



#InFlux

**Journalists' adoption of social media
and journalists' social roles**

Ulrika Hedman

**DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM,
MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION**



**UNIVERSITY OF
GOTHENBURG**

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DEPT OF JOURNALISM, MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

Doctoral Dissertation
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*To Anders: editor, fellow procrastinator, HR, IT and tech support, PA,
proof reader, research assistant, reviewer, supervisor, translator ... sort of*

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Abbreviations

AoIR	Association of Internet Research
API	Application programming interface
GDPR	EU General Data Protection Regulation
PUL	The Swedish Personal Data Act
SJS	Swedish Journalist Survey
SJP	Swedish Journalist Panel
SNS	Social network site(s)
SOU	Statens Offentliga Utredningar (Swedish Government Official Reports)
SUJ	Swedish Union of Journalists
UGC	User generated content
UGD	User generated distribution
URL	Uniform resource locator

List of articles

Article I: Hedman, Ulrika & Monika Djerf-Pierre (2013). The social journalist. Embracing the social media life or creating a new digital divide? *Digital Journalism* 1(3), pp. 368–385. doi:10.1080/21670811.2013.776804 *Contribution: 50 percent.*

Article II: Hedman, Ulrika (2015). J-tweeters. Pointing towards a new set of professional practices and norms in journalism. *Digital Journalism* 3(2), pp. 279–297. doi:10.1080/21670811.2014.897833

Article III: Hedman, Ulrika (2016). When journalists tweet. Disclosure, participatory, and personal transparency. *Social Media + Society* 2(1), pp. 1–13. doi:10.1177/2056305115624528

Article IV: Djerf-Pierre, Monika, Marina Ghersetti & Ulrika Hedman (2016). Appropriating social media. The changing uses of social media among journalists across time. *Digital Journalism* 4(7), pp. 849–860. doi:10.1080/21670811.2016.1152557 *Contribution: 33 percent.*

Article V: Hedman, Ulrika (2017). Making the most of Twitter. How technological affordances influence Swedish journalists' self-branding. *Journalism*, Epub ahead of print 5 October 2017, pp. 1–18. doi:10.1177/1464884917734054

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• • •

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• • •

This dissertation is about journalistic roles. From the perspective of academic roles, I would describe myself as a somewhat stubborn detective. I have spent some late nights thinking about the differences between journalists and researchers. There are many, of course, but also many similarities: the focus on research, on putting small pieces of information together to tell a story or

answer questions, the similarities in professional ethics, ideals, and values. Fortunately, over these years I have had lots of contacts with *journalists and others working in news media* – former colleagues and new acquaintances. Thank you all, for all the creative and interesting discussions on various aspects of social media in journalism, and for helping me grasp the differences between journalism then and journalism today.

One of these journalists is *Nicklas Malmberg*. When I asked Nicklas if I could use one of his fab sketches for the cover of this book, he not only immediately said “Yes!” but made me a new – original – illustration, and the portrait for the back cover. Thank you so much! (Fun fact: You also find Nicklas in the list of references as one of the authors of the Swedish Radio’s handbook on social media.) The cover illustration is based on one of those iconic Twitter pics (in the Swedish context, at least); from the press conference where the leader of the Swedish Christian Democrats announced his resignation. Thank you, *Göran Högglund*, for letting us use it.

• • •

During the work on this dissertation, I have spent a lot of time on different SNS. For research and research communication purposes, of course, and for general monitoring of trends and developments, but also for interesting topic discussions, for handing out reading suggestions to people in need of some research, for participating in a general public discussion, for debating – and criticizing – news media and journalism, and occasionally also for some procrastinating. I have come to know a motley crew of people I would never have met otherwise: *researchers* and *doctoral students* from all over, *geeks* and *code wizards*, *writers* and *musicians*, *knitters* and *boaters*, *politicians* and *communication strategists* ... well, all sorts of people, really, constantly chit-chatting about almost everything and keeping me company. Some of you have supported me with hands-on advice, scripts, and playlists, others have provided insights on a wide range of topics, yet others have let me pick your beautiful brains. The uttermost crazy ones among you have helped me keep sane. Thanks – and let’s stay in touch ;)

Uddevalla, June 2019

Ulrika

1 Journalists in flux¹

“In the modern Swedish media landscape, news reporters and editorial writers are gathering in a bromantic group hug, where it is close to impossible to tell which one is reporting the news, and which one is simply speaking his and her own thoughts and beliefs [...] Where old school journalism works through interviewing and thorough research, the fundamentals of neojournalism are personal branding, googling, [and] stating the obvious.”²

The anonymous blog *Bakjour*³ launched in 2011, about the same time as I started the work on this dissertation. When *Bakjour* describes the impact that social network sites (SNS)⁴ have on journalism, it is the negative consequences of journalists’ personal branding and the news media’s obvious click baiting through provocative statements that predominate the analysis. My own focus has been somewhat similar: when journalists start mixing professional and personal content in single flows of updates on SNS such as Facebook or Twitter, and using these platforms for research and contacts with their audiences – surely this must affect journalists and their practices in *some way*, mustn’t it?

In the general debate on social media in journalism (and in the research in this field) there is an often implicit assumption that social media and SNS will, or already have, fundamentally changed both journalism and journalists (cf.

¹ Cf. Spyridou et al. (2013), who argue that *journalism* is in a state of flux.

² <https://bakjour.tumblr.com/post/95552087479/poor-mans-buzzfeed-roadmap-of-swedish-media>

³ In English, *Bakjour* translates to “The Standby Duty”. *Bakjour* started with the purpose of parodying journalists, marketers, and Twitter celebrities, but soon evolved into media criticism in the form of satire, with a special focus on journalists’ behavior on Twitter (Bakjour, 2017, personal communication).

⁴ All SNS are social media, but all social media are not SNS. Many people (myself and other researchers included) do not always bother to make this distinction. SNS are “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (boyd & Ellison, 2008, p. 211), i.e. services like Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram. The more general term *social media* also includes services like Youtube, which allows for the creation and exchange of user-generated content, and practices like blogging (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Boczkowski, 2004). I can understand why: social media and SNS are different from journalistic media in several key aspects – the shared spaces, the co-creation and viral distribution of content, the ambience ... To put it simply: social media “follow[s] other ‘rules of the game’”⁵ (Klinger & Svensson, 2015, p. 1251). If anything, however, previous research shows that transforming journalism (or journalists) is not easy. The aim of this dissertation is to investigate journalists’ adoption of social media and SNS. I want to know not only how journalists use social media and SNS and how their uses change over time, but also how journalists perceive their professional practices and norms in relation to the use of social media and SNS, and how they perform “the journalist” on these new platforms – which parts do they emphasize and which parts do they play down?

I do this from the theoretical perspective of *journalistic roles*. While most people share a common understanding of what a journalist “is”, journalists have different views about the most important aspects of the roles of journalists, and they emphasize different parts – ideals, norms, values, and practices – in different contexts. Journalistic role performance can, in very simplified terms, be understood as a manifestation of the relationship between journalists’ ideals, norms, and values and their practices (Mellado, 2015; Mellado et al., 2017a)⁶. To be regarded as a journalist, you have to behave like one. On the one hand, journalists (as most of us) have a set of norms or normative assumptions of what journalism ideally should be – objective, neutral, credible, transparent, independent, immediate, ethical, and so on (e.g. Deuze, 2005). On the other hand, journalists have a set of practices and routines – for sourcing, verifying, reporting, interviewing, and so on (e.g. Tuchman, 1978). Journalistic role performance is how these perceived norms are enacted, both in journalists’ work and in the content (output) of their work; in this particular case, both in how journalists use social media and SNS and in the content of their updates and profiles.

There is an argument dating back to Meyrowitz (1985) that when technology changes, so do journalistic role performances. How do you behave like a journalist on a SNS like Twitter, where you not only share the platform with others (those who in other contexts are labeled the audiences) but where self-presentation is ambient and any sense of self is fluid (e.g. Rettberg, 2018)?

Let us return to the quotation from *Bakejour* at the very beginning of this chapter: from the perspective of journalistic roles, what *Bakejour* describes is a cultural

⁵ These “rules of the game” are often referred to as media logics, and I will return to these and to the *technological affordances* of social media that promotes certain types of uses (practices) and content in *Chapter 3*.

⁶ In this dissertation, journalistic role performance is defined as by Mellado, Hellmeuller, and Donsbach (2017a): “the manifestation of professional ideals in journalistic practice”, but with a notion that not only concrete newsroom decisions are at play here, but also more implicit collective professional considerations. Previous research show that the adoption of social media and SNS has led to at least some redefinition of journalistic roles (Hermida, 2013).

clash between the roles of *watchdogs* (“old school journalists”) and *celebrified marketers* (“neojournalists”) (e.g. Hanitzsch & Vos, 2018; cf. Olausson, 2018).

1.1 From stray blogs to personal brands

The first example of blogging in the context of Swedish news media and journalism is from 2004, when one of the political editors at the national daily *Svenska Dagbladet*, Pj Anders Linder, started a blog for opinion journalism and connected it to the newspaper’s website⁷. One year later, the tabloids *Aftonbladet* and *Expressen* followed with blogs, and soon news websites started to link to blogs that commented on a piece of news or an editorial (Hindersson, 2013). SNS such as Facebook and Myspace were implemented early as a means for audience dialogue and the co-creation of user-generated content (Hedman, 2009). Today, social media and SNS are used for much more, each use belonging to one of three categories; dialogue, research, and reach (distribution) (Gillinger & Sahlén, 2015; cf. Schori, 2016).

What we today regard as “standard” practices of journalism often started as initiatives from individual journalists, who saw opportunities to use social media and SNS as professional tools. One of the first Swedish journalists to use Twitter as a tool for journalism was *Kinga Sandén*, foreign editor at the regional daily *Sydsvenskan*. In 2009, she was awarded *The Swedish Grand Prize for Journalism as Innovator of the Year* for her way of using Twitter for sourcing during the 2009 national elections in Iran⁸. Three years later *Carina Bergfeldt* was awarded the prize for her innovative way of using SNS for live reporting – including various media formats, continuous analysis, reader comments and questions, etc. – when covering the trial against the 2011 Oslo/Utoya-terrorist for the tabloid *Aftonbladet*⁹. *Hanna Andersson*, a reporter in local news at *NT*, was one of the first to build a forum on Facebook for her local audiences, the people living in Valdemarsvik where she worked at the time, where she could not only share her texts but also engage her audiences in the newswork¹⁰.

Twitter soon became popular among Swedish journalists. In 2011, “journalist” was in fact the most common job title given by Swedes on Twitter¹¹. Swedish journalists also took to Twitter as part of an organizational strategy. “Our aim is that all our journalists are on Twitter, and use it as a journalistic tool”, *Cilla Benkö*, director general of *Swedish Radio*, the national public service radio, stated in the

⁷ <https://www.svd.se/kulturnoje/nyheter/15-ar-med-svdse-1995-2010>

⁸ <https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2009-11-26/sydsvenskan-vann-stora-journalistpriset>

⁹ <https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/gPpvga/carina-bergfeldt-vann-stora-journalistpriset>

¹⁰ <https://www.nt.se/nyheter/valdemarsvik/nu-sager-de-hejda-till-valdemarsviksredaktionen-12305834.aspx>

¹¹ <https://www.slideshare.net/Intellectacorporate/twittercensus11?nextslideshow=1>

company's first handbook on social media published in 2013 (Gillinger et al., 2013, p. 8). Other media organizations have had similar strategies, encouraging their employees to be active on various SNS (e.g. Aftonbladet, 2014).

For many journalists active on Twitter, it is hard to imagine what professional life would be like without it. "It would be much harder for me to report international news without Twitter," said *Carl Fridh Kleberg*, at the time an international news reporter with the tabloid *Expressen*, in a 2015 discussion that took place on Twitter¹². "I probably use Twitter mostly for research, that is topic-based lists, searches, finding sources, keeping up with what's on, discussing ideas, etc.," he continued. "I've spent more than 5 yrs and many hours/week on networks and lists," replied *Cecilia Djurberg*, then editor at *Swedish Radio*. The conversation emphasized the importance of Twitter as a tool for research and dialogue, but also as a tool for personal branding, and the importance of how to present oneself.

With journalists' personal use of SNS comes the blurring of all sorts of former boundaries. For many journalists, the question of how personal or private one can – or should – be on SNS is tricky. One of the most notorious examples of Swedish journalists on Twitter is *Niklas Svensson*, political reporter at the tabloid *Expressen*. In a magazine interview in 2012¹³, he describes his Twitter strategy as personal branding via a mix of personal and professional content: "In a near future, legacy media will be dependent on profiles – journalists with strong personal brands, celebrities in their own right," he said. On Twitter, but also on Facebook and Instagram, he has shared details about his job as a reporter and his search for interviews and hunt for news, mixed with links to his articles and television shows, pictures of his wife and children, updates from dinner parties, his views on this and that ... (Olausson, 2017; 2018). This explicit strategy has led to massive criticism from colleagues¹⁴, probably because he was one of the first Swedish journalists to fully implement it.¹⁵

Social media and SNS have, in many ways, reformed parts of journalism – as a beat and as a tool for journalists' daily tasks, but also for content distribution, reporting, audience dialogue, interaction, participation, transparency, networking,

¹² This discussion, in which I was one of the participants, was recorded as a Storify and made public as such. Storify is one example of a SNS that has now closed its service. The discussion "Ett samtal om Twitter i journalistiken (och i forskningen), transparens och varumärken" [A conversation on Twitter in journalism (and in research), transparency, and branding] can be downloaded (in Swedish only, pdf version published online 19 April, 2018) at <https://www.eftertankt.com/2018/04/storify-forsvinner-har-ar-mina-stories.html>

¹³ "Twittrar värst som twittrar trist" [literally "The one who tweets the worst is the one who tweets the most boring"] by *Agneta Kratz* in *Tidningen Vi*, August 2012, p. 22–24.

¹⁴ See for example (in Swedish) <https://www.aftonbladet.se/kultur/article21250689.ab>

¹⁵ In Sweden, *Niklas Svensson* is often described as "Mr. J-tweeter". Though as an individual journalist he is not the focus of any of the case studies that is included in this dissertation, I refer to him as an example, because during the years that are the focus of this dissertation, 2011–2018, most Swedes knew his name and SNS brand.

and organizational as well as personal branding. Over the last decade, journalists' professional debate about the pros and cons of social media has been lively (e.g. Witschge, 2012). Is it possible to share personal information on Twitter and still be regarded as credible in the eyes of the audiences? Is it possible to share private views on political issues and still be regarded as objective? Is it possible to build a personal brand on SNS and still be regarded as trustworthy?

This dissertation is about what follows from this; not only how journalists adopt social media and SNS, but also about how journalists' roles change, and what we can learn from this about journalists.

1.2 Times of change

From a wider perspective, however, I use the adoption of social media and SNS as a case through which to understand how journalists are affected by changes in the media industry.

With the emergence of social media, journalists' work conditions have changed. But not only because of social media. The adoption of social media in journalism is part of the process of digital transformation and technological development that parallel the consequences of the reshaping of the advertising markets and the economic implications of this for journalistic media – as (most) journalistic media are dependent on the advertising market for financing.

To understand this development, it is necessary to understand the reshaping of the advertising market. Ohlsson and Facht (2017) identify what they describe as five interdependent “game-changers” in the digitalization of the Nordic media market: new advertising platforms, new consumer behaviors, new advertising solutions, new advertiser behaviors, and new infrastructures for distributing advertising. Each of these brings new competition and new challenges to the business models of journalistic media companies. Today, neither audiences nor advertisers are dependent on journalistic media for news or advertising, which makes it difficult for journalistic media companies to capitalize on journalistic content and advertising. Furthermore, advertising has become much cheaper due to increased competition – and the audiences have a large variety of free (but not necessarily journalistic) content to choose from. As distribution is digital, it is data-driven rather than reach-driven, and this *datification* increases the demands for precise knowledge about not only the content, but also the individual members of the audiences who can be exposed to advertisements. As a result, even though it has been a positive development for the Swedish advertising market, the advertising

revenue of journalistic media companies has fallen¹⁶. The Swedish news media continue, however, to report a surplus:

“Recent years have been characterised by extensive programmes of savings in the Nordic newspaper markets – programmes that have involved cuts in the number of journalists and local newsrooms, more shared material, reduced publication frequencies and generally thinner paper editions.” (Ohlsson & Facht, 2017, p. 126)

For Swedish journalists, these extensive programs of savings have affected their work conditions: journalistic media employ fewer journalists (the number of members in the Swedish Union of Journalists dropped 12 percent from 2012 to 2017¹⁷), and each remaining journalist is expected to produce more content for several platforms (Nygren & Appelgren, 2015; Nygren & Nord, 2017). The journalistic media market as a whole has become significantly more competitive, both for media companies and for individual journalists (Waldenström et al., 2019; Ohlsson, 2017b).

One other consequence, this from the datafication of media, is that journalism has become an increasingly “more data-based, algorithmed, metrics-driven, or even automated practice” (Loosen, 2018, p. 3; cf. Carlson, 2018). The digital traces of audiences from when they visit a news site or use a mobile news app has become one of the most important assets of news media companies – the information is aggregated by the journalistic media companies and sold to advertisers as a tool to target audiences (Ohlsson, 2017a). If metrics were previously important mostly on an organizational level (as in reach, impact, etc.), datafication has made metrics also important on the level of the individual journalist, who is now constantly ranked and evaluated on the basis of her personal reach and impact (e.g. van Dijck & Poell, 2013)¹⁸. Datafication is also one of the main characteristics of many SNS platforms, where the activity metrics (as in the numbers of followers, likes, and forms of activity or engagement) of every user are displayed for everyone to see, and “increasingly accepted as legitimate standards to measure and rank people and ideas” (van Dijck & Poell, 2013, p. 7). In addition, the private

¹⁶ The total advertising investment in Swedish news media decreased from SEK 11.2 (2011) to 8.0 billion (2016), which equals a loss of revenue of 29 per cent (Ohlsson & Facht, 2017, p. 120; cf. Egge et al, 2017).

¹⁷ <https://www.journalisten.se/nyheter/fler-kvinnor-lamnar-journalistforbundet-och-yrket>

¹⁸ One can argue that research is also subjected to datafication in this sense, as more and more research draws on data (or big data) that is automatically generated and retrieved from for example SNS or digital systems, and as metrics on research (downloads of published papers, number of citations, etc.) is an increasingly important means to rank and evaluate researchers (cf. Schroeder, 2018).

companies running the various SNS are collecting automatically produced data related to the users themselves, on all a user's platforms (SNS, browsers, etc.) but also on all the user's technological media devices (such as smartphones or computers) (Couldry & Hepp, 2017), and thus competes with the journalistic media companies on the market of providing precise knowledge of the audiences for advertisers.

