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CONSTRUCTING PARTICIPATORY JOURNALISM AS A SCHOLARLY OBJECT

A Genealogical Analysis*

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2.1 Introduction

For over a decade, journalists, journalism educators and journalism scholars have been occupied with ‘participatory journalism’. New media technologies have triggered this development. The most common understanding of participatory journalism could be formulated as the idea that digital technologies enable the audience to get involved in making and disseminating news. News organizations and journalists around the world experiment with new, technology-enabled forms of audience participation; journalism schools teach courses on online journalism, social media and citizen journalism; journalism scholars, in their turn, study the phenomenon from a wide range of research perspectives. Across the various populations involved in making, teaching and studying journalism, core questions are raised as to who counts as a journalist, what counts as good journalism, and to what end. Considering all this activity around participatory journalism, the phenomenon apparently affects what practitioners, educators and scholars alike consider the fundamentals of journalism.

In this article, we focus on participatory journalism from the perspective of journalism scholars. We hook into the sociology of knowledge by conducting a Foucauldian genealogical analysis: we investigate the history of development of participatory journalism as a scholarly object in journalism studies. We analyze how scholarly ways of writing and thinking about participatory journalism have developed over the years, which concepts and convictions have emerged and how these may have changed, and how all of this is linked with what “counts” as journalism within journalism studies. In short, we query the given scholarly knowledge about participatory journalism by tracing its descent and emergence as an object of journalism studies¹.

2.2 Participatory journalism and genealogical analysis

The sociology of knowledge is concerned with the coming about and development of knowledge. The discipline experienced a revival after Berger and Luckmann’s (1966) publication of *The Social Construction of Reality*, which has inspired a wide range of studies into various aspects of the social construction of everyday life, science and technology. Still, it is safe to say that one of the most influential contributions to the sociology of knowledge has been made by Michel Foucault. In his genealogical studies on, among other things, the emergence of the penal system in modern society (1977) and the history of sexuality (1980), he puts to use his ideas on the construction of knowledge.

Central to Foucault’s genealogical analysis (1967, 1970) is the concept of ‘discursive formations’: ways of thinking, writing and speaking in a given knowledge domain and time period. Foucault holds that discursive formations are based on rules, or agreements on what constitutes proper knowledge. Genealogical analysis is a search for origins aimed at isolating the rules of production and transformation of discursive formations (Hook, 2005: 26). A genealogical search for origins is about analyzing how ways of thinking, writing and speaking about a phenomenon change and shift over time, about what is included and excluded in

the process, and about how these developments are connected with the rules governing a particular knowledge domain. A genealogical search for origins, thus, is not about uncovering a phenomenon's essential meaning. We analyze the rule-bound processes of production and transformation that participatory journalism has undergone to make it fit into the knowledge domain of journalism studies.

As a starting point for our genealogical endeavor, we need a general idea of the contemporary rules governing journalism studies. Barbie Zelizer (2009) points out that journalism studies is not one homogenous discursive formation, but rather a field consisting of several such formations. Journalism studies is made up of various scholarly communities –sociology, history, language studies, political science and cultural analysis– each having its own perception of what matters in journalism research and what does not. In line with this observation, Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch's (2009) *Handbook of Journalism Studies* provides an overview of the history of journalism research, from which three main rules can be deduced.

First, Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch point to the dominance of normative theories about the aim of journalism. These theories inextricably link journalism with democracy and can be traced back to nineteenth-century thinking on journalism, and are still alive today as a set of normative assumptions underlying all strands of journalism research. Key issues are the idea of journalism being vital to good citizenship and democracy, of journalists being watchdogs, and of journalists as guardians of free speech (2009: 8).

Secondly, Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch stress the dominance of sociological and anthropological research into news production. This line of research emphasizes the routines and practices of professional news people and can be traced back to the 1950s (White, 1950; McLeod and Hawley, 1964; Galtung and Ruge, 1965; McCombs and Shaw, 1972). It was given a strong impetus during the 1970s and 1980s when influential newsroom studies came on the scene (Tuchman, 1972, 1973, 1978; Gans, 1979; Fishman, 1980; Ericson, Baranek, and Chan, 1989, 1991). Zelizer writes that this scholarly focus on professional journalism has contributed to the naturalization of the idea of the professional journalist: "*The academy's move to professionalize journalists –largely driven by its sociological inquiry– had told journalists that they are professionals*" (2009: 34).

Thirdly, the handbook of Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch puts forward the marginal position of audiences in journalism studies. Although approaches from communication science have covered journalism's effects on audiences, accounts of the audience as subject have been relatively underdeveloped and are of recent date. Madianou points out that, from the 1980s onwards, influenced by Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model (1980), scholars have focused on audiences' interpretation of news, drawing on methods from anthropology and cultural studies (2009: 331). Partly fuelled by the emerging field of television studies, the 1990s witnessed a shift toward audiences' practices and routines around news and toward an interest in the place occupied by news in people's everyday lives (p. 329). Still, compared to the prominence of news professionals, audiences are far less visible (Costera Meijer, 2013).

Considering our goal of conducting a genealogical analysis of participatory journalism as a scholarly object and the rules governing the field of journalism studies as outlined above, we formulate our research questions as follows:

RQ1: How did participatory journalism emerge and develop as a scholarly object? To be more concrete: how have scholarly ways of thinking and writing about participatory journalism developed over time?

