Does Clark Kent tweet ? Structure, Agency and Materiality in Institutional Theory

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DOES CLARK KENT TWEET?

STRUCTURE, AGENCY AND MATERIALITY IN INSTITUTIONAL THEORY

By Patrick L. LÊ

“In a world that cultivates digital narcissistic individuality, you have to let your ego fall away. Because the world is not about each of us, it's about all of us.”

Lex Luthor (Justice League #35)

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Synthèse en français

Clark Kent twitte-t-il ? Structure, agence et matérialité dans la théorie institutionnelle

Avertissement

Il convient de rappeler que cette synthèse en français, très courte, ne peut résumer que de façon très imparfaite plus de 200 pages de réflexion. Elle vise avant tout à offrir une simple esquisse de l'ensemble du document. Nous invitons donc le lecteur à la recherche de détails à se reporter à la version complète en anglais.

Question de recherche et thèse

Cette thèse examine les questions de recherche suivantes: Comment l'adoption des technologies en ligne impacte-t-elle les comportements des acteurs et la reproduction des institutions ? Quels rôles jouent la structure, l'agence, et la matérialité dans ce changement ? Pour répondre à ces interrogations, nous avons conduit une collecte de données massive, incluant des milliers de tweets, des articles de journaux et messages de blogs, et plus de 80 entretiens avec des journalistes de média réputés.

L'argument central de ce travail de recherche est que les acteurs démontrent principalement une forme d'agence dite « évaluative-pratique », qui correspond à leur capacité à émettre des jugements pratiques en réponse aux demandes émergentes, dilemmes et ambiguïtés de situations changeantes (Battilana & D'aunno, 2009: 47; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). Cette forme d'agence est rendue possible par l'introduction d'une nouvelle technologie : cette dernière, en modifiant les conditions matérielles de la situation dans laquelle les acteurs se trouvent, les plonge dans un nouveau contexte et ouvre une fenêtre d'opportunité. En retour, cela permet aux journalistes d'échapper partiellement aux forces structurelles qui, généralement, guident et contraignent leur comportement. Ces acteurs prennent plutôt en considération des exigences pratiques et s'adaptent pragmatiquement aux besoins et aux conditions qui caractérisent la situation dans laquelle ils se trouvent. Cet argument est illustré par trois essais, qui, chacun à leur manière, offrent un éclairage différent des concepts de matérialité et d'agence pratique. Empiriquement, les deux premiers essais examinent le champ

journalistique. Le troisième essai quant à lui examine les pratiques de recherche des ethnographes en ligne.

Dans le premier essai (Chapitre 2), les journalistes transfèrent les normes journalistiques tout en déviant partiellement par rapport à ces dernières. Les propriétés matérielles propres à Twitter (ex : la limite de 140 signes, la rapidité des messages) jouent un rôle central dans ce processus car elles encouragent des comportements allant à l'encontre des normes traditionnelles d'expression journalistique (ex : usage de l'humour par des journalistes issus des journaux de référence). Dans ce cas, la technologie ouvre la possibilité pour les individus de sortir de leur rôle habituel. Pour autant, les journalistes ne savent pas précisément comment ils doivent agir : ils s'engagent dans une forme de « bricolage » caractéristique de l'agence pratique-évaluative (Battilana & D'aunno, 2009). Leur comportement correspond à une forme d'improvisation (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998) et ils « jouent » avec les frontières séparant les rôles qu'ils peuvent endosser (*boundary play*). En d'autres termes, il s'agit avant d'un processus mettant en avant la découverte et le plaisir, comme le souligne la notion de « jeu », plutôt que de travail. Dans cette étude, la technologie ouvre la porte de la « cage de fer » des contraintes structurelles. Les comportements des journalistes face à cette opportunité varient, et semblent dépendre de caractéristiques personnelles. Dans tous les cas, il n'y a ici aucun déterminisme technologique, ce qui n'exclut pas pour autant l'importance des caractéristiques matérielles de la technologie. En d'autres termes, la prise en compte de la matérialité n'implique pas nécessairement une vision déterministe de la technologie (Leonardi & Barley, 2008).

Dans le second essai (Chapitre 3), les journalistes tentent de donner du sens à la pratique du « personal branding » en faisant appel, entre autres, aux valeurs de leur profession. Dans cette étude, l'introduction d'une nouvelle technologie – les réseaux sociaux – permet l'émergence d'une pratique inédite qui requière une interprétation par les acteurs. Comme dans le cas précédent, cette situation est caractérisée par l'agence pratique-évaluative. Ainsi, les journalistes contextualisent les habitudes passées et les projets futurs en tenant compte des contingences du moment (Battilana & D'aunno, 2009: 47). Par exemple, ils vont envisager la possibilité qu'offre le personal branding en termes de renouvellement du journalisme. Plus généralement, ce processus de construction de sens est caractérisé par une utilisation de type « boîte à outils » (Swidler, 1986) où les individus mélangent des éléments disparates. Cela aboutit à des explications fragmentées, plus ou moins cohérentes. En ce qui concerne la matérialité, dans cette étude la technologie joue simplement le rôle de déclencheur, proche de

ce que Barley (1986) nomme une opportunité de restructuration. Les théorisations qui ont lieu après l'émergence des pratiques sont largement indépendantes de la technologie, contrairement à ce qui a été observé dans le premier essai.

Dans le troisième essai (Chapitre 4), nous observons que les chercheurs pratiquant l'ethnographie en ligne continuent d'adhérer à certaines normes de l'ethnographie conventionnelle (ex : approches privilégiant des sites spatialement délimités) tout en déviant par rapport à la pratique traditionnelle sur d'autres points (ex : études n'impliquant pas une présence prolongée sur le terrain). Ce faisant, ils font preuve d'un « opportunisme flexible » (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998) caractéristique de l'agence pratique-évaluative. En d'autres termes, comme les règles de la pratique ethnographique ne peuvent être transposées à l'identique à la recherche en ligne, ces dernières doivent être interprétées : les chercheurs font alors preuve d'une sagesse pratique dans leur transposition des règles (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). Ici, il n'est pas question de stratégie. Il y a plutôt une adaptation pragmatique de règles préexistantes à un nouveau contexte. La matérialité joue ici un rôle prépondérant : en effet, c'est parce que les frontières spatiales, temporelles et sociales sont redéfinies en ligne que leur réinterprétation est nécessaire. Enfin il est à noter que contrairement aux deux études précédentes, cette étude aborde un éventail très large des technologies en ligne. Pour autant, nous n'ignorons pas le fait que chaque technologie engendre des défis spécifiques. Cette étude montre par exemple que les problématiques méthodologiques varient en fonction du synchronisme des médias. Par exemple, la collecte de données des messageries instantanées est plus difficile étant donné leur nature éphémère.

