



ARISTOTLE
UNIVERSITY
OF THESSALONIKI

School of Journalism & MC

Crisis Reporting

EJTA Teachers' Conference 2018



Andreas Veglis & Nico Drok (Eds)

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Crisis Reporting

Edited by

Andreas Veglis & Nico Drok



**ARISTOTLE
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Table of content

List of contributors.....	9
Crisis Reporting – an Introduction, Nico Drok	11
Crisis reporting in traditional and new media: Greek traditional and new media coverage of the deadly wildfires in Mati, Ioanna Kostopoulou and Athanasia Alonistiotou.....	13
Verifying Social Media Content in Crisis Reporting, Andreas Veglis and Nikos Panagiotou.....	26
An Uncommon Understanding? European Media Discourses of Crisis and Human Rights, Leonie Haenchen, Elise Morton & Christos Frangonikolopoulos.....	41
Student journalism during crisis: the opportunities for professional development, Luydmila Shesterkina, Anna Krasavina	56
Changing audiences, changing realities: Identifying disinformation via new teaching curricula, Irene Photiou, Theodora A. Maniou.....	64
Why Refugee Crisis News don't Get Clicks? From Indifferent audiences to Passive Online Gatekeepers, Andreas M. Panagopoulos	72
War Reporting - Between Scylla and Charybdis?, Ilias Nikezis	85
Management Communication in Hotels During Economic Crisis in Greece, Elisavet Poimenidou, Georgios Tsourvakas	94
Reporting in Crisis - The Dangers That Media Workers Face, Christos Smilianis.....	104
The Role of Media Educators in the Age of Misinformation Crisis, Katsaounidou Anastasia, Charalampos Dimoulas	113
Collaborative collection and Multimedia Mapping of Crisis Semantics, Efstathios Sidiropoulos, Nikolaos Vryzas, Lazaros Vrysis, Evangelia Avraam, Charalampos Dimoulas	125
Journalism In the Era of Twitter – The case of Greek Social Mobilisation, Georgia Gioltzidou..	136
The challenges of covering international crises in the global village, Kally Zarali	151

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Crisis Reporting – an Introduction

Every European citizen that follows the news will know that we and our societies are facing many crises. Crises are becoming of growing interest for our daily lives and thus for our daily news, and therefore it was decided that Crisis Reporting should be prioritized as a topic for an EJTA-conference. In 2018 the yearly EJTA Teachers' Conference would be organized by the School of Journalism & Mass Communications of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Greece is one of the EJTA-member countries that has been strongly involved in some major crises. Such as the financial crisis that started about a decade ago, or the refugee crisis that burdened Greece more than other European countries. So it seemed the right idea to address the topic of Crisis Reporting in Thessaloniki in 2018.

Almost every day the news is dominated by one crisis or another: political crises, military crises, climate crises, refugee crises, financial crises, environmental crises, geophysical crises and so on. New crises come, when we are still busy dealing with the old ones. Like wave after wave, they are pounding the beaches of our risk society. Crises are not only strongly influencing our lives, they also have a huge impact on the image we have of our world and of our times. In that context it is vital to understand it is not only the crises themselves that are important, it is also our political and communicative capacity to respond to them. Here lies a crucial role for journalism. Journalists have to put the subject on the agenda, they have to inform citizens about what is happening, they have to provide background information, they have to give broader context and meaning, they have to stimulate and facilitate public debate, they have to hold decision makers accountable. All these essential tasks can only be performed by professional, independent and well-educated journalists.

Unfortunately, it is getting more difficult to perform these tasks in a 24/7 digital news environment. The irony is that journalism itself is in crises. In fact, journalism finds itself in a double crisis: a financial crisis and a functional one. The *financial* crisis concerns the diminishing advertisement and readers' revenues for mainstream news media. The *functional* crisis concerns the declining relevance of journalism for various groups and communities in society. Blumler has interpreted the two crises as follows: “*One is a crisis of viability, principally though not exclusively financial, threatening the existence and resources of mainstream journalistic organisations. The other is a crisis of civic adequacy, impoverishing the contributions of journalism to citizenship and democracy.*”¹

This means that journalism has to fundamentally rethink the role it wants to play in democratic society. Renewal of journalism is more than just serving old journalistic wine from new digital bottles.

One of the great challenges with regard to crisis reporting will be how to adequately inform the public and at the same time avoid that the ongoing news about crises has the effect that audiences start feeling depressed and powerless. Research from the Reuters Institute at Oxford University shows that this is exactly what is happening: two of the main reasons for avoiding the news are “It can have a negative effect on my mood” and “I don't feel there is anything I can do about it.”² It is

¹ Blumler, J.G. (2011). The two-legged crisis of journalism. In B. Franklin (ed.), *The future of journalism* (pp. xv-xvii). Oxon: Routledge.

² <http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/survey/2017/news-avoidance-2017/>

the task of journalism to keep the public involved and to prevent that people turn their back on the news, or – even worse – start believing that our democracies are not able to solve the problems anymore and that we need strong leaders.

The key issue with regard to Crisis Reporting might not be a lack of coverage, but the question what kind of response it generates in audiences. In other words: the key issue for today's reporting might not be the existence of an information gap, but the existence of an engagement gap. Journalists, and we as journalism teachers, are often focused on producing information, the more the better. We are often not so much focused on asking ourselves how people interact with and understand what is produced, what their needs might be, and how to keep them engaged. The bottom line is that it is not an issue of 'either...or'. Good crisis reporting focuses on both, and that is what we should teach our students.

At the 2018 EJTA Conference on Crisis Reporting we have discussed many aspects of the very important issue of crisis reporting and how to teach it. It was an excellent conference with a very high number of participants from all over Europe. The conference was prepared and organized by an outstanding team of colleagues from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, under the leadership of Andreas Veglis and Nikos Panagiotou. This team designed the website, organized the paper submission, made the programme, developed a social tour, took care of the catering and arranged the wonderful venue. The publication before you contains the presentations that were given at the conference.

Professor Nico Drok, President of EJTA

**Crisis reporting in traditional and new media:
Greek traditional and new media coverage
of the deadly wildfires in Mati**

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Abstract

The wildfires in Mati were the worst to hit Greece since 2007, when dozens of people had been killed in the southern Peloponnese peninsula. At least 100 people were killed, with government authorities declaring a state of emergency. In this context, this study analyzes this incident, because of its huge death toll and its significant media coverage by traditional and non-traditional media. This quantitative research intends to pinpoint 1. the similarities and differences between Traditional and New Media (Newspapers vs Twitter), 2. the similarities and differences between high-profile and low-profile media organizations. This study confirms that covering crisis constitutes one of the biggest challenges in today's traditional and new media. When crises occur, news media have a critical role not only in informing public about what happens but also in shaping public opinion about who is responsible for causing or solving the key problems of the crises. These challenges are related with the vast overall amount of information, the need to monitor several platforms simultaneously and the power of the social web.

Key Words: Crisis, New Media, Traditional Media, Twitter, Wildfires

1 Introduction

This study analyses a series of wildfires in Mati, in July 2018, which were the worst to hit Greece, and specifically Attica, since 2007. As of 15 December 2018, 100 people were confirmed dead. The fires were the second-deadliest wildfire event in the 21st century, after the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires in Australia that killed 180. Over 700 residents have been evacuated or rescued, mainly from the seaside settlements located north of the port town of Rafina. Boats also recovered corpses from the water, and rescued hundreds of people from beaches and the sea. More than 4,000 residents were affected by the wildfires.

Greece deployed its entire fleet of fire-fighting aircraft and more than 250 fire engines, as well as over 600 firefighters. Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras declared a state of emergency in Attica and announced a three-day period of national mourning, stating in a televised address: "The country is going through an unspeakable tragedy".

This research aims, through a comparative analysis of the Greek traditional and new media coverage of the deadly wildfires in Mati, to examine similarities and differences among media, but most importantly major conceptual issues related to the coverage of the crisis. This research aim, also, to pinpoint the similarities and differences between high profile and low profile media organizations. For the purposes of the study, we examined five newspapers (three broadsheets and two tabloids) and tweets for a two-week period, during and after the event. In particular, we analyzed frontpages, editorials and news articles from Greek newspapers "Kathimerini", "Ta Nea", "I Efimerida Ton Syntakton", "Kontra News" and "Makeleio" for the period of 24 July, till 7 August 2018 (two weeks period analysis). In Twitter, some 93,000 tweets using the hastags #Foties, #Pyrkagies, #PrayForGreece, #Mati, #GreekFires were gathered.

2 Theoretical Basis

2.1.1 Covering crisis today

A crisis is an event that "creates an issue, keeps it alive, or gives it strength" (Heath & Palenchar, 2009, p. 278). Is "an event for which people seek causes and make attributions" (Coombs & Holladay, 2004, p. 97). As researches noted (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Seeger, 2006), crises can include natural disasters, industrial accidents, and intentional events. People seek information about the crisis and evaluate the cause of the event and the organizational responsibility for the crisis based on media coverage of the crisis. Therefore, it is important to look at how the media frame a crisis event, the cause of the crisis, and the actor responsible for it because those frames influence the public's perception and impressions of the organization (Coombs, 2006b).

Covering crisis presents some of the biggest challenges in today's media. When crises occur, news media have a critical role not only in informing public about what happens but also in shaping public opinion about who is responsible for causing or solving the key problems of the crises (An & Gower, 2009; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). These challenges are related with the vast overall amount of information, and the need to monitor several platforms simultaneously. The power of the social web has created both opportunities and threats that need to be considered (Jones et al., 2009).

With the increasing use of Web 2.0 technologies, media use in times of crises has evolved from one-way communication to multi-way interactions between a range of stakeholders and publics. Not only do media transmit crisis messages, they also interpret the story for the reader, by virtue of "what elements of a story they report, the types of sources they use in reporting the different sides, and how they package a story", thus functioning as an agenda builder (Driedger, 2008; McCombs &

Shaw, 1972). This is widely acknowledged by journalists involved in reporting crises: they do not simply reflect the communication strategies of stakeholders, but actively construct news stories (Hsu, 2008). Media professionals seek to respond to and reflect social preference in their reporting, and in doing so they maintain their position as dynamic interpreters (Petts et al., 2001).

In recent years, internet-based peer-to-peer communication and specifically “social media” applications such as social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, serve as new information disseminators about crisis (Gassin and Van Geest, 2006; Hughes and Palen, 2009; Palen and Liu, 2007; Palen et al., 2009). A growing number of people have started relying on internet-based media forms as the primary channel to seek out crisis information (Jin and Liu, 2010; Powell et al., 2012). Social media may be better matched to crises than traditional media, because the technologies allow for rapid information production and free uploading and downloading of content (Macias et al., 2009; Palen et al., 2009).

2.1.2 Role of Social Media in crisis communication

Social media use can change drastically in times of organizational crises, as issues emerging online can be more unpredictable, taking dramatic turns and multiplying more quickly than issues that emerge offline. Social media, however, can allow more immediate response and interactive communication during crises (Coombs, 2008).

During crises, audiences’ social media use increases (Pew Internet & American Life, 2006), and, in some situations, audiences perceive social media to be more credible than traditional mass media (Procopio & Procopio, 2007). Blog users rate blogs to be their most credible source of information (Johnson & Kaye, 2004), and increased blog reading enhances perceptions of blog credibility (Johnson & Kaye, 2010; Sweetser & Metzgar, 2007), although Americans as a whole rate blog credibility much lower (Banning & Trammell, 2006).

However, during a crisis, audiences equally rate the credibility of third-person blogs and blogs sponsored by organizations experiencing crises (Bates & Callison, 2008). As journalists increasingly use social media for news generation (GWU & Cision, 2009), social media may have a direct and indirect impact on audiences in times of crisis. Audiences seek out social media during crises because they provide an unfiltered, up-to-date line of communication (Procopio & Procopio, 2007) and provide unique crisis information that audiences cannot get elsewhere (Bucher, 2002; Sutton, Palen, & Shklovski, 2008). Audiences also use social media for emotional support and recovery from crises (Choi & Lin, 2009; Stephens & Malone, 2009). Sites such as Flickr and YouTube have been used to collect crisis images and information for larger groups of individuals (Palen, 2008b).

2.1.3 Twitter and risk communication

Twitter, as a specific social media platform, enables real-time communication through which information can be shared as direct comments or in terms of links to other media sites (URLs) or hashtags (#). The latter enable users (where usernames are prefaced by @) to tag, follow and contribute to particular topics of conversation (Bruns and Burgess 2011). Users can interact with targeted individuals or groups but conversations are generally available to wider audiences (Boyd, Golder, and Lotan 2010).

Twitter now has an important role in crisis communication, for example in improving situational awareness during natural hazard events (Vieweg et al. 2010) such as detection during earthquakes

(Sakaki, Okazaki, and Matsuo 2010; Earle, Bowden, and Guy 2011), or illustrating how hashtags become ‘central coordinating mechanisms’ for flood-related user activity (Bruns et al. 2012). Notably, Twitter is a key means of communication for organisations managing risk (Panagiotopoulos and Bowen 2015; Panagiotopoulos et al. 2016).

News organizations are using the technological application Twitter as a tool of information dissemination. CNN breaking news and the New York Times were revealed to rank top 20 in terms of the number of followers, PageRank in following/follower network, and the number of retweets in the diffusion network in Twitter (Kwak et al., 2010). In October 2007, during the Southern California wildfires, news organizations such as the Los Angeles Times and San Diego public radio station KPBS used Twitter to disseminate urgent bits of information like evacuation orders, shelter locations, and firefighting progress to large groups of mobile people (Palser, 2009). Similarly, in January 2009, the first close-up image of the US Airways plane that plunged into the Hudson River was posted and the information was distributed through Twitter by a user, Janis Krums (Palser, 2009). These up-to-the-minute breaking tweets allow news organizations to fulfill their public service and social responsibility functions (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001), by giving consumers the necessary information they need to function and react in a crisis.

1. Methodology

Through a comparative analysis of the Greek traditional and New media coverage of the deadly wildfires in Mati, this research aims to examine similarities and differences among media, but most importantly major conceptual issues related to the coverage of the crisis. For the purposes of the study, five newspapers (three broadsheets and two tabloids) and tweets for a two-week period, during and after the event, were examined. In particular, frontpages, editorials and news articles from Greek newspapers “Kathimerini”, “Ta Nea”, “I Efimerida Ton Syntakton”, “Kontra News” and “Makeleio” were counted and analysed for the period of 24 July, till 7 August 2018 (two weeks period analysis). In Twitter, some 93,000 tweets using the following hashtags were gathered: #Foties, #Pyrkagies, #PrayForGreece, #Mati, #GreekFires, etc.

The following research questions were examined:

- How traditional and new media reporting is been articulated during a crisis
- Similarities and differences between traditional and new media, as well as between different of types of press (broadsheets- tabloid press).
- Similarities and differences between high profile and low profile media organizations.

Through the research the aim is to pinpoint: 1. the similarities and differences between Traditional and New Media (Newspapers vs Twitter), 2. the similarities and differences between high-profile and low-profile media organizations.

4 Results

For our analysis, we monitored and collected data from five print newspapers in Greece: “Kathimerini”, “Ta Nea”, “Efimerida Ton Syntakton”, “Kontra News”, “Makeleio”. “Kathimerini” is a daily political and financial broadsheet newspaper that is considered impartial, reliable and high-profile. “Ta Nea” and “Efimerida Ton Syntakton” are high-profile compact newspapers of center-right and center-left political orientation respectively. “Kontra News” and “Makeleio” are considered tabloid newspapers with a significant impact in terms of readership.

During a two-week period analysis (24 July-7 August 2018), some 571 articles concerning the Mati wildfires were published in the mentioned above newspapers. The highest number of articles concerning the wildfires was found in “Kathimerini” newspaper, which published 155 articles on the matter. “Efimerida Ton Syntakton” and “Ta Nea” published an equally large number of articles for the wildfires, 141 and 139 articles respectively. Meanwhile, relevant articles in tabloid newspapers were almost half the number of articles found in broadsheet and compact newspapers. In particular, “Makeleio” published 77 articles about the Mati wildfires, while “Kontra News” published only 59 articles on the incident.

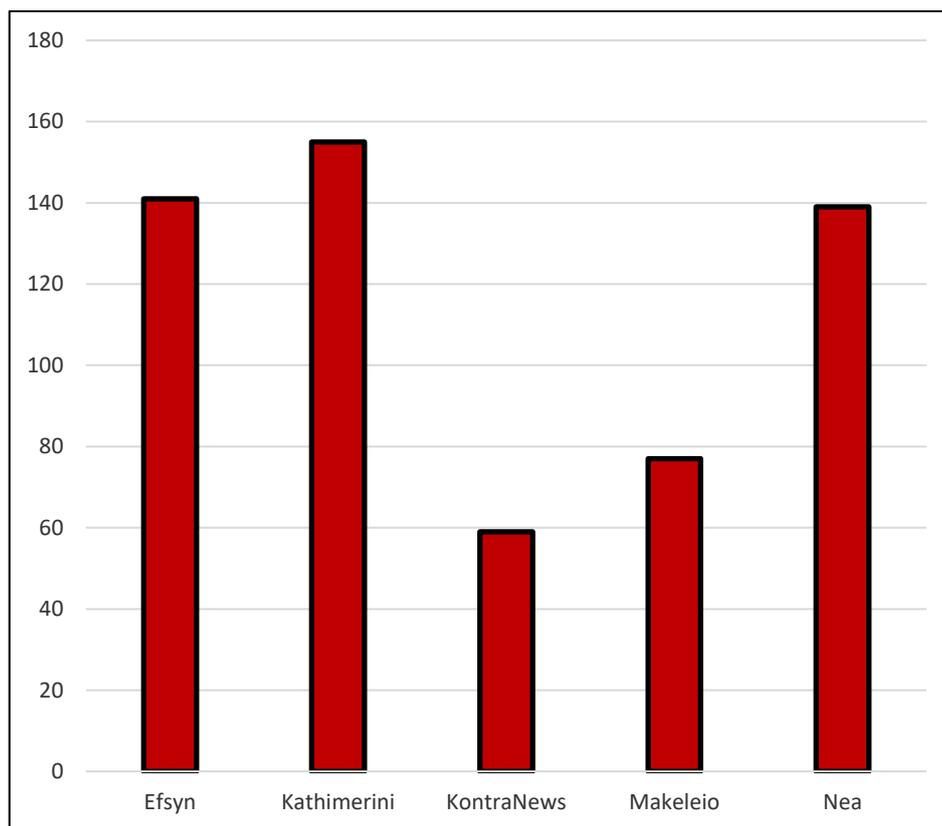


Figure 1: Newspapers: News items during the period examined.

On the first day after the incident (24 July), all newspapers published around the same number of articles on the matter (4-7 articles). However, on the following days, the high-quality newspapers dedicated more than double articles (reportages, editorials, etc) on the wildfires, compared to the tabloid newspapers. This indicates that high-quality newspapers have the resources and a better knowledge to respond to crisis, compared to tabloid newspapers.

On the first week after the incident (24 July), all newspapers published the majority of their news items. From the graph below, it is clear that the peak of publicity was in the first week, from July 24th to July 31st. During the first week the news items from the newspapers were more than doubled (compared with the second week), while all the newspapers devoted their first half daily paper writing about the wildfires and presenting the news.

For the two-week period we examined, we found that all the newspapers, and especially “Kathimerini”, “Ta Nea”, “Efimerida Ton Syntakton”, named or colored the pages that presented

the news from Mati in a specific manner. It was clear that the news presented under a specific title with a specific color was about the wildfires.

For the first week, these five newspapers, “Kathimerini”, “Ta Nea”, “Efimerida Ton Syntakton”, “Kontra News”, “Makeleio”, had as main news story on their frontpages the wildfires in Mati. On the second week, “Kathimerini”, “Ta Nea” and “Efimerida ton Suntainakton” continued to present as the wildfires in Mati as their main frontpage news story, while “Kontra News” and “Makeleio” did not. The newspapers behaved in almost the same way as regards editorials. First week’s editorials were dedicated to that incident.

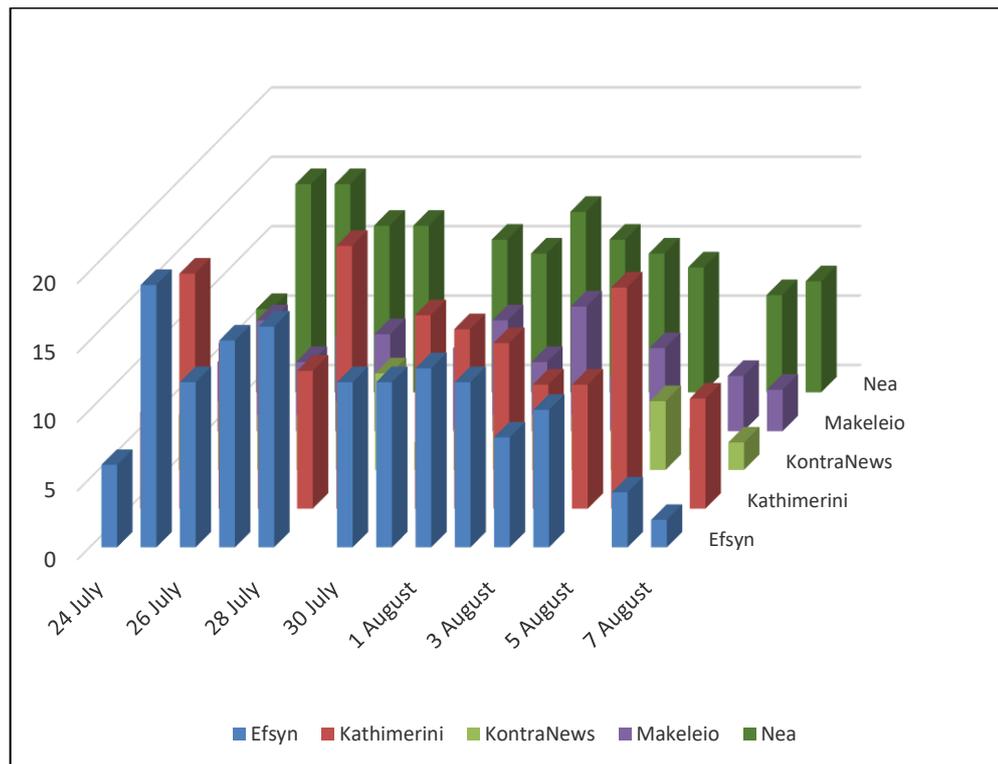


Figure 2: Newspapers: News items and publicity.

All the five newspapers presented their frontpages and their news articles along with photographic material. None of the editorials had any kind of image. “Ta Nea” and “Efimerida Ton Syntakton” were the two newspapers that mostly used photos while writing about the wildfires in Mati. “Kathimerini” is ranked third among the five newspapers as regards the use of photographic content concerning the Mati wildfires, followed by “Makeleio” in the fourth place. “Kontra News” is the newspaper that used the smallest number of photos while referring to the Mati wildfires. This may have to do with the size and the function of the newspaper. Most of the photos on the newspapers, and especially the first week, were photos taken on where the crisis took place or infographics, which helped to explain the event. These photos did not depict faces or people, but only the disaster the fires caused. During the second week, most of the news articles presented news from Mati with file images.

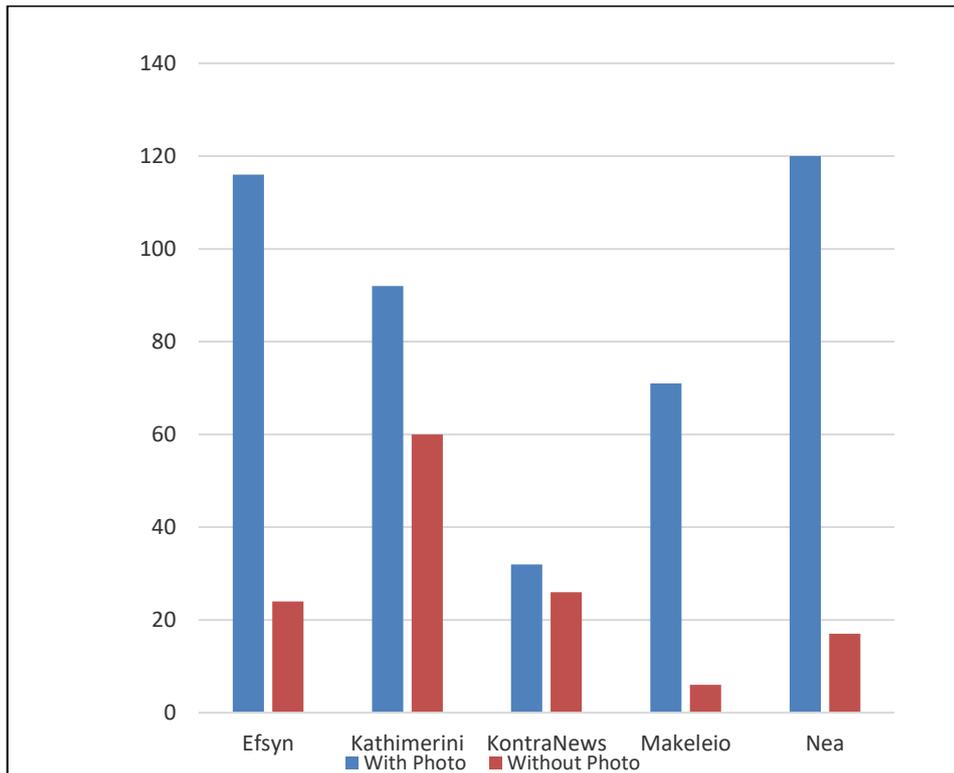


Figure 3: Newspapers: News items with or without photo.

From the graph below, it is clear that “Kathimerini” was the newspaper where the news items had the smallest size, because of the broadsheet size of the newspaper. The medium and the large sized items were less in number, especially compared to the other four newspapers. The newspapers with the most medium sized news items were “Ta Nea”, “Efimerida Ton Syntakton” and “Kontra News”. “Ta Nea” and “Efimerida Ton Syntakton” were also the two newspapers with the largest news items.

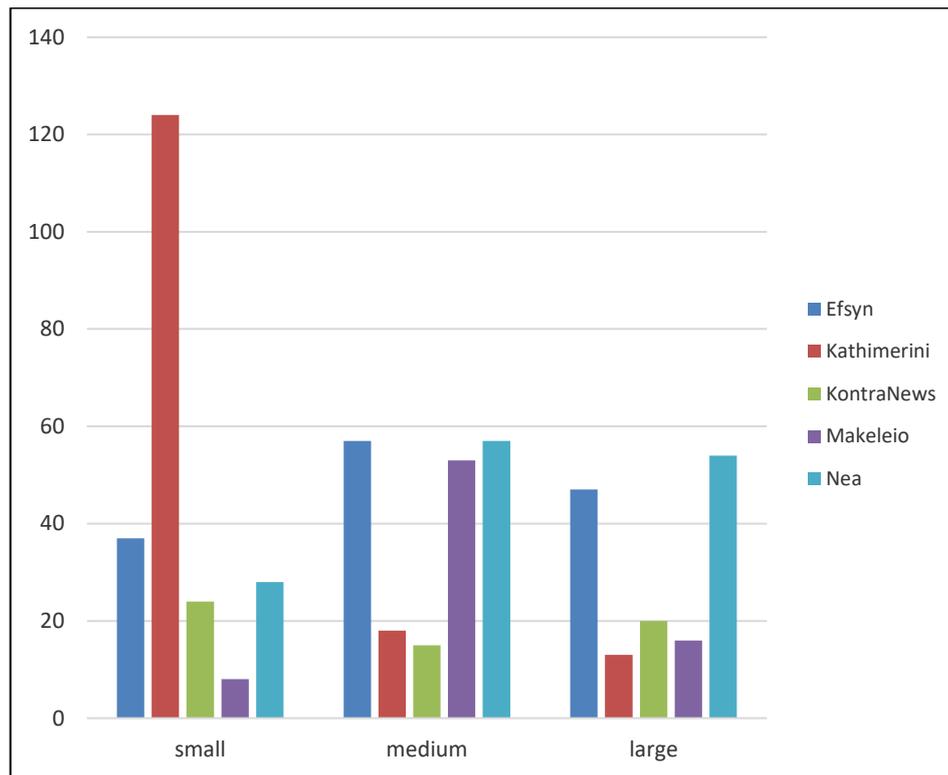


Figure 4: Newspapers: size of the news items.

For the purposes of the study, except for the five newspapers, we counted and examined tweets for a two-week period, during and after the event. In particular, we analyzed in Twitter, some 93,000 tweets using the hashtags #Foties, #Pyrkagies, #PrayForGreece, #Mati, #GreekFires from 24 July to 7 August 2018.

From the graph below, it is clear that there were relevant mentions in Twitter from July 23, the day the wildfires started. On 23 July 2018 at 13:00 Eastern European Time, a wildfire started west of Athens near Kineta. A few hours later, a second wildfire started burning at the north of Athens near Penteli. Due to very strong wind gusts in the area both wildfires spread quickly. The fire in Kineta burned houses in the area, while the fire in Penteli headed east towards the beach, where it started burning parts of Neos Voutzas, Mati and Kokkino Limanaki just north of the town of Rafina and as far as its northern fringes.

Social media and, in this case, Twitter worked as “a parallel public discourse representing the unfiltered viewpoints of citizens”. News organizations, also, used this technological application as a tool of information dissemination.

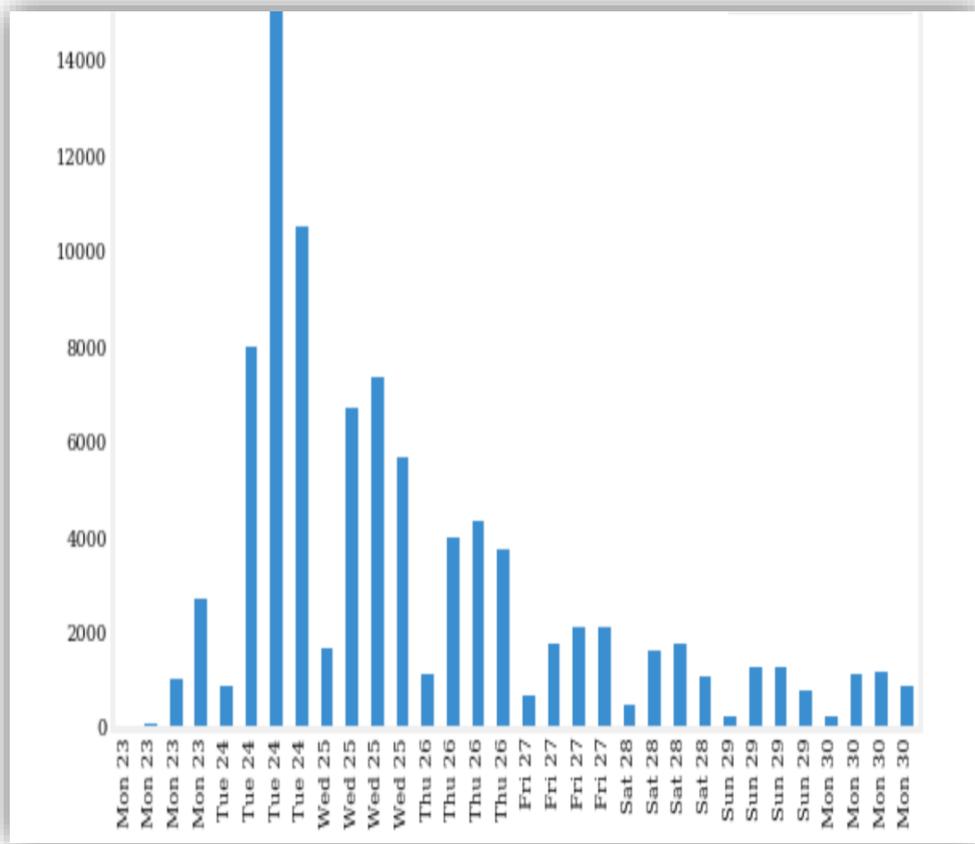


Figure 5: Twitter publicity

The first day after the incident, 24 July, recorded the most important number of tweets and retweets. From the graph above, it is clear that the traffic on Twitter was important on the second and third day of the incident. After these days passed, the traffic of the tweets and retweets was much less important, but still existent.

From the graph above, it is clear that the most active account, regarding the wildfires, is not a news organization. However, in the graph above there are some news organizations in the top list such as: amna news, etypos.gr, skai.gr. The majority of the active accounts are personal and not organizational.

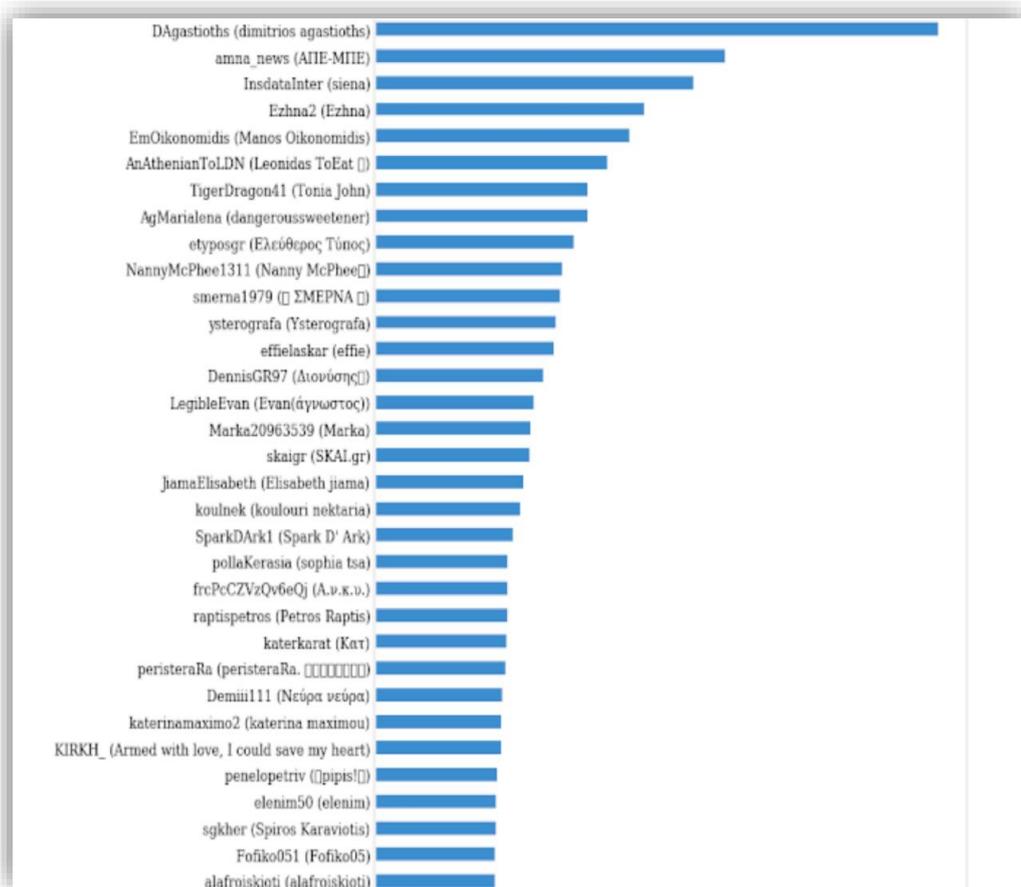


Figure 6: Twitter The most active accounts.

5 Conclusion

As Web 2.0 technologies have enabled any individual with internet access to generate, broadcast and share information, social media function as an information aggregator representing and reflecting upon opinions from various stakeholders, including those traditionally less likely to be heard. Hence, social media have been described as “a parallel public discourse representing the unfiltered viewpoints of citizens” (Keelan et al., 2010) and “an instantaneous snapshot of the public’s opinions and behavioral responses” (Chew and Eysenbach, 2010).

Social media are also increasingly considered a source of valuable information about the societal context and functions of forests (Daume, Albert, and von Gadow 2014). Bogdanou et al. (2013) suggest that social media provide opportunities for the forest industry and related stakeholders to promote communication and influence the general public. Developing social media use also decreases dependence on traditional media outlets (Heuch 2014).

Traditional media play an important role in disseminating news, especially during crisis events (Pantti, Wahl-Jorgensen and Cottle, 2012). Traditional media, and in this case newspapers, could not cover the event on real time. Therefore, the day after the incident, 24 of July, all of the five newspapers we examined dedicated their most pages to the wildfires in Mati. Newspapers continued with the same way for almost a week after the first day of the incident.

Newspapers used their websites and their accounts on Twitter in order to publish stories and to follow on real time the course of the events. Most of the photos on the newspapers, and especially

the first week, were photos taken on where the crisis took place or infographics, which helped to explain the event. These photos did not depict faces or people, but only the disaster the fires caused. During the second week, most of the news articles presented news from Mati with file images.

Twitter's mission is to give to its users the power to create and share ideas and information instantly, without barriers. It gives the opportunity to "retweet", "favorite" or "reply" any initial tweet and the occasional "trending topic". In our case twitter was used from the first day of the incident, July 23. The traffic on Twitter was important on the second and third day of the incident. After these days passed, the traffic of the tweets and retweets was much less important, but still existent.

From the most 100 most active users, only 5-10 were from professional News Organisations (Athens News Agency-Macedonian News Agency, Eleytheros Typos, Skai, etc.). Thousands of Twitter conversations appeared under a variety of hashtags. Two distinct features of twitter have enabled it to facilitate interaction: 1. It allows the continuous modification of content and applications by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion; and 2. it facilitates the creation and exchange of user-generated content, which results in enhanced interactivity (Ding, 2009). Therefore, social media, and in our case Twitter, provide new means of interaction between people within or outside the time spatial boundaries of the crisis event (Palen et al., 2009). For instance, in crises, such as the wildfires in Mati, survivors, victims and observers connect with each other via social networking sites (Palen, 2008).

Social media offers speedy information updates & the opportunity to share feelings. Social media may be better matched to crises than traditional media, because the technologies allow for rapid information production and free uploading and downloading of content (Macias et al., 2009; Palen et al., 2009). Traditional media is still preferred for in-depth news reporting on a crisis because it is seen as credible.

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Verifying Social Media Content in Crisis Reporting

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Abstract

Today's news is quite often dominated by major events in the form of crisis (earthquakes, extreme weather events, environmental disasters, financial crisis, disease outbreaks, etc.). In such situations the public usually relies on established news organization to get credible and timely information and at the same time the news organizations rely on the public that have witnessed the crisis event for new information to bring important perspective and context in the crisis coverage. Thus, media journalists have a very difficult task to handle. The problem is that very often rumours, and misinformation accompany emergency situations. People intentionally spread invalid information as a joke, to increase their "likes" in their social media posts or to cause panic. In such situations the verification parameter in reporting is extremely important since the consequences of reporting invalid information can have lethal effects. The journalists have in their aid the traditional methods for source verification and technological tools and services that allow them to rapidly implement verification processes that otherwise would require considerable time to be implemented. This paper attempts to highlight the tools and methods that journalists must be aware of when covering crisis events. Two important parameters should be considered: training and coordinating journalists and providing them with access to tools and resources that allow them to quickly and accurately verify content. Thus, training future journalists on such issues should be considered a necessity for every journalism school today.

