate Twitter in ways that lie beyond what we may understand as 'traditional' considerations around journalistic tasks and workflows. Many journalists in this study consider reputation management as key in their contemporary occupational realities and appropriate Twitter as a tool for such branding efforts. Broadsheet and broadcast journalists were found to be similar in their efforts to include elements of journalistic branding on their profile pages, and this led to the suggestion to think of a journalist's Twitter presence akin to a digital portfolio.

8.1.3. At the level of the individual

On the micro level of analysis, the study explored the role of journalists' individual traits and characteristics in shaping their engagement with Twitter. A cross-examination of journalists' reported Twitter usage with their demographic characteristics revealed that male interviewees are relatively diverse from each other, while female journalists are similar in that they gravitate towards frequent Twitter engagement. Findings further indicate that the youngest group of journalists (i.e. those aged 25–34) engage with Twitter most often during a given day, while those aged 45–54 are the most homogenous and balanced group in the study in terms of their shared engagement pattern. Individuals generally do not consciously perceive of their own demographic characteristics as influential in their engagement with Twitter, but findings suggest that generations of journalists perceive of each other differently. On the one hand, younger journalists perceive of older generations as less skilled to use Twitter with both eagerness and ease, although older interviewees themselves do not necessarily self-report experiencing such a lack in ability or confidence. On the other hand, older journalists appear more laid back in their attitude towards Twitter and tend to perceive of young journalists as too immersed with the platform. Findings also do not support previous arguments of younger cohorts as early adopters of technology (Peters & Allan, 2016).

In its premise to recognise political journalists not only as professional media workers but also as individuals, this study further investigated how Twitter satisfies certain social and psychological needs. Twitter offers novel avenues for individual use, such as those stemming from information and interest-driven motivations, and all journalists in this study report following a range of Twitter users based on personal interests. While this behaviour is common amongst study participants, such passive use (i.e. monitoring and/or information seeking practices around non-professional topics) is largely invisible to journalists' own followers on the platform. The interview data offered insights into how an eclectic assortment of journalists' hobbies and location-based topics relevant to their private life and social contexts strongly motivates engagement. Beyond journalists' passive use of Twitter, far fewer also actively engage with and tweet about such topics. Here, statistical analysis showed that broadcast journalists have higher odds of including personal subjects in their tweets than broadsheet journalists, while female journalists' odds are higher than those of males. Overall, content and personal interest-driven motivations are

perceived as key gratifications, and this corroborates insights from previous research with more general Twitter user groups (Liu et al., 2010), as reporters make a clear distinction between (passively) following and (actively) participating in interest-based conversations and communities.

My examination on the micro level of analysis also explored the role of social motivations in journalists' Twitter engagement. It investigated journalists' needs for social connections on Twitter and found that these are only relevant to some journalists. Those who have no motivations to socially connect with other platform users attribute this to varying comfort levels, protecting their privacy as otherwise public individuals, and as a precaution to negative experiences and abuse. I further examined journalists' perceptions of and approaches to expressing opinions on Twitter. While journalists overwhelmingly follow values of objectivity, neutrality and balanced reporting in more traditional circumstances of news production, they have been found to express opinions more freely on Twitter (Lasorsa et al., 2012). This study's empirical data suggests that journalists overwhelmingly and expressively deny sharing any opinions on the platform, often referring to how they seek to uphold their professional ethos and values of objectivity, but readily observe how other journalists engage in such practices. Statistical analysis revealed that opinion statements feature significantly more prominently in tweets than journalists say, indicating a clear mismatch between perceived and actual behaviour. Overall, broadcast journalists have higher odds of including their perspectives on issues than broadsheet journalists, while no other measures (i.e. news period, age and gender) were statistically significant in affecting the presence of opinions in tweets. Finally, this chapter explored journalists' motivations to engage with Twitter for passing time and entertainment purposes. It established that 'being entertained' is a welcome and appreciated side effect of journalists' engagement with the platform, but rarely a key driver of engagement for study participants. Many acknowledge how Twitter is widely appreciated for being a source of humour, clever commentary and witty internet culture, so that scrolling through Twitter feeds is a popular means to kill time or bridge short gaps in the day, both in professional and personal circumstances. Overall, many journalists report making deliberate choices when managing Twitter engagement as a leisure time activity. Here, my study findings do not corroborate previous research which establishes motivations related to passing time and entertainment as some of the most prominent factors that lead people to engage with social media platforms (Liu et al., 2010; Sundar & Limperos, 2013). Instead, many journalists articulated their motivation to actively

disengage and switch off, in an effort to draw clear boundaries around the platform's intrusion into their personal time and private life.

Overall, empirical findings on the micro level of analysis show that journalists vary considerably in the prominence and nature of individual-based motivations that lead them to engage with Twitter in a non-journalistic capacity. Findings further indicate that non-journalistic Twitter engagement is an active and deliberate choice, and for some journalists, Twitter fulfils a range of different, but co-existing, motivations, while others report far less enthusiasm for its ability to satisfy certain interest-driven or social needs. Finally, reporters reflected on the needs that Twitter cannot satisfy, and how it competes with other platforms as sources of (personal) need satisfaction, such as Facebook, Instagram or Netflix, often in an attempt to keep Twitter more professional.

8.1.4. Relationships between macro-, meso- and micro-level factors

For analytical purposes, macro, meso and micro levels of investigation were usefully separated in this study thus far, and in each one of the empirical Chapters 5, 6 and 7 respectively, I presented and discussed findings as they pertain to influences located on each level. But journalists' occupational and social realities are complex, and an understanding of the influences that shape their engagement with Twitter requires not only understanding macro-, meso- and micro-level factors individually, but also a consideration of how they relate to, interact with and impinge on each other. Journalists' accounts in this study indicate the varying degrees to which factors play a role in their Twitter engagement, but most importantly, findings show that macro-, meso- and micro-level factors naturally co-exist. Journalists variously tweet in an organisational, professional and personal capacity, simultaneously from one account, as Grayson explains: "I think my tweeting is part personal and part organisational. I mean, there's certainly an organisational voice there, but it's also my voice. It's both, I guess and it depends on the situation." His account shows how he does not necessarily separate between the two, although he is aware that his personal voice and the organisational voice differ. Other journalists indicate similar perceptions, and empirical analysis reveals three key findings in regards to the relationship between factors, which I briefly discuss in the following: synergies and mutually beneficial

outcomes; conflicting interests and fields of tension; and the perceived importance of each level compared with the others.

Journalists share many anecdotes of positive experiences on Twitter and a range of small ‘success stories’. Some of these just speak to one of the three levels of analysis; others are distinct in that they reflect how factors stemming from different origins can create synergies and mutually beneficial outcomes between and across levels. Here, journalists’ accounts indicate that considerations stemming from employer goals and those from the level of practices and routines often work well together. For example, journalists describe sourcing stories on Twitter or asking the audience for tips and input serves similar aims desired by both the organisation and the professional, such as finding a unique scoop or angle, being ahead of the competition, or engaging the audience. In different circumstances, again both organisations and individuals benefit when journalists deliberately ‘unplug’ from Twitter in order to pursue other occupational tasks or to concentrate on producing a high-quality product that lives up to professional standards. While news organisations may be willing to trade occasional Twitter abstinence for a better journalistic end product, things become trickier when journalists’ personal preferences immediately challenge their employer’s overall social media strategy. For example, how does management deal with those journalists who engage infrequently or inconsistently, when Twitter has long become an integral channel of content distribution for that news organisation, and conversely, how do journalists remain autonomous from such influences? This creates significant conflicts of interests and fields of tension that are challenging to navigate, as Tony admits:

“I’ve kind of made my peace with it. It is what it is. If I don’t get a job because I don’t have a Twitter presence then, well, I don’t get a fucking job. That’s fine... But hire me or fire me for the stories, not Twitter or my tweets. I’m sure my bosses would like me to tweet more, but frankly, it’s just not a priority.”

Tony’s account indicates the degree of frustration he experiences with his employer’s approach that seems so clearly misaligned with his own. It further shows that he has given up on reconciling the two, bracing himself for the consequences this might bring. Jackson describes a significantly more positive relationship between his organisationally driven presence and the personal motivation to benefit from the platform:

“I definitely use Twitter for personal reasons. But of course the reason I have 27,000 Twitter followers isn’t because I wrote a novel, it’s because I work for [name of major news organisation]. And so I am piggybacking on that.”

However, this relationship works both ways in that organisations can benefit just as much from journalists’ brands and personality on Twitter. Findings on the micro level of analysis show that some journalists enjoy being snarky, witty and funny in their presence on the platform. Interview data further reveals that it is tweets of this nature, that is, those with personality and high entertainment value but low news value, which happen to do exceptionally well in terms of generating audience engagement and driving traffic – a much desired outcome by journalists and especially by the news organisations they work for. While this is a productive outcome, it complicates matters for what we normatively understand as ‘quality journalism’, as being funny on Twitter and followers liking it appears to be a mutually reinforcing mechanism. Because of this, Monica has chosen what she personally views as a safe approach: she keeps her Twitter presence purely professional, despite her employer’s encouragement to show some personality on the platform as a selling point. Samuel expresses similar sentiments:

“You know what I wonder about all this? I mean I try to keep up with it. I don’t want to be obsolete. So, you know, I try to be as active on Twitter as I can be without letting it consume my life, also understanding that I’m never going to be a Twitter personality and that’s fine by me. And that’s sort of, you know, I hope ... there’s a tension. I mean, I try to cultivate this old school reporter kind of brand where I’m not the story, the story is the story. I don’t want to get to the point when there are other people who I won’t name, but who tweet and they become the story when they’re covering an event. And I don’t want to be that. And it might even be to my detriment because that sells.”

His account addresses a range of conflicts, similarly felt by other journalists in this study: the tension between upholding journalistic values and standards on a platform that appears to privilege casual ‘internet culture’ and personalisation; the tension between managing work–life balance and not missing out on anything in Twitter’s ambient news system (Hermida, 2010); and the tension between making personal choices that counter a dominant rationale of economics, often on behalf of the employer.

Finally, fields of tension emerge when individual journalistic behaviour and organisational values clash. Kristina describes an experience in her newsroom where a colleague’s actions on Twitter were questionable and inappropriate, but clearly associated with the news organisation and the values it stands for. After all, a brand is created precisely via the

associations that the audience makes in their minds (Randall, 1997), and Kristina describes how this backfired:

“I can’t remember what big news it was, but I think it was about someone winning the lottery.... The journalist made a joke about what you could buy with that money [which insulted a particular demographic]. It was devastating. Because to the rest of the world they just saw the organisational account linked to it, and they make assumptions about the type of people in our newsroom, about the organisation. Our newsroom never came back and apologised to the nation.... It was a mistake. You have to be aware, you’re still representing your news organisation and people will just have assumptions about what that means. So oh my gosh, you’ve got to be careful.”

Kristina’s anecdote highlights the negative repercussions of misaligned values, a negative brand effect and the news organisation’s failure to appropriately manage the situation. This creates a particularly expansive field of tension not only between the news organisation and the journalists who had clashed and failed to ease the situation, but also between the news organisation and its audience.

Overall, factors on each level matter and interact with each other in shaping journalists’ engagement with Twitter, requiring them to navigate both opportunities and challenges. This can create mutually beneficial outcomes and synergies, and journalists perceive of influences stemming from the macro and meso level as particularly common in working together. However, influences do not always align and create smaller and larger fields of tension and conflict, often when micro factors and considerations clash with those on the other two levels. Hanitsch et al. (2010) find in their survey of journalists across 17 countries that different influences on journalists and their work are generally not perceived as equally important, and my findings corroborate that this is also the case for the particular context of their engagement with Twitter. Finally, journalists report that they generally understand themselves as ‘professionals first’ and ‘individuals second’ on Twitter, variously highlighting that “you just have to be careful about looking unprofessional.” This suggests that they perceive of macro- and meso-level factors as more influential than micro-level ones.

8.2. Conceptual implications of empirical findings

This project started with the simple yet profound recognition that news is not produced in isolation, and the process by which this occurs must therefore be shaped by a range of factors, both large and small. From the early stages of this research, I have been conscious of distinct dimensions relevant in this endeavour: the influence that a manager may have over a journalist's work; how common ways of doing one's job and occupational duties shape journalistic conduct and priorities in the work place; and how individual attitudes and personal preferences may also play a role in a journalist's decision-making. Shoemaker and Reese's (1991, 1996, 2014) model of the hierarchy of influences on media content allowed me to identify and organise these distinct dimensions into a model, serving as the overarching and guiding framework for this study's levels-of-analysis approach. This study contributes theoretically to our grasp of journalists' engagement with Twitter through an operationalised understanding of factors located at the macro, meso, and micro levels of Shoemaker and Reese's model. By adding the concepts of institutional logic (Thornton et al., 2012) and organisational culture (Bloor & Dawson, 1994; Schein, 2004) to the macro level of analysis, the concepts of technology affordances and technology appropriation (Djerf-Pierre et al., 2016) to the meso level of analysis, and the uses and gratifications framework (Katz, Blumler, et al., 1973; Palmgreen, 1984; Ruggiero, 2000) to the micro level of analysis, this study deepens and enhances the ways in which we think of 'media content' and processes of journalistic production by expanding their scope from the dominantly studied context of traditional 'news output' to the relatively novel realm of Twitter.

The examination of Twitter's role within the larger structures and strategies of news organisations contributes to our understanding of the management of media innovation, operationalised through Twitter policies, efforts of compliance, skills development and performance evaluation. Two emerging groups of journalists, the *ambiguously managed* and the *strategically managed*, enrich what we know about organisational hierarchies and conflict, the dynamic nature of institutional change management and the spectrum of journalists' roles to actively contribute to these processes or efforts to resist change. Findings on this level further demonstrate the potent, yet oftentimes covert, subtle and intangible nature of culture in the workplace which infuses decision-making, behaviours and relationships with meaning.

In the context of practices and routines, the study offers a novel understanding of Twitter engagement amidst and competing with other occupational tasks. While previous studies have explored the ways in which Twitter is changing journalistic practices and routines, or how it is 'normalised' (Lasorsa et al., 2012), this study offers insights into how and to which degree Twitter 'fits' into and aides journalists in achieving *existing* tasks and workflows. This provides an understanding of affordance and appropriation theory as the object/subject dichotomy. It further gives insights into the importance of journalistic demands to manage scarce resources and identify sources of workflow optimisation, which ultimately affects Twitter's place and space in their daily work. Journalists differ considerably in their experiences, leading to a typology of five groups with distinct Twitter engagement patterns: (1) *the selectivists*, (2) *the regulars*, (3) *the connected*, (4) *the sceptics* and (5) *the aficionados*.

The role of individual traits and characteristics emerged as a key indicator for what Twitter offers journalists and how it is embedded into their everyday lives. While this has commonly been studied for general social media user groups via a uses and gratifications perspective, journalists on Twitter have seldom been the subjects of such scholarship. This thesis thus fills a gap in the study of tweeting journalists as individuals. Findings here further implicate how generational approaches around media competencies (such as those stemming from the prevalent, though not unproblematic, concepts of *digital natives* and *digital immigrants*⁴⁴) do not contribute to explaining journalists' individual sentiments, adoption and appropriation of Twitter. Instead of relying on age-based explanation around digital literacies, conceptualisations of generational belonging and experiences offer a more fruitful lens via which to elucidate how journalists individually choose the breadth and depth of their Twitter engagement.

