"It really is a Craft": Repertoires in Journalistic Frontrunners' Talk on Audience Participation

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SUMMARY

Studies of participatory journalism demonstrate that professional journalism can be resistant to change. Journalists and news organizations do wish to encourage audience contribution and digital innovation, but find it difficult to reconcile traditional journalistic values and practices with more participatory ones. In this study, this resistance to change is further investigated by interviewing 22 frontrunners in Dutch journalism who are pioneers in audience participation. How do they make sense of participatory journalism? The possibilities, constraints and dilemmas their discourse constructs are examined through an interpretative repertoire analysis. Frontrunners draw upon six interpretative repertoires: innovation, craftsmanship, marketing, being one's own boss, education, and profitability. All frontrunners speak the innovation repertoire and at least one of the other repertoires, often in mutual contradiction. This analysis demonstrates the current paradox of how journalism is criticized for its traditional and paternalistic culture of exclusion and at the same time valued and protected as a profession and

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craft. It is concluded that even innovative journalistic frontrunners are subject to this paradox, despite their obvious willingness to realize participatory journalism. By conducting this specific type of analysis, this study demonstrates routine deployments of cultural understandings in journalistic linguistic practices and reveals practical consequences in terms of possibilities and constraints for audience participation and innovation in journalism.

Introduction

A widespread idea is that digital technologies enable the audience to get involved in making news. Hooking into this idea, in recent years, news organizations around the world have experimented with participatory journalism. In 2005, for instance, the *BBC* launched the discussion platform *Have Your Say* and a *UGC Hub* for eliciting audience material. A year later, *CNN* set up *IReport,* a platform where the audience can upload material. In 2010, Dutch news broadcaster *NOS* started *NOSNet*, a network of experts among the audience that assist journalists in making news items.

Despite participatory developments in the field of journalism, participatory journalism does not seem to be living up to its potential: scholars conclude that journalism is adapting slowly, or not at all, to digital technology's participatory potential (e.g. Singer, 2010; Williams et al, 2010). Although journalists wish to encourage audience participation, they also find it difficult to open up their values and routines to more participatory values and practices. This suggests that participatory journalism puts at stake the definition of what counts as journalism and who counts as a journalist (Deuze, 2008; Zelizer, 2004). Given journalists' hesitant attitude towards participatory journalism, this definition turns out to be "resistant" to change (Borger et al., 2013).

Building upon previous research, this study[1] aims to further examine this resistance to change and to investigate how a specific type of journalism practitioner makes sense of participatory journalism. The focus is not on editorial staff in mainstream news organizations, as in previous research, but on frontrunners pioneering in participatory journalism. These frontrunners are expected to be more innovative than the type of journalists studied before. Unlike previous research, this study does not concentrate on journalists' opinions about, or attitudes towards, participatory journalism, but on the sense-making mechanisms in their discourse and the possibilities and constraints this language use produces. By conducting an interpretative reper-

toire analysis (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), it becomes possible to trace the dilemmas and problems the repertoires produce, and to better understand the consequences for stability and change in journalism.

Conceptual Background

The scholarly literature on participatory journalism can roughly be divided into two categories. First, following the term's coining by Shayne Bowman and Chris Willis in 2003, authors predict that a new type of journalism is emerging. Illustrative of this strand of literature is Jay Rosen's (2006) notion of "the people formerly known as the audience". The idea is that, thanks to digital technologies, the tasks once performed by journalists are now shared with the people who used to be at journalism's receiving end. This change has raised expectations enormously: the participation of citizens in the making of news could reinvigorate journalism and democracy at large (e.g. Bowman & Willis, 2003; Gillmor, 2004; Rosen, 2006).

Second, many studies investigate whether democratic prospects have already been realized. A variety of methods has been applied to examine journalists' opinions about, and attitudes towards, participatory journalism: participant observations in newsrooms and interviews with journalists (e.g. Harrison, 2010; Williams, Wardle & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2010), questionnaires (e.g. Singer, 2010), and analyses of news websites' participatory features (e.g. Domingo et al., 2008; Jönsson & Örnebring, 2011; Karlsson, 2011). By and large, these studies conclude that journalism has not yet become very participatory: audience material is embraced when it yields something journalists consider useful – extra sources or a scoop – but discarded when it challenges fixed ways of working (e.g. Harrison, 2010; Singer, 2010; Williams, Wardle & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2010). The democratic ideal underlying participatory journalism is seen to clash with other key journalistic values: "[I]t seems evident that the professionals involved in all of these cases have had (and are still having) a rough ride. Participatory ideals do not mesh well with set notions of professional distance in journalism" (Deuze et al, 2007: 335). In summary, there seems to be general agreement that professional journalism is innovating slowly or not at all (e.g. Chung, 2007; Domingo et al, 2008; Hermida & Thurman, 2008; Karlsson, 2011). In other words, existing studies on participatory journalism demonstrate that journalism is "resistant" to change (Borger et al., 2013).