Today, journalists play an important part in their employer's strategies, not only in branding but also in publishing and distribution. Journalism is no longer distributed in a package with many pieces of content, such as a newspaper or a magazine, but as single, stand alone, pieces of content that are shared along networks of users on different platforms; *viral distribution*¹⁹. This is perhaps one of the most fundamental changes that social media and SNS has brought to journalism. As a consequence, journalists are expected to take part in discussions about the news on SNS, to use their personal accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and so on, for live reporting, and to help get their own material (articles etc.) distributed and shared on various SNS (Schori, 2016). For example, the Swedish startup *KIT* chose to distribute all content only via SNS, and to use data on audience behavior, distribution, and engagement to improve each reporter's storytelling²⁰. In the most extreme examples, like the news site *Nyheter24*, journalists are obliged to use their personal memberships of Facebook groups and on discussion forums to post links to their news site's content, preferably with provocative statements to ensure engagement in the form of comments, reactions, and shares, as part of an overall strategy for viral distribution²¹. In social media, journalists are not only producing journalism but also distributing it.

In these times of change, journalists' work conditions have certainly changed, and there are several issues, including the introduction of social media and SNS in journalism, that affect journalists in different ways.

¹⁹ The term *ambient news* is used to describe those pieces of journalistic content that are distributed on social media and SNS. This can be traced back to the early 2000s, when Hargreaves and Thomas (2002) described the modern media landscape where news was accessible on a range of platforms and services and through a range of technical devices, and concluded that "[n]ews is, in a word, ambient, like the air we breathe" (p. 44). From this, Hermida (2010b) described Twitter as an expression of ambient journalism "where citizens are producing small pieces of content that can be collectively considered as journalism" (p. 3), while Burns (2010) instead emphasized the "crafts, skills, acquisition, and the mental models of professional journalists" (p. 1) on SNS as characteristics of ambient journalism.

²⁰ <https://www.niemanlab.org/2017/06/the-swedish-startup-kit-is-rethinking-analytics-for-a-broader-view-of-what-makes-a-story-successful/>

²¹ <https://www.resume.se/nyheter/artiklar/2017/02/14/nyheter24-forsvarar-viralstrategin-ditt-jobb-ar-att-bli-last/>

1.3 About this dissertation

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate journalists' adoption of social media and SNS.

I use Sweden as a case because Sweden is often described as a “digital hotspot”, and also at the forefront of digital development in the newsrooms (Westlund, 2012; Ohlsson & Facht, 2017). The Swedish media market is increasingly competitive (Ohlsson, 2017b), and Sweden also has a highly individualistic work environment and horizontal organization structures (Holmberg & Åkerblom, 2006). Swedish journalists are not as restricted by organizational demands as many of their colleagues in other countries, and have the opportunity to test different approaches when incorporating almost any new technology in their professional and private routines, all in a very competitive setting. These circumstances should ideally highlight how journalists are affected by changes in the media industry.

I use Twitter as an example of SNS to answer questions about how journalists use a specific SNS and how that usage relates to perceived professional norms and practices, and also to answer the question of how journalists perform “the journalist” on a new platform. After its launch in 2007, Twitter soon became one of the most commonly used platforms among journalists (Djerf-Pierre, 2012; Hermida, 2014b), and data is easy to collect (Bruns & Stieglitz, 2012; Williams et al., 2013). The history of social media and SNS, however, shows that platforms and services can lose their attraction quite abruptly – and of course also close (e.g. boyd & Ellison, 2008).

This dissertation contributes to the field with early research on social media in journalism, a field that increases in scholarly importance. Its main contribution is empirical: it draws on surveys and content analysis from large-*N* representative samples of journalists in Sweden, and thus contributes with findings that can be generalized to a national population of journalists – representing all ages, all demographical backgrounds, all beats, and so on.

This dissertation also contributes with a thorough discussion and viable solutions regarding how to collect and optimize the use of available Twitter data, including a review of the ethical considerations that are necessary for this type of research.

This dissertation strengthens not only the field of research into social media in journalism, but also research into journalistic roles, as it helps us understand how journalists are also affected by other technological or media logical changes – in both the past and the future.

As a reader, one has to be aware of some limitations: over these last couple of years I have researched one aspect of social media in journalism. The main

focus has been on journalists' adoption of social media and SNS, including questions of frequency, different usages, and how journalists perform "the journalist" on these new platforms. I have not compared journalists to other groups or professions. I have not paid much attention to the normative debate on whether journalists should be active on social media and SNS at all, nor to the general debate on journalism that take place on various SNS.

1.4 Chapter overview

Finally, some short notes about this compilation thesis. It consists of five articles drawing from empirical material collected in 2011 and 2014, each representing parts of the overall research problem, and each with its own findings and conclusions. These separate articles have been presented at international conferences and are published in academic journals.

The five articles are supplemented with summary chapters, of which this is the first. After this introduction, *Chapter 2* gives an overview of previous research, and an insight into the specific Swedish context. *Chapter 3* is where I introduce the main theoretical concept that I use to understand and analyze social media in journalism – journalistic roles – together with the approaches of normalizing, the appropriation of technology, and the accommodation of social media logic. In *Chapter 4* I present the aim and the specific research questions of this study. *Chapter 5* is the methodological – and the longest – chapter. Here, I explain the study rationale and the mixed methods approach I have applied, with a special focus on how to find a representative sample of journalists on Twitter and how to make best use of data. In this chapter, I also discuss some ethical considerations regarding this type of research, when data is collected from SNS. As this is a compilation thesis, the included articles are summarized in *Chapter 6* (and included in full length as *Appendices I–V*). Finally, in *Chapter 7* the general arguments (findings) of the separate studies/articles are recapitulated, the research questions answered, some limitations discussed, and future research suggested. It also includes a discussion of how journalists are affected by changes in the media industry and the possible implications of all this for journalism.

2 An expanding field of research

The research into social media in journalism reflects the rapid development of social media and social network sites (e.g. Hermida, 2013; cf. boyd & Ellison, 2008) – there is an abundance of new (and abandoned) uses, practices, and views with which to analyze from a multitude of perspectives. Lomborg (2016) describes social media as moving targets, and the implications for researchers as:

“[R]esearchers seem to accept change, rather than continuity, as the ground rule when studying social media. This is evident in our choice of research topics and data sources, but also in our discourses on social media. [- -] [R]esearch contributes to creating this sense of change by being seduced by hyped services, available data and by leaving definitional tensions of social media unaddressed.”
(p. 7; 12)

In this chapter, a literature review of research into social media in journalism is presented. The literature is organized thematically rather than chronologically, and in a descriptive manner. The purpose of this review is not to present a complete overview of all aspects of social media and SNS in journalism, but to enhance the understanding of aspects relating to the focus of this dissertation: to investigate journalists’ adoption of social media and SNS. The chapter ends with a discussion that problematizes previous research.

2.1 Social media in journalism

There are several strands in the field of research into social media and SNS in journalism. In this literature review the focus is on research into journalists, supplemented with only a brief overview of the research into news organizations’ uses of social media and SNS.

2.1.1 Journalists' professional and personal uses

Blogs (and blogging) was probably the first social media to make an impact in journalism. It is impossible to tell which journalist was the first to set up a blog. The first known use of a blog on a news site is from 1998, when a web reporter at the *Charlotte Observer* used the blog format to report on hurricane Bonnie when it made landfall²². One of the first examples of research into blogs in journalism is Matheson (2004) with a case study on the pioneer blogging of the British *Guardian* and how journalists adapted to this new form of reporting.

A year later, Singer (2005) published a study that has become one of the most cited in research into social media in journalism²³. In her analysis, she shows that the new format or genre of blogs challenges old professional norms and practices among political journalists, but that journalists adapt blogging to fit their traditional norms and values rather than the other way around. Singer's study on j-bloggers²⁴ was agenda-setting for many of the studies to follow, not only in acknowledging that this new media format actually affects journalists' practices and norms, but also in using the approach of normalizing (see also *Chapter 3.2.1*) to understand how this took place.

Mapping uses and views

A large proportion of research has since mapped the uses of social media and SNS amongst journalists, as well as journalists' views related to social media, from blogging practices in the early 2000s, to an abundance of services – and an abundance of uses and views on them.

There are several examples of surveys targeting national non-probability samples of journalists (e.g. Gulyas, 2013; Heravi & Harrower, 2016; Weaver & Willnat, 2016; Bentivegna & Marchetti, 2017; Larsson & Ihlebæk, 2017), and surveys targeting strategic samples of journalists, such as journalists working at specific news organizations, with specific media formats, or specific beats (e.g. Dahlen Rogstad, 2014; Neuberger et al., 2014; Santana & Hopp, 2016). Others have interviewed smaller samples of journalists about their uses of, and views on, social media and SNS (e.g. Parmelee, 2013; Canter, 2015). This research makes it clear that since its launch in 2006, Twitter has become an important (at least as in share of users and frequency of use) SNS for journalists. It is used as a valued professional tool – for research (e.g. Broersma & Graham, 2012), sourcing and verification (e.g. Williams et al., 2010; Bossio & Bebawi, 2016; Heravi &

²² <https://web.archive.org/web/20060621142305/http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=52&aid=48413>

²³ At this point, there were only a few examples of literature in this field, and in her study Singer refers mainly to a recently published special edition of *Nieman Reports* (2003).

²⁴ In this study, Singer coined the term *j-bloggers*, i.e. blogging journalists. In analogue to this, journalists on Twitter are often referred to as *j-tweeters*.

Harrower, 2016), reporting (e.g. Vis, 2012), interacting with the audiences²⁵ (e.g. Holton et al., 2016), and so on.²⁶

This mapping also shows that when it comes to adopting social media and SNS, journalists show a range of strategies. Some are early adopters and keen to try everything new and make professional use of it, others are more reluctant, and, in some cases, skeptical. Organizational factors (like strategies and policies) seem to be important in this, as do demographic (age, gender) and personal factors. Journalists' adoption of social media is not an exception in the process of the diffusion of technology (see Rogers, 1962/1983).

It is difficult to generalize from this mapping, however, as the findings draw from non-representative samples. There is also an at least implicit focus on the journalists actually using these new platforms, leaving the non-users' end of the scale, so to speak, out of the findings.

Mapping content

Another large amount of research is based on content analysis of what journalists post on SNS. Much of this research is comparable to the content analysis of journalistic media (like newspapers or magazines) with the aim of getting a general understanding of the mix of content (e.g. Artwick, 2013; Doval, 2014) or an enhanced understanding of topics such as journalists' news valuations (e.g. Chu, 2012; Cleary et al., 2015)²⁷. Most of these examples draw on samples of journalists on Twitter. The most probable reason for this dominance of Twitter when it comes to content analysis – besides that Twitter has proven important for journalists – is that it is comparatively easy for researchers to collect data from Twitter (see *Chapter 5.3*).

The normalizing approach, introduced by Singer, predominates these content analyses, and show that some journalists keep their roles as gate-keepers (e.g. Tando & Vos 2016; cf. Bro & Wallberg, 2015) and agenda-setters (e.g. Russell et al., 2015) when tweeting, while others use Twitter to promote their own journalistic work, by sharing links to their articles or other pieces of content. Many also share content from a more personal perspective, mixing professional content and a large share of job talk with personal opinions and in some cases even private information (e.g. Holton & Lewis, 2011; Lasorsa, 2012; Lasorsa et al., 2012; Lawrence et al., 2013; Molyneux, 2014). Noguera-Vivo (2013) and Revers (2014)

²⁵ Surveys also show a growing expectation from audiences for journalists to actually interact on SNS (e.g. Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2018).

²⁶ All these new skills that are required to use SNS as professional tools also prove a challenge for curriculum design in journalism education (e.g. Bor, 2014).

²⁷ In addition to this, content analysis of newspaper articles shows the increasing practice of using SNS for sourcing (e.g. Armstrong & Gao, 2010a; Broersma & Graham, 2012), or as an alternative *vox pop* (e.g. Beckers & Harder, 2016).

analyze this from the perspective of transparency and a normative notion of transparency as a means to increase journalists' (and journalism's) credibility. Hayes, Singer, and Ceppos (2007) argue that social media and SNS "give[s] journalists an unprecedented opportunity to build credibility through a form of information transparency that has never before been feasible" (p. 271; cf. Robinson, 2006; Phillips, 2010).

Content analyses are also used to understand how journalists use SNS to engage with and strengthen their relationships with their audiences (e.g. Cozma & Chen, 2012; Molyneux & Mourão, 2019). Some of the more active journalists on Twitter have gained positions as nodes or hubs for their followers, providing a mix of news, background information, job talk, audience interaction, and personal details (e.g. Artwick, 2013; Hermida et al., 2014; Canter, 2015; Canter & Brookes, 2016; García de Torres & Hermida, 2017). In this, journalists are displaying what van der Haak, Parks, and Castells (2012) once predicted – that "every journalist becomes a node in a network that functions to collect, process, and distribute information" (p. 2927; cf. Burns, 2010; Hermida, 2010b).

Other researchers focus on what the posted content *per se* can tell about the journalists that posted it, from a notion that professional norms and values, ideals (like objectivity), and identity, manifest in the content of what they produce (cf. Bogaerts, 2011) – and thus, also in the content of what they post on Twitter (e.g. Mellado, 2015; Canter & Brookes, 2016) or by combining these content analyses with surveys (e.g. Lee et al., 2015).

Mapping networks

When it comes to network analysis, there are several options to show the relationships between journalists and their connections. One can analyze a journalists' follows and followers, the users with whom she interacts, or the connections between the users that share or comment on the journalists' posts.

In an analysis of how Australian journalists interact on Twitter, who they reply to, engage in conversations with, or retweet, Hanusch and Nölleke (2019) show that journalists seem to prefer to interact within "bubbles which consist of more or less similar journalists" (same gender, working in the same organization, or in the same location) and that this is "further evidence for a normalization of Twitter" (p. 18).

Over the years, much interest has been directed towards political journalists, due to an often implicit normative view of the role of journalism covering politics (cf. Broersma & Graham, 2015). This focus is also apparent when it comes to network analysis and mapping journalists' networks on SNS: what links are there between journalists and politicians, and what implications might these links have for the way that journalists on the politics beat cover a politician or political issues? For example, in a study on Dutch journalists, Verweij (2012) found that

when it comes to networking, ideology is not an important factor, but that journalists build networks with politicians from all political parties.

While most researchers focus on the content that journalists publish on social media, there are also examples of those who instead analyze the networks of journalists' friends and followers and how this connects to news content. Wihbey et al. (2017) did this with data for a large sample of US journalists on Twitter which they merged with a sample of the news articles that these journalists had published, and could show only a modest association between the ideologies of the individuals that political journalists follow and the news they produce.

The new necessity: personal branding

The practice among journalists of using Twitter, in particular, for the purpose of personal branding (e.g. Holton & Molyneux, 2017) has gained the attention of researchers, resulting in a range of studies on these practices. These show not only that journalists' retweets of content can be a part of a branding strategy (e.g. Molyneux, 2014), but also that their tweeting practices as a whole are part of this strategy (e.g. Brems et al., 2016; Lough et al., 2017), not least as one's status can be evaluated via interactions (e.g. Barnard, 2014) or the character of one's personal network (e.g. Bro, 2010).

The most explicit branding takes place within the framework of profile presentations, where journalists (as do every other user) have the opportunity to present themselves to others with a short text, a personal picture, and a link to further information. Journalists not only present themselves as journalists or reporters of some sort in their profile presentations, but also with other professional attributes (e.g. beat), a short CV, awards they have been given, and so on (e.g. Hanusch, 2017a; Ottovordemgentschenfelde, 2017; Molyneux et al., 2018).

As Hanusch and Bruns note (2016), however, journalists still seem to be "experimenting to identify what approach best fill their needs" (p. 14) – both when it comes to the intended target audiences for this branding (peers, co-workers, competitors, sources, employers) and regarding which professional and personal qualities to emphasize.

2.1.2 Organizational uses

Research show that in many respects, the organizational use of social media and SNS parallels the uses among individual journalists, but there are some key aspects that differ. In media outlets, a range of SNS are used as publishing platforms (e.g. Armstrong & Gao, 2010b; Hermida, 2010b; 2014b; Pew Research Center, 2011;

Messner et al., 2012; Phillips, 2012; Engesser & Humprecht, 2014), and viral distribution²⁸ is now an important strategy for most media organizations (e.g. Newman, 2011; Messner et al., 2012; Newman et al., 2012; Phillips, 2012).

Predominantly (but not only), Facebook and Twitter have also become platforms for live reporting from events and breaking news (e.g. Hermida et al., 2012; Herrera & Requejo, 2012), tools for media organizations to engage with their audiences in different ways (e.g. Mersey, 2009; Sheffer & Schultz, 2009; Hermida, 2010b; Braun & Gillespie, 2011; Skovsgaard & Bro, 2011), and important tools for organizational branding (e.g. Ferguson & Greer, 2011; Greer & Ferguson, 2011).

The increasing importance of social media and SNS in journalism has been followed by an increasing common understanding of the importance of organizational guidelines and policies, regulating journalists' different uses (e.g. Bossio & Sacco, 2017). For example, many news organizations now place explicit demands on their staff to tweet, as part of an overall branding strategy and as part of a content distribution strategy (e.g. Ihlebæk & Larsson, 2018; Tandoc & Vos, 2016). As a consequence, there are now signs of emerging tensions in the newsrooms between the management who are implementing demands emanating from organizational strategy, and journalists, committed to professional norms (e.g. Sacco & Bossio, 2017; Duffy & Knight, 2019).

In the media industry, social media and SNS are often regarded as a means to "save" journalism (e.g. Bruns, 2012; Ju et al., 2013), but, as Ahmad (2010) argued in an early study of the implementation of Twitter as a tool for journalism in the *Guardian*, it may be hard for journalism to find revenue from SNS.

2.2 The Swedish context

When it comes to research into social media in journalism in Sweden, we find the first attempts to map professional and personal uses and views in two master theses. The first (Hjort et al., 2011) draws on an email survey of a national sample of journalists, and shows that in 2010, Swedish journalists used SNS for a range of professional tasks (including reporting, researching, and sourcing), but the views on the uses of social media in journalism varied – there was a small group of early adopters that went "all in", and a considerably larger group of more skeptical users. "Just as with everything else people are scared of the unknown and

²⁸ Viral distribution is when, in this case, a piece of journalistic content (such as an article) is shared along a network of users on SNS. Media organizations cannot control this viral distribution, but facilitate it by i) making the content shareable and ii) making people want to share the content (i.e. click baiting) (e.g. Hermida, 2014a).

everything new,” one of the respondents said (p. 20). The second (Wikström & Dahlén Persson, 2011) draws on a content analysis of a sample of journalists’ tweets, and shows how the early j-tweeters most often tweeted about their personal lives, and that opinion journalists were the most active in interacting with other users. These findings are strengthened by a preliminary analysis of the results from the 2011 Swedish Journalist Survey (SJS), which shows that more than half of all Swedish journalists were passive users of Twitter, and that about one in four were active users (Djerf-Pierre, 2012). Appelberg et al. (2014) draw on a survey of journalists in Sweden, Poland, and Russia, and is one of few examples of comparative research²⁹. They suggest that the media system is an important factor in journalists’ uses of social media – Swedish journalists show a higher degree of variety in their usage than their colleagues in Eastern Europe.