This study further provides an understanding of the relationships between macro, meso and micro factors that influence journalists' engagement with Twitter. While Shoemaker and Reese's original model of the hierarchy of influences on media content does not suggest the superiority of one level over another (despite its misleading name), journalists in this study generally understand themselves as 'professionals first' and 'individuals second' on Twitter. This suggests a recognition of macro- and meso-level factors as more influential than micro-level ones in the context of political journalists' engagement with the

⁴⁴ For example, see Bennett et al. (2008), Helsper and Eynon (2010), and Akçayır et al. (2016) for a critical review of these concepts.

platform. The interaction between factors located at different levels further revealed significant fields of conflict that journalists have to navigate: the tension between upholding journalistic values and standards on a platform that appears to privilege casual 'internet culture' and personalisation; the tension between managing work–life balance and not missing out on anything in Twitter's always-on news system; and the tension between making personal choices that counter a dominant rationale of economics. These findings make a substantial contribution to our understanding of various influences that occur simultaneously, both within the same level but also across levels of the analytical model. Yet, their conceptual implications reach beyond what the current framework is able to capture. Herein lies one of the key conclusions I draw in my reflection on the conceptual appropriateness of the model I developed for this study. If we are to systematically understand the nature of the relationships between a variety of influences that shape journalists' engagement with Twitter, there is a need to invite theories of *power relations* as a new dimension into the conceptual framework. Amongst many social theories of power, for example, a Foucauldian (1982, 1984, 2001) conceptualisation understands power as the ability to influence a group or the behaviour of individuals, be it positive or negative. Power is then everywhere and in every relationship, as we are constantly subjecting it and being objects of it. That power comes from multiple sources and this means there must be multiple sources of opposition. As a result, power relations need to be conceptualised across analytical levels and such an approach acknowledges that actors can exercise different types of power in varying contexts, some of which were already identified and discussed in this study: discipline as a form power (e.g. organisational Twitter policies and the nature of their enforcement); agency as a form power (e.g. journalists' ability to actively contribute to and shape the organisational innovation process); resistance as a form of power (e.g. journalists' choice not to contribute to realising organisational objectives on Twitter, or to resist and actively disengage with the platform during leisure time); identity as a form of power (e.g. journalists' self-understanding as professionals first' and 'individuals second' as mentioned earlier in this section); and the power of self-censorship (e.g. journalists' fear of saying something on Twitter may get them fired or the decision to protect their privacy by not sharing information from their personal lives). This study's empirical findings demonstrate the negotiated relationship between a range of factors that shape journalists' Twitter engagement, and adding *power relations* as a novel conceptual dimension would benefit the model's robustness and utility in order to better understand (1) the nature of the relationship between influences and (2) to systematically identify

which ones may be more powerful than others in shaping how journalists engage with the platform.

The study of Twitter as a novel site of journalistic production adds to our understanding of journalists' complex occupational realities in an age of post-industrial journalism (Anderson et al., 2012). Through its investigation into factors stemming from organisations, practices and routines, and individual dimensions, the analysis captures the constant, dynamic and recursive negotiation between reporters' professional contexts and individual considerations. This study followed the premise that Twitter has, to a large degree, been normalised as part of the journalistic repertoire, offering an understanding of political journalists' engagement with the platform as an extension of their traditional occupational realm into a novel space. This allowed identifying the many new and altered ways of journalism and the individuals who perform it, as well as how many of the 'old' and established journalistic arrangements and structures that pre-date the existence of Twitter have not disappeared, but are still very much in place. This observation then must take us back to the notion of hybridity⁴⁵ as a significant feature of contemporary journalistic production, as it

'offers a powerful [...] means of seeing the world that highlights complexity, interdependence and transition. It captures heterogeneity [...]. It eschews simple dichotomies and it alerts us to the unusual things that often happen when the new has continuities with the old' (Chadwick, 2013, p. 8).

Hybridity as a concept is useful to capture the developments this study uncovered that no longer fit into binary categories of how we used to think about journalistic production. My work is an inquiry into change and the factors that shape how it is approached, facilitated and exercised in distinct realms and by various actors of journalistic production. As such, a study of change is necessarily also concerned with questions of continuity and stability. My findings demonstrate the degree to which factors located on conceptually different levels of the model are dependent upon each other, co-exist and are constantly negotiated in such a way that their conceptual meaning moves beyond binary distinctions that implicate 'either/or' perspectives and instead acknowledge that the transformations that journalists in this study have experienced can be 'both' or 'it depends.' At various points of this thesis, I have discussed questions of coherence and alignment in managerial strategies and

⁴⁵ See Chapter 2 for a discussion of Chadwick's (2013) *hybrid media system*.

directives, in professional considerations and practice, as well as in individual preferences and choices. All of this was driven by a desire to understand what *makes sense* to each journalist so as to shape their actions, and a key observation here is that journalists have a sense of when things might “not work any more as they used to,” as one told me, and some of these do no longer fit into the neat dichotomies traditionally used to understand journalistic production. Study findings demonstrate how journalists’ perceived and experienced realities are ‘inevitably associated with flux, in-betweenness, the interstitial, and the liminal. It is being out of sync with a familiar past and a half-grasped future’ (Chadwick, 2013, p. 8), and this suggests the conceptual significance of the hybrid nature of contemporary news work.

Finally, different types of media and news climates have been linked to shaping journalistic workflows and considerations, and this study has brought them together in the context of political journalism and Twitter. Findings further indicate in which ways broadcast and broadsheet journalists differ from each other in their engagement, and that mundane and key news periods facilitate different journalistic behaviour, with the latter as potent in increasing journalists’ use of the platform, both in terms of quantity and quality. This points to the validity of the type of medium and socio-political environment as moderators of macro-, meso- and micro-level factors and their relative influence on journalists’ tweeting behaviour in this study’s integrated conceptual framework.

8.3. Critical reflections on research design and methodology

In bringing together in-depth, semi-structured interviews and quantitative content analysis in a mixed methods approach, this study sought to capture the complex covert dimensions and overt manifestations of influences on political journalists’ Twitter engagement in the most fruitful way. In Chapter 4 I argued that existing journalism research has approached Twitter with relatively limited methodological variation, predominantly employing quantitative approaches. Twitter data is readily accessible on the platform (although ethical considerations should be a concern, as discussed in Section 4.2), and it is understandable how researchers keenly collect large datasets from a platform whose relative novelty invites enthusiastic quantitative inquiry. In order to better understand political journalists’ engagement with Twitter and the context in which it is embedded, I designed this research

in a manner to not only study journalists' directly observable presence on the platform, but also to widen the methodological range of many existing studies with a view to exploring in detail the antecedents and structures that precede and facilitate journalists' engagement with Twitter, and the outcomes this yields. In doing so, this study investigated 'tweeting' as a process, and this necessarily meant it could not solely rely on quantitative data to inform the overarching research question.

In light of this, I chose in-depth, semi-structured interviews as an appropriate method for elucidating political journalists' own accounts and experiences, within and across a range of different news organisations. This allowed me to listen to how journalists perceive of the ways in which employers and their organisational structures, their professional tasks and routines, as well as individual-based traits and considerations factor into their approach to Twitter. I pursued a degree of openness and flexibility in the conduct of interviews to respond to journalists' revelations and reflections. This strategy proved successful in inviting journalists to voluntarily reveal and elaborate on experiences, especially those related to more emotional and affective dimensions. Given journalists' geographic diversity across the US, 15 interviews could not be conducted in person. Here, the initial concern that phone interviews would be less insightful or productive did not materialise.

Journalists are media-trained professionals, and studying them as a media scholar can have undesired implications for the material gathered. As advocates for both their news organisations as well as their profession, participants may have been reluctant to offer sincere accounts. For example, they may have over- or under-played the opportunities and challenges they face, felt a need to justify themselves before the expert (but non-practitioner) interviewer, or called the research endeavour into question. I carefully considered these risks and sought to mitigate them by openly addressing these power relations as the 'elephant in the room'. In each interview I pointed out how participants usually sit on the other side of the table, asking the questions rather than acting as the respondent. This prompted journalists to overwhelmingly articulate how they appreciated the opportunity to contribute to the study, in which many showed a keen interest (even beyond the interview itself) and described as tackling important questions. This leads me to ascertain that most individuals tended to offer sincere accounts, perhaps especially so under the trust of confidentiality and protection of their anonymity, rather than telling me what

they thought I ‘wanted to hear as a researcher’ or defending certain positions in light of critical scientific inquiry.

While the study’s main method was interviewing, insights from the content analysis of journalists’ profile pages and tweets created powerful synergies of context, nuance and interpretation (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989). This offered rich data and scope for triangulating journalists’ own understandings and perceptions of their organisational, occupational and individual experiences (Gaskell, 2000) with key elements that feature in their de facto presence on Twitter. Interview participants were recruited from the sample of journalists whose Twitter presence I analysed, but due to the anonymity of interviewees, insights from their qualitative data could not be directly linked to their quantitative data. While this did not enable me to establish and/or ‘test’ how and to which degree, in fact, specific narratives manifested themselves in someone’s observable presence on the platform, findings still indicate distinct patterns both across the sample and within subgroups of journalists.

As in any study, there are further limitations that arise from the design and scope of my research. First, while the qualitative data of the study revealed crucial insights into journalists’ perceptions of influences on their approaches to Twitter, findings are not generalisable beyond the sample group of this study. Second, by focusing on journalists who specialise in the genre of political journalism, findings and conclusions cannot be assumed as directly relevant to other news genres, despite a likelihood of shared occupational and/or professional values and standards (Waisboard, 2013). Moreover, the study focused on journalists in the US as a single country, and findings do not speak to or reflect the cultural, economic and political conditions of other geographic regions and national media systems (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Third, the study examined journalists with a minimum level of Twitter engagement, and this excludes insights into the perspectives and experiences from those individuals who are reluctant or refuse to use Twitter.

It should also be noted that insights from broadcast journalists as interview participants feature significantly less prominently than those from broadsheet journalists. As discussed in Chapter 4, I reached out to more than 100 journalists and was able to successfully recruit 26 interview participants, of which only three work for a broadcast organisation. In

addition, these three individuals were considerably diverse from each other (and, in fact, more similar to some of the journalists who worked for a broadsheet outlet), which offered less scope to compare and detect patterns amongst them. This led to an increasing reliance on quantitative data for more informative and robust findings in terms of how the type of news medium moderates journalists' engagement with Twitter (i.e. subquestion 2 of the overarching research question).

Finally, in light of the rapid (technological) development of platforms like Twitter, it is instructive to remark on the implications of the natural time lag between undertaking research and findings eventually seeing the light of day. Quantitative data for this study was collected in the autumn of 2014 and interviews were conducted one year later. This study is, in one respect or another, interested in questions of change, innovation and appropriation, and as such it recognises that if the same study were done today, results might be different. Factors that underpin journalists' engagement with Twitter are likely to change as the platform itself continues to evolve.

8.4. Avenues for further research and final thoughts

The previous reflections on the study's conceptual framework and research design suggest a range of avenues for further research. First, this study explored key factors that stem from journalists' immediate organisational, occupational and individual contexts, but this by no means exhausts the range of possible influences that impinge on journalists' engagement with Twitter, and these invite further examination. This study employed Shoemaker and Reese's (1991, 1996, 2014) model of the hierarchy of influences on media content as an organising framework for its investigation (see Chapters 2 and 3). In doing so, it focused on influences located on the three levels that reside *within* media organisations. Further research may benefit from expanding this focus to explore factors that lie *beyond* the boundaries of news organisations, that is, those on the level of social institutions and social systems (see Figure 2.1, Chapter 2).

Second, journalists' Twitter profile pages and their timelines are separate but interrelated elements of their presence on the platform. This study examined them largely independently, although each in relation to journalists' reported perceptions and

experiences of their Twitter use. Future studies may wish to explore concrete links between the content and features on profile pages and tweeting behaviour, to better understand the relationship between these two distinct although connected components of any Twitter account.

This study previously argued that existing research on particular journalistic genres is limited, as studies have tended to explore journalism in general as an occupational umbrella group without differentiating between journalistic beats or specialisations. There is a need for specificity (Deuze, 2008), and while this study examined political journalism as a particular genre, future research may wish to explore other journalistic genres, types of media and add other possible comparative dimensions to understand how, if at all, and to which degree, perceptions and patterns of behaviour differ.

From a methodological standpoint, future studies may contribute to widening existing approaches and techniques in this research area. While content analysis remains the dominant method in studies on journalism and Twitter, findings from qualitative approaches have recently been added to the literature, such as those from newsroom ethnographies (Ryfe, 2012; Usher, 2014) and interviews (Revers, 2014). Yet these remain sparse and rarely employ a mixed methods approach. Studies building on survey data are even fewer (Djerf-Pierre, Ghersetti & Hedman, 2016), and in light of this study's findings, it might be a particularly fruitful method to follow up on and test patterns in self-reported data amongst larger (and more representative) samples of journalists.

Twitter's relative youth has not yet offered much scope for more longitudinal research to understand behavioural patterns and trends over time. News organisations and journalists in this study variously reported that they "make significant investments" into the platform by deploying a range of resources (which they are then unable to mobilise elsewhere), and this invites an examination as to which concrete returns on investment this yields. Thus far, longer-term outcomes and benefits of journalistic (as well as organisational) engagement with Twitter are largely unclear, as is their relationship to strategy, perceived affordances and motivations that are likely to underpin future use. Given the Library of Congress' efforts to digitally archive all historical Twitter data (Raymond, 2010), this may emerge as a fascinating area for future research.

To conclude this thesis, I would like to offer some final thoughts on the normative implications of some of my findings and their relevance in the current news climate. This project was built on the premise that good journalism is, first and foremost, a crucial institution in democratic societies and central to political life (Curran, 2005). The study focussed on commercial news organisations in the U.S. and while findings uncovered that all subscribe to this normative ideal of the “Fourth Estate” without hesitation (though they differ in their ideas of what constitutes ‘good’ journalism), it comes secondary to larger economic imperatives and goals. News organisations have been going through a period of instability and a commercial emphasis is vital for the business’ survival, after all, only a news organisation that is alive is able to focus on producing quality output. But this can blur the fine line that distinguishes which means may justify an end on Twitter. My findings demonstrate news organisations’ regular preoccupation with branding and marketing efforts as well as with ‘what sells’ or ‘drives clicks’ so that many keenly monitor analytics to measure success and impact on Twitter. Findings further indicate that news organisations and journalists alike recognise that tweets with high entertainment value (but often lower news value) tend to do particularly well on the platform. This is not to say that the content of tweets that yield successful metrics are necessarily of poor journalistic quality. But it can have problematic consequences for the incentives news organisations create for journalists on Twitter and how acting on these impacts the normative value of their work, especially when employers monitor Twitter performance and factor this into evaluating overall journalistic performance. While we shall hope for a fair and meaningful approach to this, such practices – may they be deliberate or unintended – present a worrisome side effect which can pose a threat to journalistic autonomy, independence and the reliability of journalistic output on Twitter.

In my research I came across a wide range of individuals who have a strong self-understanding as servants to democracy and public intellectuals with a societal and ethical responsibility that forms the foundation of their professional principles, decision-making and conduct. It is encouraging that many hold on to the belief that they contribute to the ‘facts’ and ‘truth’ that democratic citizens rely on to make informed decisions and carry out their civic duties, especially in times of antagonistic elites, issues of public trust in the news media and fake news (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). But there have always been journalists whose inclination towards these values is not as strong, or where other influences overpower or de-prioritise such self-understandings. In recognition of the myriad

opportunities Twitter offers to journalists, we must equally consider some of the problematic issues that arise from this project's findings. For example, in an environment where journalists feel like they "have to do more with less" and carefully allocate scarce resources, what are the repercussions when Twitter poses a significant distraction in day-to-day workflows so that some journalists may repeatedly fail to appropriately balance responsibilities vital to the quality of their output? What are the consequences when journalists experience immense time and competitive pressures which tempts some of them to exploit Twitter as an easy way out of a demanding situation by, for example, replacing in-depth research and analysis with repackaging content and quotes from tweets to sell as a news story? And what is the impact on journalistic integrity as a whole, when individual practitioners' concerns with their own careers, self-promotion and public visibility critically undermine some of the collectively shared standards of the profession?

