Hybridity and the News
Hybrid Forms of Journalism in the 21st Century

BRUSSELS, Belgium
4-5 December 2014
# Contents

- Introduction ............................................ 3  
- Map of venue ........................................... 4  
- Programme overview .................................. 5  
- Abstracts plenary lectures ......................... 6  
- Abstracts panel contributions .................... 7  
- Index ...................................................... 29
INTRODUCTION

Welcome

The Brussels Institute for Journalism Studies, the Brussels Platform for Journalism and the Department of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Arts and Philosophy, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) are delighted to welcome you to the international Hybridity and the News Conference. Through an interdisciplinary dialogue we will explore innovative approaches to and new ideas about hybrid forms of journalism in our 21st century information society. We hope that this conference’s enthralling presentations, captivating keynotes and interesting informal conversations will lead to richer insights into the concept of hybridity in relation to journalistic practice.

Welcome also to Brussels, the booming capital of Belgium, a vibrant and superdiverse global village in the heart of Europe, where hybridity has become a way of life. Please, enjoy the conference. Connect and exchange in order to create fruitful cross-fertilizations. But also venture out of doors and have a great time in Belgium.

Organizing committee

Roel Coesemans  Martina Temmerman  Jelle Mast

Scientific Committee

Prof. dr. François Heinderyckx (Université Libre de Bruxelles - Journalism Studies)
Prof. dr. Caroline Pauwels (Vrije Universiteit Brussel – Communication Studies)
Prof. dr. Piet Van de Craen (Vrije Universiteit Brussel – Linguistics)
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Prof. dr. Huub Wijfjes (University of Groningen and University of Amsterdam – Journalism Studies)
Dr. Roel Coesemans (Vrije Universiteit Brussel – Applied Linguistics/Journalism Studies)
Dr. Jelle Mast (Vrije Universiteit Brussel – Applied Linguistics/Journalism Studies)
Dr. Martina Temmerman (Vrije Universiteit Brussel – Applied Linguistics/Journalism Studies)
**PROGRAMME OVERVIEW**

**THURSDAY 4 DECEMBER 2014**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.00-13.25</td>
<td>Registration and lunch</td>
<td>Building D, Second Floor, Pleinlaan 2 (University Campus)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.30-14.00</td>
<td>Welcome &amp; Opening</td>
<td>Building D, Room D.2.01</td>
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<td>14.00-15.00</td>
<td>Keynote: ‘Border stories: Journalism at the intersections of news and narrative’</td>
<td>Geoffrey Baym (University of North Carolina, Greensboro, US) Building D, Room D.2.01</td>
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<td>15.15-16.15</td>
<td>Panel session A1: Twitter and journalism</td>
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<td>Panel session B1: Alternative news media</td>
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<td>16.30-17.30</td>
<td>Panel session A2: Twitter and journalism II</td>
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<td>Panel session B2: Alternative news media II</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.30-19.00</td>
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**FRIDAY 4 DECEMBER 2014**

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<td>9.00-9.25</td>
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<td>9.30-10.30</td>
<td>Keynote: ‘Tribuneship: Adversarial and hybrid political interviews’</td>
<td>Ian Hutchby (University of Leicester, UK) Karel Van Miert Building, Basement Floor, Pleinlaan 5, Rooms Lisbon &amp; Rome</td>
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<td>10.45-12.05</td>
<td>Panel session C: Political news interviews</td>
<td>Karel Van Miert Building, Room Lisbon</td>
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<td>Panel session D: Hybrid styles of journalism</td>
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<td>12.05-13.25</td>
<td>Lunch at VUB restaurant</td>
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<td>13.35-14.35</td>
<td>Panel session E: Journalism, branding, and business models</td>
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<td>Panel session F: Global perspectives on hybrid journalism</td>
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<td>14.40-16.00</td>
<td>Panel session G: Lifestyle journalism and celebrity culture</td>
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<td>Panel session H: News audiences and citizen journalism</td>
<td>Karel Van Miert Building, Room Lisbon</td>
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<td>16.05-17.25</td>
<td>Panel session I: Television journalism and documentary</td>
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<td>Panel session J: Journalistic values and ideology</td>
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<td>17.40-18.00</td>
<td>Closing event</td>
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<td>19.00</td>
<td>Conference dinner (at restaurant Millésime)</td>
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ABSTRACTS PLENARY LECTURES

Geoffrey Baym
University of North Carolina, Greensboro, US - gdbaym@uncg.edu

Border stories: Journalism at the intersections of news and narrative
Particularly in the context of American television, hybridity has become the defining feature of contemporary broadcast journalism. Hybridity itself manifests on multiple levels — what I describe here as textual, systemic, and discursive. Together, these three levels of hybridization have led to a profound challenge to traditional conceptions of journalism. Hybridity has all but shattered the high modern paradigm, and is forcing us away from both notions of journalism as the transmission of useful information to an inquiring citizenry, and the political logic of rational choice upon which such notions depend. Instead, the hybridization of broadcast news moves us closer to a concept of journalism as orientation — the circulation of culturally evocative narratives that shape affective understandings as much, and likely more, than they inform citizens.

The notion of journalism as orientation is hardly new. The scholar Robert Park suggested it at the dawn of the high-modern age, and much that is happening in television news today is akin to the realist fiction of a hundred years ago. Produced by authors whose own careers moved back and forth between the domains of journalism and literature, the realist novel (as did later experiments in “documentary fiction” and “new journalism”) blurred borders between story and information and fact and fiction. Today, something similar is happening on television, in the arena of long-form serial drama, in both fictive and factual varieties.

To explore the contours of this emerging field of televsual narrative truth-telling, I look more closely at three similar, but distinct serial programs produced for American television over the last decade that differ in form, but all attempt to “tell the story” of the American urban underclass. Taken together, these various approaches to narrative journalism complicate our assumptions about the boundaries between journalism and literature and help us better understand the limitations and possibilities of serial storytelling in a hybrid age.

Ian Hutchby
University of Leicester, UK - iph2@le.ac.uk

Tribuneship: Adversarial and hybrid political interviews
This keynote lecture outlines the key features of the Hybrid Political Interview (HPI) by comparison with the more conventional, though still aggressive, Adversarial Political Interview (API). It proposes that the HPI is a different media discourse form to the API; one in which the interviewer feels able to dispense with most if not all of the norms of journalistic neutralism when he or she considers it necessary in the interests of advocating ‘the truth’. This is crystallised in the different ways in which mainstream ‘accountability interviewers’ and non-mainstream ‘hybrid interviewers’ seem to treat the key journalistic role of tribuneship. Both types of interviewer are able to orient to their role as representing the public interest/looking out for the underrepresented/seeking the truth, etc. However, in the API interviewers mainly attempt to elide their own agency, either through speech practices such as those identified by previous conversation analytic work on news interviews; or by explicitly stating that their questions are ‘in the public interest’. In the HPI, tribuneship is often manifested more directly and precisely through the interviewer’s foregrounding of agency, for instance in the often forceful expression of opinion.
ABSTRACTS PANEL CONTRIBUTIONS

Chris Anderson
City University of New York, US - christopher.anderson@csi.cuny.edu
Panel J: Journalistic values and ideology
Empirical passions: The survey graphic, the progressive movement, and the prehistory data journalism

Today data journalism is a hot topic and the use of journalistically-inclined data visualizations appears to be on the rise. According recent overviews of the field (Howard 2014), academic historiography (Parasie & Dagiral, 2013), and self-talk by the founders of new data journalism projects (Silver 2014), this new form of quantitative reporting rescues journalism from its empirical backwater and brings reporting closer to an ideal if popularized form of social science. Journalism and social science are fusing into the strange hybrid of data journalism, it is claimed. This paper takes a look back at the strange pre-history of data journalism, and in doing so it attempts to shed light on our present era of journalistic hybridity. The paper draws on new materialist theory (Coole and Frost 2010), science and technology studies (Anderson and deMaeyer 2014), and recent calls for passion and affect to be more widely integrated into the media production studies agenda (ie, Deuze and Witschge 2014).

Specifically, this paper examines how the fuzzy boundary line between journalism and social science was erected by telling the story of one important (but by now largely forgotten) news magazine, The Survey Graphic (1921-1952). This paper argues that the Survey Graphic embodies both the apex and the exhaustion of three important Progressive Era tendencies: the muckraking tradition, the naive empiricism of the social surveyors, and the “problem-oriented” wing of the new profession of sociology. The paper further argues that the Survey Graphic represented the final flowering of this casually hybrid journalistic tradition. The second half of the paper briefly places the empirical culture of the Survey Graphic into dialog with other, later journalistic developments-- precision journalism, data journalism, and computational journalism-- in an attempt to shed light on today’s drive towards a robust journalistic empiricism.

References

Corina Andone
University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands - C.Andone@uva.nl
Panel C: Political news interviews
Meeting probative obligations in political interviews: A case of accountability

In this paper, I argue that political interviews function nowadays as accountability practices, arguably due to their predominantly argumentative character. Political interviews are viewed as informal practices of accountability aimed mainly at opinion-formation. They constitute a forum for an exchange of opinions and criticisms advanced with a view to putting the political performance to the critical test directly under the eyes of the citizens.