RQ2: How can these developments be linked to “*the conditions of possibility*” (Foucault, 1970) that endorse what counts as knowledge within journalism studies, in a nutshell being the inextricable link between journalism and democracy, the dominance of sociological accounts of professional news production, and the marginality of audiences as subjects?

2.3 Method

2.3.1 Data

In order to analyze the emergence and development of the scholarly discourse on participatory journalism, we, first, had to chart the field in which the topic has been discussed. As academic journals form the locus par excellence of scholarly discussions, we decided to concentrate on articles published in these journals. First, we selected a range of journals involved in journalism and journalism studies. For some journals, this process of selection was rather self-evident, as they contained ‘journalism’ in their titles. For a large part, however, the selection process involved more search work, relying on snowball sampling: we followed up on articles popping up in references, leading to new journals being included in our data. Via ISI ranking and Google Scholar we double checked to be sure we did not miss any important publications. However, the set of journals we worked with goes well beyond the journals listed through Google Scholar and ISI ranking. This search led to the conclusion that the population of scholarly discussions on participatory journalism in scientific journals is found in the following 18 journals: *Journalism*; *Journalism Practice*; *Journalism Studies*; *British Journalism Review*; *Columbia Journalism Review*; *EJournalist*; *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*; *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*; *Journal of Communication*; *Journal of Computer-mediated Communication*; *Media, Culture & Society*; *New Media & Society*; *Convergence*; *Continuum*; *International Journal of Cultural Studies*; *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*; *Observatorio*; and *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*.

Next, from these journals, we selected the articles dealing with participatory journalism. At this point, we made two decisions. First, we decided to include equivalents of the word participatory journalism. From an initial reading of part of the literature, we observed that the term was often used interchangeably with other words, such as *citizen journalism*, *user-generated content*, *grassroots journalism*, *collaborative journalism*, *networked journalism* and *interactive journalism*. To make sure we did not overlook relevant articles, we included

these words as search terms in title, abstract and key words. For the same reason, we included derivatives of the aforementioned key words –such as *participation/participants*, *citizen journalist(s)*, *collaboration*, *interaction/interactivity*– and we included the terms news and media in addition to journalism. The second decision concerned searching for articles published over a rather broad time span: between 1995 and September 2011. We suspected that, although the term participatory journalism had not been used prior to 2003, literature on ‘interactivity’ in combination with ‘journalism’ published before 2003 might also be relevant. We chose 1995 to be our starting point, since publications on interactivity in journalism started to appear roughly from that year on, which can be linked to the rise of the internet.

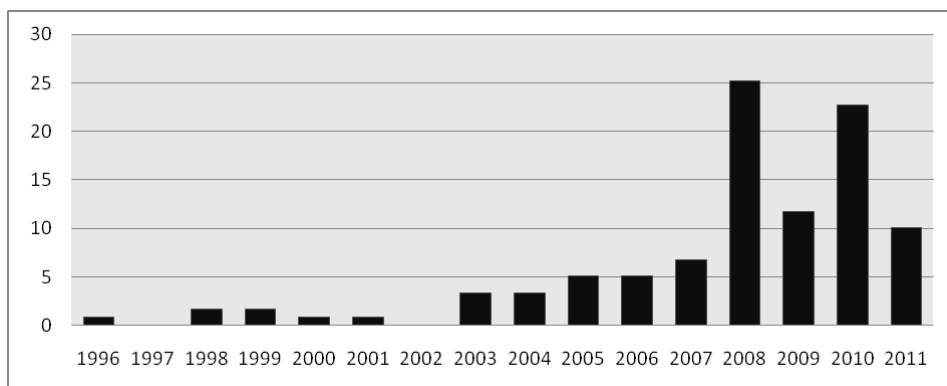
A search through each of the 18 journals, using the key terms mentioned above and covering the aforementioned time period, yielded a collection of some 200 articles. To filter out the ‘noise’, we scanned the abstracts of every article to decide if it should be included. We excluded articles that did not mention a link with new media technologies and only dealt with ‘older’ kinds of audience participation, like letters to the editor or phone-ins on radio shows. We ended up with a collection of 119 articles (Table 1). The journals that turned out to contain most relevant articles were *Journalism Practice* (19 articles), *Journalism Studies* (12), *New Media & Society* (11) and *Journalism* (9). Searches with the key words participatory (59 articles), citizen (31), interactive (16) and user-generated content (10) produced most results.

In Figure 1, we recorded the number of articles published per year. As the graph shows, from 2003 –the year in which the term ‘participatory journalism’ is coined– onwards, more and more publications enter the scene. From 2007, the number of publications expands, with peaks in 2008 and 2010. All in all, more than three-quarters of the articles turn out to have been published between 2007 and September 2011.