Dans les sections suivantes, nous présentons pour chacun de ces trois essais un bref résumé. Etant donné que nous avons déjà explicité leurs liens respectifs avec le fil conducteur de cette thèse, nous soulignerons désormais leur contribution spécifique. En effet, au-delà des problématiques de matérialité et d'agence pratique abordées dans cette thèse, chaque essai véhicule aussi des apports distinctifs à différents champs de recherche (littérature sur les rôles, théorie néo-institutionnelle, théorie de la construction de sens, etc.).

Essai 1 : Clark Kent twitte-t-il ? Les effets des normes professionnelles et de la technologie sur la gestion des frontières

Théorie

Pour simplifier le monde qui les entourent, les individus créent des frontières (cognitives, physiques, relationnelles, émotionnelles, etc.) (Ashforth et al., 2000). Ces frontières sont construites autour de rôles associés à des règles, des schémas de pensée et des comportements spécifiques (Clark, 2000). Pour les professionnels travaillant dans une organisation, il y a trois rôles fondamentaux. Il y a tout d'abord le rôle personnel (Creed, Dejordy, & Lok, 2010; Kreiner et al., 2009) : les individus agissent alors en tant que personne privée, et adoptent un comportement lié à la sphère personnelle (vie familiale, intérêts personnels, opinions personnelles). En second lieu, ces individus sont des membres d'une organisation, et adoptent donc un rôle organisationnel (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994; Maanen & Barley, 1984): ils obéissent et s'identifient avec les règles, normes et valeurs propres à leur organisation. Finalement, ces individus disposent d'une identité professionnelle (Chreim et al., 2007; Ibarra, 1999; Pratt & Dutton, 2000): en tant que membres d'une profession, ils suivent les normes et valeurs mises en place par leur corps professionnel (Abbott, 1988; Freidson, 1984).

L'introduction des nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication conduit à une confusion des frontières entre les domaines du travail et du non-travail et plus généralement à une confusion des rôles (Mazmanian, Orlikowski, & Yates, 2013; Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). En effet, les réseaux sociaux tels que Twitter peuvent être utilisés à des fins personnelles ou professionnelles, ce qui conduit à des conflits entre rôles et identités. Plus précisément, ils impactent la manière dont les frontières entre rôles sont gérées (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013). Nous posons donc cette question de recherche : quel est l'impact conjugué des normes professionnelles d'une part, et de la technologie (Twitter) d'autre part, sur la gestion des frontières entre rôles chez les professionnels ?

Méthodologie

L'usage de Twitter par des journalistes au sein des média français est un terrain approprié pour deux raisons. Tout d'abord, les journalistes montrent un fort attachement à un ensemble de normes et valeurs qui constituent la source de leur légitimité (Deuze, 2005b). Bien qu'il y ait un débat sur le degré auquel les journalistes peuvent être qualifiés de profession à part entière (ou de simple occupation), il n'en reste pas moins qu'il est clair qu'ils démontrent cet attachement normatif. Afin d'exercer leur rôle de contre-pouvoir et plus généralement leur

rôle de service publique, les journalistes appliquent des normes telles que l'objectivité ou l'équilibre dans leurs articles. Par ailleurs, ils adoptent aussi un style narratif approprié (Rogstad, 2013; Schudson, 2001; Wall, 2005). On attend aussi d'eux qu'ils respectent la ligne éditoriale du média pour lequel ils travaillent, qui est le reflet de l'identité organisationnelle collective. La seconde raison pour laquelle ce terrain est approprié est que les journalistes sont des utilisateurs avides des réseaux sociaux, dont l'essence même est de disséminer l'information. Ainsi, ils peuvent les utiliser pour recueillir des informations, diffuser des contenus, promouvoir leur travaux, etc. (Lasorsa, Lewis, & Holton, 2011 ; Rogstad, 2013).

En termes de méthodologie, notre démarche est essentiellement inductive. Nous avons adopté une combinaison de méthodes qualitatives, particulièrement adaptés pour l'exploration de nouveaux phénomènes tels que les réseaux sociaux (Edmondson & McManus, 2007). Les interviews nous permettent de mettre en lumière l'expérience subjective des informateurs et de comprendre les motivations à l'origine de leur gestion des frontières entre rôles. L'ethnographie en ligne, combinant l'observation et le codage systématique de tweets offre une représentation plus objective de leur comportements en ligne. En triangulant les sources de données, nous pouvons ainsi comparer perceptions et comportements. La liste des informateurs et des organisations pour lesquels ils travaillent est fournie par le Tableau 2.

L'analyse s'est faite en cinq étapes. (1) Tout d'abord, nous avons codé les interviews et les notes de terrain. Cela nous a permis de dégager trois rôles (personnel, professionnel, et organisationnel), les normes que les journalistes sont tenus de respecter, et trois formes de gestion des frontières (voir Tableau 2). (2) En second lieu, nous avons systématiquement codé les tweets produits par les informateurs (50 tweets par journaliste), en utilisant les catégories émergentes identifiées au cours de la première étape. Chaque tweet est ainsi codé en fonction des catégories *ton* (formel, familier, humoristique, agressif), *degré d'objectivité* (neutre, positif ou négatif), *sujet* (informations, coulisse du travail journalistique, tranche de vie personnelle), *lien* (renvoi vers des liens), *format* (nouveau message, retweet, etc.). Nous avons établi que pour chaque rôle, certains types de tweets sont attendus. Ainsi, le journaliste, lorsqu'il agit en tant que membre de son organisation, est censé choisir comme *sujet* des informations, qu'il exprime sur un *ton* objectif, et dans un *ton* relativement formel, en renvoyant éventuellement vers des sites via des *liens* hypertexte vers le média pour lequel il travaille. Les correspondances entre attentes et rôles sont résumées dans le Tableau 3 et le Schéma 1. (3) Nous caractérisons ensuite trois types de gestion de frontières : la distanciation organisationnelle, l'injection d'une touche personnelle et la transition entre rôles. (4) A partir

de ces données, en conduisant une analyse de clusters, nous dressons un profil de cinq groupes de journalistes. (5) Lors de l'étape finale, nous avons développé un cadre théorique expliquant nos observations. Il est à noter que bien que nous présentions ici notre travail de manière linéaire, il s'est en fait déroulé de manière plus itérative.