The Swedish datajournalists and their skill development process of sharing tools and knowledge for datajournalism in a dedicated Facebook group, is analyzed by Appelgren (2016), who shows the importance of using SNS among specialized groups of journalists.

The professional uses that Swedish journalists make of social media are also mapped in a study on crisis communication (Odén et al., 2016), drawing on a web survey and interviews. The dedicated use of SNS as useful tools is noted, but also that the perceived usefulness of social media (for professional purposes like live reporting or sourcing) varies among journalists.

Self-branding practices among Swedish journalists have been analyzed by Bergelez (2016), who noticed a pattern of self-branding through joint performances with the most active j-tweeters as key actors on the stage. Olausson (2017; 2018) focuses on one of the most widely followed journalists in Sweden in two case studies, the tabloid politics reporter *Niklas Svensson*, and from a qualitative analysis of his tweets shows how he constructs his professional identity and brand online.

The emerging tensions in the newsroom, originating from the implementation of organizational strategies and policies on social media (see above), are examined in an interview study by Ferreira (2016). Ferreira, herself editor-in-chief on a Swedish newspaper, shows that even though editors are positive about the possibilities social media brings to journalism, they call for organizational support in implementing new strategies and practices, and better tools for monitoring social media activities.

²⁹ Another example of comparative research – which also points to the importance of the media system to explain journalists’ uses of social media and SNS – is a study by Hanusch (2017a) which draws on a content analysis of the Twitter profiles of political journalists in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.

Larsson (2017) and Larsson and Christensen (2017) show how Swedish news organizations use Facebook for the distribution of content and – just as important – for audience interaction. This is also the focus for Almgren (2017) and Appelberg (2018), but they both conclude that this intention to engage audiences in dialogue and various forms of participation often fails in practice.³⁰

There are almost no examples of research focusing on the use of podcasts as an editorial tool for the discussion of journalism and news media. One notable exception is von Krogh and Svensson's (2017) analysis of the podcast *Mattsson-Helin*, in which the editors-in-chief of Sweden's two national tabloids each week, and for a period of several years, talked about news events, editorial decisions, and media ethics, thus not only branding their respective tabloids but also enhancing the audiences' understanding of news work. von Krogh and Svensson also show that by doing this, the editors-in-chiefs gained the upper hand in a sometimes much infected critical debate on the news media in Sweden, as the podcast format enabled them to frame the debate in their own favor.

2.3 A short discussion on previous research

When it comes to “being seduced by hyped services [and] available data” (Lomborg, 2016, p. 12), journalism researchers are not immune. In the case of research into social media in journalism, one can argue that the research field *per se* is hyped. It is easy to see why: there is an abundance of new services and, following this, new practices and views to map, from a multitude of theoretical perspectives and with all thinkable methodological approaches and easily collectable data. Having kept a relatively close eye on this research for the last couple of years, I can say with some certainty that, yes, journalism researchers have indeed been seduced by this hype, focusing on change rather than continuity (and that no, I am perhaps not an exception in this regard), but also, that some really good research into journalism has come out of it, not least advancing the literature on normalizing and self-branding.

This research into social media in journalism teaches us that social media and SNS are increasingly integrated in journalism – as professional tools and publishing platforms, and as platforms for content distribution, audience relationships, and branding on both organizational and individual levels. It is also clear that from an initial “let's try and see what happens” attitude, media organizations are now implementing strategies on how to use SNS, and demand that their staff are active

³⁰ However, drawing on a national survey, Hedman (2016) shows the increasing expectations of audiences to comment on journalistic content on SNS such as Facebook, but a modest interest in actually “following” media organizations and/or journalists on SNS.

– as individuals – on various platforms. Journalists' views on the use of SNS in journalism have also become more nuanced over the years. With the increased use of SNS comes a blurring of the former boundaries “between [...] work, life and play, as well as between production and consumption” (Deuze, 2007, p. 259), and this blurring causes tensions among many journalists as “[w]hat had been a private matter between the audience member and the journalism turned into a relationship between the online visitor and the journalist in public spaces,” Robinson (2011, p. 199) argues. As a consequence, individual norms and practices are questioned (e.g. Domingo & Heinonen, 2008; Loosen, 2015). Although much of the previous research builds on an assumption that the adoption of social media and SNS in fact changes journalism and journalists, however, there are little evidence that these changes are profound.

Just as Lomborg (2016) noted on general research into social media, previous research into social media in journalism had more of a focus on frequencies than on the questions of why and how. These questions are so far only shallowly addressed by the literature and may call for other theoretical approaches than those used in previous research (i.e. normalizing). From the theoretical perspective of journalistic roles, journalists' questioning of individual norms and practices can instead be an indication that the way they should appear on social media and SNS is not at all self-evident, and that there has been at least some adaptation of journalistic roles related to the adoption of social media and SNS. If so, this highlights Meyrowitz (1985) argument that when technology changes, so do journalistic role performances. Is this, however, only because of the adoption of social media and SNS in journalism (the technological changes), or are other factors perhaps important in this?

From a methodological point of view, as most research into social media in journalism draws on non-probability or strategic samples of journalists, it is difficult to generalize from the findings and difficult to compare groups of journalists. Many studies draw on data that was already there (i.e. collected for another purpose), or alternatively the most easily collectable data, making advanced analysis difficult. There are also only a few examples of comparative studies, or of studies of changes over time. This calls for a new methodological approach.

3 New roles for journalists?

If a journalist wants to be regarded as a journalist, she has to behave like one, but what does it mean to “behave like a journalist”?

There is an argument in journalism research that when contexts change, so do journalistic roles (Meyrowitz, 1985; cf. Hallin, 2017). When journalists adopt social media and SNS, their role performances, according to this argument, change. I use the theoretical perspective of journalistic roles – how journalists behave as journalists – to investigate journalists’ adoption of social media and social network sites.

This chapter is divided in three sections. The first section starts with an introduction to the profession of journalism and the values and norms that are the basis on the journalistic identity. The main part of this first section focuses on journalistic roles, and how these are linked to norms, values, and practices. This is followed by a section on three different approaches that can help us better understand journalists’ adoption of social media and SNS: normalizing, the appropriation of technology, and the accommodation of social media logic. In the final section, my theoretical argument about journalists’ social roles is presented.

3.1 Acts of journalism

The theoretical perspective of journalistic roles is often used to understand both journalists’ identity and journalists’ place in society. Following Mellado, Hellmueller, and Donsbach (2017a, p. 8), I understand journalistic roles as an umbrella concept with four different aspects: role conceptions, role perceptions, role enactments, and role performances (see *Chapter 3.1.2*). As such, it forms a framework to better understand journalists’ ideals, norms, values, and practices, and how journalists behave in different contexts.

While there is a common understanding of what journalism “is”, I want to stress that there are different ways to “be” a journalist, and hence a wide range of variation in journalistic roles.

3.1.1 The profession of journalism

Journalists share a strong sense of belonging. Journalism builds on a common understanding of what journalism “is” in terms of professional ideals, norms, values, and practices, and is formed by “special skills, training, codes of conduct, commitment to public service and autonomy”, as Singer puts it (2003, p. 156). This means that journalism is not a profession *per se*, but rather a social practice that nevertheless functions as a profession (e.g. Aldridge & Evetts, 2003; Hallin, 2017; Mellado et al., 2017a).

This social practice of journalism can also be described as a journalistic identity that distinguishes journalists from other professions. Deuze (2005) defines this journalistic identity as a set of values, resulting in an occupational ideology rather than a profession – no matter where journalists work or within which genres, there is a consensus among journalists about who is a “real” journalist. According to Deuze, this shared “ideal-typical value system” (p. 444) among journalists can be characterized in five categories:

- journalists provide a public service (as information providers and watchdogs),
- journalists are objective, neutral, and credible (they strive to achieve these high professional standards in their practice),
- journalists must enjoy editorial autonomy and independence (and tend to be highly suspicious of any form of external influence),
- journalists have a sense of immediacy, and
- journalists have a sense of ethics and legitimacy.

When a journalist “behaves like a journalist”, it is – at least partially – from these categories that she picks her repertoire. While almost all journalists share this ideal-typical value system, there are variations in how individual journalists relate to the respective categories. Most journalists also identify with their employing media organization (if they are employed, that is) (Russo, 1998), and are affected by such factors as an increasingly competitive media market and the growth of entrepreneurial journalism (Deuze & Witschge, 2017). Taken together, these factors affect how a journalist “behaves like a journalist”.

Journalists in Sweden

In Sweden, as in countries with similar media systems, the modern process of professionalization in journalism – the formation of this shared system of special skills, training, codes of conduct, and ideals (cf. Singer, 2003) – started in the 1960s, much due to education and the establishment of journalism schools (Djerf-Pierre, 2000; Djerf-Pierre & Weibull, 2001; cf. Nygren & Stigbrand, 2014). As a result, journalists in Sweden are now considered relatively homogeneous as a

group, although differences in values can be found relating to social factors such as gender, age, and education (Wiik, 2010). Surveys (Wiik, 2012) have found that most Swedish journalists consider themselves watchdogs that keep a close eye on the political and economic elites, objectively (rather than neutrally) informing the public about ongoing affairs and events, and allowing a range of stakeholders to raise their voices. Many also regard themselves as critics of societal injustices.

3.1.2 Journalistic roles

Journalistic role performance is one way to better understand the variations in journalists' ideals, norms, and values, and how journalists manifest these in practice. What journalists choose to emphasize is also what distinguishes them from other professions, as well as from other journalists, especially in different contexts and when contexts change.

Mellado, Hellmueller, and Donsbach (2017a; cf. Raemy et al., 2018) argue that journalistic roles can best be understood as at least four different concepts. *Role conceptions* are journalists' individual formulations of what it is to be a journalist and what is most important to them³¹, while *role perceptions* are what they believe society expects from them. It is easy to see that there might be a gap between these two things. On this evaluative level of roles, we also find *role enactments*, that – at least in an idealistic setting³² – involves the individual journalists' behavior as a response to their own conceptions and other's expectations. On the performative level we find *role performances*, that are the manifest collective outcomes³³ of role conceptions, perceptions, and enactments. In other words: journalistic role performances is the result of journalists behaving according to their own, and what they believe are our, assumptions about, and expectations of, what a journalist should be; the “manifestation of professional ideals in journalistic practice” (Mellado et al., p. 8)³⁴.

Others, like Hanitzsch and Vos (2017), also emphasize journalistic roles as discursively constituted, and as “the central arena where journalistic identity is reproduced and contested” (p. 129). In this sense, journalistic role performance is also a way for journalists to legitimize and justify themselves and their work (journalism) to others (cf. Mellado et al., 2017b).

What journalistic roles are there, then? This question is not easily answered, as journalistic roles vary not only in different contexts, but also because different

³¹ For example, Chong (2017) found that cultural journalists often value personal style (or voice) over neutrality.

³² In this idealistic setting individual journalists have the autonomy to actually put into practice what they believe is important – which is seldom the case (Mellado et al., 2017a).

³³ The “outcome” is the content of what journalists produce (Mellado, 2015).

³⁴ In the context of this dissertation, “practice” is not only how journalists use social media and SNS but also what they continuously publish on these platforms.

roles are not exclusive and distinct categories, and involve a range rather than a precise state of mind. Journalistic roles can also be labeled in different ways by different researchers, depending on the research question at hand and the need to generalize or refine the analysis. To nevertheless gain an understanding of what roles there are and how differently these can be described by researchers, the two following examples are illustrative:

Mellado (2015) suggests six general roles (p. 602). Journalists with an active journalistic voice, taking sides and making proposals or demands, are *interventionists*. Journalists engaged in investigative reporting, often building on extensive research, criticizing and questioning those in power, are *watchdogs*, while journalists instead supporting institutional activities, promoting national and regional policies, and providing a positive image of politicians, economic elites, societal progress, and so on are *loyalty-facilitators*. *Service journalists* try to make an impact by providing the audience with tips and advice, *infotainment journalists* are more into scandals and sensationalism, and *civic journalists* take on a citizen perspective, trying to make local impact and supporting citizen initiatives. Watchdogs and loyalty-facilitators are two sides of the way journalists relate to power, while service, infotainment, and civic journalists accentuate different aspects of the way that journalists relate to their audiences.

Compare this to the framework suggested by Hanitzsch and Vos (2018), identifying 18 (!) different roles among political news journalists (p. 153–156): *disseminators* (distribute information, strictly neutral), *curators* (finds, contextualizes, and shares relevant pieces of information), *storytellers* (explains and puts into context), *analysts* (rather subjective, traces causes and predicts consequences), *access providers* (provide a forum for various stakeholders to express their views), *mobilizers* (encourage people to get involved in civic activity and political conversation), *monitors* (rather passive, critical observers), *detectives* (investigates, verifies, etc.), *watchdogs* (even more active and passionate about their mission to provide independent critique than the detectives), *adversaries* (speaks “the voice of the people”), *advocates* (considers herself an advocate for a specific group and their causes), *missionaries* (personally motivated and want to promote certain ideas or values), *change agents* (want social change and political reforms), *educators* (raises the audiences awareness and knowledge), *mediators* (want to reduce social tension and resolve conflicts), *facilitators* (emphasizes nation building and unity), *collaborators* (regards journalists as part of the “state” and defends governmental policy), and – finally – *mouthpieces* (similar to the disseminator above but often feeling obliged to improve official information)³⁵. To these, Hanitzsch and Vos add another seven roles that

³⁵ Not all these roles are represented by journalists in all countries – for example, in Western democracies like Sweden there are few, if any, journalists taking roles as facilitators, collaborators, or mouthpieces. These are

relate to the domain of everyday life and lifestyle journalism (p. 159): *marketers* (promoting lifestyle and products), *service providers* (offer practical information), *friends* (help the audience to navigate through life), *connectors* (connect members of their audience to their communities by providing a sense of belonging), *mood managers* (want to entertain and make people feel well), *inspirators* (provide inspiration for new lifestyles), and *guides* (such as lifestyle guides). All in all, there are 25 different roles in only two areas of journalism, and yet, these journalistic roles are but a few of the roles that journalists can have or take. In other contexts, other roles can be identified. These influence not only how journalists perform their jobs but also how they present themselves to others. Research into the journalistic roles manifested in the content and practices of social media and SNS is, so far, scarce (cf. *Chapter 2*).

What makes the theoretical perspective of journalistic role performance especially useful when investigating journalists' adoption of social media and SNS, is how it connects professional norms and practices to the boundaries of journalism (cf. Maares & Hanusch, 2018). Unlike journalistic media, social media and SNS are indeed shared spaces where formerly well-guarded lines blur – between journalists and their audiences, such as the producers and consumers of media content (e.g. Bruns, 2008; Bruns & Highfield, 2012), between professional control and calls for openness (e.g. Lewis, 2012), between work and non-work (e.g. Lasorsa, 2012), and between professional and private spheres (e.g. Williams et al., 2010). Even the boundaries of professional work itself are increasingly blurring (e.g. Soloski, 1989; Deuze, 2007; 2008). When boundaries blur, contexts change, and therefore – as argued above – journalistic roles change. If we return for a moment to the Swedish political journalist *Niklas Svensson* (see also *Chapter 1.1* and *2.2*): he is obviously overstepping at least some of these boundaries in his SNS practices, and in doing so he challenges the professional norms and practices that many of his colleagues value. Although he is, and acts as, a classical *watchdog* (with the explicit aim of breaking political news), he is also an example of an *reinvented journalist* (who constantly tries to find new solutions regarding how to “be” a journalist on SNS) and a *celebrified marketer* (who uses SNS as part of an explicit and, in the Swedish context, unusually aggressive strategy for personal branding), as described by Olausson in her case studies (2017; 2018).

much more common in countries in Latin America. In other countries, it might prove difficult or even dangerous to take on roles as detectives or watchdogs.

3.2 Three approaches for a better understanding

I use three different approaches to better understand journalists' adoption of social media and SNS: normalizing, the appropriation of technology, and the accommodation of social media logic. These approaches are chosen from an understanding that while we shape our technology and our tools, technology and tools also shape us, as well as our uses, and that this is an ongoing, circular process. These approaches also help us understand and explore how journalistic roles, “the manifestation of professional ideals in journalistic practice” (Mellado et al., 2017, p. 8), are challenged in this process of adoption. The approaches are briefly presented below and are further elaborated in the separate studies (*Articles I–V*).

3.2.1 Normalizing

In journalism, normalizing refers to the process in which former practices and norms are being challenged, but instead of leading to a change, the “new” is being adapted (normalized) to fit within already existing professional practices and norms (Singer, 2005; Lasorsa et al., 2012). As previously shown (*Chapter 2*), the concept of normalizing is frequently used in research into social media in journalism, but not within an overall framework of journalistic roles.

In her much-cited study on normalizing in journalism, Singer (2005) shows that:

“[M]ost journalists are ‘normalizing’ blogs in at least one key way: they are maintaining control over the information provided under their names, sticking to their traditional gatekeeper function even with a format that is explicitly about participatory communication.” (p. 192)

The process of normalizing works both ways. Lasorsa, Lewis, and Holton (2012) and Lasorsa (2012) found similar patterns in the way that journalists relate to Twitter to those that Singer found among the blogging journalists – journalists normalize Twitter to fit key professional practices and norms (like gatekeeping) – but they also found that those practices and norms that are not central to the profession are instead adapted to the evolving practices of Twitter (for example by mixing personal and professional content and engaging in conversations with others).

In other words: when facing challenges – in the form of a new media technology, changes in the media market, and so on, – journalists can either adapt their practices and norms to fit the new situation, or adapt the new technology to

fit within already existing professional practices and norms. The most core professional norms and ideals among journalists are not easily affected.

It is easy to see that as normalizing is a process that affects professional practices and norms – the core question of what it is to “behave like a journalist” on SNS – it also affects journalistic roles.

3.2.2 Appropriation of technology

In general, journalists can be described as more eager to adapt new technology than most others (Lewis & Zamith, 2017), and social media and SNS are no exception in this regard. Much of the research into journalists’ uses of social media has a rather deterministic view of the adoption of a new technology: social media are adopted by journalists, and as a consequence, journalists (and journalism) will change (cf. *Chapter 2*). Such a perspective does not answer the question of how technology relates to the “social”. In contrast, the appropriation of technology approach focuses the questions of how and why users adopt a new technology (Orlikowski, 2000; Carroll et al., 2001) and can help us better understand different uses between groups of journalists, as well as how journalists’ uses change over time.

One key aspect from this perspective is that technology not only encourages certain uses and restricts others, but that the use of a technology is a social practice with certain norms and values attached to the respective affordances³⁶. These norms and values emerge when users engage with the technology (Hutchby, 2001b; Faraj & Azad, 2012; Majchrzak et al., 2013). The “social” is just as important as the material, and the use of a new technology is not only a question of adoption but a process in which the users shape and reshape technology, “the process of appropriation”, as Carroll et al. (2001, p. 5) describe it.