This project compared journalists' Twitter engagement during a mundane news period with the 2014 US Midterm elections, and findings demonstrate how news events and political climates are strongly linked to shaping political journalists' approaches to the platform. As outlined in the Introduction, the write up of this thesis coincided with both the final months of the 2016 US Presidential election period as well as Donald Trump's first months in the White House. This was a time during which Twitter became one of the most popular social media spaces (Pew Research Center, 2016) for public and real-time analysis, commentary, and deliberation of a notoriously polarising election, and these developments showcase the implications and relevance of some of my study's findings. For example, political journalists who covered the election had to handle a striking and unprecedented amount of soft news topics and an analysis published by the Columbia Journalism Review (Spike & Vernon, 2016) found that the first presidential debate focused more on personality than any other in US history. Political journalists, whose classic hard news genre puts an undisputed focus on fact and analysis, were faced with manoeuvring uneven territory at times, as personal attributes, subjective experiences and character judgments took centre stage and even turned into news stories themselves (Ottovordemgentschenfelde, 2016b). Many journalists responded to these kinds of stories, the 'softer' ones, by being snarky, witty and funny in their coverage on Twitter. My study investigated motivations behind such behaviour, and findings contribute to better understanding increasing levels of personalisation in journalists' tweets, demonstrating how micro factors at the level of the individual shape platform engagement.

Over the course of the Presidential election cycle, Donald Trump quickly developed a reputation for picking fights with media outlets and even blacklisted some of them (Gold, 2016). This was later reversed (although the overall message this sent was loud and clear) and when some journalists were temporarily prevented from entering Trump's press conferences and other engagements, they flocked to Twitter where colleagues and other attendees were live-tweeting and commenting on events. My study found that many journalists perceive of Twitter as an *early warning system* and also akin to a *modern wire service* for first-hand information, and these examples showcase how Twitter recently gained in importance for its capability to compensate for journalists' physical absence from some of Trump's events with virtual access to ongoing developments. My study further found that many journalists are significantly more opinionated in their tweets than they think or want to admit. The 2016 Presidential election has stirred up strong sentiments in all corners of the US and generated an atmosphere where many journalists approached Twitter as a less formal space to comment, reflect on and vent about political events and issues in ways that would (normatively) not be deemed as 'appropriate' in traditional news pieces. For example, when Donald Trump publicly attacked media outlets and countless reporters (Lee & Quealy, 2016), many felt the need to defend or (ideologically) distance themselves. Although this led digital native outlet *BuzzFeed* (Darcy, 2016) as well as legacy media such as *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* (Spayd, 2016) to send out memos to their staff ahead of the election to remind them to refrain from bias on social media when covering heated events and debates, it appears many tweeting journalists have gotten away with what was once a privilege reserved for opinion writers.

Ultimately, the pairing of Donald Trump and Twitter has shifted the nature of political communication and this poses the crucial question: how can the actions of one powerful individual on Twitter, such as the President of the United States, continue to change how political journalists, collectively and individually, engage with the platform?

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Appendix

Appendix I: List of news organisations

ID	Type of medium	News outlet	Primary distribution	Number of journalists selected per outlet
1	broadsheet	Wall Street Journal	nationwide	5
2	broadsheet	New York Times	nationwide	5
3	broadsheet	USA Today	nationwide	5
4	broadsheet	Los Angeles Times	Los Angeles	5
5	broadsheet	San Jose Mercury News	San Jose	5
6	broadsheet	Washington Post	nationwide	4
7	broadsheet	Denver Post	Denver	4
8	broadsheet	Chicago Tribune	Chicago	4
9	broadsheet	Dallas Morning news	Dallas	4
10	broadsheet	Houston Chronicle	Houston	4
11	broadsheet	Orange County Register	Santa Ana	3
12	broadsheet	New Jersey Star-Ledger	Newark	3
13	broadsheet	Tampa Bay Times	Tampa Bay area	3
14	broadsheet	Plain Dealer	Cleveland	3
15	broadsheet	Philadelphia Inquirer	Philadelphia	3
16	broadsheet	Minneapolis Star Tribune	Minneapolis	3
17	broadsheet	Arizona Republic	Phoenix	3
18	broadsheet	Honolulu Star-Advertiser	Honolulu	3
19	broadsheet	Las Vegas Review-Journal	Las Vegas	3
20	broadsheet	U-T San Diego	San Diego	3
21	broadsheet	Boston Globe	Boston	3
22	broadsheet	Atlanta Journal-Constitution	Atlanta	3
23	broadsheet	Seattle Times	Seattle	3
24	broadsheet	Oregonian	Portland	3
25	broadsheet	San Francisco Chronicle	San Francisco	3
26	broadcast	Fox News	nationwide	10
27	broadcast	MSNBC	nationwide	10
28	broadcast	CNN	nationwide	10

Appendix 2: List of interviewees

ID	Pseudonym	Type of medium	Editorial responsibility	Gender	Age group	Interview date	Interview mode	Interview length
1	James	broadsheet	editorial staff	male	35-44	20.08.2015	in person	58:52
2	Terence	broadcast	editorial staff	male	35-44	16.10.2015	in person	01:04:10
3	Brody	broadcast	editorial staff	male	25-34	16.10.2015	in person	01:09:13
4	Chris	broadsheet	editorial staff	male	35-44	21.10.2015	email	/
5	Rufus	broadsheet	editorial staff	male	25-34	26.10.2015	in person	51:35
6	Grayson	broadsheet	editorial staff	male	35-44	26.10.2015	in person	01:20:59
7	Samuel	broadsheet	editorial leadership	male	55-64	27.10.2015	phone	32:15
8	Jackson	broadsheet	editorial staff	male	45-54	27.10.2015	in person	52:55
9	Mason	broadsheet	editorial staff	male	35-44	27.10.2015	phone	43:06
10	Michael	broadsheet	editorial staff	male	35-44	29.10.2015	in person	29:09
11	Walter	broadsheet	editorial staff	male	35-44	03.11.2015	in person	01:08:50
12	Russel	broadsheet	editorial staff	male	55-64	03.11.2015	in person	01:22:25
13	Andy	broadsheet	editorial staff	male	35-44	05.11.2015	phone	01:17:17
14	Amanda	broadsheet	editorial staff	female	45-54	09.11.2015	phone	49:52
15	Jake	broadsheet	editorial staff	male	45-54	09.11.2015	phone	01:03:33
16	Mitchell	broadsheet	editorial staff	male	55-64	10.11.2015	phone	01:04:51
17	Tony	broadsheet	editorial staff	male	35-44	10.11.2015	phone	39:17
18	Sarah	broadcast	editorial leadership	female	25-34	12.11.2015	phone	34:25
19	Connor	broadsheet	editorial staff	male	35-44	12.11.2015	phone	26:16
20	Kristina	broadsheet	editorial staff	female	25-34	13.11.2015	phone	51:36
21	Monica	broadsheet	editorial staff	female	55-64	13.11.2015	phone	28:15
22	Melinda	broadsheet	editorial staff	female	25-34	16.11.2015	phone	39:36
23	Martha	broadsheet	editorial staff	female	25-34	19.11.2015	phone	29:25
24	Brent	broadsheet	editorial staff	male	35-44	30.11.2015	phone	51:38
25	Alex	broadsheet	editorial staff	male	25-34	11.12.2015	phone	26:03
26	Colin	broadsheet	Editorial staff	male	45-54	16.12.2015	phone	40:20

Appendix 3: Interview consent form



CONSENT FORM

Research Project:

The story behind the tweet:
Factors that shape political journalists' engagement with Twitter

I have had the research explained to me and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐

I agree to be interviewed and for the interview to be audio-recorded. ☐

In the research report I would like (please tick the box that applies):

- to remain anonymous ☐
- to be described using just my job title ☐
- to be described using my name, job title and news organisation ☐

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 4: Interview guide

Introduction

- Overview of the project and research interest
- About the interview: outline of the format, structure and length of the interview
- Opportunity to ask questions and voice any concerns

[Goal: understanding perceptions of the landscape and context of the journalist's work]

- Tell me about yourself and your daily work:
 - For how long have you been a journalist, what is your background, why did you choose this career?
 - What are the news topics that you work on? Where do your story ideas come from?
 - How do you go about researching and writing a story?
 - How would you describe the role that Twitter plays in your daily routine?
- Tell me about the journalistic profession and practices:
 - What do you consider the crucial elements of journalism?
 - What is most important to be “good at your job”? Does Twitter play a role in this?
 - The “rules of the game” for journalism are largely shared amongst legacy media organisations across the country – would you say the same applies to Twitter? What are the “rules of the game” for you on Twitter?

[Goal: understanding journalistic adoption and sentiments of Twitter]

- Tell me about your Twitter profile:
 - When did you first start using Twitter? Why?
 - How do you use Twitter differently today as compared to when you first signed up?
 - How often do you tweet? How do you decide what to tweet about?
 - Do you tweet differently throughout the day and if so, how?
 - How important is Twitter for your work? Why?
- Tell me about how the political environment impacts your Twitter use:
 - We have just talked about how you commonly use Twitter, your “routine” if you will. How, if at all, do you ever divert from that and when?
 - Your genre is political news – which role do political events play in your engagement?
 - If you compare how you use Twitter during a regular day, and, for example, an election, is this any different? How and why?

[Goal: understanding motivations and perceived benefits of Twitter use]

- Tell me about how you use Twitter and why:
 - How do you decide what to tweet about? How do you pick who to follow, what to retweet or quote, to favourite, etc.?
 - Which features/functionalities of Twitter (sharing photos, video, hashtags, what's trending, etc.) are most important to you? Why? How do you use them?
 - Have you ever had a negative experience on Twitter? How did you manage this? What have you learned from it?
 - Can you think of a positive/successful experience?

- Have you noticed which of your tweets are more popular/engaging than others? Why is that? And what does this mean for how you use the platform?
- Put yourself into the shoes of a Twitter user who looks at your profile: What does he see? What do you want him to see? Do you take this into account when designing and updating your profile?
- Tell me about what you get out of tweeting:
 - How is Twitter most useful to you? Why?
 - What do you enjoy most about engaging with Twitter? What do you find frustrating?
 - Is there anything that concerns you about Twitter?
 - How is audience engagement important to you? Who are your followers and how do you, if at all, establish a relationship with them?
 - Do you use a social media management platform? Do you monitor your account's metadata? How important are analytics?
 - Do you think you're making an investment into the platform? If so, what do you hope to get out of it in the long run?
- Tell me about your news organisation and Twitter:
 - How would you describe the atmosphere in your workplace? What is your relationship to colleagues like? How is this important to your work?
 - Does your news organisation encourage you to use Twitter? If so, how?
 - How do you feel about your employer's Twitter approach? Are there any consequences if you don't follow their lead?
 - What does your employer get out of your Twitter engagement? Do you know about any concrete benefits?
 - If you were to ever switch jobs, do you think this would impact your presence on Twitter?

[Goal: understanding journalistic accounts of the past, present and future]

- Tell me about how your work has changed over time:
 - How do you manage to keep up with change and innovation? Should journalists always keep up with new technologies?
 - What is journalism's biggest threat at the moment? What is its biggest opportunity?
 - Can you summarise in a few sentences what it is like to be a journalist in 2015?

Conclusion

- Thank you for your participation – re-emphasise anonymity and confidentiality of data
- Are there any remaining questions or concerns? Share my contact details and encourage interviewees to get in touch at any point
- Outlook on next steps in my research process

Appendix 5: Interview coding scheme

Code ID	Code	Code Description
01 JOURNALISM: any reflection on or relevance to the journalist(s)'...		
1	Demographic characteristics & capital	... any indication of age, gender, ethnicity, family context or socio-economic status, social and cultural capital (incl. networks offline and access to key individuals)
2	State of occupation & role perception	... any reflection of what it is like to be a journalist today, idea/self-understanding of what a journalist's role is and what contribution he/she makes to society
3	Identity & values	... any indication of what kind of person the journalist is, i.e. their personality, ideology, aspirations, hopes and fears, incl. things and individuals they care about
4	Professional socialization	... individual aspects and pathways of journalists' careers (incl. education, previous and current work, etc.), shared occupational practices, routines and standards
5	Digital skills & expertise	... what journalists can and cannot do with digital media, incl. their knowledge, understanding and level of confidence in using Twitter
02 ORGANISATION: any reflection on or relevance to the news organization(s)'...		
6	Twitter policy & training	... presence (or absence) and content of organizational social media policies/guidelines and any kind of social media training provided for journalists
7	Enforcement & discipline	... any indication of how social media training is carried out and policies are enforced
8	Performance evaluation	... assessment of the quality, success and impact of journalists' work, especially as it is linked to their engagement with social media
9	Business model & profitability	... any reflection on how the news organisation is run, and its financial situation and economic viability as a business
10	Newsroom culture	... any indication of the climate and relationships in the work place, incl. sense of encouragement, creative/journalistic freedom, pressures, etc.
03 PLATFORM AFFORDANCES: any reflection on or relevance to Twitter's...		
11	Characteristic content	... the nature of content on Twitter based on previous experience or anecdotal and stereotypical perceptions (esp. as it relates to news and information)
12	Platform attributes	... any reflection on Twitter's interactive features (e.g. @mentions and replies, #hashtags, etc.), and media richness (i.e. hyperlinks, photos, videos)
13	Exposure situations	... any indication of the context of engagement, e.g. times of heightened political activity vs. mundane news period, time of day, etc.
14	Limitations	... any boundaries/shortcomings of Twitter, and possible coping mechanisms/responses to such restrictions
15	Risks	... any actual or perceived risks or dangers linked to Twitter (e.g. tweets getting journalists fired, distraction from core tasks of job, etc.)
04 MOTIVATIONS: any reflection on or relevance to...		
16	Competitive pressures	... The journalist doesn't want to miss out – competitive forces that exert pressure, e.g. other journalists/news orgs, citizen journalists, audience
17	Competitive advantage	... It makes the journalist get ahead - condition or circumstance that puts the journalist in a favourable or superior business position

18	Convenience	... It makes a journalist's job easier/manageable – aides/complements the journalistic workflow and increases productivity, quality of work, etc.
19	Connecting	... it helps the journalist be in touch with the people relevant to his/her work
20	Curiosity	... The journalist likes to try new things/thinks outside of the box – any indication of novel, creative, innovative pathways to complement traditional tasks
21	Employer policy	... The journalist follows/abides by his/her employer's concrete social media policy
05 ENGAGEMENT: any reflection on or relevance to the journalist(s)' Twitter engagement related to...		
22	Frequency & scope of use	... how often and in which ways journalists use Twitter, incl. depth, breadth and diversity of engagement
23	Managing engagement	... ways of organising engagement, incl. social media management platforms (e.g. Tweetdeck, Social Flow, etc.), preferred devices to access Twitter, how it fits into daily schedule
24	Routines & practices	Audience interaction & networking ... any reflection on interactions with other Twitter users and managing relationships on the platform
25		Breaking news ... behaviour and activities in instances of breaking news, e.g. responding to, managing and sharing info in times of heightened political activity or crisis
26		Content distribution ... instances, ways, scope and considerations of distributing content on Twitter (esp. content by journalist, but also by colleagues, by third parties, etc.)
27		Information verification ... any reflection on assessing the reliability, validity and trustworthiness of information, either on Twitter itself or via Twitter (for external info)
28		Monitoring competition ... any efforts aimed at staying on top of what the competition (e.g. other news organizations and journalists, citizen journalists) is doing on Twitter
29		Monitoring discussions ... any efforts aimed at staying on top of a particular topic and how it evolves on Twitter or a user's activities/presence on the platform
30		Promotion and brand building ... any indication of efforts and practices linked to having a voice on the platform/(self-) marketing/promotion (of own journalistic portfolio/efforts related to branding on Twitter
31		Real-time commentary ... any reflection on gathering and publishing immediate updates with new info as an event unfolds (e.g. live-tweeting) or details on a topic become known
32		Sources, footage & supplementing info ... practices and sentiments related to the relevance, utility and circumstances of (non-expert) sources and other footage on Twitter, incl. eyewitness accounts and user generated content
33		Story ideas ... Twitter as a platform that inspires story ideas and topics to cover in journalistic production
34		Twitter analytics ... any reflection on using Twitter analytics to understand, deconstruct, focus, curate, design, or engineer, a journalists' (past, present and future) profile and activities
35	Distinctive practices	... noteworthy practices or behaviours on Twitter that stand out against other routines & practices, esp. compared with other journalists
36	Gratifications	... any indication of actual or perceived benefits/outcomes/rewards/returns on investment of journalists' Twitter engagement (e.g. promotions, job offers, etc.)