Key Words: Verification, Social Media Content, Crisis Events, Crisis Reposting, Verification Tools

1 Introduction

Today's news is quite often dominated by major events in the form of crisis. Such events can be earthquakes, extreme weather events, environmental disasters, financial crisis, disease outbreaks, etc. In such events people are very anxious to obtain reliable information quickly (Silverman, 2015). In such situations the public usually relies on established news organization to get credible and timely information and at the same time the news organizations rely on the public that have witnessed the crisis event for new information in order to bring important perspective and context in the crisis coverage (Panagiotou & Veglis, 2017). Thus, media journalists have a very difficult task to handle. In many cases those events take place in remote geographical locations or in places that the media organizations have no representatives and thus they need to relay on various sources the majority of which is available through the internet (Katsaounidou, Dimoulas, & Veglis, 2018).

The problem is that very often rumours, and misinformation accompany emergency situations. People intentionally spread invalid information as a joke, to increase their "likes" in their social media posts or to cause panic. Social media and specifically social networking services (Facebook, Twitter, Google+, etc) usually respond rapidly to any crisis event with various posts appearing to provide information about the crisis event. In such situations the verification parameter in reporting is extremely important since the consequences of reporting invalid information can have lethal effects (Mochla, Tsourvakas, & Veglis, 2017). The journalists must sort through fake news, hoaxes, rumours, in order to collect the valid information and report the crisis event (Silverman & Tsubaki, 2015).

The journalists have in their aid the traditional methods for source verification and also technological tools and services that allow them to rapidly implement verification processes that otherwise would require considerable time period in order to be implemented (Katsaounidou, Dimoulas, & Veglis, 2018; Panagiotou & Veglis, 2017).

This paper attempts to highlight the tools and methods that journalists must be aware of when covering crisis events. Two important parameters should be taken into account: training and coordinating journalists and providing them with access to tools and resources that allow them to quickly and accurately verify content. Thus, training future journalists on such issues should be considered a necessity for every journalism school today (Veglis, 2013).

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 discusses the importance of verification of social media content. Various tools and methods for verifying content are presented and discussed in section 3. Concluding remarks as well as future extension of this work can be found in the last section.

2 The importance of verifying Social Media Content

Social media are an important journalistic source but also a very important platform to disseminate their work. They become a standard, if not indispensable, tool for newsgathering as many studies suggest (Ahmad 2010; Cozma and Chen 2013; Sheffer and Schultz 2010). User-generated content posted to social networks like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube has shaped coverage of a variety of news events since they became the place where news is broken first. It constitutes a social-mediated crisis communication (SMCC) model, as proposed from Jin, Y., & Liu, (2010) that describes the interaction between an organization in crisis and types of publics who produce and consume information before, during, and after crises but also how information is distributed by social media directly and indirectly. The use of social media from journalists acts as a catalyst for the increase in

power of tech-savvy journalists in the newsroom. News organisations are particularly interested *“in social media as a platform to market their news content, increase traffic to their websites and strengthen customer relationships, individual journalists take a more informal and personal approach: rather than promoting links to their published articles, they primarily use social media to talk about what they are working on, share opinions and ideas or for live-blogging”* (Canter 478:2013). As the size of social networks has grown, these channels have also been used increasingly for distributing primary eyewitness material on breaking news stories. As a result, social sources have become indispensable for today journalist having become a crucial foundation of news, expanding access to ‘alternative’ sources. For Hermida (302:2010) social media constitute an ambient environment where journalists can monitor the constant stream of news and information and detect *“trends and issues hovering under the news radar”*. Journalists increasingly turn to social media (Knight and Cook 2013), especially for researching topics, curating information and analysing stories (Hermida 2012). Yet, while the research so far has focused mainly on the use of social media in daily routines such as breaking news coverage, or in times of elections, little attention is paid on how journalists use and integrate social media platforms as an important source during crises. Journalists can apply established practices to social media content, *“but the structure and usage of the Internet and Social Media complicate journalistic information gathering and verification processes”* (Backholm et All 68:2017). Hence, the characteristics related to social media *“might change the journalists’ strategies towards verification, relying more on technology, and knowledge about social media effects”* (Knight and Cook 5:2013). The acceleration of the news cycle and proliferation of news and information within social media has raised concerns about the erosion of the discipline of verification among journalists (Hermida 2012). As Wood argues (2013) *“if speed is the currency of the modern information era, misinformation is the increasingly high cost”*.

Various researches have shown that journalists are increasingly using social media as primary or secondary sources of news. According to Reuters Institute Digital News Report (2017), 57% per cent of journalists worldwide use social media. The most important source for validation in social media is industry insiders or other news organisations, such as the Associated Press (AP), Reuters and the BBC (Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2017). The role the social media played during the Boston bombings breaking news – much of which unsubstantiated – *“had pressured the mainstream media in backpedal mode”* (Pang et All 97: 2014, Dowd, 2013; Eyal, 2013).

Broersma and Graham (405:2012) argue, *“that current journalistic practices had turned covering the social media as a “beat” where journalists become part of the network for the purposes of sourcing stories”*. The integration of social media into the current daily practices underlines the need to develop a variation of verification strategies in two levels as we suggest in order to safeguard the trustworthiness of their content. According to Jordaan’s (29:2013) *“journalists actively use social media to “keep abreast of general trends in the news and in society”, as well as the “realities created by their audiences”*. News Organisations and Journalists *“in resolving the underlying strategic dilemmas there are a number of practical issues to be addressed: editorial control; scalability; ownership of intellectual property; the blurring of professional and personal spheres; as well as concerns about the representative or unrepresentative nature of the networks shouting for attention.”* (Newman 6:2009)

Resorting to citizens/experts etc social media accounts is a second level verification strategy, were actually Journalists rely upon the verification mechanisms of bigger news organisations, due to lack

of resources time etc. It is a strategy that aims to use the advantage of social media as a news source but on the same time to rely on major news organisations that works as second level verification mechanism. In addition, other tools and methods are used as a first level mechanism to verify content from social media. The necessity to manage social media content and the development of new structures in the newsroom is another important element for the introduction of verification procedures regarding social media content.

3 Tools and methods for verifying content

In today's digital environment, journalists employ many sources in order to stay informed but also in order to find information on various subjects they investigate (Veglis, 2016). Among all the information that is available today, multimedia content (images and videos) possesses a prominent role. Multimedia content supplements a news article and in many cases act as an attractor for the internet user to read the article. This is especially more evident in the case of news articles that concern crisis situations, like war, terrorist attacks, natural disasters, and refugees (Silverman, 2015). In the case of breaking news, the speed that is required in order for an article to appear in media' web site is very important and thus media companies tend to make significant compromises in the content of the article (text and images and video) (Veglis, 2016). It seems to be a quite common phenomenon to use irrelevant images in news articles, or images that were posted on social media by third parties without verifying them first (Jackson & Moloney, 2016). Although the introduction of the information and communication technologies along with the internet has transformed considerably the way journalism is conducted, the basic values of verification remain about the same (Silverman & Tsubaki, 2015). The journalist should always verify his information by asking the 5Ws (Who, What, Where, When, Why) questions (Kolodzy, 2013). In the era of the internet a significant number of the 5 Ws questions can be answered with the help of internet tools, which allow the journalists to verify and communicate remotely (Veglis & Panagiotou, 2017). These tools should help journalists((Backholm et All 68:2017): i) *be able to monitor Social Media platform content and identify newsworthy information* ii) *be able to handle verification of varying forms of content, such as text or videos, and integrate content from several Social Media platforms into verification processes* (Brandtzæg et al., 2016; Schifferes et al., 2014) iii) *offer the journalist a high level of control over, and possibilities to filter, what type of content is tracked or presented* iv) *be able to identify the geographical location of a source* (Diakopoulos et al., 2012). To this end various tools which can be employed for verifying text, images and videos are presented and briefly discussed. The tools are organized in various categories but obviously many of the tools can also be included in other categories of verification processes.

Effective Web Searching: Although today journalists have many sources of information (namely, news agencies, databases, reliable colleagues, etc) in many cases they have to use general web searching in order to find content that is relevant to their stories. As expected the main search engine that journalist should employ is Google, although other search engines and specifically Microsoft Bing should also be considered. But they should utilized advanced search techniques. This can be facilitated by using advanced search syntax or by using the advanced search page. From the two previous search solutions the use of advanced search syntax is more convenient since it can be implemented from the home page of Google search engine. The syntax may include various parameters but the most prominent, that allow journalists to focus their searches, are (Silverman, 2015):

site - which narrows the search in one site (i.e. www.ejta.eu) or limit the results to a particular domain (i.e. .eu or .gr).

filetype - which allows users to search only for items in a specific format. Useful content usually can be found in pdf format.

Although the use of parameters is very fast, in the case that journalists want to conduct a search with many different parameters and combination of keywords, the advanced search page is a very good method since it can support very complex searches.

Tools: www.google.com, https://www.google.com/advanced_search.

Figure 1: Google Advanced Search (https://www.google.com/advanced_search).

Verifying images: Images are multimedia content that are usually employed in news articles. A significant number of images are currently available on the web and thus it is quite common for a web article to employ irrelevant images that refer to the same subject (Silverman & Tsubaki, 2015; Veglis, 2016). Therefore journalists must check the validity of an image that they have found on the web before including it in their articles (with the necessary reference to the source). In order to ensure that a certain image is recent journalists employ a reverse image search operation. This can be accomplished with the help of Google Reverse Image search or with TinEye which is another online service that provide such services. Google indexes significantly more images than TinEye but in many cases the results it displays are not correct and thus, journalists should check carefully its results (Panagiotou, 2017).

Tools: <https://images.google.com/>, <https://www.tineye.com/>.

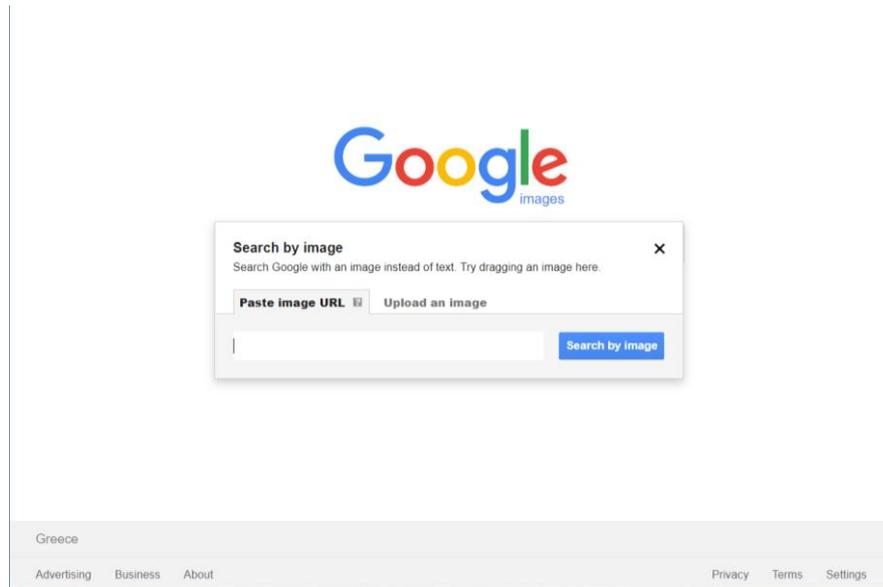


Figure 2: Google Reverse Image Search (<https://images.google.com/>).

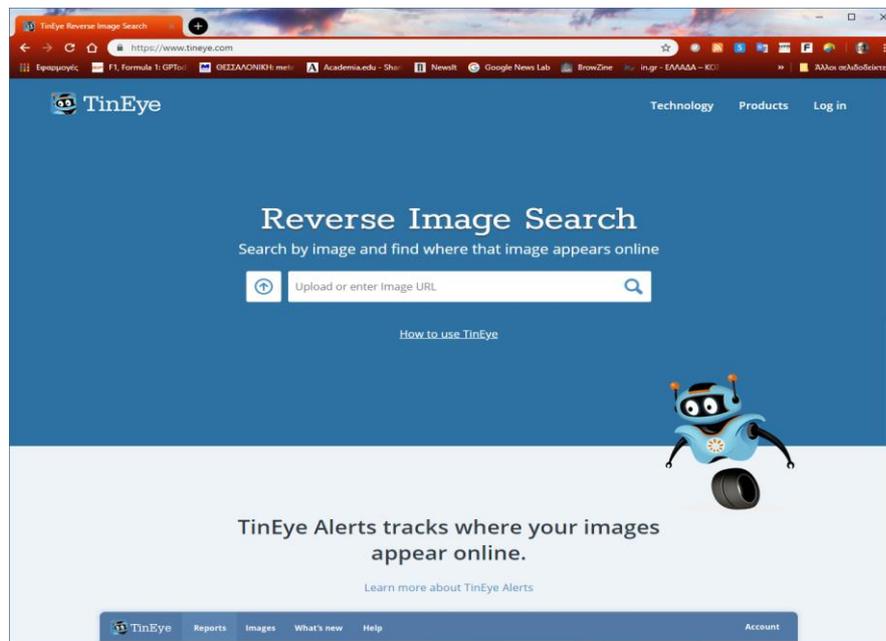


Figure 3: Reverse Image Search with TinEye (<https://www.tineye.com>).

Verifying places: One of the most difficult processes in verification is to confirm that a specific image or video is from a specific geographical location (Silverman, 2015). Obviously the most preferred method would be to visit the specific location, but this is rarely possible due to financial and also time restrictions. In this case journalists can rely on online services like Google maps (and specifically Google Street View) or Bing Maps which give them the ability to visit specific geographical location remotely (Silverman & Tsubaki, 2015). Of course, bear in mind that such services do not cover all geographical locations.

Tools: <http://www.google.com/maps>, <https://www.bing.com/maps>.

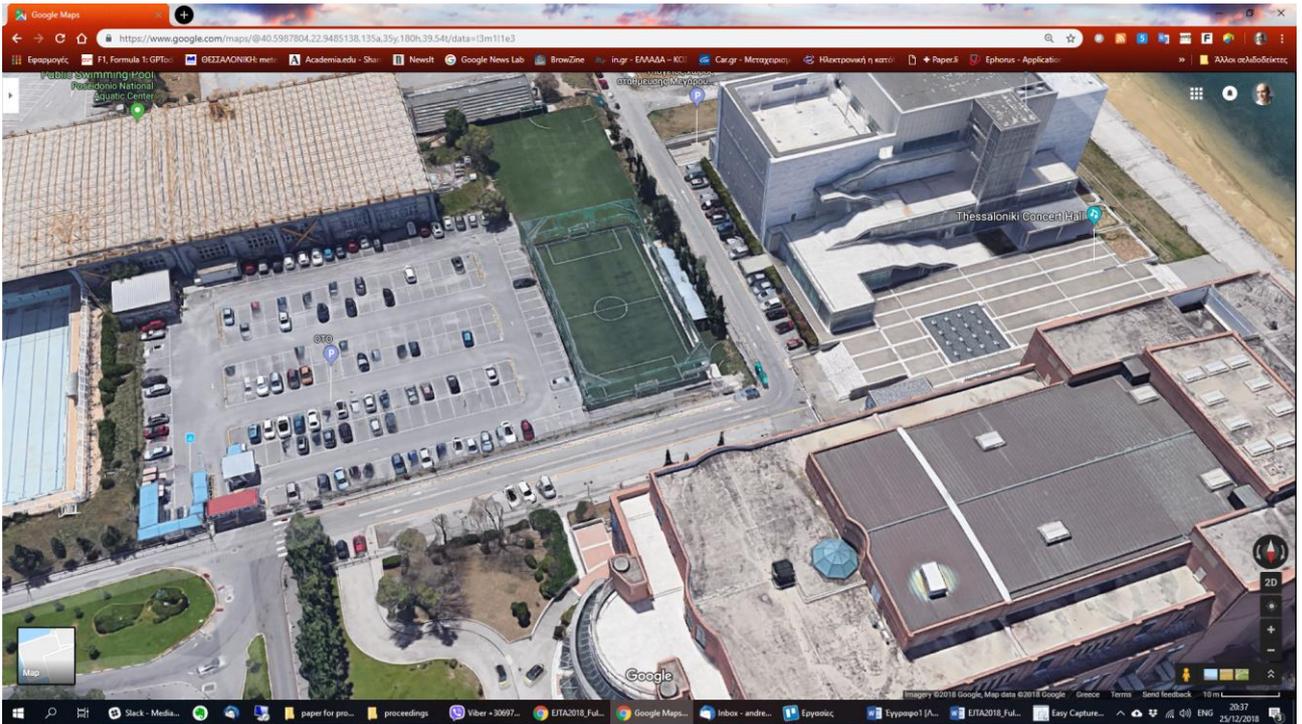


Figure 4: Verify a location with Google maps (<http://www.google.com/maps>).

Verifying time: Equally difficult is considered to be to determine if a specific multimedia content is captured at a specific time. In order to succeed in this task journalists may try to indirectly verify the time. Various methods can be employed but the most prominent include (Panagiotou & Veglis, 2017):

- *Verification based on weather conditions* - which includes searching for the weather conditions in particular time and location with the help of the Wolfram Alpha engine. It is a computational answer engine that responds to questions using structured and curated data from its knowledge base.
- *Verification based on the sun's position* - in this case the user can check if the light of the sun in the multimedia content is at the correct position (of course this can be used only when the weather is sunny). This can be accomplished with the help of SunCalc, which displays the sun movements and sunlight phases during a given day at a given location.

Tools: <https://www.wolframalpha.com/>, <http://suncalc.net>,

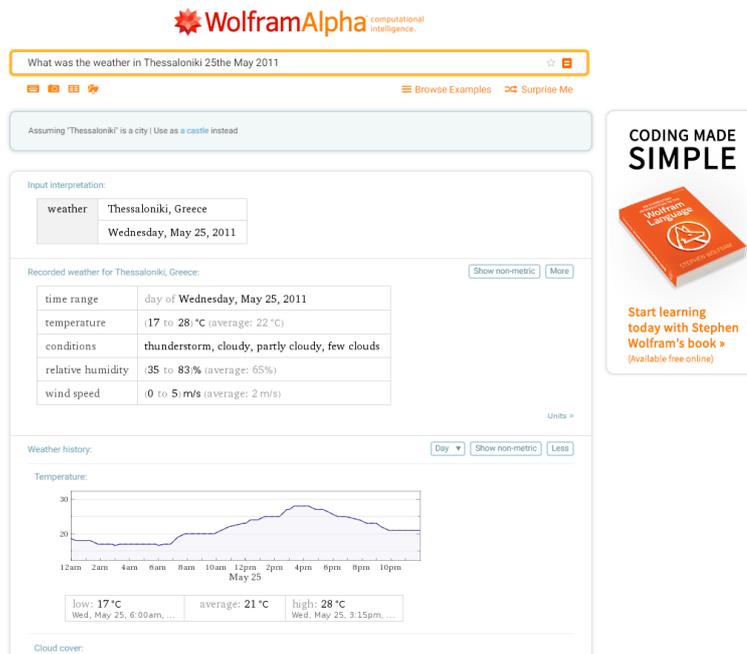


Figure 5: Verifying weather conditions with Wolfram Alpha (<https://www.wolframalpha.com>).

One other method that can be employed for verifying the place and the time that an image was captured is the inspection of the EXIF (Exchangeable image file format) data (Silverman, 2015). EXIF data includes many information among which the date and time of the capture, but also the model of the device and geographical location information based on the GPS of the device that captured the image. The display of the EXIF metadata can be facilitated by downloading and installing a stand alone application or by uploading the image file to an online EXIF reader. This method requires the acquisition of the original multimedia file since the publication of the multimedia file to social media platforms usually automatically erases the EXIF data (Silverman & Tsubaki, 2015).

Tools: <http://exif.regex.info/exif.cgi>, <http://www.findexif.com/>.

Verifying Video: One of the most difficult tasks in verification is the case of video. As in the case of images, today there is an abundance of videos on the WWW that any user can download, edit and upload again as they were their own. Thus the whole process of video verification is quite complicated and can not be achieved without technological help. Today there are various tools or initiatives that attempt to tackle the problem of video verification (Katsaounidou, Dimoulas, & Veglis, 2018). One of the most complete tool is considered to be the InVID Verification Plugin. It is provided by the InVID European Project to help journalists to save time and be more efficient in their fact-checking and debunking tasks on social networks with emphasis on verifying multimedia content. The plugin is available for Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox. It includes a variety of tools, which allow journalists i) to acquire contextual information on Facebook and YouTube videos, ii) to perform reverse image search on Google, Baidu or Yandex search engines, iii) to fragment videos from various platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, Daily Motion) into keyframes, iv) to enhance and explore keyframes and images through a magnifying lens, v) to query Twitter more efficiently through time intervals and many other filters, vi) to read video and

image metadata, vii) to check the video copyrights, viii) and to apply forensic filters on still images (Teyssou et al., 2017).

Tool: <https://www.invid-project.eu/tools-and-services/invid-verification-plugin/>.

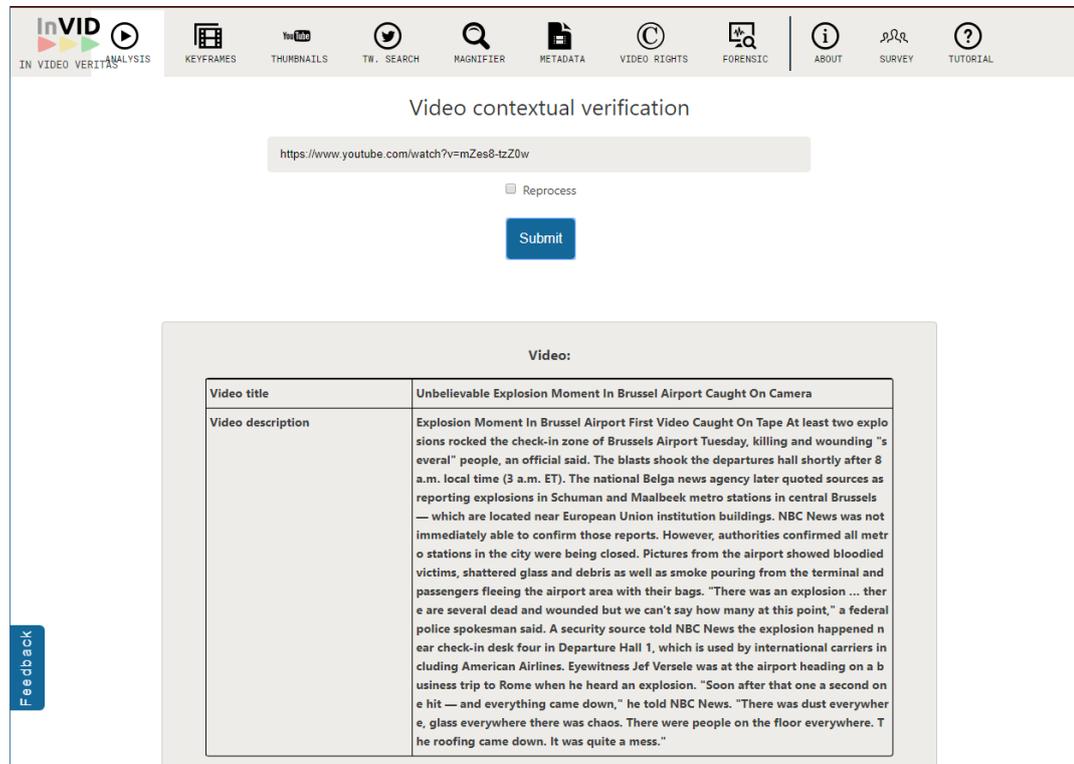


Figure 5: InVID Verification Plugin (<https://www.invid-project.eu/tools-and-services/invid-verification-plugin/>).

Verification method for multimedia content: Although the previously mentioned tools for verifying multimedia content can be proven to be very helpful, that does not mean that traditional verifying methods are not applicable when verifying images and videos. On the contrary all the previously mentioned tools should be used in conjunction with traditional verification methods. The NewsCheck extension, developed by First Draft News initiative, allows users to investigate the authenticity of an online image or video by running through a standardized checklist. The extension supports a four-step process that examine: i) Whether the content is original, ii) Who created the content, iii) Where the content was created, iv) When the content was created. For each of the questions, a series of color-coded prompts are provided. The results of the checks (which are provided in the form of percentage) are then viewed as a set of results. The tool is designed so that users can embed the image or video in a website and place the results of the checklist alongside allowing other users to understand how trustworthy the piece of content is by seeing the verification checks clearly outlined (Wardle, 2017).

Tool: <https://firstdraftnews.org/launching-new-chrome-extension-newscheck/>.

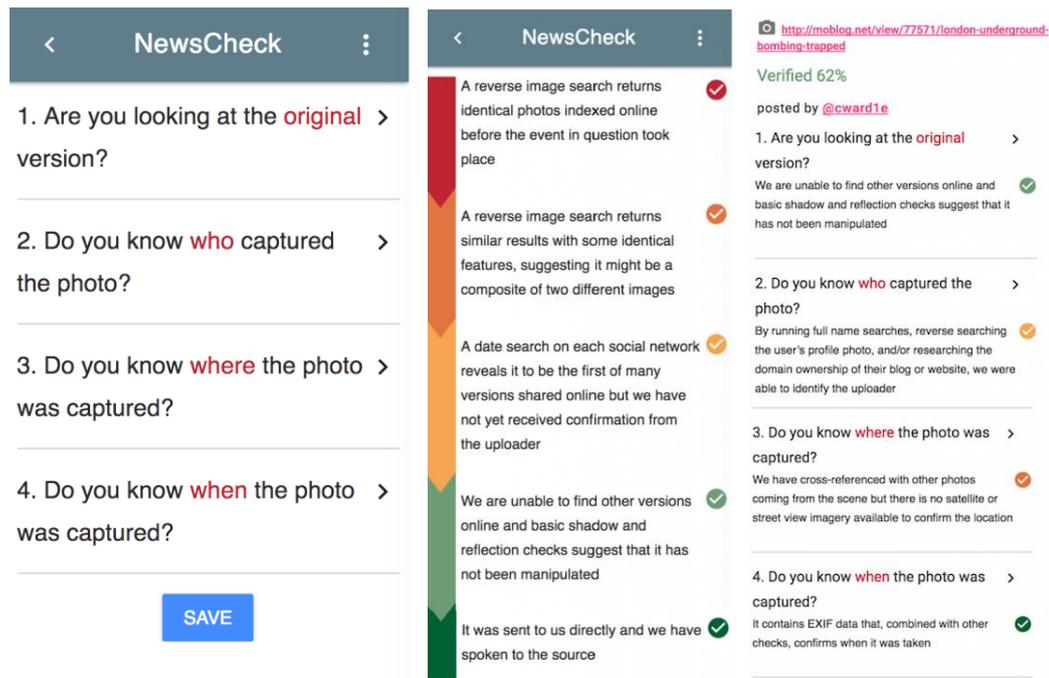


Figure 6: The NewsCheck process (depicted from <https://firstdraftnews.org/launching-news-chrome-extension-newscheck/>).

Social account analysis: In nowadays social media play an important role in journalism. They are an important information source for journalists but they also include rumours and invalid information. Shortly after the appearance of a news story on social media it is very important for the journalist to be able to validate its truthfulness. This among other includes a detail check of the social history of the account that published the news story. This process is very time consuming and not easy to implement. Thus, special tools that performs social account analysis are now available, among which TruthNest. ThuthNest that was developed by ATC (Athens Technology Center - <http://www.atc.gr>), offer very unique characteristics. It offers a holistic analysis including a plethora of social dimensions, automatic controls and metrics in order to enable media organizations and journalists to: i) identify early signals of events, ii) verify authenticity of information posted, iii) locate possible credible sources of information, iv) monitor the social ecosystem effectively by creating smart, semantically meaningful, context-aware, dynamic, cross-network streams (Jaho, Tzoannos, Papadopoulos, Sarris, 2014).

Tool: <http://app.truthnest.com/>, <http://www.truthnest.com/>.

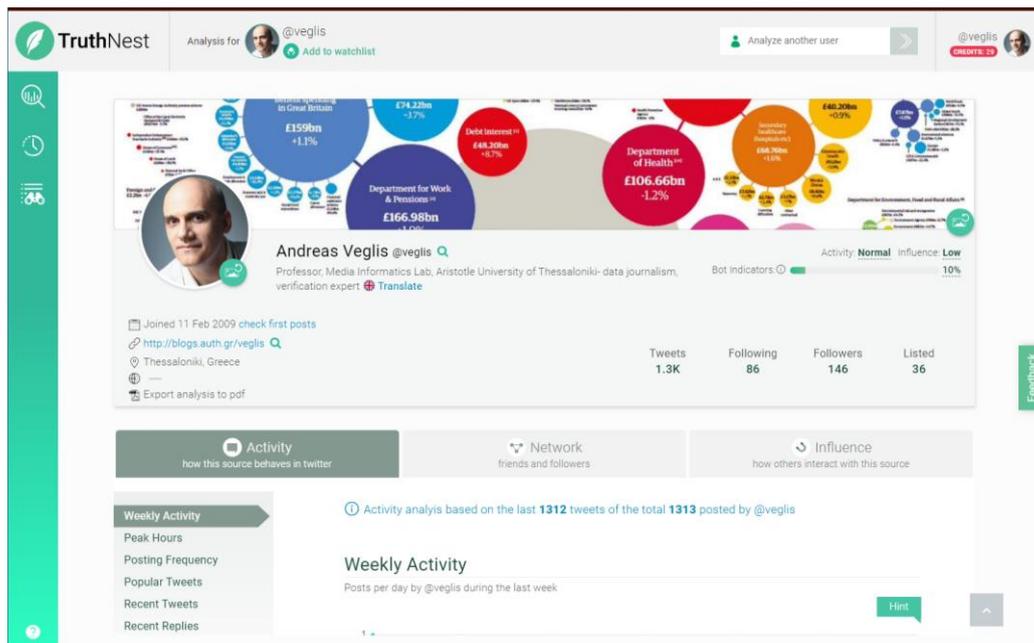


Figure 7: Social analysis with TruthNest (<http://app.truthnest.com/>).

4 Conclusions

This paper studied the issue of verification of social media content in crisis reporting that constitutes a very demanding and challenging environment for journalists. As suggested by Schultz and Raupp (2010), a more complex perspective on crisis communication needs to take into account the interactive and inter-organizational needs, especially we argue for news organisations and journalists.

The importance of the topic lies upon the fact that social media are now integrated into the working lives of most of the journalists and as thus verification strategies need to be developed in order to co-respond to this evolving environment. In addition, crises challenge the stable professional standards and routines of a newsroom in the process of news selection and journalistic sourcing. The paper's key contribution includes refocusing the theoretical foundations of news gathering and especially news verification in crisis reporting. During crisis situations the need for information increases as well of sources. As a result, journalists tend to use every available source and especially social media as a source of citizen journalism and of first hands account. In these cases, we argue that that social media seems to turn the pyramid of typical newsgathering practices and use of traditional sources upside down. Journalists tend to rely more on social media to retrieve spectacular, immediate information in relation to official sources. Social media are used as first-hand accounts were journalists build up their further work. This is why it more than ever important to work upon and develop verification techniques that will enable journalists to co-respond to a very demanding news environment. Crises and social media require journalists to cope with a digital and high-speed, distributed and networked environment "where knowledge and expertise are more fluid, dynamic, and hybrid" (Hermida, Lewis, and Zamith 495:2014). According to Backholm et All (2017) Journalists experience challenges with filtering and estimating trustworthiness of social media content. These challenges "are especially due to the vast overall amount of information, and the need to monitor several platforms simultaneously" (Backholm et All 67:2017). To support

improved situational awareness in journalistic work during crises we need to develop verification procedures. It is important though to have in mind that *“the final decision-making about content and source trustworthiness should, however, remain as a manual journalistic task, as the sample would not trust an automated estimation based on tool algorithms”* (Backholm et All 67:2017)

Based on the tools presented in section 3, for the journalism to be able to verify on Social Media Content in Crisis Reporting, they need to possess specific Information and Communication (IC) skills. The problem is that in most cases journalists are acquainted with basic internet services (WWW, e-mail), but the percentages of use deteriorate when we move to more advanced tools and services (Veglis, 2013). This lack of IC skills can have a significant impact on the verification methods they utilize, since it is very difficult for them to acquire them. In this context it is worth noting the crucial role that education can play in the acquisition of ICT verification skills. The above findings can guide journalism educators to adapt their programs to cover the lack of verification skills. As a matter of fact, this is already happening in many journalism schools. For example, in the school of Journalism and Mass Communication in Aristotle University of Thessaloniki a verification related course is being taught for the past three years. The course includes among others all the tools that were mentioned in the previously section. Thus, journalism graduates will enter the media market better prepared to cope with their work demands. A challenge is that although Journalism schools educate future journalists, by the time they become professional, changes in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) will require from them to learn or acquire new competencies. Journalism education must be focused on learning to learn and on adapting to new tools and platforms. There is no need to teach the use of specific tools when it is almost inevitable that by the time that future journalists will have to use them in their profession, those tools will have been replaced with newer versions with added or altered features, or with tools from other vendors with new interfaces (Veglis, 2013). The increased time and attention spent on verification and other digitally focused routines reflect changes in journalistic culture at a more profound level.

The critical size and various modalities of social media content and the challenges related to real-time journalism will demand efficient and effective verification tools to support journalists in the future. A further research should include factors such as the importance of journalistic education curriculum and the inclusion of verification methods and techniques in undergraduate and post graduate students as well during the early years of their professional career. Such a comparative and longitudinal research will greatly contribute in our understanding of such an important topic.

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An Uncommon Understanding? European Media Discourses of Crisis and Human Rights

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Abstract

Recent years have seen a remarkable weaponisation of human rights language, both in the context of war and humanitarian crisis, but also in a non-war context, with the effect of elevating political or foreign policy issues to the status of ‘crisis’. Bearing this in mind, this paper aims to reopen the debate on the relationship between human rights and journalism by analysing how the discursive framework of human rights has influenced the reporting of contemporary crisis scenarios in European media. Drawing parallels and contrasts between multiple examples of crisis narratives from recent years (the humanitarian refugee disaster in the Mediterranean; Russia’s annexation of Crimea, the Greece/Macedonia name dispute and Brexit), we intend to discuss the legitimacy of political and journalistic agendas that report or advocate upon these grounds. Eventually, we aim to rethink the media’s educative potential lend transparency to the legal system behind human rights terminology and foster greater literacy among its readership.

Key Words: European Media, Crisis Discourses, Human Rights

1 Introduction

Agenda-setting theory holds that the news media constitute instruments that “influence the importance placed on the topics of the public agenda (McCombs & Reynolds, 2002). Among others, news media outlets employ framing techniques – drawing attention to certain events and locating them within a particular field of meaning – in order to shape public opinion by setting the agenda in public discourse. One such “frame” utilised by journalists is that of human rights; our aim herein is to examine and problematise the deployment of human rights language and narratives – the application of a moralistic human rights “frame” – in media discourse.

The relevance to reinvestigate these matters is best illustrated by a heated debate this summer, when one of Germany’s most influential newspapers, *Die Zeit*, published a “For” and “Against” format, asking whether NGOs should be allowed to rescue refugees in the Mediterranean (Lobenstein & Lau, 2018). Italy had repeatedly condemned operations by various international NGOs off its coastlines, hence the newspaper had intended to shed light on the various arguments at play. On the “Against” side, author Lau argued that the NGOs believed themselves to be morally irreproachable and undefeatable. “Their understanding of human rights is without compromise,” she argued, “which is why they operate in ignorance of legal frameworks and responsibilities.” What followed was the largest wave of criticism the newspaper had ever received. A week later the editors published an statement, in which they apologized for accidentally creating the impression of questioning fundamental human rights, as they are aware of the necessity to save lives and that their only aim was to include all opinions on the matter.



Figure 1: Title of *Die Zeit* Article, July 2018, “Should NGOs be allowed to rescue refugees in the Mediterranean?”

With that in mind, this paper aims to reopen the debate on the relationship between human rights and journalism by analysing how the discursive framework of human rights has influenced the reporting of various contemporary crisis scenarios in European media. Drawing parallels and

contrasts between multiple examples of crisis narratives from recent years, we intend to discuss the legitimacy of political and journalistic agendas that report or advocate upon these grounds. Eventually, we aim to rethink the media's educative potential and how it can lend transparency to the legal system behind human rights terminology, and foster greater literacy among its readership.

2 Defining Human Rights

Often defined as standards of treatment that human beings command by virtue of their inherent dignity and personhood, human rights represent a multifaceted concept (Minogue, 1979). They might allude to universal rights and those of specific populations, rights held by individuals and those held by communities, along with legal agreements and philosophical debates. On the one hand, human rights language implicitly refers to a dense body of national and international law that, in theory, equates to the provision of agreed standards. On the other, human rights language represents a discourse with a strong emotional resonance and is in this way susceptible to politicisation. Virtually any topic can be perceived or approached as a question of human rights; accordingly, rights-based language proliferates in legislative and political discourse, together with media treatment of a diverse range of issues.

From a social constructivist perspective, as is taken up by Nash in her innovative analysis of human rights discourse (2015), human rights are not static and inalienable, but fluid and changeable. If we are to accept this social constructivist assessment of human rights, it follows that human rights remain in a state of flux, continuing to be constructed and reconstructed. In their capacity as social constructs, human rights are subject to influence and limitation by social structures (e.g. social class, religion) and (geo)political dynamics and can be weaponised to bolster or undermine these structures and relationships. As such, human rights represent a “malleable trope” (Tumber & Waisbord, 2017) used to frame disparate political causes and actions: rights-based discourses in this way are mobilised to define issues and justify policies.

Accordingly, a number of contemporary challenges – from cross-border migration to climate change and progressive values (e.g. access to reproductive services) – have been redefined as assaults on basic rights. We note, for example, these instances of headlines drawing on rights-based discourse on the topics listed above, drawn from media sources with diverse political leanings.