TABLE 1. Data: articles per journal

Journal	Reference
Journalism Practice	Bivens(2008)2(1),pp.127-142 Braun&Gillespie(2011)5(4), pp.383-398 Deuze&al.(2007)1(3),pp.322-338 Domingo&al.(2008)2(3),pp.326-342 Hermida&Thurman(2008)2(3),pp.343-356 Jönsson&Örnebring(2011)5(2),pp.127-144 Karlsson(2011)5(1),pp.68-84 Lewis&al.(2010)4(2),pp.163-179 McIntosh(2008)2(2),pp.197-211 Muthukumaraswamy(2010)4(1),pp.48-65 Neuberger&Nuernbergk(2010)4(3),pp.319-332 Nip(2008)2(2),pp.179-196 O'Sullivan&Heinonen(2008)2(2),pp.357-371 Robinson(2007)1(3),pp.305-321 Singer(2010)4(2),pp.127-142 Strömbäck&Karlsson(2011)First,pp.1-14 Vujanovic&al.(2010)4(3),pp.285-296 Williams&al.(2010)5(1),pp.85-99 Xin(2010)4(3),pp.333-344
Journalism Studies	Compton&Benedetti(2010)11(4),pp.487-499 Harrison(2010)11(2),pp.243-256 Kioussis(2006)7(2),pp.348-359 Kovacic&Erjavec(2008)9(6),pp.874-890 Lasorsa&al.(2011)First,pp.1-18 Moyo(2009)4(1),pp.551-567 Nip(2006)7(2),pp.212-236 Örnebring(2008)9(5),pp.771-785 Quandt(2008)9(5),pp.717-738 Reich(2008)9(5),pp.739-758 Robinson&Deshano(2011)First,pp.1-16 Steensen(2010)First,pp.311-327
New Media & Society	Antony&Thomas(2010)12(5),pp.1280-1296 Carpenter(2010)12(7),pp.1064-1084 Chan&Leung(2005)7(3),pp.357-382 Deuze(2003)5(2),pp.203-230 Goode(2009)11(8),pp.1287-1305 Hujanen&Pietikäinen(2004)6(3),pp.383-401 Kperogi(2010)13(2),pp.314-329 Larsson(2011)First,pp.1-18 Robinson(2009)11(5),pp.795-814 Thorsen(2008)10(6),pp.935-954 Thurman(2008)10(1),pp.139-157
Journalism	Anderson(2011)12(5),pp.550-566 Deuze(2006)7(3),pp.262-280 Flew&Wilson(2010)11(2),pp.131-147 GildeZuniga&al.(2011)12(5),pp.586-606 Nassanga(2008)9(5),pp.646-663 Nielsen(2010)11(1),pp.21-35 Reese&al.(2007)8(3),pp.235-261 Singer(2005)6(2),pp.173-198 Wall(2005)6(2),pp.153-172
Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly	Carpenter(2008)85(3),pp.531-548 Johnson&Wiedenbeck(2009)86(2),pp.332-348 Kaufhold&al.(2010)87(3-4),pp.515-529 Massey&Levy(1999)76(1),pp.138-151 Rosenberry(2010)87(1),pp.154-169 Singer(2003)80(1),pp.39-56 Singer(2006)83(2),pp.265-280 Singer(2009)86(4),pp.827-843
Columbia Journalism Review	Baker(2006)44(5),p.64 Cooper(2008)47(3),pp.45-7 Cornog(2008)47(3),pp.38-41 Gillmor(2003)41(5),pp.20-1 Joel(2010)49(3),p.12 Quart(2008)47(2),pp.14-7 Roasa(2008)46(6),p.12 Rose(2008)47(3),pp.10-1
Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication	Chung(2008)12(4),pp.487-499 Chung&Nah(2009)14(4),pp.855-874 Domingo(2008)13(3),pp.680-704 Lowrey&Anderson(2005)10(3) Paulussen(2004)9(4) Schultz(1999)5(1) Singer(1998)4(1)
Convergence	Beyers(2004)10(4),pp.10-20 Chung(2007)13(1),pp.43-61 Gordon(2007)13(3),pp.307-319 Huang(2009)15(1),pp.105-122 Lee-Wright(2008)14(3),pp.249-260 Robinson(2010)16(1),pp.125-143 Sundet&Ytreberg(2009)15(4),pp.383-390
Observatorio	Deuze(2008)2(4),pp.103-117 Franquet&al.(2011)5(3),pp.223-242 Garcia-Aviles(2010)4(4),pp.251-263 Holt&vonKrogh(2010)4(4),pp.287-306 Karlsson(2010)4(1),pp.201-220 Paulussen&al.(2010)1(3),pp.131-154
Journal of Mass Media Ethics	Altschull(1996)11(3),pp.166-172 Hayes&al.(2007)22(4),pp.262-279 Kenney&Ozkan(2011)26(1),pp.38-55 Singer&Ashman(2009)24(1),pp.3-21 Spence&Quinn(2008)23(4),pp.264-279 Ward&Wasserman(2010)25(4),pp.275-292
Media, Culture & Society	Kim&Hamilton(2006)28(4),pp.541-560 Rebillard&Touboul(2010)32(2),pp.323-334 Schultz(2000)22(2),pp.205-221 Warlde&Williams(2010)32(5),pp.781-799 Woo-Young(2005)27(6),pp.925-935
EJournalist	Bruns(2008)8(1),pp.74-89 Cokley(2005)5(1),pp.1-78 Deuze(2001)1(1),pp.1-20 Knight(2010)10(2),pp.13-31 Xiaoge(2008)8(1),pp.19-26 Singer(2009)14(4),pp.477-496
Harvard International Journal Press/Politics	Elberse(1998)3(4),pp.62-83 El-Nawawy&Khamis(2011)16(2),pp.234-253 Mäkinen&WanguKaira(2008)13(3),pp.328-335
Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture	Bergström(2008)5(2),pp.60-80 Hamdy(2009)6(1),pp.92-112 Metykova(2008)5(2),pp.42-59 Paulussen&Ugille(2008)5(2),pp.24-41
International Journal of Cultural Studies	Carpentier(2003)6(4),pp.425-447 Deuze(2007)10(2),pp.243-263 Pantti&Bakker(2009)12(5),pp.471-489
British Journalism Review	Chisholm(2010)21(13),pp.13-19 Rusbridger(2009)20(3),pp.19-26
Journal of Communication	Boczkowski(2004)54(2),pp.197-213 Newhagen& al.(1995)45(3),pp.164-175
Continuum	O'Donnell(2009)23(4),pp.503-517