Adopting social media is not only about starting to use a technology, it is also about learning all these new social practices (cf. Majchrzak et al., 2013). When journalists adopt social media, the social practice of journalism meets the social practice of using social media. These social practices are influenced by personal as well as organizational and professional factors – in the case of journalists, factors such as age, gender, personal motivations and competences, beat, professional values, norms, and practices (e.g. DeSanctis & Poole, 1994). Some journalists will choose not to use social media at all, what Carroll et al. (2001) refer to as non-appropriation. Those who do appropriate social media, however, will find a range of ways to use it, adapted to their own specific situations – different SNS

³⁶ In this context, I understand technology affordances as defined by Faraj and Azad (2012): “action possibilities and opportunities that emerge from actors engaging with a focal technology” and as equally material and social.

will promote different uses and over time, these uses can and most probably will change. Over time, some journalists will most likely even disappropriate (stop using) social media.

Just like the normalizing approach (see above), the appropriation of technology approach thus helps us understand how technology affects journalistic roles, but in connecting technology (social media and SNS) to the “social” (the repeated interactions and the social practices of engagement) it does so from a different perspective.

3.2.3 Accommodation of social media logic

The accommodation of social media logic approach focuses the process of mediatization³⁷ and how actors are affected by media logical changes. Journalists not only have to accommodate social media logic but also have to find a way to fit this with news media logic.

Media logics can be described as a set of technological and organizational media formats that structure both the content and the users’ expectations. The theoretical concept of media logic was first introduced by Altheide and Snow (1979). It has been used since to explain how the media influences other societal institutions and actors (e.g. Schultz Jørgensen, 2016; Brants & van Praag, 2017). While some argue that there is one single (news) media logic (e.g. Asp, 2014), others point to the existence of several independent media logics, each with their own inherent mechanisms (e.g. Chadwick, 2013; Brants & van Praag, 2017) – and thus that there are different media logics to accommodate in parallel processes of ongoing mediatization.

News media logic is a specific logic that functions within the context of news media and thus affects not only what is presented as news but also how news is made or created. According to Asp (2014), this news media logic can be described as consisting of both professional journalistic norms and standards (more or less taken-for-granted practices, such as news criteria or how to write an article). This

³⁷ Mediatization is “the process whereby society to an increasing degree is submitted to, or becomes dependent on, the media and their logic” (Hjarvard, 2008, p. 113). Hjarvard distinguishes between a direct and an indirect form of mediatization. In the direct form, things and activities that used to be non-mediated (like banking, playing games, corresponding) become mediated (we do them online on computers or smartphones). In the indirect form, almost any given activity is “increasingly influenced with respect to form, content, or organization by mediagenic symbols or mechanisms” (p. 115), i.e. media logic. This latter indirect form of mediatization can also, perhaps somewhat simplified, be understood as described by Asp (2014, p. 257): “a process in which individuals, politicians and social institutions tend to adapt to various constraints imposed by the media”. There is also deep mediatization, “the growing interdependency of everyday life and media technologies” (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, p. 125) which comes from digitalization. As a consequence, “we all increasingly rely on ‘infrastructures for the continuous production and exchange of data’”, Couldry and Hepp argue (p. 130, see also *Chapter 1.2* on datafication).

places professional journalists at the core of news media logic. Esser (2014) recognizes how closely linked they are: it is journalists' norms, values, practices, and strategies that are the very foundation of news media logic, and it is journalists who produce and select all news media content. Others have to adapt³⁸.

Social media and SNS, on the other hand, are platforms for sharing information with networks of selected others, and underpinned by a logic in which there is no obvious link to professional journalists and in which the content is generated by all users, journalists and others alike. In the words of Klinger and Svensson: social media "follow[s] other 'rules of the game'" (2015, p. 1251; cf. van Dijck & Poell, 2013). For example, there is an ambience (e.g. Hermida, 2010a; 2014b) that makes it important for journalists to find new ways to gain and keep their audiences' attention. Another example is the consequences of datafication: the higher the numbers (of clicks, updates, users in one's network, etc.), the higher the status – in the organization, among peers, in the eyes of their sources (van Dijck & Poell, 2013). One way for a journalist to achieve this, and to gain their audiences' attention, is to share content that is more personalized and emotional (e.g. Klinger & Svensson, 2015) and to build a personal brand (e.g. Molyneux, 2014; Holton & Molyneux, 2017). This conflict between social media logic and news media logic is basically a conflict between social media logic and journalistic professional norms and practices. Social media logic (or the media logical changes) thus affects journalistic roles.

3.3 Social presences – and social roles?

When journalists adopt social media and SNS, these are not just another set of tools that they need to start using effectively. Professional practices and norms are challenged in the process of adoption – by the technology, its affordances, and the inherent media logic.

We know from previous research that when journalists are subjected to change, they adapt (e.g. Gade & Lowrey, 2011; Pihl-Thingvad, 2015; Grubermann & Meckel, 2017; Mellado & Van Dalen, 2017), but how promptly they adapt depends on what is changing³⁹. Ekdale et al. (2015) argues that journalists are quick to adapt to technological changes, but less positive when it comes to changes in their relationship to audiences – and still more tepid about changes that affect their professional roles:

³⁸ I.e. in a process of mediatization.

³⁹ For example, corresponding to the shift from print to online publishing, Hellmueller, Vos, and Poepsel (2012) show a move among journalists towards more transparency and objectivity (cf. Revers, 2016), and Hornmoen and Steensen (2014) a shift towards recognizing the importance of dialogue.

“Changes that newswriters see as beneficial to the news product and consistent with their understanding of journalism are viewed favorably, while journalists are resistant to adopt changes that they believe challenge journalistic autonomy and judgment, hurt the quality of the news product, and/or have been communicated poorly by the company’s leadership”. (p. 955)

The adoption of social media and SNS in journalism challenges journalists in similar ways. Social media and SNS provide new tools in the journalism toolbox, and many journalists are keen to explore just how they can utilize these news tools. Journalists also now have new ways of interacting with the audiences – and, as we have seen, increasing expectations from audiences on individual journalists to actually interact. Above all, journalists are now expected to have a social presence. In the words of Ekdale et al.: journalists need to “rethink what it means to be a journalist” (2015, p. 242). Adding this social presence to Deuze’ “ideal-typical value system” presented above (2005, p. 444), gives journalists a new category from which to pick their repertoire when “behaving as a journalist on social media”, and, if you will, a new set of socially related journalistic roles.

In this dissertation, I use the theoretical perspective of journalistic roles to understand journalists’ adoption of social media and SNS. I use the approaches of normalizing, the appropriation of technology, and the accommodation of social media logic to better understand how this is done.

4 Aim and research questions

For journalists, these are times of change. Social media and social network sites are shared spaces, and have reformed at least parts of journalism – as a beat and as a tool for journalists’ daily tasks, but also for content distribution, reporting, audience dialogue, interaction, participation, transparency, networking, and organizational as well as personal branding.

4.1 Aim

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate journalists’ adoption of social media and social network sites. This is done from the theoretical perspective of journalistic role performance, “the manifestation of professional ideals in journalistic practice” (Mellado et al., 2017, p. 8), and the assumption that the adoption of social media and SNS brings new or altered journalistic roles. The study of the adoption of social media and SNS is also used to understand how journalists are affected by changes in the media industry.

4.2 Research questions

The analysis will be guided by the following research questions, which focus the aim of this dissertation, and represent different levels of interest and the different conceptual levels of journalistic roles.

The first research question aims to map social media and SNS amongst journalists: levels (frequency) of usage for different purposes and on different platforms/services.

RQ1: How do journalists use social media and social network sites, and how does their uses change over time?

The second research question aims to map journalists’ views and opinions on social media and SNS in relation to professional practices and norms.

RQ2: How do journalists perceive professional practices and norms in relation to the use of social media and social network sites?

The adoption of social media and SNS in journalism is not only about levels of usage and views of social media in relation to journalism, but also about how individual journalists “behave as journalists” on these new platforms. This is addressed in the third research question.

RQ3: How do journalists perform “the journalist” on social media and social network sites?

Both conceptual levels of journalistic roles are addressed in the research questions – the evaluative level (role conceptions, perceptions, and enactments) in *RQ1* and *RQ2*, and the performative level (role performances) in *RQ3*. The first research question asks for comparisons over time. Differences between groups of journalists are of interest for the analysis in all three questions.

5 A mixed design approach

This dissertation investigates journalists' adoption of social media and social network sites, which is one aspect of social media in journalism, from the theoretical perspective of journalistic roles. The study rationale is presented in this chapter. A special focus will be placed on how to find a representative sample of journalists on Twitter and on how to make best use of the data collected.

First a reminder: in this dissertation, the definition of “journalist” is as a person associated with a journalistic media organization and/or self-identifying as a professional journalist, editor, news worker, and so on, doing journalistic work (i.e. active journalists or journalist students)⁴⁰.

5.1 Researching a rapidly expanding field

As previously discussed (*Chapter 1*), social media in journalism is rapidly evolving. To research social media in journalism is, from one perspective, very rewarding – there is an almost endless stream of new platforms, new professional practices, and new professional debates, to study (which is reflected in a rapidly evolving research literature on social media in journalism, as described in *Chapter 2*). There is also a seemingly endless stream of easily collectable digital data on users, content, and practices. From an opposing perspective, this means that there is no “end point” and that the only thing a researcher can say for certain is that the specific findings at hand at any given moment (i.e. the percentages of any this or that) will most likely be rapidly outdated.

I also use the adoption of social media and SNS to understand how journalists are affected by changes in the media industry on the whole. From this perspective, the *continuum* of changes within social media in journalism is not a problem, but rather an opportunity.

⁴⁰ This definition of “journalist” is similar to that used by the Swedish Union of Journalists (SUJ), see <https://www.sjf.se/medlemskapet/vem-kan-bli-medlem> (in Swedish only).

The fact that this field is rapidly evolving, however, is the main reason this dissertation has been written as a compilation thesis rather than as a monograph. In this way, each study and each article reflects not only its own period of data collection but also the research of the period, and the discussion of the general findings and the wider view from the theoretical perspective of journalistic roles is presented in the very last of these summary chapters.

5.2 Sweden as a critical case

In many respects, Swedish journalists are much like their colleagues in Western democracies, in other ways they are not. The Swedish media market is distinguished by a high circulation of newspapers, a traditionally strong position for public service, and a diverse and increasingly competitive media market (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Ohlsson, 2017b). The public's general trust in the news media is high (Andersson & Weibull, 2017). Sweden is furthermore often described as something of a digital hotspot regarding the digitalization of public services and corporations, but also in the use of different digital services by the general public, and broadband and mobile access (Westlund, 2012; Wadbring, 2017).

The share of journalists with a professional education is high (72 percent, Edström, 2012), and the professional society can be described as relatively homogenous, sharing core professional values and ideals (Wiik, 2010; 2012). Sweden is also characterized by horizontal work organization structures and a highly individualistic work environment (Holmberg & Åkerblom, 2006). Most Swedish journalists (about 85 percent of all employed journalists and about 50 percent of all freelancers) are members of the Swedish Union of Journalists (SUJ), which functions both as a traditional trade union and as a professional interest organization⁴¹.

Taken together, these circumstances should ideally highlight the way that journalists are affected by changes in the media industry, given that Swedish journalists are not as restricted by hierarchical organization structures as most of their colleagues in other countries, and are allowed to take an individualistic approach in tackling changes in the media market as well as about how to fit SNS practices into their professional and personal day-to-day routines.

⁴¹ Jonas Norling, chair of SUJ, 2013, personal communication.

5.3 The focus on Twitter

After its launch in 2007, Twitter soon became an important platform in journalism and for journalists in general (e.g. Hermida, 2014b). Research (Djerf-Pierre, 2012) has indicated that this is also true among Swedish journalists.

Journalists' use of Twitter is not representative of their uses of other SNS, partly because of the technological affordances and the media logical mechanisms that are specific to Twitter, and partly – actually – because of its exceptional position among journalists, but also because of Twitter's position amongst other users. In Sweden, Twitter has been something of an elite medium from the start, attracting politicians, lobbyists, PR persons, and so on, and fewer of the general public⁴². The way that journalists perceive professional practices and norms, and perform “the journalists” on a new platform, however, should be ideally highlighted on Twitter.

The choice of Twitter is also a choice of convenience. Twitter is a public platform and most data is easily collectable by researchers and others (Brunns & Stieglitz, 2012; cf. Williams et al., 2013).⁴³

5.4 A mixed design

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate journalists' adoption of social media and SNS. This aim is specified in three research questions which represent different levels of interest: journalist's uses of social media and SNS in *RQ1*, their perceptions of professional practices and norms in relation to the use of social media and SNS in *RQ2*, and how they perform “the journalist” on these new platforms in *RQ3*. The dependent variable is journalists in all three research questions, as well as in the aim.

Given the aim and these particular research questions, a statistical methodological approach is applied. This approach makes it possible to generalize the findings to the national population of Swedish journalists. It also allows for comparisons between subgroups of journalists, as well as comparisons over time.

The question of the uses of social media and SNS is a question of frequencies: which platforms are used and how often? This question was answered by asking a representative sample of journalists to answer a survey on their perceived social media and SNS usage. The question of journalists' perceptions of professional

⁴² <https://www.slideshare.net/Intellectacorporate/twittercensus11?nextslideshow=1>

⁴³ At least this was true during the time of data collection for this dissertation. In July 2018, Twitter changed its rules for API access, making it slightly more difficult for researchers to collect data via its API. See https://blog.twitter.com/developer/en_us/topics/tools/2018/new-developer-requirements-to-protect-our-platform.html

norms and practices in relation to the use of social media and SNS is another question that can be answered through a survey. The first research question asks for a comparison over time. As the work on a dissertation normally extends over several years, it is possible to collect comparable data on more than one occasion. As social media and SNS is rapidly evolving, one can expect changes in frequencies of usage, as well as opinions on these uses, even after a relatively short period of time.

The third research question, how journalists perform “the journalist” on these new platforms, calls for a different approach. In this dissertation, I understand practices as not only how journalists use social media and SNS, but also what they continuously publish on these platforms (cf. *Chapter 3.1.2*). A quantitative content analysis of what journalists publish (post) can thus answer this question.

By applying a mixed methods approach like this (i.e. the combination of both surveys and content analysis) it is possible to customize the articles needed to answer the research questions and the aim of this dissertation. It also makes it easier to optimize the use of material, as different sets of data can be combined, used, and reused, in different ways.

This statistical approach does not, however, allow for in-depth insights into how journalists adopt social media and SNS. Future research can provide this by, for example, interviewing journalists, or by following journalists in their day-to-day SNS practices in observational studies.

5.5 Operationalization

Drawing on the theoretical operationalization presented in the previous chapter, the three research questions are methodologically operationalized as follows (cf. Carpenter et al., 2015; Karlsson, 2017; Singer, 2017; Van Dalen et al., 2017):

Journalists’ uses (*RQ1*) as questions about i) which social media and SNS journalists use, professionally and/or privately, ii) to what extent, i.e. what frequency, and iii) for which purposes.

Journalists’ perceptions of professional norms and practices in relation to the use of social media and SNS (*RQ2*) as questions about journalists’ views and opinions on i) social media and SNS in general, ii) the use of social media and SNS in journalism, and iii) the perceived usefulness of social media and SNS.

The question of changes over time (*RQ3*) is operationalized as differences in uses, and in views and opinions, respectively, on i) aggregated level, and ii) individual level, between two distinct separately points of measurement.

Journalists' performances of "the journalist" on a new platform (*RQ3*), is operationalized in two separate ways: i) as an implicit or explicit manifestation of one professional ideal, transparency, and ii) as journalists' self-branding practices.

The choice of transparency as an example of a manifestation of a professional ideal is based on a notion that transparency has become one of the most important professional ideals among journalists (Plaisance, 2007), and scholars have noted that Twitter promotes transparency and pushes journalists to adopt new practices, including "job talk" and dialogue (Revers, 2014). I thus argue that differences between journalists in how they relate to transparency indicate differences in journalistic role performances. Transparency is operationalized as disclosure (how news is produced), participatory (audience dialogue) and personal (or even private) transparency in the content of journalists' tweets.

In recent years, self-branding has become something of a new necessity for journalists working in an increasingly competitive media market (Molyneux, 2014; cf. Gandini, 2015). How journalists self-brand is a manifestation of how they want to be regarded as journalists; their journalistic role performances. Self-branding is operationalized as the manifestation of professional and personal/private attributes in journalists' Twitter account presentations.

The methodological operationalizations are further elaborated in each study (*Articles I–V*).

5.6 Material

There are few examples of studies that draw from representative large-*N* samples of journalists in previous research into social media in journalism (see *Chapter 2*), and as a consequence few studies that show the differences between groups of journalists on a national level. Previous studies using data collected from SNS often draw on small-*N* and/or strategic samples of journalists.

This study draws from representative large-*N* samples. Three separate sets of data are used to answer the research questions. These sets of data were collected in 2011, 2012, and 2014.

5.6.1 The Swedish Journalist Survey

The Swedish Journalist Survey (SJS)⁴⁴, is conducted as a collaboration between the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication at the University of Gothenburg and the Swedish Union of Journalists (SUJ). It is a postal survey on

⁴⁴ <https://jmg.gu.se/english/research/research-projects/swedish-journalist-survey>

a representative sample of the members of the SUJ. The first survey was conducted in 1989, and it has since been repeated approximately every fifth year (Asp, 2012).

The 2011 survey was performed in the autumn and winter of 2011/2012. Among the questions on journalists' background, gender, age, class, education, career, lifestyle, work conditions and practices, professional values, and opinions on a range of subjects, it also contained a range of questions on social media use and eliciting opinions on social media. These questions were modelled in cooperation with the administrators of the survey. The survey targeted a randomized sample of 2,500 members of the SUJ. The net sample consisted of 2,362 individuals, and of these 1,414 answered the questionnaire, providing a net response rate of 60 percent (Andersson, 2012).

The high degree of representativeness in this survey comes from the high degree of unionization among Swedish journalists, and an analysis shows that the 2011 survey is representative of the population of Swedish journalists on key factors such as gender and workplace (Andersson, 2012).

5.6.2 The Swedish Journalist Panel

The Swedish Journalist Panel (SJP)⁴⁵, is a web survey conducted by the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication and run by LORE (Laboratory of Opinion Research) at the University of Gothenburg. The panel was built during 2011/2012 using strategic sampling to construct a panel that is representative of the population of Swedish journalists. After several recruitment campaigns, the final panel consisted of about 2,000 members (Löfgren Nilsson, 2015). All panel members answered questions on gender, age, workplace, career, and so on.