In the first part of the paper, I will explain why and how political interviews function as accountability practices. This explanation is based on insights derived from the rules of procedure, such as broadcasting codes, agreements and editorial guidelines. In addition, the explanation is based on empirical evidence derived
from my own observations of the communicative practices at issue. In the second part of the paper, I will illustrate my claim by providing a detailed analysis of a fragment from a political interview in which it is shown how the interviewer and the politician advance and defend standpoints. The analysis will concentrate on the way in which the participants’ probative obligations are met with a view to contributing to the accountability purpose.

Stefan Baack
University of Groningen, the Netherlands - s.baack@rug.nl

Panel H: News audiences and citizen journalism

Open data and civic hacking: Complementing or replacing professional journalism?
This presentation focuses on activists in the Open Data movement and considers the implications of their values and practices for journalism. While the increased interaction between journalists and activists with roots in the hacker culture is mostly studied in terms of (potentially) resulting developments within newsrooms, I will draw on my research about the German Open Knowledge Foundation to show how activists call into question narrow conceptions of journalism that are limited to media institutions.

Activists argue that Open Data, understood as raw government data that is openly available for anyone without restrictions, represents a ‘democratization of information’ that enables citizens to better understand and control their governments and allows them to participate on a broader scale. However, since expert knowledge is often needed to use raw data, activists recognize that this empowering potential of Open Data can only be fulfilled with ‘data-intermediaries’: actors that make raw data accessible to the public and utilize it in a way that enables citizens to participate.

On the one hand, this leads activists to an interest in professional journalism. Journalists should act as – in this sense – ‘empowering data-intermediaries’, which is why activists want to cooperate with professional journalists and teach skills necessary for ‘data-literacy’. On the other hand, activists understand themselves as ‘civic developers’ who seek to implement their values and imaginations by building their own, alternative applications. In this way, they act as intermediaries themselves and try to fulfill functions that can be described as ‘journalistic’: making governments more transparent and accountable and enable participation. I therefore suggest that by acting as intermediaries themselves, activists can potentially both complement and replace professional journalism. This forces us to think about how and by whom journalism is conducted with the growing reliance on data that is implicated in the datafication of society.

References
Open Knowledge Foundation, online at http://okfn.de/ [last accessed 28.06.2014].

Maitrayee Basu
Middlesex University, UK - maitrayee.basu1988@gmail.com

Panel A2: Twitter and journalism II

Tweeting authority in Indian literary reportage writing
Indian English language literary reportage writers in the postcolonial literary field face challenges to their legitimacy mainly from two quarters. Firstly, they face critique from pro-vernacular writers and literary critics, who see the choice to write in English as creating an “export oriented” body of work, which looks at India from a tourist’s eye (Reddy, 25th Feb 2002). Secondly, as writers of a form famously dubbed as a “bastard form” in the New York Review of Books when first popularised by Tom Wolfe (Macdonald 1965), they must establish beyond doubt the “truth claim” of their work.

When it comes to writers who write about marginalized subjects in a postcolonial environment, questions about authenticity and veracity of the work come under even tighter scrutiny. Building on Wheelwright’s (2014) contention that literary journalists’ “authority with their readers is most often acquired through reputation”, in this paper I look at the ways in which three Indian freelance journalists who write long form
reportage pieces about the marginalized – Sonia Faleiro, Shivam Vij and Neha Sharma – use Twitter to construct and establish authority with their readers, which in turn legitimizes their work.

The construction of journalistic authority in the United States has been analysed in the pre-digital news environment, using the media narratives surrounding the Kennedy assassination by Zelizer (1992). Robinson (2006) carried on a similar analysis in the digital age, which looked at how ‘truth’ and ‘reality’ are shaped by a struggle between the reifying forces of standard journalistic voices and postmodern journalism bloggers. However, I will focus specifically on how Twitter presence and communications is used by postcolonial literary reportage writers in the global literary market, who, according to Brouillette (2007), are compromised due to conditions of its dissemination of their texts across different (usually Anglo-American) metropolitan markets.

References

Kathleen Beckers & Raymond A. Harder
University of Antwerp, Belgium - Kathleen.Beckers@UAntwerpen.be
University of Antwerp, Belgium - Raymond.Harder@UAntwerpen.be

Panel A2: Twitter and journalism II
‘Twitter just exploded’: Social media as alternative vox pop?
Traditional news media regularly include the voice of the ‘man on the street’ alongside that of the actors involved in a news story. These so-called vox pops are used by journalists to give an impression of what the public thinks. With the rise of social media use, access to people’s opinion has never been so easy. One single Twitter search yields instant replies to questions that need not even be asked – the answers are already out there.

Set against traditional media, the technology of news websites allows new ways of including these opinions from social media as a representation of the public opinion. Also, the real-time modus operandi of online newsrooms generates more incentives for journalists to do so. The combination of both makes that different uses and forms of vox pops can be found in this medium, as compared to traditional media. The prevalence of this phenomenon warrants a deeper exploration. In addition, existing ethical considerations regarding sourcing practices in journalism become urgent once more on this new playing field.

We use a qualitative content analysis to assess news items in which Twitter functions as a means to describe the sentiment among the population. For this we draw on a theoretical sample of relevant Flemish and Dutch online news items from 2014. These are analyzed on formal, substantive, and functional aspects. Based on the empirical findings, we address the ethical considerations of this phenomenon. Our exploratory research sheds more light on the representation of public opinion using social media and more generally on journalists’ sourcing practices in the social media age.

Henrik Bødker
Aarhus University, Denmark - imvhb@dac.au.dk

Panel G: Lifestyle journalism and celebrity culture
VICE Magazine: Youth, lifestyle and edgy journalism
“Rupert Murdoch firm dips into hipsters’ bible with $70m stake in Vice” ran a headline on The Guardian online in August 2013. Although Murdoch’s nose for profitable ventures is not infallible this Canadian magazine turned digital media and publishing group may point towards a renewed form and relevance of journalism for
a coming-of-age audience. With headlines such as “These Fat Anarchists Are Pissed Off at Skinny Liberals” and “VICE TO GAWKER: FUCK YOU AND FUCK YOUR GARBAGE CLICK-BAIT ‘JOURNALISM’”, Vice certainly breaks with established conventions and demarcations within the landscape of news - and, not least - within journalism studies. Situating Vice within a wider field of digital news sites and magazines this paper seeks, firstly, to characterize and discuss the combination of elements that make up its hybrid mixture of news, lifestyle and in-depth reporting. While this one the one hand is part of a continuous questioning of the boundaries that have formed both popular and academic understandings of journalism, not least that separating it from popular culture, Vice, on the other hand, also invites us to bracket this distinction and explore existing and emerging hybridities between lifestyles, popular culture and investigative news and between the seriously questioning within popular cultures and lifestyles. The empirical base of this paper will consists of a number of event-based cases from http://www.vice.com/en_dk. The theoretical discussions will be grounded in journalism studies, cultural studies and hermeneutics.

Cara Brems, Martina Temmerman, Marcel Broersma & Todd Graham
Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium & University of Groningen, the Netherlands - c.brems@rug.nl
Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium - martina.temmerman@vub.ac.be
University of Groningen, the Netherlands - m.j.broersma@rug.nl
University of Groningen, the Netherlands - t.s.graham@rug.nl
Panel A1: Twitter and journalism

All the world’s a stage, and so is Twitter: How Dutch and Flemish journalists brand themselves on Twitter

In this paper, we argue that personal branding is increasingly important for journalists now that the profession is moving from a mass communication to a network paradigm. As such, journalists have to be visible, liked and respected online. By employing smart strategies for self-presentation they can obtain a central position in the network as news and opinion hubs. This is important for media organisations because individual journalists are in general regarded as more interesting than institutional accounts because of the opportunity to interact with them. Their self-performance can thus strengthen (or harm) the reputation of the media brand. For individual journalists, it’s equally significant because it influences their reputation and helps determine thei

References:
Cassandre Burnier, David Domingo, Florence Le Cam & Victor Wiard
Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium - cassandre.burnier@ulb.ac.be
Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium - david.domingo@ulb.ac.be
Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium - flecam@ulb.ac.be
Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium - Victor.Wiard@ulb.ac.be
Panel H: News audiences and citizen journalism

The hybridity of news consumption in francophone Belgium
Research on the hybridization of journalism has tended to focus on the producers and their products, but the blurring boundaries of news cannot be fully understood in the contemporary media landscape without taking into account the place that journalistic information has in the media consumption habits of citizens. News, put in the context of everyday life, is one of the many inputs that citizens have to engage with society, learn and relax from their obligations. To explore these implications, we conducted a qualitative study of the news consumption of 90 citizens in francophone Belgium with a variety of socioeconomic, geographic and demographic backgrounds. Participants filled in a semi-structured, week-long media diary and were interviewed before and after, in order to reflect on their interpretations and justifications of the news consumption described in the diaries. Results show how journalistic products are embedded in their daily lives as resources to structure routines and fill in moments, but, at the same time, citizens appreciate the importance of news to connect to their immediate context and have normative expectations on the quality of journalistic work. Moreover, the plurality of motivations, platforms (from the newspaper to the cell phone) and uses of news among our respondents invites for a reflection on the assumptions that professionals and scholars do about the position and the role of journalism in society, a need to acknowledge the tension between the social dispersion of news production practices and the normativity implicitly negotiated in each news story produced and consumed.