FIGURE 1. Attention to articles on participatory journalism per year as percentage of total number of articles ($N = 119$)



2.3.2 Applying genealogical discourse analysis

Having charted the field in which participatory journalism is discussed, we had to think of a way to undertake our genealogical discourse analysis. Foucault's genealogy is more of a methodology – "*a lens through which to engage in discourse analysis*" (Carabine, 2001: 268)– than a clear-cut method. Therefore, our analysis was inspired by Lowrey, Brozana, and Mackay's (2008) method in a study of 'community journalism'. By conducting a qualitative and quantitative content analysis of 11 years of scholarly articles on community journalism, Lowrey et al. investigated how scholars have conceptualized the meaning of community and of the relationship between community and journalism. Based on the type of research questions asked, methods used, and conclusions drawn, they studied the definitions and descriptions scholars have given to the term 'community journalism'. Put differently, Lowrey et al. investigated the elements constituting a scholarly object. Their method, thus, suits our aim of analyzing participatory journalism's coming about as a scholarly object in the field of journalism studies.

Per article we analyzed how participatory journalism was conceptualized. Following Lowrey et al. (2008), we did not look only for explicit definitions of the term, but explored a broad array of perceptions concerning the meaning of participation and the relationship between participation and journalism. For every article, we recorded all implicit and explicit definitions and descriptions of participatory journalism. In addition, we recorded research questions, hypotheses (if mentioned), methods used, and conclusions drawn. Also, we determined whether the author studied participatory journalism as having an effect on journalism, or as impacting on external factors (e.g. democracy/society) and noted the anticipated changes and consequences. Language use and tone of voice were also important in this process, because they helped when considering whether statements were

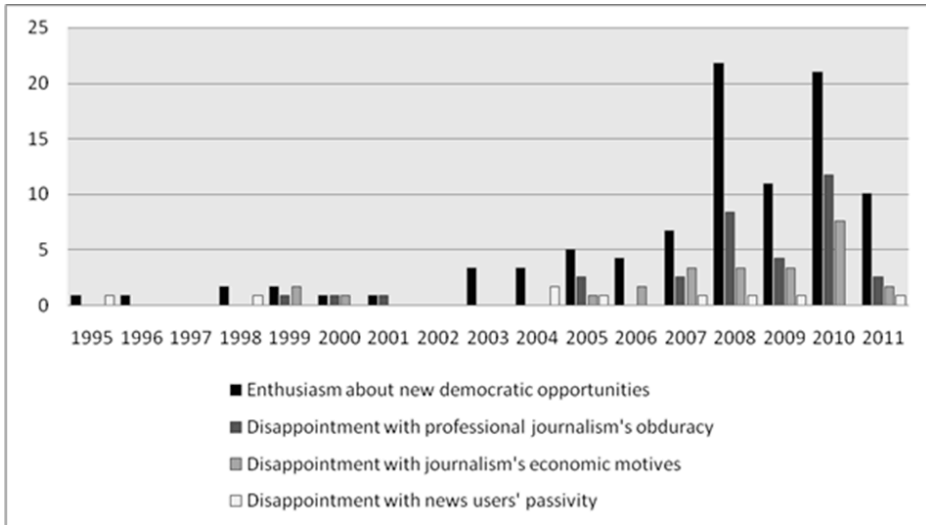
made in a positive, neutral or negative way. In this manner, formulations like citizens being “*limited*” (Domingo et al. 2008¹: 335) to roles as contributors, “*if they were given a role at all*” (p. 335), and user-generated content as “*merely*” (Harrison, 2010: 253–4) supporting stories of professional journalists, were helpful in determining what counts in journalism studies according to these scholars.

By close reading and re-reading the assembled data we began to identify shifting dimensions, key issues and characteristics of the discourse. We summarized them with labels, like ‘democracy’ or ‘obduracy’, and added narrative descriptions of concepts, findings, and quoted passages. As analysis progressed, we were able to discern four ‘dimensions’ in the discourse that together constitute the way participatory journalism has been framed, presented and discussed over time. Finally, we employed basic descriptive quantitative analysis as an extra tool to indicate and visualize the presence of the various dimensions in the data over the years.

2.4 Analysis

Our analysis suggests that the knowledge domain of journalism studies has constructed the phenomenon of participatory journalism² along four normative dimensions. The concept ‘normative dimension’ should not be understood so much in terms of a binary normative judgment (good/bad), but rather in terms of a focus on what is deemed important and on what counts within this particular knowledge domain. We labeled the dimensions as follows: (1) enthusiasm about new democratic opportunities; (2) disappointment with professional journalism’s obduracy; (3) disappointment with journalism’s economic motives to facilitate participatory journalism; (4) disappointment with news users’ passivity. Figure 2 shows a rise in scholarly attention from 2003 onwards, and peaks in 2008 and 2010. The figure also shows that the dimensions differ in attention received over time. The first dimension is dominant, whereas the fourth dimension has received least attention. It is important to note that one article can recur in several dimensions. For instance, an article can portray enthusiasm about new democratic opportunities while expressing disappointment with the extent to which these are realized in journalism practice. We will explain the four dimensions below.