1. “Women fear for their safety and loss of rights if US abortion laws change” (Sky News, 1 October 2018)
2. “What a surprise! Women avoid £40K GENDER NEUTRAL Home Office loos – as too distressing” (Daily Express, 16 August 2018)
3. “Trump's 'zero-tolerance' immigration policy still violates fundamental human rights laws” (Business Insider, 30 June 2018)
4. “The sanctuary city mess – What really happens when cities choose politically correct politics over safety” (Fox News, 26 October 2018)
5. “Mo Brooks: ‘Now’ Is Time to Build Wall, Caravan ‘Hell-Bent on Assaulting Our National Sovereignty’” (Breitbart, 24 October 2018)
6. “Young People Are Suing the Trump Administration Over Climate Change. She’s Their Lawyer” (New York Times, 23 October 2018)

In framing an issue using the language of rights, governments or press outlets implicitly identify it as a matter of human dignity. As a result of such reframing, a nuanced situation is recast as a polarised confrontation between “good” and “evil”. Khor (2016) underlines that the ideas that make up human rights are articulated by people as discourse (e.g. texts, discursive practices) and enacted via networks i.e. acts of communication and cooperation between people. Mass media can be viewed as discursive, and therefore creative acts in the process of (re)defining human rights or in their employment to serve a particular aim or structure. The way communities understand and experience the notion of human rights is shaped by media communication and the news media, therefore, constitute an arena where political and social actors fight for public perception. As such, the news media possess a strong agenda-setting ability. When considering this agenda-setting ability, it is worth bearing in mind that the role of the media in defining and promoting human rights is dependent to some extent on the rights they enjoy themselves. In autocratic regimes, for example, state-sanctioned human rights narratives may be perpetuated by the media. Furthermore, even if independent of government, media outlets are often not free from interference by other actors, such as corporate interests, civil society, human rights organisations and publishers.

3 Human Rights, Conflict and Global Politics: Dominant Narratives and the Question of Responsibility

Within the political reality of global conflicts and crises today, we often witness large-scale *violations* of human rights as the initial trigger of a larger debate. Usually brought to the public eye by media or large-scale organizations, mainly NGOs, the international community is equipped to respond to infringements of any kind with a handful of well-established assets, ranging from verbal condemnations, to coordinated diplomatic, economic and military pressure mechanisms. In their entity, these various components of human rights practises not only form the realm of political action, but they also produce a discursive body that effectively shapes our understanding of human rights, including cases of their violation. To understand human rights narratives today, we must briefly consider the most dominant voices in this particular discourse, their points of reference and possible limitations to their argumentative spectrum.

Most prominently stands the United Nations, whose Charter, together with their “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (1948), provide the most practically applied definition of human rights as such, and who’s associated bodies like the Security Council and Human Rights Council are tasked with monitoring and setting the agenda of when and how to respond to human rights violations and other humanitarian threats. This political power status expands into (post-conflict) legal settlements and prosecutions with the UN operating its own juridical organ: the International Court of Justice in The Hague, who’s fifteen judges are elected by the General Assembly and Security Council. Additionally, the United Nations have played a vital role in the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC), essentially a non-UN institution, but to which the UN can refer cases to.

In close proximity to the UN orbits, a “tight-knit group of elite players that can be described as the Humanitarian Club: an organized and hierarchical network of states, donors, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that (...) seeks to maintain its exclusivity and therefore tends to embrace only changes that reinforce its central position” (Barnett & Walker, 2015:131). This degree of supremacy of the UN and its partners can be and has been criticised for a variety of reasons, for instance concerning its political legitimacy and efficiency.

On the sidelines, critics have addressed discursive tendencies, as well: According to Makau Mutua, the UN-centered Humanitarian Club as the ‘main author of the human rights discourse’ (2001: 202) has cultivated a *Savage-Victim-Savior* metaphor within their narrative patterns: vulnerable and defenseless individuals and communities are framed as figures of victimhood, who fell prey to a perpetrator, usually a particularly repressive, autocratic or criminal ‘savage’ state apparatus. In this context, the human rights corpus itself emerges as the authorized source of relief and hence the sole ‘savior’ figure. By casting actors into ‘superior and subordinate positions’, Mutua concludes, the basic claim of ‘universality’ (as enshrined in the title of the UN Declaration) is undermined. Instead, the narrative contributes to a process of ‘othering.’

Being aware of such tendencies and patterns in the human rights discourse is crucial, as they easily find their way into the mass media’s depictions of crisis. Especially when reporting on distant crisis scenarios—where budget, censorship or safety issues restrict access of reporters—information and statements provided by governmental agencies and international NGOs become an integral part of news stories (Berganza et. Al, 2018). Especially NGOs are perceived as key actors in conflict-related discourse, as they are often considered to be rather unbiased and credible sources. Research indicates that the visibility of NGOs in media discourses on conflict is growing, as they increasingly fill the demand gap left behind by a lack of credibility in government sources and the media’s inability to verify material amid highly volatile conflict settings. A study conducted on the influence of NGOs on media coverage between 2011 and 2014 of the Syrian war, provides further nuances to this development: While there appears to be “a growing reliance on new types of semi-local NGOs, large international NGOs such Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch remained the most influential in pushing normative frames and advocating a tough stance on the Assad regime (Meyer et. al., 2017).

As such, the global politicization and subsequent institutionalization of human rights issues is not only negative: enshrining essential rights in the founding Charter of the largest and most powerful international organization has relocated related issues from the private sphere into the public arena. The degree of hegemony found throughout political, legal and public debates on the interpretation of human rights ideally contributes to more efficient and united responses to violations. However, as Krzyzanowski et. al. (2018) have recently pointed out, the process of politicization brings along some noteworthy side effects. As visible in the predominant position of the human rights corpus, the power to interpret and operate upon human rights (violations) is disproportionately shifted to state institutions; while non-state, private actors, localised organisations, volunteers or individuals are generally threatened to be marginalized, while they remain to be dependent on political decision-making processes. In public perceptions of rights-based matters, therefore, the question of responsibility for addressing or protecting rights is quick to be assigned to state actors only, leaving civil society a rather passive spectator in the human rights discourse.

4 The European ‘Refugee Crisis’: Dehumanising the Victim

The migrant influx of 2015 into Europe and the beginning of what has since been referred to as the ‘European refugee crisis’ not only introduced practical challenges to the political and civil sphere, but equally challenged common human rights narratives, as well. Unfolding in close range off and within European territory, one could rarely speak of a distant crisis any longer, even if the initial circumstances (the war in Syria) still feel distant to many Europeans. As such, at least a part of civil

society has either witnessed directly (inhabitants of Greek islands, for instance) or has been involved in active responses (volunteer organizations, refugee camp staff, donors of material supplies, etc.). That said, the comparatively more immediate experience of the consequences of human rights violations and humanitarian disasters calls for a re-investigation of how the notion of human rights has been framed in this context.

Research perspectives share the view that there are two dominating frames in European media coverage. On the one hand, the refugee is portrayed as a ‘threat’ (to national security or cultural identity) and is hence to be excluded from ‘our’ community. On the other hand, the refugee appears as a ‘victim’ figure. As such, the refugee is trapped between these two positions (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2018). Media critics have thoroughly analysed how the depiction of refugees as a threat has contributed to an increasingly anxious and hostile climate, because it has led to very tangible changes within the political landscape of Europe, most notably the sharp rise of right-wing/nationalist movements and parties. In that context, the non-hostile ‘victim’ frame seems of less harm, because it might originate in the well-intended aim to trigger empathy instead of rejection among the audience.

However, according to Chouliaraki and Stolic, the ‘victim’ frame is equally potent to produce problematic, if not damaging perceptions in the longer sight: linked to *visualities of collective misfortune*—most prominently, images of refugees squeezed on unstable rubber boats or overcrowded camps with only a minimum of material supply—the refugees are situated within “a field of representation that reduces their human life to corporeal existence (...) fully reliant on Western emergency aid or rescue operations to survive and so inevitably dispossessed of will and voice.” Reduced to a life context of naked survival, these visualities suggest a ‘lack of civic status’ and in the broader sense nullify not only the migrant’s dignity, but essentially his entitlement to human rights as a whole (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2018: 14-15). Consequently, audiences will find it hard to perceive migrants on eye-level.



Figure 2: Asylum seekers traveling by boat off the coast of Africa on the Mediterranean

Reinforcing previously addressed notions of victimhood that emerge within the global human rights discourse, the case of the refugee crisis highlights the necessity to examine narrative patterns like these beyond the usual scope. In light of the political and social task of integrating migrants into co-citizens, the need to diffuse subordinating and disuniting perceptions is crucial. Unlike debating a distant conflict, the refugee crisis on our doorstep now reveals the previously hidden consequences of short-sighted empathy frames.

5 Human Rights Narratives as Political Strategy: Inflaming Public Opinion

While the use of the term “crisis” within the context of refugees arriving in Europe has been the subject of critical analysis (Triantafyllidou 2018), the deployment of human rights narratives in news reporting represents a broader, more subtle and insidious phenomenon, whereby crisis narratives have crept into the discourse surrounding political issues by way of human rights-based language. Particularly striking in this contemporary period is the employment of human rights narratives with the effect of elevating political or foreign policy issues to the status of “crisis”. We note the abundant (and arguably unwarranted) use of human rights by governments and media outlets to inflame public opinion in the context of situations that may not qualify as crises in themselves but rather as questions of social, political or economic concern or disagreement.

In particular, media discourses frequently draw implicitly on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, notably Section 3 of Article 21 – “The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government” – and Article 22 regarding those economic, social and cultural rights “indispensable for [...] dignity”. Among the most common devices employed in reframing social, political or economic issues as questions of human rights are rhetoric, images and polls or statistics (often presented as visually arresting graphics). Three examples of this phenomena are the news coverage

surrounding: Brexit, the Macedonia/Greece naming issue, and Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014.

In the cases of both Brexit and the Macedonia/Greece naming dispute, media coverage has been marked by a proliferation of language grounded in vague principles of human rights – particularly related to sovereignty and identity – deployed in the construction of crisis at the discursive level. For example, in UK media coverage surrounding Brexit on both “sides” of the argument – both in press outlets generally of a pro-Remain and those of a pro-Leave orientation – there has been a significant appeal to human rights language, with the effect of advancing a particular political agenda vis-a-vis the United Kingdom leaving the European Union.

On the one hand we note claims that Brexit in itself represents a human rights crisis. In February 2017, for example, *The Independent* published an article entitled “Brexit could prompt human rights crisis, lawyers warn” (*The Independent*, 21 February 2017), in which the author, Charlotte England, stated that the UK's departure from the EU would leave “citizens with a similar level of protection to people in Europe's last dictatorship, Belarus”. On the other, outlets with a broadly pro-Leave orientation frequently cited calls for a second referendum and the decision of UK supreme court judges regarding the role of parliament in initiating the Brexit process as undermining democracy. A particularly highly-discussed example was *The Daily Mail's* take on the so-called “Brexit case” in the UK supreme court. On 4 November 2016, the political editor of *The Daily Mail*, James Slack, branded the judges responsible for the ruling as “Enemies of the People” in his front-page headline.

Combined with a subheadline emphasising the judges' betrayal of the wishes of 17.4 million voters, this inflammatory and now somewhat infamous (though far from singular) headline makes implicit reference to Article 21 of the UDHR in its claims that the judiciary has defied “the will of the people” as “the basis of the authority of government”. Similar sentiments can be found in such newspapers as *The Daily Express* – e.g. “THEY WON'T STOP! Unelected Lords DEMAND second Brexit vote - with even CHILDREN given say” (26 October 2018) – and *The Daily Telegraph* – “The judges versus the people” (3 November 2016).



Figure 3: Daily Mail, November 4, 2016, on Brexit

Turning to the Macedonia/Greece naming dispute, a large part of the Greek and some international coverage of the issue has taken on human rights as a foundational narrative. A number of mainstream Greek news outlets patently appeal to a rights-based narrative while failing to cite the source of these rights – e.g. a direct appeal to the UDHR – and often conflate perceived historical rights (e.g. to names and historical figures) with codified human rights. Most conspicuously, the Greek news portal in.gr places stories on the issue within its “Human rights” section, as was the case of in.gr on January 1st 2018, while other outlets led with images of protesting crowds and snapshots of opinion polls, indirectly asserting the betrayal of popular (democratic) will and the rights of the Greek populace.



Figure 4: The “Macedonian” naming dispute: protesting Greek citizens

As an example, in February 2018 Greek news outlets *To Proto Thema* and *I Efimerida* (among others) combined opinion poll results as headlines – e.g. “Poll: 71.% do not accept the use of the name Macedonia” (To Proto Thema, February 2018) – with images of protest featuring crowds brandishing Greek flags and statues of Alexander the Great. While this coverage found parallels in FYROM media – e.g. news media such as *Republika* and *Nova Makedonija* using images of protests taking place in Skopje – many outlets took on a more conciliatory tone. In contrast, some international coverage mirrored that of the Greek media more closely; Russian media, especially RT (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vgx7XH4us1c>), consistently underscored the unpopularity of the name deal among the population of FYROM via videos of violent protest and appeal to public will. While RT’s coverage is undoubtedly unsurprising, given the NATO and EU membership at stake for FYROM, its juxtaposition with Greek media coverage illustrates the possible use of similar means (vague allusions to human rights, images of mass protest and/or statistic) to achieve disparate political aims via the evocation of a crisis of democracy and human rights.

Similar strategies were visible in Russian coverage of the Crimea and Donbass crisis, this time at more extreme levels. Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed in 2014 that Russian forces were deployed in Crimea only to protect “Russians” and “Russian-speakers” in Ukraine. This narrative was rapidly and consistently reproduced in the majority of Russian media outlets. Indeed, Russian news coverage largely provided a mirror of official policy or statements made by the administration (particularly by President Putin himself), providing an example of media not initiating a human rights-based narrative, but rather perpetuating it. Similarly to presentational tools employed in coverage of Brexit and the Macedonia/Greece naming dispute, this narrative was supported by images of crowds at pro-Russia demonstrations and striking graphics depicting public opinion in favour of a Russian takeover, together with personal accounts on the struggle of Russian-speakers in Crimea (<https://www.kp.ru/daily/26208/3093541/>).



Figure 5: Russia Today graphics depicting public opinion in favour of a Russian takeover of Crimea



Figure 6: Russia Today images of crowds at pro-Russia demonstrations in Crimea

In addition to similar use of rhetoric, polls and protest images, however, the falsification of events (and their subsequent media portrayal) constituted a dramatic elevation of the human rights-based narrative. On 12 July 2014, for example, state-owned Channel One Russia ran a news story about the alleged crucifixion of a three-year-old boy in the town of Sloviansk by Ukrainian soldiers, featuring the testimony of the child's mother. Today held up as a prime example of disinformation, this story was widely reported in the Russian news media.



Figure 7: Channel One Russia story about the alleged crucifixion of a three-year-old boy in the town of Sloviansk by Ukrainian soldiers, featuring the testimony of the child’s mother.

Despite the use of similar reporting tools, Russian media coverage of events in Crimea and Donbass constitutes an example distinct from the other cases examined in that the human rights-based narratives deployed here lent a degree (however small) of legitimacy to concrete action by Russia in Ukraine. Furthermore, claims of human rights violations by Russia partially obscured Russia’s own violations of international law; together with the monopoly held by this narrative in Russian (and other Russian-language) media, mainstream Western outlets were also forced to engage with the Russian state-sanctioned narrative, even if only to test its validity (see <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26415508>). Moreover, this theme – of violations of the rights of Russians and Russian-speakers – has become an established narrative, gaining weight by virtue of its longevity; governments and media outlets, particularly across the post-Soviet space, must engage with it. We note, for example, articles about the situation for Russian-speakers in Estonia by Russian news agency RIA Novosti – e.g. “Narva – this is not Crimea. It’s much worst” (see <https://ria.ru/accents/20180519/1520884960.html>) – and statements by national administrations about the rights of their Russian-speaking populations, disputing any claims of violations. They include a 2015 interview by Deutsche Welle with then Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, entitled “President of Estonia: Russian-speakers do not want to become part of Russia” (see <https://www.dw.com/ru/президент-эстонии-русскоязычные-не-хотят-стать-частью-россии/a-18924273>).

6 Conclusion: How to Reconcile?

Human rights narratives are rightfully an integral component of crisis and foreign affairs discourse. However, they often appear disconnected from their legal basis and instead surface as concepts of undefeatable universal truths, which protects them from any critical examination and makes them vulnerable to political manipulations., their dual existence as both a legal code and a loose moralistic language allows human rights to be deployed as a potent narrative with little or no attempt to provide clarity and context. As our examples demonstrate, different media appeal to the same values (here vague conceptions of human rights) in order to achieve disparate aims.

As an essential transmitter of these discourses, journalists have the potential to neutralise rights-based claims for political legitimation, inflammatory rhetoric and vague appeals to moral standards by providing the audience with sufficient context. In this direction, as Ibrahim Seaga Shaw (2012) has argued, it is important to begin by comparing and contrasting what he terms ‘human wrongs journalism’ with ‘human rights journalism’ that will identify and critique the often-subtle ways in which journalism is implicated in the structural imperatives of politics and economics, which more often than not underpin human rights abuse. That is to say, to find new ways to disrupt the ideological purchase of official truth claims, not least where the waging of war by ‘us’ against ‘them’ is effectively normalised to the point that peace-centred alternatives are trivialised, marginalised or excluded altogether as being less than newsworthy.

This begins by educating the public about their own rights, the rights of others and to what extent a state is capable or responsible to safeguard them. Tracing back notions of human rights to their historical, political or legal origins and documents can not only demystify perceptions of human rights as moral truths, but would contribute to a more rational, productive approach, in which the audience better understands its own duty of respecting rights. Only this way, we can overcome the role of a passive spectator, but engage with human rights debate in a more grounded way.

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Student journalism during crisis: the opportunities for professional development

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Abstract

The article describes the concept of “student journalism” during crisis era and explores its functioning during completing the collective project of joint creativity, implemented on the basis of the multimedia newsroom laboratory (“Newsroom Digital”) of SUSU (South Ural State University, Chelyabinsk, Russia) by a team of students and teachers of the Faculty of Journalism. In the era of total communication, when there are fewer and fewer “filters” between information and the audience (which were typical for traditional journalism), “fake” becomes a tool of manipulation. The priority of journalist’s education in SUSU is to gain public trust by providing reliable and necessary information for the audience. Thus, one of the modern journalism education strategies in SUSU is the ethical professional norms and rules assimilation by students-journalists, as well as the development of media literacy and mastering the skills of factchecking. These skills students acquire during the theoretical and practical classes on the basis of the Internet portal “Newsroom Digital”. During educational process in SUSU students create a multimedia product for all types of media, honing various competencies, which are basic for the journalism profession during the crisis era.

Key Words: crisis, student journalism, longread, development, meteorite

University media must prepare students in conditions which are close to reality. This will allow students to adapt to the challenges of the time, including all the types of crisis (the environmental crisis in the region and lack of trust to journalists and their professional work in the society). Modern conditions of real media production should be created during the educational process, enabling journalism students to position themselves both: as personalities and future competent media specialists.

The article describes a collective project of joint creativity – the multimedia longread, implemented on the basis of multimedia newsroom laboratory (“Newsroom Digital”) of South Ural State University by a team of students of the first, second, third and fourth courses, teachers of the Faculty of Journalism and employees of the TV and radio company "SUSU-TV". In total, the project involved 25 people. The project was led by Dean of the faculty of journalism, head of the Department of Journalism and Mass Media, Doctor of Philology Sciences, Professor L. P. Shesterkina, as well as the three teachers of the Department of Journalism and Mass Media: O. S. Lakhtacheva, K. A. Karpenko and M. N. Bulayeva, who organized and supervised the work of students engaged in editing materials.

This project explored the real crisis episode, happened in Chelyabinsk in 2013 - the meteorite falling, which became a training material for the students of Journalism faculty of South Ural State University. It was created a multimedia longread under the title “Once upon a time there was a meteorite ...” (<http://www.longridm.susu.ru>).

The features of the longread format were discussed at the first meeting, including offering possible topics and ideas. At the second meeting, the participants accurately formulated the topic and defined the idea, discussing, how to use this or that type of information. The choice of topic was determined by the following criteria: it should be a bright, extraordinary event, about which it could be told a story, in addition, it requires "binding" to Chelyabinsk, since the creation of longread takes place during the educational process and excludes long business trips and journeys.

Thus, the most suitable topic was the falling of the Chelyabinsk meteorite. It is important that almost all members of the group were eyewitnesses of the event, so the project was interesting to everyone.

It was decided to tell a detailed story about the Chelyabinsk meteorite: from its existence in the outer space to the present moment. Hence - the name of longread, the sequence of presentation of the history, an animated movie with animated figures.

To prepare the longread, the creative team was divided into five teams, led by teachers. This separation was based on the fact that the longread had to consist of five parts, and the groups had to work in parallel to save the time. In each group, there were from 3 to 5 people. Students were responsible for the text, photo and video, organizing and conducting interviews, collecting and analyzing facts. At the same time, the design and layout of the future material was discussed weekly among the groups.

However, the division of duties during creating the longread can be done differently: one person could be responsible for the text, another for photos, etc. In the case when the main members of the team are students, and the creation of longread occurs parallel with the educational process, it is useful to put simple and specific tasks for them.

Initially, three students and a teacher had worked on the first part of longread. The distribution of responsibilities was as follows: one person was preparing the text and selects background information, second – was making video interview with experts. Further installation was carried out

by another student of the Faculty of Journalism at the TV company "SUSU-TV". Infographics was created by another student of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication.

The teacher carries out planning of the work, editing of materials, and also controls terms of implementation of the task. The work on the other parts of longread is constructed in the same way.

Thus, the process of creating longread was organized with traditional design concept: choice of topics and ideas, gathering information, creating text and audiovisual elements, text editing, layout and design, publishing longread and after that - promotion.

First of all, the most difficult and time - consuming work was carried out: the collection of factual material, including photo and video shooting, a trip to the place of the meteorite falling, the study of scientific articles and official documents on the topic. Thus, one of the modern journalism education strategies in SUSU - the mastering the skills of factchecking was elaborated. In parallel with facts gathering the work on the design of future longread was organized.

Despite the plan, changes can be made during the process: for example, an exclusive video appears at the team disposal or, conversely, it is impossible to take a comment from a specialist.

The falling of the meteorite occurred in 2013 and the creative team has had a lot of information about the event. It was collected and analyzed a huge data, including photos, videos, eyewitness impressions, as well as scientific articles and research results. It was made because in the era of total communication, when there are fewer and fewer "filters" between information and the audience (which were typical for traditional journalism), "fake" becomes a tool of manipulation and it is important to gain public trust by providing reliable and necessary information for the audience, due to the fact that in the media there is a large number of "fakes" around this event.

Format of longed allows a multi-genre approach, in one material can seamlessly be blended elements of different genres. In the case of this project, these were the elements of the article, correspondence, interview, reportage. This approach allows us to tell the story with the help of the most appropriate and adequate expressive journalistic tools. For example, the moment of explosion of the "superbolide" and reaction of people was more appropriate to present in reportage style, and the story about lifting of a fragment of a meteorite was quite suiting for a genre of correspondence.

Audiovisual elements selection specifics consisted in the fact that the creative team had a lot of videos, mostly from amateurs and surveillance footage (fig.1). However, longread has original videos – these are interviews with experts. In this case, it wasn't advisable to use archives, as the information was updated as the meteorite was studied by experts, and it was important to present the latest scientific facts on this topic.

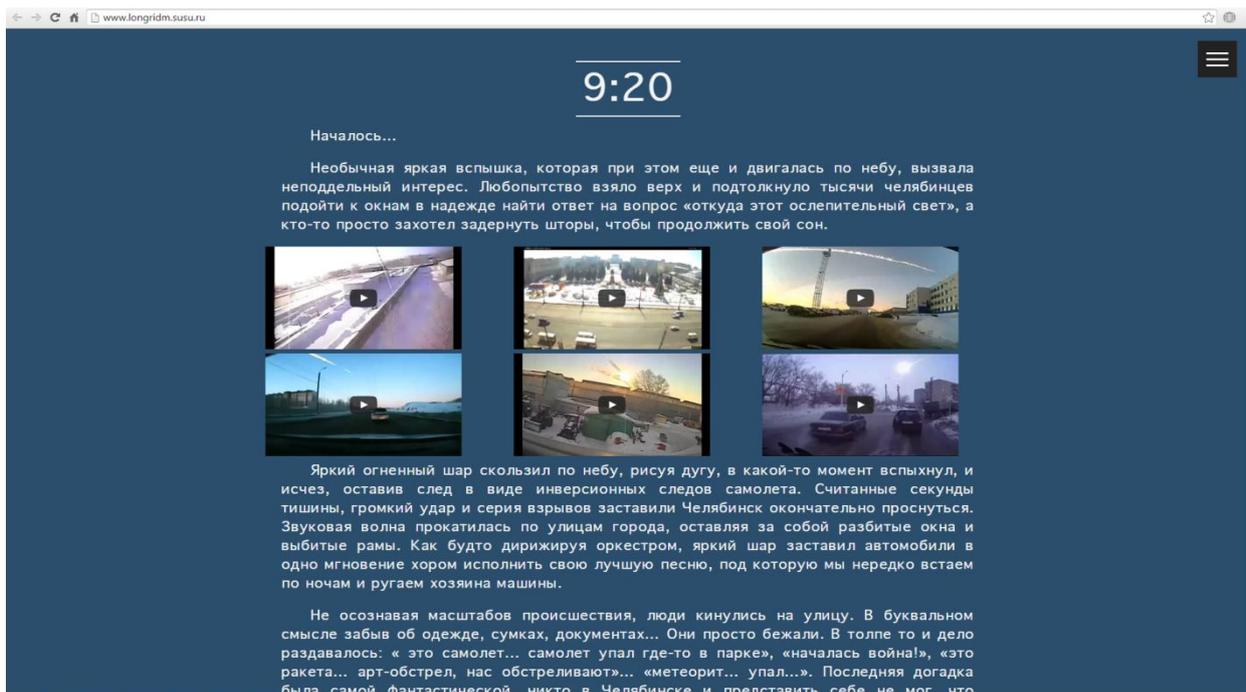


Figure 1: Selection of videos.

Photos, used in longread, were shot by both - student - photographer, and witnesses. The decision to choose a particular image was made depending on its importance for understanding the meaning. Sometimes photo illustration was the central element, sometimes - additional to the text. Longread contains single images, photoreports, photogallery (fig. 2) and photocollage.

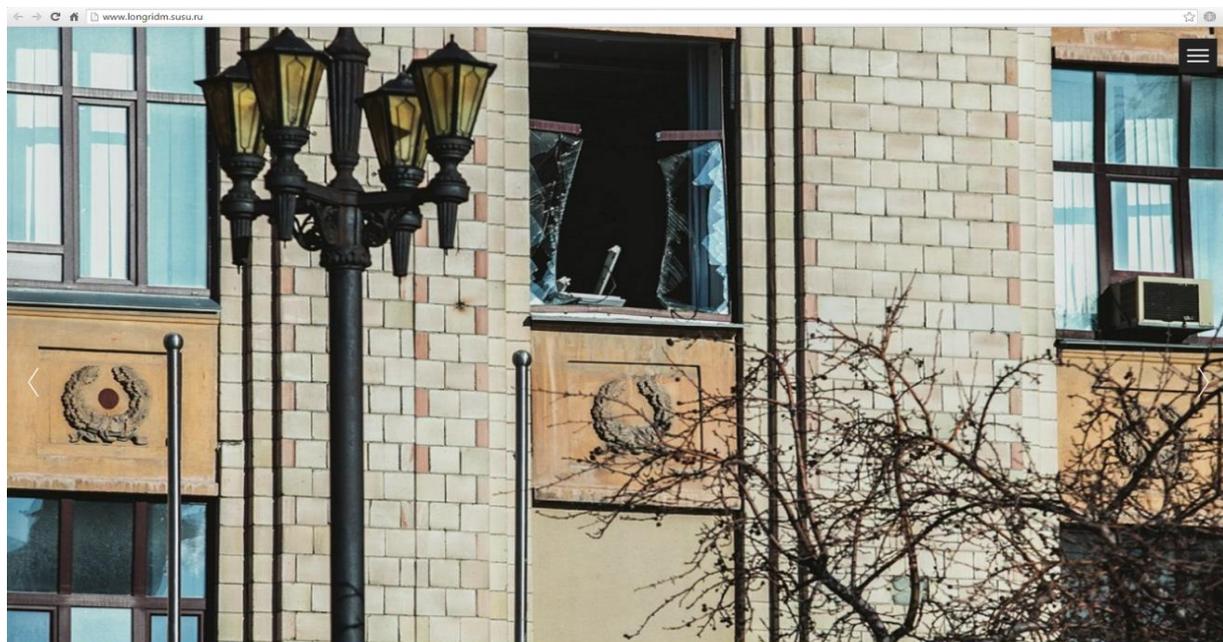


Figure 2: Photogallery fragment

Infographics included in longread to visualize information and particularly effective for representing an array of homogeneous data and a long process. In this longread were applied such types of infographics as: simple and dynamic scheme (fig.3), map.

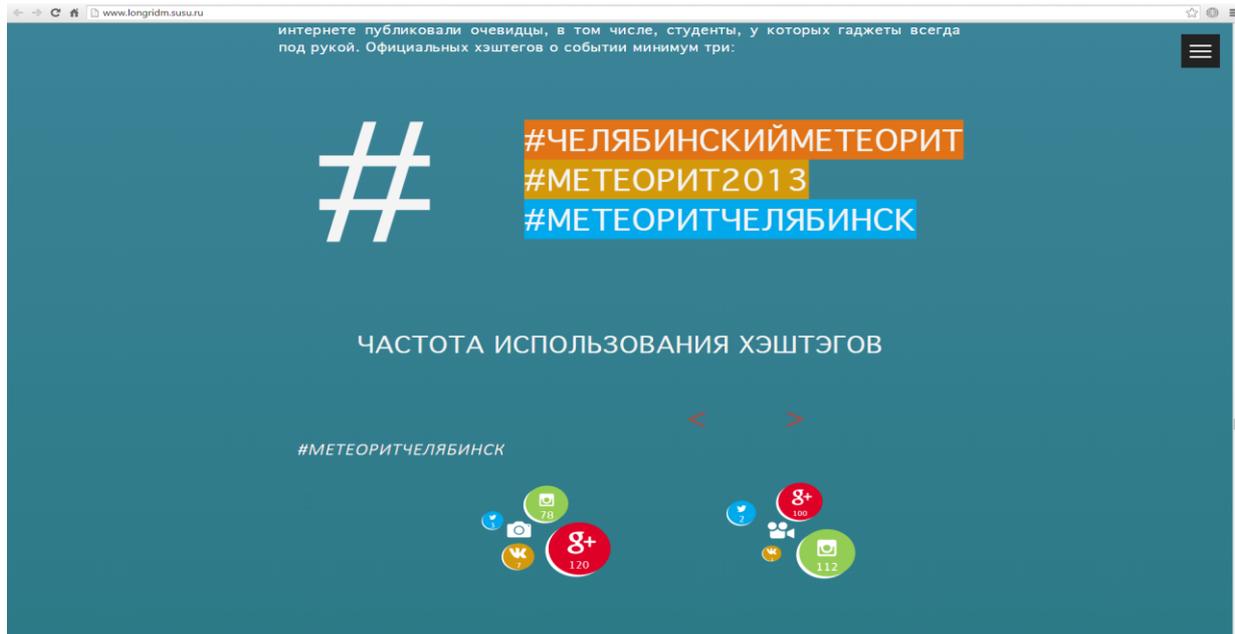


Figure. 3: Infographics (dynamic diagram)

Graphics is used mainly in screensavers to mark the parts of the longread, it is a design element (fig. 4).

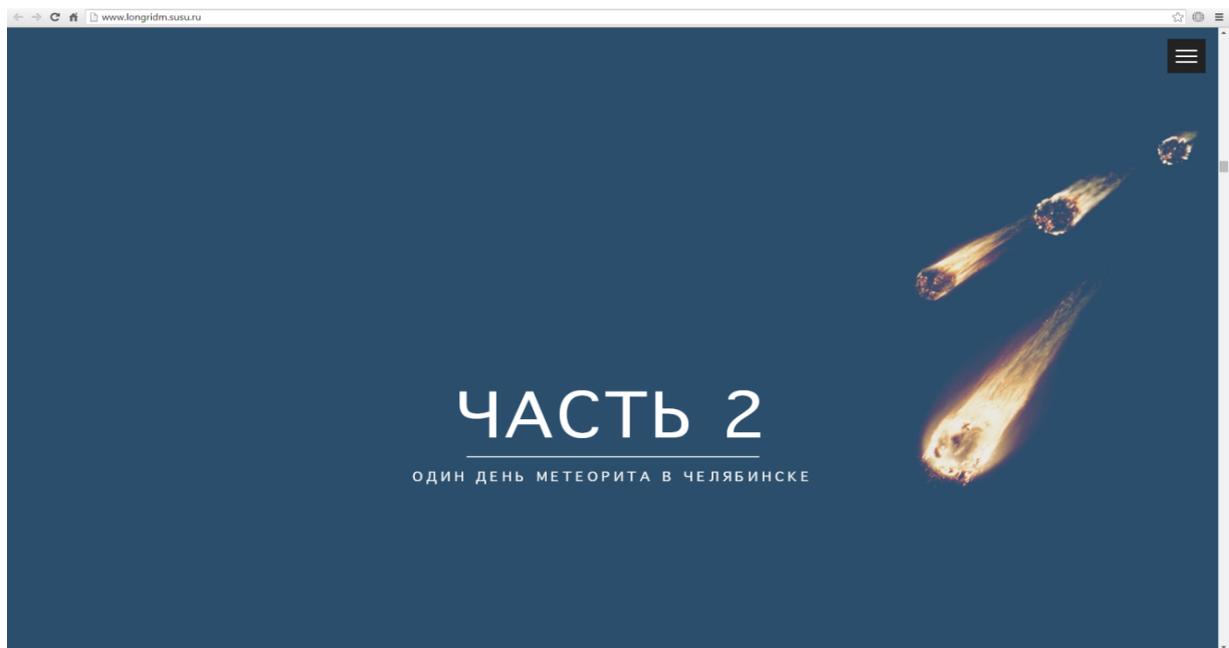


Figure 4: Graphic design of the screensaver

Longread has a lot of dubbed movies; it was decided not to overload the material with audios and to publish only selected audio interviews with the eyewitnesses.

Animation at the end of longread briefly reflects the story that was told earlier and also to illustrate the idea of longread: the journey of a meteorite from Space to Earth (fig.5).

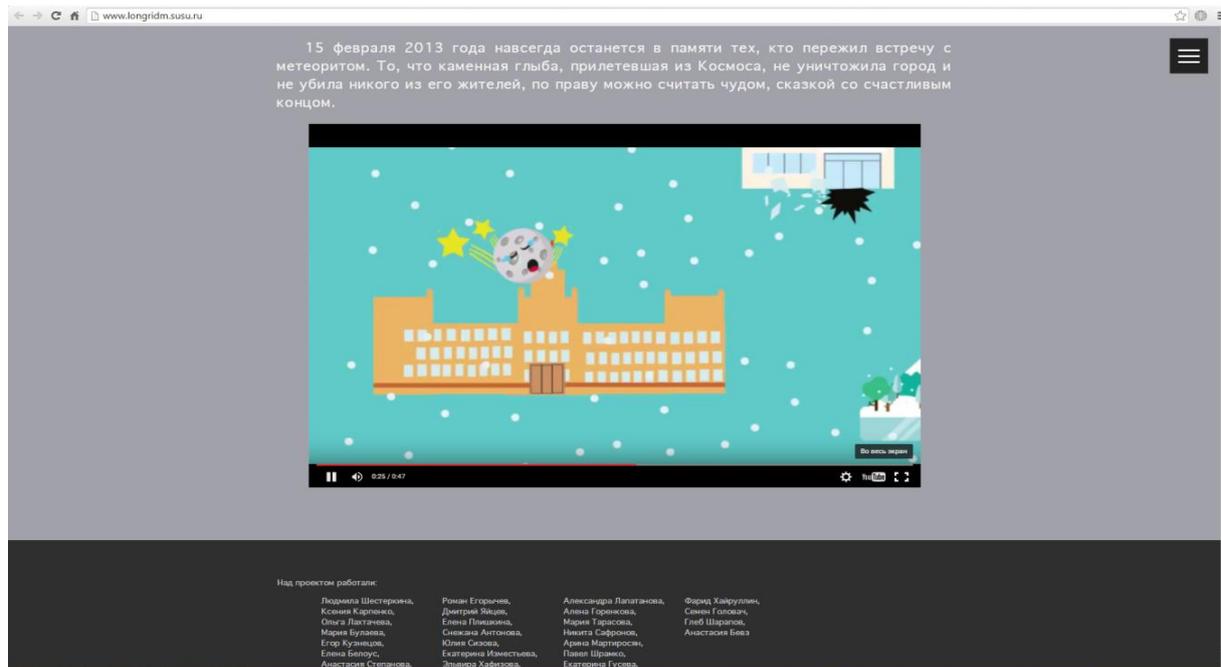


Figure 5: Animated video

The location of all audiovisual elements is primarily due to the logic of presentation. The elements were selected depending on the effectiveness in providing specific information. For example, a flash in the sky and the impact of the blast wave is better to show on video, and a large asteroid belt, where the meteorite came from, it is more logical to present in the form of infographics.

To simplify navigation, the longread was divided into parts. All the videos signed in order to ease the choice for the audience to find the interesting one. The audience can scroll the pages up and down.

Longread design was taken due to the subject. The color scheme was selected in accordance with the colors of space, sky, water, earth. In order to avoid sharp contrasts, it was decided to use the white font (Champions).

The multimedia project was created on the basis of the "360-degree multimedia newsroom" laboratory, at the same time, the other University media platforms were involved: audio materials were recorded at the "Radio SUSU", the TV company" SUSU-TV " carried out the cutting.

Longread is hosted on the domain of the South Ural state University (susu.ru), website typeset was made by hand without use of third-party services in the Webstorm editor. The graphics was created by the designer and then adapted by the programmer for the site using Adobe After Effects and Photoshop. Various plugins were also used in the layout process.

To promote the project, first of all, the websites of Journalism and Mass Communications Department, the Faculty of Journalism, the University, the "360-degree multimedia newsroom" laboratory, as well as social networks, were used.

During the work on the project students has practiced and reinforced their theoretical knowledge. Work on such a complex multimedia project contributes to the formation of skills of practical use of the knowledge, gained during creation of their own media materials.

Future journalists have had the opportunity to demonstrate their personal creativity, the ability to find and identify priority sources of information, knowledge of methods of journalistic research, analysis, the ability to apply the theory of disciplines "Fundamentals of the Journalism theory", "Fundamentals of Journalistic activity", "Journalism and the Internet", "Convergent editorial", etc. during the

organization of the creative process.

Students could put into practice such professional skills as taking video and photo, editing, sound design. In addition, students acquired such important qualities for the future journalists as: the ability to work in a team, responsibility, communication skills, initiativeness, stress resistance, high efficiency, the ability to quickly adapt to the new team, the desire for self-improvement.

For the teachers, this type of work was also interesting, first of all, because it allowed to assess the level of theoretical and practical training of students and to continue educational process outside the classroom. This project of joint creativity of teachers and students allowed diversifying practical classes in professional disciplines.

So, students, during educational process in SUSU create a multimedia product for all types of media, honing various competencies, which are basic for the journalism profession during the crisis era.