Joanna Chojnicka
Konstanz University, Germany - joanna.chojnicka@uni-konstanz.de
Panel B2: Alternative news media II

Dissident online journalism: Investigating Polish LGBTQ blogs
This paper shall present a part of the project “Attitudes to confessional and sexual minorities in the changing Latvian, Lithuanian and Polish media discourse”, carried out at the University of Konstanz with the support of the EU FP7 Marie Curie Programme. The project uses methods of critical and historical discourse analysis to reveal stereotypes and prejudice towards minorities in post-communist Central and Eastern European societies, and the role played by the media in the processes of constructing, reinforcing and legitimizing these attitudes. Within such a framework, it is of vast importance to study not only hegemonic discourses but also counter-discourses of the minorities in question. For this reason, the proposed paper shall focus on dissident online journalism as a kind of hybrid genre combining social activism and news reporting on the Internet. The new genre may be defined as reporting on current social, political and cultural events relevant to a minority group from its own point of view, usually in ways that challenge and oppose the view offered by the mainstream media, using social media such as blogs or social networking sites. Here, reporters are also participants of progressing events; they do not strive for objectivity but rather emphasize their involvement; they embrace and the group’s complaints and demands. The study will analyse a corpus of 30 blogs by Polish LGBTQ authors, applying the framework of positive discourse analysis (PDA) and in particular a revised typology of counter-strategies developed by Felicitas Macgilchrist. Non-ironic and ironic strategies of inversion, complexification, partial reframing and radical reframing are shown as contesting mainstream frames of news reporting. Their analysis reveals how dissident online journalism interacts with, builds upon and reappropriates mainstream frames and news reporting genre conventions in diverse, often thought-provoking And unexpected ways, with striking effects.
Roel Coesemans  
Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium  
Panel J: Journalistic values and ideology

**Multimodal representation and ideological image-building of Belgian trade unions on an alternative news website**

In a marketized public sphere with ‘new management ideology’ on the rise (Chiapello & Fairclough 2002) trade unions can be seen as partly commercial companies selling social products and services to their members, who are recruited in economic competition (Hyman 2001). In contemporary information society they benefit from a positive image in the media. This paper investigates how Belgian trade unions are represented and present themselves in multimodal ways in different kinds of media. Trade union representatives as well as journalists construct coherent multimodal meanings by interactions of text, picture, colour, gesture, etc. when they communicate newsworthy union actions. Approaching news as a discursive, multimodal genre (Machin & Mayr 2012), representational strategies and multimodal meanings are studied in a rich dataset of news reports and news videos, taken from the commercial left-leaning centre newspaper *De Morgen* as compared to the union sponsored alternative news website *DeWereldMorgen.be*. Union performance in the news will be interpreted in terms of self-profiling, image-building and marketing strategies. This can only be done by comparing the media representations to self-descriptions at the unions’ websites as a kind of triangulation. The methodology of this explorative study comprises a combination of multimodal website analysis (Pauwels 2012) and multimodal discourse analysis (Van Leeuwen 2008).

**References**

Benjamin De Cleen  
Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium - benjamin.de.cleen@vub.ac.be  
Panel J: Journalistic values and ideology

**Turning journalistic values against critical journalism: The Flemish radical right and the discursive struggle to define journalism**

Journalistic professional ideology is complex and contested. Different types and traditions of journalism stress different values and principles and give a different meaning to those values and principles. Moreover, journalistic ideology is a hybrid that brings together distinct values and principles, the articulation of which leads to tensions and contradictions (Carpentier 2005, Deuze 2005, Hanitzsch 2007; Schudson 1978).

This paper sheds light on the complex and contested nature of journalistic ideology by looking at the debate about journalistic coverage of the populist radical right (PRR). Journalism has been an arena for PRR and anti-PRR rhetoric, but has also been an actor in and an object of the discursive struggle between the PRR and its opponents. Debate on how journalism should deal with the PRR has been an integral part of this discursive struggle. PRR parties have accused mainstream journalism of treating them unfairly. Competing political parties, anti-racists, and counter-hegemonic forms of journalism have criticised mainstream journalists’ purportedly uncritical and excessive coverage of the PRR, not in the least when PRR politicians have appeared in non-traditional hybrid journalistic formats. And journalists have struggled with their attitude towards the PRR, navigating between on the one hand commercial imperatives, news values, and key journalistic values such as objectivity and impartiality, and on the other hand democratic values.

This paper presents a discourse-theoretical analysis (Carpentier & De Cleen 2007) of the rhetoric of the Flemish Vlaams Blok/Belang (VB) about journalism (in newspaper articles and VB propaganda). The paper shows how the VB has turned journalistic values against critical journalism. The party has delegitimized
journalists as part of a politically correct elite that is far removed from ‘the people’ and controlled by the political elite, does not live up to journalistic values such as objectivity, impartiality, truth, and autonomy, and therefore does not live up to its democratic role.

References

Rozane De Cock
KU Leuven, Belgium - Rozane.DeCock@soc.kuleuven.be

Panel A1: Twitter and journalism
Twitter as a journalistic or (self-)promotional tool for news rooms: Case studies from Flanders, the Netherlands, the UK and USA

In a journalistic world in which competition is fierce, market shares are increasingly important for commercial and public broadcasting companies as well, while operating in a rapidly changing digital environment that demands constant alertness, social media in general and Twitter in particular can fulfill multiple roles within the communication process of news makers and their online news consumers. Next to using Twitter as 1) a news gathering tool in answer to the ‘what’s happening’ question (Bruns, 2008; Palser, 2009) and as reflected in the concept of ambient news (Hermida, 2010), Twitter operates as 2) a news diffusion tool (news channel, Bruns, 2012; Farhi, 2009), but the medium may simultaneously serve as a 3) promotional tool for a news channel, news brand, news program or its journalists as well (Emmett, 2008; Moylan, 2013; Standley, 2013). Seen from this perspective, the line between journalistic content and (self-)promotion becomes blurred. In combination with an attempt to interact more intensely with news users/consumers, specific call-to-actions are used in news tweets in order to turn the relationship into a reciprocal one instead of the pre-web 2.0 one-way communication direction. In our exploratory research on the journalistic and promotional use of Twitter, we studied 6 cases and analysed 1477 tweets from Flanders (content from the twitter accounts of VRT and VTM news and Reyers laat), UK (BBC), USA (Fox News) and the Netherlands (DWDD). Intercoder reliability was measured (alpha’s) for 10% of the material. Our results show that interactivity is quite low on all these accounts, the level of promotional content varies between 1/6th to 2/5th of the twitter content. Calls-to action, finally, are widely used (call for material, sharing, polling etc.).

Hedwig de Smaele
KU Leuven @ HUB campus Brussels, Belgium - Hedwig.deSmaele@soc.kuleuven.be

Panel E: Journalism, branding and business models
Brand journalism: How media organizations behave on Twitter

How do media organizations behave on Twitter? What social media policy do they follow? Why do they twitter and how? How do they interact with their audience? By use of a quantitative content analysis of 1300 tweets distributed between November 2012 and April 2013 by two television channels and four radio channels, both public and private, we try to answer these questions and form an image of the channels presence on Twitter. The public channels surveyed are: Eén (first television channel of the public broadcaster VRT), VTM (first television channel of the commercial broadcaster Medialaan), Studio Brussel (radio channel, VRT), MMN (youth radio channel, VRT), JOEfm (radio channel, Medialaan) and Q-Music (radio channel, Medialaan). In addition, we conducted five expert interviews with the heads of digital media of VRT, Medialaan, Studio-Brussel, MMN and JOEfm/Q-Music.

The results indicate that news distribution is a far less important goal than brand promotion. If news is distributed, it is defined in terms of the channels ‘core business’ for example music news for radio channels.
with general news only present on public television channel Eén. But even for the public channels, self-promotion and promotion of the own programs and website, is more important than functioning as a news channel. Interaction with the audience is the most expressed goal and a theoretical ideal but in reality it turns out to be a necessary (because of social customer care) burden that is solved with the least possible effort (for example retweeting messages of the audience instead of replying to them). Behavior on twitter depends on individuals more than organizations or organizational policy. Media policy and formal rules are developed for television, but not explicitly for radio.

Further research is needed into the twitter behavior of individual journalists. As for the media organizations we can conclude that their tweets are the expression of a hybrid form of journalism, marketing and public relations.

Eva Desmedt
Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium - Eva.De.Smedt@vub.ac.be

Panel C: Political news interviews

Pre-mediation and the achievement of media professionalism in the production of political broadcast talk

Political television interview and debate programmes have increasingly been recognised as “a fundamental act of contemporary journalism” (Schudson, 1994: 565) and as “a key moment in the political news cycle” (McNair, 2000: 84). While the existing body of research on political broadcast talk has predominantly focused on the interactional dynamics in the on-air encounters between journalist-anchors and public figures (e.g. Ekström et al., 2006; Ekström & Patrona, 2011; Hutchby, 2006; Montgomery, 2007; Tolson, 2006), it has seldom dealt with the routine practices of pre-mediation that precede these live, on-air media performances. This paper partly builds on and extends the scope of these studies by relating insights on the performance of media professionalism to preparatory activities in the backstage production setting.