Questions on social media use and opinions about social media were included in the web questionnaires on two occasions, in June 2012 and again in June 2014, as part of two research projects⁴⁶. The questions were modelled in cooperation with the administrators of the panel. In 2012, 1,305 panel members answered the survey, giving a net response rate of 66 percent. In 2014, 957 answers gave a net response rate of 49 percent.

The construction of the panel facilitates not only the analysis of changes over time in the total group of respondents (cross-sectional data), but also changes over time on an individual level (panel data) in a subset of the data. 573 individual journalists answered both surveys, and the net response rate for this panel data was 34 percent.

⁴⁵ <https://jmg.gu.se/english/research/research-projects/the-journalist-panel>

⁴⁶ These questions were supported by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) and the project *Crisis Communication 2.0i*, and by FORTE (The Swedish Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare) and the project *The Social Journalist*.

A comparison between the members of the panel and the members of SUJ shows that the panel is “in large representative” (Löfgren Nilsson, 2015, p. 3) of the members of SUJ, but that permanently employed journalists are overrepresented, as are journalists working within daily news.

5.6.3 Twitter data on a representative sample of journalists

Twitter data is used for the quantitative content analysis of what journalists post on SNS.

Twitter data has been useful for researchers of journalists and journalism, to answer a range of questions on how journalists appropriate and make use of new technology (see *Chapter 2* on previous research). Unlike many other SNS, most information on Twitter is public and easily accessible. Also – and not least important – the data is easily collectable via Twitter’s API (Application Programming Interface) (Gaffney & Puschmann, 2014). For an “old school” journalism researcher like myself, however, used to content analyses with carefully constructed manually coded variables, research into Twitter and other SNS can be somewhat challenging. How can I find a representative sample of Swedish j-tweeters when this population is not recorded anywhere? How do I make best use of the collected data? The following approach is explained with the purpose of answering these two questions. It is based on two types of literature: methods for analyzing social media in general and Twitter in particular, and previous research into Twitter in journalism.

What’s in a tweet?

A description of some Twitter specific features is necessary for an understanding of which data can be retrieved from Twitter for a content analysis⁴⁷. A user’s profile presentation consists of a maximum of 160 characters, an avatar picture (often a portrait), a background picture, a location (optional) and a web link (optional). A tweet consists of a maximum of 140 characters (in November 2017 the maximum limit was doubled to 280 characters) and can include one or several web links and/or pictures. A standard tweet is intended for the user’s followers, but unless the user has protected her tweets the content is public for everyone to see. By including one or more usernames (*@username*) the message becomes part of a conversation that directly addresses other users – but it is still public. By instead including one or more hashtags (*#hashtag*) the message becomes part of a larger public discussion (for example, the most prominent hashtag for general political

⁴⁷ However, it is important to remember that Twitter is constantly changing its features, including its technological mechanisms. For example, in November 2017 the character limit in tweets doubled from 140 to 280.

debate in Sweden has been *#svpol*). Twitter's users create personal networks by following other users; these connections between users in a network do not have to be mutual. Additionally, users can create lists of other users, regardless of whether they follow them or not. All Twitter activity is measured, and most of these metrics are easily accessible. (Giglietto et al., 2012; Weller et al., 2014)

What journalists do on Twitter not only reflects how they perform journalism and their dialogue and interactions with their audiences, but also reflects their professional norms and values, private opinions, and private lives – how they perceive their roles. Information on this is not only found in the explicit content of short tweets and profile presentations, but also implicitly in the metrics (Hermida, 2013; van Dijck & Poell, 2013).

Finding a representative sample of j-tweeters

When it comes to collecting data on Twitter, Gaffney and Puschmann (2014 p. 64; cf. Golder & Macy, 2012) emphasize that “without generalisation the potential for sociological research is limited, in spite of much enthusiasm for Twitter as a data source”. Others point to the difficulties of sampling data “because in most of the cases the distributions are extremely skewed” as a few users are much more active than most others (Giglietto et al., 2012, p. 154). As a result, and considering that journalists can use Twitter for mainly professional tasks, perhaps without posting content of their own but instead “lurking around”, one of the main focuses when designing this study has been to find a sample of j-tweeters who are as representative as possible. By including more and less active j-tweeters in this sample, the skewedness in this respect should be less of a problem.

As many journalists do not identify themselves as such in their Twitter presentations, and there is no mandatory registration of journalist accounts, there are obvious difficulties in determining the population of Swedish journalists on Twitter, and thus no way to draw a “proper” randomized sample. Researchers can solve this problem in different ways: by searching for the words “journalist” or “reporter”, and similar, in the Twitter account presentations and letting the findings equal the sample (e.g. Wihbey et al., 2017), building on strategic samples small enough to search for the chosen journalists' Twitter usernames manually (e.g. Cozma & Chen, 2012; Noguera-Vivo, 2013), or building on self-recruited lists or lists compiled by others (e.g. Lasorsa et al., 2012; Artwick, 2013; 2014; Lawrence et al., 2013). All these strategies will leave the researchers with a purposive (convenience) sample. Another approach is to search for specific hashtags and analyze the activity connected to these (e.g. Bruns & Stieglitz, 2012), but in that case one cannot analyze differences between groups of users.

Instead, in spring 2011, I started strategic snowball sampling by manually collecting Swedish journalists' Twitter usernames⁴⁸. Each time I found a "new" journalist's account, the username was stored in a separate list and the journalists' lists of followers and followed were manually searched for yet more usernames. The lists of employees, members and so on in news and interest organizations were searched in the same way. One advantage of this approach is that the resulting list of usernames consisted of journalists identifying themselves as journalists in their Twitter presentations, as well as journalists who did not disclose their profession in their presentations and perhaps not even in the content of their updates. When collecting usernames, the emphasis was on finding individuals representing different groups of journalists and a diversity of workplaces (from national television and metropolitan tabloids to local dailies) and types of work (print, mobile, editor, etc.), as well as different levels of Twitter activity ranging from high-end to low-end users. In May 2014, when I collected my first sets of data, the list of Swedish j-tweeters included 2,543 usernames.

An analysis of the strategic sample of 2,543 Swedish journalists' usernames, using the account information and the manually coded variables in *Module 1* (see *Figure 5.1*), shows that there is a high degree of correspondence in the key variables where comparative data is available from the Swedish Journalist Surveys (see *Table 1* in *Article III*). Not all accounts display information on all these variables, however, and it is important to bear in mind that the distribution of all these unknowns could skew the sample in these respects. As shown in *Table 5.1*, the sample contains both high-end and low-end users.

Table 5.1 Swedish journalists on Twitter 2014, account metrics

	Number	Mean	Median	Std. deviation
Followers	0–75,000 (+)	1,714	434	5,377
Follows	0–40,000 (+)	631	428	1,288
Updates	0–100,000 (+)	4,668	1,488	9,090

Comment: $N = 2,543$. With respect to the anonymity of the journalists in the sample, the exact maximum numbers of followers, follows, and updates are withheld.

⁴⁸ This sampling method is similar to what Rafail (2017), in a comparison of the strengths and problems of different sampling strategies, suggests as the most effective (with regards to data quality) way to construct a sample from a bounded or pre-defined population: to first create a database of accounts of interest.

The merged dataset approach

Previous research into journalists on Twitter draws on either data about the users (profile presentations) or a collection of tweets. Instead, I suggest an approach that includes collecting and combining data on both users and tweets, thus facilitating a new type of analysis.

The merged dataset approach (Figure 5.1) was originally developed to answer the third research question of this study, but it is highly flexible: once the first module, which includes data on the sample of journalists, is collected and coded, it can be reused with different sets of data in the second module, answering new research questions or building a timeline. Each module can also be analyzed separately if the research question at hand calls for such an approach. If the research questions call for it, each module can also be merged with data and/or information from sources other than Twitter⁴⁹.

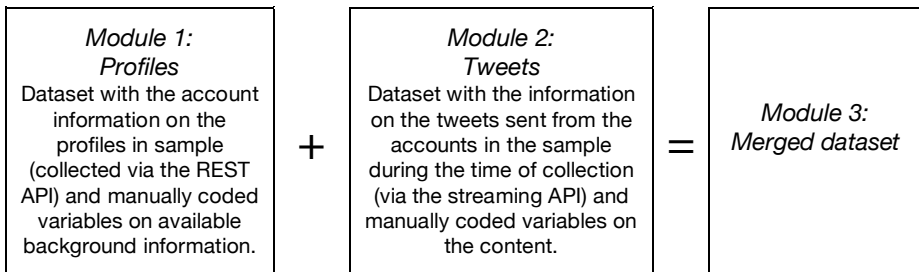


Figure 5.1 A model of *The merged dataset approach* with replaceable modules.

Collecting data from Twitter

The API (application programming interface) is an interface through which a third-party researcher or developer can connect to an existing service, such as a social media platform, to collect data or connect add-ons (Lomborg & Bechmann, 2014). The Twitter API gives access to two types of information, about the users or about the tweets (Giglietto et al., 2012), and there are three types of API available: the streaming API means that the requested data is constantly “flowing” from the requested URL (web address) as a live poll, the REST API that uses a more traditional pull model, and the search API, also pull-based, that allows the researcher to search for specific tweets, usernames or hashtags and so on (Bruns & Burgess, 2012; Kumar et al., 2013; Gaffney & Puschmann, 2014).

⁴⁹ However, combining data from different sources this way calls for thorough ethical consideration.

The data was collected in collaboration with *Filip Wallberg*, a journalistic lecturer at University of Southern Denmark. Wallberg and his colleagues have developed a Python script that allows for importing and following lists of users and collecting all tweets, retweets and so on, during the chosen time of data collection. In May 2014, two sets of data were retrieved.

The first dataset, collected via the REST API, contains information on all 2,543 accounts in the list of usernames: id, name, username, account presentation, joining date and time, location, and numbers of followers, followed, lists, and updates at the time of the retrieval. This first dataset equals *Module 1* in *Figure 1*. Using all available information in the dataset, it was manually coded for gender, workplace, and workplace location, as well as a range of dichotomous variables⁵⁰.

The second dataset, collected via the streaming API, contains all the tweets from the usernames on the list in one week: username, tweet, date and time, number of retweets, favorites and replies, geo location, and if the tweet was deleted or not during the period of data collection. It also contains all tweets from other users mentioning the usernames in the sample during the time of data collection, mentions and retweets. In total, 271,854 tweets were collected in May, of which 70,901 were sent from the usernames in the sample of journalists. This second dataset equals *Module 2* in *Figure 1*⁵¹. From this dataset of tweets, a subsample of 1,500 tweets was randomized and then merged with the dataset of the users. This resulting third dataset, *Module 3*, is used for a content analysis of what journalists publish (post), and manually coded with regard to the specific research questions in the articles⁵².

5.7 Five part studies and articles

The research questions guiding this analysis were answered in five part studies, resulting in five separate articles, each with its own “sub-aim” and research questions, and using one of the three theoretical approaches introduced in *Chapter 3*. Each research question is answered in more than one article. For practical reasons, *RQ1* and *RQ2* are answered in parallel in the articles based on survey data, while *RQ3* is answered in two separate articles, focusing on different aspects of the research question.

The five articles are schematically presented in *Table 5.2* as an overview. Each article is summarized (including a résumé of its main findings) in the next chapter.

⁵⁰ See the methods sections in *Articles III and V* for further information on these variables.

⁵¹ One must remember, however, that this sample of tweets in *Module 2* is extremely skewed in the respect that a small share of constantly active users makes up most of the content, while the majority are far less productive (cf. Giglietto et al., 2012).

⁵² See the methods sections in *Articles III and V* for further information on these variables.

Table 5.2 Overview of articles and studies

	Title	Aim of article	Approach
I	The social journalist. Embracing the social media life or creating a new digital divide? (2013)	To analyze the level, purpose and evaluation of usage of social media and social network sites among different categories of journalists in Sweden.	Normalizing
II	J-tweeters. Pointing towards a new set of professional practices and norms in journalism (2015)	To study the process of normalizing in journalism by examining journalists' use of Twitter.	Normalizing
III	When journalists tweet. Disclosure, participatory, and personal transparency (2016)	To analyze transparency among groups of journalists by examining journalists' tweets.	(Normalizing)
IV	Appropriating social media. The changing uses of social media among journalists across time (2016)	To study changing attitudes and practices related to social media among Swedish journalists between 2012 and 2014.	Appropriation of technology
V	Making the most of Twitter. How technological affordances influence Swedish journalists' self-branding (2017)	To analyze how the technological affordances of Twitter shape journalists' self-branding in their account presentations and whether there are differences between groups of journalists.	Social media logic

Comment: *The difference in *N* refers to the use of different versions of the SJS.

Sub RQs in article	Material	Answers to
–	The Swedish Journalist Survey, 2011 (N = 1,412)*	RQ1, RQ2 (evaluative level of roles)
<p><i>RQ1:</i> Who are the active j-tweeters, and how do they use Twitter?</p> <p><i>RQ2:</i> How do the active j-tweeters deviate from other journalists on views about practices and norms, audience orientation, and personal branding?</p>	The Swedish Journalist Survey, 2011 (N = 1,414)*	RQ1, RQ2 (evaluative level of roles)
<p><i>RQ1:</i> To what degree do journalists show disclosure transparency (i.e. job talk) when tweeting from their personal accounts, and what differences are there between groups of journalists regarding disclosure transparency?</p> <p><i>RQ2:</i> To what degree do journalists show participatory transparency (i.e. engaging the audiences) when tweeting from their personal accounts, and what differences are there between groups of journalists regarding participatory transparency?</p> <p><i>RQ3:</i> To what degree do journalists show personal transparency (i.e. sharing private information) when tweeting from their personal accounts, and what differences are there between groups of journalists regarding personal transparency?</p>	Twitter data (profile information and tweets) collected in 2014 (N = 1,500)	RQ3 (performative level of roles)
<p><i>RQ1:</i> To what extent do journalists use social media, and how has the usage changed across time?</p> <p><i>RQ2:</i> How are the changing uses of social media related to journalists' personal (age, gender) and organizational (type of work, workplace location, workplace) identities and positions?</p> <p><i>RQ3:</i> Which social media affordances do journalists recognize and value, and how does the valuation change across time?</p>	The Swedish Web Panel, 2012 (N = 1,305) and 2014 (N = 957)	RQ1, RQ2 (evaluative level of roles)
<p><i>RQ1:</i> How do journalists self-brand on Twitter in terms of what information they provide about themselves in their account presentation, and are there differences among groups of journalists?</p> <p><i>RQ2:</i> How does information derived from Twitter's account metrics (number of updates, follows, and followers) add to journalists' self-branding, and are there differences among groups of journalists?</p>	Twitter data (profile information) collected in 2014 (N = 2,543)	RQ3 (performative level of roles)

5.8 Evaluation

Each study is evaluated separately and these evaluations are included in the respective articles. The question here is how well the part studies answer the aim and the research questions of this dissertation? To answer this, one has to analyze both internal and external validity.

Aim and research questions have been formulated and re-formulated over the years, reflecting the rapidly evolving field of research. In two articles, co-writers have influenced both aim and research questions. In most articles, anonymous reviewers have made relevant and well-argued suggestions about how to improve the articles before publishing in international journals – advice for which I am very grateful. All in all, this has made the articles much more readable and stringent.

The operationalization of the three research questions (see above) is executed in two separate ways: as questions in two separate surveys (SJS and SJP), and as variables in two content analyses of data collected from the SNS Twitter. This methodological triangulation enhances internal validity. Two levels are identified in the theoretical perspective of journalistic role performance: an evaluative and a performative level. These two levels are addressed in this methodological triangulation – the evaluative level in the surveys and the performative level in the content analysis – which also enhances internal validity. A general problem with surveys is that the findings draw from self-reported data, and individuals do not always remember what they actually do or how much – or they are embarrassed to answer or won't answer for other reasons (Blair et al., 2014).

There is a risk that findings may be compromised because the data collections (surveys and Twitter data) were made during a period of hype; the journalists in the samples may have been more positive about social media and SNS than they would have been if the data collection had occurred at a later point⁵³. As the research questions calls for comparisons over time, however, this should be less of a problem.

The survey questionnaires were formulated in co-operation with the respective survey administrators. The main purpose of this was to ensure the overall quality of the respective surveys. The SJS was created in 2011 and the SJP in 2012, however, when social media in journalism was considered a novelty and research in this field was still scarce. In retrospect, and considering the development of

⁵³ In retrospect, at the time when the data for this dissertation was collected it was possible for Swedish journalists to be perhaps even more personal and private when using Twitter, as Twitter in general was somewhat more personal in contrast to what it has evolved to (Burgess & Bruns, 2012; Burgess, 2015), and as there were fewer threats and hate espoused against Swedish journalists (Löfgren Nilsson & Örnebring, 2016).

SNS and their uses among journalists, other questions could have been asked. The survey questionnaires reflect their specific period in time, when we did not know which specific services or uses would be most valued five years later.

If the surveys can be considered rather blunt instruments from this point of view, the coding of the Twitter data is more flexible – given the limitation of what data can be retrieved via Twitter’s public API (see above). Once the data was collected in 2014, new variables could be added, reflecting not only the time of the actual data collection but also the development of social media and journalism. For example, personal branding was not regarded as common practice among journalists in 2011. When work started on the fifth study of this dissertation in 2015, it was fairly easy to re-code the data material, adding a new set of variables.

Transparency is but one of many professional ideals among journalists, and the third study (*Article III*) focuses on the manifestation of transparency in journalists’ tweets. Further research is called for to analyze the manifestation of other professional ideals – for example, journalists’ networks and/or interactions can be analyzed as reflections of objectivity, and their interactions as manifestations of audience orientation (cf. Mellado, 2015). The second study (*Article II*) analyze the j-tweeters in relation to a somewhat wider range of professional ideals. Again, further research is called for to analyze the manifestation of other professional ideals.

The process of transforming the web questionnaires in the SJP is automatized, and evaluation of the SJS showed high quality in the process of scanning and coding the questionnaires – the dataset reflects the respondents answers to the questionnaires (Andersson, 2012).

An independent research assistant coded subsamples of 10 percent of the respective Twitter datasets, and Krippendorff’s Alpha (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007) was used to estimate intercoder reliability. The estimates for the independent variables used range from .91 (if the user self-identified as a journalist) to 1.00 (gender). The estimates for the dependent variables range from .87 (explicit personal transparency) to 1.00 (explicit participatory transparency).⁵⁴

Regarding external validity and the ability to generalize from the findings, the evaluations of the SJS and SJP surveys show a high degree of representativeness compared to the total population of the SJU (Andersson, 2012; Löfgren Nilsson, 2015). As shown above (*Table 5.1*), the purposive sample of journalists on Twitter show a high degree of representativeness compared to the total population of the SJU and to the SJS.

⁵⁴ Information on all estimates is included in the methods sections of *Articles III and V*.

5.9 Ethical considerations

There are some ethical considerations when working with Twitter data (and data from other SNS). In this section I will discuss the most important of these, and account for my own actions in this regard.