The goal of this article is to better understand how journalism changes in the face of participatory journalism. This study investigates how journalism's 'resistance' to change manifests itself and what it produces in terms of possibilities and constraints

for change in journalism. Previous studies concentrated on editorial staff in main-stream news organization, the results of which can be considered representative of the *norm* for what counts as journalism. In this study, however, the focus is on how much the norm can be *stretched*. Therefore, the emphasis of this article is on frontrunners pioneering with audience participation. This type of journalism practitioner is expected to be more prone to stretching the norm than 'regular' editorial staff from mainstream organizations previously studied. Additionally, existing studies provide valuable insight into journalists' opinions of, and attitudes towards, participatory journalism. This study, however, does not concentrate on the *descriptive* side of journalists' language, but on the productive side of their discourse. The goal is to investigate the possibilities and constraints their language use produces. Applying the theory and method of interpretative repertoire analysis (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), enables the various repertoires that frontrunners use to make sense of participatory journalism to be traced. Every repertoire turns out to give meaning to participatory journalism in a different way. By conducting this specific type of analysis, it becomes possible to reveal the dilemmas and problems the repertoires produce, and to better understand the consequences for stability and change in journalism. This leads to the following research questions:

RQ 1: *How do frontrunners make sense of audience participation in journalism?*

RQ 2: *What possibilities and constraints do these constructions produce?*

RQ 3: *What does this mean for stability and change in journalism?*

Most existing research into participatory journalism focuses on the United States and the United Kingdom. Although little is known of the Dutch context, developments in Dutch journalism are reflective of journalism trends in Europe and the United States. News organizations are facing the challenges of new technology. They have to deal with the audience's changing use of news, drops in advertising revenues, and new (technological) ways to gather, tell, and distribute the news. Just like in the USA and the UK, in the Netherlands too, new organizations find themselves in a process of rethinking their ways of making and distributing news and doing business. In that context, experiments with participatory journalism abound.

Methodology

In this study the theory and methods of 'interpretative repertoire analysis' (Potter and Wetherell, 1987) are employed to frontrunners' accounts of participatory practices. This approach is used to identify patterns in language use and reveal their

practical consequences: the possibilities, constraints, and dilemmas thrown up. Interpretative repertoires are recurrently used routines of arguments, descriptions and evaluations in people's talk. They are "the building blocks" (Wetherell and Potter, 1988: 172) speakers use to make sense of everyday life. Recurring tropes, figures of speech, clichés or terms can help the researcher trace a repertoire.

Three concepts are pivotal: variation, function, and construction. People's discourse is variable, depending on the demands of the context: different versions of phenomena serve different functions. This means people construct accounts with which they accomplish social actions: evaluating or characterizing events and phenomena in a certain way or positioning people in a certain manner, situating self and others as "characters with roles and rights" (Seymour Smith et al., 2002: 255) and positions to speak from. As such, repertoires in people's talk have material effects in real life: they organize people's everyday activities by justifying decisions and actions in given contexts and contributing to the naturalization and rationalization of certain versions of reality. Repertoires, thus, "construct" our "lived reality" (Wetherell and Potter, 1988: 172). Comparing repertoires and studying inconsistencies between various repertoires will reveal the dilemmas or the "problems thrown up by their existence" (Potter and Wetherell, 1987: 149).

The three key concepts guided the (sub)questions posed to the data: Which various repertoires are found in the data? What functions do the repertoires have? Which practical consequences do the repertoires construct (possibilities, constraints and dilemmas)?

Materials and participants

The data for this study consist of in-depth interviews with frontrunners pioneering with various forms of audience participation in Dutch journalism. The first interviewee was the founder of a new audience participation project of a Dutch broadcaster. The second interviewee was the founder of a group blog, operating outside the context of established journalism. Each of these interviews was the starting point for a snowball sampling procedure. There were two criteria for including interviewees in the sample: first, they had to be involved in realizing and encouraging audience participation in journalism; and second, the sample had to be representative of the variety in the journalistic field. Interviewees, thus, represented a range of journalistic practices: they worked for broadcasters, newspapers and web-based media; for public, commercial and voluntary organizations or projects; some were freelancers, others were employed by an organization (for an overview, see Box 1). First, in-depth interviews with 12 experts were conducted. After a first analysis of

potential interpretative repertoires, two additional group interviews were organized. In these group discussions, participants were presented with preliminary findings to validate and refine these. There was some overlap between the one-to-ones and the group interviews. In total, 22 experts were interviewed. At this point, saturation was reached, and no new repertoires were found.

Table 1   Overview of interviewees

Interviews:	
1	chief participative network national news organization, male, 45+
2	new media expert and head new media department national news organization, male, 50+
3	innovation and new media expert, former deputy editor-in-chief regional newspaper, male 50+
4	founder online neighbourhood television network, male, 55+
5	deputy editor-in-chief group blog, female, 30+
6	chief audience participation division within online news organization, male, 30+
7	moderator popular commercial blog, male, 40+
8	initiator group blog (voluntary) and writer popular (commercial) blog
9	initiator and editor-in-chief local participative news website, male, 50+
10	editor-in-chief experimental news program for youngsters, female, 45+
11	project manager innovation (freelance), female, 30+
12	founder website where audience experts come together, male, 25+
Group Interviews	
1	Interviewee 3 + 9 + new media expert, male, 50+; director regional broadcaster, male, 55+; news manager regional broadcaster, male, 55+; internet journalist and innovation expert, male, 50+; editor-in-chief online news organization, male, 40+; former editor-in-chief national newspaper, female, 45+;
2	Interviewee 1 + 2 + 6 + journalist, innovation expert, female, 55+; chief digitization national broadcaster, female, 50+; news manager regional broadcaster, male, 55+; director research center innovation in ICT, female, 50+