Taking an interactional and dramaturgical perspective, it specifically deals with the situated processes through which media professionalism is performed, negotiated and reproduced in the run-up to on-air broadcasts. The central question is how journalist-anchors define and achieve professionalism in and through their daily routine practices in the newsroom. More specifically, the analysis seeks to find out the constitutive cornerstones of journalist-anchors’ professional identity in political television production. Therefore, it draws on fieldnotes of six weeks of ethnographic observations at the newsroom of Terzake, a political programme daily broadcast on Flemish public service television (Canvas), in 2012. Overall, the study indicates that the accomplishment of media professionalism in the backstage settings of political television production is always the result of interactional processes, team performances, collaboration and journalistic agency. Media professionalism turns out to be partly articulated in the ways journalist-anchors and their team members can show a competence to align with the programme’s identity and create a unique, independent and actual broadcasting offer; and is partly expressed in the extent to which journalists can show a competence to script spontaneity and create a continuous and coherent broadcast flow.

David Domingo & Florence Le Cam
Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium - david.domingo@ulb.ac.be
Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium - flecam@ulb.ac.be

Panel B2: Alternative news media II

Journalism as a polyphonic discourse: The case of local news in Brussels

Journalists have claimed for decades the jurisdiction of production and circulation of news (Delporte, 1995; Schudson and Anderson, 2008), but if we understand these processes as a social practice we must acknowledge a much broader diversity of actors. Local journalism provides the best scenario to trace this multiplicity of news producers, their interactions and struggles to define the hegemonic narratives about current events. Controversies (Callon, 1981; Jobert, 1992) are especially useful situations to trace the dispersion of journalism, as the different social actors involved are more visible than in other circumstances. In previous phases of this research project we have analysed a controversy on multiculturalism in Brussels (Domingo and Le Cam, 2013). This time, we take the urban development plans of the Brussels canal to explore how a wider range of social
actors get involved in the co-construction of news discourses: environmental activists, urban planners, real state companies, neighbourhood associations... The paper will present the discourse analysis of news published by mainstream media and by other online and offline community, alternative and individual media initiatives (from monthly print publications and community radios to blogs and social media). It confronts the sources used by journalists in covering the controversy and their professional strategies in the construction of the narrative with the ones of those others that produce their own form of journalism, in what has been conceptualized as “journalism in dispersion” (Ringoot & Utard, 2005). These complementary and sometimes competing narratives form the polyphonic discourse of news. In a moment when local professional media organisations are struggling for economic viability, understanding the relationship of their news narratives with those of other social actors opens up the array of possibilities in the configuration of well-informed communities.

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Antonio Fruttaldo
University of Naples ‘Federico II’, Italy - antonio.fruttaldo@unina.it
Panel I: Television journalism and documentary

_Hybridity and the news ticker: An introduction to a TV news genre_

On the morning of September 11, 2001, there was more news than a TV screen could fit. Beyond the plane crashes and burning buildings, reports and rumours abounded of other attacks, explosions and evacuations. Thus, in order to deal with the problem of information overload, each of the 24-hour news channels implemented news tickers (also referred to as ‘crawler’) at the bottom of their screens.

After 9/11, news tickers remained at the bottom of news channels’ screens, becoming a way to convey to the audience a sense of never-ending emergency, a never-ending sense of crisis, which keeps viewers in front of the TV screen, waiting for a breaking news which may or may not appear.

Through a corpus-based analysis, we will try to better understand how news are presented and represented in news tickers; which phenomena of hybridization can be identified in this new genre (i.e., hybridization between TV and Web contents); and what kind of phenomena of colonization can be noticed (i.e., TV contents colonized by advertising discourse).

Agnes Gulyas
Canterbury Christ Church University, UK - agnes.gulyas@canterbury.ac.uk
Panel F: Global perspectives on hybrid journalism

_Evolving social media practices of journalists: An international comparative study_

This paper is concerned with the ways in which social media are embedded in journalistic practices in different countries. It explores and compares social media use and attitudes of journalists in nine countries: Australia, Canada, France, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, UK, and US. The analysis is based on three years of data of an annual online survey taken in 2012 (N=3650), 2013 (N=3120) and 2014 (survey ongoing), which asked journalists about patterns of their social media use as well as their views about these tools. The paper explores two specific questions. First, it examines similarities and differences between the countries to identify general patterns of social media adoption by journalists. Second, it explores the notion of hybridity in relation
to social media practices by journalists in the nine countries. It argues that in this context hybridity can be understood in three aspects: (1) diversified and blended use of social media; (2) complex reasons for social media use where lines between traditional professional tasks are blurred; and (3) values and meanings that underpin practices are shifting.

**Argyro Kantara**
Cardiff University, UK - kantaraaa@cardiff.ac.uk

**Panel C: Political news interviews**

**Hearing non-neutral: Listening practices in (hybrid) pre-election interviews**

Hutchby (2011a, 2011b) and Ekstrom (2011) refer to hybridity in political interviews as the mix of activities, the systematic shifting between speech exchange systems otherwise associated with non-interview settings. In their examination of journalists’ mixed interactional activities in the hybrid political interview both Hutchby and Ekstrom discuss how hybridity is explored as an interactional resource to question and challenge politicians and experts, breaching the traditionally conceived neutralistic role of the broadcast news journalist.

In this talk I examine instances of journalists’ breaching neutralism not through their hybrid questioning practices but through their listening practices (as discussed by Norrick 2010) that match practices typical of everyday conversation, in the context of one-on-one pre-election interviews conducted during the 2012 Greek general election. In particular I examine how interviewers signal listenership and the uptake of information, how they prompt and aid the politicians and how the latter respond. In doing so I attempt to chart the changing form of neutralism and how this may shape the epistemology of (Greek) TV journalism.

In my data, journalists use reactive tokens (collaborative completions, repetitions) to collaboratively complete politicians’ arguments, to answer their own questions and even to correct politicians. Findings indicate that: 1) journalists, by using reactive tokens do not only breach neutralism, and introduce hybrid interactional practices in the “hard” genre of pre-election interviews, but by doing so they facilitate the development of the politicians’ arguments. Thus by co-constructing knowledge, journalists aid politicians’ propaganda (Taylor 1992). 2) politicians by accepting, or reacting to the content of the turn, but not the breach of neutralism, indicate both that this transformed form of neutralism is co-constructed and it serves the politicians’ practical process of persuasion (propaganda). It seems that this hybrid form of neutralism produces knowledge for the overhearing audience that facilitates the politician’s propaganda.

**References**


Pieter Maeseele
University of Antwerp, Belgium - Pieter.Maeseele@UAntwerpen.be

Panel B1: Alternative news media

On traditional, alternative and entertainment media, or: Pluralism in the 21st century?
This paper focuses on some results from a recent comparative research program into the extent of pluralism in the representation of diverse social issues by Flemish news media. These show that news media are not found to differ first and foremost in terms of ideological preferences, but in terms of the extent to which democratic debate about dominant ideological preferences is discouraged (i.e. depoliticization) or encouraged (i.e. politicization). Furthermore, we also find that especially traditional news journalism is characterized by depoliticization, while alternative journalistic examples – where existing journalistic news conventions are exceeded – are rather characterized by politicization. In this paper we will first focus on how this takes place in the case of alternative news media such as DeWereldMorgen.be and Mo*. Second, we change our focus to reflect on how this also takes place in the case of entertainment media, both in terms of non-fiction such as The Daily Show with Jon Stewart (Comedy Central) or Basta! (Neveneffecten), and fiction such as The Wire (HBO) or The Newsroom (HBO). We conclude by discussing the significance of these results for the future of pluralism in 21st century commercial media landscapes in general and news in specific.

Martin Montgomery, Shen Jin & Chen Tong
University of Macau, China - mmontgomery@umac.mo
University of Macau, China - shenjin1016@hotmail.com
University of Macau, China - corychen22@gmail.com

Panel F: Global perspectives on hybrid journalism

Digital discourse and changing forms of political engagement. A case study of two separate episodes in contrasting mediaspheres: ‘Binders full of women’ in the US and ‘Watchgate’ in the PRC
This paper will draw upon two case studies from contrasting mediaspheres, the U.S. and the PRC, to explore the role of digital discourse in micro-blogs on social media platforms as an enactment or extension of the public sphere. The first case study is based on data from the second presidential debate of the U.S. Presidential Election, 2012, where the Republican candidate, Mitt Romney, made an ill-judged reference to ‘binders full of women’. It explores how the phrase was immediately picked up on Twitter and became the focus for memes and threads in the days that followed.

The second case study is based on data from China where a press photograph of a public official looking relaxed at the scene of a fatal accident led to widespread comment amongst China’s netizens, to such an extent that the official not only lost his position (as regional head of work safety), but was subsequently investigated for breaches of party discipline.