Résultats

Le constat général est que nos informateurs conçoivent principalement Twitter comme un outil de veille et de diffusion de l'information. Cependant, en comparaison avec les comptes Twitter des média, les journalistes n'adhèrent pas complètement à la combinaison des rôles professionnel/organisationnel qui est généralement la leur : nous observons qu'ils traversent les frontières entre rôles et font preuve de plus d'autonomie et d'individualité que d'ordinaire. Cette traversée s'effectue à travers trois comportements de gestion des frontières, eux même favorisés par des facteurs matériels (détaillés dans le Tableau 5).

Le premier comportement est la distanciation organisationnelle : elle consiste à se détacher du média pour lequel le/la journaliste travaille. Il s'agit là d'une forme de co-activation asymétrique des rôles organisationnel et professionnel, où ce dernier devient prédominant (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001). Par exemple, les journalistes vont indiquer dans leur biographie « mes tweets n'engagent que moi », tout en soulignant leur appartenance à un célèbre organe de presse (ex : « journaliste au Monde »). Cela leur permet de gagner en légitimité (via leur organisation) tout en préservant leur autonomie en tant que professionnel. Cette prise de distance est encouragée par des facteurs matériels. Par exemple, la plateforme Twitter est indépendante (ce qui n'est par exemple pas le cas d'un blog hébergé par un journal) : si les contenus qui y sont publiés engagent (juridiquement) les médias pour lesquels les journalistes travaillent est une question ouverte. La distanciation organisationnelle transparaît aussi à travers le fait que les journalistes retweetent des informations avec des liens pointant vers des médias concurrents. Ce faisant, ils soulignent la prédominance de leur rôle de journaliste, dont l'objectif est d'informer, quel que soit le média, par rapport à leur appartenance organisationnelle.

En second lieu, il y a l'injection d'une touche personnelle : elle consiste à co-activer le rôle personnel en plus des rôles professionnel et organisationnel. Alors que la majorité des journalistes twittent dans un style conforme à celui des journaux, certains dévient de cette norme. Ils injectent une touche personnelle qui peut soit avoir trait à la forme par le *ton* utilisé (usages de l'humour, agressivité, etc.), soit par le *jugement*/*degré d'objectivité*. A nouveau,

des facteurs matériels interviennent. Ainsi, contrairement au copy-flow qui caractérise les rédactions, les tweets ne sont pas relus. Cela permet aux journalistes de « se lâcher » et d'adopter des comportements ludiques qui font penser, selon leurs termes, à une « cours de récréation ». L'absence de signaux sociaux que permet la communication en ligne encourage une désinhibition. Parallèlement, la vitesse et la brièveté des messages encouragent les traits d'esprits ou les piques, aboutissant parfois à des virulents conflits appelés « tweet clash ». Il est à noter que les déviations par rapport à la norme, notamment en termes d'objectivité, varient grandement. Ainsi, si les déviations mineures sont encouragées, certains jugements sont de l'ordre du dérapage (ex : propos sexistes, prises de position politiques partisanes). Enfin notons que la distanciation organisationnelle et l'injection d'une touche personnelle sont deux comportements qui ne s'excluent pas mutuellement, mais sont au contraire complémentaires.

Le dernier comportement en termes de gestion des frontières est la transition entre rôles. Alors que les deux autres modes de gestion des frontières sont mesurés à un point dans le temps, synchroniquement, la transition est mesurée à travers les séquences de tweets, diachroniquement. Ainsi, les individus peuvent transiter d'un rôle à l'autre, notamment à travers le choix des sujets traités, passant par exemple d'une information d'actualité à la description d'un événement personnel. Notre analyse suggère que les journalistes transitent souvent entre rôles (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001). Les transitions sont encouragées par la portabilité de Twitter qui transcende le temps et l'espace (Mazmanian, 2013; Perlow, 2012). En effet, la moindre importance des démarcations spatio-temporelles favorisent la perméabilité des frontières entre rôles (par ex. les informations twittées à partir de la maison ont plus de chance d'être suivies de récits de vie personnels). D'autres éléments matériels favorisent ces transitions, tels que la vitesse des messages, avec des successions rapides, ou encore l'horizontalité de l'outil : tous les tweets sont au même niveau, sans hiérarchie ni classement.

En résumé, les journalistes n'adhèrent pas complètement aux normes traditionnelles. Ils expérimentent avec des identités alternatives en traversant les frontières entre les rôles. Cette observation générale ne doit pas masque l'hétérogénéité qui existe au sein de notre échantillon. En effet, nous avons identifié cinq clusters de journalistes qui peuvent être placés sur un continuum allant d'un pôle rassemblant ceux adhérant aux normes traditionnelles (notamment organisationnelles) à ceux qui mettent l'accent sur leur individualité. (1) Les journalistes « loyaux/objectifs » adoptent un comportement similaire aux comptes

organisationnels, et adhérent aux normes organisationnelles et professionnelles. (2) Les journalistes « autonomes » activent plus fortement leur identité professionnelle, et font preuve de distanciation organisationnelle. (3) Les journalistes « équilibrés » forment une catégorie qui, dans leur traitement de l'information, laisse place tout autant à des tweets impersonnels que des tweets injecté d'une touche personnelle. (4) Les journalistes « injectant » sont quant à eux caractérisés par leur propension à proposer une vision subjective des événements à travers l'injection de touches personnelles telles que l'humour ou l'opinion. (5) Finalement, les journalistes « sarcastiques » font preuve de beaucoup d'humour, qui, combiné avec des jugements négatifs, offrent une vision critique des événements. Ainsi, à défaut d'objectivité, les journalistes exercent leur rôle via un équilibre dans leurs critiques (par ex. en critiquant les politiques de tout bord).