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Changing audiences, changing realities: Identifying disinformation via new teaching curricula

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Abstract

This article examines the ways in which modern students of Social Sciences (including Journalism) identify the, so called, 'fake news'. The aims of this work are to identify the factors that enable students to distinguish between fake and real news, as well as any differences between students of Journalism compared to those of other Social Sciences, in order to be able to formulate adequate teaching curricula that can enhance students' ability to distinguish disinformation and fake news. Focus group interviews were used in order to investigate how students conceive of fake and real news. The sample consisted of forty undergraduate students, ten of whom from the field of Journalism, separated into groups of ten students for the interviews. All groups were given items of fake and real news published in new media and were then questioned on distinguishing them and their characteristics. The results show that the majority of journalism students and a significant number of students in other Social Sciences were able to discern fake from real news items supplied, although a small proportion were confused in identifying them. Students who were successful, pointed out that they perceived the combination of titles, photographs and content in fake stories as inconsistent, factors which may enable academics to design curricula in all Social Sciences.

Key Words: Fake news, disinformation, education, teaching curricula, journalism.

1 Introduction

Disinformation, currently popularized in the media as a unitary political phenomenon under the label of fake news, comes with a significant number of changes mainly targeting the current reality and, consequently, audiences. A narrow definition of ‘fake news’ is news articles that are intentionally and variably false and could mislead readers (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017); this definition has been widely adopted in recent studies (e.g., O’Klein & Wueller, 2017; Shu, Sliva, Wang, Tang & Liou, 2017). There are two key features in this definition: authenticity and intent. First, fake news includes false information that can be verified as such. Second, fake news are created with dishonest intention to mislead the audience.

The overarching aim of this research is to be able to isolate the specific factors that can formulate curricula for training students in enhancing this skill and this paper marks the start of this effort. This article examines the ways in which modern students of Social Sciences (including Journalism) are able to discern the so-called fake news. The aims of this work are: a) to identify the factors that enable students to distinguish between fake and real news, and b) to identify differences (if any) between students of Journalism as a group compared to those of other Social Sciences. To this end, we will investigate the following research questions:

- a. Is it possible for students of Social Sciences (i.e., members of the millennial generation) to discern fake from real news in a new media environment?
- b. If so, which factors, if any, enable students to distinguish between fake and real news?
- c. Are there any differences in the ability to spot fake news between students of Journalism as a group compared to those of other Social Sciences?

The article is organised as follows. Part 2 presents the theoretical framework used for this study, mainly focussing in two areas: factors that can help us identify disinformation and the characteristics of new audiences that have led to new media consumption models. Part 3 presents the methodology used in this study as well as the specific characteristics of the sample. Part 4 focusses on findings and discussion, while Part 5 presents the general conclusions as well as the limitations of this research.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Identifying disinformation

A number of research studies have investigated the role of influential experts in spotting and verifying news in social media posts (e.g., Castillo, Mendoza & Poblete, 2013; Kim, Tabibian, Oh, Scholkopf & Gomez-Rodriguez, 2018). Most of them tend to develop representations of the relevant procedures and new models for fact-checking in order to efficiently reduce the spread of disinformation with provable guarantees.

In order to fully understand the meaning of disinformation, we first need to describe what constitutes real news. In this work, ‘news’ means verifiable information of public interest. Information that does not meet these standards does not deserve the label of news (Photiou, Maniou, Eteokleous & Ketteni, 2017); in this sense then, fake news is an oxymoron which lends itself to undermining the credibility of information that does indeed meet the threshold of verifiability and public interest, i.e. real news (Ireton & Posetti, 2018). According to Fallis (2009), the standard dictionary definition of disinformation is ‘deliberately misleading information

announced publicly or leaked by an organization' (p.3)³. Following Ireton & Posetti's (2018) analysis, disinformation is generally used to refer to deliberate (often orchestrated) attempts to confuse or manipulate people through delivering false information to them; this is often combined with parallel and intersecting communications strategies and a suite of other tactics, like hacking or compromising of persons. Misinformation, on the other hand, is generally used to refer to misleading information created or disseminated without manipulative or malicious intent; both are problems for society, but disinformation is particularly dangerous because it is frequently organised, well resourced, and reinforced by automated technology (p.7). Based on Fetzer's analysis (2004), the distinction between misinformation and disinformation becomes especially important in political, editorial, and advertising contexts, where sources may make deliberate efforts to mislead, deceive, or confuse an audience in order to promote their personal, religious or ideological objectives. The difference consists in having an agenda. It thus bears comparison with lying, because lies are assertions that are false, that are known to be false, and that are asserted with the intention to mislead, deceive, or confuse (p.231)⁴.

In this research, the key issue is to develop suggestions for teaching the new and radically different audience of digital immigrants how to spot the different species of disinformation posted in the new media. Therefore, the basic question is how to approach effective teaching curricula for students of journalism and other social sciences so as to enable them to identify disinformation.

To this end, this study explores the key factors that can enable younger consumers of new media how to detect disinformation. Developing teaching curricula for fact-checking never was nor is – even with the use of digital tools – an easy procedure. It requires deep knowledge of audience reception mechanisms as well as the development of methods to trace the production, circulation and reception of fake news online (Bounegru, Gray, Venturini & Mauri, 2017). In 2018, UNESCO issued a new model curriculum for combatting disinformation, with practical lessons and exemplary assignments to show how disinformation can become part of course syllabi in journalism education (Ireton & Posetti, 2018). However, although this handbook provides a crucial guide for fact-checking and data verification, there still seems to exist a gap in the relevant academic field specifically centred in the factors that can mislead young audiences when consuming new media information.

2.2 New audiences, new media consumptions

What is 'new' for one generation may not be new for another. For example, 'new media' can be perceived as a relative term; television, radio, magazines and newspapers were considered to be old (traditional) media in comparison to the world wide web at the start of the new millennium (Jenkins, Purushotma, Weigel, Clinton & Robison, 2009). Nevertheless, today online media may also be considered 'old' in comparison to social media.

The use of smart devices in everyday life has led to the emergence of the 'smart audience': a new generation of media recipients eager to use smart technology through digital portable devices in order to fulfil their everyday needs, from entertainment to information (Maniou & Veglis, 2016). In fact, current generations of media audiences are young adults, who have been born within a digital

³ According to Fallis (2009), this definition comes from the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (2006, 4th edition). The *Oxford English Dictionary* provides almost exactly the same definition.

⁴ It is not in the immediate goals of this article to analyse the differences between Disinformation and Misinformation; the distinction here was made so as to facilitate the analysis below.

world and their media consumption patterns are completely different compared to those of their parents. People who have been born after the mid-1990s grew up in an already established digital environment. For them, the Web is a medium that always existed while buying a newspaper or watching the news on television may be the unprecedented (Podara, Maniou & Kalliris, 2018). They are the so-called 'digital natives' (Prenski, 2001), 'post-millennials', 'generation Z', 'net generation' and 'iGeneration' (Edmunds & Turner, 2005; Combi, 2015; Dimock, 2018; Tapscott, 2009).

Overall, age is an indicator of a certain life course in different historical phases and holds a clear impact on media consumption (Weibull & Westlund, 2013). Obviously, various other social parameters and demographic variables of each generation, such as education, family income, origins, etc., also can influence media consumption, sometimes significantly. However, age is a personal characteristic of unquestionable effect (MacManus, 2018). According to Tapscott (2009), it is not the age per se, but the generation that affects motivation and use of media. The decade when a person was born defines its life phases and societal needs. It also leads to different trends in media use, because of the developments in technology that change the media landscape and transform the experience of the users (see also, Maniou, 2013).

In this perspective, in order to develop new teaching curricula for identifying disinformation we do not only have to take into consideration the specific characteristics of fake news, but we also need to keep into account the idiomatic synthesis of this new generation of audiences in order to understand the way(s) they perceive information and consume new media products.

3 Methodology and research sample

Focus group interviews were used in order to investigate how students conceive of fake and real news, as well as in spotting possible differences in the ability to discern fake news between students of Journalism versus those of other Social Sciences. A focus group comprises a number of individuals who interact with each other on specific topic(s), having mutual interests and frequently common characteristics. The interaction is regulated by a moderator, a researcher who utilizes the team and its interactions in order to exact conclusions regarding the topic(s) under discussion (Krueger, 1998, p. 18). The prerogatives of the moderator include the capacity to lead the discussion towards essential or fundamental elements of particular interest in their research, to confine it to specific issue(s) and to activate all the members of the group (Barbour, 2008). Liamputtong (2011) emphasises the importance of universal participation in focus groups pertaining to the Social Sciences, by stressing that they do not constitute mere group interviews, but that their value derives from the interaction. Therefore, focus group interviews are akin to the communal daily routines of the public sphere of most societies, in which people discuss the issue(s) at hand, and formulate and/or change their opinions (Rabiee, 2004). Since this work focuses on (younger-generation but public) opinion as formulated by consuming and discussing (fake and real) news, we find that focus group interviews currently constitute the most effective manner in investigating our research questions.

The sample of this research constitutes of 40 undergraduate students, 10 of whom focus their studies on the field of Journalism and the remaining 30 on other Social Sciences. The students were separated into four groups of 10 persons each and given items of fake and real news published in new media. After allowing them to consume the news, the groups were convened and questioned on distinguishing the authenticity of each news item. They were allowed/directed to discuss each in

detail, and their interaction enabled the extraction of the specific characteristics that the interviewees attributed to fake and real news.

4 Findings and discussion

Although most students commented that most fake news had a ‘dose of truth’, they exhibited incredible propensity in discerning fake news. In fact, 33 out of 40 interviewees from all disciplines were successful in doing so. This indicates that the younger generation have established or are developing an affinity for discerning the authenticity of the content of new media. Although merely a hypothesis at this stage, this skill may potentially arise from the fact that they have grown up in the environment of the internet and social media rather than being introduced to these later in their lives like older generations (e.g., see Edmunds & Turner, 2005; Combi, 2015; Dimock, 2018; Tapscott, 2009).

Given their ability, it is more interesting to investigate which factors they have attributed to fake news and whether there are any differences in such details between students of Journalism and those of other Social Sciences. The interviews have enabled the identification of four potential factors for distinguishing fake from real news, namely the sources of articles, their content, and the titles and photographs accompanying the text.

The first factor was one specifically identified by most students of Journalism. Specifically, they pointed out that fake news were easy to discern if they did not reference their sources, or if they gave very general information regarding their sources. The existence of a source did make fake news seem more plausible, but they were critical enough to evaluate the credibility of different sources so as not to be fooled by the mere existence of a source. For example, one student commented on a piece of fake news that the article cites ‘for example, the newspaper *Espresso*⁵. The existence of a source indicates a measure of truth, but on the other hand, I’m not convinced by the source itself.’ Conversely, few students of other fields who were successful in identifying fake news commented on the citations of fake articles.

The content of the news items constituted one of the more important factors by which fake news were distinguished, by both Journalism students as well as those of other fields. In fact, all students pointed out that the fake news they were able to identify exhibited inconsistencies in the facts, timelines, etc. of the story. On a particular fake article, one student commented that ‘true news have more detail,’ and this prompted another to indicate that ‘yes, and the characteristics described in the piece are hard to find in normal political and financial news,’ which a third student qualified by stating, ‘Yes, the content seems inconsistent, exaggerated.’ In fact, one of the successful interviewees commented on the presence of excessive details that ‘it seemed like someone [was] trying too hard to sell them on the story.’ Nevertheless, some fake news did deceive a small number of interviewees; these were detailed (but not excessively) and usually contained additional (manufactured) evidence such as (a) quote(s). As an example, one student stated that he believed a specific piece of (fake) news because ‘there was that quote from the specialist, what’s his name, that financial analyst,’ which prompted another student to ascertain, ‘Just because someone tells you that a specialist made a statement, doesn’t make it true!’ In fact, none of the Journalism students were deceived, even when articles contained such detail.

⁵ *Espresso* is a light, pop-culture newspaper, which is considered far from a mainstream, hard-hitting newspaper. The (fake) news item the sample were given was taken from a website that referenced this newspaper as its source.

That most interviewees were able to spot inconsistencies in the content – sometimes even if those existed in a few or even one sentence – evinces their critical and observational skills. Since the number of (successful) individuals in the sample is too large for these skills to be intuitive in all of them, and their current curriculum does not consist of courses that enable them to enhance them, it is likely that they were established through their own experience with the new media environment.

The titles accompanying fake news constituted the most effective factor in discerning lack of authenticity. All students were able to point out that some fake articles exhibited a lack of continuity between the intensity of the title, which was used to provoke the audience, and the typically mild and inconsequential description/content of the news story. Students of Journalism seemed to explain their intuition of this phenomenon further. They commented that they could discern fake news when ‘loud word’ in the title (e.g., in titles displaying the words ‘shock’, ‘extraordinary’, ‘incredible’, ‘devastating’) were accompanied by inconsistently ‘calm’ content in the story. For example, one student justified his disbelief in a particular (fake) story by saying that ‘The title does not suit the story, it is too intense. It makes you believe that you’re going to read something different, far more exciting.’

Finally, fake news were also easy to distinguish by the photographs accompanying them. Specifically, most students of all fields were able to pinpoint that fake stories usually displayed generic photographs that were not explicitly connected to the story, but could have been generically shot anywhere and by anyone. For example, a Journalism student and one in another field both commented similarly on the photograph accompanying a specific (fake) story. The former stated that ‘This picture is generic and not directly related to the content, if at all. It could have belonged or been taken from any current or past story on the subject,’ while the latter said, ‘the photo is in fact too generic and does not display anything of substance with regards to the content of the news.’ Nevertheless, this problematic depiction of the news in the media seemed to concern most students of Journalism and other Social Sciences. Their trepidation, and that of many academics, was crystallised in the following statement by a Social-Science student: ‘We are reaching a situation where we won’t believe the real news, like the death of Pantelides⁶, because they have killed off so many people!’

5 Conclusions and future work

Although our research has the overarching aims of trying to identify specific factors featured in fake news and to establish curricula that can train students in enhancing the skill of distinguishing these from real news, we focus our current work to the following research questions:

RQ1: Is it possible for students of the Social Sciences (i.e., members of the millennial generation) to discern fake from real news in a new media environment?

RQ2: If so, which factors, if any, enable students to distinguish between fake and real news?

RQ3: Are there any differences in the ability to spot fake news between students of Journalism as a group compared to those of other Social Sciences?

As this preliminary research has indicated, there exist factors that can be used by specialized as well as unspecialized audiences to discern fake news in the new media. Therefore, for RQ1, we find that all Journalism students and the overwhelming majority of students in other Social Sciences have been quite successful in identifying the fake news stories we gave them during their focus groups.

⁶ The popular Greek singer Pantelis Pantelides was killed in a car accident on 18 February 2016.

Given that the numbers of successful interviewees are so high, we find that this propensity cannot be intuitive. Furthermore, it cannot be due to education, as currently their academic training does not address this skill, let alone enhance it. Therefore, by the process of rejecting these alternatives, we conclude that the ‘post-millennials’ we have selected for our sample must have developed the skill from their own experience with the new media.

In addressing RQ2, our sample was able to distil four factors in discerning fake news. Specifically, the use of generic sources or the inability to cite (a) specific source(s) raised red flags, albeit mostly for Journalism students rather than those in other fields. Inconsistencies and excessive detail in the content of stories were the most telling for the interviewees in distinguishing fake news. In addition, some articles gave themselves away by featuring ‘loud’ titles followed by a ‘mild’ content, as well as disconnected or generic photographic material.

For RQ3, no significant differences in the ability to spot fake news were detected among Journalism students and students of the other Social Sciences. This observation contradicts the expectation that Journalism students would find it easier to identify specific characteristics of fake news than the others, due to their area of study. However, it may confirm that the generation of ‘digital natives’ (Prenski, 2001) may have experientially been able to train themselves (at least in part) in discerning non-authentic stories.

The verification of the factors identified here, as well as the identification of others in fake news, constitutes an important part of media research. It can be used to design academic curricula that enable at least Journalism, Media and Social-Science students to spot them, which can begin to address the concerns that the affinity in the new media for publishing fake news may result in real stories being disbelieved.

To this end, in the next step of this study, it has been deemed appropriate to expand the sample considerably, so as to further the investigation into the ability of young audiences to determine fake news. To do so, focus-group interviews are going to be conducted with students of Journalism and other Social Sciences in various universities in Cyprus and Greece, so as to specify whether these findings can be attributed to factors relating to social characteristics and/or educational factors.

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Why Refugee Crisis News don't Get Clicks? From Indifferent audiences to Passive Online Gatekeepers.

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Abstract

Web analytics can help journalists understand how people find, consume and interact with online content. But, they don't answer why certain newsworthy stories such as the refugee crisis, chosen by the editors and/or journalists get more or less attention (and clicks) by the audience. Using as case studies Greek online newsrooms we found that audience, despite the importance and the consequences of the issue was apathetic to the published stories. With this paper we expand our research and study to what extent, audience's consumption influences the choices that have to be made by the online Gatekeepers and what was their reaction if a "must read" story, such as the refugee crisis, don't gets audience's attention. We focus on the reaction of the gatekeepers with semi-structured interviews. From a sample of Head of News working in well-established online media we confirmed that audience was indifferent to the refugee story. But, we also found online Journalists were aware of the gap between their choices and audience preferences but continued publishing a huge amount of news items about the refugee crisis feeling that they perform their democratic function. However, they didn't redeployed their journalists nor used new practices to attract audience's attention on this important story and continued their everyday work routines influenced by Web metrics in order to get audience's clicks from other- mainly soft- stories.

Key Words: Web metrics, Online journalism, Audience preferences, News selection, Refugees

1 Introduction

Online news is characterized by volatility and fast production as well by many innovative practices for news presentation. The evolution of the internet technologies armed Journalists with a strong pallet of options to produce and promote their stories and at the same time altered considerably their work (Ferucci & Tandoc 2015; Deuze & Prenger 2018). In this context online news organizations due to technology emergence have a deep knowledge about the audience's news consumption: their profile, habits and online footprints (Napoli, 2010).

Online newsrooms are embracing web analytics and use them in their everyday routines and practices (Anderson 2011a; Anderson 2011b) and do not have to guess audience's preferences in contrary with traditional media journalists, which do not know what their audience is (Gans 2004; McGregor 2007). Online gatekeepers know in real time how many users prefer -click- every story and have plenty of data for the consumption of each story in every single second. Studies have found that journalists use analytics to decide stories' placement on the home page, to "follow-up" and/or how to write more attractively for the audience (Boczkowski, 2004; Bunce 2015; Bright and Nichols, 2014; Giomelakis et al, 2018; MacGregor, 2007; Panagopoulos 2017; Petre, 2015; Tandoc, 2014; Usher, 2013; Vu, 2013). However, journalists seem to have a poor understanding of their audience and limited analytics capability (Cherubini & Nielsen, 2016), web metrics are imprecise in meaning and hard to interpret (Graves and Kelly 2010), and in the newsrooms there are several "cultures of the click." (Christin, 2014).

Our previous research (Panagopoulos 2018) found that Greek news websites despite publishing multiple stories on refugees over a year, only a handful of them was in the most clicked and in several months none of them was on the top 100 stories per month.

Refugee crisis was the story of the year for Greek journalists and media -and global media. Greece was and still is in the frontline of the refugee crisis. Arrivals in Greece by sea increased a staggering 1,075.3 percent in 2015 compared to 2014 – 72,632 migrants arrived in Greece by sea in 2014, jumping to 853,650 in 2015 (IOM, 2016).

My research begins with most clicked refugee stories published online in two influential websites in which I found there was a low preference for such stories among the total published online. I continue my research here in other websites with semi-structured interviews in order to find if the audience has the same consumption behaviour for refugee stories and what is the impact on the online editors decisions on covering the story.

2 Literature Review

The digitization of news gave rise to new forms of audience feedback. Digital newsrooms using modern software have the ability to monitor their audience behaviour in real time. Editors decide on the placement of stories on the home page, on follow-ups -if there is high audience interest, on testing headlines and on refreshing stories with extra/different photos and/or multimedia content (MacGregor 2007; Lowrey & Woo 2010; Anderson 2011b ; Usher 2013; Lee et al, 2014; Vu 2014; Ferrucci & Tandoc 2015; Tandoc & Jenner, 2016; Panagopoulos, 2017). More clicks for a story could bring to editors more willing for editorial changes (Vu, 2014).

Studies have identified three facets of news production affected by audience feedback online: topic selection, story placement, and performance evaluation. Topics that have attracted clicks in the past tend to be covered more often (Welbers et al, 2016). However, I found that heads of news in Greek private nationwide television's websites are not affected by metrics in topics selection. What

considered news is published -if it is compatible with the brand (Panagopoulos, 2017). Visualised stories (photos and/or videos, infographics) tend to draw more clicks, thus editors include visual complements (Tandoc, 2014). If a story gets more clicks might be upgraded to the top stories section of the website -which usually means above the fold- and vice versa. Lee et al, (2014) showed that audience clicks affected the subsequent placement of stories on news websites. Head of news and /or home page editors limit the number of stories on their homepages and constantly update them. Journalists need to decide not only which stories to upgrade or downgrade, but simultaneously which ones to replace (Tandoc, 2014; Lee et al, 2014; Panagopoulos, 2017). Performance evaluation refers to how journalists measure success in their day-to-day work. Thus, 'metrics exert a powerful influence over journalists' emotions and morale' (Petre, 2015).

Journalists are confronted with a dilemma: Metrics provide access to real-time audience feedback to journalists who have been socialized to protect their editorial autonomy. Scholars such as Boczkowski & Peer (2011) have found a gap between audience preferences and editors' choices. Traditionally, journalists shielded this process from external influence to protect their editorial autonomy (Gans, 2004). Considering that online audiences tend to click on soft stories -celebrity and sports stories- (Boczkowski, 2010), efforts to give news audiences what they want, rather than what they need, may jeopardize democratic and social functions of journalism, such as informing the public (Tandoc & Thomas, 2015).

Web metrics tools give feedback after a story is published. Researchers are working in models to predict the reaction of the audience toward a story using machine learning algorithms and NLP algorithms. According to Sotirakou, et al (2018) characteristics of the user, emotions expressed in the text, personal tone of speech and the use of uncommon words are highly correlated with influence of acceptance by the audience.

2.1 The Greek online news ecosystem

The rise of online journalism is prominent in Greece. Greek media and Journalists gradually employed most of the universal online practices (Giomelakis et al, 2018; Panagopoulos & Panagiotou, 2016; Panagopoulos, 2017; Spyridou et al, 2013). Greek audience seems to have adopted online journalism since 66,3% uses Internet daily searching for news (NCSR, 2017) while 66% are interested or very interested in online news (Kalogeropoulos et al, 2016).

Greek media and journalism are at the top of the research lists in distrust (Kalogeropoulos, 2016) and at the top for unfairly reporting political sides (Mitchell et al, 2018). Greek audience, unlike the rest of the world, prefers news from digital born more than online news from mainstream media (Kalogeropoulos, 2016). It was found that news gathering in online media is influenced by competition and the continuous attempt to attract and satisfy online audiences (Touri et al, 2016). In a study by Kardami (2014) on the top 10 Greek sites, 72.3% of the news stories gathered were copied from another news source. Also, metrics could be interpreted differently, by media professionals working in the same newsroom and drive to different editorial decisions (Christin, 2014; Panagopoulos, forthcoming Ph.D thesis).

In a time lagged analysis for online editions of Greek TV stations there is divergence between most popular and top stories (Panagopoulos, 2017), confirming previous research (Boczkowski and Peer, 2011). In a recent study (Giomelakis et al, 2018), 63.9% of the journalists who were asked, responded that they are monitoring the metrics that reflect the general picture - page views, visits,

unique users - 46.3% the popular articles, 32.8% new and returning users' percentages, 28.7% the bounce rate, 36.1% the engagement - comments and sharing - in the Social Media.

2.2 Greek Media and Refugees

Greek media's coverage of the massive flows had a negative discourse until summer 2015, solidarity starting in autumn, and xenophobia and hostile attitude by the end of 2015 (Megrelis, 2017). Of course there is significant variety within Greek media. Chouliaraki et al. (2017) found that two influential Greek newspapers employed frames that emphasized geopolitical aspects, gave more voice to refugees, and promoted humanitarian actions against defensive ones. Panagiotou & Selcuk (2017) noted that local newspapers in areas where open-door hotspot camps were constructed and refugees stayed permanently presented negative, stereotyped characterization of refugees as the "Other" and even a potentially dangerous criminal in Greece. The notion of hospitality to foreigners appeared to be in conflict with rising xenophobic tendencies toward migrants in Greek society (and around the world) (Triandafyllidou & Kouki, 2013). By examining audience online choices for refugee stories my research (Panagopoulos, 2018) showed a huge gap between audience preferences and gatekeepers' choices and discourse analysis showed a marked preference for more negatively headlined stories.

3 Method

Research is mostly focused on what online journalists do when each story -as an item- is getting more or less clicks (Tandoc, 2014; 2015). But, what is Journalists' stance when a story of public interest -such as the refugee crisis- is not consumed?

As I found (Panagopoulos, 2018) having access in the metrics of two prominent -one populist and one quality- web sites refugee story did not get clicks in its peak period, October 2015-December 2016. In the period of fifteen months there were only sixteen items in the monthly top 100 list for the Quality site and just three for the Populist one.

Drawing upon gatekeeping theory I conducted in-depth interviews with the heads of 10 well-established news websites and with over 1,5 million unique users per month⁷. Usher (2013) found that institutional culture has impact in the way journalists use web metrics, as well the brand itself (Panagopoulos, 2017). Following those principles I included four digital- born(digital-only), four digital editions of newspapers and two digital editions of private television stations⁸. Heads of the online editions are the gatekeepers selecting which stories will be published, their placement and in which channels (social media) will be distributed. Based on the above findings the following research questions are proposed:

RQ1: Is the audience indifferent for the refugee story in the Greek online media?

RQ2: Online editors will reduce publishing if the refugee story is not popular?

RQ3: If audience indifference is ascertained for the refugee story, will online editors try, due to its significance for the public, different editorial practices to attract audience?

Audience's impact on gatekeeping and the hierarchies of influence model is depicted in the routines level and the socio-institutional level (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, Reese

⁷ In Greece there is no common currency or public data for web metrics, except from the members of the Union of Digital Publishers (www.ened.gr), which represent a small part of the online media (83 news sites as members in October 2018)

⁸In my previous research (Panagopoulos, 2018) had access to the metrics of two news websites under the condition of anonymity the rule applies for all the interviews, too.

& Shoemaker, 2016). Shoemaker and Vos (2009) revised the gatekeeping model by adding the “audience channel,” on top of the source and media channels. Scholars revised gatekeeping theory taking under consideration the evolution of the internet, the social media, the UGC content and the networked ecosystem (Heinderyckx & Vos, 2016; Reese & Shoemaker, 2016). As Heinderyckx and Vos (2016) put it popularity of a news story replaces the logic of relevance as a news value.

4 Results

4.1 Refugee story don't clicks

RQ1 asked if the refugee story had low performance in Greek online media. Unanimously the verdict of the heads was: refugee story doesn't sell.

Despite the fact that the refugee crisis was a major event with consequences in many areas across the political, economic, cultural and social realms of the country it seems that the audience did not click on the stories, confirming my previous findings (Panagopoulos, 2018).

We published a lot of refugee stories, prior of the sinking boats and dead children. At the beginning there was good traffic. We insisted on publishing but despite there was a lot of drama, the interest of the users was declining. (Editor B, Digital print, 2017)

Online-only and digital print heads admitted that the audience was indifferent for the story. Exceptions were spotted if there were riots, crimes, rapes and dead children.

In the cases with sinking boats with children on board, there was a sporadic interest...since the story was announced to the media from the authorities, it was just the same story (Editor A, Online-only, 2016)

Visual elements or/and characters narrative are important elements for journalists to construct a story. Authorities report the incidents with a formal narrative and journalists in most cases were unable to have access to the possible survivors. But, journalists have to publish the story since it is newsworthy. Even on television's digital editions, there was low traffic for refugee stories. A television digital editor explains:

At the beginning of the refugee influxes there was political tension, images and video footage with refugees in the main squares of the capital. But, since the story was repetitive ‘the audience's surprise was absent’ and traffic for those stories was dropping down fast (Editor F, Digital TV, 2016)

Metrics provide journalists with data about the audience's preferences. But, those data don't give answers about audience's behaviour forcing editors to predict why audiences disapprove their choices. Gatekeepers might pay more attention for the most clicked stories aiming to increase audience traffic and attention. However, there is an important distinction between stories and real important for democracy and the public interest stories.

4.2 The fulfilment of journalism's duty

RQ2 asks if the journalists maintain professional autonomy and keep audience's feedback separate from their decisions, especially in such important stories. The first criterion of selecting news for all the interviewees is newsworthiness. All declare that they do not exclude news even if they know or have dealt with bad metrics at the past.

We are going to post the story even if we know that nobody is going to click on it (Editor K, Digital print, 2017)

Everyone knows that ‘what it bleeds...leads’...we are going to write a refugee story as many times we believe is news (Editor H, Digital Print, 2016)

If it is news it will be online...but, we might spend less time and resources (Editor C, Online-only, 2017)

Newsworthy and editorial judgement underlie a possible excuse for story exclusion since definition for each journalist could be vague. As it is stated journalists still select the stories according to their professional culture. There is no metrics influence during the selection process for essential stories.

As one puts it:

Journalists have responsibility to curate editorially what people need to learn...We must form mature readers...(Editor G, Digital print, 2016).

Analyzing metrics for a long time, gatekeepers have the experience and the intuition to guess if a story has potentials for many clicks. However, metrics affect less informative news sites. The head of an infotainment site states:

We take into consideration the clicks from the audience. Gradually, we limited the refugee stories (Editor I, Digital TV, 2016).

News sites have no limits of space or time, thus gatekeepers are able to publish as much and any kind of content are keen to. The guidelines of the organization are crucial for the news selection.

We always have a dilemma...as an infotainment site we didn't publish all the refugee stories, but the most -for our brand- interesting ones (Editor D, Online-only, 2017).

On the contrary the head of an online-only informative news site insists:

Metrics for our site don't play any role at all in news selection and production...We choose only news, according to the guidelines of our brand...(Editor G, Online only, 2017).

If a story is newsworthy it will be selected and published. Metrics are not used by the gatekeepers to exclude newsworthy stories. The brand's identity is determining except style, what will be selected, in what amount and in which frequency. Journalists are doing their duty since they publish all the newsworthy stories and remains to the audience's responsibility to search, find and read them. But, the audience is facing millions of different and more attractive information for a wide palette of news and prefers mostly soft news.

4.3 Audience's fatigue and Journalists' burnout

RQ3 asks about journalistic initiatives and practices if the audience is not interested for an important story which they believe it should be published. Online journalists could use many and different ways to write and produce a story. Multimedia tools could enhance the narrative of the story and might attract audience's attention.

The refugee story was a very interesting story, but there were no new news... Sinking boats in the middle of the sea, human tragedies and at the other hand overcrowded hotspots and gradually hostile locals. Everyday, the same story (Editor D, Online-only, 2017)

Finding new narratives and angles requires multi-skilled reporters and editors which in Greek online media is rare and reporters at the field are luxury.

We followed the ‘business as usual routine’ since there is no budget for field coverage. We used official sources, news agencies and local press as sources for the stories... (Editor I, Digital TV, 2017).

It seems, despite the limited human and economic resources, that there is a lack of multimedia tools knowledge and usage. As an editor puts it:

Our staff is not trained to use multimedia. However, there are a few multi-skilled journalists ...but, the need for speed and constant refresh of the content is our enemy (Editor A, Digital only, 2017).

A ‘must read’ attitude is concealed in the answers of the interviewees.

We publish the important story for refugees and we continuously feed the audience with every important development. The audience has its own responsibility what stories chooses to click (Editor G, Digital-print, 2016).

There is no effort from the journalists to come close on the audience. They seem retreated behind the wall of publishing newsworthy news.

We publish the story. We inform the public. What else, we should do? (Editor I, Digital TV, 2017).

Another editor states openly that important (hard) stories might not be visible from the audience since they are mixed with soft stories:

We provide hard and soft stories and this could undermine reading hard news (Editor D, Online-only, 2017).

The real question is, how can professional journalism perform its essential democratic function of informing a public that appears to be indifferent.

5 Conclusions

Greek online audience was indifferent for the refugee story despite the fact that the country was and still is in the middle of it. Chief editors of well - established online media state that audience was clicking on stories at early 2015 but later the traffic for refugee stories, dramatically, declined, confirming previous findings (Panagopoulos, 2018). Online journalists continued informing the public, constantly publishing developments ignoring audience’s indifference, but without putting extra efforts, resources and new practices to attract the audience.

Web metrics are used in the Greek online newsrooms but not for stories exclusion. Journalists keep their professional autonomy separate from audience’s feedback. Greek online journalists provide the audience with newsworthy important stories even if the audience don’t click on them. Heads of news did not redeployed their journalists to attract the audience in reading an important story and continued covering the story without disrupting their everyday routines and practices. Their duty to the society exhausted providing the information, but at the same they were managing their journalists in such way to publish soft stories aiming to increase clicks. The findings showed that online editors still use metrics primarily for monitoring traffic, but they also use them in their decision-making processes in order to get more audience. They monitor analytics and produce stories, such as soft ones, which will gets clicks. Possible decline in clicks prevents them of changing their newsroom’s practices even if they believe there is a newsworthy story which needs reallocation of journalists. Monitoring metrics leads editors to use analytics allowing audience preferences to influence editorial judgment and to manage editorial production.

It seems that still exists a “must read” culture which raises firewalls with the audience. It seems that digital print and digital television editors have less disposition to adjust their editorial and production processes than the online-only editors in order to attract the audience. The gap between journalists’ choices and audience’s preferences remains since editors don’t alter their practices to provide the important story with different angles and usage of multimedia content. They use the same practices changing story placement and headlines, but they don’t test new formats to publish a story. It looks there is a lack of creativity in story production, following local competitions’ norms.

Journalists feel that they fulfill their duty to inform the public, since they don't exclude the refugee story from their everyday agenda they publish. But, the question here is, if this is enough? Is online journalism actually performing its democratic function since is providing the information or this should be extended to the practices they use to draw audience? This question is crucial knowing that audience's attention in the Web is diverted by infinite information and stories.

The lack of multi-skilled online journalists is an important issue for Greek online newsrooms and could be faced by training them and by adding a new generation from the universities with modern journalistic culture and knowledge to the newsrooms. Thus, online media newsroom culture and practices might improve and content-related decisions alter for the benefit of journalism and Democracy. However, if the majority of online media in Greece continue the practices of rewriting the stories from news agencies and local press the perspective of advancing and offering to the audience an attractive informative content won't occur and there might be a new danger for their survival.

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War Reporting Between Scylla and Charybdis?

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Abstract

War reporters today face a significant number of unprecedented challenges on the field. They find themselves strangling to satisfy basic physical needs and personal security, while at the same time they have to deal with an extremely complicated information environment. Taking as an example the civil war in Syria, we analyze the threats on the physical environment, the bans to international media, the difficulties on accessing credible information and how all these affect the coverage provided by the professional journalists. In addition we examine the sophisticated and complex information environment and the media coverage of the conflict, where there is a number of different actors and stakeholders involved, supporting conflicting narratives; disinformation, propaganda, fake news, graphic imaging, public relation's spinners, and all relative means have been implemented in order to manipulate the public perceptions, through social media, civilian journalist's blogs, real-time platforms, maps, and any other appropriate means. It is these two features, the physical threat and the complexity of the information environment, between which a contemporary war reporter has to balance - the Scylla and the Charybdis. Much like the two mythical monsters, it is the high level of threat which does not allow direct access to the information, that drives reporters to another kind of threat, that of resorting many times in second-hand information, where their professionalism and the critical capability are continually under test. This is a situation that has a direct impact on contemporary war reporters, as they come across choices, according to which different skills are to be developed; war correspondent, freelancer, unofficially "embedded" with armed groups or just a guy in front of a laptop, relying on civilian journalists, networks, crowdsourcing and verifying second-hand news? What is the acceptable level of threat for a war reported? Otherwise, how can a reporter preserve his credibility? What are the ethics he has to follow? What is his role in such a context? And, finally, what are the skills he needs to develop in each case?

Key Words: Crisis, risk, narrative, war reporter, professional coverage

1 Introduction - A Challenging New War Reporting Era

It was a year after the conflict in Syria had started when Stephen Farrell was writing for the New York Times an article with the title “Reporting in the Post-Embed Era.” At that time, 2012, he was already reporting about the struggle of “the correspondents of this era to adjust to the ever-shifting hazards of war reporting” (Farrell, 2012), questioning whether Syrian conflict could continue to be reported and how, while Syria did not even rank yet in the top 20 of the C.P.J.’s list of deadliest countries. Today, this question, remains valid, although the statistics have dramatically changed, as Syria is one of the deadliest countries in the world for journalists and media workers, confirmed by both the Committee for the Protection of Journalists (CPJ) and the Journalists without Borders (JSF).

Actually, the situation in Syria is exemplary of the contemporary conflicts’ development, which are today more complicated than ever in the past, involving not just two opponents, with a crystal clear narrative of the one enforcing his will over the other, but a large number of armed groups, belonging to states, or being national, religion or by other mean motivated, where a matching number of narratives also conflicts in the information environment. These developments create an extremely complicated situation, where the journalist who will decide to cover such a conflict, will face an unprecedented level of threat, making fair enough for anyone to question if coverage worth the risk or not, whether in terms of ethical commitment or financial benefit.

Advancements in the communication technologies, as always, come as another factor to balance the equation, providing a number of dividing alternatives; dividing in a number of different frames, such as the reliability of truthful information, the biased or impartial coverage, the lack of basic reporting skills, the professional status of the sources and a number of ethical dilemmas. Second-hand reporting by civilian journalists and bloggers, the collected information by crowdsourcing and social media analyses and the material produced and disseminated through the internet, by actors involved to the conflict, such as videos and photos, consist some of these alternatives.

It is under these circumstances, that the convergence of traditional and new media is forged in war reporting, as the access to first-hand information is almost impossible for the professional war correspondents of the traditional media, or even the freelancers, while the out coming information from the conflict needs to be double checked through means, such as fact-checking applications, that need to develop and adapt to the new challenges, but also upgraded in context, by providing the necessary skills and sometimes equipment to the sources. This is a challenging new era for war reporting, where the professional journalist, covering a conflict will find himself between the two threats, where avoiding the one throws him directly into the other: the Scylla and the Charybdis; to risk his own life or his professional credibility.