In both case studies we see an interaction between ‘old’ and ‘new’ media, since a significant amount of participation in both the U.S. and China comes not just from members of the public but from established journalists accredited to what might be called ‘old’ media news institutions. Each episode, indeed, begins with what might be called an ‘old media’ event: a televised debate in the US and a news report in the press in the PRC. But in each case the public response is widely dispersed through micro-blogging on social media.

A comparison of these two cases leads to reflections on the potentialities of the mediated public sphere in the age of the internet. But it also deals with two kinds of body politic in process in two very different societies. Nonetheless, the comparison throws interesting light on how a similar mediated genre – the micro-blog – can be inflected in different ways and to different ends in the two major societies of our time.

Hendrik Michael
University of Bamberg, Germany - hendrik.michael@uni-bamberg.de

Panel D: Hybrid styles of journalism

Agents of irony: An approach to political reporting based on Hunter S. Thompson’s Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail ’72
In 1972 Kurt Vonnegut claimed that representative democracies, notably the United States, are suffering from a political disease. For this disease many diagnoses are at hand but no cure is offered. Its common symptoms are disengaged public discourse about policies, cynicism towards and by politicians, and acts of radical
partisanship throughout the polity. A further symptom is how journalism reports politics. Arguably, political journalism has been failing to engage and inform voters in complex political processes. Straightforward journalistic coverage of politics has, many critics claim, become an inside job. This research aims to explore alternatives of making political reporting more accessible to a general audience. So far, maybe the most engaged and unorthodox testimony of American political journalism in the 20th century has been critically disregarded: Hunter S. Thompson’s Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail ’72. His journalism, the notorious Gonzo, uses narrative strategies of modernist story-telling where the author provides a kaleidoscopic view of world and self. Thereby, Thompson’s political reporting is engaging as entertainment and at the same time informative as political analysis. In Campaign Trail ’72 Thompson creates a hybrid form of political reportage through a modus operandi that makes strategic use of verbal irony. I will argue that it enables a politically engaged writer not only to voice his growing frustration with politicians and journalists on the campaign trail, but moreover establish an understanding with these protagonists through the use of irony’s various forms, i.e. ironic dialogues, characters and tropes. Thus Campaign Trail ’72 does not merely follow the inroads of political journalism. Thompson’s reporting rather fosters the readers’ understanding for an often intangible subject, namely the complex election process and its protagonists.

Renée Moernaut
Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium - Renee.Moernaut@vub.ac.be
Looking in different directions: ‘Positionality’ as core point of difference between alternative and mainstream media. A case study: The environmental justice frame
Panel B1: Alternative news media
What is alternative media? The concept is often problematized as being oxymoronic. After all, “everything, at some point, is alternative to something else”, according to Downing (2001, p. ix). Nevertheless, we try to define ‘alternative media’ in their divergence from ‘mainstream media’, based on a literature review. We posit that alternative media can be considered to be ‘anti-hegemonic’ in three ways: They have a non-commercial and de-institutionalized context which allows them to be radical in terms of content and to adopt a non-hierarchical production process. As such, these media try to enact social change. (Atton, 2002; Downing, 2001; Hamilton, 2000). We conclude, more specifically, that the ‘positionality’ of sponsors, sources, media producers... is the core point of difference between alternative and mainstream media. ‘Positionality’ is “a person’s location within the larger social formation”, which is “key to how people experience, articulate and respond to environmental issues”. (Pulido & Pena, 1998, p. 34).

This alternative sphere indeed is a fruitful context for alternative frames, which might counterbalance mainstream views. We demonstrate this based on a case study of the ‘alternative’ environmental justice frame (Hopke, 2012) - as opposed to the ‘mainstream’ environmental justice frame - in the coverage of the alternative Flemish website ‘DeWereldMorgen’. In a qualitative framing analysis (Entman, 1991; 1993; 2004; Van Gorp, 2006) drawing on tools of discourse analysis (Richardson, 2007; van Dijk, 1988; 1998), we show that the alternative ‘positionality’ in alternative media feeds into the alternative ‘positionality’ of agents and patients in their version of the environmental justice frame (the key characteristic of ‘environmental justice’, according to Pulido and Pena (1998)). We summarize this illustratively introducing an ‘alternative ideological square’. (van Dijk, 1998, p. 33).

Although the above draws the image of a Janus figure, with mainstream and alternative media looking opposite directions, we conclude by briefly illustrating the ever changing faces of media: while recent evolutions (like the Internet) blur the mainstream-alternative demarcation, alternative media feed into mainstream coverage and vice versa.

References


Katarzyna Molek-Kozakowska
Opole University, Poland - molekk@uni.opole.pl

Panel D: Hybrid styles of journalism

**Hybrid styles in journalistic reporting on science: A study of New Scientist’s headlines**

This project explores current journalistic practices that reflect the established media’s increased need to attract readers/viewers through sensationalized coverage. Sensationalism is understood as a discursive strategy of re-presenting and re-packaging information in such a way as to make it appear as more attractive, relevant and interesting than might be the case (Molek-Kozakowska, 2013). Within discourse studies, it has been demonstrated that popular journalism is characterized by thematic preoccupations with extraordinary events and dramatic human-interest narratives (Ekstrom, 2002), by simplified and stereotyped representations and colloquial idiom (Conboy, 2006), or by emotion-laden evaluative language (Bednarek and Caple, 2012). This project aims to explore to what extent such popular journalistic style has colonized “more serious” scientific coverage. It examines a sample of over 300 headlines collected over the period of nine months from the webpage of the international magazine *New Scientist*. The headlines have been collated from the list of five “most-read” articles displayed by the outlet. The linguistic, stylistic and rhetorical properties of these headlines are examined quantitatively and qualitatively. The analysis focuses on the ways in which scientific research and discoveries are popularized in hybridized formats involving various proportions of academic and popular styles.

**References**


Tokunbo Ojo
York University, Canada - ojotoks@yahoo.com

Panel F: Global perspectives on hybrid journalism

**Changing the game in Nigeria? Appropriating Internet and web 2.0 for sports communication**

Historically, it has always been journalists who shape and define the narrative discourse around sporting events (Boyle, 2012). But, with the advent of social media and internet technologies, this is no longer the case. The digital media technologies now allow athletes, fans and sports organizations to impose their narrative frames on sporting events in the real-time. This has changed the tenor and tone of sport communication and journalism. With Shooting Stars Sports club (3SC) of Ibadan, a legendary and pacesetter football club in Nigeria, as its case study, this paper examines why and how football clubs are appropriating social media and web technologies for information dissemination and live match commentaries in the Nigerian contexts.
Svenja Ottovordemgentschenfelde
London School of Economics and Political Science, UK - s.ottovordemgentschenfelde@lse.ac.uk

Panel A1: Twitter and journalism

Negotiating legitimacy: Political journalists and their presentation of self on Twitter
In the past, political journalists needed to spend years of their careers building relationships with politicians, sources and the audience to win trust, earn credibility and establish their reputation. Today, within a matter of minutes, they can design a profile page on Twitter that includes a short biography, images and hyperlinks to their work as well as other external content which all give testimony to their occupational achievements and status. Twitter itself promotes that “[m]oment by moment, your Twitter profile shows the world who you are” (Bellona 2014) and thus claims to have become a new arena for journalists to display their identities and status.

Journalism has become increasingly precarious and contingent, detached from the stability institutions once provided (Deuze, 2007). In the current hyper-saturated and fluid media environment, competition between professionals is harsh, while novel actors are moving into a space formerly controlled by journalists alone. The emergence of citizen journalism threatens the historic boundaries that once provided occupational legitimacy. This paper conceptualises these phenomena through the notion of post-industrial journalism (Anderson, Bell & Shirky, 2012) and Chadwick’s (2031) hybrid media system. It asks how political journalists on Twitter negotiate their occupational legitimacy in this new media environment that directly challenges the principles their professional ideology is built upon?

The paper presents the findings of a quantitative content and visual analysis of 125 U.S.-American political journalists’ profile pages on Twitter. These journalists work for the 25 largest commercial newspapers and top three cable news channels in the United States. While the paper discusses partial results of a much larger work in progress, it aspires to contribute to understanding a) how and where we can locate ‘professionalism’ on Twitter as an interactive, participatory and comparatively non-hierarchical communicative space; and b) where old, new and hybrid media logics become visible that maintain and reinforce journalism’s status?