06 MISCELLANEOUS		
37	Change, the future & other contemplations	... any reflection of change in the industry, organization or profession, incl. anticipating/imagining the future and other contemplations
38	New theme	... a new theme emerges to be added inductively
39	Great quote	... any instances of great quotes or observations as they arise
40	Methodology	... any instances that are of interest in terms of research methods, ethics, difficulties, choices made

Appendix 6: Sample interview transcript

Details

Interview ID: 08

Interview mode: in person

Interview date: 27 October 2015

Interview length: 53 minutes

Key

I = Interviewer

J = Journalist

[Start of recording]

I: Okay. Do you have any more questions before we start?

J: No, we can go ahead.

I: Okay. So to jump right in, can you tell me a bit about how Twitter fits into your sort of daily routine?

J: It takes up way too much. The thing is that we used to have a constant feed of wire services, right? We had the APA—you'd call up the AP wire service, you'd call up Reuters wire service and you saw things as they were coming that way. And we can still do that but I tend not to. I tend to use Twitter as kind of crowd sourcing journalism. Depending on whom you follow if you're heavily following political reporters or political editors or members of congress, President whatever you're going to get the news as it comes and Twitter has become kind of our wire service. And I spend basically it's bad because instead of when I have downtime instead of picking up the newspaper and reading deep into the newspaper I tend to look at what's going on on Twitter. So it is a source of information. And then you know when a thought occurs to me I'll put it up there. But you know, I like to think that spend more time getting information from Twitter than giving it but--.

I: So what are the different ways of how you use the platform, what do you do with it?

J: You know, a lot, I mean there are dutiful responsibility is to tweet out links to stories. And I try like stories that the [name of news organisation] is writing especially I try to be clever with what I'm doing looking through the story, finding the best quotes or just the catchiest thing and tweeting it out to get traffic to the [name of news organisation] . Sometimes I'll use it to tweet out information that I have gleaned as kind of a teaser. It won't necessarily have a link but it's kind of like putting the Twitter audience on notice that something is going to be coming from the [name of news organisation] on this subject. And quite frankly I also for a time—I just published a novel recently and I used Facebook and Twitter to try to get sales for the novel. So I do that too.

I: Yeah.

J: I think a lot of—I actually feel like a lot of reporters who write books use Twitter as a promotion platform because it's one thing to be in the—the [name of news organisation] has an automatic reader base. We have huge subscription readerships and we are going to reach people. But when you write a book your only real audience is what you create so we use—

I: But don't you think that's sort of the—by being affiliated as a reporter for the [name of news organisation] you already have a sort of I guess brand that's associated with your employer does it make you—

J: Somewhat. Somewhat. And of course the reason I have 27,000 Twitter followers isn't because I wrote a novel it's because I work for the [name of news organisation]. And so I am piggybacking on that. But look, the readership of a novel that is about [historical topic] are not going to be the same people who want to read what I have to say about U.S. politics.

I: Yeah. So how do you I guess the sort of content that you publish in a journalistic capacity I'm sure then is somewhat different from what you would do as—

J: Oh, completely.

I: --an individual who publishes stuff.

J: But a lot of those things, a lot of the book promotion is like sending out reviews, sending out awards or recognition that I've received. And it's funny because I do understand that it in some way is a cheat. I'm piggybacking on my followings because of the [name of news organisation] just to do something completely different because really it's completely different. But I mean mostly on Twitter what I write is related to what I'm doing in the newspaper.

I: Right. Is that something that you choose to sort of, you know, choose to have a presence like that on the platform or is that something that your organization would like you to?

J: You know, that's a good point. I think more and more, and the [name of news organisation] now has a social network desk. There's a formal effort for the [name of news organisation] under [organisational acronym] politics or [organisational acronym] business or just [organisational acronym] to promote the work of reporters. But they want us as individual editors and reporters to also be promoting our work and the work of our colleagues. So they want you to. In fact the software that we use to publish stories has a tab that you click on to promote for Facebook links, for Twitter links for whatever other else. Basically it's Facebook and Twitter. I mean Twitter is funny because if you look at—we of course, the [name of news organisation] analyse every bit of traffic that our website gets. We know how many people are coming in because of social through Facebook through Twitter, though Drudge, through anything. We know how people are getting to us through

subscription. Twitter is not nearly as powerful as Facebook. Facebook is much more—if you look at people who come through social to us I think it's orders of magnitude more come through Facebook than Twitter. Twitter is a conversation between journalists. That's what it is. The dominating, in Washington at least the dominant user of Twitter both as putting content on it and reading it are journalists.

I: What about politicians?

J: Politicians use it too, obviously.

I: Because they seem to be part of that mix.

J: They are, they are. It's a weird thing where we are all getting information from each other and providing information to each other through Twitter. But it's not general audience. It's funny because I have two teenage daughters, one's 13 and one's 16 they never go on Twitter. This is like not their thing. They go on Facebook or Instagram or Google Hangouts or whatever but they do not use Twitter. Twitter's like an adult medium.

I: Yeah, right.

J: It's funny because you think of like LinkedIn as the professional medium, but in Washington Twitter is the professional medium.

I: Yeah, yeah. do you ever feel like when you meet someone new who's maybe either new to DC or someone who's up and coming kind of building a career in the city is sort of the, you know, you'd go to the Twitter protocol to check out who they are

J: You might look at what they-I don't, you might look. I won't read their bio but you might read what they've been tweeting certainly. And there are people in this city who their reputations are built on what they tweet. It's very funny.

I: Do you have an example?

J: Well, like this guy Steven Dennis he's from Roll Call. He's not a prominent reporter really. He doesn't break news. He doesn't really—no one would know him other than through Twitter. Chad Pergram he's a Fox News—he actually started as a Fox radio reporter. And the reason we know him is because he is reliably tweeting out information that we need to know. Like he will tell—you know, if there is information leaking on Capitol Hill about some law, some bill I can just go to @ChadPergram and know that it will be there because he is religiously on Twitter, you know?

I: Yeah, yeah.

J: People make their reputations with Twitter which is really quite remarkable, actually.

I: Right. Do you feel like what Chad for example is doing is that sort of a fine, a risky line to walk? Sort of building a certain brand of the kind of reporter that you are versus giving away inside information that sort of then other people sort of cannibalize for their own stories?

J: I mean I think it's funny because actually people get mad at me sometimes at the [name of news organisation] for what I give away on Twitter because like I'll have an idea for a story. You know right now I'm not a reporter any more I'm editing. And I'll have an idea for a story and I'll go to the reporter and I'll say, 'Look, I just did this research on..' you know, like the other day I was trying to figure out how many Republicans in the House has voted for lifting the debt ceiling last year. And how many are still there and how many have left. And I went and ran some numbers then I went to the reporter who was writing about the subject and told her about my research and then I went on Twitter and tweeted it

out because I was just so excited and she said, “Why are you giving away this story? I haven’t had a chance to write it.” And I said, “Yeah, but you know what these are just factoids you’re going to do the story.” And she said, “Yeah, but you just gave me this idea and now you’re giving the whole world. What if they all do it?” And so I have to balance my desire to just get information out because I’m excited about it to holding some back. I mean I’ll make a decision like is this really giving away too much. Or is it really just kind of priming interest in a subject that we will then satisfy when the newspaper comes out or the story comes out later today.

I: Yeah, yeah. Would you say that as kind of picking up that point that you sort of have an idea of sort of certain rules that you apply to how you engage with the platform?

J: Yeah.

I: The criteria of like or catalog of criteria where you say this is worth tweeting about but this isn’t?

J: Oh, absolutely. I mean first of all it’s funny because our social media desk wants us to kind of have an attitude, bring an attitude, bring a voice to social media whether it’s Twitter or Facebook or whatever.

I: What does that mean?

J: Be kind of funny, snarky, silly. I mean stuffy [name of news organisation], right?

I: So do you think it’s an image sort of thing?

J: I think it’s, you know, in the modern era of journalism I think personality helps drive interest and sell newspapers, right? Or subscriptions. So I mean it’s an interesting question because it’s not settled. The Wall Street Journal, I’ve worked everywhere in this city. I’ve worked for the Washington Post I’ve worked for USA Today and now I work for the [name of news organisation] so I have a sense of different strategies on things like this. The Wall Street Journal believes that anything attached to its name must have its voice. So it’s very staid, it’s kind of dull and boring but it’s just the facts. And they had actually very firm rules. You do not tweet out anything that does not have a link to a The Wall Street Journal story. That was the rule. You’re not tweeting for yourself. You’re tweeting for the newspaper and therefore it must have a link that’s bringing traffic to the Journal. And they always wanted the voice, the personality on social media to reflect that kind of business buttoned down feel. And the Washington Post when I was there, this was a while ago, I mean, gosh, I left the Washington Post in 2008. The Washington Post had this idea that it was going to be a smaller newsroom than its big competitors so it needed recognizable personalities in its reporters and its editors so people would say, ‘Well I might be able to get more news from the [name of news organisation] but I can’t get Dana Millbank from the [name of news organisation] I have to come to the Washington Post to get Dana Millbank,’ or any other—or Jonathan Weisman at that time. They wanted you to have personality because they knew that that was their selling point. And increasingly the [name of news organisation] is probably feeling that way, too. Because the social media desk wants us to bring personality to the social network. Whereas I don’t think the rest of—the kind of the old guard of the newspaper, the people who put out a print paper every day they don’t think about these things.

I: Uh-huh (yes).

J: So if you look on a spectrum and the Washington Post is kind of the most free-wheeling newspaper in Washington with the most voice and personality and The Wall Street Journal is the most boring with the least voice and least personality but you know its own very recognizable image. But [name of news organisation] is kind of in the middle.

We're in the middle and we kind of experiment a little on voice and personality but generally we keep personality to the editorial pages and the news pages still have to have a certain quality of erudition and smarts. And it doesn't necessarily match up with the kind of snarkiness of social media.

I: Yeah, yeah. Why do you think that is so important in social media, like why is having a personality such a big—why does that in this day and age why does that resonate with the audience?

J: Well first of all I mean certainly on Twitter 140 characters means you have to be clever. You have to be---boring—here's an old Twitter feed boring tweets. You know, and we make fun of people who do boring tweets. I mean Twitter is supposed to be the repository of clever. And I don't know how it is in Germany but in the United States clever usually means snarky. It usually means sarcastic. And you know, it's hard to break through because you think about you know in the time that you and I have talked somebody could have tweeted something and I will never see. Because it's gone, it's down, it's down in my feed. Whereas my newspaper, I can always pick up my newspaper. Or a story, even a story that we posted at 6 a.m. this morning on the [name of news organisation] website it's going to be somewhere there. I can find it. But that tweet that's lost forever.

I: Yeah, yeah. What's your strategy to kind of sift through the traffic on the platform because there's so much noise? How do you get to what matters to you?

J: Well, I'm pretty careful about who I follow. Like I just don't follow that many people because I know that if I just keep—just because I like somebody or some outlet if I just keep follow, follow, follow then the Twitter feed itself becomes useless to me and I can't do it. It's kind of funny because on Facebook as I was preparing to launch this novel that I wrote, anybody who friended me I would friend back. And so now I have a 'friend' list on Twitter. I have many more friends on Facebook than I have than people I'm following on Twitter. And it's just a mess. I never would look on my Facebook feed to get information because it's just full of crap, you know? It's full of people that I don't know and I don't care about and information that I'm not interested in. the only reason I friended these people was because at some point I knew I would want to be promoting a book. So that's—I always think I should just like get rid of my Facebook page and restart because it's of no use to me. Twitter I'm more selective and more discerning because I know this is a tool for me professionally. I need to get the information. So there's that. But a lot of times I'll just miss it. So somebody will say, 'Hey, did you see this guy tweeted this?' I'm going, 'No, I completely missed that.'

I: Yeah, yeah, right, yeah.

J: You know, but sometimes you kind of rely on the wisdom of crowds as they say in business journalism. If something important is on Twitter it will be retweeted, it will be commented on, it will be—it will just—it kind of rises up. I mean there were certain things like Donald Trump, you know, you have to see Donald Trump uses Twitter so avidly that I'll just do a search for his name, real Donald. The real Donald Trump to just see what in the world he's up to today. So I don't want to miss his tweets. But generally you just kind of hope that if it was important it will bubble up.

I: Yeah, right. Do you use a content management platform or some sort of like a social media management platform?

J: I'm so stupid because most people do. I mean Tweet Deck and all those things. I don't. I just never have bothered. I should. You know, it's funny that guy Paul Opie he's right there, he's one of the online editors for politics and he's always telling me, "Oh, come

on Jonathan, you're so old-fashioned, you're just ridiculous you should be using Tweet Deck at least to organize these tweets." But I don't.

I: Yeah, yeah. So how do you---do you just kind of organize them in your head or—

J: Yeah, I kind of just organize it—

I: --or do you go onto Twitter knowing, okay, I'm looking for this kind of information so you can strategically search for that rather than having like content pushed at you and sift through it?

J: Right. I mean again sometimes I will just do search for information. Like, ah, this happened, you know, this budget deal was struck I'm just gonna do search for certain people I know who would be covering it and see what they're putting out.

I: Right.

J: Sometimes it's just catch as catch can. I mean I just hope I find it.

I: Right, yeah, I see. Okay. Okay, I guess getting back to my question from before. So what's sort of your catalog of criteria that you need to kind of go through in order to decide whether or not to tweet about something? What's tweet worthy?

J: Yeah, what I would—well. I think that I have, as an editor I have a certain stable of reporters. I have like six reporters who I edit. And anything they write I will tweet out their stories. I feel like it's my job to bring attention and promote their stories. So that's like the baseline character. Then if I'm reading something in the [name of news organisation] that I really like I will tweet it out. I will try to be clever and I will tweet out that story regardless of whether that was somebody I edited. When I'm reading stories, when I'm reading a story that is in a different publication like at The Wall Street Journal or the Washington Post or whatever and I really like it but I feel like it's a competitor to the [name of news organisation]' version of that story I won't—I believe very strongly that we don't our competitor. But if it's a story, like if it's an op-ed or something that we would never have I will gladly do that. I will gladly bring attention to another publication as long as I don't feel like it's hurting my publication. So that's important. I think that's kind of like professional courtesy in modern journalism. But thoughts, I think if I have a brilliant or not so brilliant thought about the news I do think, 'okay, this is something if I put this out there it's going to get attention.' And then I think, 'okay, but is it good attention? Is it bad attention?' you know, sometimes I'll talk to people and say, 'Hey, what do you think about this tweet? Is this okay? Is this not?' or is this going to reflect badly on me or on the newspaper. I mean I try to be fairly conscious about this so, you know. Sometimes you get in trouble.

I: Yeah, I was just going to ask have you ever had a bad experience?

J: Oh, my God, yes.