2 Threats on the field

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) describes Syria today as a “horrendous” environment. The civil war has turned Syria into one of the world’s deadliest country for media workers. The large number of diverse armed groups poses a threat to professional journalists that find themselves victims of violence by all parties. Ali Hashem characteristically writes, “*Those close to the opposition went under the regime’s fire and those on the other side we deemed regime “soldiers”*” (Hashem, 2013). However, it was not just the chaotic situation and the large numbers of journalists’ deaths. It was also the directed, mediatized set up deaths of westerners, such as the murder of James Foley by

Islamists militants after his kidnap in Syria in 2012, that has focused attention on the dangers of reporting from the country (Doyle, 2014)

2.1 Statistics and facts

The Committee to Protect Journalism (CPJ) also highlights Syria, together with Iraq, as the deadliest countries for journalists for the year 2017. According to CPJ data, up to now, 122 journalists have been killed in Syria since the conflict begun, out of which the 18 were targeted for murder, while 18 of the cases have been under impunity. Up to now, for the year 2018, six journalists have been killed according to CPJ, while according to RSF data, two journalists have been killed, six citizen journalists and one media worker. The numbers are quite different, although really close, due to the way CPJ and RSF use to categorize journalists, especially when it comes to citizen journalism. A large number of citizens have started publishing content on the internet, whether it is social media or blogs, in an effort to shed light on the situation, for the rest of the world, taking the role of civilian journalists.

2.2 Impunity

As already mentioned, it is common for journalists to find themselves victims of violence in Syria and there are many cases where they have been targeted, both by the government, the opposition or other military groups. In all these cases there has been no punishment for the perpetrators. That creates an environment where, despite freedom of expression and opinion being fundamental human rights, media workers in Syria continuously fear for their lives. A significant reason for that impunity is the fact that the status of war correspondent only exist in the international law, regarding the coverage of international conflicts, while there is not a separate status regarding non-international armed conflicts, such as the one in Syria.

Additionally, there is also the case of citizen journalists, who are, by default, under a dubious journalistic status. As the access to the field is practically denied for the professional journalists, their role is undertaken by those civilians, who report from inside the conflict zones, putting many times their lives at risk. The material they produce and share, many times in cooperation with international media organizations, represents the majority of the coverage of what happens inside the country. Moreover, this material can be used to document war crimes, atrocities, and others, like a shred of evidence in the future. It is of high importance to understand and appreciate the capabilities, and the influence citizen journalism has, in the new, converged media environment, and try to implement basic rules for their protection. In the case of Syria, being a not Non-International Armed Conflict, this would probably be impossible.

2.3 The Press Emblem Campaign (PEC)

In a similar perspective, the PEC is a campaign supporting the adoption of a protected press emblem that journalists will bear on them, while covering war or conflict, as part of an international convention for the protection of journalists. The PEC's rationale is that the provisions of International Human Law are ineffective in protecting journalists. However, with a closer look at the provisions of the organizations, we will see that they are not applicable. Among others, provisions include warning journalists by the military prior attacks, the creation of an international commission to investigate breaches and others (Davies, 2013). CPJ in 2005 distanced itself from the campaign, declaring that adoption of such an emblem would be undesirable for lots of reasons,

including a licensing entity to determine who is and who is not a journalist. (Davies, 2013). That would be even more problematic nowadays when reporting from conflict areas such as Syria is largely based on citizen journalism.

2.4 Boots on ground; the choices

As frequent intimidation, arrests, abductions, and murders constitute a horrendous environment for the media (BSF), when a reporter decides to enter the conflict zone, must be really cautious with the choices he is going to make. In the past, a reporter would be well prepared and most probably would have the choice to be embedded under the relevant safety of an official military force. Former BBC war correspondent, Nenad Sebek, speaking as a part of the expert panel on Open Journalism, arranged at the end of September 2014 in Vienna by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, said that at least when he reported from conflicts in Croatia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo and Chechnya, he knew he was prepared as any journalist could be. He had had extensive training with ex-Royal Marines, had all the protective gear, and was fully insured. "Not only that," he adds, "my salary was guaranteed. I didn't have to continually sell stories like the freelancers, who are prone to take much higher risks." (Baker, 2014)

Even this way, reporting war was not an easy assignment. However, today, terms for journalists reporting from conflict areas have entirely changed. As the level of threat has risen sky high, media outlets depend mostly on freelancers and civilian journalism. Even if some send correspondents, that is for a limited time, and under specific cautions taken. Some might say that the choice to be embedded in Syria existed, in a way, but you are no longer embedded with an army, but with militias, terrorists, armed groups that can't guarantee your safety. In any case, being a Non-International Armed Conflict, even being embedded with an armed group, a reporter does not have the status of the war correspondent.

So, the choice left is that of the freelancer. However, this also comes with a number of problems. A freelancer has to take care of a number of issues and cope with the expenses of proper training, equipment, accommodation, fixers, drivers, translators and others. An experienced correspondent would probably have already all this covered and would have the links to find the proper fixers, knowing whom he can trust or not. Freelancers could be experienced, but could also be young journalists, that put themselves in danger, by making compromises on their preparation and safety, and trying to get stories that will pay for all these, aiming to maximize their profit or gain recognition in their domain. Some organizations have stated that they do not longer accept material by freelancers, in order to protect young journalists, "*to avoid a situation where young journalists are heading to war zones looking for excitement in twisted, parallel history to that of the so-called young jihadis*" (Baker, 2014).

3 Redirected to second-hand information

With the option of eye-witnessing and verifying the facts being extremely dangerous, reporting the situation inside Syria for the international media has been redirected to second-hand information. "*One fact is emerging: no conflict ever has been covered this way,*" writes The National (2013).

3.1 The Sources

In response to these difficulties for the international media to cover the conflict, "*hundreds, if not thousands of Syrian activists picked up smartphones to visually document events and report in 140*

characters or less about the conflict. This army of self-anointed reporters has uploaded thousands upon thousands of YouTube videos, and used Twitter, Facebook, and Skype in heretofore almost unimagined ways to show the world that their government was committing unspoken atrocities against its own people”, writes Chloe Lowe for the Radio Liberty (Lowe, 2012). In many cases, it is not a single citizen journalist alone, but there are organized networks of volunteers. As very graphically described in The National, “citizen videos have undeniably ensured that details of a conflict that has killed more than 110,000 people and ravaged the country do not go unnoticed, providing a look at the horrors of war: villagers digging through destroyed buildings with their bare hands for survivors; massacre victims in pools of blood; children with grave wounds from heavy bombardment” (The National, 2013).

In a different approach, another source of information for the media can be found far from the battlefield. For example, some of the most influential reports from Kabani battle were by two men based in the Midlands region of England (Platt, 2014). Edward Platt in his article about citizen journalism in Syria refers to the examples of Rami Abdul Rahman and Elliot Higgins, who, working in different ways, provided a significant number of influential reports, far from the field, taking advantage of the growth of social media, facilitated by technological advances that allow access in a war zone, that have made detailed ground-level information on the war available online (Platt, 2014). In a similar concept, social media analysis has made available advancements such as mapping of the conflict; the Carter Center’s Conflict Resolution Program is one such example (Farabaugh, 2017)

Finally, the national media should also be mentioned as sources. In a study, run by the Middle East Institute is found that there were as many as 298 newspapers being circulated in different parts of the country during various periods of the uprising, in addition to 17 state-run or regime-affiliated newspapers (Issa, 2016). By the time of the study, at least 196 active media outlets were found. The study assembled the 196 outlets into four categories: pro-opposition, independent, pro-regime and independent Kurdish. The distinction was determined based on the language used in the coverage, which indicated the level of bias within the reporting. This method found that 71 of the 196 media outlets were considered pro-opposition, 39 independent, 72 pro-regime, and 14 independent Kurdish (excluding party-affiliated media) (Issa, 2016).

3.2 The threat of reporting from the outside

However, second-hand information, comes with many problems, especially in the contemporary post-truth era, highly appreciated in an environment where fake news and propaganda flourish. The speed of information dissemination in comparison with the inability of professional journalists to verify facts by traditional means makes it a challenge for the media to find what is real and what is not. “If you are not there, you cannot see it; you have to say you cannot verify this,” Liz Sly said in an interview for RadioLiberty (Lowe, 2012).

Additionally, the physical threat exists also for those citizen journalists. “We have lost a great many activists detained, arrested, tortured to death and shot on the spot,” says Rafif Jouejati, a Washington DC-based spokesperson for the Local Coordination Committee of Syria (LCC), speaking to RadioLiberty (Lowe, 2012). So there is also an ethical dilemma in the use of local, citizen journalists and activists as news sources.

Another issue is the moderate quality of amateur reporting by citizen journalists, who lack journalistic experience or basic training. One of the key findings in the Antoun Issa study was that

foreign countries and NGOs have provided funding and trained Syrian journalists to increase the quality of reporting (Issa, 2016). However, to what cost comes that support for the truth, especially having in mind the above mentioned ethical dilemma, concerning the threats to the local journalists, citizen or professionals?

It is in the nature of contemporary conflict itself that the truth is the first casualty. It has always been in the past, but nowadays, with the media having an upgraded role in the development of the conflict, the truth is in the foresight of the adversaries. To proceed, each of the adversaries needs to gain popular support, acceptance or at least compliance; and to achieve this, there is no other way than persuading about what the truth, or the post-truth, is. It is a war of narratives, where other's except for the directly involved, also participate. The conflict in Syria has become an international Strategic Communications platform. *"Their country has become a proxy battleground for competing powers and groups. News from inside Syria matters to the public all over the world and impacts decisions made by foreign governments"*, Peter Gelling writes for the Global Post (Gelling, 2015). The cases of the chemical weapons attack of August 2013 and the allegations of the "industrial killings," by the Syrian government, are emblematic cases of hoaxes, where a number of elements of the war of narratives, as well as a large number of different actors can be identified.

4 Educating the young reporter

Whether a young journalist chooses the path of entering the field or that of reporting from the outside, many new competencies are demanded, while new opportunities are offered. These should all be subjects of young journalists' training, especially for those who plan to cover war and conflict during their career, but also for the rest too, as it is not always easy to predict your path; sometimes it is the sequence of events that drive your path.

4.1 Preparing for entering the field

Demystification of war should be the basic outset for those who seek excitement, fame, and glory through such a job. Young journalists might share similar motives with young soldiers, ready to enter the field without being able to evaluate what the word "fatality" means. Such a decision should be well thought before taken; otherwise, the reporter might find himself in a really uncomfortable and dangerous situation.

After this, there is the practical part; there are many essential military, threat awareness, field safety, and other pieces of training offered for journalists preparing to enter a conflict zone. There are also organizations supporting war reporters, whether freelancers or not, providing from free basic or even advanced information to support. Young reporters should be aware of all those, in order to be prepared accordingly.

They should know a number also of basics; equipment needed (from basic armor to advanced digital equipment), finding a fixer, driver, interpreter, the necessity of creating their network, health insurance issues, legal status, and others. Especially in the case of freelancers, one should also be ready to bear the economic cost of all these.

4.2 Preparing for distant coverage of a conflict

Taking the case of Syria as an example, it makes it easy to understand that there is an unlimited number of alternatives while covering a conflict from a distance, based on second-hand information; a number that can only be restricted by the creativity and imagination of the journalist.

What is common in all those alternatives is that they all come with some doubt when it comes to the timely verification of the information; it is the time factor that adds extra pressure. While reporting Syria, the use of media analytics, triangulation, the creation of networks and other methods have been put to the test. It has been a valuable lesson learned for future reporting.

Additionally, it is essential for future professionals to highlight the capabilities offered by the creation of a network, based on local citizen journalists and volunteers, which however comes with ethical dilemmas, but also technological challenges concerning their protection, such as the use of VPNs, circumvention technologies and other means to keep their identities secret.

5 Conclusion

War reporting has always been a challenging, life-claiming job. Today, entering the field is more dangerous than ever; the level of threat is almost prohibitive. To the choice of entering the field, the alternative is to report from a distance, without being able to verify the facts, facing the danger of spreading misinformation. These are the two choices the contemporary war reporter has, one claiming his life and the other his professional credibility; much like the Odysseys Scylla and the Charybdis, trying to avoid each of these two threats the journalists find themselves facing the other.

However, the coverage of the conflict is too important to be neglected. It is not because “people have to know”; it is because “people have to show” what is going on in their country. This is a situation where the journalist needs to make choices; choices delicate enough that will allow them to safely balance between the Scylla and the Charybdis and bring the information out to the rest of the world.

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Management Communication in Hotels During Economic Crisis in Greece

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Abstract

The present study addresses the management communication in hotels during the economic crisis in Greece. Particular, the research focuses on ten hotels in Northern Greece thus tourism is of vital importance for the development of our country. As a case study, we chose the period of Capital Controls in the summer of 2015 because it had severe consequences on the movement of capital, payments and transfers. Furthermore, this study aims to contribute by exploring, if the crisis in 2015 has had a negative impact on the hotel industry according to industry professionals. Specifically, we examined how the hotel industry professionals/ executives experienced all three stages of the crisis: ex-ante, crisis, post-ante, who was the planning and strategy to address the crisis that followed whether the crisis and political instability affected the confidence of customers. Our state of research revealed that there are problems of managing an organisation or a company concerning the process of communication, the exercise of power and the development of coordinated action in the 20th century (Quarantelli, 1988). Moreover, the field of crisis management has arisen mainly in the organisation of emergency events including hurricanes, floods, genocides, wars and social conflicts that are related to environmental and climatological factors, psychological factors, security and political issues.

Key Words: Crisis Branding, Hotels Management, Crisis Management Plan, Business Crisis, Crisis Simulations,

1 Introduction

In recent years, the researcher's interest in crisis management in the hospitality industry and tourism have increased, as crisis incidents have increased. For example, the terrorist attacks in the United States in the 11th September 2001 affected negative consequences, as expected, on consumption and in travelling. As a crisis in the tourism sector, Sönmer S. & Graefe A. (1998) consider that it is a situation that could threaten the normal operation of a tourist enterprise or destroy the reputation of a tourist destination (A.A. Israeli, et al., 2010).

Managers or leaders in a crisis are under high pressure and have to make decisions quickly and with incomplete information without having the overall picture Stafford and Armoo (2002), consider that the experience gained from managing the crisis following the terrorist attack on Twin Towers on 11 September 2001 in New York serves as a framework for crisis planning tourism industry worldwide. Crisis management failures also lead to corporate governance failures, and it is often the reason why companies can shed their shares mainly from accounting and financial scandals. All these judgments have three distinct features: the unexpected, the uncertainty and the pressure of time (Stafford & Armoo, 2002). A crisis usually happens suddenly and has the element of surprise even if there are early warning signs that may be detectable (Stafford & Armoo 2002). The crisis as we have analysed is unpredictable, it explodes suddenly like in the case of terrorist attacks and causes unexpected consequences. In the tourism sector when the situation stabilized the organizations work to operate recreational areas. In the hotel industry hotels run in all stages of the crisis unless they have material property damage from natural disasters.

Communication and management crises are becoming menace increasingly to our societies. Crisis in social media communication and business have received research attention in our days. The literature on crisis management in the hospitality industry has gone through significant developments in recent years. Although, many countries experienced different crises. In Greece tourism is a vital importance for the development of the country. The time in which our case study took part was the summer of 2015 because this particular period had capital controls. We studied most of the 5-star luxury hotels in Thessaloniki and Chalkidiki. Especially for the tourist sector, a critical factor is the management of crisis and how the companies communicate the fact. We aim to contribute by exploring the motives underlying local hotels' Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives and communication strategy methods and plans. That focus on communication strategy issues and prevention measures. Due to the unique nature of CSR, a qualitative approach adopted for our research. Crisis management is a complicated field which includes, strategy organisation crisis prevention and the most important stage is to cope with the consequences. To analyse the elements of crisis management, introduction section is organised accordingly in correspondence with our research. In this paper, we studied how managers' practices are valued and which of these are used in times of crisis and the contribution of research to the hospitality industry.

2 Crisis Management Strategies in Tourism

2.1 Crisis Management Strategy

Crisis Management Plan (CMP) only existed in hotels that are part of an international group and operated by international standards. As a result of our survey, one hotel staff at Sani Resort had been trained in crisis management. Hyatt's team also moved by instructions from the specific guidelines of the international group which have been called upon to face crises such as the 2004

tsunami in Indonesia. Greek businesses, especially in small family hotels, had not proceeded to the CMP. It is helpful to say that they do not consider it necessary, as they believe that every crisis is unique and treated with different tools. Apart from a large resort, nobody mentioned that it has been training in crisis scenarios. Apart from the fact that they did not predict this crisis, which came from the economic situation in Greece, it is true that none of the ten interviewees said they had a crisis management strategy in general.

In each period of crisis, we observe three characteristics: the unexpected, the uncertainty and the pressure of time (Stafford & Armoo, 2002). These elements had also found in the case of the capital controls. In the middle of the tourist season, Greek hoteliers were requested to confront quickly and efficiently an unexpected and crisis which surprised them. Usually, corporate executives are trained in crisis management, and they are ready to face any unpredictable developments, something that did not happen with the hotels in Thessaloniki. In our case, the Hotels had not pre-determined information/instructions to follow. Another element, which emerged from our research, is that decisions concerning administrative and financial issues were taken from the board of the company. Usually, in typically crisis scenarios general managers of hotels are in charge to follow CMP, in our case, they did not act likewise.

2.2 Crisis prevention

The political crisis in our country intensified six months before applying capital controls, and the negotiations for the economy were at a critical point. The risk of a financial deficit was visible, indeed there was the imposition of capital controls at a similar critical period in the economic problems of Cyprus. However, hotel managers said they were totally surprised and could not prevent capital controls. The results of our qualitative research confirm that most of the companies handle their crisis management strategy during the fact or after that and not before (Hensgen et al., 2003). Moreover, only 1 in 10 respondents (Les Lazaristes) said that they had predicted the crisis while others mentioned that the crisis was an unexpected event, which surprised them completely. A crisis can be avoided even before the event that will create it, or it can have a shorter life cycle (Landau & Chisholm, 1995). At any emergency, there are warning signs that if we found them in time, we can significantly reduce the consequence (Landau & Chisholm, 1995). Of course, all the above requires a proper prediction. According Landau and Chisholm (1995), it is common for managers to overestimate their potentials and to believe that the crisis will not affect their own company due to the protection that their powerful brand name guarantee. This was confirmed in our sample, as all managers believe that they had the least losses due to the brand name guarantee of their hotel.

2.3 Consequences of crisis

Usually, the organizations have to deal with the consequences of a crisis. Adjustment, evaluation, justification are the main points of the business planning of the crisis (Coombs, 2007), (Seeger et al., 1998), (Vaughan, 1996). After the crisis the organizations or the companies have been completed the report, they have been focused on incidences of casualties and on compensation for loss of reputation. Surveys have shown that businesses with a significant brand name and reputation are less damaged in a crisis period and recover their strengths and lost ground much faster than others (Fombrun, 1995). But is this good enough for cope with a crisis? In order for the company to regain is important a specific plan to drawn up, based on communication with consumers and

citizens, removing faulty products, correcting moves, restoring confidence, providing compensation where appropriate, and introducing a new strategy for designing moves and communication policy of the company (Meyer, 1982; Pearson and Mitroff, 1993).

In our case, the biggest problem that resorts have been faced was the cancellation and the refund policy which is not so flexible. While in city hotels, it is possible to cancel the reservation 24 hours in advance, at resorts most packages are not refundable. Although the Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises (SETE) had announced specific directives to refund the clients who cancelled, in the case of the resorts this practice that was very difficult to be followed. For the above reason, the followed policy was to transfer the reservations to another date. Despite the fact that, for the smaller hotels were more accessible to manage the cancellations. Also, the managers in smaller hotels reacted more flexible to manage the structure of the staff and created new parts such as cleaning department with the internal staff wherever needed without risk. Particular, capital control "created" new services covered by external collaborators or by the redistribution of existing staff. Indeed, in addition to hotels functionality, priority was given to avoiding the shortage of essential products than the luxury food products to serve their customers.

3 The problem

The damage to tourism caused by a crisis or disaster can have serious consequences not only for the national economy but also for the survival of many actors within the state (De Sausmarez, N. 2007). Tourism stakeholders explain that in order to ensure stability not only in Greek tourism but also in state functions, it is necessary to finalize the evaluation of the program as soon as possible in order to start the process of stabilization of the economy.

Although, Greece as tourism destination remains particularly positive in terms of attractiveness and safe destination in Great Britain, Germany and the United States according to Censuswide's Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises (SETE) Intelligence. The survey was conducted from 21.01.2016 to 25.01.2016 by (SETE) Intelligence for the perception of Greece's image in the markets of Great Britain, Germany and the USA. The research was carried out by the independent British company Censuswide, in a total sample of 3.046 respondents who have visited or intend to visit our country (<http://sete.gr/el/statistika-vivliothiki/statistika/>). The survey was conducted in January 2016 but also assesses the image of the visitors or potential visitors and the tourist season of 2015 that had just been completed, including the June-September 2015 four months we are examining.

According to the data of the Hoteliers Association tourism in Thessaloniki, hotel industry has had strong pressure and they consider that 2015 was the most difficult year since the beginning of the crisis in Greece. It could keep reservation numbers at satisfactory levels, but it did not succeed in continuing the dynamics of 2014 because of political instability the developments have had downs and were being stagnant. Factors such as national elections twice in a short period, the referendum, political and economic uncertainty, scenarios for Grexit affected tourism industry. Finally, in the summer of capital controls have caused transaction problems and have influenced customer's behaviour.

4 Methodology

We have implemented semi-structured interviews that are conducted with the general managers of ten local Greek hotels.

4.1 Data collection method

In this paper, we chose to use qualitative research using the methodological tool to interview and study the results with the content analysis method. According to Creswell (2012), qualitative research is an exploration and understanding process based on specific methodological traditions of strategy that address an individual or social issue. We chose the semi-structured interview so that there is a structure in the questioning, but the interviewee is free to answer freely (open questions) as it is for executives with great experience but also with an important position in the companies examined. The more a researcher wants to access unique, non-standardized and personalized information about how people engage the world, the more it focuses on a qualitative, unstructured interview. The main disadvantage of this research tool is the question of quantification (Cohen, Manion, Morisson, 2008). I am proposing that such interventions may be limited because the managers may want to show a positive impact of the hotel's and not share their policy. The interview guide consists of questions that were formed after the goal of the survey was decided. In particular, the questions was open-ended, so they did not restrict the respondent to answer with a yes or no, but encouraged him to develop his point of view. During the interview, supplementary questions were often asked by the writer, especially in cases where the respondent's answer did not fully cover us.

4.2 Research Questions

The aim of our research was to investigate the crisis management strategy in Greek businesses and study the way in which the three stages of the crisis go: ex-ante, crisis, post-ante exists. To do this we chose the tourism industry, which is various of our country. As a period of crisis, we chose in June 2015, the month that announced the capital controls in our country. This crisis, apart from an economic impact, had a significant impact on our country's reputation as a safe tourist destination.

The research cases selected are:

RQ1. Has had the crisis of 2015 a negative impact on the hotel industry according to industry professionals?

RQ2. Have the 5star Hotels implemented preventive plans to manage the crisis and the impact of its reputation?

RQ3. Have there been any changes in the crisis plan?

RQ 4. Did the crisis and political instability have the confidence of customers?

RQ 5. Have communication strategies been implemented?

RQ 6. Has there been a review of existing crisis management plans after the crisis, based on the experience of the summer of 2015?

RQ7. Has there been an allocation of resources, human, monetary, etc. in order to cope with the crisis?

4.3 Sample

As a sample of the survey, eight 5 stars hotel companies were selected around the center of Thessaloniki and two in Chalkidiki in Central Macedonia. In particular, were studied the hotels Sani Resort, Porto Carras in Chalkidiki (resorts) and MET, Macedonia Pallas, Mediterranean hotel, Grand Hotel, Hyatt, Electra Palace, Daios Hotel and Les Lazaristes (city type) in Thessaloniki. The classification of hotels is according to the services they offer done with a rating ranging from one

star to up to five. For our research, we chose hotel companies a) offering 5 star services as they are the ones that attract the largest number of tourists, b) have resources for potential opportunities for developing a relevant strategy c) because of their internationalization they are more exposed to this type of crises. The interviewees were those who were responsible for managing the crisis because of their position and were able to make decisions and implement a specific strategy. In particular, the positions of the interviewees were as follows: seven were General Managers and the rest three were Marketing Directors.

Table 1: Number of rooms per hotel unit

Codification	Hotel	Type of hotel	Type of company	Number of hotels per company	Number of rooms
1.SA	Sani Resort	Resort	Group	4	2.000
2. PC	Porto Carras	Resort	Group	2	243
3. ME	MET	City Hotel	Group	5	212
4. MK	Macedonia Pallas	City Hotel	Company	1	283
5. MED	Mediterranean hotel	City Hotel	Company	1	118
6. GH	Grand Hotel	City Hotel	Company	1	266
7. HY	Hyatt	City Hotel	Worldwide Company	12	152
8. EP	Electra Palace	City Hotel	Group	5	138
9. DA	Daios Hotel	City Hotel	Group	2	49
10.LZ	Les Lazaristes	City Hotel	Group	7	100

Table 2: Number of employees per hotel unit

Codification	Hotel	Number of employees
1.SA	Sani Resort	2.200
2 PC	Porto Carras	1100
3 ME	MET	150
4 . MK	Macedonia Pallas	70
5 MED	Mediterranean hotel	75
6. GH	Grand Hotel	120
7 HY	Hyatt	190
8 EP	Electra Palace	70
9 DA	Daios Hotel	45
10 LZ	Les Lazaristes	100

The number of employees in each unit is a total of permanent and seasonal staff and in most cases hoteliers have reported that the number of staff is not stable can increase during the season in the

summer depending on tourist demand. The sample we are considering includes two resorts that offer plenty of entertainment: marina, casino, restaurant, clubs etc. Such hotels are usually well located in touristic areas and attract tourists who want an all-inclusive holiday. The other 8 hotels which include in our research are close to the city center and attract tourists who want to be down town for the main attraction and facilities or they are business travellers. Typically, these hotels have customers who travel for work, weekend break, health tourism etc.

5 Results

According to bibliography real crisis for a company exists when there are consequences, and not when an existing situation is dealt with. The crisis is determined on the basis of its impact and whether there are economic and social consequences for business and society. Then there is really a crisis and not only when an emergency situation prevails (Clark, 1995, 1996). After come to terms with crisis must be a re-adaptation of the company's strategy, a period that staff and management should "recover" and reframe new philosophy. If a crisis has no consequences, then we can say that it was never experienced like it. Depending on the time period in which the crisis affects the company, respectively measures are taken, so that the impacts are as few as possible (Gonzalez-Herrero and Pratt, 1996).

In general, the crisis in hotels in Thessaloniki was to have minimal consequences and influenced the operation of hotels only during the crisis period. Both small and large investments (from the renovation of a hotel to the disposal of capital for the purchase of new linen) have remained stagnant. According to, there was a shortage in the market of certain essentials products, such as toilet paper, eggs, etc it made it difficult for some companies that did not care for a large stock to cope with. Furthermore, problems were created with small suppliers who due to lack of cash could not supply the big hotels on credit. In this regard some units were forced to change their suppliers for a short time. Especially, Greek customers were affected more than the other and they proceeded to cancel reservations. The hotels that worked more with domestic tourism had increased cancellations about of 15-20%. Although, one of the two resorts we included in the sample (Sani Resort) was unaffected. Their customers are repeaters in a percent of 90% and there were bookings for the entire tourist season or one year sooner. On the contrary, the second resort (Porto Carras) reported that cancellations were crowded about 20% and they are over-staffed due to recruitment seasonal staff. Finally, there was a lesser impact in online bookings and foreign transactions, but it came to a fairly rapid pace (the first two weeks).

In the first two weeks there did not have new reservations because of insecurity, embarrassment and uncertainty environment but this changed in the end of July. Before the announcement of capital controls tourism factors affecting the growth of tourism were positive the hoteliers and the ministry were optimistic that the year of 2015 it would break any record. But it did not happen exactly as predicted. In general, they have the same booking rate and number of tourists as 2014 levels, but they did not manage to overcome them. Finally, there may have been no increase in profits, but no drop was reported too. According to SETE statistics on capital controls, tourist arrivals had fall with a downward trend from -0.8 in June to -7.3% in September. The fact that most of the hotels in our research were city destinations affects the result as the customers came to the city for work and not for leisure. The cancellations came from tourists who visiting the city for entertainment.

6 Conclusions and future directions

In this paper, I am drawing on published and anecdotal data from my own research to provide a presentation of crisis management plan in ten hotels in North Greece during the period of capital control in the summer of 2015 and an explanation of how it affected this in these hotel companies. Based on these findings, I am arguing that interventions against the capital control all of the hotels change the cooperation with suppliers who demanded cash for the transaction (shortage of certain essential products, such as toilet paper, eggs, laundry service). There was a shortage in the market of certain essential products, such as toilet paper, which made it difficult for some businesses that did not have a large stock. There was a case of a hotel that had to create a laundry unit and buy laundry professionally machines because it could not be served by laundry company that carried and washed the linen because they needed to be paid in cash. Greek managers, especially in family companies hotel, had not proceeded to a Crisis management Plan. They do not consider it as necessary, as they believe that every crisis is unique and treated with different tools and plans. Furthermore, they have had to change suppliers, to buy many stock products to serve their customers because they did not know how much capital control will last. Eventually, most of these products they did not have to be consumed. Therefore, one of the factors that has positively influenced the management of the crisis is flexibility as all the entrepreneurs have adapted new needs, especially in the category of suppliers. By bibliography an organization that has a good reputation before the crisis can maintain a good reputation after the crisis and suffer less (Coombs, 2007). This is also confirmed in our research, there was no panic in the first days of the crisis as the employees trusted the reputation of the company they work for. Furthermore, domestic customers trusting brand guarantee accept to change the dates and not cancel their reservation.

One of the major limiting factors of our research is the subjectivity of the data as we rely on personal statements by the managers. Also, due to the small sample, the results can not be representative of all hotel units. In the future, this knowledge can be exploited in the way that crisis management can be an excellent tool for dealing with similar incidents in the tourism sector, particularly in the hotel sector, as we have concluded in most cases that there was no strategy crisis plan. In our next survey, we could focus on real-time crisis management scenarios with interactive simulations in the media and social networks. Simulation technology could reproduce the behaviour of social networks, microblogs, news sites, forums, blogs, and video channels that record the public's response to the crisis in real time. Media simulator mimics any situation unfolding on social media creates and simulates a realistic fictional crisis for brand to manage on social media and respond to a social media management strategy. It is important in tourist industry in Greece to have safe environment, more effective tools to deal with a crisis, feedback, training and best practice to ensure that crisis management strategy is robust and protects the hotels brand.

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Reporting in Crisis The Dangers That Media Workers Face

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Abstract

This essay explores the dangers that media practitioners face around the world in areas of conflict and war. The dangers for the life and safety of media workers are grave, since they are the only available mean for societies to be informed on the situation and the acts of the combatants. They are the only who can expose the violations of the human rights and the humanitarian situation. This fact is putting them on the scope of any violator, potential or real. However, the analysis in this essay is not restricted only in combat zones. One more focal point is placed for Countries that, in times of peace, the corruption is roaming in such high levels that the very principles of democracy are at stake. This includes the fourth Estate and its practitioners. Therefore, the essay refers on how impunity, creates the tendency in increasing the attacks on the press. Furthermore, there is a reference on the responsibilities that governments worldwide have to undertake, under the United Nations Action Plan, in order to protect Journalism and the Press. Finally, the essay speaks how proper education, training and preparation can actively make journalists more effective and at the same time save their lives.

Key Words: impunity, conflict, corruption, danger, crisis

1 Introduction

Many media personnel around the world, work under immense danger to expose corruption, to report on crime, and to be a voice for populations in conflict-ridden areas. Death threats, violence, harassment by security forces, abuse of security laws or weak freedom of expression legislation are all too commonly used to deter journalists working in all mediums. For most, there is no recourse. (Inkinen, 2017a)

2 The attacks on journalism

On 2016 the UNESCO Director General, Irina Bokova, released a report regarding the dire conditions in which the Journalists' Safety has come, and about the danger of impunity. She stated that Media and freedom of expression are under siege, with fatal attacks on producers of journalism being the most serious cases. Over the course of the last decade, a total of 827 journalists have lost their lives for bringing information to the public. On average, this constitutes one casualty every five days. To this, one needs to add the countless other violations endured by journalists, which include kidnappings, arbitrary detention, torture, intimidation and harassment, both offline and online, and seizure or destruction of material. An overwhelming majority of the 827 journalists have been local journalists, accounting for 95% of all cases. The vast majority of journalists killed each year are men, representing approximately 94% of all victims. However, women journalists have to deal with a range of threats such as intimidation, abuse and violence, including sexual assaults and harassment. Since 2016 the numbers of Journalists who are getting killed is only slightly decreased. In 2017, 74 more journalists are added on the endless list of the casualties for the free flow of information. Eight media workers are included in this number. As of February 2018, 8 more journalists were murdered around the world in conflict areas or in areas with raging corruption. (CPJ, n.d.) The only reason that the annual number of casualties' drops, is the absence of fresh wars. The decline on the record numbers of the previous years' is not something to be witnessed everywhere on the globe. For example, in Mexico dozens of journalists and media workers are being murdered but it is difficult to determine the motive due to the lack of credible investigations and the high level of violence and corruption. (Beiser, n.d. a)

On top of the physical attacks against journalists, comes the danger of imprisonment. Back in the time when news were only printed, censorship was an easy matter for governments, as bureaucrats holding black pens, was the only thing necessary to silence critics. In most countries politicians could vote the laws that could give them the power to overcome the journalistic control of their actions. Since then the technology gave power to the people, improved awareness and gave the means for the information to flow. Nevertheless, governments and non-state actors find similarly innovative ways to suppress the media. Masked political control means a systematic effort to hide repressive actions by dressing them in the cloak of democratic norms. Governments might justify an internet crackdown by saying it is necessary to suppress hate speech and incitement to violence. They might cast the jailing of dozens of critical journalists as an essential element in the global fight against terror. These strategies have contributed to an upsurge in killings and imprisonment of journalists around the world. In fact, at the end of 2016 there were 259 journalists in jail, the most ever documented. 81 of them were held in Turkey with the number raising each day, while in China 31 journalists are in jail for being critical to the regime or to financial and political stakeholders. (Simon, n.d.)

3 Geographic distribution

The allocation of the attacks against journalists is found around the world with the most recorded in Middle East, in China and in Latin America. Nevertheless, many attacks are recorded in places characterised as part of the “Free World” like the USA and the EU. According to the “2017 world press freedom index” the 10 most censored countries are:

- North Korea
- Eritrea
- Turkmenistan
- Syria
- China
- Vietnam
- Sudan
- Cuba
- Djibouti
- Equatorial Guinea

Close to these countries follow Turkey, Saudi Arabia, India, Mexico and Russia with scores a lot worse than the ones of war-torn Afghanistan.

3.1 Middle East

In Middle East, due to the numerous conflicts and the prolonged civil war in Syria, the most abuses against journalists and media workers are recorded. In Syria alone, 147 Journalists have been murdered and in Iraq 71 journalists have been killed for covering conflicts or being critical to various actors like militia, armed groups, religious movements or the government of the Country. The collapse of the Islamic State hasn't improved the conditions for the journalists as they are not in any safer environment. The extremist group was the main suspect for any killing in Syria and Iraq as it tried to establish an information monopoly in the occupied areas. Journalists were considered as nothing less than spies and propagandists of the west and they faced the penalty of death just for working in the media. Although Islamic State considered media and journalism as enemies to be destroyed, according to reports from the “Committee to Protect Journalists” (CPJ) the end of [Islamic State's] presence in Syria and Iraq will not bring any opportunities for journalists. Threats against them will only worsen. Armed groups remain the main threat to journalists, although the level of threat posed to them, changes from one armed group to the next.

Rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, have repeatedly condemned abuses allegedly carried out by militias, including extrajudicial executions, forcible disappearances, and torture.

Dlovan Barwari, from the independent Iraqi civil rights group Legal Defense for Crimes Against Press Freedom, said that he sees them as the biggest challenge. “Militias don't hesitate to use all kinds of threats against journalists, including killings. Journalists in areas retaken are very cautious and exercise self-censorship for fear of militia brutality and of being accused of terrorism. Journalists face a threefold threat because of their job. From armed groups that have gained political cover, political parties, and the authorities. These groups do not tolerate criticism and they are rarely held accountable for their actions against journalists. The 2017 referendum on Kurdish independence further stirred tension in areas under Kurdish rule, and left media outlets and journalists in the political crossfire. Outlets and journalists regarded as critical or anti-independence

by Kurdish authorities in Erbil had broadcast signals blocked, offices attacked, or were ordered to leave the city of Kirkuk. In Syria Press freedom doesn't rank high in any of the Syrian parties' agendas. The future for journalists will depend on who is in power. In areas held by Assad, journalists are jailed on terrorism charges, media are strictly controlled, while torture and disappearances are common. Islamist factions are equally repressive of journalists. In the Kurdish-held areas, journalists enjoy more freedoms, but there are also many arrests. (Culebras, n.d.)

In Yemen, the conflict has led to a deterioration of the human rights and any protection towards the press is ceased. 10 journalists and media workers have been killed in crossfires or deliberately. Moreover, many are jailed. 13 journalists have been arrested, but this number is not part of the total number of 259 jailed journalists mentioned above. The simple reason is that the Houthis, who made these arrests, are not a recognised government and they are only accounted as a non-state actor.

In the rest of Middle East conditions are not any better for journalists as their freedom is constantly threatened. In Egypt two journalists were arrested just for filming without a licence. Their story was of public interest – they were reporting about a tram – and according to CPJ this is legal in Egypt. One more journalist disappeared on December 2017 while being under state custody. 25 Journalists are accounted to be in jail.

In Iran any journalist reporting against the regime is risking being arrested immediately. In Israel, journalists covering demonstrations have been assaulted by the riot police and many Palestinian media outlets are muted after authority's order.

In Turkey after the failed coup, President Erdogan has staged a witch-hunt against anyone who might be considered a supporter of the preacher Fethullah Gulen's movement. Journalists are imprisoned, media outlets closed or capitulated by the government, in order to censor any critic on the elected president who is slowly gaining total control of the country.

3.2 Communist States

In communist states - here examining only China, North Korea, and Cuba - freedom of Press is not an established right. The regimes of the countries maintain total control of all aspects of life and they acknowledge press freedom only if it serves the Communist Party's interests.

In North Korea, Press freedom is tightly controlled by the state. North Korean Constitution protects freedom of speech and freedom of press. In practice, however, the government only allows speech that supports it and the ruling Workers' Party of Korea. Any journalistic activity is closely monitored and controlled. In these conditions, the journalistic profession is not actually practiced and no attacks on journalists occurred with the exception of the expelling of a BBC crew visiting the country and the Death sentence in absentia of two South Korean Journalists only for insulting the "dignity of the Country".

In Cuba, constitution guarantees the freedom of press. However, freedom of speech and the press must be exercised in accordance with the aims of the socialist society and none of the freedoms granted to citizens can be exercised against [...] the decision of the Cuban people to build socialism and communism. Given this remark, journalism is extremely difficult to be practiced in Cuba as all activities must be authorised and permitted by the state. Numerous journalists have been arrested and mistreated with the accusation of fomenting foreign propaganda, or trying to cover protests and discontent against the government. The Cuban government has such a tight grip on press that detained journalists while covering a hurricane, without the appropriate permission.