To harvest "narrative production" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995: 39), interviewees were encouraged to speak about their participatory projects in their own terms and

were asked to describe a regular day at work, name significant moments in their projects up until now, and identify opportunities and pitfalls. They were also confronted with utterances from earlier interviews to have them compare their own views with those of others. These interview techniques complied with the "active interviewing" approach (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995: 140), which holds that an interview is not a "neutral means for extracting information", but rather a "conversational encounter" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987: 165), aimed at producing evaluations and meanings.

The interviews took between an hour and an hour and a half, most being held in the interviewees' working environments. The two group interviews were held at the *VU University*. The conversations were recorded with interviewees' consent and literally transcribed.

Analytical procedures

Following Potter & Wetherell (1987) on analytical procedures, analysis consisted of six stages:

- *Selection.* By close reading of the transcripts, elements were identified that could be described as "participation talk" (compare "race talk" Wetherell & Potter, 1992): fragments in which interviewees talked about their own or others' participatory practices.

- *Sensitizing.* These excerpts were reread to become familiar with both content (what was said) and form (how something was said), and to develop a sensitivity to language use. Recurring tropes, figures of speech, clichés or terms served as clues.

- *Coding.* Labelling analytical elements prepared for more intensive analysis in stage four. Coding was done almost line-by-line, staying close to the data, as inclusive as possible.

- *Identification.* The various interpretative repertoires were identified, and tentative ideas on functions and consequences were developed. Stages three and four alternated in a process of moving back and forth between coding and identification.

- *Validation.* During the group interviews, interviewees were presented with the preliminary repertoires to check whether they tended towards them.

- *Fine-tuning.* The repertoires were further developed by searching for affirmative and contradictive arguments in the data.

Results

The analysis yields that frontrunners vary between six repertoires when making sense of audience participation: innovation, craftsmanship, marketing, being one's own boss, education, and profitability. The repertoires' labels are illustrative of their functions. All interviewees spoke more than one repertoire: they were multilingual. However, some repertoires were more common, whereas others appeared marginally. The more frequent a repertoire is in the data, the more common sense it was considered. In the next paragraphs, the six repertoires are discussed. Their order is determined by the space afforded to the audience participant, from small to bigger. For each vocabulary, subject positions, function, and possibilities are described. The conclusion addresses the constraints and dilemmas the repertoires construct.

Innovation repertoire

The most frequent repertoire is innovation. In Excerpts One and Two, frontrunners hold fervent arguments in favour of audience emancipation.

> *Excerpt One* – Interview 2
> 1. *You see, **traditional journalists** do not want their role to change. They **always** refer to*
> 2. *gatekeeping as being the most important (.) that **they determine what the audience***
> 3. ***should or should not see, because we are the only ones who have knowledge.** Yeah,*
> 4. *I find this **so terrible**. **Arrogant through and through, old media**.*

> *Excerpt Two* – Interview 9
> 1. *If you **claim** that this role is **still** the same and that you can **still** work from **that old***
> 2. ***context** (.) well yes, then you're writing your own **obituary**. If ehm (.) if you've only got*
> 3. *a couple of years to go, then you'll be fine, but someone who is **ambitious** about*
> 4. *journalism can't allow himself to do it the classical way.*

In these excerpts, frontrunners position themselves as different from "traditional journalists" who can only perceive the audience in a passively receiving role, and not as an actively participating party. In Excerpt One, traditional journalists are

evaluated as paternalistic and arrogant. The latter characterization is literally repeated in line 4. Traditional journalists are furthermore constructed as conservative and stubborn, emphasized by the use of "always", the verb "claim" and repeated use of "still". By stating that he finds this attitude "so terrible", this frontrunner strongly distances himself from those who do not work with audience participation. By explicitly criticizing the culture of traditional journalism as outdated and conservative, speakers implicitly position themselves as up-to-date and innovative.

The innovation repertoire's function is illustrated in Excerpt Two: traditional journalists who ignore their audience as active participants are not just conservative, they are "writing their own obituary". In other words, they are putting themselves out of action. The utterance "someone who is ambitious about journalism" thereupon constructs audience participation as a "must" to be up-to-date and as an essential component of future journalism. Taken together, the repertoire's function is to make journalism visible as outdated and in urgent need of innovation. Thus, it simultaneously confirms the frontrunners' role as frontrunners, appointing and legitimizing their innovative role. By emphasizing the urgency of the need to change, the innovation repertoire also reveals journalism to still be of great importance. All frontrunners spoke this repertoire.

Craftsmanship repertoire

Excerpts Three and Four illustrate how frontrunners discuss what distinguishes journalists from audience participants.