References

Yeoh Pei Lee & Pieter Maeseele
University of Antwerp, Belgium - PeiLee.Yeoh@uantwerpen.be
University of Antwerp, Belgium - Pieter.Maeseele@UAntwerpen.be

Panel B2: Alternative news media II

‘No need for condoms – GE Corn can do the job’: How feature journalism of NGOs de commodifies genetic engineering
From its earlier formation “a feature story is one in which the news element is made subordinate” (Harrington, 1912: 294). With the widening diversity offered by new media technology, the central tenet of feature journalism today is associated with the discourse of intimacy where it prides in its ability to close in on the private-public distance of news production and reception. While current research on online feature journalism focuses on the properties of media technology, its broader social role in engaging on politicization is seemingly lacking. Thus, the aim of this research is to investigate how online feature stories by Greenpeace are ideological in delegitimizing the use of genetically engineering as an unsustainable agricultural practice in India and China. This research adopts the discourse analytical approach to investigate the type of feature journalism practised by Greenpeace through its feature articles on its website from 2003-2013. In locating this strategic role of feature journalism, two issues will be discussed. First, it explores the hybridization of discourse at the local level of textualization. This investigates three integral features comprising discourse, genre, and style – the discourse of scientism in the genre of feature journalism and the deployment of specific style (epistemic and deontic authority). Second, it locates the social practice behind this interdiscursive hybridity and discusses how it operationalizes as an effective communicative model in being an alternative medium to achieve its political
intent by constructing a particular reality on the GE technology. With these empirical insights, it further addresses how the politicization through such hybrid journalism is significant in recontextualizing the social realities of GE where it disarticulates and rearticulates certain relations. It will be argued that this form of discursive hybridity becomes a potent mode in the decommodification and demarketization of neo-liberal tendencies on GE thus contributing to the democratization process.

Ike Picone  
Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium - ike.picone@vub.ac.be

Panel H: News audiences and citizen journalism

Hybrid audiences: Changing news practices and the notion of news

News as a genre has been traditionally defined in terms of the timely nature of its content, the specific formats like newspapers and television shows dedicated to it, and the special value attributed to it in modern democracies. At the same time, this notion has continuously been contested, not only in terms of the characteristics of the genre, but also in terms of what audiences consider news.

This article proposes to approach the notion of news from a user perspective. More precisely we ask how news as a genre has ‘liquefied’ (Deuze, 2006, 2012) through changing news practices enabled by the rise of digital, mobile and ‘social’ distribution platforms over the past decade. Building on different strands of literature in audience research, news use studies and media publics, the question of ‘what is news’ will be explored from audiences’ point-of-view.

Special attention will be given to the role of publics as distributors of content through amongst others social media. In certain cases, the ‘news feeds’ central to these platforms feature information from different sources, ranging from national or international news outlets to hyper-local or personal networks. We can witness another ‘journalistic gate’ becoming more prominent in this context, namely the choice of audiences in what ‘news’ they decide to share with their network, possibly resulting in content ‘going viral’ when appealing to larger audiences. Research (Picone, 2011) suggests that in making this choice, people are led by dynamics both similar as divergent from traditional journalistic gate-keeping processes. We will conclude the article by a reflection on what these changing news practices mean for the notion of ‘news’ in academic research.

References

Daniëlle Raeijmaekers & Pieter Maeseele

University of Antwerp, Belgium - Daniëlle.Raeijmaekers@uantwerpen.be  
University of Antwerp, Belgium - Pieter.Maeseele@UAntwerpen.be

Panel J: Journalistic values and ideology

Pluralism outside the box: Crossing the ideological borderline of objectivity in media research

As journalism has become more professionalized over the last decades, the concept of ‘objectivity’, along with its twin sentries ‘balance’ and ‘impartiality’, has been significantly enshrined within media policies, newsroom routines and journalism education (e.g. Schudson, 2011). Moreover, given the widespread use of objectivity as a journalistic guideline, it is “not surprisingly then, academics have also adopted bias and objectivity as organizing concepts in many studies of journalism (Hackett, 1984: 230)”. However, a number of scholars have criticized the journalistic and analytical ideals of objectivity, balance, and impartiality for not enabling, but limiting media pluralism (Hackett, 1984; Hall et al. 1978; Taylor & Willis, 1999; van den Berg & van der Veer, 1986). They claim that these ideals cannot be regarded as neutral concepts, but carry ideological assumptions about society and media: they reflect, construct, and reinforce an existing social consensus. In this paper, we will show that objectivity not only confirms and generates a certain social consensus (on a particular topic), but also incorporates a genuine belief of social consensus in itself (as an ideological ideal). By linking its counterpart ‘balance’ to a representation of society as if there are no major insurmountable conflicts of interests, and ‘impartiality’ to the assumption that further social consensus can be reached through detached rational
procedures and debate, we demonstrate how the objectivity norm is rooted within a post-ideological understanding of society. Contrasting such an understanding of society with a post-political one, we claim that the objectivity norm only allows for an evaluation of media pluralism ‘within the box’, i.e. *within* the limits of social consensus. In that sense, we suggest a new analytical vocabulary is needed to discuss pluralism ‘outside the box’, i.e. *about* the limits of social consensus.

Chris Roberts
University of Roehampton, UK - C.Roberts@roehampton.ac.uk
Panel I: Television journalism and documentary

**Reconstituting current affairs broadcasting: The return to documentary forms and values**

This paper is oriented around the notion that the crisis of capitalism in 2008 has been effectively [re]framed in such a way as to render alternatives and alternative narrative almost impossible to produce. Normative assumptions - what Mark Fisher calls ‘Capitalist Realism’ – are dominant or almost the only frames of reference for narrating the crisis. The case will be made that, restricted as it is by various normative news values; aesthetics; resource *and* time pressures it is in fact not possible to effectively “tell the story” of the “crisis of capitalism” within the narrow discourse of broadcast journalism. Using a series of “public service” current affairs broadcast journalism examples, the paper will critically interrogate current affairs broadcastings’ discursive role in the shaping of public understanding [the epistemology] of politics, power, and “the economy”. The paper concludes by arguing that standardised forms of broadcast journalistic practice must be radically shifted in favour of forms that locate contemporary issues in their wider social and historical context. In short, in order to fully “tell the story” of crisis and inform “the public,” current affairs in particular must [re]turn to an approach more readily associated with documentary practice.

Diğdem Sezen & Tonguc Ibrahim Sezen
Istanbul Bilgi University, Turkey - digdemssezen@gmail.com
Istanbul Bilgi University, Turkey - tonguc.sezen@bilgi.edu.tr
Panel B1: Alternative news media

**Between independent and the mainstream: Transmedial news coverage by Cuneyt Ozdemir**

In this paper we prose a comparative analysis of the transmedial news coverage and of the Turkish journalist Cuneyt Ozdemir and his network of channels between May 31 and June 15 2013 during the Istanbul Gezi Park protests. Ozdemir is one of the “star journalists” of the Turkish media and is positioned between independent and mainstream media outlets. He owns the independent dipnot.tv news website, its social media channels, and a weekly tablet magazine. He also writes for the left wing newspaper *Radikal* owned by the Dogan Group and is the producer of the daily news show 5N1K on CNNTURK Television.

During the Gezi Park protests mainstream Turkish media has been criticized both by the protesters and the international press for not reporting the events to the general public. Although the protesters praised social media as their main news source in early days; acts like trolling raised the questions on credibility of these channels. In this environment independent news web sites and news agencies played a big role. At that time dipnot.tv used its micro blog account for news feeds, video chats to create public forums, the web site for news content and the tablet magazine for deeper analysis and opinion pieces. Ozdemir also covered the events on his column and TV show.

In this paper we will look into these channels owned or run by Ozdemir and map their relationships and features. How much original content did each channel create? How did they position themselves? How did they get their readers involved? How were their content linked? By answering these and other questions we will try to understand how alternative and mainstream news coverage creates convergent content during a crisis.

Sangeeta Sharma
Birla Institute of Technology and Science, India - 38.sangeeta@gmail.com
Panel E: Journalism, branding and business models

**Advertising and journalism: The innovative ways to lure the customers**

The confusion between advertising and journalism has fumed up a lot of debate in recent times. These days you will interface with an ad that doesn’t look like an ad at all. When we look at the definition, there is a
distinction between advertising and journalism. Advertising deals with more with company wants without taking care of relevance or utility to the audience. However journalism focuses on giving information relevant to the audience without keeping in mind the company’s objective. Advertising is paid for the content by the company. With the advent of digital age and democratization there is a twist in the approach. The formats of ads get along with the user experience where it is placed. It is less intrusive and more friendly, it is likely to make an impact on the viewer. The examples are facebook sponsored stories, branded videos on youtube, etc. The format is such that they are strong on the content, more integrated and not blown directly on the face. The native advertising is prone to criticism as it is the sort of advertising in the garb of journalism that is more of story narration or mimicry. It all depends how much you can sell- whether you label it as advertising or not but if you make it appealing and creative you will be able to engage the customers and marketers more that the traditional media. The paper aims to study the content and approach of new ways of advertising that includes native advertising, Guerilla marketing, product placement and advertorials.

Marica Spalletta & Lorenzo Ugolini
Link Campus University, Rome, Italy - m.spalletta@unilink.it
Catholic University of Sacred Heart, Milan, Italy - lorenzo_ugolini@virgilio.it

Panel G: Lifestyle journalism and celebrity culture

Hybridity in Italian sports journalism: from sportswomen to celebrities

The paper aims to highlight the hybridity of Italian sports journalism by presenting the results of a research concerning a case study focused on three Italian athletes: Valentina Vezzali, Federica Pellegrini and Carlotta Ferlito.