I: I guess it's kind of one of those things where people especially journalists learn by trial and error I think a lot of—

J: Exactly, exactly. Recently we did a story, it was part of a story about the Iran nuclear deal. And I was working with the graphics desk to put together a graphic. One of the graphics editors said, "You know, I want to do a really interesting graphic looking at how people are voting on this Iran deal." And I had this idea of looking at the Democrats who were voting against the deal because that was a small subset of members of congress small enough to go into a graphic. I mean you don't want to put like 400 names you can only put like two dozen names. And I wanted to look at what made a Democrat vote against the deal. And I went through and looked at the criteria and I said, well, the main criteria was if you come from a heavily Jewish district or if you're Jewish yourself. And then

there were a couple of other criteria. Oh, the four criteria were if you're Jewish, if you come from a Jewish district, if you are from two different regions that are heavily Jewish, New York City of South Florida, Miami. Or if you were just among the most conservative Democrats. Those were my four criteria. And I sat down with [name], our graphics person and we put together a graphic showing, okay, listing all the Democrats who were opposed to the deal and then going through those four criteria which ones applied. And one of the criteria was just Jewish and it said, yes, yes, no, yes, yes, no. And I'm Jewish. I couldn't care less. I didn't think it was inflammatory or anything. Really, nothing. But we put this graphic together and immediately it was being attacked at anti-Semitic. And I went on Twitter and I said, "I'm the one that came up with this idea," I can't remember exactly how I did it. You could probably do a search for it. 'I came up with this idea. I don't think anything's wrong with it. I take responsibility and I'm not a self-hating Jew.' And this, I mean I've never seen attacks. I mean the attacks just launched on me almost all from Jewish people who hated me. And, in fact, who called me an anti-Semite and was a horrible human being. And this went on—what amazed me is it went on for week. I mean for weeks I kept—and you know it caused a big—and [name], the Executive Editor of the [name of news organisation] told me, "Stop tweeting about that."

I: So was there sort of a mechanism in place that helped you manage this or did you just sort of ignore it?

J: I just tried to ignore it because there wasn't a mechanism. I don't even know what mechanism you could do. Just try to stop looking. I didn't look on Twitter for like days because, like three days I said I'm just not going to call it up. Because they were vicious. I didn't care that much. It was kind of like an experiment for me. I mean, boy, how vicious can people be. But eventually it just gets wearing and it's just filling up your feed like your feed becomes useless, right?

I: Yeah, yeah.

J: Because it's getting so much crap. So, yeah, I've had bad experiences. But I've had other ones that would just amaze you. Like it was right after the Charlie—no, not the Charlie, it was the Charlie Hebdo attack. It was right after the Charlie Hebdo attack and I had just tweeted something like two of the victims were Muslim, the main policeman was Muslim, the hero of one of the attacks was Muslim, something like that. It was like that. And this thing got picked up, that tweet got picked up and it didn't refer back to a [name of news organisation] story, it wasn't helping anybody frankly at the [name of news organisation], but that tweet got like hundreds of thousands of retweets and from all over the world. And it's fascinating to watch what goes viral because you never know. You absolutely never know.

I: Yeah. Do you feel like Twitter has a way of being a space where things that are inflammatory or provocative or touch on very sensitive issues as it is like religion for example?

J: Yeah, uh-huh.

I: That that has a way of blowing things out of proportion a bit more so moderation is actually not the way to go because it just doesn't create traffic?

J: Well, that's a good point. Moderation certainly doesn't create traffic and being inflammatory about things like religion and race always create traffic. But I mean that's where my inner censor comes in. you can't create traffic for the sake of creating traffic. I mean I am still—I am an employee of the [name of news organisation] and I might have a little looser reign on social media but I still have to reflect—personally I have to be professional and I have to reflect—and as a collective I need to reflect the [name of news

organisation] . so I'm not going to be—I mean if I just made commentary about sex, religion and—sex, religion and race I would get millions and millions of followers, many of them would hate me, many of them would love me and, yeah, sure I would help make my reputation. But what kind of reputation would that be? No, I'm not going to do that for its own sake.

I: Yeah, yeah. So what do you think are sort of the journalistic principles for sort of the offline more traditional side of the profession that sort of find their way into Twitter? Or should find their way into Twitter?

J: Well, it's an interesting question. I mean we are ostensibly objective. More so than the European newspapers. We are not, even though conservatives will say that the [name of news organisation] is a liberal newspaper but the people who are editors and reporters not on the editorial page are not supposed to be overtly political, you know, have a bias towards one way or the other. And I think that has to carry on to social media. I mean it drives me nuts when I see a reporter obviously taking a political position on something. I mean I feel like there's no—you can't say I'm objective in the newspaper but I am a liberal or I'm a conservative on social media. We know who you are, you know? And so I think that objectivity even, I would say things like—I'll put some things on there that might move the dial. I'll say, I know this will upset conservatives or I know this will upset liberals. But I always have to be, I'll think into myself 'but is it factual? Is this my opinion or is this factual?' And I want it to be factual. I want to be able to defend it say, hey, I know that really made conservatives angry that I put that on there but I feel perfectly justified in putting a series of facts online. And sometimes I will do things like if I've done a series of tweets that have made conservatives angry I'll then do tweets that make liberals angry.

I: To keep the balance?

J: To keep the balance, exactly. To make sure that nobody has totally typecast me.

I: Yeah, right. So how then do you sort of reconcile your organization identity in a way that's attached to you as an employee of the [name of news organisation] with being snarky and having personality on Twitter?

J: I mean I think that you have to operate within a set of parameters. I mean if the newspaper those parameters are narrower they might be wider on social media but they still are not wide. It's not wide open. It's not a free-for-all.

I: That goes back to your example for the Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post their sort of approaches to different social media strategies.

J: Yeah. I mean, you know, it's funny because if you talk to like Robert Costa. I think Robert Costa on social media does give away too much. I mean we can count—Robert Costa's really very plugged in with certain politicians and we know who's plugged in with these very conservative politicians. And I can watch Robert Costa's Twitter feed and know before he gets anything onto the Washington Post website he'll have tipped me off. I don't want to do that. I don't want to be like Robert Costa. But God bless him, you know he's helping me.

I: Yeah. Do you think that's stealing stories based on that he tipped off—

J: No, because he's putting it into the social realm. I mean I don't feel like I'm stealing anything from him. I feel like he's handing it to me.

I: Yeah. Did you ever feel like somebody stole something from you? For example the example you mentioned earlier where you have the story idea and somebody said why are you giving this away?

J: Well, I've never, and it's interesting that you say that because if for instance on that example when I ran some numbers to show how difficult it would be to raise the debt ceiling, it's a very arcane issue, but if I saw somebody the next day or that afternoon print that story then I would go, 'oh, shoot, I really did give it away.' But it didn't happen. So I'm kinda like—you know, it is trial—social media in some ways is trial and error, right?

I: Yeah.

J: So you're waiting to see if something bad happens. But as long as it doesn't you just keep kind of going along, going along.

I: Right, yeah. If I were to mention the words "quantity" and "quality" of tweeting what's sort of your thought on that?

J: I think that's an interesting question. I mean I think that there are some people who get a lot of followers on Twitter sheer on quantity alone. They're dishing it all out and some people think, 'oh, I've got to like see what this guy does.' And sometimes I actually will unfollow somebody because he or she is tweeting so much that it's just cluttering my feed. But I believe that what I tweet—I'm judicious. I only want to do maybe a maximum ten tweets a day. I don't actually count it in my head but I do think I'm going to be—I want each one to be of use, you know, not some stupid thing that just came out of the top of my head. So I don't tend to do a ton of tweeting for that reason. Because you know what frankly when you are on a Twitter feed that's just full of somebody's half-baked notion that popped into his head you either stop following or you just don't take much notice of it. So I mean it's funny to think about quality on social media because most of social media there is no quality. But I personally think we should take some pride in what we're putting out there because it's our public face.

I: Yeah, yeah, yeah it is, right. What do you say or what do you think is sort of the biggest risk involved in sort of journalism moving onto social platforms?

J: I mean the biggest risk, and it is a big risk because I see it in myself, is that social platforms become news. And you stop reading. Why should I read this 2000 word story in the [name of news organisation] when if I just stay abreast on Twitter by a 140 characters at a time I'll at least get the gist of what's going on. I mean you don't want social — social media should feed the news, should kind of be a supplement to the news but it should not replace the news and that's the big fear. And it's a real fear. Like that people will stop even subscribing to newspapers because—and that's amazing when you look—now Twitter has all these diagnostics. And you can see how many people looked at a tweet versus—

I: Do you do that?

J: Yeah, I do. How many people looked at a tweet versus actually clicked on the link and it's like hardly anybody clicks on the link. You want them to click on the link, that's the point. But it's amazing how many people really they are just kind of getting their news 140 characters at a time.

I: Yeah, yeah. What do your analytics and diagnostics tell you and how does that sort of shape your future engagement? Do you feel like based on the numbers that it's given you on your past performance that sort of—

J: You know, that's an interesting question whether I actually am influenced. We have an internal diagnostics tool at the [name of news organisation] where we could put any story, just take the URL from any story, put it in there and you can see exactly how much traffic that story has gotten, when it's gotten it, how much of it came through Twitter, how much of it came from Facebook, how much of it came through other social platforms and how much of it came through just the homepage of the [name of news organisation] or

something like that. You can look at all of the stuff and what you see is social is still not the dominant way people come to our newspaper. Which is good frankly. I mean I would rather them pay their money, subscribe to the [name of news organisation] and go to our homepage, read it and decide what to read just like old media. I don't mind that. That's good. And we are really encouraged to look at these diagnostics, that's why we were given the tools. I still—but I don't really—I'm kind of pig-headed in that way. I don't really shape the way I use social media based on those diagnostics. And partly because I'm not sure how to do it. And it's also it's hard to break through. I mean the fact is that you're looking at Twitter traffic into the [name of news organisation] at [organisational acronym] politics dwarfs any amount of traffic that one individual reporter or editor can drive. It doesn't even really show up on the diagnostics.

I: Yeah, yeah. Is the [name of news organisation] interested in your sort of performance on the platform? Do they sort of check how well you're doing?

J: No.

I: Whatever that means?

J: No, they don't. I've been waiting for them to do that.

I: Yeah, because in a way it is a very sort of tangible metric to include that in someone's performance review for example.

J: Yes, it is really tangible. And I'm waiting for them to do it. My now ex-wife, she works at McKenzie and Company and they do that. They actually grade you on how many followers you have, how much you've tweeted, what you've done. And I'm kind of waiting for them to do that her but they haven't because I think they're a little afraid. They're afraid that if they start analysing our use of social media we will devote too much of our time and our resources to it. Because it's too easy. It's actually easy to just sit and tweet. You know? That's not measuring the quality of your use of social media on the efficacy, it's just time spent.

I: Yeah, yeah. What is user engagement on a platform like Twitter mean? So I feel like, well, if you're pushing out your stories and you're including links in all of that and it drives a bit of traffic to the [name of news organisation] platform but if your audience is mainly other journalists like where does that become like a meaningful thing to do that you devote your very valuable time to?

J: You know, that's an excellent question. If your audience is mainly journalists why do you do it? It's a lot of it I think is pride of authorship. Pride of scoops, you know, 'hey, we beat you.' Look at us and we're going to shove it in your face, look, we beat you on this. A lot of it is self-aggrandizing, you know, it's 'look at me I'm so clever.' You know? It's the equivalent of going on MSNBC for a 32nd hit on TV. It's just a way to draw attention to yourself. I would not be proud of that but it's true. But I think a lot of it is what I said at first that if Twitter becomes the new news feed, if you're using it to keep up on what's happening right now in Washington or the world you have your part to play in it too. The collective journalistic community includes you. You can't just be a user. You can't just be a consumer of that information you have to do your part to provide it.

I: Yeah, yeah, right. Do you think that because you sort of engage in that particular way that that sort of challenges the notion of objectivity or sort of the, you know, the journalist is the one who reports the story rather than the one who is the story that there's such an ego sort of involved in being on Twitter as a journalist?

J: Yeah. I mean the thing about it you know, the thing is TV used to be that.

I: Yeah, right, the sort of the celebrity status of a journalist.

J: Exactly. TV was how you attained fame as a newspaper reporter certainly. So the reporters that didn't ever, never turned down a chance to do a 30 second hit on television that's kind of now what they do on social and they still do the 30 second hit sometimes. And frankly the problem with you do these 30 second hits on television you're on TV for 30 seconds but it takes like an hour of your time to get there and get mixed up, get whatever makeup or whatever and you're on for 30 seconds and it's gone. It's so time consuming. I actually am somebody who almost never goes on TV. I turn it down. I say forget it. Now nobody asks me to go on TV because they know I'm probably going to turn them down. So I think that—I don't think it's a hit on your objectivity unless you're using it in an un-objective way. I mean just your presence on social media isn't corrupting your objectivity. It might corrupt your reputation but it doesn't necessarily corrupt your objectivity unless you are being subjective on it. So I mean just like, you know, TV is harder in some ways because you go on TV especially if you go on one of the channels that is overtly partisan, you know, MSNBC for Democrats, FOX for Republican. If you go on there you will be asked questions to push you to answer in an un-objective way, in a subjective way. Whereas on social you're in complete control. Nobody's asking you the question so you can write whatever you want.

I: Right, yeah.

J: So I think it should be, it should be a more objective platform than television.

I: Let's talk about sort of your audience again for a second. If you—so you said you have 20,000 plus followers?

J: I have 27,000.

I: Yeah, that's a lot of people.

J: It is. It's funny because you know, I'm sorry I have to wrap up soon but it's just funny because I look at like Politico reporters. I think, I don't know how Politico does it, I don't know what they do but it seems like they must have some means of generating followers because their Politico reporters have hundreds of thousands of followers so I don't think of myself as a particularly prolific—

I: I still think it's a very decent number. I guess what I'm trying to get at is so you're based in DC, you used to do political reporting.

J: Yes.

I: So people follow you because they know these are the kinds of stories you cover.

J: Yeah.

I: At the same time this is Washington DC everyone is sort of involved in politics in one way or another why do you think is it that people follow you over others?

J: Yeah.

I: Like when they look at your profile what it is that appeals them?

J: I would agree with you that a lot of those people who follow me followed me because of my political reporting. I mean the Washington world of Twitter, Twitter's a funny thing because obviously there are different pieces. I mean some people only follow Twitter for recipes, for cooking. Some people follow Twitter for celebrity gossip. We live in that political corner of Twitter and when I tweet about politics overtly and when I covered politics if I would do things from the campaign trail that would always get a lot more interest than necessarily that I would do on domestic policy. So I think people don't tend

to unfollow you, I mean some do but they don't tend to unfollow you so I think a lot of people who are waiting for me to go back to tweeting more about politics. But I think I'm kind of conscious of that.

I: Yeah. Did you make a conscious decision to sort of create your profile in a certain way to attract followers? Was there sort of a strategic sort of thought behind sort of the way, for example the profile photo or the header photo that you use or the way you phrase your bio so it's more attractive to potential followers?

J: No. I mean it's funny because you know you have the background, you have your profile picture and then you have the background picture. Well my background picture is now like from the cover of my novel. And a lot of people do that.

I: But if you think about it—you previously talked about sort of the personality that you are supposed to have on Twitter well there's two really big visuals and a bio statement that can exploit for that sort of objective.

J: No, you're absolutely right and I've seen other people do it. Like I try, like we just say this is the Domestic Policy Editor at the [name of news organisation] . It's not very exciting. So other people do very funny snarky things there too. I guess I'd have to let my tweeting speak for itself because I don't do that. That would be almost too, to me that would almost be too transparent, right?

I: Yeah. Do you think there's also a problem involved in sort of people can see when you're trying too hard?

J: I think so.

I: Because there's sort of---

J: I actually do.

I: --a certain culture that has evolved around social media that has a certain code of how you do this.

J: I mean there are certain people who are really good at tweeting politics that are funny and clever and you love 'em and follow 'em because you love 'em.

I: Right.

J: And there are other people who try to be that and they fail. And you hate 'em.

I: Yeah.

J: You know, it's actually—I don't want to be like the pour me coffee guy or whatever because I feel like I can't live up to that and if I tried I would just probably fall on my face. So—or Tweet of God or things like that. I'm amazed that these people can consistently be clever like that. Because if you fail you look really bad.

I: Yeah, right because there's kind of being like that that comes from expectation of maintaining that sort of voice.