FIGURE 2. Attention to four dimensions per year as percentage of total number of articles ($N = 119$).



Note: One article can recur in several dimensions. The dimension 'Enthusiasm about new democratic opportunities' occurs in 111 articles; the dimension 'Disappointment with professional journalism's obduracy' in 41 articles; the dimension 'Disappointment with journalism's economic motives' in 30 articles; the dimension 'Disappointment with news users' passivity' in 9 articles. Six articles do not occur in any of these four dimensions.

2.4.1 Enthusiasm about new democratic opportunities

An early and fundamental conviction throughout the data is the idea that participatory journalism potentially offers new democratic opportunities. In a small minority of journalism studies (5 percent of the articles), authors do not support this line of thinking and warn against harmful effects of a participatory trend on the quality of journalism³. The majority, however, irrespective of research methods used, adhere to the idea that participatory journalism harbors the potential to democratize both journalism and society at large. The—often—tacit understanding is that participatory journalism revolves around a new type of audience participation in the creation of news: one that surpasses audience's active interpretation of media messages or sending letters to the editor, and that, theoretically, encroaches upon the core of journalism and could change it for the better.

When zooming in on the democratic prospects, we find them resting on two pillars. First, there is a strong faith in the democratic potential of digital technologies. This technological optimism can be traced back to internet enthusiasts of the 1990s who voiced great expectations regarding the reinvigoration of the public sphere, as envisioned by thinkers like Dewey (1954) and Habermas (1989). The few articles that were published before the coining of the term "participatory journalism"⁴ refer to interactivity believers like Howard

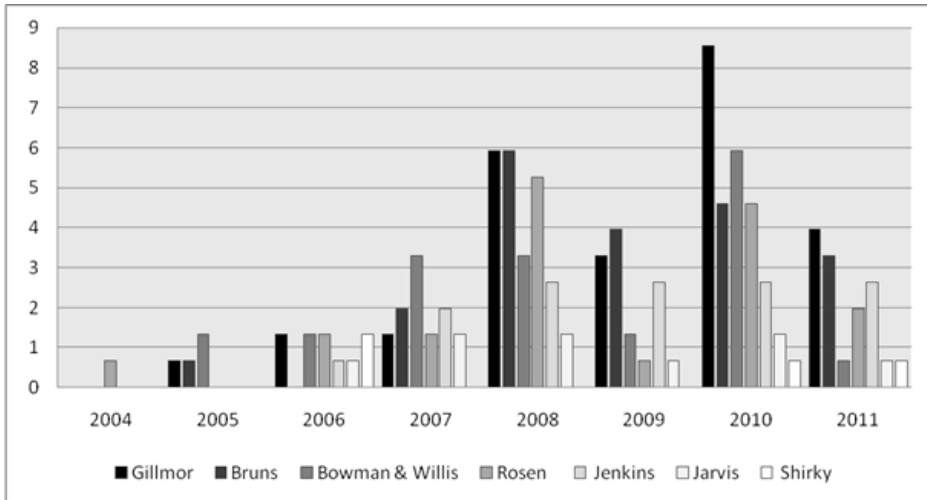
Rheingold (1993) and Nicholas Negroponte (1995), and to scholars who shifted theorizing on interactivity from the field of computer-mediated communication to the knowledge domain of media (Heeter, 1989; Newhagen and Rafaeli, 1996; Rafaeli, 1988; Rafaeli and Sudweeks, 1997) and journalism.

From 2004 onwards, the same type of technological optimism is drawn from another group of ‘founding fathers’. This group consists of Shayne Bowman and Chris Willis (2003), Dan Gillmor (2004), Jay Rosen (2006), Jeff Jarvis (2006), Clay Shirky (2008), Henry Jenkins (2004, 2006) and Axel Bruns (2005, 2008). In the wake of the introduction of the term participatory journalism, these authors engage in crafting a participatory ideal for the future of journalism. In a nutshell, they envision journalism as an egalitarian conversation between professionals and citizens. Notwithstanding that ‘interactivity’ is still important to these authors, the focus now is on participation. In 56 percent of journalism studies (65 articles) reference is made to these founding fathers. Figure 3 shows the development in references over the years. Gillmor, Bruns, and Bowman and Willis are referred to most frequently.

The second pillar of participatory journalism’s democratic promises consists of the ideals underlying public journalism. In the 1990s, this journalistic reform program aimed to reconnect journalism to the public and citizens to public life by encouraging citizen participation in the creation of news. The movement’s goals can be summarized as: (1) empowering ordinary people by enabling them to express their views on public affairs and shape the news agenda; (2) motivating ordinary people to get involved in public deliberations of important issues, which is an elaboration on Habermas’ (1989) ideal of the public sphere; (3) helping public deliberation in search of solutions to societal problems; and (4) fostering people’s understanding of public issues (Merritt, 1995; Rosen, 1999). In 40 percent of journalism studies⁵ (47 articles), public journalism is literally mentioned as participatory journalism’s precursor. Going hand in hand with the technological optimism, there is a broad belief that, theoretically, participatory journalism offers a renewed chance to realize public journalism’s goals.

In sum, our analysis shows that at the origins of participatory journalism lie normative ideas that are inextricably linked with democracy, a core value of both journalism and journalism studies. In the theoretical ideal underlying participatory journalism, the audience is explicitly approached as citizenry. Its technology-enabled participation in journalistic activities is thought to result in a better kind of journalism, beneficial to society. Scholars generally agree that this democratic ideal is worth striving for.