Excerpt Three – Interview 9

1. *Well yes, the **professional** has **skills** that **not everybody** has. I mean, after all, you've*

2. *gone on to **higher education** to get to work as a journalist. Or at least, **you've***

3. ***developed yourself** in such a way that **you're able** to own a number of **journalistic***

4. ***aspects or <u>skills</u>.***

Excerpt Four – Interview 10

1. *We consider ourselves to be the **experts**, in the sense that **we are able to** check*

2. *sources, we have access to certain channels, where we can… You know, it's **our <u>craft</u>**!*

3. We **know** when to delete things, we **know** about 'hearing both sides'. These are the

4. journalistic **skills**.

In these excerpts, frontrunners construct journalists as "skilled" newsmakers and "experts" with certain know-how. The word "skills" is recurrently used, often with added emphasis, just like a notion of a certain "ability" to practise journalism. This ability is not constructed as innate, but as acquired through "development" and "(higher) education". In other words, journalism cannot be practised overnight by anyone, it needs to be mastered.

Journalists are positioned as being different from anyone else, including audience participants. Thus, the repertoire constructs a dichotomy between the skilled "professional" and "everybody", journalistically unskilled, or so it is implied. In Excerpts Five and Six, frontrunners talk about the role they see fit for audience participants.

Excerpt Five – Interview 1

1. **We are the journalist**. I can't expect this from someone who is **a teacher, or a car**

2. **mechanic, or a nurse**... that this person is also going to study how journalists think

3. that a journalist should work. No, **they** are **informants,** I'd say. **[…], it will of course**

4. **remain up to us** to find out **what is relevant and what is true** in these stories**.**

Excerpt Six – Interview 2

1. You see, **of course** we are going in that direction **too**, but we're very **careful** about it.

2. You see, we use this network that we build as **sources** rather than as people that we

3. ask to **make items**. In **our** vision, that really is a **craft**.

The stressed "we" and "they" signal that journalists and audience are constructed as separate categories. "We" are "journalists", and "they" are "informants" and "sources". Allocated the position of assistants, the audience is invited to bring in anything they know or see: extra information, illustrations to a story, or a scoop. With the words 'Of course' and 'too' the frontrunner positions himself as up-to-date. At the same time, the word "careful" illustrates the frontrunner is holding back. 'Finding out' what is "relevant" and "true" and the "making" of "items", which, given the

added emphasis, are considered the 'real' work, are in the hands of journalists. The words "will", "of course" and "remain" stress this is common knowledge. The use of the future tense emphasizes that this division of roles will exist in the future.

Regarding the repertoire's function, Excerpt Five is illustrative. The frontrunner compares journalists with teachers, nurses and car mechanics. This comparison constructs both a difference and a similarity. The difference is that teachers, nurses, and car mechanics are ordinary people who cannot be expected to act as professional journalists. Simultaneously the comparison aligns journalism with professions that require such specialist expertise (nurse, teacher, car mechanic) that they cannot be exercised by laymen but need to be exercised by skilled professionals. This alignment is reinforced by the formulaic utterance "it's our/a craft", which we encountered frequently. Both the comparison with other "crafts", and the use of this formula, capture the function of the craftsmanship repertoire: making journalism visible as a skill-based craft. The use of the word "our" indicates that the interviewees do not only speak for themselves, but for the entire profession. It reveals they are communicating something all professional journalists know and agree with. The craftsmanship repertoire was equally frequent in the data as the innovation repertoire: all frontrunners fluently spoke both.

Marketing repertoire

The marketing repertoire is demonstrated in Excerpts Five to Seven, in which the frontrunners explain their take on audience participation, or on the audience as such.

Excerpt Seven – Group Interview 1, new media expert

1. *What I think is interesting, **<u>personally</u>**, is the question of how you can strengthen the*
2. *connection between your **product**, your **title**, and the audience. […] I think your*
3. ***product line** will really improve by that [i.e., audience participation]. […] And that's*
4. *something you'll always **profit from**. Because you can **hold on longer to subscribers**,*
5. *or whatever.*

Excerpt Eight – Interview 2

1. *[It means] that, if people want to consume news in certain ways, that you link up with*

2. *those preferences.* **Maybe people do not want to watch the news at eight o'clock,**

3. **but at half past eight. <u>Fine!</u> Then you get it at half past eight.** *I always say…* **'hey, if**

4. **you want to have Teletext on your microwave's LCD screen tomorrow..?'.**

Excerpt Nine – Interview 2

1. *And since you have* **a portfolio of various products**, *you do not have to say anymore:*

2. *well, with our eight o'clock evening news* **we miss out on part of our target group,**

3. **and therefore we need to change something about the programme**.

What first stands out is the use of the words "products", "product lines", and "portfolio of products". In the marketing repertoire these words replace terms like "items", "stories" or "programmes". Additionally, the excerpts reveal the repertoire positioning its speakers as marketers thinking up strategies to get products to consumers, affording the audience the position of "subscribers", "consumers", and "target group".