J: Exactly. It's like being a being comic. People say comedy is hard because being a bad comic is really obvious. If it's not funny it makes you feel like oh, my God, terrible.

I: That's right, okay. So to wrap up my final question will be if you were to summarize in a couple of sentences given the whole social media sort of hype that has been going on: what is it like to be a journalist in 2015?

J: I mean social media makes everything urgent. And it's hard. It makes our lives harder. And there's no luxury, there's no luxury. Yesterday when we got word that there

was going to be this budget deal that they struck last night I immediately went to Twitter to see what was on there and I said, and the reporter that was going to be writing it, [name], he was taking the Metro up from this office to Capitol Hill and I said, “I will bet you that this is on Twitter before he gets to his computer there.” And it was. And it makes—social media has sped everything up. And in some ways that’s helpful as a consumer of news but it makes our lives as reporters of the news or editors of the news that much more difficult. So we are on, now it’s put us on a treadmill. We used to think that TV, the beginning of the 24 hour cable channel, news channel was bad for TV. I mean social media’s even faster. I mean it’s so fast and that’s—but that’s just the life we live in.

I: Yeah, yeah, so finally where is this going?

J: You know I think that people keep declaring the death of Twitter and it never dies. So I guess it will keep going for the foreseeable future. Something will come and supplant it. I just don’t know—if I knew then I would be a very rich man, right?

I: Probably.

J: I don’t know what’s going to be the next thing. I mean I remember when Twitter first came I thought it was ridiculous. I thought this is—what is the point of this. Although I was a fairly early adopter of it I still didn’t understand it. And now it’s become this absolute necessity in my life which I would have—

I: It’s almost like a career asset for journalists, isn’t it? It’s part of your job. If you are not on Twitter you’re sort of missing on part of the picture of what’s happening?

J: Oh, absolutely.

[End of recording]

Appendix 7: Codebook – Twitter profile analysis

The units of analysis in this codebook are the Twitter profile pages of political journalists who work for newspapers and cable news channels across the United States. The Twitter timeline is to be excluded from analysis. It will be examined by a separate codebook (see document *Codebook – Tweet analysis*).

This codebook contains four categories: (1) ID and general account owner details, (2) profile details and history, (3) profile biography and (4) visual elements. Each category is composed of individual variables to be coded as defined in the following.

ID and general account owner details

1. Sample ID (id)
[___] Attribute an ID number to each coded profile.
Variable Description:
Unique identification number consecutively numbered from 001 to 120.
2. Type of medium (medium)
1 = broadsheet
2 = broadcast
Variable description:
Please record the type of medium the journalist primarily works for.
3. ID of news organisation (id_org)
[___] Attribute an ID number to each news organisation included in the study.
Variable Description:
Unique identification number consecutively numbered from 01 to 28.
4. Gender (gender)
1 = male
2 = female
Variable description:
Please record the account owner's gender.
5. Age (age)
1 = 25-34 years
2 = 35-44 years
3 = 45-54 years
4 = 55-64 years
Variable description:
Please classify the account owner's age.
6. Editorial responsibility (responsibility)
1 = editorial staff
2 = editorial leadership
Variable description:

Please record the which role the journalist has within his news organisation.

Profile details and history

7. Real name on Twitter (name_real)
0 = no
1 = yes
Variable description:
Please record whether the journalist uses his/her real name on the Twitter profile.
8. Verified account (verified)
0 = no
1 = yes
Variable description:
Please record whether the journalist's Twitter profile is a verified account. When an account is verified, a blue badge with a white check mark appears next to the journalist's name. Twitter currently uses account verification to establish the authenticity of identities of key individuals and brands on the platform.
9. Date joined Twitter (joined)
[___] Record the date when the journalist joined Twitter.
Variable description:
Please record the year during which the journalist created his/her Twitter profile.
This information is listed below the account owner's bio.
10. Organisational branding in Twitter handle (handle_org)
0 = no
1 = yes
Variable description:
Please record whether the journalists' Twitter handle includes an acronym or other reference to the news organisation the journalist primarily works for.
11. Location listed (loc_listed)
0 = no
1 = yes
Variable description:
Please record whether the journalist lists his/her location. This information can be found right below the account owner's bio.
12. Website listed (url_listed)
0 = none listed
1 = yes
Variable description:
Please record whether the journalist lists a website below his bio.
13. Nature of website (url_nature)
0 = none listed
1 = organisational website
2 = professional website

3 = personal website

98 = other/unclear

Variable description:

Please indicate the nature of the website to which the URL links:

- Code 0 (none listed) applies when the profile does not feature a URL.
- Code 1 (organisational) refers to the news organisation's site for which the journalist primarily works, such as cnn.com/politics.
- Code 2 (professional) refers to a website that is not the primary employer's website, but contains news, journalistic content or showcases the journalist's professional skills or experience (e.g. his/her LinkedIn profile, Tumblr page, etc.).
- Code 3 (personal) refers to a website that is not related to news or journalism, but contains content from the journalist's personal/private life.
- Code 98 (other/unclear) is to be used when Twitter's dedicated URL field links to a website other than those coded as 1, 2 or 3, or if the nature of the website is unclear.

14. Total number of all-time tweets at time of data collection (tweets)

[___] Record the total number of tweets.

Variable description:

Please record how many tweets the journalist has published since joining the platform. The recording format should always reflect the full number, i.e. 12.5K should be recorded as 12,500. This information can be found below the header photo and above the Twitter timeline.

15. Total number of media at time of data collection (media)

[___] Record the all-time number of photos/videos shared

Variable description:

Please record how many photos and videos the journalist has shared at the time of data collection. This information can be found either below the header photo and above the Twitter timeline.

16. Total number of profiles followed at time of data collection (following)

[___] Record the number of profiles followed.

Variable description:

Please record how many Twitter profiles the journalist is following. The recording format should always reflect the full number, i.e. 10.2K should be recorded as 10,200. This information can be found below the header photo and above the Twitter timeline.

17. Total number of followers at time of data collection (followers)

[___] Record the number of followers.

Variable description:

Please record how many Twitter users are currently following the journalist. This information can be found below the header photo and above the Twitter timeline.

18. Total number of likes at time of data collection (likes)

[___] Record the number of favorited tweets.

Variable description:

Please record how many tweets the journalist has favorited during his Twitter lifetime. This information can be found below the header photo and above the Twitter timeline.

Profile biography

19. Mode of narration: 1st person perspective (narration)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the journalist uses the 1st person mode of narration in the Twitter bio. The 1st person perspective is indicated by personal pronouns such as “I”, “me”, “my”, “mine”, etc.

20. Professional role (role_prof)

0 = no

1 = yes, it states journalistic expertise/specialisation

2 = yes, but only generic description as journalist

Variable description:

Please record whether the journalist states his professional role within the news organisation:

- Code 0 applies when there is no mention of the journalist’s professional role in the Twitter bio.
- Code 1 applies when the journalist refers to his/her professional role in such a way, that it conveys his/her journalistic expertise. This could either be a journalists’ exact job title (e.g. White House Correspondent) or specify his/her specialization (e.g. “I cover State House politics”). Abbreviations (e.g. “pol” for political, “nat” for national) are common due to Twitter’s character limitations.
- Code 2 applies when the journalist refers to his/her professional role in such a way, that it generically identifies him/her as a journalist without specifying a particular expertise or specialization within the profession.

21. Primary, current employer (emp_prim)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the journalist explicitly names his current, primary employer in the bio.

22. Employment with another news organisation (emp_news)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the journalist refers to employments with other news organisations, in addition to his/her primary employer. This variable only refers to other journalistic work, and does not refer to entrepreneurial work, or a different career strand altogether.

23. Other form(s) of employment (emp_other)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the journalist refers to other forms of employment in his/her Twitter bio, past or present, in addition to his work for one or more news organisation(s). This variable only refers to entrepreneurial work, or a different career strand altogether, such as “author of xyz book” or “professor of public policy”.

24. Education (edu)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the journalist states in his bio where he/she went to school or university.

25. Home (home)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the journalist states in his/her bio where he/she is from originally or currently lives. This could either be a city (e.g. Minneapolis), state (e.g. Minnesota) or region (e.g. the Midwest).

26. Family related to journalist’s work (fam_rel)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record if the journalist mentions any family in his bio and the relationship this has to his work. Family is understood as any one or a combination of the following: parents, siblings and other relatives, partner, husband/wife, child(ren), or pets:

- Code 0 refers to no family mention at all or a mention that is unrelated to the journalist’s work.
- Code 1 refers to an explicit mention of family related to the journalists’ work, such as a spouse who also works as a journalist or is a known public figure for other reasons. The family member may be introduced with their job title, employer info or even appear with an @mention.

27. Family unrelated to journalist’s work (fam_unrel)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record if the journalist mentions any family in his bio and the relationship this has to his work. Family is understood as defined for variable 26:

- Code 0 refers to no family mentioned at all.
- Code 1 refers to a mention of his/her family, but without any explicit relation to his/her job as a journalist.

28. Interests and hobbies (hobby)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the journalist mentions any interests or hobbies in his/her profile biography. An interest or hobby could refer to sports, food, music, art, travelling, etc. or anything that the journalist enjoys outside of or in addition to his/her professional context.

29. URL to external website: organisational URL (url_org)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the journalist includes a URL in his bio and its destination. This does not refer to the dedicated Twitter URL field coded for with variable 12 (url_listed) and 13 (url_nature):

- Code 0 applies when there is no organisational URL included in the bio.
- Code 1 refers to a URL that links to the news organisation's website. A journalist may work for more than one official news outlet at the same time and use the bio text to link to one or more of his/her other employers or content hosted on a news organisation's website.

30. URL to external website: professional URL (url_prof)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the journalist includes a URL in his bio and its destination. This does not refer to the dedicated Twitter URL field coded for with variable 12 (url_listed) and 13 (url_nature):

- Code 0 applies when there is no professional URL included in the bio.
- Code 1 refers to a URL that links to journalistic content published independently of the journalist's employer(s), i.e. not on the homepage of an official news organisation. For example, this could include freelance work or reports, as well as CVs or journalistic portfolios published on professional websites such as blogs, a Tumblr page, LinkedIn, etc.

31. URL to external website: personal URL (url_pers)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the journalist includes a URL in his bio and its destination. This does not refer to the dedicated Twitter URL field coded for with variable 12 (url_listed) and 13 (url_nature):

- Code 0 applies when there is no personal URL included in the bio.
- Code 1 refers to a URL that links to a personal website that the journalist may use to collect and share personal or private creative projects, hobbies, etc. A personal website is not related to any news or journalistic content.

32. Crosslink to another Twitter profile (crosslink)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please indicate whether the journalist includes a crosslink to another Twitter profile in his bio. Crosslinks to another page within the Twitter platform are indicated by an @mention or a hashtag (#), e.g. “I work for the @nytimes”, “fan of @Giants”, or “I cover national #news.”

33. Contact details listed (contact)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the journalist lists any contact information in his/her bio:

- Code 0 applies when the journalist lists no contact info.
- Code 1 refers to an email address, a phone number or an extension listed in the journalist’s bio.

34. Asking for tips (contact_tips)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the journalist lists any contact information and specifically asks followers to contact him/her:

- Code 0 applies when the journalist does not ask for tips, story ideas, etc.
- Code 1 applies when the journalist lists any contact information and actively asks for tips/scoops/stories, etc. to be shared with him/her.

35. Disclaimers (disclaimer)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the journalist includes any disclaimers (“All tweets personal,” “retweets ≠ endorsement,” etc.) in his bio.

Visual elements

36. Type of visual used as profile photo (visual_p)

0 = no visual

1 = image/illustration

2 = photograph

Variable description:

Please record what type of visual the journalist uses as his profile photo.

- Code 0 applies when there is no profile photo
- Code 1 applies to an image or an illustration, such as a drawing, sketch or painting, etc.
- Code 2 refers to an actual photograph.

37. Type of visual used as header photo (visual_h)
 0 = no visual
 1 = image/illustration
 2 = photograph
 Variable description:
 Please record what type of visual the journalist uses as his header photo.
- Code 0 applies when there is no profile photo
 - Code 1 applies to an image or an illustration, such as a drawing, sketch or painting, etc.
 - Code 2 refers to an actual photograph.
38. Journalist identifiable in profile photo (jour_p)
 0 = no
 1 = yes
 Variable description:
 Please indicate whether the journalist is depicted in the profile photo, and if so, whether he/she can be identified.
39. Journalist identifiable in header photo (jour_h)
 0 = no
 1 = yes
 Variable description:
 Please indicate whether the journalist is depicted in the header photo, and if so, whether he/she can be identified.
40. Organisational branding in profile photo (orgbrand_p)
 0 = no
 1 = yes
 Variable description:
 Please record whether the profile photo contains an employer branded (i.e. organisational) element, such as a badge or button with a logo, or text elements that represent for which news outlet the journalist primarily works.
41. Organisational branding in header photo (orgbrand_h)
 0 = no
 1 = yes
 Variable description:
 Please record whether the header photo contains an employer branded (i.e. organisational) element, such as a badge or button with a logo, or text elements that represent for which news outlet the journalist primarily works.
42. Setting in profile photo (setting_p)
 0 = no visual
 1 = organisational setting
 2 = professional setting
 3 = personal setting
 98 = other/unclear
 Variable description:
 Please indicate the setting of the profile photo. Setting is understood as the context, location/environment and circumstances depicted in the photo:
- Code 0 applies when the profile does not feature a profile photo/image.

- Code 1 refers to a setting that depicts the journalist's organisational context, e.g. a production/news studio, a work space within a news organisation, or a photo of a newspaper's front page that indicate the journalist's employment relationship with an official news outlet.
- Code 2 applies to a setting that refers to the journalist's professional context. For example, the journalist could be "on the job" or "in action" while interviewing a witness. The professional setting highlights the journalist's occupational role independent of news organisation he/she works for.
- Code 3 refers to a setting of a personal nature, e.g. a journalists' home or family context, a leisure activity or vacation setting, etc.
- Code 98 refers to any other settings that can neither be identified as professional nor as organisational or personal, e.g. skylines, landscapes, etc.

43. Setting in header photo (setting_h)

- 0 = no visual
- 1 = organisational setting
- 2 = professional setting
- 3 = personal setting
- 98 = other/unclear

Variable description:

Please indicate the setting of the header photo. Setting is understood as the context, location/environment and circumstances depicted in the photo.

- Code 0 applies when the profile does not feature a header photo/image.
- Code 1 refers to a setting that depicts the journalist's organisational context, e.g. a production/news studio, a work space within a news organisation, or a photo of a newspaper's front page that indicate the journalist's employment relationship with an official news outlet.
- Code 2 applies to a setting that refers to the journalist's professional context. For example, the journalist could be "on the job" or "in action" while interviewing a witness. The professional setting highlights the journalist's occupational role independent of news organisation he/she works for.
- Code 3 refers to a setting of a personal nature, e.g. a journalists' home or family context, a leisure activity or vacation setting, etc.
- Code 98 refers to any other settings that can neither be identified as professional nor as organisational or personal, e.g. skylines, landscapes, etc.

44. Personal objects and individuals in profile photo (pers_p)

- 0 = no
- 1 = yes

Variable description:

Please indicate whether the profile photo contains any individuals or objects that represent or link to the journalist's personal life. For example, a journalist might be depicted with his family, is a sports fan with a mascot on his desk or a framed photograph of his family.

45. Personal objects and individuals in header photo (pers_h)

- 0 = no
- 1 = yes

Variable description:

Please indicate whether the header photo contains any individuals or objects that represent or link to the journalist's personal life. For example, a journalist might be depicted with his family, is a sports fan with a mascot on his desk or a framed photograph of his family.

46. Traditional media depicted in profile photo (tradm_p)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the profile picture depicts any traditional ("old") media, such as a type writer, telephone, television, newspapers, radio, books, magazines, etc.

47. Traditional media depicted in header photo (tradm_h)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the header picture depicts any traditional ("old") media, such as a type writer, telephone, television, newspapers, radio, books, magazines, etc.