5.9.1 Regarding the surveys

All answers to the SJS are anonymized. To guarantee the anonymity of the respondents of the SJS, the sampling, enumeration of questionnaires, mail distribution, and control of returned questionnaires were conducted separately from the scanning of the returned questionnaires. It was thus impossible to connect a specific questionnaire to an identified respondent (Andersson, 2012).

All answers to the SJP were anonymized in a similar way⁵⁵.

5.9.2 Regarding the Twitter data

Working with data derived from SNS “presents significant ethical challenges” no matter that the data is “already public” (Wolfinger, 2016, p. 1; cf. Zimmer & Proferes, 2014; Ahmed et al., 2017). The most important of these challenges are addressed in the following.

Twitter’s terms of use

First of all, the researcher needs to make sure that she does not violate Twitter’s terms of use: the Developer Agreement and Policy (Twitter Inc., 2018a), Terms of Service (Twitter Inc., 2018b), and Privacy Policy (Twitter Inc., 2018c). A review of these with regard to the specific context of this research demonstrates that the collected data must not be shared, and that the researcher must remove information from the collected datasets that might make the identification of specific users possible. Apart from this, Twitter’s terms of use are in line with general research ethics and Swedish law (cf. Buerskens, 2014; Gunnarsson Lorentzen, 2016) and the following will show the steps that I have taken in each respect.

Informed consent

Perhaps most important ethical consideration involves the question of gaining informed consent from the individuals in the sample of Twitter users. This is a question of both research ethics, law, and what is stated in the privacy policy that

⁵⁵ See the project’s website for further information on this: <https://jmg.gu.se/english/research/research-projects/the-journalist-panel>

every Twitter user accepts. The latter gives researchers, among many others, consent to collect and analyze any Twitter user's public data:

“When using any of our Services you consent to the collection, transfer, storage, disclosure, and use of your information as described in this Privacy Policy. [— —] Twitter broadly and instantly disseminates your public information to a wide range of users, customers, and services, including search engines, developers, and publishers that integrate Twitter content into their services, and organizations such as universities, public health agencies, and market research firms that analyze the information for trends and insights.” (Twitter Inc., 2018c)

Consent according to the Twitter Privacy Policy does not necessarily equal consent according to research ethics, however. The ethical guidelines published by the Association of Internet Research (AoIR) (Markham & Buchanan, 2012) suggests that since all collected Twitter data in this case is public, since it contains non-sensitive information (with one exception to be discussed later), and since the data is analyzed on an aggregated, non-individual level, there is no need to gain informed consent from the individual journalists whose Twitter accounts are being harvested for this particular study. Lomborg and Bechmann (2014) also reach this conclusion in an article on using APIs for data collection on SNS:

“... most quantitative studies using APIs are interested in structural analysis, pattern recognition, and prediction and not in single-user profiles, in contrast to qualitative studies. This creates research scenarios where it may be appropriate not to seek informed consent, simply because there is a greater distance between the analysis being made and the actual users involved in the data sets.” (p. 262)

Following these guidelines and the Twitter Privacy Policy, I did not gain informed consent from the sample of journalists on Twitter.

Personal data and anonymization

The Swedish Personal Data Act (PUL)⁵⁶ stated that one cannot process sensitive personal data, such as information on race or ethnicity, political opinions, religion,

⁵⁶ The EU General Data Protection Regulation, GDPR (EU 2016:679) was enforced from 25 May 2018. This outdated the national PUL, and a new national legislation (SFS 2018:218) supplements the GDPR.

health, or sexuality – any such data must be removed from the datasets (SFS 1998:204). This is not the type of information that is normally posted on Twitter, and there has been no need to remove such information from the datasets. On the question of anonymizing the datasets or not, since data is analyzed on an aggregated, non-individual level, there is no need to keep variables on actual user id, name, or username, in the final datasets, and these have thus been removed, nor have they been shared or made public (cf. Gunnarsson Lorentzen, 2016).

Sensitive information

As mentioned above, the collected data (i.e. the second dataset) contains what can be regarded as a piece of very sensitive information. According to the Swedish Freedom of the Press Act (SFS 1949:105) and the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression (SFS 1991:1469) journalists and other people working in media must not disclose information on or the identity of a source if this source wants to be anonymous. The second dataset contains information on not only the exact time a tweet was sent, but also, in some cases, information on the geo location – geographic coordinates that shows exactly where the tweet was sent from, at an exact point in time. This information, which is accessible not only to researchers but to anyone with access to Twitter's public API, jeopardizes the source's right to anonymity, as it makes it possible to map journalists' movements in detail. Twitter users have the option to not share this information, but 8 percent of the journalists in my sample do share it. Geo location information also involves individual privacy and integrity. As a journalism researcher I do not see any need to retain the exact geographical information in the datasets, and have replaced it with a variable that shows only whether there was information on geo location or not.

5.10 Some notes on research design and methodology

There is a lack of research into social media in journalism based on an empirical material that can be generalized to a larger population of journalists. The study rationale presented here draws on a statistical methodological approach that allows for the generalization of the findings to the national population of journalists in Sweden as well as comparisons between groups of journalists. The mixed design consists of both surveys and content analysis of Twitter data.

My main methodological contribution with this dissertation lies in demonstrating a way to optimize the use of available Twitter data for research (*The merged dataset approach*). By providing a thorough account of all methodological steps in my work with Twitter data, I hope that other researchers can learn from this example, to answer new research questions or to work with data retrieved from other SNS.

6 Summary of the articles

This chapter gives a brief overview of the five separate articles (part studies) that are included in this compilation thesis (*Articles I–V*). These five articles show how Swedish journalists adopt and appropriate social media, how they evaluate different affordances, and their opinions on social media in journalism. They also show how the Swedish journalists active on the social network site Twitter perceive their roles as journalists as they perform one of the most important contemporary ideals of journalism (transparency), and how their personal brands are manifested in their account presentations on this platform.

Each study's aim, theoretical points of departure, and the methodologies applied are presented, along with their main findings⁵⁷. The articles are presented in chronological order, as they were written and published, as this is perhaps the best way to reflect that how journalism and journalists make use of social media and that SNS is not static but rapidly developing – as is the research in this field.

Previous versions of all these articles have been presented at international conferences, and abstracts and/or full papers have been reviewed as part of the conference application processes. The final articles are all published in international journals that apply systems of double-blinded peer review.

6.1 Article I: The social journalist (2013)

This first article was co-authored with *Monika Djerf-Pierre*. It draws on the Swedish Journalist Survey, a postal survey to a randomized and representative sample of members of the Swedish Union of Journalists, that was conducted in the autumn of 2011. Previous research, although not on representative samples of journalists, had indicated that social media not only changes business models and professional day-to-day practices in the newsrooms, and enhances the possibilities for audience interaction, but also affects professional values and norms. With this previous

⁵⁷ For details on sample, variables, frequencies, etc. see *Chapter 5* on methodology and/or *Articles I–V* in the appendices.

research in mind, this article uses the concepts of normalizing (Singer, 2005), ambience (Hermida, 2010a; 2010b), and blurring (Deuze, 2007) to analyze the level, purpose and evaluation of usage of social media and social network sites among different categories of journalists in Sweden.

The findings indicate that the use of social media and SNS among Swedish journalists is widespread. The level of usage is related to social factors such as age and type of work. Swedish journalists perceive social media and SNS as mostly useful for performing traditional professional tasks, and as an important awareness system. The very most frequent users are more audience orientated and positive about personal branding than are their less active colleagues.

From these findings, we distinguished three different ways in which journalists relate to social media. The small group (about 10–15 percent, often older journalists working in print media) of skeptical shunners avoid social media and SNS, are deeply skeptical of all uses and impacts of social media on journalism, and resist the notion that social media should change the profession. The vast majority of pragmatic conformists use social media and SNS predominantly as professional tools, but selectively, and are judicious in keeping their professional usage separate from their private, reflecting their ambivalence – they appreciate using social media and SNS as professional tools but are skeptical about the hype. This hype is articulated by the small group of enthusiastic activists (less than 5 percent, young, metropolitan, and mostly working on digital platforms): always online, mixing professional and private updates, convinced that social media will change journalism profoundly. This study also shows, however, that there are no differences between low- and high-end users regarding core professional values and ideals – objectivity, scrutiny, neutrality, independence, and so on.

6.2 Article II: J-tweeters (2015)

The aim of this article was to study the process of normalizing in journalism by examining journalists' use of Twitter. Normalizing is the process in which former practices and norms are challenged, but instead of leading to a change (and an improvement in a normative sense) the “new” is normalized, or adapted, to fit what already exists (Singer, 2005; Lasorsa et al., 2012). This article draws on the same empirical data as the first article, the SJS postal survey, but the analysis focuses on the active j-tweeters, the journalists in the sample who are active on Twitter. At the time, Twitter was considered the most important platform for social media in journalism, and by analyzing the j-tweeters one would thus expect to find the greatest impact from social media and SNS on the profession of journalism, as well as the largest differences between groups of journalists regarding professional practices and norms.

The findings indeed indicate that there are substantive differences between the most active j-tweeters (22 percent daily users) and their colleagues, especially regarding the Twitter-specific features of interacting, networking, and branding. The analysis shows that the active j-tweeters do not normalize Twitter, but instead adapt to the evolving norms and practices of Twitter related to audience orientation, networking and branding. The majority of journalists do normalize Twitter, however, and adapt it to fit journalism and to perform traditional professional tasks.

6.3 Article III: When journalists tweet (2016)

The aim of this article was to analyze transparency among groups of journalists by examining journalists' tweets. Transparency is considered one of the more important professional norms of journalism, not least because transparency is considered to promote credibility and accountability (Plaisance, 2007). The main argument here is that if you know "the persons behind the news" and how the news are made, you will also trust them (Feighery, 2011), and also that Twitter as a platform actually promotes transparency (Revers, 2014). The three forms of transparency in focus are disclosure transparency (job talk, explaining how the news are created, etc.), participatory transparency (references to the audiences and invitations to interact or contribute), and personal transparency (tweets that reveal personal or private information such as opinions, references to family or private life, etc.). The article draws on a content analysis of Twitter data from a representative sample of Swedish j-tweeters collected in 2014.

The analysis shows that about a quarter of journalists' tweets can be described as explicitly transparent (and many more implicitly transparent), however, while j-tweeters often discuss how the news is produced (journalists working in public service were the most transparent in this regard), they show less personal transparency (in this regard, there is a gender difference: women show a significantly more personal transparency than their male colleagues), and rarely invite the audiences to interact or take part in the process of making news. In other words: if you follow one or more journalists on Twitter with the purpose of understanding journalism, you may very well be disappointed. The level of transparency varies on an individual level, however – some journalists are considerably more transparent than others, blurring the boundaries between their professional and private spheres.

From these findings I distinguish two separate approaches among journalists on Twitter. The skeptical tweeters, who are most likely active on Twitter because they have been encouraged to be, have a "professional only" account and show moderate activity, tweeting about work related issues. The enthusiastic tweeters,

on the other hand, “go all out”, do not distinguish between professional and personal content, and are also the most likely to engage in conversations with their audiences.

This article also answers a call from previous research for studies based on a more representative sample of journalists. It does so by introducing an approach in which a dataset including independent variables on the users, and coded from the users’ account presentations, is merged with a dataset including dependent variables on the content of their activities, thus making comparisons between groups of users possible.

6.4 Article IV: Appropriating social media (2016)

In this fourth article, co-authored with *Monika Djerf-Pierre* and *Marina Gheretti*, we examine the changes in social media use over time, as well as changes in the perceived usefulness, among different groups of journalists. This article draws from theories on the appropriation and adoption of technologies (Orlikowski, 2000; Hutchby, 2001a; 2001b). Empirically, it draws from the Swedish Journalist Panel and two web surveys with questions on social media use conducted in 2012 and 2014. We were thus able to analyze changes over time in different groups of journalists, as well as changes on the level of the individual panel members.

This article shows that journalists’ appropriation of social media and SNS is an ongoing process during which the affordances are tested and reconsidered, an indication of the ultimate normalizing of social media in journalism. We find that Swedish journalists as a group only slightly increased their use of social media between 2012 and 2014, when almost 6 out of 10 used social media on a daily basis for professional purposes. We also find that the level of the use of specific platforms is relatively stable over time – but also that a significant proportion of journalists (about 18 percent, mostly formerly high-end users) have in fact decreased their use or even discontinued using social media altogether. This decrease in use correlates to a decrease over time in journalists’ evaluation of the perceived usefulness of social media and SNS for various professional tasks. One thing that has increased, however, is the explicit demands from managers and editors for members of their staff to be more active on social media.

6.5 Article V: Making the most of Twitter (2017)

The focus in this article is on personal branding and how journalists present themselves to others on a new platform. The theoretical focus is on social media logic, which in many ways contradicts news media logic. Social media logic not only

promotes a chase for virality and impressive metrics, but also a mix of professional and private content, as well as sharing, interacting and dialogue (van Dijck & Poell, 2013; Esser, 2014; Klinger & Svensson, 2015). When journalists appropriate social media, they accommodate social media logic which affects not only how they present themselves and their profession but also how they can be evaluated as professionals in terms of the metrics provided on their social media accounts. In this context, the aim of this article is to analyze how the technological affordances of Twitter shape journalists' self-branding in their account presentations, and whether there are differences between groups of journalists. It draws on a content analysis of Twitter account presentations from a representative sample of Swedish j-tweeters collected in 2014.

The findings suggest that the journalists who are most active on Twitter, and thus most likely to accommodate social media logic, brand themselves as being more audience oriented, networking, and individualistic than their colleagues, and also that they project a rather mixed identity of both professional and personal features. Journalists do not accommodate social media logic without reservations: most journalists emphasize professional attributes in their presentation (perhaps in an attempt to maintain their traditional role as trustworthy gatekeepers), most journalists do not seem to strive for high rankings based on Twitter activity metrics, and most journalists are restrictive with personal information. Accommodating social media logic is a process, however, and it is likely that the minority of high-end users set a standard for their less active colleagues to follow, especially considering Twitter's growing importance for journalists' personal branding. This article thus argues that what we see could very well be the start of a de-professionalization process in journalism, in which the professional and the personal will continue not only to mix, but perhaps also to merge.

7 The social roles of journalists

Journalists globally are now expected – or even obliged – to have a social presence on social media and social network sites. Swedish journalists are no exception in this regard. In these new shared spaces of social media and SNS, we now find *news hubs*, *ambassadors*, *lurkers*, and *celebrified marketers* side by side with the more *pragmatic journalists*. The adoption of social media is not the only thing affecting journalists in these times of change for the media industry, however, journalists are indeed in flux.

The chapter starts with a section on the answers to the research questions (RQ1–3) and the aim of this dissertation. This is followed by a discussion from the theoretical perspective of journalistic roles. I suggest a conceptualization of the social roles of journalists along the axes of news media logic–social media logic and formal–personal. I also present what I argue is one consequence from the clash between news media logic and social media logic: social news media logic. The chapter ends with discussion of the implications of this research, some limitations, and some suggestions for future research.

7.1 Journalists' adoption of social media

In the previous chapter, focus was on the individual studies and their respective findings. Now it is time to focus on the aim of this dissertation, to investigate journalists' adoption of social media and SNS, and the three research questions that guide the analysis.

7.1.1 Journalists are keen to adopt ...

The first research question (RQ1) concerned how journalists use social media and social network sites, and how this changes over time. The answers are found in *Articles I, II and IV*.

The findings of these studies show that social media and SNS had an almost immediate impact among Swedish journalists – as a group, these journalists are indeed keen adopters. The professional use of social media and SNS increased

only slightly from 2011 to 2014, however. Notably, the surveys show an increasing organizational demand for journalists to use social media, and that “the managers/editors want it” is in fact one of the most important factors for many journalists to be active on these platforms. Based on the web panel survey (*Article IV*), it has been possible to analyze individual changes in usage over time. From 2012 to 2014, 35 percent of the journalists in the panel increased their use of SNS, but there is also a large proportion of journalists who have in fact decreased their use – and among these, some of the previously most frequent users have chosen to disappropriate social media all together, joining the relatively small group of non-appropriators who are skeptical of social media and SNS.

There are differences between groups of journalists in how they appropriate this new technology. Age is, perhaps not surprisingly, the most predominant factor (the younger, the higher frequency of use), followed by workplace location (with a higher frequency of use among metropolitan journalists compared to others), type of work and workplace (radio and print journalists are the most frequent users), and gender (usage among women is higher than among men). These differences fade over time, however, as the late adopters start using social media and SNS more regularly.

With only a few exceptions, Swedish journalists are active on Facebook and Twitter, use Wikipedia, watch Youtube, read blogs, and lurk in discussion forums like “Flashback”⁵⁸, all with the purpose of typical professional practices such as sourcing and research, but also for trendspotting and general monitoring of ongoing debates. In this sense, social media and SNS are normalized in Swedish journalism, and journalists use them as “just another tool”. A small group of Swedish journalists also normalize journalism in social media and SNS, however, as more social media specific tasks such as dialogue, networking, and branding have become part of their new daily practices. These differences in normalization relate to differences in use – high-end users are more keen to fit journalism to social media and SNS, while low-end users guard traditional professional norms from the impact of social media and SNS. Most journalists show a very pragmatic approach to social media and SNS.

It is interesting to see that not only do former high-end users decrease or even stop using social media and SNS over time, but that the perceived usefulness of social media and SNS for various purposes also decreases over time among all users. The initial social media hype has indeed faded, a sign that a more pragmatic view of social media and SNS have gained support.

⁵⁸ “Flashback” (www.flashback.org) is a Swedish forum targeting a broad range of topics, from “national politics” and “crime” to “entertainment gossip” and “media criticism”.

7.1.2 ... but perhaps not keen to change

The second research question (*RQ2*) concerned how journalists perceive professional practices and norms in relation to the use of social media and SNS. The answers are found in *Articles I, II and IV*.

When asked about how Swedish journalists agree with a range of statements that relate to professional ideals and norms (see *Chapter 3.1.1*), the analysis showed few differences related to their social media practices, between high-end and low-end users⁵⁹. Journalists' professional ideals and norms are not easily affected, even by the adoption of a new set of tools that have a distinctive impact on journalistic practices.

There are significant differences that relate to other attitudes: the most frequent social media users are more audience oriented, more positive about personal branding, and believe that social media will indeed change journalism profoundly – the latter in sharp contrast to the most skeptical low-end users who believe that journalists should not be active on social media or SNS at all. This parallels what journalists say they use social media and SNS for: most journalists use these platforms for journalistic tasks but the high-end users also value the possibilities for dialogue, networking, and branding (see above).

7.1.3 Transparent by demand, a brand by competition

The third research question (*RQ3*) concerned how journalists perform “the journalist” on social media and SNS, and is analyzed as transparency in journalists' tweets (*Article III*) and journalists' personal branding (*Article V*).