Contributions

Notre première contribution se rapporte à la littérature institutionnelle. Les professionnels sont soumis à des pressions institutionnelles qui les forcent à se comporter de manière appropriée (Pratt et al., 2006), voire à éliminer les éléments de leur identité personnelle dans les environnements de travail (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). Cependant, il existe d'autres forces, telles que les propriétés matérielles de Twitter qui peuvent les encourager à dévier de ces normes. Nos résultats montrent que si deux groupes tendent à suivre les normes traditionnelles, trois autres se démarquent. Nous constatons aussi que les journalistes qui ont le plus de succès en ligne (i.e. le plus de followers), sont ceux qui exhibent le plus leur rôle personnel. Ce résultat résonne avec le concept de Deephouse (1999) d'équilibre stratégique au niveau organisationnel : en s'inspirant de la théorie institutionnelle et de la littérature sur la différentiation stratégique, Deephouse montre que les organisations doivent adopter des modèles socialement acceptables pour rester légitimes aux yeux de leurs parties prenantes (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Heugens & Lander, 2009) ; cependant, elles doivent aussi faire preuve de différentiation pour établir une position stratégique avantageuse. Nous observons un phénomène analogue : les professionnels ont intérêts à adopter les schémas normatifs traditionnels, tout en déviant de ces derniers de manière acceptable. Il s'agit donc là d'un bricolage des normes (Aldrich, 2010).

Notre seconde contribution est à la littérature sur la gestion des frontières entre rôles. Plutôt qu'un travail des frontières (*boundary work*), nous observons plutôt un jeu des frontières (*boundary play*). En effet, alors que la notion de travail évoque l'idée d'effort (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009) et de stratégie (Nippert-Eng, 1996), la notion de jeu renvoie à

l'idée de plaisir intrinsèque. Twitter constitue un terrain de jeu virtuel qui existe en parallèle du monde réel (Nippert-Eng, 2005). L'impression d'audience invisible donne l'apparence d'un espace protégé propice à l'expérimentation (Boyd, 2007 ; Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010). La spontanéité est aussi encouragée par la brièveté des messages. Enfin, le jeu permet de se démarquer des normes professionnelles traditionnelles incarnées par les comptes organisationnels (Nippert-Eng, 2005).

Notre troisième contribution consiste à ouvrir la boîte noire de la technologie (Orlikowski & Iacono, 2001). Son rôle dans le respect des normes a été peu exploré dans la recherche. En particulier, les travaux existants ont eu tendance à traiter la technologie comme indéterminée et abstraite (ex : Internet, la génétique) alors que nous l'expérimentons tous sous une forme concrète (ex : Yahoo, la brebis Dolly) (Hargadon & Douglas, 2001). Nous remédions à cette lacune en examinant les caractéristiques matérielles propres à Twitter et leurs impacts sur le comportement des acteurs.

Essai 2 : Construction de sens dans le champ journalistique : le cas du personal branding

Théorie

La littérature institutionnelle a souligné l'effet contraignant des institutions (Barley & Tolbert, 1997; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Hirsch & Lounsbury, 1997; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Dans cette perspective, les significations et les institutions se reproduisent de manière quasi-automatique. Cette approche tend à réifier les institutions et à ignorer comment les individus interprètent une situation (Holm, 1995). Le rôle de la cognition est réduit au seul fait que les institutions sont considérées comme naturelles et données. Inversement, des travaux récents ont insisté sur l'agence exercée par les individus. Cependant, ils examinent des individus spécifiques, qui montrent des capacités exceptionnelles en termes de manipulation de sens, même dans les situations les plus complexes. Ainsi, les entrepreneurs institutionnels parviennent à manipuler significations et institutions en leur faveur, et ne sont nullement affectés par des contextes confus et ambigus (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009; DiMaggio, 1988). En résumé, les explications institutionnelles oscillent entre deux extrêmes : ou bien elles ignorent les individus et considèrent les significations comme données, ou alors, à l'opposé, elles décrivent les individus comme des acteurs rationnels qui ont un contrôle total de la situation, qu'ils peuvent manipuler de manière stratégique. Dans les deux cas, les

processus interprétatifs décrivant comment les acteurs construisent font sens d'une situation ne sont pas explorés.

La littérature portant sur la construction de sens, qui examine ces processus interprétatifs, est donc complémentaire. La construction de sens est un processus que les individus mettent en œuvre pour comprendre des événements ambigus et confus (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Weick, 1995). Si certains auteurs le décrivent comme un processus individuel, les études en management ont surtout souligné sa dimension collective : les significations sont négociées entre acteurs, dans un contexte organisationnel (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Ainsi, le processus est intersubjectif, et se déroule à un niveau micro (Weber & Glynn, 2006). Il est composé de trois phases : la perception d'une situation confuse, la construction de sens à proprement parlé, et l'action (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014).

En définitive, les explications institutionnelles n'examinent que superficiellement comment sens et les significations sont construits au niveau micro. En particulier, la théorie institutionnelle suppose que les acteurs, lorsqu'ils interprètent des événements, le font de manière stratégique, même dans les contextes les plus complexes. A l'opposé, la perspective axée sur la construction de sens met en avant l'ambigüité et l'équivocité de telles situations. Malgré les injonctions de nombreux académiques prônant l'intégration de ces deux perspectives, les travaux en la matière, notamment au niveau empirique, sont restés rares (Jennings & Greenwood, 2003; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014; Schultz & Wehmeier, 2010; Weber & Glynn, 2006; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005; Zilber, 2008). Cela nous amène à poser les questions de recherche suivante : « Comment les acteurs construisent-ils le sens d'une pratique émergente dans une situation caractérisée par un niveau élevé d'ambiguïté ? Quels sont les mécanismes institutionnels qui sous-tendent le processus de construction de sens ? » Pour cela, nous faisons appel au modèle proposé par Weber et Glynn (2006). Deux niveaux sont liés par une relation récursive (Barley & Tolbert, 1997; Giddens, 1984). D'une part, les institutions contraignent la création de sens en influant sur ce qui est considéré comme naturel ; elles constituent aussi le cadre à travers lequel la réalité est construite (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Weber & Glynn, 2006). D'autre part, au niveau des individus, la construction de sens entre acteurs permet aux institutions de se reproduire.

Méthodologie

Notre terrain est l'étude des pratiques dites de "personal branding". L'idée maîtresse de ce concept réside dans l'application de techniques de marketing à des individus, souvent dans le

but d'améliorer leur employabilité et leur carrière. Le personal branding s'est développé dans le champ journalistique suite au durcissement du marché du travail, en lien avec la crise que connaît le secteur. Ce terrain est pertinent pour trois raisons. Tout d'abord, les journalistes montrent un fort attachement aux idéaux de leur profession, ce qui fait d'eux un objet d'étude idéal pour la recherche institutionnelle. En second lieu, comme le personal branding trouve ses racines dans le marketing, il est précisément susceptible d'entrer en conflit ces idéaux journalistiques. Finalement, le nouvel espace ouvert par les réseaux sociaux crée un contexte ambigu qui est propice à la construction de sens. Alors que beaucoup d'études dans cette perspective examinent des situations de crises, nous l'appliquons à un contexte quotidien (Maitlis, 2005; Rouleau, 2005).