China, according to “Freedom House” is home to one of the world’s most restrictive media environments. The already limited space for investigative journalism and online commentary shrank during 2015, continuing a trend of ideological tightening since Xi Jinping assumed the leadership of Chinese Communist Party in 2012. Censorship of news and internet content related to the financial system and environmental pollution increased as the economy slowed and smog intensified, adding to the topics’ political sensitivity. Journalists not complying with the regime’s orders face harassments and even imprisonment, with 38 being currently in jail for reporting stories that were not satisfactory to the regime. Journalists were molested for investigating corruption and misconduct of duty or for covering the environmental problems. (Beiser, n.d. b)

3.3 Afghanistan

Media has flourished in Afghanistan since the collapse of the Taliban regime 15 years ago, buoyed by an influx of international support for reconstruction, local entrepreneurship and the enthusiasm of many in the country to exercise their new-found right to freedom of expression.

Such rapid and unprecedented growth in the media sector also exposed Afghan journalists to great risks. The media’s prominence has made it a target of the Taliban and other terrorist groups seeking to manipulate coverage. At the same time, government officials, powerful individuals, warlords, security forces and other armed groups, unaccustomed to the degree of freedom granted to media outlets, frequently respond to open criticism with hostility. These two factors loom large behind the high rate of violence, threats, murder, detention and other acts of intimidation against journalists in recent years. Over 350 journalists have been attacked and threatened in the last three years, according to the Afghan Journalist Safety Committee. The Taliban, unhappy with the media coverage, some of which was perceived even by the media community as inaccurate, began to openly threaten and target journalists across the country working for two major media outlets. Taliban threats had a severe impact on the quality of media coverage, AJSC director Najb Sharifi said. Self-censorship began among some of the most reliable media outlets, causing imbalance in reporting and covering stories. Following the Taliban’s escalation of hostility toward journalists, the number of attacks leading to fatalities increased sharply. Although the attacks from Taliban are more deadly in 2016, 51 cases, nearly 50 percent of the total cases of violence against journalists recorded by the AJSC, were attributed to government officials.

3.4 Mexico

Mexico is one of the world’s most dangerous places for journalists and media workers. Most murders and other violent attacks are not punished, leading to an expectation of impunity, and journalists face extreme editorial pressure—including credible threats of violence—from criminal organizations and corrupt authorities. Governmental mechanisms to protect journalists are hampered by bureaucratic rivalries, lack of resources, and inadequate training. Media outlets and their employees encounter pressure from a variety of actors interested in manipulating or obstructing news content, including owners with political or separate business agendas, major advertisers seeking positive or neutral coverage, government officials, and criminal organizations. Critical journalists are sometimes fired or otherwise threatened with professional repercussions if their work conflicts with the interests of such groups. Drug-trafficking organizations, frequently in cooperation with authorities in their areas, have created “zones of silence,” or what the Washington Post called an “institutionalized system of cartel censorship.” For media editors in such regions,

survival can require accepting explicit criminal demands regarding content and practicing self-censorship. However, the proliferation of threats—and impunity for perpetrators—has caused self-censorship to deepen and spread across the country, including to areas that had not been considered hotspots for drug-related violence.

Only for 2016, at least two journalists were killed as a result of their work, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), but seven more were killed for motives that had yet to be confirmed. Another organization, Article 19, counted 11 murders of journalists in possible connection with their work for the year, and a total of 100 such killings since 2000.

3.5 European Union

In the European Union, the principles of Democracy are valued highly, they have been institutionalized and they have been simultaneously the mean and objective for the prosperity of the European Nations. Nevertheless, not everything is secured and goes smoothly. Journalists being after serious cases of corruption and interrelation, have become targets of lethal attacks from the establishment and from people moving outside the grid of lawfulness. Recent examples of such acts are the assassination, in Malta, of Caruana Galizia the “one-woman WikiLeaks” who was behind Panama Papers and was investigating serious allegations of corruption on the Prime Minister of the small country. Another example is the assassination of Slovakian Jan Kuciak who sought to expose Italian organised crime.

The only positive in these cases is that there was a general uprising of the people, who demanded justice for the crimes and insight on the investigated stories. Moreover, the public was alerted in journalist protection. It is only to be seen if the cases will be solved or if there is going to be impunity for such important events inside the European Union.

3 Impunity – Getting Away With Murder

When journalists are attacked or even murdered the perpetrators are rarely prosecuted. With only 8% of cases reported as resolved (63 out of 827), impunity for these crimes is alarmingly high. This impedes the free flow of information that is so vital for sustainable development, peace building, and the social welfare of humankind. This widespread impunity fuels and perpetuates a cycle of violence that silences media and stifles public debate.

Journalists in many countries are subject to a wide range of attacks and interference. Violent assaults from terrorists, other armed groups and powerful individuals — including government officials, security forces and criminal gangs — pose the greatest threat. For the most part, these take place with impunity, a major concern among those consulted in all countries. The killing of a person for their journalism not only brutally eliminates that person’s right to freedom of expression – it also puts a symbolic gag around the same right for every citizen. Attacks such as online threats and harassment, especially of women journalists, intimidate everyone and interfere with the free flow of information. A silenced journalist mutes the voices of the people and curbs their right to know. The result is a society where fearful citizens resort to self-censorship and where it is not possible to make informed decisions. The widespread climate of impunity fuels a vicious cycle of violence, bolstering those who aim to silence public debate and block sensitive information. In this context, the media are critical in providing verifiable information and informed opinion. During the tense environment of a crisis, with populations on edge and tempers flared, this becomes all the more important. The relationship between terrorism and media is complex and fraught. At its worst, it is a

perverse symbiotic relationship – terrorist groups devising spectacles of violence to continue drawing the world’s attention, and the media incentivised to provide wall-to-wall coverage due to huge audience interest. (Inkinen, 2017b)

5 Defending Journalism

If journalists have access to public information they can play a pivotal role in the struggle against corruption and violation of human rights. But journalists face threats and murder if they uncover instances of corruption. Journalists need laws to protect them and these laws are lacking in many countries. In countries that these laws, which regulate the work of journalists and access to information, do exist, journalists still face violence. Considering that the democratic values and the protection of human rights are depending in their work, protection of Journalists is of huge importance.

In only a small handful of countries do journalists have access to state–supported programmes for protection, and even in these countries, many journalists are at risk to “fall through the cracks”. Much of the work of protecting journalists has fallen to civil society.

National and international non-governmental organisations, media associations and unions around the world have developed emergency responses that include relocating journalists under threat, emergency funding, legal support and safety training. They advocate for better legislation and campaign for justice or for the release of colleagues in captivity. These efforts can save lives. In some cases, they have resulted in the convictions of suspects behind the murders of journalists, freed or kept journalists from prison, and brought about important changes in legislation. Given the immense challenges confronting journalists today, however, a more comprehensive, coordinated approach is needed. (Inkinen, 2017c)

6 United Nations Action Plan

The UN Security Council adopted Resolution S/RES/1738 in 2006, which established a coherent, action-oriented approach to the safety of journalists in armed conflicts. Since then, the UN Secretary-General has presented an annual report to the General Assembly on the implementation of this Resolution. As the United Nations specialized agency with a mandate to ‘promote the free flow of ideas by word and image, the UNESCO has been an important player in the defence of freedom of expression through the promotion of the safety of journalists and the fight against impunity. Often in collaboration with other organizations, UNESCO has taken a number of decisive actions in this field. For example, it has been working together with Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) to publish a regularly updated practical guide for journalists working in conflict zones, now available in ten languages. In 2008, UNESCO co-authored a Charter for the Safety of Journalists Working in War Zones or Dangerous Areas, which includes a commitment by the media, public authorities and journalists to systematically seek ways to reduce the risks involved. It has also supported a number of organizations to provide safety and risk awareness training for journalists and media workers. In addition to these practical steps, UNESCO has undertaken a number of activities designed to raise awareness about journalists’ safety and the issue of impunity. At the national level, many agencies, funds and programmes of the UN system are also working toward an approach which promotes the safety of journalists and addresses the issue of impunity. This is relevant to the UN strategic discussions and joint programming within the Delivering as One framework. Finally, many institutions have considered the importance of effectively preparing

journalists for the dangers of their profession. With proper education, training and preparation journalists can be more effective while at the same time they will be aware of the dangers and how to best avoid them or handle difficult situations.

7 Conclusions

With the recent advances in technology, with cameras in the hands of every citizen, and with easy access to broadband Internet, there was solid hope that journalism was progressing to a new era. An era where everyone can report, all hidden stories are revealed and the press fulfils its role of offering the ability of informed options to all citizens. The prerequisite of true Democracy. Nevertheless governments, institutions, groups of influence or power, managed to counter this by striking hard and lethally the people of the Press. The events in Syria showed that with the use of deadly and brutal force – even in the form of a spectacle – can shake the hands of the “citizen – journalists” and break the resolve of the professionals who have devoted their lives to the truth. It is required to increase awareness among the people about the importance for the protection of Journalists. It is important the journalists to be taken under the protection of the societies that they serve and everyone, citizens and journalists, to be determined for the prevalence of Democracy. In this way, people and institution holding power will not be able to censor the media by ganging individuals, as they will have to face societies determined to live democratically and free.

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The Role of Media Educators in the Age of Misinformation Crisis

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Abstract

The main goal of this paper is to highlight media authenticity education strategies and the essence of learning in battling misinformation, initiating related actions to help users become critical evaluators of the received informing, so they can better separate fact from fiction. In the age of misinformation crisis, the “Verification industry” has attempted to bring forward various solutions, without succeeding to decisively facing the continually arisen challenges. Establishment of authenticity evaluation best practices, methods and tools, along with new validation policies and procedures are considered among the solutions to ensure the quality and originality of the transmitted information. Though all the available inventory tools seem equally essential to the media domain, knowledge and training around these aspects are limited, so there is a gap in education regarding the authenticity of the media content. In other words, users are not informed or even instructed properly about the mechanisms, the strategies and the techniques that they could use to evaluate content integrity. Thus, a framework to educate users on information verification strategies is presented, extending simple instructions and rules to address all scales of training needs in misleading news detection, aiming at cultivating a profound consciousness to all digital natives. Due to space limitations and the fact that visual content is used as material evidence in many journalistic cases, the analysis will focus on the development of prototype models and interactive interfaces to train journalists on image verification problems. Overall, the proposed integration attempts to build upon current knowledge and to initiate a “holistic” misinformation crisis management plan.

Key Words: Media Literacy, Media Authentication, Misinformation, Validation Tools, Veracity Strategies, Fake-news crisis

1 Introduction: History and definitions

Historically, there have been appeared various kinds of crises situations. Unexpected events causing breaking-news reports and social debates that concern organizations or agencies, do usually trigger such, short in duration, emergencies, while, in other cases, the dealing problem might have a lasting societal impact, such as the Misinformation crisis. Ideally, the responsible managers have already a predetermined action plan before a crisis unfolds. However, the latter does not usually take place in real-world and crisis-handlers endeavouring to deal with the consequences of a disaster. As in most circumstances, “therapy costs more than prevention”, therefore, instead of striving to recover from the effects, we should be better prepared regarding the unexpected event that will cause a crisis. In all cases, preventing strategies and measures are necessary to deal with chronic social diseases, which are continually evolving and spreading, such as the fake-news (Katsaounidou & Dimoulas, 2019).

As a matter of fact, people were, are and will probably be lying to support their interests and aspirations. The same happens with groups of all kinds, political parties and states, who communicate their opinions and beliefs (no matter what) for various purposes. As a consequence, misinformation was here since ever, but nowadays, the absolute prevalence of this unwanted phenomenon is extremely dangerous (Pasquale, 2017). Things have changed in many directions, including technology, which has facilitated the dissemination of unreliable or even misleading information so much, that this kind of unvalidated news-data is digitally spread everywhere. Recent events, such as the dissemination of fake news through the 2016 U.S. election and the case of Cambridge Analytica, have underlined some of the dangers related to trusting on and engaging with online content (Faris, Roberts, Etling, Bourassa, Zuckerman & Benkler, 2017.). That is precisely why the impact of news validation has never been stronger in today’s misinformation crisis, demanding to deal with its consequences. It is generally claimed that the best solution to a problem is to deal with its core, which also fits the current case needs. The above contributes to a climate of mistrust towards the media and promotes civic apathy. This is one of the reasons that traditional media are facing a major economic and political crisis and also raises questions about the ability of diverse audiences to critically analyse journalistic work (Katsaounidou, Dimoulas & Veglis, 2018). However, this debate has led to extreme sensitization regarding the problem, coming to the point of using the term “fake news” populistically, as a mean to reject the opposite arguments, assuming that every little piece of online information is biased (Berghel, 2017; Rider and Peters, 2018; Bakir and McStay, 2018).

Undoubtedly, we are witnessing a war of information that is being fought on an electronic battlefield, using clicks as weapons. This war had forced us to keep going through a divisive intersection between real and false sources, thus we inevitably been led to an overly simplistic picture. However, instead of treating some sources as authentic and some as fake, we should cultivate confidence about the news, while being open to possible systematic failures of news sources (i.e. “reliable” sources do sometimes make mistakes and mistakes are not classified as “false content”). These thoughts also concerned Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web (WWW), who has published a five-year strategy, unveiling a plan to tackle data abuse and fake news, while stressing in particular that the solutions will be complicated (BBC, 2017). Moreover, Social Media users seem to have forgotten the practice of thoroughly reading and understanding information, hence they have adopted a habit of monitoring information, sharing posts with appealing and memorable headlines (Wendling, 2017). Thus, the curation of high-quality

Journalism is also at stake, since an increasing population of adults is getting news from social media, where fictional stories are presented in such a way that it can be very difficult to tell them apart from what is authentic (Katsaounidou & Dimoulas, 2018).

Studying the relevant literature, we can observe that all attempts to solve the problem of misinformation are incidental. In specific, we have an example of false news, we identify it, discuss it, analyse it, we write about it, we use to train “machines” that we want to do the job for us. But, yet the algorithms are not so successful as someone would expect. From the above, we can easily realize that tools should be intended to support humans and not to replace them as stand-alone autonomous systems. By leveraging the way, we must naturally interact with information and logically extend human intelligence capabilities instead of hampering them. In the end, the following simple question arises: Can we train ourselves (on our daily news routine) to identify the misleading information to stop disseminate it? In this direction, media literacy and education regarding misinformation is considered more than imperative. It is really challenging to discriminate between what is actual news, that would be trustworthy or even less biased than other sources, for which challenge, professionals, experts and plain users /news audience should systematically work and collaborate towards a viable and prosperous solution.

2 Verification strategies and contributors – The role of the Media Educators

There are plenty of methodologies trying to solve the problem of misinformation prevention, usually forming the so-called “verification industry” (Katsaounidou, et al., 2018). Wendling (2017) mentions a significant number of worldwide entities, organizations and initiatives aimed at stopping the spread of misinformation. She classifies these efforts to a) Human-driven actions, i.e. interventions by featured groups and associations to verify information, like the International Fact Checking Network (IFCN) and b) Machine-driven approaches, i.e. automated /algorithmic solutions, which identify fake content and validate information sources to fight (other) algorithms that are part of what spreads the fake news (popular content). Still, despite the systematic research and progress that have been made in this domain, there has not achieved the required robustness yet to perform a reliable evaluation of which information is accurate and which is false or falsified. Figueira and Oliveira (2017) divide the latter category into algorithms that are based: (1) on the content, (2) on the diffusion dynamics of the message and (3) on a weighted sum of the two or a group of features feeding a smart system, referred as hybrid algorithms.

Based on the above, verification practices can be categorized into traditional and algorithmic ones, as indicatively presented in Figure 1. The term traditional does not imply that the exploitation of technology is excluded of the validation processes, but highlights the fact that they use the traditional journalistic approach of “5W-questions” (who, what, where, when, why), in order to verify a fact (Katsaounidou et al., 2018). In short, they aim at detecting the context of the news stories, to collect and further analyse “validation meta-data”: Who was involved? What happened? Where did it took place? When did it took place? Why did that happen?

Algorithmic approaches attempt both to recognize the originality of the multimedia essence (i.e. the integrity of the content itself and the associated semantic conceptualization) and to classify the reliability of the source. However, it is very complicated for an ordinary user or even a professional journalist to have a comprehensive view about all the available services, to use them in the everyday cross validation practice, aiming at preventing misinformation propagation. Overall, there are many kinds of contributors who are involved in the authentication tasks, having the role of the

Debunker, i.e. experts in debunking User Generated Content (UGC), the experienced professional journalist, the technological specialist who provides tools & services and, of course, the audience that can be engaged through crowd-sourcing campaigns. While the collaboration of all these different and complementary parties could be very constructive in the end-to-end validation chain, until now, the individual outcomes of one group have not succeeded in being fully comprehended and exploitable by the others. In all cases, specialized training can offer the wanted skills and know-how required for the holistic undertaking of integrated and collaborative verification (Katsaounidou et al., 2018; Katsaounidou & Dimoulas, 2018).

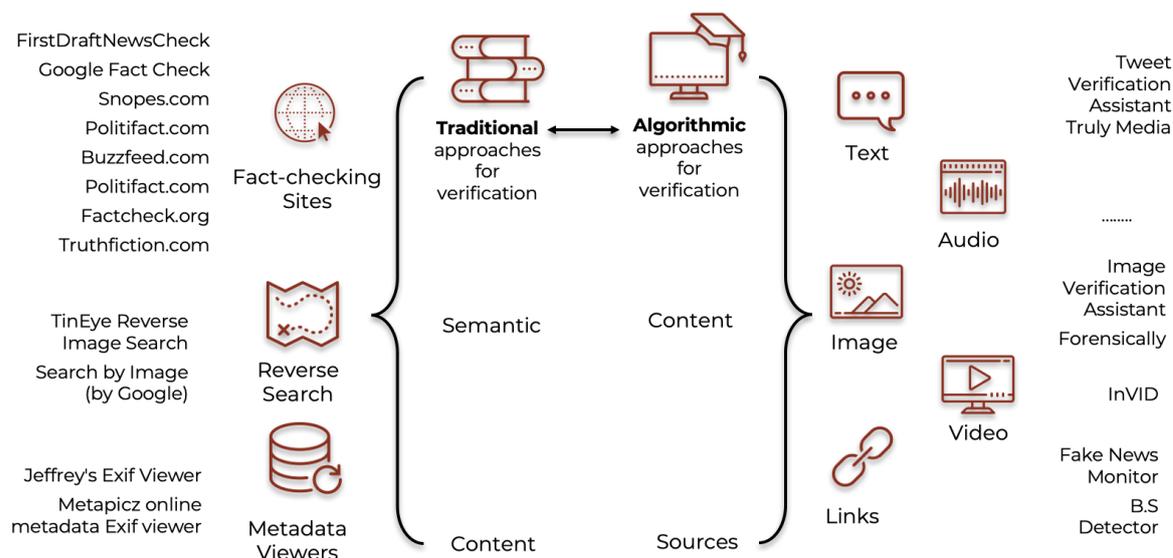


Figure 1: Information Verification Strategies

It becomes clear that a judgement on the value of information should not be performed exclusively by machines, giving them total control to decide which information is /can be displayed to whom, when and in through which channel. The same applies for the traditional approaches, where specific “experts” /human-beings shouldn’t have the sole responsibility on taking media authenticity labelling decisions, therefore causing possible isolation and blocking effects, which will probably ingest an amount of subjective bias. Freedom of speech must be protected at all cost, taking into consideration that there are distinct types of publications, which may include humour and sarcasm, or just conveying simple opinions on something, even if they are only based on personal beliefs. According to Aufderheide (1993), media literacy is an individual’s ability to access, analyse, and evaluate media, and therefore we need media literacy instruction inside and outside of the traditional classroom. This is precisely the role of media educators, to cultivate knowledge and skills to users, so that they could evaluate (themselves) information through obtaining multiple validation views, without relying solely on direct unimodal suggestions (offered exclusively by specific analysts, networks, machines, etc.). Such multimodal perspectives, i.e., personal insights, obtained by following traditional validation rules, human-driven verification reports conducted by experts and featured groups, machine-assisted inspection outcomes, crowd-sourced interactions by larger audiences, and others, can offer the wanted diversity and aggregation mechanism to form a more complete and objective veracity assessment. These thoughts have concerned the European Union that published an institutional Digital Education Plan (for the digital literacy in general and only for the media veracity task), defining that the priorities of media educators are to (Union,

2018): a) make better use of digital technology for teaching and learning, b) develop relevant digital competences and skills for the digital transformation, c) improve education through better data analysis and foresight.

3 Designing a Framework to Train Users on Image Verification Technologies

As already mentioned, the current work is part of a broader project, designing a framework to train users on information verification technologies, aiming at gathering all the existent authentication knowledge in one single access point (environment or service). Since visual content is extensively used as material evidence in many journalistic cases (and due to paper space limitations), our analysis will focus on the training necessities for proper image authenticity assessment.

3.1 Analysis: State of research on Image Verification Surveys and Techniques

Prior research reveals that the audience tends to believe the data depicted in images. In specific, a study measuring students' ability in evaluating online sources of information found that the majority of high school students accept photographs as facts without verifying them (Wineburg & McGrew, 2016). Similarly, an exploratory study based on groups of US college students found that, in general, users are overly trusting toward images on the Web (Kasra, Shen and O'Brein, 2018). In this process on searching pieces of evidence to help the forensics community understand how users identify forgeries in digital images, and how accurate they are, Schetinger, Oliveira, da Silva and Carvalho (2017) test the ability of individuals to determine when an image has been modified. The above study conducted through simple computer-generated graphical stimuli, in which participants were able to spot tampering in a proportion of 47%, suggesting that people are poor at detecting geometrical inconsistencies within a scene. A similar study was conducted by Nightingale, Wade and Watson (2017), utilizing photos or real-world scenes this time. The associated outcomes show that human-beings have some ability in detecting and locating photographic manipulations, although performance is far from perfect.

Moreover, Pantti and Sirén (2015) conducted a survey draws on semi-structured face-to-face interviews, with 19 journalists from Finish leading newspaper publishers and television broadcasters. Participants were asked about the value of UGC images in breaking news, and how they deal with them, especially regarding the perceived integrity of amateur photos and the methods, if any, they used to verify them. The results showed that most journalists, while ascribing accuracy and validation as central to journalistic work, distancing themselves from having the responsibility in evaluating the fragility of amateur images, while few of them attempt to perform or find some form of verification. The previous studies deal with humans' ability to detect and locate image manipulations. Concerning efficiently, Gloe, Kirchner, Winkler and Böhme (2007) are wondering if we can trust their results and take a critical view on the reliability of forensic techniques, as tools to generate authentication evidence for digital images. Specifically, they focus on two specific Digital Image Forensics (DIF) approaches, known as "the resampling detection" and the "digital camera identification". Williams, Sherman, Smarr, Posadas and Gilbert (2018) conducted related research on the needs of designing explanation interfaces to build the trust between humans and machines. Their experiment seeks to identify factors of implicit bias in how humans analyse information when it comes from a machine (algorithm), or a human (Expert Graphic Artist). The results of the above studies highlight the essence of users' participation in the algorithmic verification procedure and the necessity for developing computational cultural literacy.

Understanding technology is a significant factor, where users are deciding to accept a new technology system that will complete tasks for them.

Lately, approaches subsumed to the idea of Digital Forensics (DF) have been introduced to direct misinformation problems. According to Gloe, Kirchner, Winkler and Böhme (2007), the field of DIF is usually divided into two levels. The first one is to judge whether a digital image has sustained malicious post-processing or tampering. Forensic algorithms of this kind intended to detect and expose characteristic traces of image processing operations or to confirm the integrity of particular features, associated with the absence of alteration processes. Another goal of DIF is to retrieve metadata related with the time, date and location that the image was created. Table 1 depicts techniques and toolsets that are already implemented in such systems, most of which use machine learning, a data-analysis-by-example method that automates the build of computational models. The idea behind machine learning is that a system can learn from data, identify patterns and make decisions with minimal human intervention. Therefore, this is the frame in which demanding and powerful classifiers are required to draw criteria and rules (or even blind decisions) regarding image integrity (Katsaounidou & Dimoulas, 2018; Katsaounidou et al., 2018).

Table 1: Automated DIF analysis toolsets

Amped Authenticate	https://ampedsoftware.com/authenticate
Forensically	https://29a.ch/photo-forensics/
Ghiro	http://www.getghiro.org/
Image Forensics	http://www.imageforensic.org/
Fotoforensics	http://fotoforensics.com/
Image Verification Assistant	http://reveal-mklab.it/it/reveal/
JPEG Snoop	https://sourceforge.net/projects/jpegsnoop/postdownload
PhotoDetective	http://metainventions.com/photodetective.html
Pizarro	http://pizarro.utia.cas.cz/
Verifeyed	http://verifeyed.com/documentation/

From all the toolsets mentioned above, we selected two algorithms to design our training interface: The Double JPEG quantization (DQ) algorithm from the Image Verification Assistant (IVA) platform and the Clone Detection (CC) algorithm from the “Forensically” platform. The decision was based on the fact that these platforms are publicly available as Web interfaces and allows to run the analysis online. Moreover, IVA presents an interactive view of the generated localization maps, allowing the export of a report to a PDF document. DQ evaluates the statistical inconsistencies at the compression level, for a typical cloning /copy-move scenario. To be clearer, an example from the book "Cross-Media Authentication and Verification: Emerging Research and Opportunities" is borrowed. Thus, following Figure 2, the original document is compressed at a quality (A), and then an area duplicated and is inserted into it (uncompressed, lower or higher quality-B). Following the applied processing, file saving triggers a recompression process, at a different quality (A+B). Hence, the image will have endured two compression levels, an issue that would leave some processing traces. Forensics algorithms can identify the different layers of compression and visualize their difference in colormaps as presented in Figure 2 (Katsaounidou et al., 2018 p. 121). Apparently, the manipulation at the presented (in Figure 2) scenario is easy to identify, a fact that led us to adopt this example during the design of the prototype User Interfaces (UI). However, in

most forgery cases, the extracted colormaps, provided by the forensic investigation algorithms, are not such easy to read and interpret. This brings us to the next important questions: Can people identify the regions of a manipulated image? How easy is to understand the mechanisms of DIF? The systematic state of research review reveals that such surveys are not very common in the field (Katsaounidou, 2016). This shortage reflects their marginal role in the existing body of literature regarding media authentication, presently. However, it can be anticipated that, within the next years, the number of such featured research will be intensified to fill the interdisciplinary gaps between the involved fields in the direction of holistic media authentication support, including the acquisition of the dedicated knowledge and know-how through literacy actions (Katsaounidou & Dimoulas, 2018; Katsaounidou et al., 2018). Overall, the utmost target is to cultivate confidence in the validation of news, documenting images and sources. Hence, by upgrading our critical capacity to recognize the true nature of digital data, the goal is to stop being afraid of the conveyed information, to perceive it and comprehend it.

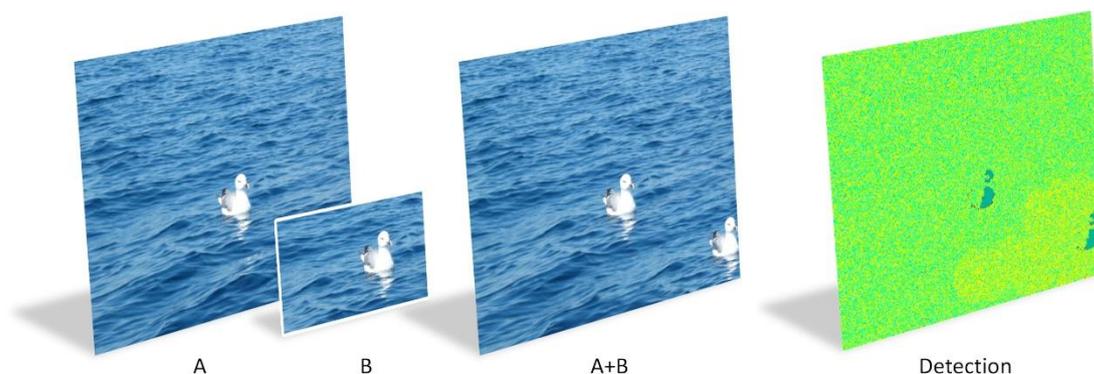


Figure 2: A step by step scenario of image forgery and the indications of the “Media Verification Assistant”, while using “Double JPEG quantization (DP)” (Katsaounidou, Dimoulas & Veglis, 2018 p. 121).

3.2 Designing Interactive UI prototypes to Train Journalists on Image Verification

At this point, all the aforementioned analysis outcomes and the associated research findings are linked to the present designing effort. Except the DIF platforms, there is another kind of applications that can be useful in media authentication literacy. Online games and quizzes that test our abilities to identify the true or false nature of an image, based on our cognitive skills and related experience. An exemplary case is an online quiz that Adobe created to celebrate 25 years of Photoshop (Photoshop Quiz, 2018). Although this game provides some clues regarding the nature of manipulated images, Adobe has used photos with none journalistic interesting. A more severe problem is that this quiz does not give any indications about the manipulation of the pictures, as it happens in the case of the “Real or fake” Photo paradigm, where the nature of manipulation can be revealed by comparing the two states (Before-After) of the used examples (Fake Photos, 2018).

The above quizzes are at the core of our project because, such kind of gamification approaches must also be utilized in journalistic authentication training, taking advantage of all the available image verification assistance tools. Consistent with the above, Figure 3 provides the step-by-step flow of the proposed educational method, comprising a combination of the games listed above and the image verification algorithms. The goal of the current design was to map the detailed procedural steps. Accordingly, in Step 1 the trainee can observe the image. In Step 2 the

analysis of DQ Algorithm is presented. The next step is the analysis to be explained (Step 3). Then, the result of the second Algorithm (CC) is revealed (Step 4), along with its explanation (Step 5). In Step 6 the trainee must decide if the image is manipulated or original, choice (interaction) that also triggers the reveal of the correct answer.

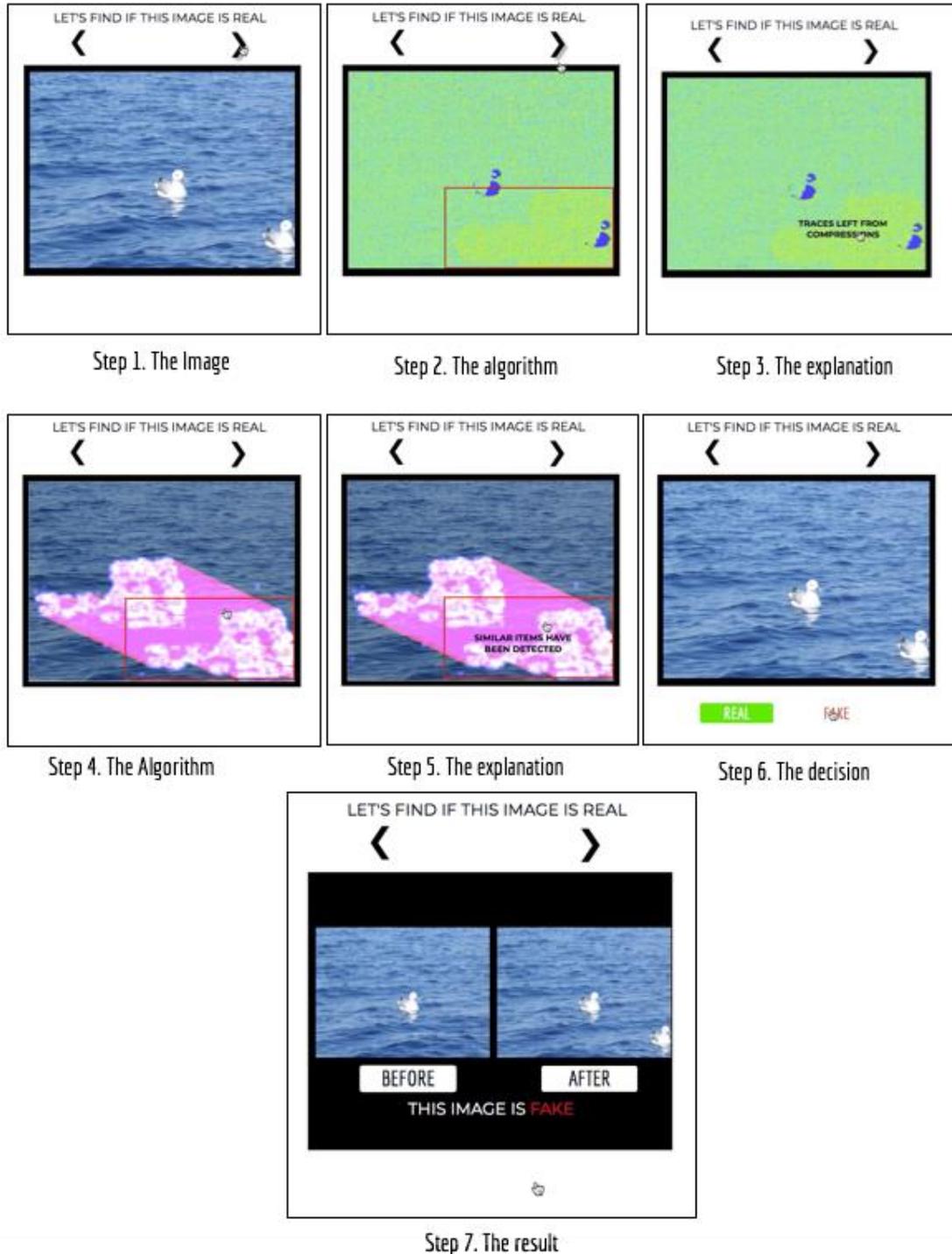


Figure 3: A combination of the gamification approaches with the available image verification algorithms.

The presented educational approach is considered suitable as it gathers all the existed knowledge on how to deal with the phenomenon of misinformation. Also, the proposed practice will upgrade education of digital media from a time-consuming process to a pleasant challenge, promoting the essence of users' engaging and active participation. In the above context, media trainees, expect from learning to identify manipulated images, will also be informed about the availability and usefulness of such tools, which might not be aware of.

4 Results and Conclusions

As analyzed above, our vision is to restore the paradigm of factual information. To succeed this target, we had to build upon current knowledge and to initiate a holistic misinformation crisis management plan. A series of successive prototyping attempts have been already conducted and analysed, with the interfacing needs to be carefully studied, projected /transferred to UI designs and interactive prototypes and, finally, updated, on the basis of formative evaluation. In specific, the "True News" browser extension and the "Factual Information" site have been designed and presented to the public (students of Journalism, PhD candidates, teachers, professional journalists, educators, etc.), in order to obtain valuable feedback in the direction of agile development. The currently presented interfaces, along with the ones implied in the current project, are parts of a broader holistic design process, towards an integrated /collaborative environment for supporting media authenticity. The ultimate goal is to gather all the existent knowledge regarding verification in a single platform, where the analysis of the currently available methods and techniques can lead to the elaboration of related policies, the adoption of best practices and the launch of user-friendly tools, offered as online services. Support on the underlying knowledge and the proper use of this diverse toolset is considered equally important and is pursued through targeted literacy actions, among others, to fill the interdisciplinary gaps and to bring closer the experts of the various domains, so that could collaborate more efficiently. The hope is that the proposed framework will eventually ensure users' ability to transmit accurate information and to prevent misinformation propagation.

Concluding, the phenomenon of fake news tends to be established as a dogma with committed followers. Someone can think that the above fact is decent, as it is based on the idea that most of the news is original. On the other hand, activists in the war against misinformation tend to believe that their own attitude is inter-linked with the "vision" of ensuring authentic information, which shape the beliefs in the public sphere. In all cases, we cannot be sure that the path to this divisive intersection between real and fake news (and their sources) is a good pattern. Thus, we have to establish the foundations for upgrading the digital literacy that will make us stop believing that every piece of information we see is entirely fake (or altogether right). This fact highlights the vital role of media educators, whose purpose is to guide people, cultivating confidence on how to perceive news. Undoubtedly, education and training are the securest investments in the current hyperactive, buzzy, chaotic and unpredictable online world.

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Collaborative collection and Multimedia Mapping of Crisis Semantics

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Abstract

In many crisis reporting paradigms, citizens using their smartphones become reporters and contribute potentially valuable audio-visual information. User Generated Content (UGC) can be entirely supported by mobile devices (smartphones, tablets), while context-, time- and location-aware metadata are automatically produced and validated among multiple contributors. Hence, crowdsourcing-driven decision making is produced regarding the veracity and the significance of the reported stories. In the present work, a model is presented for dealing with the aforementioned processes through the use of a dedicated cloud-based platform, allowing for online collaborative editing/processing and fact-checking by users, reporters, and newsroom staff. Moreover, editing history is tracked, preventing forgery attacks during publishing. Having obtained the exact time and location of the captured events and the editing history log-file, the demand for credibility and originality of the content can also be satisfied. To provide ease of access, and understanding of the succession of events during crisis, the created content has to be delivered to the public in a comprehensible way. For this reason, an interactive map is designed, featured with a timeline bar. The captured content and news reports will be pinned in the information map, taking into consideration time and location tags. This way, the final consumer can monitor the evolution of events though time and location, without being vulnerable to fake content distribution. While this news reporting scheme can be useful for everyday news reporting and logging, it can prove handy during crisis periods, where the timeline of events is in the focus of interest.

Key Words: crisis reporting, user generated content, collaborative model, map, cloud

1 Introduction

Risk communication has been defined by the National Research Council of the USA as “an interactive exchange of information and opinions” in order to respond to the risk management process. The analysis process of risk communication has been divided in four phases as following: of effects, content, persuasion and actors. In this context, the actors form the affected community, public authorities, industry professionals, scientific and technical experts, civil associations and the communications media (Sorribes & Rovira, 2011). Perko (2012) posed a few challenges influencing the important role of new mass media in risk information dissemination. The credibility and trustworthiness of new sources of risk related information, as well censorship or overload of information in the new media are becoming more crucial. Moreover, the risk managers and communicators are failing to be updated on the technological changes in information systems used for risk communication. Citizens using their smartphones contribute audiovisual information via social media platforms from the ground during disasters (Palen et al. 2010). The citizen journalism phenomenon (Gillmor 2006) and the emerging concept of open journalism (Aitamurto et al., 2011) are products of this transformation. The researchers try to focus on the role of journalists during crisis reporting, examining how they could adopt these new tools such as mobile applications for news reporting related multimedia content creation, management, processing and checking but also how these new trends will re-form existing work practices (Dailey & Starbird, 2014).