FIGURE 3. Reference to ‘founding fathers’ in articles on participatory journalism as percentage of total number of references to founding fathers ($N = 152$).



Note: In 65 articles reference is made to one or more ‘founding fathers’.

2.4.2 Disappointment with professional journalism’s obduracy

A second dimension entails a sense of disappointment with the extent to which democratic ideals are realized in journalism practice. Despite the fact that some scholars discern positive signs regarding their actualization, mostly when studying citizen-only activities outside professional frameworks, the picture turns grim when scholars turn to participation in professional news organizations. This move is made in over a third of journalism studies (42 articles) and can be identified from 2007 onwards⁶. Methodologically, these studies resemble the sociological newsroom studies of the 1970s: they focus on the production side of journalism and investigate how professional journalists deal with citizen participation by conducting participant observation in newsrooms, doing in-depth interviews with journalists, and carrying out analyses of participatory features on the organizations’ websites to determine how participatory the production culture is. The general outcome of these studies is that journalism is adapting slowly, if at all, to this democratic ideal.

More specifically, in a large number of these studies⁷, scholars find that news organizations offer participatory opportunities, but not in a way that overthrows the existing journalistic paradigm. Despite the fact that users can upload videos, leave comments, or send e-mails to the editorial staff, citizens cannot perform key journalistic activities, journalists hardly engage in conversation with them, and citizens never have any control over their contributions or the outcome of the news-making process. Scholars observe that participatory journalism’s

democratic ideal clashes with professional journalism's core values of objectivity and autonomy. As a result, scholars find journalists sticking to traditional gatekeeping, and come to the conclusion that, unfortunately, technology's democratic potential remains largely unused.

In general, one can say that a dominant line of research finds professional journalism to be 'obdurate'. We borrow this term from the field of science and technology studies, where the notion is used to indicate the obduracy of technological artifacts (Hommels, 2005). A technological artifact is obdurate when fixed ways of thinking and doing have grown up around it, limiting the conceivability of alternative practices and making it resist change. Translating this to the field of journalism, one can say that journalism is found to be obdurate because existing routines, practices and values resist innovation toward more participatory practices.

Taken together, the line of reasoning through which scholars come to the conclusion that journalism is obdurate and express disappointment with this rigidity, implies a second normative dimension ('Disappointment about professional journalism's obduracy' in Figure 2). This dimension entails the idea that participatory journalism does not come about without obligations on the part of professional journalists. It involves the normative demand that journalists change some of their fixed ways of performing journalism. Preferably, it requires that they commit themselves to structurally listening and responding to citizen contributors and even to sharing control over content with them.

2.4.3 Disappointment with journalism's economic motives to facilitate participatory journalism

A third line of thinking entails a sense of disappointment with the kind of motives journalists and news organizations have to engage in participatory journalism. When investigating participatory journalism within the context of professional news organizations, scholars do not only find that journalism is innovating slowly, but also that strategic-economic reasons to embark on participation prevail over democracy-enhancing ones. This line of reasoning largely coincides with the former in terms of periodization and methodological approach. In over a quarter of journalism studies (32 articles), professional journalism is observed offering participatory opportunities from a strategic-economic perspective rather than a democracy-enhancing one⁸.

More precisely, scholars find that professional journalism models participation in two strategic-economic ways. First, participation is seized as an opportunity to involve users as content subsidiaries who contribute for free. Material from the audience is incorporated if journalists think their stories can be enriched by it; if audience material is assessed as being unusable, it is ignored. Second, participation is shaped as an opportunity to involve users as builders of a brand community, to generate traffic to the website and to keep up with –or stay ahead of– competing news organizations. Both sorts of strategic-economic motives mean

that, in journalistic practice, participation is modeled such that it fits, rather than overthrows, the existing journalistic paradigm.

Scholars who follow this line of reasoning do not only formulate their conclusions as dry statements. As was the case with studies concluding that journalism is obdurate, scholars who note a gap between journalism's actual motives for engaging in participatory journalism and the motives outlined in the theoretical ideal express a sense of disappointment. This amounts to formulating a third normative dimension: the idea that participatory journalism should be embarked on for democratic rather than economic reasons ('Disappointment with journalism's strategic-economic motives' in Figure 2).

2.4.4 Disappointment with news users' passivity

Different from the previous dimensions that can be characterized by a rather dominant presence within the field of journalism studies, a fourth dimension stands out through its marginality. Whereas scholars have converged on the perspective of professional journalists, the perspective of those that should start contributing to journalism is an underdeveloped area. Notwithstanding this asymmetry, from 2004 onwards, a few studies have been published that investigate the perspective of contributors in a way similar to examinations of journalists' perspectives on participatory journalism. These studies focus on contributors' routines and practices around participatory news by means of in-depth interviews and large-scale surveys. The general conclusion from these efforts is that news users act differently than scholars hoped⁹.