The Italian sports journalism of today is the result of an evolution that, in the last 15 years, led it to be always more spectacularized, personalized, leaderized and popularized (Spalletta, Ugolini 2013). One of the main features of this phenomenon is that sports journalism is now hybridized with several other journalistic genres, such as political, financial, crime, scientific, television and gossip news. Today, athletes can be more and more assimilated to celebrities, because of their performances but also – and sometimes mainly – because of some aspects strictly linked to their personalities, their appearance and their non-athletic activity.

Our research focuses on three Italian athletes: Valentina Vezzali, Federica Pellegrini and Carlotta Ferlito are three champions of their sport (respectively fencing, swimming and artistic gymnastics), whose newsworthiness is due to sports but also to politics (Vezzali is a Member of Italian Parliament), gossip (Pellegrini’s private life is one of the most discussed in Italy) and television (Ferlito became a TV-star and a social network star before proving herself as a gymnast).

The research analyses the news coverage of these three athletes from 2008 to 2014 on two important Italian newspapers: the Corriere della Sera (non-specialized) and La Gazzetta dello Sport (specialized in sports), and highlights that the newsworthiness of Vezzali, Pellegrini and Ferlito shows several important differences (based on their discipline, their age and the phase of the career they were living from 2008 to 2014) and, at the same time, several things in common, especially concerning the different ways they can “make the news” on Italian newspapers.

Michael Stevenson, Tamara Witschge & Chris Anderson
University of Groningen, the Netherlands - m.p.stevenson@rug.nl
University of Groningen, the Netherlands - t.a.c.witschge@rug.nl
City University of New York, US - christopher.anderson@csi.cuny.edu

Panel E: Journalism, branding and business models

Hybridity and re-stabilization: On the ‘platform effect’ in journalism

Among the various financial, technological and ethical crises supposedly transforming journalism today, one of the more subtle could be termed a crisis of professional identity (Anderson, 2014). Although this identity crisis is often tied to the problem of public trust in journalism, it also relates to an unsettling of roles in journalists’ everyday work. Journalists who freelance or work for non-traditional news publishing companies may find themselves shifting between roles in a way that counters the neat, modernist distinctions between publishers, editors, journalists, etc. (Turner, 2005). In this paper, we explore how these hybrid roles may be inscribed in the
structure of new publishing platforms, thus contributing to their re-stabilization. To this end we critically examine Atavist, the celebrated news start-up known for its publication of long-form “e-singles,” as well as its proprietary multi-media publishing software, Creativist.

When viewed as journalistic endeavor, Atavist, as the name implies, is something of a throwback: it aims to instigate a return to what the founders identify as a previous era of quality, long-form storytelling. Analyzing it as a platform (Gillespie 2010), however, this case study shows how Atavist mediates between journalists and audiences, creating and configuring what economists call a two-sided market (Rochet and Tirole, 2004). Platforms are not simply passive intermediaries in such markets, but shape or ‘regulate’ behaviors within them: stabilizing the form of a market’s activity is a key determinant for a platform’s success (Boudreau and Hagiu, 2008). Ultimately, this paper explores how Atavist’s technological and commercial organization - such as its royalties-based system for paying its authors - can be seen to institute expectations, norms and routines that stand in contrast with traditional delineations of a journalist’s work.

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Chen Tong
University of Macau, China - corychen22@gmail.com

Panel C: Political news interviews

Doing accountability in political news interviews: A comparative investigation of interviewers’ practices in the Anglo-American and Chinese-Anglophone broadcasting

Political news interview, or the accountability interview as defined by Montgomery (2007), has long been the focus of social scientific research due to its profound social political implications and also its significance in the field of journalism. The recent decades have witnessed a variety of studies in this field, with the mainstream looking at the normative conception of how things should be and accordingly what practices should be undertaken (Ekström & Lundell, 2009). However, it needs to point out that the understanding of the accountability interview and the normative constraints on the interactional participants are primarily developed under the Anglo-American context. This paper argues that practices of political news interview are more complex, diverse and hybrid than what has been described or taken for granted if other cultural domains are taken into consideration, here in this paper, the Chinese society.

In order to have a comparative sense of the current sphere of the accountability interview, four political interviewing programs with temporal, spatial and cultural differences are selected and they are CCTV Toptalk from Mainland China, ATV Newsline from Hong Kong, BBC Hardtalk from the U.K. and The O’Reilly Factor from the U.S.. By analyzing mainly the variations of interviewer practices in the four programs, the paper intends to demonstrate the hybrid features of doing accountability, for instance, conversational arguments, and more importantly, to re-define the notion of accountability interview. Also, although the research output shares some resemblances with the idea of Hybrid Political Interview (Hutchby, 2011), the paper argues that it might be more appropriate to consider the accountability interview with blended features as cases with shifts of activities from one sub-genre of news interview to another, rather than justify it as an independent genre.

References
Hilde Van den Bulck & Steve Paulussen
University of Antwerp, Belgium - hilde.vandenbulck@uantwerpen.be
University of Antwerp, Belgium - steve.paulussen@uantwerpen.be
Panel G: Lifestyle journalism and celebrity culture

Celebrity news as hybrid journalism
Taking empirical data from content analysis of celebrity news in a range of Flemish and international celebrity gossip websites and mainstream newspaper websites, this contribution analyses celebrity news as a hybrid journalistic genre, focusing on the originality, newsworthiness and factual accuracy of the news content, on the one hand, and the truth claims, the sources used and indications of fact checking by the journalists, on the other hand. This allows for an evaluation of the journalistic genre as ‘walking the thin line between journalism and entertainment’.

Media feature centrally in the growth of celebrity culture (Drake & Miah, 2010). For a long time, celebrity news was restricted to specialized gossip magazines, but today it is a fundamental part of all old and new (news) media (Gorin & Dubied, 2011). As a journalistic genre, celebrity news is often considered, by academics, the journalistic profession and segments of the audience, as situated at the very bottom of the news food chain, popular with media because of its suitability for short-term news cycles, short news stories, and contemporary media’s preference for entertainment (Turner, 2010). Contemporary celebrity culture focuses on the real and the intimate (Holmes, 2005; Marshall, 2006). As such, scandals and paparazzi photographs have become mainstream news content, which is seen to ty in with a shift in journalism towards tabloidization (Turner, 2004). Most analyses of celebrity journalism are case studies that demonstrate this emphasis on the private and real (Butler Breese, 2010; Dyer, 1987; Holmes, 2005). Research further shows a growing stress on celebrity as news value, also in mainstream, quality news media (O’Neill et al. 2012).

Because of this focus on the entertainment aspect and the ‘value’ of celebrity news content, little systematic empirical work has been done regarding those who actually produce the news, the celebrity journalists. How do they gather, select and verify the news they spread about celebrities? And to what extent and in what ways do they adhere to professional standards, values and routines generally considered as ‘good’ journalistic conduct? These are the questions this contribution aims to address. We use celebrity news stories published on national and international gossip websites and mainstream newspaper websites as objects of analysis, not only to describe the characteristics of celebrity news, but also to examine the practices and rituals enacted by the reporters during the news production. More specific, the qualitative content analysis focuses on three elements: (1) the originality, substance and newsworthiness of the story; (2) the factual accuracy and unambiguity of the information presented in the story, including the degree of gossip in it; and (3) the (transparency about) sourcing and verification processes that preceded the story’s publication.

Preliminary results indicate that while there are vast differences between different outlets within the celebrity gossip press, contrary to common understanding, news in celebrity gossip media adheres to many of the professional standards and values often associated with quality journalism and hard news. Conversely, in their use of celebrity news as ‘clickbait’ for their websites, mainstream media can be seen to ignore even the most basic verification rules in copy/pasting celebrity news from sources not deemed ‘trustworthy’ within the world of celebrity gossip media.

Maaike Van de Voorde
Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium - Maaike.Van.De.Voorde@vub.ac.be
Panel G: Lifestyle journalism and celebrity culture

‘Super creams for young eyes’: Women’s magazines’ hybrid approach to journalism
For many decades now, women’s magazines have been the ideal form of escapism for women readers from all over the world. However, despite their strong influence and popularity, this particular genre of media has occupied a less central and prestigious space in journalism, as they are often considered a less ‘serious’ form of journalism than, for instance, lifestyle magazines for men (Grose 2013).
In trying to define the concept of journalism, David Randall distinguishes between good and bad journalism. He defines good journalism as ‘intelligent, entertaining, reliably informative, properly set in context, honest in intent and effect, expressed in fresh language and serving no cause but the discernible truth [...] Such journalism could be printed in any publication, because it is, in every sense of the word, universal’ (Randall 2000: viii). Following this definition, one could argue that the editorial content of women’s magazines can be defined as ‘serious journalism’ dealing with socially relevant themes as health, sexuality, love and family life and serious matters of politics like rape, domestic violence and abuse.

However, as commercial media products, the content of women’s magazines not only depends on the editorial policy of the magazines, but also, and more often than their readers can suspect, of their commercial background. In recent years, media critics have expressed great concern about a blurring of the lines between editorial content and advertisements (Stular 2009: 61). Advertisers interfere with the journalists’ role, resulting in ‘hybrid journalism’ in which journalistic and advertising discourse are mixed.