48. New media depicted in profile photo (newm_p)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the profile picture shows any new media, such as a mobile or smart phone, computer, tablet, etc.

49. New media depicted in header photo (newm_h)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the header photo shows any new media, such as a mobile or smart phone, computer, tablet, etc.

50. Emotions in profile photo (emo_p)

0 = none

1 = low emotionality

2 = high emotionality

98 = other/unclear

Variable description:

Please record the degree to which the individual(s) in the profile photo convey(s) emotions. As subjective and physiological experiences, emotions match distinct facial expressions which can either be controlled or openly expressed.

- Code 0 applies if there no individuals are depicted in the photo, e.g. a landscape or an object.
- Code 1 (low emotionality) applies if the photo's subject is composed, e.g. the neutral but friendly face of a TV reporter.
- Code 2 (high emotionality) applies if the subject openly expresses emotion, e.g. eyes wide open in surprise, tears resulting of sadness, etc. Emotions are classified as the following six basic ones: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness and surprise. These can be supported by body language.

- Code 98 (other/unclear) applies if the profile photo depicts an individual, but the degree of emotionality cannot be assessed, e.g. when someone's face is turned away from the camera.

51. Emotions in header photo (emo_h)

0 = none

1 = low emotionality

2 = high emotionality

98 = other/unclear

Please record the degree to which the individual(s) in the header photo convey(s) emotions. As subjective and physiological experiences, emotions match distinct facial expressions which can either be controlled or openly expressed.

- Code 0 applies if there no individuals are depicted in the photo, e.g. a landscape or an object.
- Code 1 (low emotionality) applies if the photo's subject is composed, e.g. the neutral but friendly face of a TV reporter.
- Code 2 (high emotionality) applies if the subject openly expresses emotion, e.g. eyes wide open in surprise, tears resulting of sadness, etc. Emotions are classified as the following six basic ones: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness and surprise. These can be supported by body language.
- Code 98 (other/unclear) applies if the header photo depicts an individual, but the degree of emotionality cannot be assessed, e.g. when someone's face is turned away from the camera.

52. Political elements in profile photo (politics_p)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the profile photo contains any elements that represent or symbolise the political, e.g. a photo of the White House, a (national or state) flag, (historic and current) political leaders, political events, etc.

53. Political elements in header photo (politics_h)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the header photo contains any elements that represent or symbolise the political, e.g. a photo of the White House, a (national or state) flag, (historic and current) political leaders, political events, etc.

Appendix 8: Twitter profile analysis intercoder reliability

N variables 41
 N coders per variable 2
 Overall ICR 97.10%

Variable ID	Variable name	% Agreement	Scott's Pi	Cohen's Kappa	Krippendorff's Alpha	N Agreements	N Disagreements
7	name_real	100%	1	1	1	21	0
8	verified	100%	1	1	1	21	0
10	handle_org	100%	1	1	1	21	0
11	loc_listed	100%	1	1	1	21	0
12	url_listed	100%	1	1	1	21	0
13	url_nature	95.24%	0.782	0.784	0.788	20	1
19	narration	100%	1	1	1	21	0
20	role_prof	100%	1	1	1	21	0
21	emp_prim	100%	1	1	1	21	0
22	emp_news	100%	1	1	1	21	0
23	emp_other	100%	1	1	1	21	0
24	edu	95.24%	0.865	0.865	0.868	20	1
25	home	100%	1	1	1	21	0
26	family_rel	100%	1	1	1	21	0
27	family_unrel	100%	1	1	1	21	0
28	hobby	90.48%	0.824	0.825	0.828	19	2
29	url_org	100%	1	1	1	21	0
30	url_prof	100%	1	1	1	21	0
31	url_pers	100%	1	1	1	21	0
32	crosslink	95.24%	0.903	0.903	0.905	20	1
33	contact	100%	1	1	1	21	0
34	contact_tips	100%	1	1	1	21	0
35	disclaimers	100%	1	1	1	21	0
36	visual_p	90.48%	0.462	0.462	0.474	19	2
37	visual_h	90.48%	0.826	0.828	0.831	19	2
38	jour_p	100%	1	1	1	21	0
39	jour_h	100%	1	1	1	21	0
40	orgbrand_p	100%	1	1	1	21	0
41	orgbrand_h	95.24%	0.780	0.781	0.785	20	1
42	setting_p	85.71%	0.692	0.697	0.699	18	3
43	setting_h	95.24%	0.923	0.923	0.925	20	1
44	pers_p	90.48%	0.625	0.632	0.634	19	2
45	pers_h	100%	1	1	1	21	0

46	tradm_p	100%	1	1	1	21	0
47	tradm_h	100%	1	1	1	21	0
48	newm_p	100%	1	1	1	21	0
49	newm_h	100%	1	1	1	21	0
50	emo_p	80.95%	0.432	0.440	0.446	17	4
51	emo_h	80.95%	0.425	0.455	0.438	17	4
52	politics_p	100%	1	1	1	21	0
53	politics_h	95.24%	0.883	0.883	0.886	20	1

Appendix 9: Codebook – Tweet analysis

The units of analysis in this codebook are the tweets on the Twitter timelines of political journalists who work for newspapers and cable news channels across the United States. The Twitter profile page is to be excluded from analysis, as it will be examined by a separate codebook (see document *Codebook – Twitter profile analysis*).

This codebook contains six categories: (1) ID and general account owner details, (2) metadata, (3) tweet content, (4) platform interactions, (5) embedded media, and (6) hashtags. Each category is composed of individual variables to be coded as defined in the following.

ID and general account owner details

1. Sample ID (id)
☐ Attribute an ID number to each coded profile.
Variable Description:
Unique identification number consecutively numbered from 001 to 120.
2. Type of medium (medium)
1 = broadsheet
2 = broadcast
Variable description:
Please record the type of medium the journalist primarily works for.
3. ID of news organisation (id_org)
☐ Attribute an ID number to each news organisation included in the study.
Variable Description:
Unique identification number consecutively numbered from 01 to 28.
4. Gender (gender)
1 = male
2 = female

Variable description:
Please record the account owner's gender.

5. Age (age)
1 = 25-34 years
2 = 35-44 years
3 = 45-54 years
4 = 55-64 years

Variable description:
Please classify the account owner's age.

6. Editorial responsibility (responsibility)
1 = editorial staff
2 = editorial leadership

Variable description:
Please record the which role the journalist has within his news organisation.

7. Tweet ID (id_tweet)
[___] Attribute an ID number to each coded tweet.

Variable Description:
Unique identification number consecutively numbered from 1 to 2,400.

Metadata

8. Sampling period of tweet (date)
1 = first sampling period (15 – 19 September 2014)
2 = second sampling period (3 – 7 November 2014)

Variable description:
Please record during which sampling period the tweet was collected.

9. Tweet sent during traditional work hours (hours)
0 = no
1 = yes

Variable description:
Please record whether the tweet was sent during the hours of a (traditional) work day (i.e. between 8am and 6pm). Code 0 applies when a tweet was sent before 8am and after 6pm. Bear in mind that you will have to adjust for different time zones across the United States.

10. Number of Retweets (retweets)
[___] Please record how often the tweet was retweeted.

11. Number of likes (likes)
[___] Please record how often the tweet was liked.

Tweet content

12. Tweet contains hard news subject (news_hard)
0 = no
1 = yes
Variable description:
Please whether the tweet contains a hard news subject, e.g. elections, Congress, legislation, immigration, etc. This is to be determined by looking at all elements of tweet, except the hashtags which will be coded separately.
13. Tweet contains soft news subject (news_soft)
0 = no
1 = yes
Variable description:
Please whether the tweet contains a soft news subject, e.g. entertainment and gossip, music, arts and culture, sports, lifestyle, etc. This is to be determined by looking at all elements of tweet, except the hashtags which will be coded separately.
14. Tweet contains a personal subject (subject_pers)
0 = no
1 = yes
Variable description:
Please whether the tweet contains a soft news subject, e.g. family, friends, hobbies and interests, etc. This is to be determined by looking at all elements of tweet, except the hashtags which will be coded separately.
15. Tweet contains breaking news (breaking)
0 = no
1 = yes
Variable description:
Please record whether the tweet contains breaking news content. This can be indicated by an introduction, (e.g. “Breaking: ...”) or a hashtag (e.g. #breaking, #BreakingNews).
16. Mode of narration: 1st person perspective (narration)
0 = no
1 = yes
Variable description:
Please record whether the journalist uses the 1st person mode of narration in the Twitter bio. The 1st person perspective is indicated by personal pronouns such as “I”, “me”, “my”, “mine”, etc.
17. Opinion statement (opinion)
0 = no
1 = yes
Variable description:
Please indicate whether the tweet contains an opinion statement, i.e. a judgment or viewpoint. This can be indicated by distinct verbs (think, dis/agree, believe, etc.) or adjectives (good/bad, desirable, etc.), but also by providing suggestions/advice for

action (e.g. “the representative should consult his constituents”) or criticism (e.g. “if the mayor had asked the committee, she would have gotten the advice she needed”).

18. Call to action (action)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the tweet contains a call to action. This is indicated by usage of the imperative form, e.g. “read this article”, “click on the link below”, “check out my new story,” etc.

19. Asking for further information or story details (asking)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the tweet is asking for (any or additional) footage, scoops, story ideas, or verifying information, etc.

20. Reflection on journalistic practice and production (meta)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the tweet contains any reflection on journalistic practice or production. This is indicated by comments or info regarding media practice, coverage and routines, e.g. commenting on the state of the news industry, offering clarification on a story or how a piece was written/produced, correcting info, announcing a piece, sharing updates of an ongoing investigation, etc.

Platform interactions

21. Tweet is a retweet or quoted tweet (retweet)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please indicate whether the tweet is a retweet or quoted tweet of someone else’s tweet.

22. Nature of account which is retweeted or quoted (retweet_a)

0 = no retweet

1 = news organization

2 = other news media

3 = colleague

4 = other journalist

5 = politician, political staffer or government

98 = other/unclear

Variable Description:

Please indicate the nature of the account which is retweeted or quoted. This might require looking up the respective account owner on Twitter or further online

research. If the account owner cannot be coded as either 1-5, the code 98 should be assigned.

23. Number of @mentions in the tweet (mention)
[___] Please record the number of @mentions and @replies present in the tweet.
24. The employing news organisation's account is mentioned (mention_org)
0 = no
1 = yes
Variable description:
Please indicate whether the employing news organisation's account is mentioned in the tweet. This might require looking up the respective account owner on Twitter or further online research.
25. Another news organisation's account is mentioned (mention_news)
0 = no
1 = yes
Variable description:
Please indicate whether another news organisation's account is mentioned in the tweet, i.e. a media outlet other than the journalist's employer. This might require looking up the respective account owner on Twitter or further online research.
26. A colleague's account is mentioned (mention_col)
0 = no
1 = yes
Variable description:
Please indicate whether a colleague's account is mentioned in the tweet, i.e. the account of an individual who is employed by the same news organisation. This might require looking up the respective account owner on Twitter or further online research.
27. Another journalists' account is mentioned (mention_jour)
0 = no
1 = yes
Variable description:
Please indicate whether another journalist's account is mentioned in the tweet, i.e. the account of an individual who is employed by a different news outlet. This might require looking up the respective account owner on Twitter or further online research.
28. A politician's or other political account is mentioned (mention_pol)
0 = no
1 = yes
Variable description:
Please indicate whether a politician's account, or an account of another political nature (i.e. government, political institution or staffer, think tank, etc.) is mentioned in the tweet. This might require looking up the respective account owner on Twitter or further online research.

29. Another account is mentioned (mention_other)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please indicate whether the account which is mentioned in the tweet is not addressed by variables 24-28. This will be the case for either members of the general public or those accounts where the nature/identity of the account owner is undetermined. Again, this might require looking up the respective account owner on Twitter or further online research.

Embedded media

30. Link included in tweet (url)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the tweet includes a link.

31. URL links to the news organisation's website (url_org)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the tweet links to content on the website of the journalist's employer. Determining the link destination requires clicking on it and leaving the Twitter website.

32. URL links to other news content (url_news)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the tweet links to content on another news organisation's website. Determining the link destination requires clicking on it and leaving the Twitter website.

33. URL links to political content (url_pol)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the tweet links to political content on an official website (e.g. government, politician, campaign, think tank, or other official entity). Determining the link destination requires clicking on it and leaving the Twitter website.

34. URL links to other content (url_other)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record if the tweet includes a link to any other content not address by variables 31-33. Determining the link destination requires clicking on it and leaving the Twitter website.

35. Visual uploaded alongside tweet (visual)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether there is a visual uploaded and posted alongside the tweet.

Thumbnail photos displayed as part of embedded links should not be considered as visuals, as these are a platform feature rather than deliberately uploaded photos.

36. Type of visual (v_nature)

0 = no visual

1 = image/illustration/meme

2 = photograph

3 = video

98 = other/unclear

Variable description:

Please indicate the type of visual uploaded and posted alongside the tweet.

37. Journalist depicted in visual (v_jour)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please indicate whether the journalist is both shown and identifiable in the visual.

38. Organisational branding or reference in visual (v_orgbrand)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please indicate whether the visual includes a reference to the journalists' employing news organisation or if it includes an element of organisational branding (e.g. logo, text element, etc.).

39. Political element in visual (v_pol)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please record whether the visual contains any elements that represent or symbolise the political, e.g. a photo of the White House, a (national or state) flag, (historic and current) political leaders, political events, etc.

40. Personal elements in visual (v_pers)

0 = no

1 = yes

Variable description:

Please indicate whether the visual contains any individuals or objects that represent or link to the journalist's personal life. For example, a journalist might be depicted with his family, is a sports fan with a mascot on his desk or a framed photograph of his family.

Hashtags

41. Number of hashtags included in tweet (hashtags)
[___] Please record the number of hashtags present in the tweet.
42. Organisational hashtag (hashtag_org)
0 = no
1 = yes
Variable Description:
Please record whether the hashtag refers to the journalists' employing news organisation, e.g. #NYTimes, #CNN, etc.
43. Professional hashtag (hashtag_prof)
0 = no
1 = yes
Variable Description:
Please record whether the hashtag refers to the journalists' profession or his occupational context, e.g. #news, #journalism, etc.
44. Political or event-based hashtag (hashtag_pol)
0 = no
1 = yes
Variable Description:
Please record whether the hashtag refers to politics, political actors, or specific news events relevant to the genre, e.g. #politics, #MidtermElections, #POTUSspeech, etc.
45. Personal hashtag (hashtag_pers)
0 = no
1 = yes
Variable Description:
Please record whether the hashtag refers to a personal subject, such as hobbies, leisure time activities, or family, e.g. #vacation, #Weekends, #, #LoveMyKids, #NFL, etc.
46. Other hashtag (hashtag_other)
0 = no
1 = yes
Variable Description:
Please use this variable to record a hashtag which is not clearly addressed by variables 42-45.