User Generated Content and Citizen Journalism, as well as the constant rise of the use of web for publishing changes the whole landscape of content creating and publishing. This change requires of course the collaboration of different disciplinary specializations and the adaptation of traditional newsrooms (Umair, 2016). Crowdsourcing is part of the practices of the biggest news organizations (Mills et al., 2012). Taking into consideration the possibilities, as well as the challenges of participatory journalism and content sharing, it has been stated that the profiles of the collaborators should be estimated (Väätäjä et al., 2013) for effective utilization of the collected material. Meanwhile, smart and automatic procedures can be applied for the handling of vast amounts of content collected through crowdsourcing (Vrysis et al., 2016).

However, the great advances of content creation do not concern solely the utilization of resources created and provided by non- professional users. Mobile Journalism (MoJo) is an emerging field, finding applications mostly for live reporting and breaking news. Professional journalists tend to make use of the sensor and connectivity capabilities of modern smart mobile devices, in a similar way citizens do in citizen journalism. Modern devices provide effective packaging of cameras and microphones, as well as Global Positioning Sensors (GPS) for geographical localization, accelerometers and gyroscopes to monitor the movement and direction of the device (Al-Turjman, 2016) (Dimoulas et al., 2014). Even in the common case of having access to professional high-end equipment, MoJo offers versatility, affordability and promotes rapid publishing (Guribye & Nyre, 2017). Moreover, a whole new market of gadgets and add-ons has emerged in order to improve the quality of multimedia production with mobile devices. In terms of hardware, this is supported with the connection external professional quality specialized microphones, camera lenses etc. (Borum & Quinn 2015). The newsrooms have to adapt and centralize their infrastructure for content gathering and publishing as interconnection between reporters and editors is essential (Mills et al., 2012).

In the current paper, a model for collaborative collection and publishing of multimedia content from professional and non-professional contributors is presented. In Section 2, the model is described, and the main challenges, as well as the matching proposed solutions are presented. In Section 3, the

high fidelity interactive prototypes of a map for effective publishing of the collected content are presented. In Section 4, the conclusions and the future steps of the research project are stated.

2 A Collaborative Model for Collection and Mapping of Multimedia Content During Crisis

The proposed approach for handling professional and non-professional user generated multimedia content during crisis is part of a cloud collaborative model for news reporting (Vryzas et al., 2018). The model describes an interconnected newsroom, where reporters, editors, journalists and technical staff can communicate on the cloud using a dedicated platform (Vryzas et al., 2018). The on-site reporters use their mobile phones as terminals. Mobile services for audiovisual content creation and semantic analysis should be available on terminal-side (Vrysis et al., 2018), (Vryzas et al., 2018).

Everyday live news reporting, and especially during crisis sets the needs for fast creation and publishing of high quality content. As multimedia is an integral part of news story telling, fast publishing requires also the accelerating of the procedures of audiovisual capturing and editing. Physical limitations in the capability of professional journalists to capture events happening simultaneously around a geographical region of interest have led to the increased use of User Generated Content (UGC).

While this practice covers the requirement of fast publishing and effective capturing of live footage, several other issues emerge. Contributing users are not necessarily expected to share the same knowledge, skills and ethics as professional journalists. Content that is collected through crowdsourcing is often of low quality, due to non-professional hardware limitations and the lack of proper training, while the credibility of the stories can also be disputable.

The main goals of the proposed model concern the efficient and purposeful employment of emerging technologies, cloud connectivity, and mobile artificial intelligence for the support of effective and high quality news reporting. The suggested workflow cycle aim at improving:

- Content creation efficiency through crowdsourcing
- Quality of the multimedia content through collaboration and mobile intelligence automations
- Credibility of the published stories through user profiling and semantic analysis and crowd-sourced checking
- Comprehensibility of storytelling through time/location mapping

The procedures of the creation, editing and publishing of audiovisual content is meant to be as simple as possible. Professional and non-professional users capture audiovisual content using mobile devices (smartphones and tablets) and upload it to the platform. Mobile intelligence automations are provided in order to assist the process (Vrysis et al., 2018). Location and time information is extracted using the default built-in device sensors. The editors and technical staff have access to the online repository of audiovisual content in order to perform post-processing. The content of live news reporting is published on a map with an interactive timeline in order to present the evolution of the crisis events through time and space.

An overview of the proposed system is shown in Figure 1. Different contributors create audiovisual content using mobile devices in several locations and time. The content is collected, while location, time and user information is also extracted, and uploaded to the online repository. The multimedia assets and the concerning metadata is then accessible by all collaborators to edit and check until it is ready to be published, enhanced with the extracted semantic information.

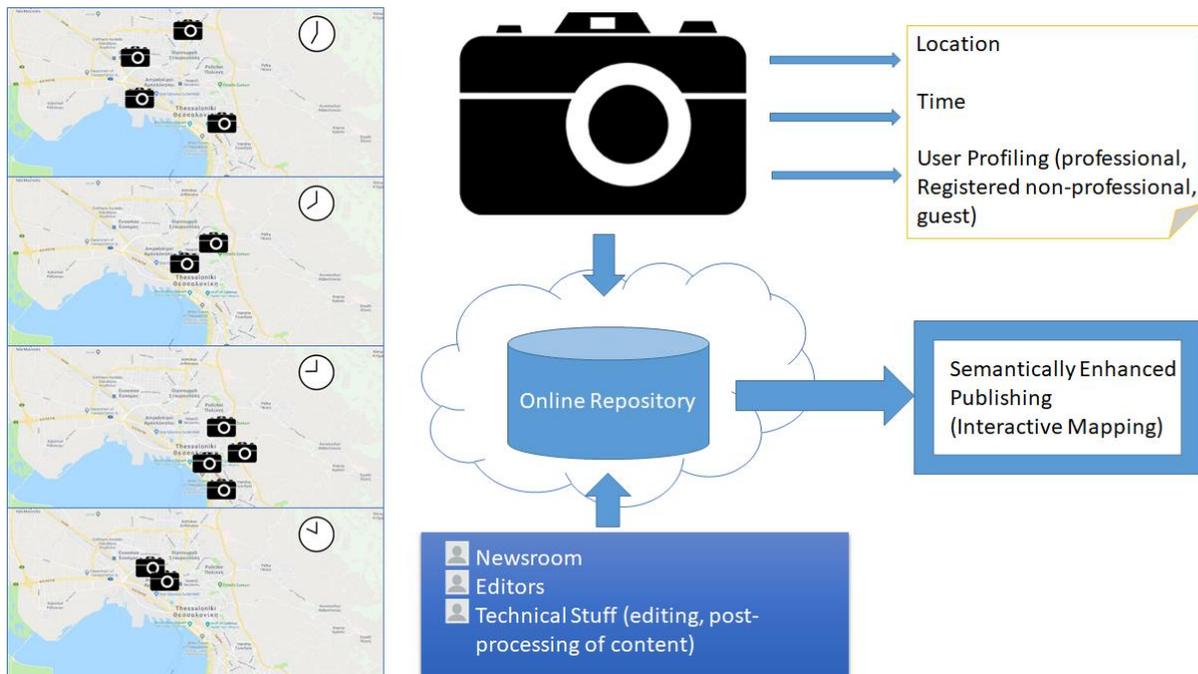


Figure 1: The proposed system.

2.1 Crowdsourcing Multimedia Content Collection and Online Collaboration

For the collection of the multimedia content, the use of mobile devices is encouraged. Non-professional users of the platform, eyewitnesses, as well as professional users can capture a scene using dedicated tools. Mobile intelligence automations can improve the quality of the recordings by automatically adjusting the settings (Vrysis et al., 2018). All the stories are collected in an online repository, where the technical experts of the newsroom can perform post-processing procedures of editing, restoring, denoising and correction in order to further improve the quality of the recordings. A log-file containing the editing history of the assets serves as proof that no malicious forging has taken place in order to misinform or distort the content.

2.2 Extracting Time and Location Information

By employing smart mobile devices for capturing audiovisual scenes, it is possible to combine the microphone and camera sensors with additional default built-in sensors of the device in order to enhance the information metadata of the created files. Additional information that can be included in the saved video file concerns:

- Time; the timestamp of the video with universal timing
- Geo-location; using the Global Positioning System (GPS) information
- Direction; using the device compass, it is possible to keep track of the direction the camera is facing.

The significance of extracting information concerning the time and location of the captured scene is dual; on one hand, it strengthens the credibility of the stories, while on the other hand, it can be very useful for efficient storytelling, especially when multiple audiovisual assets are part of the same

bigger story. The proposed approach for using time and location stamps for creative and efficient storytelling will be thoroughly explained in Sections 2.4 and 3.

Combining the log-file of video editing along with the time and location information we can have more control over the content of the video. The usual case scenarios of spatiotemporal tampering of the video file as well as fake information about the time and the location of the scene are eliminated. This is quite helpful, given what the aforementioned scenarios concern the vast majority of misinformation cases using multimedia.

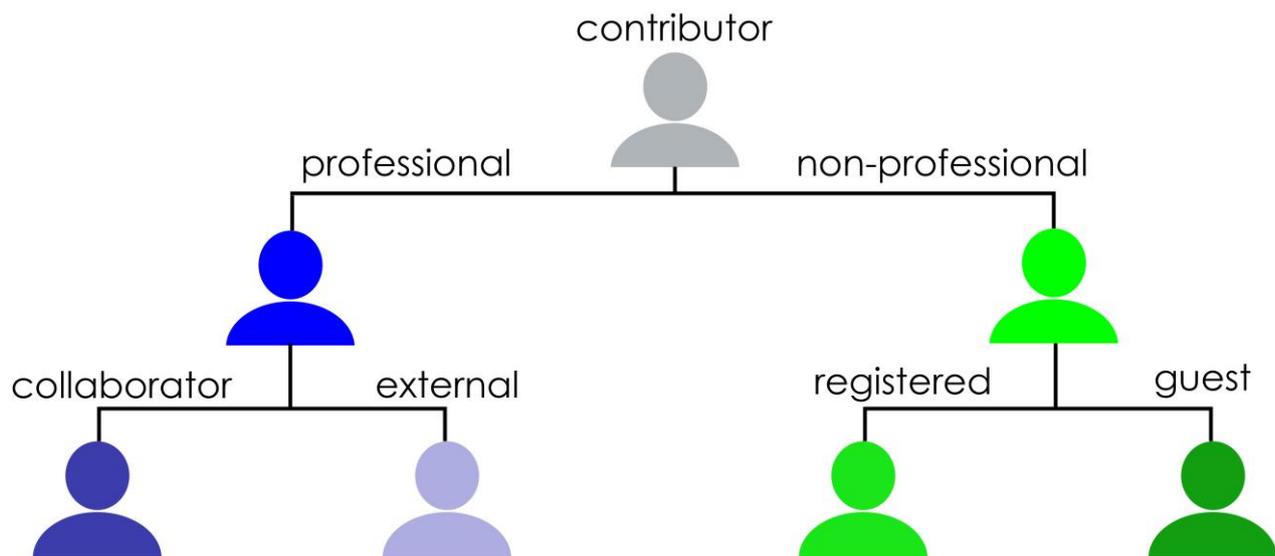


Figure 2: An hierarchical diagram of the possible discrete roles of content contributors.

2.3 User Profiling and Credibility Crowdsourcing

As mentioned, the collaborative model addresses mostly to professional reporters and the interconnected newsroom to support live news reporting. However, crisis reporting depends heavily on crowdsourcing and UGC. Consequently, professional non-collaborators/external contributors, as well as non-professional users are also involved. The published content is evaluated through crowdsourcing, affecting the credibility score of the contributor.

Specifically, the following roles of contributors are distinguished:

- **Professional collaborator:** all the journalists and reporters working together within the scope of the presented collaborative model.
- **Professional external contributor:** professional journalists and reporters working for other, external news organizations whose content is republished, with reference to the creator and the original source.
- **Non-professional registered users:** non-professional contributors who are registered to the platform, having an active user profile and a personal credibility score.
- **Non-professional guest users:** unregistered content contributors.

The credibility of professional users is equivalent to the credibility of the news organizations they are working for and their own professional reputation. The credibility of non-professional registered users is estimated according to the number of stories they have contributed to the collaborative platform and the crowd ratings of this content. In the case of guest contributors, nothing is known about their credibility statistics. However, even in this case, the time and location information, as

well as the editing log-file make sure that the multimedia content captures a specific scene and has not been tampered. The hierarchical diagram of the possible roles of contributors is depicted in Figure 2.

2.4 Location and Time Mapping of Events during Crisis

The final stage of the workflow cycle includes the procedures of publishing and story-telling. While the creation, collection and publishing of content during crisis sets many challenges, it is also often difficult for the public to keep track of the flow of news reporting. The sequence of events taking place is not identical with the sequence of collecting and publishing content. This is inevitable, since contributors cannot always provide content at the moment it is captured. Furthermore, the concerned receivers are able to check for news periodically at discrete time instants. It is mostly convenient to follow the sequence the events take place, rather than the sequence of newly published content. This observation highlights the usefulness of providing a timeline, positioning published content at the exact time it was captured.

The extracted information concerning location and time makes it possible to provide an interactive map, where all multimedia content can be accessed through time and location stamps. This acts as a powerful supervisory tool, allowing the public to understand and monitor the evolution of events through time and space, during everyday news reporting and especially during crisis. The interactive map is prototyped and presented in more detail in the next section.

3 Prototyping an Interactive Map for Semantic News Publishing

For the purposes of designing, presenting and evaluating the semantically enhanced publishing model, the aforementioned interactive map was prototyped in the Axure RP Environment. The recent floods in the city of Thessaloniki was chosen as an example to create the demo, as a good example of how this proposed workflow could be proved effective even in local, short range crisis reporting. The story began as a usual bad weather reporting, but the succession of events led to the flooding of more and more streets, and more and more damages and technical problems around the city were reported. Many citizens created content during the day, capturing the flooding and events happening around the city, as the rain continued. Meanwhile, citizens were urging to inform about the damages that were caused in several places of their interest, as well as the current condition of roads and city sectors, in order to protect themselves and transport with safety.

The interactive map supports pinned events, with regard to the extracted location information of the contributed content. A timeline is also present, in order to navigate to different timeslots, as shown in Figure 3. In this case, the whole time period was less than a day, so a time resolution of one hour was considered appropriate. Different events may require higher or lower time resolution (minutes, days, months etc.)

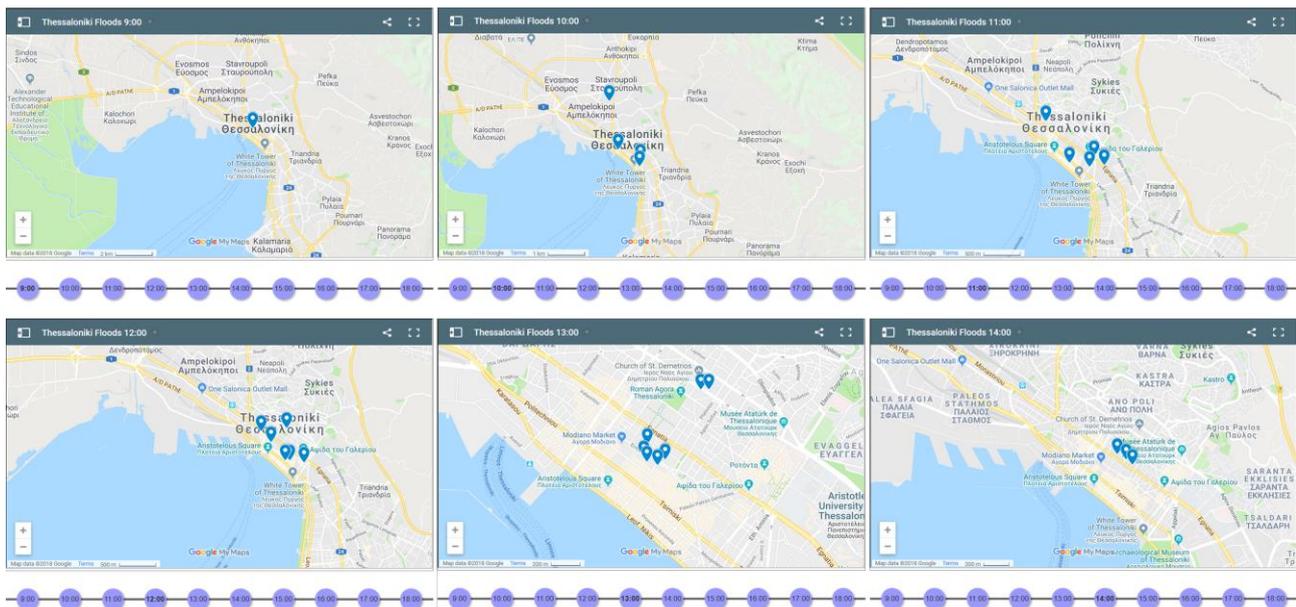


Figure 3: Screenshots of the interactive map prototypes for the case scenario of Thessaloniki Floods. In every case, a different time instance is selected, thus a different map is loaded, showing the events of the selected time.

The interface was meant to be as simple as possible, following a straight-forward approach, while the popular and familiar to most users interface of Google Maps is embedded. The user is able to select a time slot from the timeline, and the corresponding map is loaded.

Every pin on the map is clickable, leading to an emerging menu where the audio-visual content can be accessed. When a specific event (pin) is selected, a popup menu is shown, containing the uploaded content, the name and description of the event, as well as the name and rating of the contributing user, as depicted in Figure 4. The name and the description of the captured content are provided by the contributor, as well as the contributor's role and rating. In the case of a professional external contributor, links of the original story and the news organization where the contributor belongs are also cited.

The user rating can function as a metric of the overall credibility of the user, calculated by past ratings and contributions and can indicate the credibility of the current content at some degree. In the case of a guest user, nothing is known concerning the integrity of the contributor. The audio-visual content is not the sole modality of the story, as the description and commentary of original, non-forged assets can play a role in misinformation. Since the audio-visual content has been only edited by the technical staff in order to improve its quality, and all the editing actions are kept in a log-file, the possibility of tampering is excluded. Time, location and direction information is provided by the recording device's sensors, so its authenticity is also not disputable. However, the name and the description of the content is created by the contributor. The text can be misleading or biased, and this is cannot be automatically controlled by the platform. This is the reason user profiling and credibility crowdsourcing is integrated. The public can be sure about the authenticity of the multimedia content, while in the case of the written story the profile of the writer can be crucial in the forming of opinion.

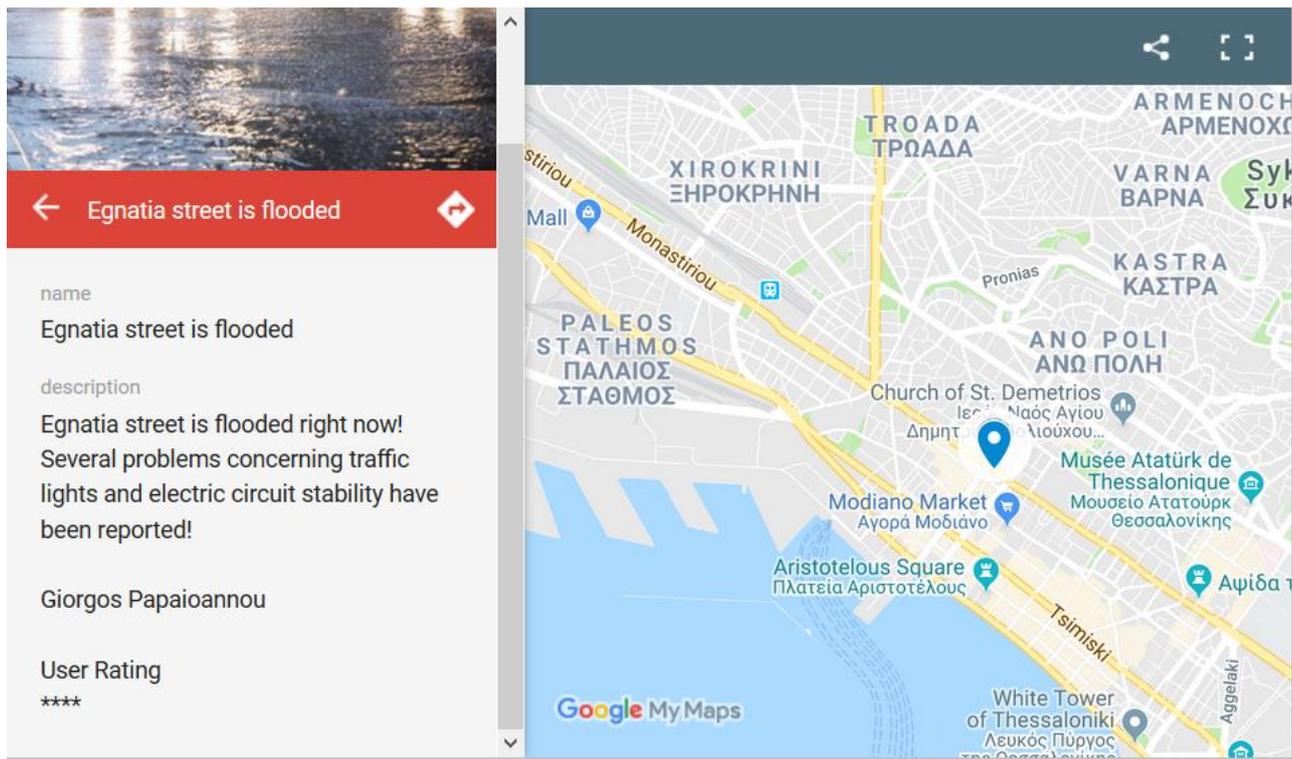


Figure 4: An instance of the interactive map prototype for the case scenario of Thessaloniki floods. A specific event (pin) is selected, and the popup menu is shown, containing the uploaded content, the name and description of the event, as well as the name and rating of the contributing use.

4 Conclusions and Future Work

The current work is part of an ongoing research project, with the goal of designing and prototyping the whole workflow cycle in a collaborative news reporting model. In this paper, emphasis was given to the procedures of collection and publishing of content through crowdsourcing, adapted to the case of crisis reporting. It was within our intentions to detect some of the challenges of crisis reporting; namely the fact checking procedure in a fast publishing pace situation, and comprehensible story telling of a rapidly evolving event. We focused on multimedia user generated and mobile journalistic content and the employment of the technical capabilities of new mobile devices in order to address the aforementioned challenges.

The functional interactive prototypes created for publishing of content (interactive map) and the multidisciplinary approach to the problem of crisis reporting was presented in the EJTA Teachers Conference 2018 in Thessaloniki, Greece, and obtained positive feedback. The next steps of the research project include subjective evaluation tests within concerned focus groups, in order to improve the functionality, requirements and the graphic interface (in effectiveness, efficiency, ease of use, usability and user experience).

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Journalism in the Era of Twitter – The case of Greek Social Mobilisation

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Abstract

In the last few years, Greece has been characterized by periods of mass mobilization and protest, which affected deeply all areas of life. One field that has changed dramatically is that of political journalism. The paper seeks to map some of the changes that have affected the Greek political news landscape, as a result of the deepening crisis and the rise of social media. Starting at 2010, a wave of social mobilisation and general strikes against austerity measures took place across Greece. New politicians entered the scene while some of the traditional parties lost their political legitimacy. As a result of the financial and political crisis, Greek journalists and media faced a deepening lack of trust. In this context, social media have evolved into powerful tools for communication and a significant form of engagement for many Greeks. It was at this level, that especially through Twitter, political communication players altered the way of their interaction with the public. This paper, taking the Greek national elections in 2012 as its starting point, has collected Twitter data from ten different periods of crisis that caused social mobilisation in Greece. How many journalists responded to the wave of participatory and social media? What do they do on Twitter? What is the content of their tweets? Did journalists alter the way they tell stories or they tend to normalisation? How are their contributions received by the Twittersphere?

Key Words: Journalism, Mobilisation, Social Media, Twitter, Communication

1 Introduction

During this period, Greece is undergoing one of the most deep and intense crisis of its history. At the same time, the use of social media is becoming a new feature of political engagement for many Greeks. In this paper, we study how Twitter involved in the cycle of political communication between politicians, journalists and citizens in times of social mobilisation in Greece.

1.1 Political Communication in Crisis

Due to the cycle of political communication, politicians communicate with citizens through journalists. Journalism underlied by principles of truth, verification, independence and provide citizens with accurate and reliable information they need to function in a free society (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 1999). Citizens on their part, should discuss matters of common concern in a free, rational sphere, in disinterested way. (Habermas, 1996) If it is so, why political communication faces crisis?

Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch in "The Crisis of Public Communication," (2002) trace the origins and development of political communication's crisis, blaming neither politicians nor journalists. The roots of the problem associated with the contemporary environment (Blumler and Gurevitch, 1995), characterized by professionalization of political communication, disdain and scorn of journalists and citizens' distrust and cynicism. They described the political communication as a process that:

"now tends to strain against rather than with the grain of citizenship (...) While politicians often behave as if planting ever more clever messages in the media could be a miracle cure for their power predicaments, journalists often deploy disdain, scorn and shock-horror exposure as ripostes to their threatened autonomy. Meanwhile the voter is left gasping for civically nourishing air - not expecting to be given it and surprised when it is offered. Our civic arteries are hardening." (Blumler and Gurevitch, 1995)

1.2 Social Media and the News

As Lotan (et al., 2011:1379) describes, "the relationship between social media and the press has become increasingly complex" creating a "hybrid news ecosystem". Pointing this innovative form, Hermida described that the role of the journalist is reframed as a professional who "lays bare the manner through which a news story is constructed, as fragments of information are contested, denied or verified" (Hermida, 2012:8). In this context, by using tools like Twitter, the "self-described non-professional journalists begin to influence and co-construct the kind of news traditionally produced by mainstream broadcasters" (Lotan et al., 2011:1379).

Yochai Benkler at "The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom" (2006) asserts that the Internet has the capacity to create a networked public sphere - a means of direct communication between politicians and citizens. He states that "the network allows all citizens to change their relationship to the public sphere. They no longer need be consumers and passive spectators. They can become creators and primary subjects. It is in this sense that the Internet democratizes." (Benkler, 2006:41)

1.3 Literature Review

Through the literature review we found out that there is a growing body of diverse researches. Most studies on Twitter, journalism and politics have documented a tendency towards normalization, meaning that Twitter is adapted to political communication as it is found in other media.

While Axel Bruns and Jean Burgess (2011) discussed the role of hashtags on Twitter in enabling the formation of issue publics in Australia, they report the creation of ad hoc publics, clustering around specific themes of the election agenda, through hashtags. Kim Strandberg (2013) analysed the use of social media by both candidates and citizens in the 2011 Finnish parliamentary election campaign. The findings show that although both candidates did use social media extensively, the significance was modest and the on-line electoral patterns were found to be mostly normalized. Todd Graham et al. (2013) investigated how candidates were using Twitter during the UK General Election campaign. Findings show that British politicians mainly used Twitter as a unidirectional form of communication, although there was a group of candidates who used it to interact with voters, for facilitating a closer relationship with citizens.

There are also found some evidence for normalization of Twitter through journalists, by Lasorsa et al. (2012). Their study reveals that journalists adopted two norm-related microblogging features: providing accountability and transparency regarding how they conduct their work, and sharing user-generated content with their followers. Lotan et al. (2012) analyzed Twitter information flows during the 2011 Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings and discussed the symbiotic relationship between news media and information sources. Their findings suggest that news on Twitter is being co-constructed by bloggers and activists alongside journalists.

As for the citizen side, Andranik Tumasjan (2010) found that in Germany, Twitter reflects the broader public opinion. Their study shows that the mere number of Twitter messages mentioning a party reflects the election result. Moreover, joint mentions of two parties are in line with real world political ties and coalitions, while the content of Twitter messages plausibly reflects the offline political landscape. Bruns and Burgess (2011a), extend their argument on the elections, positing the creation of ad hoc publics that discuss single issues, such as the environment. Ausserhofer and Maireder (2013) taking the example of Austria, examined the interrelation of individuals on the basis of their professions, their topics and their connection to mass media. Their results show that the Twittersphere in Austria is a space for already established actors as it is dominated by an elite of political professionals. Never the less, the network is open to outside participation, providing more scope for exchanges between politicians and citizens.

Conclusively, the overall findings suggest the normalization of Twitter by politicians and journalists, while citizens usage is not radical enough to lead to major shifts in political practices. However, most studies take place in stable political contexts. But under extraordinary circumstances, as times of crisis, do new windows of opportunity open, allowing different players to rise? With this in mind, is the Greek political Twittersphere any different?

1.4 Methodology of the study, Data collection

The data for this study came from a dataset that included more than 382,000 tweets posted between May, 2012 and February, 2015. To map the dimensions of who, when and what tweeting, the study collected user activity data (tweets, plus other user-related information) during ten periods of protests and political instability in Greece. The objective of the study was to select suitable, popular hashtags, determined by close observation of the communication on Twitter. As in the last few

years, political instability in Greece often occurs during the election periods, the first group of the sample was election periods.

Table 1: First sample of the study, the six election periods between May, 2012 and July, 2015

1st period	2nd period	3rd period	4th period	5th period	6th period
May, 6 – June, 17 2012	December, 25 2014 – January, 11 2015	December, 30 2014 – January, 25 2015	April, 30 – May, 25 2014	August, 21 – September, 27 2015	June, 28 – July, 12 2015
The six-weeks period between the two national elections in Greece	The three-weeks period between the two Greek presidential elections	Two weeks before and 1 week after the national election in Greece	3 weeks before the European Parliament election in Greece	On the day the early national election was announced, up to a week after the election	On the day of the ratification of the Greek economy referendum, up to a week after the referendum
#ekloges, #ekloges2012, #Greece2012, #ekloges12	#PtD	#ekloges2015	#EP2014, #EP14	#ekloges, #ekloges2015_round2	#Greekreferendum, #grefenderum, #greferendum, #dimopsifisma
6,287 tweets	6.412 tweets	38,325 tweets	more than 100,000 tweets	94,017 tweets	77,717 tweets

As Table 1 shows, the first dataset includes 6,287 tweets with the four most respective hashtags posted May 6 – June 17, 2012, covering the period between the two national elections in Greece. The second includes 6,412 tweets posted the three-weeks period between the two Greek presidential elections on 2015 (December 25, 2014 – January 11, 2015). The third period was two weeks before and one week after the national election in Greece on the same year (December 30, 2014 – January 25, 2015). Eight months later, a second round of the national election took part (April 30 – May 25, 2014) with more than 94,000 tweets posted obtaining the keywords “#ekloges” or “#ekloges2015_round2” (5th period). The fourth period was the European Parliament election on 2015, with more than 100,000 tweets in less than 3 weeks (April 30 – May 25, 2014). The last dataset includes the 77,717 tweets posted during June 28 – July 12, 2015, the week before the greek referendum of 2015.

Table 2: Second sample of the the study, the four demonstration periods between November, 2012 and February, 2015

1st period	2nd period	3rd period	4th period
November, 1-22 2012	March, 17 – April, 7 2013	July, 13 – August, 2 2015	February, 10 – 12 2015
One week before and 2 weeks after the voting of adoption of a new round of austerity from the Greek parliament	Three-weeks period after the announcement of a levy on all deposits in Cypriot Banks	On the night the euro leaders negotiated with the Greek Prime Minister for a financial deal, up to two weeks after	On the night of the Greek governments' negotiations with euro leaders, while anti-austerity campaigns across Europe were rallying, up to 2 days after

#7ngr, #syntagma, #greekrevolution, #mnimonio, #12fgr	#kourema, #trapezes, #katatheseis, #cypros, #kypros, #eurogroup, #HandsOffCyprus	#ThisIsACoup	#mazi
8,103 tweets	8,159 tweets	36,371 tweets	7,166 tweets

As Table 2 shows, the second dataset includes periods of demonstrations in Greece, during November, 2012 and February, 2015. The first period (November 1-22, 2012) refers to the voting of the adoption of a new round of austerity from the Greek parliament. More than 70,000 people took part in the demonstration in Athens' central Syntagma Square, outside the parliament building, as lawmakers prepared to vote. There were posted more than 8,103 tweets, one week before and 2 weeks after the voting, with popular relevant hashtags. The second choice was the three-weeks period (March 17 – April 7, 2013) after the announcement of a levy on all deposits in Cypriot Banks, a period that affected also many Greeks. More than 8,000 tweets appearing through the seven most prominent hashtags (#kourema, #trapezes, #katatheseis, #cypros, #kypros, #eurogroup, #HandsOffCyprus). The third period was the night that the euro-leaders negotiated with the Greek Prime Minister for a financial deal. The hashtag “#ThisIsACoup” trended on Twitter, while it was followed by related hashtags like “#BoycottGermany”, and in some spheres was countered by the reversal “#ThisIsNotACoup”, or even the half-hearted attempt to install a new word creation “#AGreekment” (Deutsche Welle, 2015). During that days, many users globally, through these hashtags were complaining about creditors' seeming harshness towards Athens. The last dataset includes the 7,166 tweets included the hashtag #mazi, which means “together” in greek. This was an anti-austerity campaign during February 10 – 12, 2015, which caused a big globally demonstration to support the greek government, to back its demands for a new bailout deal (Huffpost, 2015).

To collect the total of almost 400,000 tweets, we used freely available softwares (Topsy, yourTwrapperkeeper and Twitter archiver). After that, we chose a random sample of almost 1,000 messages for each period and manually imported them in an Excel file.

1.5 Methodology of the study, Classification

The next step was to classify the Twitter users into categories based on Lotan study (Lotan, 2011:1382), who developed “a classification schema” based on the types of actors, “which was refined through several phases of coding”. By looking at the public profile data of all 10,000 users we categorized them in 14 categories:

1. Greek mainstream media
2. Foreign media
3. Greek alternative/non mainstream media
4. Greek journalist
5. Foreign journalist
6. Greek expat journalist
7. Blogger journalist
8. Greek politician
9. Foreign politician
10. Blogger citizen
11. Greek or Cypriot citizen
12. Foreign citizen
13. Activist account
14. Other

As far as the content of the tweets, the classification of the data into categories was based on grounded theory method (Lotan, 2011), which interested “in patterns of action and interaction between and among various types” of users and tweets (Strauss and Corbin, 1994:278). The nine main categories of the content was:

1. New information on developments in Greece
2. New information on Europe more broadly
3. News along with a positive comment
4. News and a negative comment/irony
5. Critical/negative/ironic comments
6. Comments in support of the government and/or pro-bailout politicians
7. Analysis on developments
8. Activist/Solidarity tweet
9. Other

After categorizing the users and the content of the messages, we manually classified each of the 10,000 tweets and their users into one of the predefined categories.

2. Findings

As described in the methodology section, we manually categorized Twitter users from each dataset into 14 distinct categories. The classification results on Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 shows that during the pre-election periods in Greece, 10% of all the amount of messages were from Greek journalist or Media. On the other hand, only 3% of the tweets were from foreign journalists or media. One user-category tweeted more than the others, Citizens (60%), while Bloggers (5%) were also active. Greek politicians are not appearing particularly active, as they tweeted almost 180 times, in a total of 6,000 messages, during all the pre-election periods.

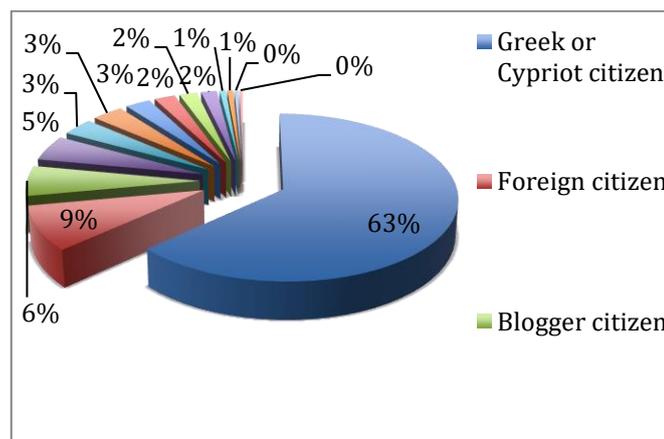


Figure 1: Twitter users during the election periods

As far as the periods of demonstrations (fig. 2), it seems that half of the users were citizens – greek or foreign. Bloggers were much more active than the election periods, as they almost doubled their contribution. Greek mainstream media on the other hand, were virtually absent: they tweeted only 16 times during the demonstrations, in a total of 4,000 messages. The foreign media were more active, with 101 tweets.

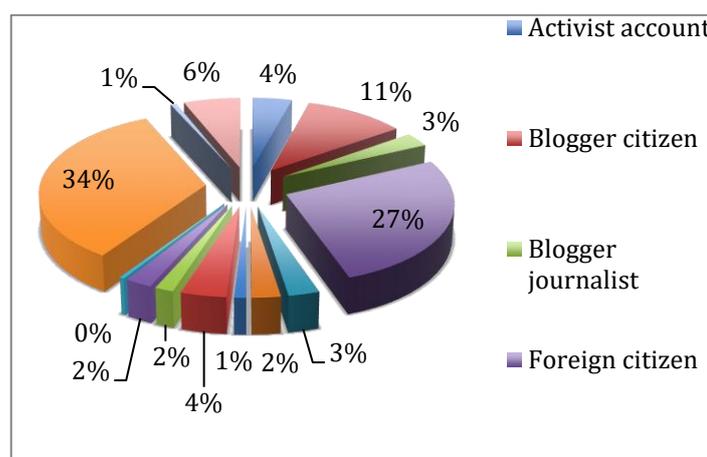


Figure 2: Twitter users during the demonstration periods

Through the findings, it is obvious that during periods of social mobilisation, Greek Twittersphere was dominated by citizens and bloggers rather than journalists or media, unlike most findings on Twitter and politics so far - with only possible exception the #Egypt tweets study by Lotan (2011).

The retweet ratio of the users is an indication of how often different actors' tweets are retweeted by their followers (Lotan, 2011). Studying the datasets of the tweets more prominently, we see that Twitter accounts of "Greek citizens" was the most prolific user category, with a total amount of 4,000 retweets received during the election periods (63% of the total amount of the retweets). Really prolific users are also the foreign citizens, followed by bloggers (who received almost 20.000 retweets in total). The involvement of journalists is much more extensive, as they elicit 5,408 retweets. On the other hand, at the low end of this metric are politicians and mainstream medias and politicians (less than 1 thousand six hundred retweets).

Table 3: Number of retweets during election periods

Sum of Retweets	
Row Labels	Total
Greek or Cypriot citizen	102642
Foreign citizen	77378
Blogger citizen	17951
Other	7779
Foreign journalist	6441
Greek journalist	5408
Activist account	3566
Greek alternative/ non mainstream media	2304
Foreign politician	1589
Greek mainstream media	1453
Foreign media	1430
Greek expat journalist	1343
Blogger journalist	1003
Greek politician	876
Grand Total	231163

During demonstrations, although citizens (foreigns and greeks) are dominant, bloggers are seemed to be very prolific. Retweets that derived from foreign media are a little bit more elevated than the election periods, but not exceeded the 3%. Greek mainstream media were virtually non-prolific, as caused only 1,453 over 231,163 (less than 1%) retweets.