Nous avons adopté une méthode inductive fondée sur un codage itératif, avec des allers retours entre données et concepts théoriques émergents (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012; Locke, 2001). L'analyse s'est déroulée en trois étapes. Tout d'abord, nous avons codé les schémas de construction de sens reflétant l'expérience subjective de nos informateurs. En second lieu, nous avons recherché les catégories et concepts théoriques pouvant expliquer ces schémas. Finalement, nous avons développé un cadre théorique intégrateur liant contexte institutionnel et construction de sens.

Résultats

Nous avons identifié trois mécanismes principaux qui lient le processus de construction de sens au contexte institutionnel. Ces mécanismes correspondent à trois phases chronologiques (voir schéma 1 et schéma 2).

(1) Dans un premier temps, il y a une rupture institutionnelle provoquée par la disparition des piliers régulateur, normatif, et cognitif. Par exemple, lorsqu'ils vont au travail, les journalistes savent que leur activité est journalistique. En contraste, Twitter n'a pas été créé dans un but précis. Cette absence de cadre cognitif mène à une situation ambigüe, où les journalistes ne sont pas sûrs de ce qu'ils doivent y faire (journalisme, communication, etc.). Des observations similaires peuvent être faites pour les piliers régulateur (ex : absence de gouvernance par la hiérarchie) et normatif (ex : présence importante de communicants sur Twitter, dont les normes diffèrent de celle du journalisme).

(2) Dans un deuxième temps, les acteurs essaient de restaurer leur compréhension des événements. Pour cela, ils s'engagent dans un processus de théorisation : ils réfléchissent aux contradictions et compatibilités potentielles entre la pratique du personal branding et leurs

idéaux professionnels. Ainsi, le personal branding peut être présenté comme un moyen de renouveler la pratique journalistique en proposant des contenus personnalisés. Inversement, il peut être dénigré car il est associé au marché, institution qui suscite généralement la méfiance des journalistes. Il est à noter que cette théorisation n'intervient qu'une fois que les pratiques ont atteint une masse critique suffisante pour être remarquées. En d'autres termes, la construction de sens opère de manière rétrospective.

(3) Dans un troisième temps, les acteurs re-catégorisent leurs propres actions afin de se départir des connotations négatives du personnel branding. Par exemple, ils vont insister sur le fait que leur propre pratique ne peut pas être qualifiée de personal branding parce qu'elle n'atteint pas un « volume » suffisant. Cette re-catégorisation contribue au maintien des idéaux professionnels, même si les comportements effectifs sont en décalage avec ceux-ci.

Contributions

Cette étude contribue à intégrer la littérature institutionnelle et la perspective sur la construction de sens, répondant ainsi aux injonctions de nombreux chercheurs (Jennings & Greenwood, 2003; Weber & Glynn, 2006; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). L'étude illustre de manière empirique quels sont les mécanismes qui interfacent les institutions au niveau macro et la construction de sens par les individus au niveau micro. Les implications du modèle proposé sont diverses. Nous montrons que si les systèmes de sens existent à un niveau extra-subjectif, ils ne sont pas adoptés de manière automatique par les acteurs. Par exemple, après la rupture institutionnelle opérant au stade 1, la construction de sens qui se déroule lors de la phase suivante implique une combinaison hétérogène d'éléments institutionnels. Des éléments variés se côtoient, sans pour autant correspondre à un schéma culturel unique. Par exemple, des arguments relatifs au marché et à la vanité, deux thèmes pourtant peu liés entre eux, sont conjointement théorisés par les acteurs pour souligner l'incompatibilité du personal branding avec la pratique journalistique. Cela suggère que cette construction de sens, qui recombine des éléments préexistants de manière inédite mais peu cohérente, n'est ni automatique, ni stratégique. En outre, nos résultats montrent qu'une pratique peut se diffuser sans pour autant devenir légitime. Ainsi, le mécanisme de re-catégorisation au stade 3 permet aux acteurs de dissocier leur propre comportement des valeurs et idéaux journalistiques.

Notre seconde contribution a trait à la nature de l'agence et à la définition du processus de théorisation. Notre étude montre qu'en l'absence de guidage, les institutions offrent les

« briques » culturelles que les acteurs utilisent ensuite pour construire leur compréhension des événements, de manière autonome. En résumé, le contexte institutionnel propose les mythes rationnels à partir duquel les acteurs vont ensuite construire leurs récits explicatifs. En ce sens, il limite nécessairement les « histoires » que ces derniers peuvent bâtir. Cependant, cette restriction n'exclut pas une forme d'agence : ce sont bien les acteurs qui manipulent les briques et forment des explications, en réinterprétant les possibles significations (Zilber, 2002). Cette construction de sens se fait pragmatiquement. Les récits formés sont fragmentés, parfois incohérents. Ainsi, nos résultats suggèrent que le processus de théorisation consiste avant tout à construire du sens dans le cadre d'une tentative authentique de comprendre un phénomène. Cette définition fait contraste avec la littérature existante, qui souligne sa nature manipulatrice, avec des acteurs employant stratégiquement la construction de sens pour imposer leur vision aux autres.

Essai 3 : (Re)localiser les frontières : une revue systématique de l'ethnographie en ligne

Théorie

La pratique consistant à définir un terrain, bien que centrale dans l'élaboration d'un projet de recherche, a été relativement peu examinée. Définir un terrain est à la fois un acte d'inclusion et d'exclusion et revient à tracer ses frontières (Burrell, 2009). En effet, le terme « définir » dérive du latin *finis*, qui signifie frontière ou limite (Zerubavel, 1991). Ainsi, ce sont les chercheurs qui doivent décider où tracer les limites de leur terrain de recherche. De manière générale, les frontières sont définies comme étant les limites relationnelles qui séparent des entités (Ashforth, Kreiner & Fugate, 2000). Nous distinguons trois types de frontières : les limites spatiales, temporelles, et sociales.