Regarding the construction of audience participation, Excerpt Eight is revealing. Here, the audience is invited to make its consumption preferences known. The excerpt illustrates that marketers adopt a serviceable attitude towards the audience: whether it is the preferred time of a broadcast or the platform through which they consume news, the marketer will tune into these consumption wishes. The stressed "fine" emphasizes how serviceable this frontrunner is when it comes to the audience's consumption preferences. The colloquially constructed "hey, if you /…/ screen tomorrow?" serves the same purpose. Leaving the sentence unfinished only enhances the serviceable attitude. The same applies to the use of "I always say", indicating that complying with consumption preferences is like a motto. The repertoire thus affords consumer-participants the position of a test panel measuring "product developments", thereby constructing audience participation as technological product adjustment.

The marketing repertoire's function is demonstrated in Excerpts Eight and Nine. Here, marketing and journalism are implicitly positioned as at odds with each other. Both frontrunners are explaining how their consumer-oriented take on audience participation fits into journalism. Excerpt Eight illustrates how the marketing repertoire constructs audience participation as revolving around form, not content. In Excerpt Nine, this is reinforced where a diverse product "portfolio" caters to all tastes. As a result, marketers do not 'miss out on part of the target group' any more, which simply removes the necessity to change the journalistic content. In both excerpts, thus, jour-

nalistic content remains untouched by either marketers or the participating audience, and journalists are positioned as being in charge of making and telling the news. By this construction, the repertoire wards off an anticipated fear among journalists that "participation" equals audience control over content. In addition, the construction refutes the broadly shared idea that interference of marketing principles equals the end of journalists' independence and puts journalism's quality at risk. This is illustrated in Excerpt Seven by the stressing of the word "personally": the frontrunner realizes that his view deviates from what is common or accepted in journalistic circles. All of these examples illustrate the marketing repertoire's function: revealing that marketing can be exercised within journalism, provided it does not interfere in matters of content. Audience participation is positioned as an important tool in this respect: constructed as technological product adjustment based on consumer insights, it supports the chances of increasing sales without touching journalists' independence and control over content.

About a fifth of the frontrunners spoke the marketing repertoire. These interviewees were not responsible for the making of news, but were in charge of technological or new media development in support of editorial departments.

Education repertoire

The 'education repertoire' is illustrated in Excerpt Ten, where a frontrunner explains the rationale behind the neighbourhood television network he founded. In Excerpt Eleven, the deputy-editor-in-chief of a group blog explains how she handles audience material.

Excerpt Ten – Interview 4

1. And this is the intention: that people themselves, from the neighbourhood, the
2. neighbourhood journalists, say: 'oh, this is interesting, I'm going to film this'. Well,
3. **you can count those people on the fingers of one hand.** *Most people in the population*
4. *just don't have the time for it or* **they're simply not able to do it.** *But* **we try to get**
5. **people in** *and* **educate them. Until they can work independently**.

Excerpt Eleven – Interview 5

1. *Yeah, well,* **it's exactly the same as when a student hands in rubbish.** *Like: go back to*

2. this sentence, this is not properly developed, this sentence could be bet-
   ter, maybe you
3. should turn this around.

Speakers and participants are constructed as different categories: teachers as opposed to (ignorant) students. Although these frontrunners are connected to projects that encourage people to participate (Excerpt Ten, line 1-2), they also perceive audience participants as unable to practise journalism. In Excerpt Ten, this is demonstrated by the utterance "they're simply not able to do it". In Excerpt Eleven, participants are compared to "students" handing in "rubbish", who deserve to receive harsh comments on their writings. Opposed to those not knowing how to practise journalism, there are those that do. In Excerpt Ten this is implied by a "we" that "tries to get people in" and "educate them", which positions the repertoire's speakers as teachers. Excerpt Eleven affords its speaker the position of a (strict) teacher that comments on students' work.

The repertoire constructs participation as something that needs supervision, time, and practice, demonstrated by utterances such as "until they can work independently". It suggests participants enter as trainees that, after having been educated up to an acceptable level, can work for themselves. Although audience-students can be trained into participants, it does not give them the level of their skilled teachers, the journalists. This is illustrated by the frontrunner in Interview 9, describing the best audience participants in his project: "[T]he people who are really active at the moment are **nearly professionals**". Teaching and supervising can thus help audience participants near the level of professionals, but there will always be a difference with "real" professionals.

The education repertoire, thus, is a particularization of the craftsmanship repertoire, the difference being that speakers of the education repertoire are willing to introduce laymen into their craft. This repertoire was used by a third of the frontrunners. Frontrunners active in neighbourhood journalism projects were especially fluent; the others did not use it, possibly because it was not functional to them to invoke journalists as teachers opening up the craft to laymen.

'Being one's own boss' repertoire

The 'being one's own boss' repertoire is illustrated in Excerpt Twelve where a journalistic blogger explains why he started his journalistic activities.

Excerpt Twelve – Interview 8

*1. It's like **cocking a snook** at **those who have always controlled this**. That you say*

2. *something like:* **oh, I'm going to take part in this too**. *Then you just play the game.*

3. *And then you can* **change the game and try to change its course** *a little.*

This frontrunner accounts for his activities in terms of two metaphors: "rebellion" and "game". In lines 1-2, the repertoire positions the speaker as rebelling against established news organizations, evaluated as dominating and unwieldy. The speaker formulates his account in terms of "he who laughs last, laughs longest". He speaks about "cocking a snook" at "those who have always controlled this", and the utterance "Oh, I'm going to take part in this too" is sneering at the establishment. Now that it is technologically possible, it is time to stand up against "those who have always controlled this" and join in on journalism. "They" are here the traditional journalists and "you" is the unruly newcomer. In line 2, the frontrunner invokes the "game" metaphor. Having joined in on journalism, he adds he does not only want to play along, but also to change the rules of the "game". The interviewee's comparing journalism with a "game" reveals the repertoire's experimental character: it positions its speakers as rebellious, as breaking with traditions, and as pushing boundaries to find out what else is possible within the journalistic field.