Theoretically, transparency should be part of journalists' manifest performance of “the journalist” on Twitter. There are several reasons for this: the professional ideal of transparency is growing in importance among journalists, transparency is growing in importance as a means for journalistic media to improve credibility and trust among their audiences, and social media logic promotes transparency in the form of interactivity, job talk, and mixing professional and personal content. Few Swedish j-tweeters, however, are transparent in this regard.

Again, while most Swedish journalists display a pragmatic and rather restrained tweeting practice, a small group of j-tweeters stand out with a mix of professional and personal content in a steady flow of updates, often vividly chit-chatting with everyone on everything. It is also these journalists who are most engaged in public job-talk. In the case of transparency, age and type of work are

⁵⁹ The one exception to this is found among the very high-end users who display a slightly more active journalistic ideal, and these differences disappear when controlled for gender, age, and education.

not relevant factors, nor is the level of Twitter activity. Instead, it seems as if organizational factors could be at play here – organizational demands to be active and transparent on social media and SNS, policy documents, influence from editors and colleagues, and so on, – as well as individual factors.

To perform “the journalist” is also a question of personal branding and how journalists position themselves as journalists on Twitter. The analysis of Swedish journalists’ Twitter profiles show that most journalists present themselves with professional attributes, thus distinguishing themselves from other users on the platform. They mix this with some personal information, most likely to be perceived as trustworthy and credible. The small group of high-end j-tweeters also build their brand with impressive metrics, such as size of network and Twitter activity, as a way of gaining and displaying high rank and high status.

7.1.4 The question of “how?”

The aim of this dissertation has been to investigate journalists’ adoption of social media and social network sites. The answer to this implicit question of “how?” lies in the answers to the research questions presented above:

- social media and SNS had an immediate impact among Swedish journalists and are now used as valued professional tools for performing traditional professional tasks – however, the initial hype has faded and the general view is best described as pragmatic, but
- the high-end users of social media and SNS also use these new tools for networking, audience dialogue/interaction, and personal branding.
- journalists’ professional ideals and norms have not been affected by the adoption of social media and SNS, but
- the high-end users of social media and SNS have a more positive view on networking, audience dialogue/interaction, and personal branding.
- the professional ideal of transparency is not converted to Twitter practice, except for a small group of j-tweeters who engage in job-talk and mix the professional with the personal in their updates,
- most Swedish j-tweeters position themselves on Twitter with professional attributes mixed with some personal information, and impressive metrics have become part of their personal brand for a small group of j-tweeters.

Social media and SNS have changed journalistic practices, but not journalists as such. A small group of high-end users, the young journalists working in the largest cities, stand out both with regard to social media use and in relation to social media specific practices – networking, audience relations, personal branding, and so on, but these characteristics could as well be a consequence not of the adoption of social media and SNS but of the more competitive media market. For young

journalists, the competition for a job, an audience, professional status, and so on, is hard, especially in the big cities, making it more necessary to make an impact. The study of changes in social media and SNS use show that between 2011 and 2014, the only SNS that increased in use among Swedish journalists were Twitter and LinkedIn⁶⁰ (see *Figure 1* in *Article IV*). These are also the two SNS that most explicitly offer a platform for professional usage; Twitter because almost all activities are public and attracting elite users (at least in Sweden), and LinkedIn because of its aim to be a network for professionals. It is also among the young journalists, freelancers, and unemployed that we find the most positive attitudes towards personal branding (see *Table 2* in *Article II*). For these journalists, social media and SNS provide a just-in-time means to build a career on a more competitive media market. The ever increasing datafication is part of this, as visible metrics have indeed become a measure of success.

This is also the answer to the question in what I have referred to as the wider perspective, in which I use the adoption of social media and SNS as a case to understand how journalists are affected by changes in the media industry: this case provides another example showing that journalists are keen to adopt new tools and to add new practices to their professional toolbox, but not easily affected when it comes to core professional ideals and norms. This supports previous research about past changes in the media industry. Despite what many argue, and despite the many changes in journalism practice, social media and SNS has not – yet – brought any profound change to the profession of journalism.

I have used Sweden as a case study because its work conditions and organizational structures should ideally allow Swedish journalists to test different approaches in adopting social media and SNS. This has proved true especially when it comes to personal branding, in which Swedish j-tweeters deviate from journalists in countries with similar media systems in that they are more personal in their profiles and updates, and more likely than others to give away private information about themselves. To paraphrase Klinger and Svensson (2015, p. 1251), Swedish journalists are indeed allowed to follow the rules of the social media game – if they want to.

7.2 Journalists' social roles

Interestingly, Swedish journalists of all groups and with different levels of social media usage believe that the traditional role(s) of journalists must – and will – change because of social media (see *Table 5* in *Article I* and *Figure 2* in *Article II*).

⁶⁰ The use of chat forums also increased, but these forums are private and difficult for journalists to exploit for professional purposes.

While there is no consensus among journalists about what the traditional role(s) of journalists really is, journalists' adoption of social media and SNS does indeed bring a new set of possible roles to the repertoire. Many of these relate to the social in social media and SNS, while others are perhaps less social but nevertheless relate to social media logical mechanisms.

Based on the findings in the respective individual studies, which all relate to the evaluative or performative levels of journalistic roles, I suggest a conceptualization of journalists' social roles – how journalists “behave like journalists” – along the axes of news media logic–social media logic and formal–personal.

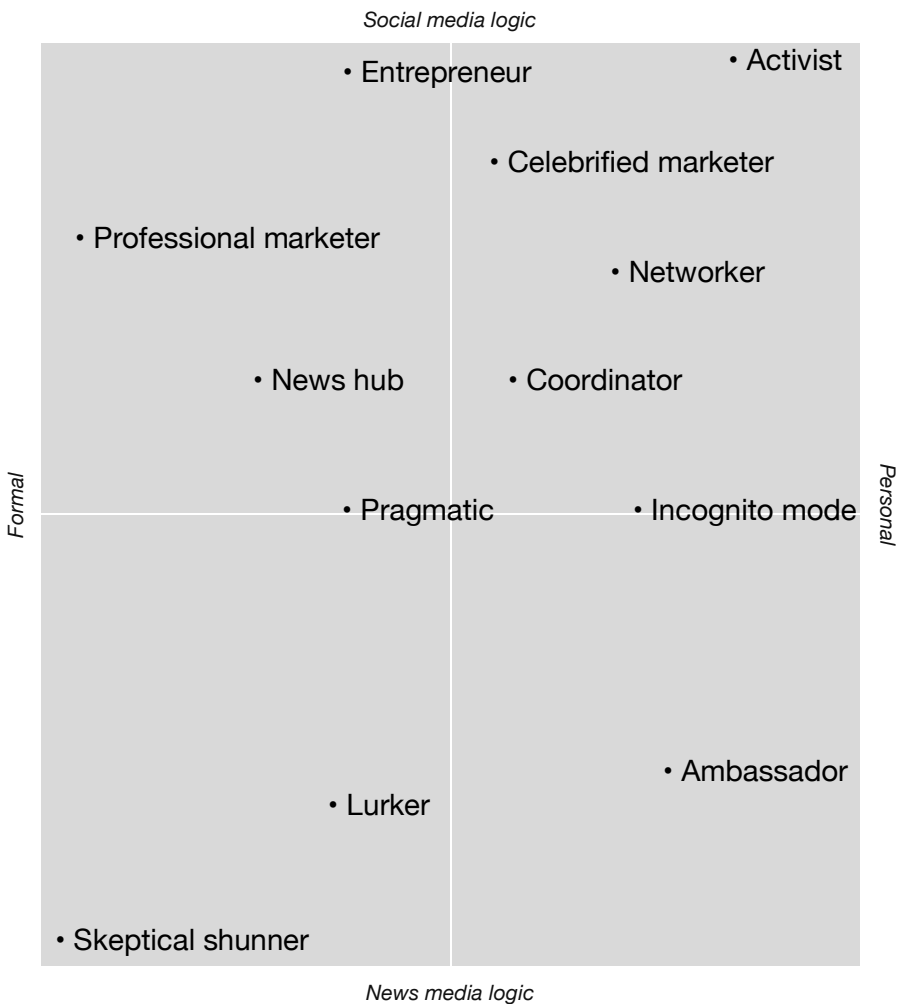


Figure 7.1 The social roles of journalists.

media logic–social media logic relates to the inherent mechanisms of news media and social media, respectively, and how journalists relate to these in both views and in practices. Formal–personal relates to voice, and whether the approach is mostly professional and formal or more personal. The conceptualization is presented in *Figure 7.1*. In this, I have placed the different social roles of journalists that can be detected in the different part studies.

We find the journalistic roles of the *skeptical shunner* and the *activist* in opposite corners. If she could have it her way, the skeptical shunner would have nothing to do with social media and SNS. If she is active on social media, it is often because of organizational demands and for strictly work-related purposes with a strictly professional approach. In the most extreme cases, the skeptical shunner may be a non- or dis-appropriator. The activist, on the other hand, embraces social media and all the possibilities for networking, audience relations, and personal branding, and is, in the words of Hermida, not held back by any “formal constraints of traditional journalism” (2013, p. 306). She is constantly active, mixing professional with personal or even private content, and also has a distinct personal tone, almost chit-chatting, also in work-related activities.

Somewhere in between, and part of the majority, is the *pragmatic*. She recognizes traditional journalistic norms and ideals (cf. Deuze, 2005) and values the possibilities that comes with social media for performing traditional professional tasks but also for improving audience relations, networking, content distribution, and so on. While she uses social media and SNS for both professional and personal purposes, her personal usage shows that she is a journalist.

There are also journalistic roles that reflect specific social media affordances in professional role performances. The *lurker* prefers not to interact, but nevertheless keeps a close eye of what is going on – on social media in general and on her beat specifically. The *networker* builds a professional network, visible for everyone to see, of sources, interviewees, colleagues, and so and, and maintains this network by friendly small talk. The *news hub* has found her role in providing a constant flow of updates and links that relate to her beat, thus building a personal audience of up-to-date followers. Among these, we also find the *coordinator*, who initiates debates and discussions on social media, sometimes with the purpose of translating these into journalistic output.

The *ambassador* spends her time on social media to advocate journalism. She also recognizes the importance of transparency as a means for credibility, engage in professional disclosure and job-talk, and try to get her audiences involved in the process of making journalism.

The *celebrified marketer* (cf. Olausson, 2018) is the extreme among those who have an explicit strategy for personal branding. She is constantly positioning herself at every breaking news event, professional debate, and general debate, using the visible metrics of social media as a sign of her success. In contrast to this is

the *professional marketer*, who recognizes the need to brand herself but prefers a more non-personal approach, emphasizing professional attributes over SNS metrics.

The *incognito mode* journalist has chosen an anonymous social media life. She is known by a pseudonym or nickname, and does not disclose that she is a journalist in her profile information. This does not stop her from talking about journalism, often in a more up-front manner.

The *entrepreneur*, finally, is not explicitly present in the individual studies of this dissertation but this is a journalistic role we most likely will see in the future. In a more competitive media market, she makes social media and SNS the platform for her journalism, for building her audience, publishing, and financing (e.g. Vos & Singer, 2016).

Interestingly, not all of the social roles of journalists are truly social. The skeptical shunner avoids anything social, the lurker prefers to observe rather than to interact, the professional marketer shows a digital business card more often than mingling skills.

7.3 Social news media logic

What we see in *Figure 7.1* above is also the formation of social news media logic. As discussed previously (*Chapter 3.2.3*), journalists adopting social media and SNS not only have to accommodate social media logic but also find a way to fit social media logic with news media logic. The findings in my research suggest that this is not only a question of maneuvering two parallel media logics. Building on the works of Esser (2014) on news media logic, Klinger and Svensson (2015) on what they describe as network logic, but in the following is referred to as social media logic, and van Dijck and Poell (2013) on what they describe as social media logic but within a journalistic context, I suggest the following conceptualization of the differences between news media logic and what I argue is a new news media logic – a social news media logic^{61 62}. This conceptualization is presented in *Table 7.1*.

The differences between news media logic and social news media logic have several implications not only for journalism but also for journalists. Social network sites facilitate audience dialogue, interaction, and participation (and, following this, that audiences expect journalists to answer questions etc.). Social news media logic also favors a different storytelling (or reporting) technique in order to gain as much attention as possible in the ambient flows of information (Klinger & Svensson, 2015, p. 1246). On social network sites, journalists can no longer rely

⁶¹ This conceptualization originates from the work on network logic by Klinger and Svensson (2015) but is here modified.

⁶² For an extended discussion of these differences, see *Article 5*.

Table 7.1 News media logic vs. social news media logic

	News media logic	Social media logic	Social news media logic
Product	Pre-defined format with a selection of curated content (i.e. a newspaper, a news site, a documentary series)	1) Services where users can create and exchange content OR services where users construct a profile, create a network, and share content within this network i.e. ambience. 2) Data	1) Single (stand-alone) pieces of content (a link to an article, a video, an interview) i.e. ambient journalism. 2) Data
Production	Expensive. Journalists as gatekeepers. Journalists professional norms, practices, and ethics, guiding the selection and production of content	Inexpensive. Information selection by all users according to individual preferences and practices, selection guided by principles of engagement (virality) and maximizing attention	Less expensive. Journalists professional norms, practices, and ethics guiding the production, and the selection guided by principles of engagement (virality) and maximizing attention
Voice	Formal	Personal	Personal
Mode	One-way	Two-way	Two-way
Distribution	On schedule to a paying and pre-defined audience of subscribers	Logic of sharing and logic of virality	Continuous. Logic of sharing and logic of virality
Media usage	Location-bound, passive, "mass audience"	Interest- or peer-bound networks, selective exposure	Interest-bound networks, active audiences (re-distributing, commenting, and participating), selective exposure
Journalists	Professionals working for an organization/ corporation	Individual users with networks of followers	Professionals working for an organization/ corporation <i>and</i> individual users with networks of followers

Comment: This comparison of different but interdependent media logics is based on the works by Klinger and Svensson (2015), Esser (2014), and van Dijck and Poell (2013).

exclusively on the audiences' trust in the brand of their employer – if they want to build an individual audience of followers, they have to build their own personal brands and expose themselves personally and/or privately in a way that was rarely called for just a decade ago. Journalists must also show that they can adapt to genre conventions and the logic of sharing (e.g. Hermida, 2014a).

Furthermore, and as a consequence of datafication, the higher the numbers (of clicks, updates, users in one's network, etc.), the higher the status – in the organization, among peers, and in the eyes of their sources (van Dijck & Poell, 2013). One way for a journalist to achieve this is to share content that is more personalized and emotional (Klinger & Svensson, 2015). The ambience (e.g. Hermida, 2010a; 2010b; 2014b) of social network sites like Twitter makes it even more important for journalists to find ways to keep their audiences' constant attention. For individual journalists, becoming a node or a hub by delivering a constant flow of relevant news from trustworthy sources is one way to achieve this. Credibility can be obtained not only by authenticity and accountability, but also by personal disclosure (e.g. Hayes et al., 2007). According to social news media logic, journalists are thus again encouraged to provide a mix of professional and personal content.

Van Dijck and Poell (2013) emphasize another important aspect of social media logic: technological mechanisms. These “shape all kinds of relational activities, such as liking, favoriting, recommending, sharing and so on” (p. 5)⁶³. For example on Twitter, all users are required to present themselves in their account information, to add a background photograph and an avatar picture of some sort, and optionally to provide contact information and/or a link to a website, and every user's number of sent tweets, followers and follows are displayed for everyone to see⁶⁴ (for an overview, see Halavais, 2014). Another consequence of datafication is that newsrooms are increasingly dependent on deriving metadata for predictive and real-time analytics from social network sites, as well as from the devices that are used to gain access to media content. This also affect journalists' professional practices, as metrics are an important factor guiding the selection and presentation of content (e.g. Lee et al., 2012; Hanusch, 2017; Carlson, 2018; Ferrer-Conill & Tandoc, 2018).

⁶³ For another example of how these technological mechanisms shapes journalists' practices, see Enli and Simonsen (2018) on political journalists' use of hashtags on Twitter.

⁶⁴ This visibility of metrics also contributes to the increasing datafication.

7.4 Implications for journalists and journalism

What are the implications of all this for journalists and for journalism? The adoption of social media and SNS not only opens the way for a new more interactive relationship with audiences, but provides new possibilities for networking, and a platform for personal branding. I would like to highlight three other examples, all aspects of the blurring of the former journalistic boundary of professional–personal.

The first implication concerns journalistic ethics. In the 2011 SJS survey, a majority of the Swedish journalists agreed with the statement that “it is important to keep the private and professional use of social media separate” (see *Table 5 in Article 1*). This is a boundary that is not only blurred but rather non-existent. There is no way to separate professional from personal on social media and SNS. Unless a journalist chooses a totally anonymous approach on social media and SNS, never talking about her job as a journalist and not networking with colleagues, she will be identified and evaluated by others as a journalist and as performing a journalistic role. This makes it important for Swedish journalists to uphold professional ethics in their personal/private everyday social media usage as well. One way to address this would be to add a section on “social media ethics” to the professional code of conduct.

The second implication concerns the increasing levels of threats and hate speech against journalists, including in Sweden (Löfgren Nilsson & Örnebring, 2016). The mixing of professional and personal on social media and SNS enables a more personalized and thus aggressive type of threats and hate speech, and friends and family who are visible in a journalist’s personal networks become additional and easily identified targets. While social media logic promotes a mixture of the professional and personal, the increasing threats against journalists could be a restraining factor, pushing journalists towards a more strictly professional use – giving up on audience-related interactions and transparency. The awareness of this problem is rising, but it needs further attention. One way to address this is to revise legislation.

The third implication concerns the possible de-professionalization of journalists. In *Article 5*, I argue that the process of accommodating social media logic is a process of mediatization “in which the professional and personal continue not only to mix but perhaps also to merge” (p. 204) and personal attributes become as important as professional ones when evaluating a journalist⁶⁵. This is a process of de-professionalization that could also lead to journalists becoming

⁶⁵ See also Kammer (2013) on the mediatization of journalism.

more heterogeneous as a group, with greater variation in professional values relating to personal (rather than professional) preferences. The findings in the individual studies of this dissertations suggest that the young metropolitan high-end users set an example for their colleagues to follow. Whether or not this is a positive development is a normative question, but one that deserves attention from journalists and journalistic organizations, as well as from researchers.

Finally: the reshaping of the Swedish media market brought a forced generational shift in journalistic organizations, in which older journalists were given the option to leave with a more or less golden handshake or laid off, more often than not based on the argument that the organization needed younger and more social media savvy employees. There are several reasons to question the validity of this argument. In retrospect, we can see that the appropriation of social media and SNS by all groups of journalists is a success story. There are some examples of non-appropriators, certainly, but also of dis-appropriators – formerly high-end users, and as such attractive employees that have stopped using social media altogether. “Young and social media savvy” was apparently not the sole answer to the challenges brought by a more competitive media market, and it is a lesson for media organizations that “young and savvy” is most likely not the answer to future challenges.