As a case study, this paper examines the Flemish women’s magazines Flair and Libelle as journalistic products and aims to answer the following research questions: how are women’s magazines valued in journalistic culture? Which topics do the magazines cover and which kinds of journalistic forms are used? How do the women’s magazines’ editors see themselves as journalists and how do they see their own product? Can we uncover hybrid messages in the content of these magazines? And if so, which textual devices are used to construct advertising discourse?

References

Tom Van Hout
University of Antwerp, Belgium & Leiden University, the Netherlands - tom.vanhout@uantwerpen.be

Panel D: Hybrid styles of journalism

Policing language in the media: How journalists assess ‘message’ politics

This paper examines hybrid news discourse as sites of language policing. Drawing on a corpus of politicians’ faux pas quotes and journalists’ tongue-in-cheek assessments of these quotes, I analyze the behavioral norms that news media hold politicians accountable to. My interest lies with that curious byproduct of professionalized, media-saturated public communication “in which no facet of [...] behavior is safe from scrutiny” (Lempert 2011: 242).

The data are drawn from Ongehoord (‘Inappropriate’), a weekly column in the Belgian newspaper De Standaard. On average, 10 quotes are selected “that should not have made the news” (but did, of course). These quotes are curated from a variety of news sources (print, broadcast, digital) and highlight who’s hot and who’s not for all the wrong reasons. The corpus consists of 670 quotes by national and local politicians and world leaders published between 8 April 2011 and 5 April 2013. Here’s an example (translated into English):

‘And I can assure you: there will be no alcoholic beverage controls tonight. Enjoy your drink.’

Nineve Mayor Michel Casteur ‘s bombshell new year’s speech started a controversy.

What we see here are journalistic evaluations of what Silverstein (2011) calls “message’. Message does not refer to the content or topic but rather to “a structure of potential associations — biographically imagined ascriptions of outlook, attitude, character — with a degree of coherence” (Silverstein 2011: 172). By teasing out the implicit norms of public communication, I show how journalists police message.

Marco Van Kerkhoven
Utrecht School of Journalism, the Netherlands - marco.vankerkhoven@hu.nl

Panel H: News audiences and citizen journalism

Stretching journalism: Hyperlocals b(l)ending ethics and business

Online news start-ups are gaining ground in local news ecosystems in the Netherlands. However, explorative empirical research revealed that not all of these so-called hyperlocals view themselves primarily as journalists or producers of journalistic content. Based on nationwide content analyses, five case studies, and twenty
interviews with owners of hyperlocals in the Netherlands, journalism and business ethics were explored. We specifically looked at how owners of hyperlocals value and implement journalistic codes, how they combine advertorial based business models with independent news production and how they deal with conflicting interests, especially in cases where local economic and political powers seem to interfere.

First results indicate that ethics do play a role in editorial choices and practical news production, but that views and practices differ substantially. Many owners of hyperlocals reject the idea of being strictly a journalist, although bringing independent news is there acclaimed primary goal. They rather allow themselves the liberty of crossing the traditional line between the economic and democratic interests of their business. Sometimes this is said to be a necessary step in order to survive. In some cases hyperlocals seem to allow political interests to interfere with journalistic interests.

Based on our multi-angle approach we conclude that the hyperlocal news business is still based on a low-budget strategy. Most sites underperform in terms of efficiency, marketing and audience approach. It seems that in this situation journalism ethics are vulnerable, since businesses based solely on independent news production are having a hard time surviving. The sustainability of local independent local news start-ups seems far from secured, as is, consequently, independent local news production.

Jim Walker
University for the Creative Arts, UK - jwalker4@ucreative.ac.uk

Panel D: Hybrid styles of journalism

The para-textual experience: Navigating the temporal distortions and spatial illusions in illustrative reportage and graphic journalism

The paper considers how the reader/viewer navigates through different forms of illustrative journalism in relation to the multiplicity of journalistic sources. It is proposed that while the dominance of conventional and digital forms of journalism remains the norm. That graphic forms of reportage construct a para-textual reading that interweaves between these different matrices. In part the materiality of illustrative news/reportage including its compositional construction, colour, textual forms, and its illustrative lines evoke a complex multilayered narratological reading for the reader/viewer. In part the visual transcription of events as found in the work of Joe Sacco, Dan Archer, George Butler and Emmanuel Guibert enable the reader to reposition their views and understanding of events. Evoking a more immersive experience that transcends what Susan Sontag has described, as “The ultra-familiar, ultra-celebrated image – of an agony, of ruin – is an unavoidable feature of our camera-mediated knowledge of war.” (Sontag 2003:21) It is therefore proposed that illustrative forms of journalism liberate the reader by breaking away from the “ideological linearity of print”. (Bredehoft 2014:21) by repositioning the authorial line of the illustrator at the heart of the communicative process that challenges the multiplicity of contemporary multimedia forms of communication.

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not sufficient enough to explain the complex development of hybrid styles in TV-journalism. We will suggest operating future research on a different basis, analysing hybrid styles on a quantitative and qualitative level.

This research brings two main concepts together by looking not only at what subjects are chosen as news, but also how this news is presented. If looking into the way in which content and form are complementary the hybrid styles become visible. The research for example shows that hard (international, political, economic) news - which in former research usually is defined as ‘public quality’ - more often is brought in a more popular and personal way through increased use of human interest stories, voxpop and cross talks. Popular and soft news - for example celebrity news - on the other hand can be presented as factual, detached and aloof. These examples show that the conventional dichotomy between hard and soft news is outdated. In research about qualities in television journalism the acknowledgment of quality in hybrid forms is inevitable.

Hongqiang Zhu
University of Macau & Jinan University, Guangzhou, China - hongqiangzhu@163.com

Panel A2: Twitter and journalism II

‘Searchable talk’ as discourse practice on the internet: The case of ‘binders full of women’

This paper explores the case of ‘binders full of women’ as an example of ‘searchable talk’ (Zappavigna 2012) in the micro-blogging sphere of Twitter. Drawing on Goffman’s notion of ‘embedding’ (Goffman, 1981), the article explores Sinclair’s distinction between ‘utterance averred’ and ‘utterance attributed (Sinclair 1986) and his related distinction between ‘interactive’ plane and ‘autonomous’ plane of discourse (Sinclair 1981; see also Hunston 2000). This paper suggests that the operation of the discourse item ‘binders full of women’ - when collected and sampled in terms of its temporal development on Twitter - can be distinguished into three types. Firstly, as a meme, ‘binders full of women’ works on the interactive plane. Secondly ‘binders full of women’, as an instance of re-contextualised discourse practice, is constructed on the autonomous plane. Thirdly, ‘binders full of women’ operates on the indeterminate plane. In this way, the averral of ‘binders full of women’ is reported in different modes in each type and this may lead to variations of its discourse function. The characterization of the discourse item, ‘binders full of women’, as searchable talk may offer some insights into how the averral of ‘binders full of women’ is communicated in the interactive context of the micro-blogging sphere and may also provide an exemplary description for how other themed discourses emerge in the heteroglossic context of interactive social media.
INDEX

Anderson, 9, 12, 14, 30  
Andone, 8, 14  
Baack, 11, 15  
Basu, 7, 15  
Baym, 5, 6, 11, 13  
Beckers, 7, 16  
Bødker, 10, 16  
Brems, 6, 7, 17  
Broersma, 6, 17  
Burnier, 11, 18  
Chojnicka, 8, 18  
Coesemans, 3, 10, 11, 19  
De Cleen, 11, 19, 20  
De Cock, 6, 20  
de Smaelle, 9, 20  
Deridder, 6  
Desmedt, 8, 21  
Dijkstra, 11, 34  
Domingo, 8, 11, 18, 21, 22  
Fruttaldo, 11, 22  
Graham, 6, 17  
Gulyas, 10, 22  
Harder, 7, 16  
Heinderyckx, 3, 12  
Hutchby, 5, 8, 13, 21, 23, 31, 32  
Jin, 10, 24  
Kantara, 8, 23  
Le Cam, 8, 11, 18, 21, 22  
Maeseele, 7, 12, 24, 27, 28  
Mast, 3  
Michael, 9, 22, 24, 30  
Moernaut, 7, 25  
Molek-Kozakowska, 9, 26  
Montgomery, 10, 21, 24, 31  
Ojo, 10, 26  
Ottovordemgentschenfelde, 6, 27  
Paulussen, 6, 10, 32  
Pauwels, 3, 6, 19  
Pei Lee, 7, 27  
Picone, 10, 11, 28  
Raeijmaekers, 12, 28  
Roberts, 11, 29  
Sezen, 7, 29  
Sharma, 10, 15, 29  
Spalletta, 10, 30  
Stevenson, 9, 30  
Temmerman, 3, 6, 10, 17  
Tong, 9, 10, 24, 31  
Ugolini, 10, 30  
Van de Craen, 3  
Van de Voorde, 10, 32  
Van den Bulck, 3, 10, 32  
Van Hout, 9, 33  
Van Kerkhoven, 11, 33  
Walker, 9, 34  
Wiard, 11, 18  
Wijffjes, 11  
Wijffjes, 3, 9, 34  
Witschge, 9, 14, 30  
Zhu, 7, 35