Excerpt Thirteen demonstrates the position afforded to audience participants. The interviewee describes how he sees their role.

Excerpt Thirteen – Interview 8

1. *It's nice if someone else knows something too.* **And then sends that to <u>us</u>. And doesn't**

2. **send it to SBS** [commercial national broadcaster] **or so**. *The idea is that, if they have*

3. *something to tell, they decide to tell it to <u>us</u>. […] So then you'll have a large group of*

4. *people that read you on a daily basis, or regularly at least,* **and then think of you,**

5. **think of us if they have something. So that's the whole point. […] So the point is to**

6. **know that you're being read.** *But* **other than that, I don't really care about those**

7. **comments.**

The excerpts illustrate that audience participants are positioned as loyal followers. The frontrunner likes the audience to read him "daily, or at least regularly", and

send in tips and information. Seeing the recurrent use of the stressed "us" and the explicit mentioning of another, established, player in the journalistic field ("SBS or so", line 2), it is particularly important that followers send material to the frontrunner, and not to other, established players in the field. Readers or users of the frontrunner's blogs are thus constructed as an opportunity for the repertoire's speakers to be seen for who they are, that is, as different from established players, and as an opportunity for the audience to show that they are following. The use of "So that's the whole point", "So the point is' and 'other than that' stress that the quantity of audience material is more important than its content. The function of the audience material is to serve as visible proof of having followers and of being a leader. The frontrunner wants to know that 'he's being read".

The importance of having followers also reveals the function of the "being one's own boss repertoire": pushing the journalistic boundaries. Note that pushing the boundaries means creating more room for journalistic practices without transgressing boundaries, since this would drive audiences as well as established journalistic players away: pushing boundaries, by contrast, attracts followers. This is reinforced by the frontrunner in Interview 6. The interviewer asks when he considers his work a success. The frontrunner answers: "when at the end of the day, the most read article is one of ours and when other media pick up on it, too". Having followers, both in terms of other established media and in terms of audience, thus serves as a sign of acknowledgement that one is part of the journalistic field, and as evidence of having extended the journalistic playing field.

The 'being one's own boss' repertoire was used by a fifth of the frontrunners. Most of them were active in the blogosphere and were thus relative newcomers in the journalistic field. Despite the aim of enlarging – and not transgressing – journalistic margins, most interviewees could not identify with the tampering with journalistic values or rules.

Profitability repertoire

The final repertoire is the 'profitability repertoire'. In Excerpt Fourteen, the frontrunner gives an introduction of the platform he is building.

> *Excerpt Fourteen* – Interview 9
> 1. *Well.. the goal is to eh.. research the **feasibility** of a nationwide, locally oriented*
> 2. *network for news and information. […] So it's really a story about **costs and benefits**.*

3. If you claim that you provide current information from every corner of the street, with

4. all kinds of databases attached to it, you simply can't do it with professionals only.

5. ***That will cost the earth. It's a bit of a trivial reason***, *but really, it's just* ***not …***.

6. ***feasible***, *you* ***can't upscale that***.

First, the excerpt constructs participation as a way to save on personnel costs. The frontrunner speaks in terms of "feasibility", "costs and benefits", and "up-scalability". Second, the frontrunner is defending his take on audience participation. To begin with, there is the strong case formulation "That will cost the earth". With this expression the interviewee defends running the platform with audience participants, instead of only with journalists. It is as if he would have liked things to be different, but "sadly" it is too expensive to run the platform with only professional journalists. The utterances "It's a bit of a trivial reason" and "but really, it's just not feasible" again position the frontrunner as reluctantly going down the road of audience participation, and at the same time, as making his excuses for approaching journalism in terms of costs and benefits. These utterances construct the frontrunner's approach – both running the platform with audience participants and approaching it in a commercial way – as at odds with what others consider acceptable in relation to journalism.

The Excerpts Fifteen and Sixteen demonstrate how the profitability repertoire positions its speakers and audience participants.

Excerpt Fifteen – Interview 9

1. *The most important question here is … how can we, eh, what do* ***we*** *have to do* ***to***

2. *really* ***get*** *a community* ***active***. *So a community that does not only passively read*

3. *what happens, but one that* ***actively co-operates to boost the platform and make it***

4. ***better***.

Excerpt Sixteen – Interview 9

Interviewer: 1. So what does this person actually do?