Méthodologie

Afin de couvrir l'étendue des pratiques d'ethnographie en ligne, particulièrement fragmentées, nous avons conduit une revue systématique de littérature. Pour cela, nous avons téléchargé l'ensemble des articles de la base de données SSCI incluant des mots clés tels que « ethnographie en ligne», « netnographie », etc. Nous avons ensuite filtré les 518 articles obtenus afin de ne retenir que les articles ayant trait au management ou aux études organisationnelles et comportant une dimension empirique. L'échantillon final comporte 59 articles. Notre analyse s'est déroulée en deux étapes. La première étape est purement qualitative. Elle nous a permis de développer une compréhension globale de l'échantillon. En

suivant une approche itérative (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), nous avons identifié des thèmes et catégories transversaux. Pour cela, nous avons fait appel à des cartes heuristiques (*mind-map*) (Buzan & Buzan, 1993) pour visualiser les catégories obtenues. Une fois que nous avons atteint suffisamment de convergence dans notre analyse en ce qui concerne les catégories développées, nous avons abordé la seconde étape : la classification de chaque article en fonction des catégories précédemment développées. Chaque auteur a catégorisé séparément les articles, et les résultats ont été comparés par la suite. Durant ce processus récursif, les catégories ont parfois été modifiées jusqu'à l'obtention d'un consensus. Cette procédure a souvent été utilisée en recherché inductive (Trefalt, 2013) : notre objectif n'est pas tant un calcul statistique que l'obtention de tendances générales à travers de simples statistiques descriptives.

Résultats

En ce qui concerne les frontières spatiales, la première décision que les ethnographes doivent prendre a trait à l'intégration du « hors ligne » et du « en ligne ». Notre étude montre une prédominance des études qui ne s'intéressent uniquement qu'à la sphère virtuelle, considérée comme un phénomène digne d'être examiné séparément. Cela contraste avec les études, minoritaires, qui intègrent les deux dimensions « réelles » et « virtuelles ». La seconde question a trait à la localisation du terrain : ainsi, les ethnographes peuvent le restreindre à un seule site (ex : un forum), adopter une approche multi-sites (ex : plusieurs forums) ou essayer de suivre le flux de la navigation (ex : aller là où les utilisateurs d'une communauté vont, ce qui peut rassembler blogs, site officiel, forums, etc). Contrairement à ce que l'on pourrait attendre d'un monde caractérisé par l'absence de frontières physiques et par une navigation fluide (ex : liens hypertexte), nous observons que les chercheurs se limitent majoritairement à un seul « lieu ». Inversement, les approches privilégiant les flux et connections restent relativement rares.

En ce qui concerne les frontières temporelles, la première alternative à laquelle les ethnographes en ligne sont confrontés est la place laissée à l'observation en temps réel. En effet, dans un univers virtuel où toute communication se fait par l'intermédiaire d'artéfacts, des archives couvrant une longue période de temps peuvent être téléchargés d'un seul clic. En d'autres termes, période d'observation et période observée sont décorrélées. Notre étude montre une très large prédominance dans l'utilisation des données d'archive. Le deuxième critère temporel est relatif à la nature du média étudié. En fonction de leur rapidité dans les échanges, les différents médias peuvent être placés sur un continuum. Bien que les médias

synchrones (ex : messagerie instantanée) soient abondamment utilisés au quotidien, ces derniers ne sont que relativement peu explorés, probablement en raison des difficultés techniques que cela engendre en termes de recueil de données. Ce sont généralement les média à vitesse intermédiaire (forum, pages Facebook) qui ont été le plus exploré. Cela peut s'expliquer par leur ancienneté mais aussi par une plus grande facilité dans la collecte des données.

Finalement, l'élaboration d'un projet de recherche implique des décisions en ce qui concerne la gestion des frontières sociales. Afin d'entrer en contact avec leur terrain, les ethnographes doivent déterminer leur degré de participation, ce qui implique un arbitrage entre éviter les influences néfastes provoquées par la présence du chercheur et la volonté d'améliorer les relations avec les membres de la communauté observée (Pongsakornrungsilp et Schroeder, 2011). Notre étude montre que les pratiques actuelles de l'ethnographie en ligne privilégient largement les comportements furtifs (« *lurking* »), avec des interactions limitées, voire une absence totale de contact avec les personnes observées, y compris par l'intermédiaire de méthodes complémentaires (ex : entretiens).

Contributions

En comparaison avec l'ethnographie dite conventionnelle, l'ethnographie en ligne présente un certain nombre d'avantages: elle est moins intrusive, plus accessible et plus pratique (Kozinets, 2002). Ces avantages ont d'ailleurs contribué de manière significative à la propagation de cette méthode. Cependant, ces propriétés sont à double tranchant. En effet, notre étude montre que ces caractéristiques, qui confèrent à l'ethnographie en ligne une simplicité apparente, doivent aussi éveiller l'attention des chercheurs : en effet, elles risquent de les enfermer dans certaines stratégies de recherche telles que celles observées dans cette étude. D'autres auteurs ont d'ailleurs mis en garde contre les "avantages productifs" (Murthy, 2011:161) de la simplicité. Par exemple, nous observons que l'absence de nécessité d'un déplacement physique tend à encourager les chercheurs à se restreindre à des sites bien délimités, plutôt que de suivre le flux de données. De manière analogue, la possibilité d'observer les participants de manière non intrusive n'encourage pas l'interaction ou les contacts rapprochés, pourtant sources d'enseignements. En d'autres termes, alors que toute ethnographie, conventionnelle ou en ligne, est difficile, l'apparente simplicité de l'ethnographie en ligne peut pousser certains chercheurs à se limiter dans leur pratique. Par conséquent, les recherches futures en la matière gagneraient à changer de perspective, en se focalisant plus sur les défis potentiels de la pratique et les enseignements que cela permettrait

d'engendrer, plutôt que de souligner les avantages pratiques de la méthode comme cela a été le cas jusqu'à présent.

Implications pratiques de la thèse

Dans cette section, nous décrivons les implications pratiques et managériales de cette thèse. Tout d'abord, il est à noter que nos résultats dépassent largement le cadre du champ journalistique ou même de l'industrie des médias et peuvent se généraliser à d'autres secteurs. Ainsi, dans le secteur médical, des études ont montré que des comportements inappropriés sur les réseaux sociaux (ex : photos de patients inconscients) pouvaient rejaillir négativement sur l'ensemble de la profession (Greysen, Kind, & Chretien, 2010). De même, les avocats et juristes rencontrent des problématiques similaires de gestion des frontières (ex : risque de violer la confidentialité de la relation avocat/client). Tous ces exemples pointent vers la même conclusion, centrale à cette thèse : parce que les nouvelles technologies ont fait évoluer les conditions matérielles, les normes professionnelles traditionnelles doivent être réinterprétées et adaptées de manière pragmatique à ces changements. Cela est aussi valable pour le secteur de l'éducation : ainsi, des études ont démontré que les réseaux sociaux affectaient les relations entre étudiants et professeurs (Snowden & Glenny, 2014; Veletsianos & Kimmons, 2013). Les risques ne doivent cependant pas masquer les nombreux apports possibles. Par exemple, les réseaux sociaux permettent aux étudiants et à leurs professeurs d'établir une relation plus approfondie au niveau interpersonnel. Ils offrent aussi des opportunités en termes de communication en dehors des horaires et espaces dédiés.