Being more precise, scholars find that there is only moderate, or even little, use of interactive and participatory functions on news organizations' websites. Most people seem to hold on to traditional ways of dealing with news. Furthermore, researchers observe that, when users engage in participatory practices, they mostly do it for fun, seeking entertainment, and not so much out of democratic considerations. Scholars express the thought that it might take considerable time for people to get used to new, participatory possibilities around news. In coming to these conclusions, scholars portray a sense of disappointment about citizens not using democratic attainments. For example, the audience is described as "*reluctant*" (Bergström, 2008) and "*jaded and uninterested*" (Larsson, 2011: 1192) vis-à-vis democratic opportunities, and as interested mainly in "*easy-going*" (Hujanen and Pietikäinen, 2004: 398) forms of participation, oriented at entertainment rather than citizenship. As such, scholars express an idea of news users' desired behavior regarding participatory journalism and of the preferred motives to engage in it. This results in a fourth normative dimension that entails, first, an idea of reciprocity: it is not only professional journalists that are expected to change traditional ways of working, users should also adopt new practices and routines to become active participants. Second, this dimension contains the idea that contributors should get involved as 'citizens'.

2.5 Conclusion and discussion

This study examined how participatory journalism has been constructed as a scholarly object between 1995 and 2011. We identified four normative dimensions of the scholarly discourse on the phenomenon that produced participatory journalism as an object of journalism studies. We labeled these dimensions ‘enthusiasm about new democratic opportunities’, ‘disappointment with professional journalism’s obduracy’, ‘disappointment with economic motives to facilitate participatory journalism’, and ‘disappointment with news users’ passivity’. We argue that these dimensions are produced by the rules governing the domain of journalism studies and, therefore, that these dimensions are inextricably linked with what ‘counts’ as journalism in the field of journalism studies.

Democracy, the cornerstone of both journalism and journalism studies, appears to be a precondition, too, for participatory journalism’s coming about. Scholarly thinking on participatory journalism rides on the waves of democratic expectations surrounding the internet, set forth by founding fathers like Bowman and Willis (2003), Gillmor (2004), and Rosen (2006) and the matching body of thought of the public journalism movement. There is a widely supported anticipation that technological developments open up new democratic opportunities that question existing journalistic values, routines, and practices. Scholars portray a strong sense of moral enthusiasm about the potential changes at hand.

When shifting attention to the production of news by professional journalism –a move that is produced by the dominant position in the field of journalism studies of studies on professional journalists and their routines and practices of news production– scholars come to the conclusion that participatory journalism, with democracy as its core value, clashes with other values and practices key to journalism. Journalists and news organizations fear the potential consequences for objectivity, autonomy, and their own authority. As a result, participation is embraced in terms of more sources, illustrations to a story, free content, or a better connection with consumers, but kept at bay in terms of participants being co-decision makers or co-storytellers, positions that challenge journalists’ authority. Scholars, thus, conclude that professional journalism reduces participatory journalism to existing journalistic ways of working. This is represented in the semantic shift from ‘interaction’ to ‘participation’: the former term implies equality of actors, the latter the subordination of one actor (citizens) to the other (the professional journalistic framework). Scholars express a sense of disappointment with the obduracy of journalism as a professionally dominated and structured system, as well as about the prevalence of strategic-economic considerations over democracy-enhancing ones. Both disappointments are constructed by rules governing the domain of journalism studies, being the inseparable link between journalism and democracy and the dominance of sociological accounts of professional news production.

An illustration of these disappointments is that, when scholars start examining citizen participation in professional news organizations, a new phrase emerges: ‘user-generated content’. Different from ‘participatory journalism’ or ‘citizen journalism’, the notion of ‘user-generated content’ carries a far less civic connotation, and expresses more of a practical

and strategic meaning. What is more, the word ‘users’ carries a far less active connotation than ‘participants’. The term user-generated content is used in nearly 40 percent of journalism studies. A large majority of these studies (72 percent) support either the second normative dimension (disappointment with professional journalism’s obduracy) or the third (disappointment with journalism’s economic motives).

What is more, the audience turns out to be less active and civic than scholars hoped for. Despite the fact that the audience has largely remained an implied category, which reflects and is produced by regularities in journalism studies at large, from the few studies that study participatory journalism from an audience perspective, scholars conclude that people do not make use of democratic attainments. As a result, participatory journalism, as appropriated by professional journalism and as ignored by citizens, loses its radical potential. The moral enthusiasm found at the source of scholarly thinking on participatory journalism, thus, produces its own moral disappointment.

This study is the first to analyze how journalism studies has given rise to participatory journalism as an object within its field of action. The ‘rules’ –practices, regularities–governing the domain of journalism studies have produced participatory journalism as one of its objects. This mechanism reminds us of, for instance, the medical sciences that first studied the outer human body and that thereupon turned towards the inner body, according to the same principles, convictions, and procedures with which the human outside had been studied. In a same sense, the field of journalism studies has incorporated and constructed participatory journalism. It is an object that journalism studies has come to “*own*” and exercise a “*disciplinary prerogative*” over (Hook, 2005: 15). By not treating dominant practices in the scholarly discourse on participatory journalism as ‘natural’, but by historicizing them and by interrogating how journalism studies, as a form of knowledge, has played a role in the ordering and formation of participatory journalism, we aimed to show participatory journalism’s constructed nature.

The dimensions of the discourse on participatory journalism reflect and are produced by rules that both create and delimit spaces for the sayable and thinkable (Kendall and Wickham, 1999: 42). Compared with the particular kind of democratic ideal behind participatory journalism, the audience has turned into users generating content at best and into ‘passive’ or ‘uninterested’ at worst. As a consequence of the dominant sociology of news discourse, the audience has become subordinate to journalists and to what journalists think they can do with audience participation. For future development of participatory journalism as an object in the field of journalism studies, we propose putting the audience in a more central position. This would involve moving beyond the dominant focus on the production culture of professional journalism –which results in journalists setting the terms for participatory journalism –towards the motives, expectations and conditions on the part of the audience. What would this type of approach render visible? Would the audience appear as something different than users generating content or as passive?