Interviewee: 2. *Yeah, so that's the community* ***manager***. *That's what we called*

3. him. That's the one who has **to stir up** *the community,* **get it**

4. **moving**, **get it in motion**, *make sure that there will be contributions.*

Journalists are positioned as managers and audience participants as the ones who are managed, who should become active. The journalist's task is constructed as "to get a community active", "to stir up the community", "get it moving", "get it in motion" and to "make sure there will be contributions". Becoming active on the part of audience participants signifies "actively co-operating to boost the platform and make it better" and making "contributions". Thus, the profitability repertoire transfers the heart of journalistic activities to audience participants: they spot, collect and make news. In other words, audience participants are constructed as producers as well as consumers, who are consuming and producing output at the same time.

The positioning of audience participants as newsmakers is unique: in none of the other repertoires are participants constructed as such. The utterance "to boost the platform and make it better" points to a another noticeable difference with other repertoires: instead of positioning journalists as guarding over journalistic quality and participants as potentially putting it at risk, here, participants are explicitly constructed as potential quality enhancers.

In summary, the profitability repertoire's function is to make journalism visible as a business that needs to be profitable. Audience participation plays an important role in this regard: it is constructed as a survival strategy that could prevent journalism from going "out of business". As such, the vocabulary radically stretches the boundaries of the "journalistic": participants are positioned as collecting and making news, whereas journalists are positioned as "mere" managers in a reversed position compared to other repertoires: less controlling over content than audience participants. Only one frontrunner – who was inventing a new business model for journalism based on audience participation – used this repertoire, and even he doubted whether it was "journalistic". Other frontrunners did not use this repertoire, unable to conceive audience members in the role of journalists.

Conclusion and Discussion

Existing research demonstrates that journalism is on the one hand changing profoundly, but on the other hand "stays the same" (Deuze, 2008). Research into participatory journalism illustrates that journalists wish to encourage innovative participatory practices, while being 'resistant' to change (Borger et al., 2013). Despite

high hopes expressed for participatory journalism (Bowman & Willis, 2003; Gillmor, 2004; Rosen, 2006), these expectations have not yet been realized. Scholars conclude that journalists welcome audience material when they consider it useful, but discard it when it challenges traditional journalistic values and ways of working (e.g. Harrison, 2010; Singer, 2010; Williams, Wardle & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2010). This article reveals how even journalistic frontrunners' language use is permeated with this resistance and how this constructs their journalistic realities.

The analysis reveals that frontrunners drew upon six interpretative repertoires. All frontrunners used the innovation repertoire, plus at least one other repertoire. The innovation repertoire positioned frontrunners as innovators, and constructed traditional journalism as conservative, arrogant, and needing innovation. The other repertoires revealed frontrunners as part of the journalistic field and thus as having to relate to the journalistic profession. This contradictory construction confronted frontrunners with a dilemma: being innovative and being a "true" journalist at the same time. Each combination of repertoires (innovation repertoire plus one of the other vocabularies) negotiated this dilemma in a different manner, resulting in varying possibilities and constraints for audience participation and innovation in journalism.

The combination of innovation and craftsmanship constructed participants as assistants (sources, eyewitnesses) and innovation as new technological ways to get in touch with them. Innovation combined with marketing constructed participation as reporting consumption preferences concerning distribution and packaging, and innovation as technological product adjustment tuning into these wishes. In both combinations, participation and innovation revolved around technological aspects, and resulted in journalism being protected and valorized as a craft and profession.
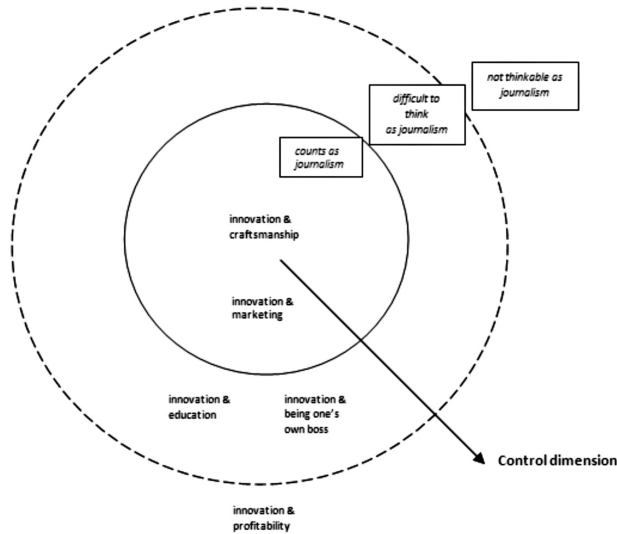
The combination of innovation and education positioned participants as students that need to be taught by skilled teachers how to properly participate in journalism; innovation was consequently constructed as carefully opening up the journalistic craft to laymen. Innovation and being one's own boss positioned participants as loyal followers, and constructed innovation as the opportunity to build one's own platform and set one's own journalistic rules. Innovation and profitability constructed participation as a way to save on personnel costs and innovation as devising a new business model. These three combinations of repertoires proved problematic for many frontrunners: as the repertoires no longer fully protected journalism as a craft of skilled professionals, they were not used by the majority.