Une seconde implication pratique a trait au rôle des Ressources Humaines (RH) dans la gestion des défis liés aux réseaux sociaux. Selon une étude de KPMG, les RH sont de loin les principaux acteurs (devant le département informatique ou marketing) responsables de la création d'une charte réseaux sociaux pour leur organisation. Notre recherche montre que les employés font preuve de pragmatisme, mais que lorsqu'ils sont confrontés à de nouvelles technologies, des conseils et des mesures les aidant à s'orienter peuvent leur être bénéfiques. Les RH peuvent actionner deux leviers: les formations et les chartes. Le premier essai de cette thèse montre l'importance pour les employés de gérer les frontières entre rôles sur les réseaux sociaux. Des formations peuvent ainsi être développées, visant non pas à inculquer le fonctionnement des outils et leur aspect technique, comme c'est souvent actuellement le cas, mais plutôt focalisées sur les aspects comportementaux (ex : études de cas sur des violations de frontières entre rôles, comportement inacceptables, etc.). Le second outil auquel les RH peuvent faire appel est la constitution de chartes. Faire appel à ce levier est cependant une

tâche complexe : en raison de l'évolution rapide des réseaux sociaux, inscrire des règles de comportement dans un document statique induit un risque d'obsolescence. En outre, contrôler le comportement des employés peut paradoxalement exposer une organisation à des poursuites juridiques en raison du principe "si vous le contrôlez, vous en êtes responsables » ("*if you control it, it's yours*") (Bussing, 2011). En résumé, l'utilisation de chartes devrait idéalement être couplée à des outils plus interactifs tels que les formations ou la mise en place de référents auxquels les employés peuvent demander conseil. Fondamentalement, les réseaux sont *sociaux*, et par conséquent les mesures tenant compte de leur dimension sociale sont les plus appropriées.

Enfin, il est important de souligner que les implications de cette thèse dépassent le cadre des réseaux sociaux. En effet, nous pouvons observer des problématiques similaires dans d'autres domaines. Par exemple, la tendance du BYOD (*Bring Your Own Device*), qui consiste à utiliser sur le lieu de travail du matériel personnel (ex : smartphone et PC privés) soulèvent des défis analogues quant à la gestion des frontières entre rôles ou l'interprétation de nouvelles pratiques. De manière générale, l'impact des nouvelles technologies et de la matérialité se manifeste dans de nombreux contextes, tels que le télétravail, le nomadisme digital ou encore le développement des espace de travail collaboratifs.

Conclusion

En résumé, cette thèse argumente que les acteurs agissent de manière pragmatique face à l'introduction de nouvelles technologies. Ils ne sont ni des « idiots culturels » qui se contenterait de se conformer aux normes existantes, ni des « Supermen » hyper-rationnels agissant toujours de manière stratégique (Suddaby, 2010). Notre analyse montre qu'ils agissent plutôt comme de simples Clark Kent, c'est-à-dire comme des individus somme toute assez normaux. En cela, ils sont plutôt représentatifs du type d'acteur que l'on pourrait s'attendre à trouver dans toute organisation.

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INTRODUCTION

Organization sociologists and management scholars have demonstrated an early interest for the role of technology in organizations. In contingency theory, technology is one of the three pillars, along with size and environment, determining organizational structure (Woodward, 1958, 1965). However, in the 1970s, competing approaches emerged such as institutional theory (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), population ecology (Hannan & Freeman, 1977) or resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), leading to a decrease of interest in this issue. By the mid-1990s, technology as a research topic had virtually died out, and represents hardly 1% to 5% of top journals articles (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008; Zammuto, Griffith, Majchrzak, Dougherty, & Faraj, 2007).

This absence offers a striking contrast with the current pervasive use of technology in organizations and in our everyday life. More than twenty years ago, scholars already underlined that "the use of sophisticated communication technologies in the conduct of work is a commonplace in organizational life" (Fulk, 1993: 921). Among communication technologies, social media play an essential role for consumers, employees and organizations (Dutta, 2010; George, Haas, & Pentland, 2014). However, institutional theory, because of its original focus on symbolic and ideational elements, has neglected materiality and its most pervasive avatar, technology. This oversight is surprising as institutions are not only transmitted through symbolic systems, but also through objects and artifacts (Scott, 2008). Recently, institutional scholars have begun to acknowledge the importance of material elements and call for further research in this direction (Jones, Boxenbaum, & Anthony, 2013; Monteiro & Nicolini, 2014; Pinch, 2008). This observation is the backdrop of this dissertation and underlies my overarching research questions:

RQ 1: How does the adoption of online technology and social media impact actors' behavior and their enactment of institutions?

RQ 2: What roles do structure, agency and materiality play in this change?

I answer these questions in three essays. In the first essay (Chapter 2), I examine how Twitter affects boundary crossing behaviors in the field of hard news journalism. In particular, I investigate how professional norms, which constitute the structural social forces, and the material features of Twitter guide journalists' online boundary management behavior between

three roles: the professional, personal and organizational-member roles. As technology blurs these boundaries, it enables actors to step outside their traditional roles.

In the second essay (Chapter 3), I examine the dynamics of meaning construction and their relation to the institutional context. In contrast with essay #1, the focus shifts from the technology itself to the emerging practice that it enables and its resulting disruptive effect. I investigate the articulation of institutional context (i.e. the structural social forces) and the sensemaking process by studying how journalists ascribe meanings to the emerging practice of personal branding.

The third essay (Chapter 4) takes a methodological perspective, and hence, is not based on the same empirical setting nor does it appeal to an institutional lens. Still, it nonetheless illustrates the interplay between structure, agency and materiality. With the development of online technology, new research methods have developed, such as online ethnography, which does not necessarily follow the same guidelines as the rules and norms of conventional ethnography. Reviewing the business and organizational literature, I investigate how online ethnographers engage their field, as material conditions such as space and time boundaries are redefined. These new practices are contrasted with the practice of traditional ethnography.