7.5 Limitations

There are limitations to the findings in this dissertation, and it is important to keep these in mind when discussing the implications.

The empirical material is collected from one national context, which makes generalizing to other contexts difficult. The sampling in the surveys and in the collection of the Twitter data does not make up for this limitation in space.

There is also a limitation in time. The empirical material was collected during a period of social media hype and when social media and SNS were still new phenomena and under constant development. Over time, uses and views are expected to change, and new platforms will replace those used during the time of the data collection.

7.6 Further research

One of my main arguments is that we can now watch the formation of a specific social news media logic. Future research should follow this process and refine the rather blunt schematic overview of its characteristics, as presented in *Figure 7.1*. With media logic comes mediatization, an adaption to the special rules of the game of journalism in social media, which will provide an opportunity to study

parallel processes of mediatization in news, as we now have parallel news media logics. In journalism research, especially journalists' position or roles in social news media logic is of interest.

From the perspective of journalistic roles, a general observation from my studies is that there is still a gap in methodology – how can different journalistic roles be operationalized and conceptualized in such a way that research becomes comparable over time, over media systems, and over platforms? The work of Karlsson (2017), Singer (2017), and Van Dalen, de Vrees and Albæk (2017) should be a good starting point here.

From the perspective of my own research, one way to move forward is to interview journalists about their adoption of social media and to gain a more nuanced understanding of how social media and SNS are normalized in journalism, how the technology is appropriated, and how the social (news) media logic is accommodated. Ethnographical studies (observations) of the work in the newsrooms would provide even more knowledge about this rapidly developing field of research.

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Svensk sammanfattning (Summary in Swedish)

Utvecklingen av sociala nätverksmedier⁶⁶ är en av de största förändringarna i medielandskapet på senare tid. Den här avhandlingen handlar om svenska journalisters bruk av sociala nätverksmedier. I ett vidare perspektiv handlar den om hur journalister påverkas också av andra förändringar i medielandskapet. Den är en sammanläggningsavhandling, vilket innebär att den består dels av fem vetenskapliga artiklar (delstudier), dels av en så kallad kappa som placerar de olika artiklarna i ett sammanhang, teoretiskt och metodologiskt.

Bakgrund

I den allmänna debatten om journalister och sociala nätverksmedier antas ofta att sociala medier förändrar såväl journalistiken och journalister på ett fundamentalt vis. Och med sociala nätverksmedier så har journalistiken förändrats på så sätt att många journalistiska praktiker har ändrats samtidigt som nya har kommit till. Inom journalistiken används sociala nätverksmedier för bland annat omvärldsbevakning, research, spridning och publicering av material samt olika former av publikkontakt och -engagemang, men också för varumärkesbyggande. Enskilda journalister använder sociala nätverksmedier inte bara som ett arbetsredskap utan också för nätverksbyggande och för att bygga ett personligt varumärke, vilket har blivit allt viktigare på en mer konkurrensutsatt mediemarknad.

Men det är inte bara sociala nätverksmedier som medför förändring. Det senaste decenniet har den svenska mediemarknaden genomgått stora omvälvningar som en konsekvens av dels digitalisering, dels en strukturomvandling av mediebranschen som i grunden beror på att annonsmarknaden ser annorlunda ut idag jämfört med för bara några år sedan. För journalistiken har detta inneburit färre anställda (och hårdare konkurrens om de jobb som finns), och varje anställd förväntas producera mer innehåll och till flera plattformar – tidning, webb, tv, sociala medier ... Journalistiken har också blivit mer datadriven, inte bara på så sätt att medieföretagen samlar och sammanställer de dataspår den egna publiken lämnar efter sig för att kunna skräddarsy olika annonserbjudanden, utan också på så sätt att allt innehåll utvärderas utifrån detaljerade mått på räckvidd och engagemang i sociala nätverksmedier. På samma sätt utvärderas också enskilda journalister utifrån sin personliga räckvidd på olika plattformar och antal engagemang i sociala nätverksmedier i form av följare, gilla-markeringar och klick på länkar.

⁶⁶ Det finns anledning att skilja mellan sociala medier och sociala nätverksmedier. Alla sociala nätverksmedier, som Facebook, Instagram, Twitter och Snapchat, är sociala medier, men alla sociala medier behöver inte vara nätverksmedier utan handlar istället om en tjänst för att skapa och dela innehåll – Youtube och bloggar är två exempel.

Forskning om journalistik och sociala nätverksmedier är ett snabbt växande forskningsfält, och delar av det präglas av samma slags *hype* som präglar den allmänna diskussionen om journalistik och sociala nätverksmedier. Som en följd av detta har en stor del av forskningen fokuserat på de förändringar som hittas i det insamlade materialet samtidigt som den bortser från allt det som inte förändras – vare sig det gäller att undersöka hur journalister använder sociala nätverksmedier, vad de tycker om dem, vad de publicerar på olika plattformar, hur de bygger sina nätverk eller hur de bygger sina personliga varumärken. På grund av hur tidigare forskning genomförts går det också sällan att generalisera utifrån resultaten.

Teoretiska utgångspunkter

Avhandlingens teoretiska utgångspunkt är journalisters roller. Som grupp betraktad är svenska journalistkåren relativt homogen, och det finns en stark konsensus kring traditionella yrkesideal som objektivitet, neutralitet, journalistiken som granskare av makten etc. Journalisters roller är hur dessa olika ideal och värderingar omsätts i praktik, alltså i hur man uppträder som journalist och i det material man producerar. Journalisters olika roller ska inte ses som en fast rollista, utan journalisters olika yrkesideal, normer och värderingar kan hellre jämföras vid ett rekvisitaförråd där journalisten kan hämta delar till en roll som passar just henne – är hon en grävare, en berättare, en neutral faktaförmedlare, en maktens granskare eller vad?

Tidigare forskning visar att när sammanhangen förändras, så förändras också journalisters roller. Med sociala nätverksmedier så ges alltså journalister möjligheten att ha andra, mer sociala, roller som bygger på hur de ser på journalistiken och sitt arbete i förhållande till sociala nätverksmedier.

Den teoretiska utgångspunkten i journalisters roller kombineras i avhandlingen med tre olika angreppssätt:

En stor del av tidigare forskning kring journalister och sociala medier bygger på teorier om normalisering, alltså att normer och praktiker som hör till ”det nya” anpassas så att de passar in med redan existerande yrkesnormer och praktiker. Normalisering kan naturligtvis också verka åt andra hållet, att det redan existerande anpassas efter det som är nytt. Tidigare forskning visar just denna dubbelriktade normalisering vad gäller journalister och sociala nätverksmedier.

Att börja använda sociala nätverksmedier handlar också om att tillägna sig en teknologi, och det i sin tur handlar inte bara om att tillägna sig särskilda praktiker och att tekniken i sig tillåter vissa praktiker men inte andra, utan också om att med nya teknologier kommer också nya sociala praktiker – och med dessa kommer också nya normer och värderingar att förhålla sig till. Olika journalister förhåller sig till nya tekniker på olika sätt beroende på såväl personliga som professionella och organisatoriska faktorer. Allt detta förändras över tid. Tidigare forskning har visat att journalister gärna tar till sig och använder ny teknik.

Sociala nätverksmedier är ett medieformat som skiljer sig från journalistiska medier på många sätt. Detta kan uttryckas som att sociala medier-logiken skiljer sig från nyhetslogiken. När journalister börjar använda sociala nätverksmedier så måste de också hitta ett sätt att hantera sociala medier-logiken vid sidan av nyhetslogiken – som de är en bärande del i, till exempel i det att det är professionella journalister som står för nyhetsvärdering (urval) och som producerar allt innehåll. I sociala nätverksmedier gäller andra regler – här kan vem som helst dela innehåll, vem som helst avgöra vad som är en nyhet, och nätverket är det avgörande för hur innehållet sprids. Den journalist som vill verka i sociala nätverksmedier måste helt enkelt följa andra spelregler.

Allt det här – gamla yrkesideal som prövas i nya kontexter, nya sociala praktiker och normer som kommer med den nya tekniken, nya spelregler som åtminstone delvis krockar med de gamla – påverkar journalisters roller. Den här avhandlingen handlar om på vilket sätt detta sker.

Syfte och frågeställningar

Avhandlingens syfte är att undersöka journalisters användning av och inställning till sociala nätverksmedier. Jag gör det med en teoretisk utgångspunkt i journalistiska roller. Analysen utgår från tre forskningsfrågor: 1) Hur använder journalister sociala nätverksmedier och hur ändras detta över tid? 2) Hur uppfattar journalister yrkespraktiker och professionella normer och ideal i förhållande till användningen av sociala nätverksmedier? 3) Hur uppträder journalister som ”journalister” i sociala nätverksmedier?

Forskningsfrågorna 1 och 2 syftar till att undersöka den del av journalisters roller som handlar om värderingar, medan forskningsfrågan 3 syftar till att undersöka den del av journalisters roller som handlar om manifesta roller.

Metod och material

I avhandlingen används olika statistiska metoder. Med statistiska metoder kan resultaten generaliseras och sägas vara giltiga för gruppen journalister i Sverige, samtidigt som det är möjligt att jämföra olika grupper av journalister.

Forskningsfrågorna 1 och 2 besvaras med hjälp av enkätundersökningar. Dels Svenska journalistundersökningen 2011, en postenkät till ett urval av medlemmar i Svenska journalistförbundet, dels Journalistpanelen, en representativ webbpanel där frågor om sociala medier ställdes 2012 och 2014, vilket gör det möjligt att jämföra förändringar över tid också på individnivå. Frågorna om sociala nätverksmedier berörde såväl användningen av olika sociala nätverksmedier, för vilka syften de används, samt inställningen till sociala nätverksmedier i journalistiken. I undersökningarna ställdes också frågor om yrkesideal samt en rad bakgrundsfrågor.

Forskningsfrågan 3 besvaras med hjälp av två olika innehållsanalyser av insamlad Twitterdata – dels som en analys av hur pass transparenta journalister är i sitt twittrande (transparens är ett av journalisters yrkesideal som växer i betydelse i kåren, och anses bland annat främja trovärdighet och stabila publikrelationer), dels som en analys av hur journalister presenterar sig själva i sina Twitterpresentationer (vilket kan ses som en del i hur de bygger sina varumärken). Det empiriska materialet har samlats från ett strategiskt urval som är representativt. I avhandlingen presenteras en metod för att samla ett representativt urval för analys av data från sociala nätverksmedier, samt en metod där användardata (med kontopresentationer) och insamlade tweets kombineras, vilket gör det möjligt att analysera materialet med bakgrundsvariabler som kön, arbetsplats och arbetsort.

I avhandlingen ingår fem olika delstudier/forskningsartiklar. Dessa är självständiga på så sätt att de har sina egna teoretiska utgångspunkter, syften och frågeställningar. Avhandlingens syfte och frågeställningar besvaras i kappan.

Sammanfattning av artiklarna

De fem artiklar som ingår i avhandlingen har, i sina tidiga versioner, presenterats vid internationella konferenser. De slutliga versionerna (som finns i *Appendix I–V*) är publicerade i internationella fackvetenskapliga tidskrifter och har genomgått en granskningsprocess (så kallad dubbelblind referentgranskning).

Artiklarna visar att även om de allra flesta svenska journalister använder sociala nätverksmedier så finns det stora skillnader. En liten grupp journalister är entusiastiska och använder sociala medier i stort sett jämt, men de flesta har en mer pragmatisk inställning (*Artikel I*). Över tid tycks den initiala *hopen* över sociala nätverksmedier ha minskat – den upplevda nyttan minskar och många journalister minskar eller slutar använda sociala nätverksmedier över huvud taget (*Artikel IV*). När journalister använder Twitter så anpassar de journalister som är mest aktiva på Twitter journalistiken efter Twitters normer och praktiker, medan de allra flesta journalister istället försöker anpassa sitt twittrande efter traditionella professionella normer och praktiker – här finns alltså tecken på en professionell klyfta (*Artiklarna II och III*). Slutligen kan vi se (*Artiklarna III och V*) hur sociala medierlogiken och de teknologiska egenskaperna i sociala nätverksmedier skapar intrycket av en ny, eller i alla fall annorlunda, sorts journalist – mer publiktillvänd, mer nätverkande, mer individualistisk – som också visar en mer personlig sida av sig själv vid sidan av den professionella.

Slutsatser

Svaret på forskningsfrågorna, och avhandlingens syfte, kan sammanfattas i följande:

- För de allra flesta svenska journalister är sociala nätverksmedier idag ett uppskattat arbetsverktyg – dock så har den tidigare *hype* avtagit och den generella inställningen kan bäst beskrivas som pragmatisk, men
- de som är allra mest aktiva på sociala nätverksmedier använder dess också för nätverkande, publikdialog och att bygga sina personliga varumärken.
- Journalisters traditionella yrkesideal och värderingar har inte påverkats av sociala nätverksmedier, men
- de som är allra mest aktiva har en mer positiv inställning än andra till nätverkande, publikdialog och personligt varumärkesbyggnad.
- Även om transparens är ett yrkesideal på uppgång i kåren så är de journalister som är aktiva på Twitter inte särskilt transparenta, med undantag för en liten grupp som gärna pratar jobb och som gärna bjuder på sig själva och sin person när de twittrar.
- De flesta journalister som använder Twitter presenterar sig själva med en rad yrkesattribut i kombination med något personligt. För vissa journalister är ett högt antal följare och en hög aktivistnivå på Twitter en del av det personliga varumärket.

Så visst har sociala nätverksmedier fört med sig förändrade journalistiska praktiker, men de har inte förändrat journalisterna i särskilt hög utsträckning. Undantaget är den lilla gruppen allra mest aktiva – dessa, ofta unga i storstad och nya i yrket, är också mer aktiva i att bygga nätverk, prata med publiken och bygga sina personliga varumärken. Dock kan dessa handlingar lika gärna ses som en konsekvens av en hårdnande mediemarknad – det är helt enkelt hårdare konkurrens idag.

I sociala nätverksmedier har journalister nu en rad mer eller mindre nya och mer eller mindre sociala roller. Dessa roller ligger antingen närmare den traditionella nyhetslogiken eller den nya sociala medier-logiken, och är antingen mer formella (mer yrkesbetonade) eller mer personliga (se *Figur 7.1*):

Skeptikern vill helst inte vara på sociala nätverksmedier alls, men måste på grund av jobbet och är inte särskilt aktiv. Skeptikerns motsats är *aktivisten*, som är på sociala nätverksmedier jämt och tycker att allt kan – och ska – göras där. De allra flesta journalister som är aktiva i sociala nätverksmedier kan beskrivas som *pragmatiker* – de är där för att göra sitt jobb. Men här finns också *smygaren* (håller koll men deltar sällan aktivt), *nätverkaren* (ser sociala nätverksmedier som en plats att hålla regelbunden kontakt med allt och alla), *nyhetscentralen* (delar länkar och nyheter inom sitt bevakningsområde), *samtalssamordnaren* (deltar i och håller igång konversationer) och *ambassadören* (pratar och förklarar journalistik). Den *etttrige marknadsföraren* bygger sitt varumärke med både yrkesmässiga och personliga attribut, till skillnad från den *professionella marknadsföraren* som fokuserar på de yrkesmässiga. I sociala nätverksmedier finns också den *förklädda journalisten*, som ofta

gärna pratar journalistik men inte avslöjar vem hon är eller var hon jobbar. Motsatsen kan sägas vara *entreprenören*, som gör sociala nätverksmedier till basen för sin journalistik – det är här hon hittar sin publik, sin finansiering och en distributionskanal för sitt material.

Journalisters nya sociala roller kan ses som en del i en framväxande social nyhetslogik (se *Tabell 7.1*), som kan sägas förena den traditionella nyhetslogiken och den nya sociala medier-logiken och i vilken traditionella journalistiska yrkesideal, normer och praktiker har en central plats.

I avhandlingen lyfts tre exempel på tänkbara konsekvenser för journalistiken. Det första exemplet handlar om journalisters yrkesetik. Oavsett i vilken roll journalistisk roll som en journalist är aktiv på sociala nätverksmedier, så går det mycket sällan att skilja yrkesanvändning från privat användning. Alltså måste yrkesetiken gälla också journalisters privata användning av sociala nätverksmedier, och anpassas för detta. Det andra exemplet handlar om konsekvenserna av ökande nivå av hot och hat som riktas till journalister. När journalister använder sociala nätverksmedier och blandar yrkesanvändning med personligt innehåll så öppnas också för mer personligt riktade hot, vilket kräver särskild uppmärksamhet från såväl arbetsgivare som samhälle och lagstiftare. Det tredje exemplet handlar om journalistikens möjliga av-professionalisering som en konsekvens av att personliga egenskaper alltmer framstår som lika viktiga som yrkeskunskaper för journalister, och att personliga ideal och värderingar alltmer likställs med yrkesideal.

Även om avhandlingen beskriver bara svenska journalisters bruk av sociala nätverksmedier under en begränsad tidsperiod och med exempel från bara ett av alla sociala nätverksmedier, Twitter, visar den på behov av ytterligare forskning på flera områden. Forskningen har nu tillfälle att följa framväxten av en ny medielogik, den sociala nyhetslogiken, och den särskilda medialisering (anpassning till den sociala nyhetslogiken) som följer i dess spår. Det finns också ett metodologiskt inriktat arbete att göra kring journalisters roller – hur kan dessa beskrivas och operationaliseras (göras mätbara) på ett sätt som möjliggör jämförelser över tid, över olika mediasystem och över olika medieformat? Till sist vill jag lyfta möjligheten att fördjupa förståelsen för svenska journalisters bruk av sociala nätverksmedier genom att använda ytterligare metoder: intervjuer och etnografiska observationer.

#InFlux

Journalists' adoption of social media and journalists' social roles

#InFlux investigates journalists' adoption of social media and social network sites (SNS) from the theoretical perspective of *journalistic roles*. It shows how the *social roles* of journalists are situated along the axes of formal–personal and news media logic–social media logic: *skeptical shunners* and *activists*, *lurkers* and *networkers*, *news hubs* and *celebrified marketers*, *coordinators* and *ambassadors*, *professional marketers* and *pragmatics*, *entrepreneurs* and journalists in *incognito mode*. The emergence of a *social news media logic* has implications for journalistic ethics and possibly brings a de-professionalization of journalists.

This thesis also shows that social media and SNS had an immediate impact among Swedish journalists and are now regarded as highly valued professional tools. Over time, the initial hype has faded – the general use can now best be described as pragmatic, while the high-end users use social media and SNS strategically for networking, audience dialogue, and personal branding. Journalists' core professional ideals are not affected by the adoption of social media and SNS.

The statistical methodological approach applied – a mixed design with surveys (cross-sectional and panel data) and content analysis of Twitter data – allows for a generalization of the findings to the national population of journalists in Sweden as well as for comparisons between groups of journalists, and shows a way of how to find a representative sample of journalists on Twitter and other SNS and how to make best use of the data collected.



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