Taken together, the repertoires reveal a notional "control" as pivotal (see Figure 1). The five repertoires combined with the innovation repertoire are ordered ac-

cording to the amount of space afforded to audience participants, in increasing degree: innovation and craftsmanship create the least space for audience participation, innovation and profitability the most. At the same time, more space for audience participation implies handing over more control to participants. The repertoires constitute a discursive environment consisting of three circles, measured against what the majority of frontrunners consider thinkable: what counts as journalism, what is difficult to think as journalism, and what is not thinkable as journalism. The inner circle consists of the repertoires most frequently used: the craftsmanship and marketing repertoire. Here, journalists stay in control over output and audience participation is implemented without impeaching what counts as journalism. When journalists' control decreases and participants' control increases, as happens in the being one's own boss and education repertoires in the middle circle, audience participation becomes problematic. For some, these repertoires are thinkable as journalism, but to most frontrunners they are not, because they yield control on the part of the journalists. Most problematic is the profitability repertoire. This was the only vocabulary that invoked participants as potential newsmakers. It was used by only one frontrunner, and even he expressed doubts about the repertoire's journalistic calibre. The marginal use of the profitability repertoire suggests that the majority could not think it as journalism. In summary, even in the discursive environment set by frontrunners – who all speak the innovation repertoire – the dominant repertoires are likely to sustain traditional journalistic patterns and hinder change that tampers with traditional values, role divisions, and practices.

This study indicates that journalism may be even more resistant to change than previous research suggested. Not only do editorial staff from mainstream news organizations hold on to classical ideas about what counts as journalism (Deuze, 2008; Zelizer, 2004), even pioneering frontrunners endorse traditional notions of what counts as journalism and who counts as a journalist. Repertoires were found that constructed a combination of audience participation and journalism as possible and even necessary, but these were not unproblematic. This hesitant attitude towards participatory journalism suggests that journalism can be called obdurate. The term obduracy comes from the field of science and technology studies where it is used to understand processes of sociotechnical development (Hommels, 2005). A technological artefact is obdurate when it resists change. Just like automobiles, transport networks, or cities that become hard to change once firmly in place, journalism can be labelled obdurate. Existing routines, practices, and values, developed over time, limit the flexibility of the definition of what counts as journalism. This study illustrates the difficulty in altering the obdurate definition of what counts as journalism.

Figure 1:   The repertoires' positions in relation to 'what counts as journalism' to most frontrunners

While in larger society social media are flourishing with the audience in the role of "prosumers" (Jenkins, 2006), professional journalistic contexts resist change, even if they are created by innovative frontrunners. The findings further strengthen the suggestion made by Deuze (2005, 2008) and others that journalists' professional identity is strongly set, which is expressed in the difficulty the profession experiences in adapting to the rapidly changing news media environment of declining newspaper circulations and increasing digitization.

Three directions for further research can be suggested. As this study was based on Dutch data, an international comparison with pioneering frontrunners across different locales could prove useful. Second, we propose investigating motivations and expectations of the audience. The six repertoires constructed audience participation on journalists' terms, not taking into account participants' perspective. Turning to participants might reveal new resources to make sense of audience participation, currently not part of practitioners' linguistic practice. A third direction would be researching participatory content: what is produced if participants are handed over control? Are frontrunners rightly protecting their craft so fiercely, or could participation also bring about something that is valuable, not only on journalists' terms, but in its own right?

ENDNOTES

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APPENDIX

Conventions:

(.)   short pause

sources the use of bold indicates the focus of the researchers

<u>our</u>   underlining indicates added emphasis by the speaker

"To je zaista umijeće": Razmišljanja vodećih novinara o sudjelovanju publike

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SAŽETAK

Istraživanja o participativnom novinarstvu pokazuju da profesionalno novinarstvo može biti otporno na promjene. Novinari i novinarske organizacije žele potaknuti doprinos publike i digitalnu inovaciju, ali nailaze na poteškoće kod tradicionalnih novinarskih vrijednosti i praksa s obzirom na one koje su više participativne. U ovom istraživanju otpor prema promjeni istražuje se kroz 22 intervjua s vodećim nizozemskim novinarima koji su pioniri u sudjelovanju publike. Kakva su njihova razmišljanja o participativnom novinarstvu? Mogućnosti, ograničenja i dvojbe vidljive iz njihovih riječi istražene su pomoću interpretativne analize repertoara. Vodeći novinari oslanjaju se na šest interpretativnih repertoara: inovacija, vještina, marketing, biti sam svoj šef, obrazovanje i profitabilnost. Svi vodeći novinari govore o inovacijskom repertoaru i barem još jedanput od preostalih, često u uzajamnom proturječju. Ova analiza pokazuje svojevrsni trenutačni paradoks s obzirom na to kako se novinarstvo kritizira zbog svoje tradicionalne i paternalističke kulture isključivanja, a u isto je vrijeme cijenjeno i štićeno kao profesija i zanat. Zaključak je da su čak i inovativni vodeći novinari podvrgnuti tom paradoksu, unatoč njihovoj očitoj želji da realiziraju participativno novinarstvo. Provodeći ovaj specifični tip analize, istraživanje pokazuje rutinski pristup u poimanju kulturne novinarske jezične prakse i otkriva praktične posljedice u smislu mogućnosti i ograničenja za sudjelovanje publike i inovacije u novinarstvu.

Ključne riječi: sudjelovanje publike, analiza diskursa, interpretativni repertoari, okorjelost, participativno novinarstvo