Due to Lotan et al. (2011:1387), the retweet ratio is "a measure of how well actors engage their audiences". Tables 3 and 4 shows that Twitter accounts of individual accounts (journalists) have substantially higher retweet rates than do organizations (media). In conclusion, retweets in Greece do not follow the global Twitter structure and hierarch, which is mainstream media, journalists and politicians prevail.

Table 4: Number of retweets during demonstration periods

Sum of Retweets	
Row Labels	Total
Foreign citizen	54294
Greek or Cypriot citizen	33008
Blogger citizen	14580
Other	10178
Activist account	9224
Foreign journalist	8614
Foreign media	4938

Blogger journalist	4326
Greek alternative/non msm media	1772
Greek journalist	1698
Greek expat journalist	167
Foreign politician	155
Greek politician	73
Greek mainstream media	20
Grand Total	143047

Through a manual content analysis of the 10,000 tweets of the 10 periods, we found that as far as the contents concerned, the Greek Twittersphere during social mobilisation, is more similar to Western countries (Rosenstiel, 2015). The classification results on both datasets shows that the most frequent content categories included news on development and comments among with irony or criticism. Figures 3 and 4 suggest that although Twitter users tend to be news consumers, their usage seems participatory, as they comment, post and share images while such events are moving (Gioltzidou et al., 2018).

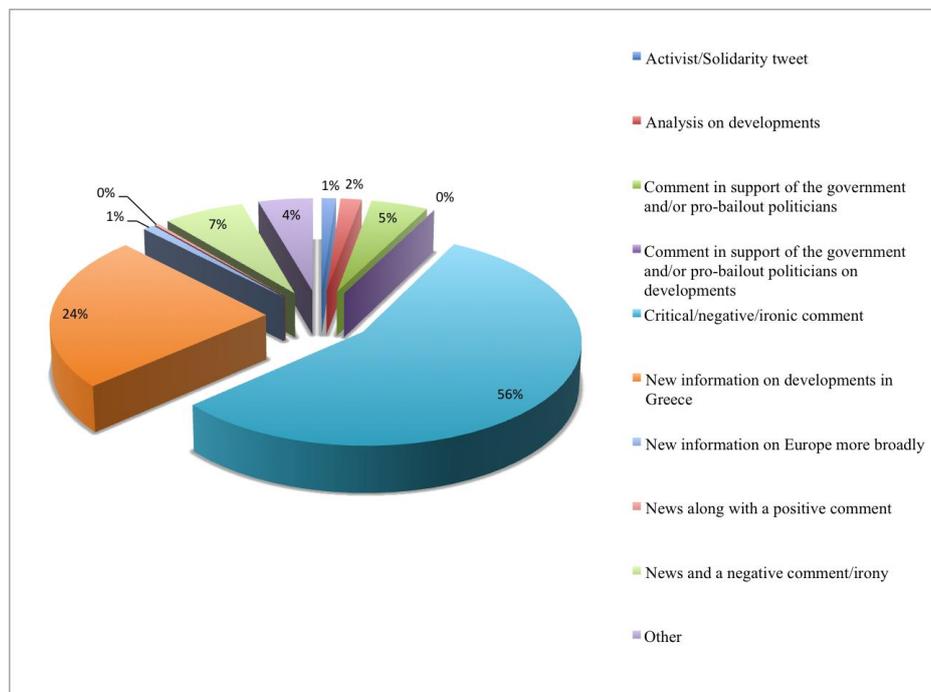


Figure 3: Content categories during the election periods

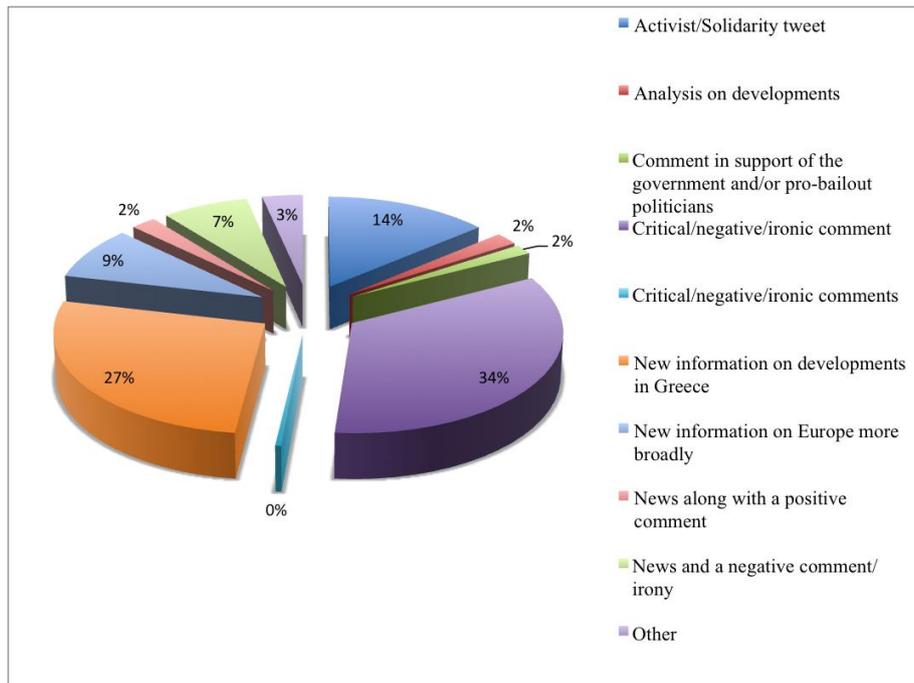


Figure 4: Content categories during the demonstration periods

In order to develop a better understanding of how compatible is journalists' and media's posts with the Greek Twittersphere shaped by the users, the content categories were identified across the type of users. The categories involving journalists in Greece (blogger journalist, Greek journalist) grouped under an overall category named "Greek Journalist" to contrast with journalists from other countries (foreign journalist). The results on both datasets (Table 5 and 6) show prominence of news and critical/negative/ironic comments, rather than analysis on developments and positive comments.

Table 5: What journalists and media tweeted during election periods

Journalists' categories	Total	Media categories	Total
Foreign journalist	126	Foreign media	40
New information on developments in Greece	63	New information on developments in Greece	27
Critical/negative/ironic comment	36	Critical/negative/ironic comment	4
News and a negative comment/irony	14	News and a negative comment/irony	4
Comment in support of the government and/or pro-bailout politicians	8	New information on Europe more broadly	3
Analysis on developments	2	Analysis on developments	1
New information on Europe more broadly	2	Other	1
Other	1	Greek alternative/non mainstream media	207
Greek journalist	326	New information on developments in Greece	97
New information on developments in Greece	157	Critical/negative/ironic comment	70
Critical/negative/ironic comment	115	News and a negative comment/irony	14
News and a negative comment/irony	31	New information on Europe more broadly	2
			146

Comment in support of the government and/or pro-bailout politicians	2	Analysis on developments	10
Analysis on developments	5	Other	9
New information on Europe more broadly	4	Comment in support of the government and/or pro-bailout politicians	4
Other	5	News along with a positive comment	1
Activist/Solidarity tweet	5	Greek mainstream media	109
News along with a positive comment	2	New information on developments in Greece	88
Grand Total	452	Critical/negative/ironic comment	11
		News and a negative comment/irony	5
		New information on Europe more broadly	1
		Analysis on developments	2
		Other	2
		Grand Total	356

On both datasets (Table 5 and 6) the analysis on the development on journalists and media posts is at the low end of the metric. However, it is noteworthy that when considering the demonstrations' data, Greek mainstream media did not post any positive comment, rather than news and negative comments.

Table 6: What journalists and media tweeted during demonstration periods

Row Labels	Total	Row Labels	Total
Foreign journalist	109	Foreign media	101
Critical/negative/ironic comment	47	New information on developments in Greece	66
New information on developments in Greece	19	New information on Europe more broadly	9
New information on Europe more broadly	14	News along with a positive comment	8
News and a negative comment/irony	12	News and a negative comment/irony	7
Activist/Solidarity tweet	10	Critical/negative/ironic comment	4
Analysis on developments	3	Comment in support of the government and/or pro-bailout politicians	3
News along with a positive comment	2	Activist/Solidarity tweet	2
Critical/negative/ironic comments	1	Analysis on developments	2
Other	1	Greek alternative/non mainstream media	160
Greek journalist	273	New information on developments in Greece	74
Critical/negative/ironic comment	71	New information on Europe more broadly	30
New information on developments in Greece	91	News along with a positive comment	4
New information on Europe more broadly	53	News and a negative comment/irony	10
News and a negative comment/irony	38	Critical/negative/ironic comment	28
Activist/Solidarity tweet	7	Comment in support of the government and/or pro-bailout politicians	3
Analysis on developments	3	Activist/Solidarity tweet	8
News along with a positive comment	6	Analysis on developments	2
Other	2	Other	1
Comment in support of the government and/or pro-bailout politicians	2	Greek mainstream media	16
Grand Total	382	New information on developments in Greece	3
		New information on Europe more broadly	11
		Critical/negative/ironic comment	1

Other	1
Grand Total	277

What it can be observed in Tables 7 and 8, is that during the studied election and demonstration periods, the dominant language on Twitter messages, posted by journalists and media is english rather than greek. As Verma et al. (2011) spotlighted, tweets that contribute to situational awareness, such those posted during social mobilisation periods, “include content that demonstrates an awareness of the scope of the crisis as well as specific details about the situation”.

Table 7: Languages used by journalists and media during election periods

Language	Total
English	461
Greek	309
Spanish	17
French	11
Swedish	4
Italian	3
German	1
Latin	1
Turkish	1
Grand Total	808

As, during the periods studied by this paper, tweets directed to mixed-language Twitter users, the users were trying to bridge all language spheres, by posted mostly in english. Probably, this is because both journalists and media wanted to externalize what was happening in the country.

Table 8: Languages used by journalists and media during demonstration periods

Languages	Total
English	395
Greek	192
French	22
Spanish	20
German	14
Italian	12
Finnish	2
Dutch	1
Turkish	1
Grand Total	659

3 Conclusions

While there is plenty of future work to do, this article highlights that news on Twitter in Greece during social mobilisation is being co-constructed by citizens and bloggers, alongside journalists. The prominence of citizens/bloggers shows that currently, Twitter in Greece is not normalized,

either by journalists or by politicians, as there is a little to non-existent use during the case studies of this research. More over, collected Tweets show how deep is the citizen's dissatisfaction about Greek journalists, as the most frequent content categories included news among irony.

The findings suggest that Greek Twittersphere is more similar to Arab Spring Twittersphere than Western countries not only during election campaigns but also during demonstrations. Twitter perhaps lead to be more participatory and better reflection of citizens' sentiments than mainstream media (Gioltzidou et al, 2018), but still remains unable to introduce any political shifts in a deeply troubled political landscape.

Indeed, we aim at further research to analyse how Twitter is used in Greek political communication during social mobilisation. Additionally, more work is needed to better understand how information flows among actors. To draw reliable conclusions, we have to analyse the Greek Twittersphere in more occasions to see if its constitution has changed in a significant manner. If we find that it has changed and that now more journalists tweet than citizens/bloggers, then we can say that the Greek Twittersphere is also moving towards normalization. If not, then the argument will be on Greek exceptionalism.

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The challenges of covering international crises in the global village

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Abstract

In McLuhan's global village news about the world is accessible everywhere and through a variety of media. But for the volume and the speed the news on the world developments is received, the knowledge and understanding of the complex situations and relations around the globe still lack the whole picture. International news coverage is less extensive, complies to the rules and needs of a national/ domestic news agenda and even serves the interests of national political elites. Thus, people tend to consume increasingly more news, but they still lack a wider, more profound and multi- aspect picture of the international developments and this paradox applies also to the coverage of international crises. This paper focuses on the challenges journalists face in covering international crises in a globalized, interconnected world and emphasizes the need for journalists to challenge the banal nationalism approach to international news and to contribute to the development of a transnational approach to the world developments with a global perspective and a transnational way of journalistic writing. In order to analyse these points the paper uses as an example the coverage of the immigration crisis and the European response.

Key Words: (banal) nationalism, transnational news agenda, global perspective, international crises, immigration, EU)

1 Introduction

In June 2018 a ship belonging to the German NGO “Lifeline” saved nearly 300 African migrants in the sea near Libya and entered the European waters. Although the conditions aboard made its docking urgent, the ship was denied access to European ports and was left stranded in the Mediterranean for almost a week. The then new Italian Minister of Internal Affairs and head of the far-right movement “Lega”, Matteo Salvini, used a harsh tone against immigrants and the European countries as well. The issue received extensive coverage by the international news agencies and media worldwide. A couple of days later it became reference point during the Summit of the European Council in June 28th and 29th, where the newly elected populist Italian government came forward with a hard-line plan to tackle migration and a threatening rhetoric. Other countries also came in with their agendas. National interests prevailed over the European and the migration crisis was covered once more to a great extent as a national rather than European/transnational issue.

The Greek Press followed both issues closely with numerous news items devoted to them. Most of the reports concerning the “Lifeline ship” appeared in the world news section, whereas the coverage of the Summit, which focused on the migration crisis was divided between the politics and the international news section.

This paper concentrates on the way international and transnational crises are covered in the Greek press in the globalized and interconnected world and on how the “national” angle prevails over the international. With the use of quantitative data and discourse analysis and the migration crisis as an example the editor seeks to answer to the following questions:

RQ1: Do the Greek media “domesticate” international news?

H2: Does the national political discourse overshadow the global perspective and

H3: How populist language infiltrates the journalistic discourse?

However, migration is not a national issue, but a global problem that exceeds national borders and demands a cooperative global response, a “cosmopolitan outlook” (Beck 2006). To this end, journalists need to develop new professional practices, based on a transnational, global outlook (Berglez 2008). Such practices can help people recognize and understand international news and developments in a wider context, think out of the national(istic) box and seek transnational solutions for global threats and problems that affect countries worldwide and not each nation-state separately.

2 Nationalising international crises in the global village

More and more people gain real-time access to news and abundant information about global issues on a variety of platforms, on a 24/7 basis. The public appetite for international news, especially online, is growing (Sambrook, Terrington, Levy 2013), however knowledge and understanding of the complex situations and relations around the globe lack a transnational perspective.

Traditional news values still apply in news selection and news agencies still dominate the gatekeeping process, prioritizing certain news over others, according to their news culture and agendas (Wu 2003, 2007). Due to the technological advances and the accessibility to information even in remote areas most mainstream news organizations tend to rely on news agencies reporting and thus they cut back on resources and permanent correspondents based in key places around the world. As Paterson notes (2003), international news coverage consists of unchanged or barely edited wire services stories, while reporting remains episodic; it breaks apart the developments into

separate events, rather than synthesizing them in a broader context. Moreover, the great volume of information and the speed of its flow make it difficult for journalists, who usually lack the specialization of international news editors, to manage it effectively.

Most important however and despite the advances in the world of global communication is the fact that international news coverage, especially in crisis situations, is still a product of the existing frameworks of nationhood (Nossek 2004). “Banal nationalism” (Billig 1995) anyway describes eloquently how unconfessed nationalistic feelings characterize most of the people in everyday life and provoke relevant spontaneous reactions, either discernible or not. As a result foreign news coverage tends to comply to the rules and needs of the national/ domestic agenda and even serves national interests (Pleios, Frangonikolopoulos 2011, Herman and Chomsky 2002, Nossek 2004, Biltereyst 2001). Furthermore in order to become more relevant to national audiences foreign news tends to be “domesticated”, interpreted in a context understandable by a domestic audience (Cohen 2013, Curran et al. 2017).

The rise of nationalism and populism in many countries around the globe intensify this tendency. Professionalism is subjugated to nationalist or at least patriotic reflexes and international news is reported through a national lens.

3 The Greek case

Coverage of world news has a substantial role in the daily news-feed of the Greek media, which publish numerous foreign news items online on a 24/7 basis. However the reports are mostly dependent on news agencies, the “silent partners” in the process of newsmaking (Johnston and Forde 2011) or (to a lesser degree) to international electronic media. Due to the market pressures, that have intensified during the financial crisis and the technological advances that have led to the new global communication environment (Siapera et al. 2015), newsmedia have modified significantly the way they cover international developments. More and more, international news reporting is done from the newsroom, churnalism tends to become the main practice for most of the media (Davies 2008) and since most of the information concerning the international developments can be found in English, there is a noticeable absence of specialized international news editors; their job tends to be assigned to any reporter, on the condition that he/she speaks English. This might be a reason why international news editors nowadays tend to be younger, even novices in the field.

Foreign news coverage in the Greek media is broadly based on the international news agencies wires and those of the *Athens News Agency (ANA-MPA)* (Roberts & Bantimaroudis 1997). The latter depends also on the international news agencies, since it lacks the resources abroad and the people on the spot.

Numerous studies have shown that nationalism is a pervasive characteristic of the Greek media foreign coverage over time and that Greek journalists tend to a great extent to “read” and report the developments through a national/ patriotic lens (Frangonikolopoulos 2016, Yiallourides 2001). Especially when the so- called “national interests” are at stake the coverage complies to the rules and needs of a national/ domestic news agenda and even serves the interests of national political elites, “rallying behind the flag” (Pleios, Frangonikolopoulos 2011). Greek- Turkish bilateral relations, the “Cyprus”, as well as the “Macedonian” issue for example have been researched extensively within this scope (Panagiotou 2005, Skoulariki 2007).

Such is the case of the coverage of international news, although to a lesser degree. This coverage is characterized to a certain extent by some of the elements of the underdog culture, as they are

described by Diamantouros (2000) in the theory of *Cultural Dualism* and are seen as dominant in the Greek public sphere (Zarali & Frangonikolopoulos 2013). Based on such national stereotypes for example, the world is divided in a simplistic way into “philhellenes” and “anti-hellenes”, those who have conflicting interests are demonized, Greeks are victimized and tend to identify themselves with those who are depicted as weak and unjustly treated. Furthermore international developments are seen as part of a conspiracy, where evil forces are planning against the “good guys” and against “us”.

4 “Lifeline crisis”, Greek media and the migrant issue

This case study is based on news items published in three Greek online newspapers (they also come out in print editions): *I Kathimerini*, *Efimerida ton Sintakton* and *Proto Thema* from 18/6 to 2/7/2018. During this period the “Lifeline ship crisis” broke out, 16 leaders out of the 28 held a “mini” preparatory summit, which focused on the migrant issue and finally they all met in Brussels for the Summit of the European Council.

As far as the sources of the reports are concerned the data (Table 1) show that the coverage of *I Kathimerini* is totally based on wires, especially those of *Athens News Agency(ANA-MPA)*, *Proto Thema* does not mention any source, whereas *Efimerida ton syntakton* publishes four bylined reports by its correspondent in Rome.

Table 1: Number of news items and sources/Lifeline Crisis

Name of Media	number of news items	Sources/ bylines
Kathimerini	9	4 from International News Agencies 5 from Athens News Agency
Proto Thema	7	no sources/ bylines
Efimerida ton Sintakton	14	4 bylined (correspondent in Rome) 1 from Athens News Agency

Interestingly, most of the Greek media news items on the issue, with the exception of some of the reports of *Efimerida ton Syntakton*, focus only on the agencies reports and mention no alternative source. However *NGO Lifeline* has expressed its stance with posts on social media and sent specific messages to the politicians. This is an element still missing in the mainstream coverage of international news. Although journalists are increasingly getting familiar with the use of new technologies and social media, journalistic practices have not adapted yet to the changing transnational and multi- actor communication environment and thus they do not make use of the social media and of alternative news sources that have gained access and visibility in the digital world (Spyridou et al. 2013). Apart from the lack of adaptation however, one should add time pressure as an additional element that makes the management of these new resources quite challenging in the daily routine of an international news editor. The use of the same news sources by the majority of editors results in the reproduction of a similar story. Churnalism anyway and recycling of news content of specific sources are on the rise and dominate the Greek newsmedia (Saridou et al. 2017)

The “Lifeline” incident is described in most of the news items as a “*crisis*” that concerns specific countries (who are involved in the negotiations about hosting the ship), whereas the situation of the migrants, who are actually the main actors, although dramatized with sensational titles, such as “critical situation”¹ or “the Odyssey goes on:”², still is underreported.

On the other hand, most of the reports focus on the political aspect of the issue and personalize it according to the national stereotypes or the general attitude that dominates the national public discourse towards specific countries/persons. In *I Kathimerini* for example the German Federal Minister of Internal Affairs, Horst Zeehover, “ignored, *as expected*, the challenge”³(emphasis mine), whereas other European politicians visited the migrants on the ship; Italy “insists on its *hard stance*”⁴ (emphasis mine), Italian Interior Minister “attacked France *once more*”⁵(emphasis mine), or in another case, as mentioned emphatically in the title, he is surprised by France’s malice and calls for the port of Marseille to open for the migrants⁶, whereas he comments that “Italy plays again a leading role in Europe”⁷. Interestingly, the reports mimic Matteo Salvini’s populist discourse style, informal, direct and thus provocative, which is mirrored in their titles: “Italian government to NGO: find other ports to take the migrants, not the Italian”⁸ and “Stop calling us, talk with Libya”⁹.

Most of the titles emphasize the division between the states involved, frame the incident as a combat and demonize the one or the other side: “Italy does not accept an NGO ship with hundreds saved migrants”¹⁰, “Italy accuses Malta: It does not accept ship with migrants”¹¹ and “Germany

¹ Critical situation for the 300 migrants, *Efimerida ton syntakton*, 25.6.2018, <http://www.efsyn.gr/arthro/krisimi-i-katastasi-gia-toys-300-metanastes>

² The “Odyssey” goes on: The two ships with refugees with meet off the coast of Malta, *Proto Thema*, 23.6.2018, <https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/799389/sunehizetai-i-odusseia-anoihtatis-maltas-tha-sunadithoun-ta-duo-ploia-me-prosfuges/>

³ Accusations of criminalization of rescues, *I Kathimerini*, 29.06.2018, <http://www.kathimerini.gr/972251/article/epikairothta/kosmos/kataggelies-gia-poinikopoihsh-diaswsewn>

⁴ Lifeline Migrants may “disembark in Malta”- Italy insists on its hard stance, *I Kathimerini*, 26.06.2018, <http://www.kathimerini.gr/971581/article/epikairothta/kosmos/pi8anon-na-apovivastoyn-sth-malta-oi-metanastes-toy-lifeline---epimenei-sth-skllrh-ths--stash-h-italia>

⁵ Lifeline Migrants may “disembark in Malta”- Italy insists on its hard stance, *I Kathimerini*, 26.06.2018, <http://www.kathimerini.gr/971581/article/epikairothta/kosmos/pi8anon-na-apovivastoyn-sth-malta-oi-metanastes-toy-lifeline---epimenei-sth-skllrh-ths--stash-h-italia>

⁶ Salvini: I’m surprised by France’s malice, Let Marseille port open, *I Kathimerini*, 25.6.2018, <http://www.kathimerini.gr/971491/gallery/epikairothta/kosmos/salvini-me-ekplhssei-h-gallikh-kakia---na-anoi3ei-to-limani-ths-massalias>

⁷ i.b.

⁸ Italian government to NGO: Find other ports to take the migrants, not the Italian, *Proto Thema*, 16.6.2018, <https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/797223/italiki-kubernisi-se-mko-vreite-alla-limania-na-pate-tous-metanastes-ohi-ta-italika/>

⁹ Don’t call us any more, talk with Libya, *I Efimerida ton Syntakton*, 23.6.2018.

¹⁰ “Italy does not accept an NGO ship with hundreds saved migrants”, *I Kathimerini*, 21.6.2018, <http://www.kathimerini.gr/970777/article/epikairothta/kosmos/h-italia-den-dexetai-ploio-mko-me-ekatontades-diasw8entes-metanastes>

¹¹ Italy accuses Malta: It does not accept ship with migrants, *I Kathimerini*, 22.6.2018, <http://www.kathimerini.gr/971086/article/epikairothta/kosmos/h-italia-kathgorei-th-malta-arneitai-na-dex8ei-ploio-me-metanastes>

blocks the rescue of the Lifeline migrants”¹². Interestingly, in the updated version of the report the title “Germany blocks the rescue of the Lifeline migrants” is replaced by “Malta finally opens port to Lifeline”, the initial text though appears in the hyperlink¹³; what is more, the accusation against Germany is actually attributed, in the middle of the main text, to the spokesperson of Lifeline who cites “press reports”.

The incident is directly linked to the European Summit with comments about how this “Odyssey” of the migrants reflects the challenges for the European migration policy¹⁴, the “obvious standoffs in managing the migrant crisis”, which result in “ultimatums that come and go”¹⁵ and how “it is now clear that until new decisions are made (...) Matteo Salvini will keep on digging his heels in”¹⁶.

5 Covering the European Summit with a national lens

Most of conservative *I Kathimerini*'s reports (46 news items) come from the permanent correspondent of the newspaper in Brussels, something that underlines the importance given to the summit as a European (transnational) issue. Most of these reports are published in the world news section, together with 19 news items (three bylined) based on the wires of international news agencies and ANA- MPA. However the summit is noticeably addressed as a political event with certain domestic and political implications, with eleven reports (6 bylined) published in the politics section.

As far as the left-leaning, cooperatively organized, *Efimerida ton Syntakton* is concerned, interestingly most of the summit news (33 in total) appear under the label “Europe” (28), three in the section of politics, one in foreign policy and one in the section “Rights”. Only one news item is based on Agencies wires, five are bylined by correspondents in Brussels and Berlin and nine are bylined articles of the editors of the newspaper. Their approach towards the summit underlines the importance they give to the incident in a European context; the participation of the Greek prime minister is presented under the label “Europe”, whereas they focus on more aspects of the crisis (foreign policy and rights).

Tabloid style *Proto Thema* covers the Summit extensively, with 59 news items in total, most of them are categorized as “world” news (46), eleven as politics, and only six are bylined, although the reports are exhaustive, based on various international media reports.

¹² Germany blocks the rescue of the Lifeline migrants, *Efimerida ton Syntakton*, 27.6.2018, <http://www.efsyn.gr/arthro/i-germania-mplokarei-ti-diasosi-ton-metanaston-toy-lifeline>

¹³ Malta finally opens port to Lifeline, *Efimerida ton Syntakton*, 28.6.2018, <http://www.efsyn.gr/arthro/i-germania-mplokarei-ti-diasosi-ton-metanaston-toy-lifeline>

¹⁴ Migrants of Lifeline are in Valetta, *I Kathimerini*, 28.6.2018, <https://www.efsyn.gr/arthro/sti-valeta-oi-metanastes-toy-lifeline>

¹⁵ Italian government to NGO: Find other ports to take the migrants, not the Italian, *Proto Thema*, 16.6.2018, <https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/797223/italiki-kubernisi-se-mko-vreite-alla-limania-na-pate-tous-metanastes-ohi-ta-italika/>

¹⁶ Secret rendezvous in Rome, *Efimerida ton Syntakton*, 27.6.2018, <http://www.efsyn.gr/arthro/mystiko-rantevoy-sti-romi>

Table 2: Number of news items and sources/EU Summit

Newspaper	Politics section	World section	Correspondent	Agencies	Bylined
Kathimerini	11	35	46	19	9
Efimerida Syntakton	3	28	5	1	9
	Foreign policy 1	Rights 1	Article 1		
Proto Thema	11	46	7 +1 (envoy)	8	6

From this short quantitative analysis we deduce that Greek media are less dependent on the agencies, when it comes to important incidents, with political implications. All three media have used their correspondents in Brussels (*Efimerida ton Syntakton* used a second one based in Berlin), whereas all three sent a political editor to cover the presence of the Greek Prime Minister in Brussels. Most of the news items were published in the section of world (or European) news, something that could lead to the conclusion that there is no domestication of the news. However a qualitative analysis (discourse analysis, framing) depicts quite a different picture.

Most of the coverage centers on the conflicts, the divisions, the gains and losses of the national actors and not on Europe as a whole. Although the agenda of the Summit is extensive, the reports concern only the migrant issue, as if it is the only one addressed during the talks of the European leaders. The Summit is described as a battlefield, the European leaders as rivals who fight in alliances or on their own and their talks on the proposals about the migrant issue as negotiations for the management of a crisis.

German internal politics and the political pressures Chancellor Merkel faces over the migrant issue for example are personified in the face of the German Minister of Internal Affairs, Hoerst Seehofer, who is seen as “dangerous for Germanexit”¹⁷ and presented as dictating the result of the Summit, since the summit is “Zero hour for the...permanent Chancellor”¹⁸, “who is fighting against time and herself”¹⁹ and “The agreement over the refugee issue determines Merkel’s future”²⁰. During the Summit Germany is demonized, depicted as acting “against all”²¹, while the rest of the leader

¹⁷ Seehofer is dangerous for Germanexit, according to the Leader of SPD, *Proto thema*, 23.6.2018, <https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/799380/germania-epikindunos-gia-germaniko-brexite-o-zeehofer-leei-i-igetis-ton-sosialdimokraton/>

¹⁸ Mpampis Agrolampos, Zero hour for the...permanent Chancellor, *I Efimerida ton syntakton*, 29.6.2018, <http://www.efsyn.gr/arthro/ora-miden-gia-ti-monimi-kagkelario>

¹⁹ i.b.

²⁰ The agreement over the refugee issue determines Merkel’s future, *Proto Thema*, 1.7.2018, <https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/801399/germania-to-politiko-mellon-tis-merkel-sta-heriatou-kubernitikou-tis-etairou/>

²¹ Dimitris Terzis, Germany against all, *Efimerida ton Syntakton*, 22.6.2018, <http://www.efsyn.gr/arthro/germania-enantion-olon>

“search for a solution to the refugee issue tailored to Merkel”²². In the end, the agreement is seen as “Good for Merkel, fine and dandy for the migrants”²³, since “Merkel seems to have taken all that she wanted”²⁴.

The summit is portrayed as a field of competition for the member-states, who “bargain (hard) over the migrants”^{25,26} and try to promote their specific (national) interests. The leading ones, as Germany and France, are depicted as authoritative, who promote “solution to the migrant issue without the consensus of the 28”. Others, as the Visegrad countries, form alliances, who “snub” the preparatory summit²⁷, or react dynamically, as Italy, by saying that “Germans and French won’t dictate their plans to us”²⁸, whereas EU is personified as a villain “Europe” who is ready to “bury” the South²⁹. The negotiations over the migrant issue are described dramatically as “a 12-hour thriller”^{30,31}, “an existential threat”³² and “the crash test for Europe”³³, where “Merkel is in a grim position, while the Italian proposal puts a halt to a quick European solution to the asylum policy”³⁴. When the competition between member-states goes beyond rules and limits, the news media are keen to follow it, focusing on specific persons and their (incendiary) statements, when for example

²² They search for a solution to the refugee issue tailored to Merkel, *Efimerida ton Syntakton*, 21.6.2018, <http://www.efsyn.gr/arthro/anazitoyn-lysi-gia-prosfygiko-sta-metra-tis-merkel>

²³ Mpampis Agrolampos, Good for Merkel, fine and dandy for the migrants, *Efimerida ton Syntakton*, 30.6.2018, <http://www.efsyn.gr/arthro/mia-hara-gia-ti-merkel-dyo-tromares-gia-toys-metanastes>

²⁴ i.b.

²⁵ Konstantaras, N., Bargaining over the migrants, *I Kathimerini*, 1.7.2018, <http://www.kathimerini.gr/972542/opinion/epikairothta/politikh/pazaria-me-toys-metanastes>

²⁶ “Hard bargaining over the migrant issue in the Summit”, *I Kathimerini*, 28.6.2018, <http://www.kathimerini.gr/972059/article/epikairothta/kosmos/sklhro-pazari-gia-to-metanasteutiko-sth-synodo-koryfhs>

²⁷ Visegrad member-states snub the Summit for the migrant issue, *Proto Thema*, 27.6.2018, <https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/798791/ta-krati-meli-tou-visegrad-snoaroun-ti-sunodo-gia-to-metanasteutiko/>

²⁸ Germans and French won’t dictate their plans to us”, *Efimerida ton Syntakton*, 20.6.2018, <http://www.efsyn.gr/arthro/den-tha-mas-ypagoreyoyn-ta-shedia-toys-oi-germanoi-ki-oi-galloi>

²⁹ Refugee issue: Europe is getting ready to “bury” the South- Italy reacts, *Proto Thema*, 22/6/2018, <https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/798898/prosfugiko-i-europi-thavei-to-noto-adidra-i-i/>

³⁰ Yiannis Antipas, Agreement over the migrant issue after a 12-hour thriller, *Proto Thema*, <https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/800935/sunodos-korufis-sumfonia-gia-to-metanasteutiko-meta-apo-12oro-thriler/>

³¹ European Summit: Agreement over the migrant issue after overnight thriller, *I Kathimerini*, 29.6.2018, <http://www.kathimerini.gr/972145/article/epikairothta/kosmos/synodos-koryfhs-symfwnia-gia-to-metanasteutiko-meta-apo-olonxytio-8riler>

³² Eleni Varvitsioti, Refugee issue, existential threat to the EU, *I Kathimerini*, 25.6.2018, <http://www.kathimerini.gr/972154/gallery/epikairothta/kosmos/ypar3iakh-apeilh-gia-ee-to-prosfygiko>

³³ Migrant issue: The crash test for Europe, *Proto Thema*, 25.6.2018, <https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/799687/metnasteutiko-to-kras-test-tis-europis/>

³⁴ i.b.

Macron and Salvini are at odds over the refugee crisis”³⁵, when Macron says he does not accept lectures by anybody³⁶ or Salvini makes poisonous remarks against Macron that “He pretends to be crazy because his popularity has sunk³⁷. Considerable coverage receives the Italian stance during the Summit, not only the presence of Italian PM, Giuseppe Conte, who “threatens with veto the conclusions of the Summit³⁸” but also the internal politics and the populist rhetoric of Interior Minister, Matteo Salvini who blatantly asks the EU to “Give money to Libya for the refugee issue as you did with Turkey”³⁹ or predicts that “in 2019 the EU might not exist⁴⁰”. Characteristically this quote by Mr Salvini is used in the title rather as a prediction than a statement made by a politician, something that reflects the euroscepticism of the news media and the editors themselves.

The extensive and dramatic coverage of the negotiations over the migrant issue reflects the importance Greek media put on the issue and how they nationalize and domesticate it, reflecting the Greek narrative. Provocative titles that emphasize the *dangers*, such as “Mini summit for Migration. The dangers for Greece”⁴¹ or *fears*, “Critical summit for the refugee issue. What is Athens afraid of?”⁴² predispose the readers negatively, present the European summit as a hostile (battle)field and intensify this way the general eurosceptic sentiment. Furthermore, by emphasizing on *gains, losses and burdens*, in the titles “EU Agreement for Asylum. Losses for Greece, it wasn’t even able to secure some more money⁴³”, “Refugee issue: everybody got money, we got more refugees and

³⁵ Macron- Salvini at odds over the refugee crisis at the last minute”, *Proto Thema*, 23.6.2018, <https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/799388/sta-mahairia-makron-salvini-gia-to-prosfugiko-sto-para-5-tis-sunodou/>

³⁶ Macron’s Message to the Summit: We do not accept lectures by anybody, *I Kathimerini*, 24.6.2018, <http://www.kathimerini.gr/971364/article/epikairothta/kosmos/mhnyma-makron-prin-apo-th-synodo-den-dexomaste-ma8hmata-apo-kanenan>

³⁷ Salvini’s “poison” against Macron: He pretends to be crazy because his popularity has sunk, *Proto Thema*, 27.6.2018, <https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/800528/dilitirio-salvini-gia-makron-kanei-ton-trelo-giati-i-dimotikotita-tou-einai-sto-nadir/>

³⁸ Yiannis Antipas, Conte threatens with veto the conclusions of the Summit”, *Proto Thema*, 28.6.2018, <https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/800808/o-kode-apeilei-me-veto-ta-suberasmata-tis-sunodou-gia-to-metanasteutiko/>

³⁹ Salvini to EU: Give money to Libya for the migrant issue, as you did with Turkey, *Proto Thema*, 25.6.2018, <https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/799875/salvini-se-ee-doste-sti-livui-hrimata-gia-to-metanasteutiko-opos-kanate-me-tin-tourkia/>

⁴⁰ EU might not exist in 2019, *Efimerida ton Syntakton*, 27.6.2018, <http://www.efsyn.gr/arthro/mporei-na-min-yparhei-eyropaiki-enosi-2019>

⁴¹ Mini summit for Migration. The dangers for Greece, *Proto Thema*, 20.6.2018, <https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/798345/sunadisi-germanias-gallias-italias-kai-austrias-gia-to-prosfugiko/>

⁴² Critical summit for the migrant issue, what is Athens afraid of?, *Proto Thema*, 24.6.2018, <https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/799424/simera-i-krisimi-sunodos-gia-to-prosfugiko-ti-fovatai-i-athina/>

⁴³ EU Agreement for Asylum. Losses for Greece, it wasn’t even able to secure some more money, *Proto Thema*, <https://www.protothema.gr/politics/article/801096/sumfonia-ee-gia-metanastes-oi-zimies-gia-tin-ellada-pou-den-katafere-oute-na-exasfalisei-epibleon-hrimata/>

lower VAT for 6 months”⁴⁴ and “Refugee issue: The burden on...Greece”⁴⁵ the nation-centered approach to the EU is underlined, reflecting how the EU is seen as a field for the nation- states to combat, demand and acquire and how Greece is victimized and is depicted as the loser and scapegoat of the Summit after the hard negotiations and the bargaining.

6 Discussion

This paper focused on the way Greek news media cover news and events of global interest and with transnational impact and how the “national” angle prevails over the global. The quantitative and discourse analysis of news items from three popular online media (with print editions also) showed that Greek media tend to “domesticate” international news and to read the international and transnational events with a national lens, which reflects the national stereotypes and the national political agenda. Sensationalism, emphasis on conflict and on provocative and populist elements tend to overshadow the developments, whereas the national narrative prevails over their global and transnational aspect.

Greek newsrooms are gradually adapting to the global communication environment, especially in terms of the use of technology and social media, Greek journalistic culture though is still inspired by an old-fashioned short-sighted national(istic) approach to the world and the international developments. However in a globalized and interconnected world it is essential that journalists see the whole picture, acknowledge that increasingly more developments and problems, such as the migrant crisis, affect and concern people on a transnational and global level and address them accordingly, by adapting their practices, sources, narratives and journalistic cultures to this new global communication environment.

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⁴⁴ Refugee issue: everybody got money, we got more refugees and lower VAT for 6 months, *Proto Thema*, 1.7.2018, <https://www.protothema.gr/greece/article/801397/prosfugiko-oloi-piran-hrimata-emeis-pollous-prosfuges-kai-meiomeno-fpa-gia-6-mines/>

⁴⁵ Refugee issue:, the burden on...Greece, *Proto Thema*, 27.6.2018, <https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/798629/prosfugiko-to-varos-stin-ellada-oi-metanastes-tha-menoun-sti-hora-opou-upovaloun-aitisi-asulou/>

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