Appendix 10: Tweet analysis intercoder reliability

N variables 31
 N coders per variable 2
 Overall ICR 95.90%

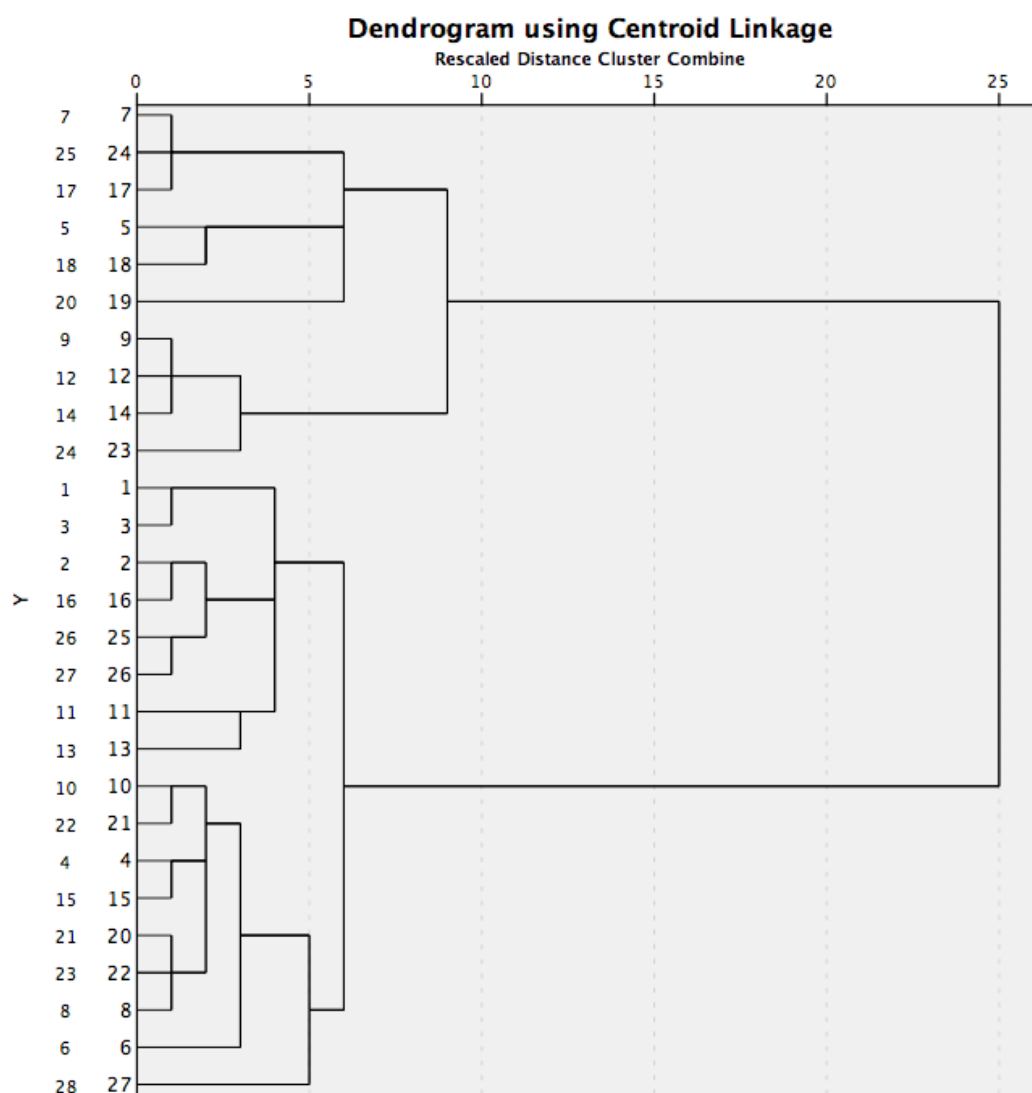
Variable ID	Variable name	% Agreement	Scott's Pi	Cohen's Kappa	Krippendorff's Alpha	N Agreements	N Disagreements
9	hours	100%	1	1	1	240	0
12	news_hard	80.80%	0.615	0.621	0.616	194	46
13	news_soft	80.40%	0.555	0.555	0.556	193	47
14	subject_pers	93.30%	0.165	0.183	0.167	224	16
15	breaking	98.30%	0.325	0.326	0.326	236	4
16	narration	95.80%	0.81	0.81	0.81	230	10
17	opinion	80.80%	0.489	0.494	0.49	194	46
18	action	94.20%	0.618	0.618	0.619	226	14
19	asking	99.20%	0.496	0.496	0.497	238	2
20	meta	97.10%	-0.015	-0.007	-0.013	233	7
21	retweet	97.10%	0.936	0.936	0.937	233	7
22	retweet_a	97.50%	0.955	0.955	0.955	234	6
24	mention_org	98.30%	0.848	0.848	0.849	236	4
25	mention_news	99.60%	0.945	0.945	0.945	239	1
26	mention_col	97.10%	0.879	0.879	0.879	233	7
27	mention_jour	98.80%	0.947	0.947	0.947	237	3
28	mention_pol	100%	1	1	1	240	0
29	mention_other	98.80%	0.898	0.898	0.898	237	3
31	url_org	97.90%	0.945	0.945	0.945	235	5
32	url_news	97.10%	0.893	0.893	0.893	233	7
33	url_pol	99.20%	0.896	0.896	0.896	238	2
34	other_url	98.80%	-0.006	0	-0.004	237	3
37	v_jour	97.90%	0.606	0.607	0.607	235	5
38	v_orgbrand	99.20%	-0.004	-0.004	-0.002	238	2
39	v_politics	96.30%	0.552	0.553	0.553	231	9
40	v_pers	99.60%	-0.002	0	0	239	1
42	hashtag_org	95%	0.64	0.642	0.641	228	12
43	hashtag_prof	98.30%	-0.008	-0.008	-0.006	236	4
44	hashtag_pol	95.40%	0.804	0.804	0.805	229	11
45	hashtag_pers	95.40%	0.13	0.147	0.132	229	11
46	hashtag_other	95.80%	0.621	0.623	0.622	230	10

Appendix I I: Statistical output

Cluster analysis: Agglomeration schedule for the six-cluster solution

Stage	Cluster combined		Coefficients	Stage cluster first appears		Next stage
	Cluster 1	Cluster2		Cluster 1	Cluster 2	
1	7	24	0.002	0	0	7
2	9	12	0.002	0	0	6
3	20	22	0.002	0	0	10
4	1	3	0.002	0	0	20
5	4	15	0.004	0	0	13
6	9	14	0.006	2	0	16
7	7	17	0.007	1	0	23
8	2	16	0.009	0	0	12
9	10	21	0.01	0	0	14
10	8	20	0.01	0	3	13
11	25	26	0.011	0	0	12
12	2	25	0.016	8	11	19
13	4	8	0.017	5	10	14
14	4	10	0.022	13	9	18
15	5	18	0.024	0	0	22
16	9	23	0.03	6	0	25
17	11	13	0.033	0	0	19
18	4	6	0.035	14	0	21
19	2	11	0.044	12	17	20
20	1	2	0.049	4	19	24
21	4	27	0.056	18	0	24
22	5	19	0.067	15	0	23
23	5	7	0.067	22	7	25
24	1	4	0.076	20	21	26
25	5	9	0.104	23	16	26
26	1	5	0.318	24	25	0

Cluster analysis: Dendrogram for the six-cluster solution

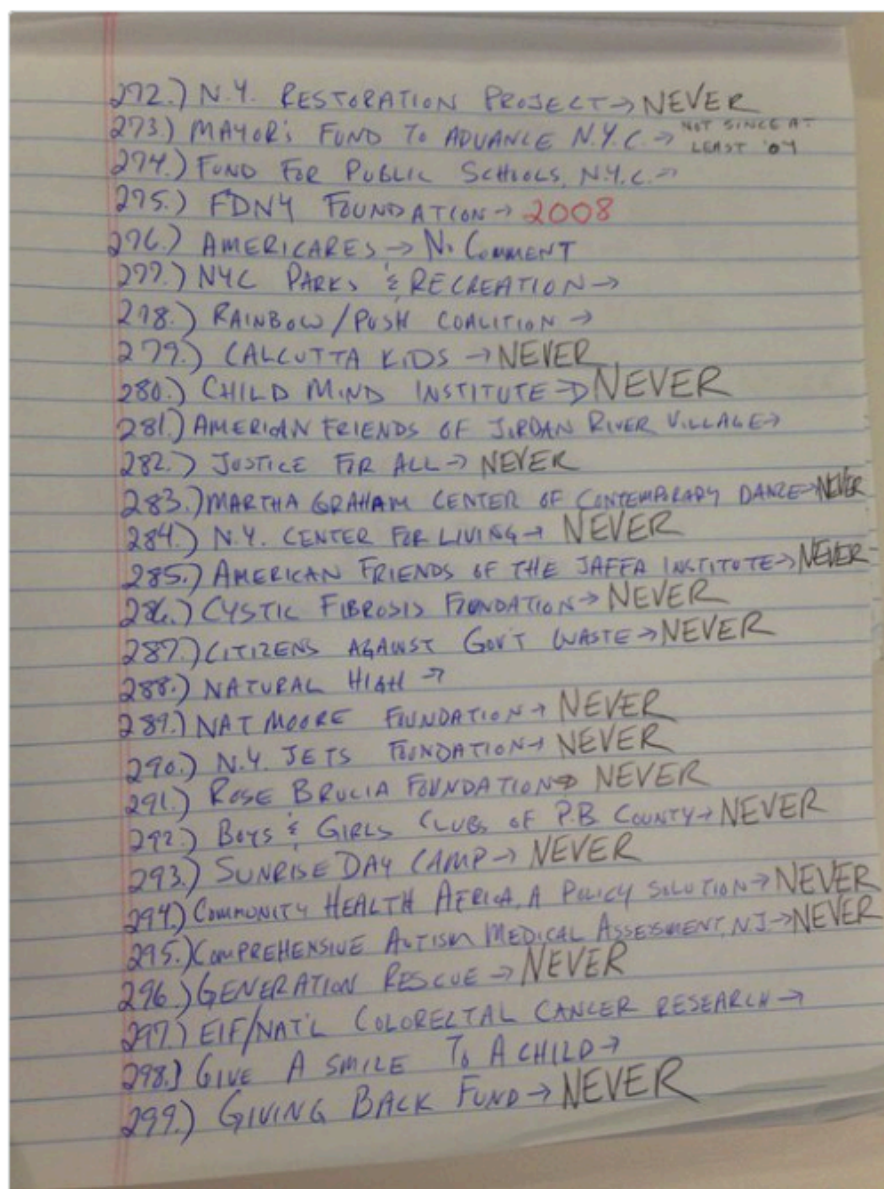


Cluster analysis: Variable means by clusters

			Generating traffic	Audience engagement	Organisational branding	Organisational elements
Means	Cluster 1	N=8	0.268	0.211	0.496	0.818
	Cluster 2	N=9	0.391	0.170	0.646	1.009
	Cluster 3	N=3	0.523	0.357	0.680	1.420
	Cluster 4	N=3	0.457	0.253	0.790	1.220
	Cluster 5	N=4	0.628	0.165	0.948	1.463

Base: Complete dataset of tweets ($N=2,400$) by news organisations ($N=28$)

Appendix 12: Screenshots of David Fahrenthold's Pulitzer Prize winning investigation of Donald Trump's claims of charitable giving



David Fahrenthold ✓
 @Fahrenthold

Follow

I've now called 313 charities in my search for proof
[@realDonaldTrump](#) gives his own money away. Not much luck lately

10:36 PM - 2 Sep 2016

↩ ↻ 4,099 ❤ 4,757

PERSONAL DONATIONS TO CHARITY BY DONALD TRUMP BETWEEN 1/1/09 AND 5/23/16

- 1.) * 2009, DONATION TO POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUE
OF NYC. AMOUNT: \$5,000 to \$9,999

* May be a book-keeping error.

LAST PERSONAL DONATION FROM DONALD TRUMP?

- 1) ACHILLES INTL FOUNDATION → NEVER
- 2) ALLU FOUNDATION OF FLA. - BROWARD → NEVER
- 3) AIDS SERVICE CENTER OF N.Y. → NEVER
- 4) ALLIANCE FOR LUPUS RESEARCH → NO COMMENT
- 5) AMERICAN AUSTRALIAN ASSOC. → NO COMMENT
- 6) AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY → NO COMMENT
- 7) AMERICAN CONSERVATIVE UNION FUND → NEVER
- 8) AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR AIDS RESEARCH (AMFAR) → NEVER
- 9) AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION → NO COMMENT
- 10) AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE → 2000
- 11) AMERICAN RED CROSS → NO COMMENT
- 12) ANDREW GLOVER YOUTH PROGRAM → NEVER
- 13) ANNIE K. FOUNDATION →
- 14) ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE → NEVER
- 15) ARNOLD PALMER MED. CTR. FOUND → NEVER
- 16) AUTISM SPEAKS → NEVER
- 17) BILLY GRAHAM EVANGELISTIC ASSOC. → NO COMMENT
- 18) BOY SCOUTS → NO COMMENT
- 19) CARING FOR MILITARY FAMILIES / ELIZ. DOLE FOUND → NEVER
- 20) CENTRAL PARK CONSERVANCY → NO COMMENT
- 21) CITIZENS UNITED FOR RESEARCH IN EPIDEMIOLOGY → NEVER
- 22) CITIZENS UNITED FOUND → NO COMMENT
- 23) CITY PARKS FOUNDATION → NO COMMENT
- 24) CITYHEALS - ON-WHEELS → NO COMMENT
- 25) COLUMBIA GRAMMAR & PREPARATORY → NO COMMENT
- 26) COMIC RELIEF → NEVER

55.) MARINE CORPS - LAW ENFORCEMENT FUND → 2016

- 56.) MARINE CORPS SCHOLARSHIP FUND → NEVER
57.) MARTIN B. GREENBERG FUND → NEVER
58.) METROPOLITAN GOLF ASSOC. → No COMMENT
59.) METROPOLITAN OPERA → No COMMENT
60.) ~~THE MET~~ MET. MUSEUM OF ART → No COMMENT
61.) MONTEFIORE FOUNDATION → NEVER
62.) MUSEUM OF JEWISH HERITAGE → 2003
63.) NATIONAL FOOTBALL FOUNDATION → NEVER
64.) NAT'L MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SOCIETY → NEVER
65.) NAT'L CATHOLIC MUSEUM → RECORDS UNAVAILABLE
66.) N.Y. LEGAL ASSISTANCE GROUP → NEVER
67.) N.Y. PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL → No COMMENT
68.) NICKLAUS CHILDREN'S HEALTH CARE FUND → NEVER
69.) N.Y. HISTORICAL SOCIETY → NEVER
70.) N.Y. MILITARY ACADEMY → No COMMENT
71.) N.Y. VIETNAM VETS. MEMORIAL FUND → 1995
72.) N.Y.C. POLICE FOUNDATION → No COMMENT
73.) OPERATION SMILE → No COMMENT
74.) PALM BEACH 200 → NEVER
75.) PARTNERSHIP FOR THE HOMELESS → RECORDS UNAVAILABLE
76.) POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUE OF NY → 2009
77.) PROTECT OUR WINTERS → NEVER
78.) ROBIN HOOD FOUNDATION → No COMMENT
79.) RONALD McDONALD HOUSE OF NY → NEVER
80.) RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART → NEVER
81.) SCHOOL OF AMERICAN BALLET → NEVER
82.) SKY SCRAPER MUSEUM → NEVER

381.) HEROES TO HEROES → NEVER

- 382.) WATERFRONT CENTER (D.C.) →
383.) ETA PI CHAPTER FOUNDATION →
384.) CASA NEW ORLEANS → NEVER
385.) N.Y. MARINE CORPS COUNCIL → RECORDS UNAVAILABLE
386.) ST. FRANCIS FOOD PANTRIES →
387.) PROJECT VERITAS → NEVER
388.) SHINE GLOBAL → NEVER
389.) AMERICANS FOR PROSPERITY FOUNDATION → NEVER
390.) AHRC NYC → NEVER
391.) BOYS TOWN OF ITALY →
392.) CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY → NEVER
393.) GRAHAM WINDHAM →
394.) LANCE ARMSTRONG (LIVESTRONG) FUND →
395.) PRINCESS GRACE FOUNDATION →
396.) ASPCA → No COMMENT
397.) CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF MANHATTAN → NEVER
398.) CHRIS EVERT CHARITIES →
399.) N.Y. SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL →
400.) GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM →
401.) NAACP → NEW YORK? NEVER
402.) UNITED NEGRO COLLEGE FUND →
403.) NAACP LEGAL DEFENSE FUND →
404.) NAACP N.Y.C. →
405.) THEATER DEVELOPMENT FUND →
406.)
407.)
408.)