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Notes

1. References to the 119 journal articles listed in Table 1 are given in italics.
2. Note that in this study, participatory journalism is interpreted literally, as the participation of citizens within the context of professional news organizations. The reason is that two-thirds of the articles in our data associate ‘participatory journalism’ with citizens taking part in professional news organizations, rather than with citizens engaging in journalistic activities elsewhere in the journalistic field.
3. *Baker, 2006; García-Avilés, 2010; Knight, 2010; Lee-Wright, 2008; Rose, 2008; Rusbridger, 2009.*
4. *Deuze, 2001; Elberse, 1998; Massey and Levy, 1999; Newhagen et al., 1995; Schultz, 1999; Schultz, 2000; Singer, 1998.*
5. *Altschull, 1996; Antony and Thomas, 2010; Bergström, 2008; Carpenter, 2010; Chung, 2007; Chung, 2008; Chung and Nah, 2009; Cokley, 2005; Deuze, 2003; Deuze, 2006; Deuze, et al., 2007; Domingo, 2008; Domingo et al., 2008; El-Nawawy and Khamis, 2011; Flew and Wilson, 2010; Holt and von Krogh, 2010; Hujanen and Pietikäinen, 2004; Johnson and Wiedenbeck, 2009; Jönsson and Örnebring, 2011; Karlsson, 2011; Kperogi, 2011; Kovacic and Erjavec, 2009; Lewis et al., 2010; Lowrey and Anderson, 2005; Muthukumaraswamy, 2010; Nassanga, 2008; Neuberger and Nuernbergk, 2010; Nip, 2006; Nip, 2008; O’Donnell, 2009; O’Sullivan and Heinonen, 2008; Ozkan, 2011; Pantti and Bakker, 2009; Paulussen et al., 2007; Reich, 2008; Robinson, 2007; Robinson and DeShano, 2011; Schultz, 1999; Schultz, 2000; Singer, 1998; Singer, 2003; Singer, 2006; Singer, 2009a; Strömbäck and Karlsson, 2011; Vujnovic et al., 2010; Wall, 2005; Ward and Wasserman, 2010.*
6. *Bivens, 2008; Chung, 2007; Cokley, 2005; Deuze et al., 2007; Domingo, 2008; Domingo et al., 2008; García-Avilés, 2010; Franquet et al., 2011; Harrison, 2010; Hermida and Thurman, 2008; Holt and von Krogh, 2010; Jönsson and Örnebring, 2011; Karlsson, 2009; Kperogi, 2011; Lasorsa et al., 2012; Lewis et al., 2010; O’Sullivan and Heinonen, 2008; Massey and Levy, 1999; Metykova, 2008; Neuberger and Nuernbergk, 2010; Nip, 2008; O’Donnell, 2009; Örnebring, 2008; Pantti and Bakker, 2009; Paulussen, 2004; Paulussen and Ugille, 2008; Paulussen et al., 2007; Quandt, 2008; Rebillard and Touboul, 2010; Robinson, 2010; Schultz, 1999; Schultz, 2000; Singer, 2005; Singer, 2009a; Singer, 2009b; Singer, 2010; Singer and Ashman, 2009; Steensen, 2010; Wardle and Williams, 2010; Williams et al., 2011; Xiaoge, 2008.*
7. *Chung, 2007; Cokley, 2005; Domingo, 2008; Domingo et al., 2008; García-Avilés, 2010; Franquet et al., 2011; Harrison, 2010; Jönsson and Örnebring, 2010; Karlsson, 2009; Kperogi, 2011; Lasorsa et al., 2012; Lewis et al., 2010; O’Sullivan and Heinonen, 2008; Massey and Levy, 1999; Metykova, 2008; Nip, 2008; O’Donnell, 2009; Örnebring, 2008; Pantti and Bakker,*

- 2009; Paulussen, 2004; Quandt, 2008; Rebillard and Touboul, 2010; Robinson, 2010; Schultz, 1999; Schultz, 2000; Singer, 2005; Singer, 2009a; Singer, 2009b; Singer, 2010; Singer and Ashman, 2009; Steensen, 2010; Wardle and Williams, 2010; Williams et al., 2011; Xiaoge, 2008.
8. Anderson, 2011; Bivens, 2008; Cokley, 2005; Deuze, 2006; Deuze, 2007; Deuze, 2008; Deuze et al., 2007; Domingo, 2008; García-Avilés, 2010; Goode, 2009; Gordon, 2007; Harrison, 2010; Holt and von Krogh, 2010; Jönsson and Örnebring, 2010; Kim and Hamilton, 2006; Kovacic and Erjavec, 2008; Kperogi, 2010; Massey and Levy, 1999; Metykova, 2008; Örnebring, 2008; Pantti and Bakker, 2009; Paulussen et al., 2007; Robinson, 2010; Sundet and Ytreberg, 2009; Schultz, 1999; Schultz, 2000; Singer, 2010; Strömback and Karlsson, 2011; Vujnovic et al., 2010; Wardle and Williams, 2010; Williams et al., 2011; Xiaoge, 2008.
9. Bergström, 2008; Chung, 2008; Chung and Nah, 2009; Hujanen and Pietikäinen, 2004; Larsson, 2011; Lowrey and Anderson, 2005.

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