This dissertation shows that technology does have an impact on actors' behavior and their enactment of institutions by opening the door of the iron cage formed by structural constraints. However, this effect is neither deterministic nor totalizing. Online technology and social media, because of their material specificities, offers a new setting which is not the one actors usually experience. Facing this emergent situation, actors grab this opportunity to partly escape the structural constraints they are usually trapped in. Hence, my dissertation emphasizes the practical-evaluative nature of agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998), where actors "make practical and normative judgments among alternative possible trajectories of action, in response to emerging demands, dilemmas, and ambiguities of presently evolving situations" (Battilana & D'aunno, 2009: 47; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). Actors are neither "cultural dopes" (Garfinkel, 1967: 68) nor "hypermuscular supermen" (Suddaby, 2010: 15). Rather, I simply "bring men back in" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998: 966), actors who look like the average Clark-Kent-employees that populate most organizations.

CHAPTER 1. DISSERTATION FRAMEWORK

1.1 Theoretical framework

This dissertation aims at contributing to the debate on the effects of technology on institutions through the interplay of structure, agency and materiality. Although all three essays of this dissertation are self-contained and include their own theoretical framing, they all are underpinned by the same reflection. In this section, I will first justify why institutional research should examine technology and materiality. Then, I will introduce the global framework of this dissertation around the concepts of structure, agency and materiality.

1.1.1 Opening the black-box: technology and materiality in institutional theory

Technology has various definitions. In its most common sense, technology refers to "artifacts, processes, and machines, and the knowledge - often based in engineering - used to design and operate them" (Pinch, 2008: 467). This is the definition I adopt here when I refer to technology. Its archetype for the broad public is information technology, such as computers and internet (Pinch, 2008). In organization theory, early definitions of technology see it as a production system, with an industrial focus, such as manufacturing technologies (Woodward, 1958). To extend its scope to other sectors such as services, technology has been subsequently subsumed under the broad definition of "social technologies" (Orlikowski, 1992: 399), which includes the generic tasks, techniques and knowledge used in any productive activity (Perrow, 1967; Thompson, 1967). By aggregating these multiple dimensions into a single construct, it becomes impossible to focus on the specific physical elements constitutive of a technology.

More generally, organization theory has largely ignored the specific material elements that characterize technology and has rather considered it in an abstract way. Even in the field of information technology, technological artifacts have remained underexplored for a long time: technology is often considered as a black-box and its artifacts as taken for granted and unproblematic (Orlikowski & Iacono, 2001). Hargadon and Douglas summarized this issue well:

> *Research tends to treat innovations as abstract and indeterminate ideas -the automobile, the personal computer, the Internet, and genetic engineering- while, in daily life, the public confronts them in specific and concrete forms -the Model T, the Apple 11, Yahoo! and Dolly the sheep. (Hargadon & Douglas, 2001:477)*

One epistemological position to counter such problem is to insist on the importance of materiality. Here, to be materialist is to hold that human actions stem from specific physical

causes (Leonardi & Barley, 2008). However, the meaning of "physical" must be understood in a broad sense. Orlikowski (2007) shows how materiality is also present in software and algorithms. At the difference of abstract views of technology, materiality stresses the concreteness of matter: even "virtual" products such as software have a physical representation, lines of code that precisely and concretely define the way technology works. Materiality acknowledges such "hard" and objective constraints. In this dissertation, when I point out materiality, I refer to these physical constraints, as well as to the space and time elements brought on by the specific characteristics of a technology.

In contrast, because of its roots in social-constructivism, institutional theory has always placed a great emphasis on symbolic elements. Historically, it has focused on "activities that are legitimate in the symbolic realm rather than the material one" (Suddaby, 2010). However, material elements can impact actors' behavior in the same way symbolic elements do. For instance, physical devices such as speed bumps have the same effect in enforcing the institutional order as more symbolic systems such as traffic signs or traffic laws (Pinch, 2008). At a macro-level, technology (e.g. the industrial revolutions) has played a great role in the transformation of institutions. More generally, nearly all human actions, and even the human bodies themselves, are interwoven with physical and material elements (Pinch, 2008). In fact, a closer look at institutional writings shows that the latter implicitly acknowledge the importance of materiality. For instance, artifacts are material objects which can, along other institutional carriers such as symbolic systems, relational systems, or routines affect and be affected by the three institutional pillars (Scott, 2008). Institutional logics are ''both material and symbolic" (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999: 804). Institutions are "enacted through material practices organized around objects, through things and bodies, and the words by which they are named and constituted" (Friedland, 2013). "Physical symbols, object and artifacts form an important but relatively unexplored element in the chains of activities that constitute institutional work" (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006: 245). Unfortunately, most research has only paid "lip service" to materiality, simply mentioning physical elements in passing (Pinch, 2008: 466).

Scholars, though only very recently, have explicitly called for a closer examination of technology and materiality in various streams of institutional research (Jones, Boxenbaum, & Anthony, 2013; Monteiro & Nicolini, 2014). I now introduce a theoretical framework which links the examination of the role of technology and materiality to the debate of structure versus agency.

1.1.2 Structure and agency without materiality

The debate of structure versus agency is one of the major quarrels among institutionalists, and more generally a source of debate in organizational analysis as well as in sociological theory (Heugens & Lander, 2009; Reed, 1997; Sewell, 1992). Structure broadly refers to the social rules, resources and schemas that shape people's practices (Sewell, 1992). At the organizational level, the structuralist camp claims that organizations become increasingly similar over time as they incorporate the same institutional templates in their quest for legitimacy. In contrast, agency refers to the actors' (organizations or individuals) capacity to escape the cultural schemas of the structure (Sewell, 1992). Scholars emphasizing agency judge the structuralist view overly deterministic: they reject an "oversocialized" view of actors who would only mechanically follow customs, habits and norms (Granovetter, 1985: 485). Rather, they stress the degree of discretions that actors have in responding to institutional pressure (Heugens & Lander, 2009).

Interestingly, a similar version of this debate, which schematically opposes determinism and voluntarism, exists in other streams of organization theory. In that case, technological determinism replaces social determinism. In approaches favoring technological determinism, "material agents [such as] technologies can constrain social action in a manner similar to that of social structures" (Boudreau & Robey, 2005: 4). For instance, in contingency theory, different technologies impose different organizational forms (Woodward, 1958). Conversely, approaches based on voluntarism argue that humans have agency and can shape their environment to achieve their goal, independently from or despite of the material conditions (Leonardi & Barley, 2010). This is the case of the new approaches that blossomed in the 1980s under the banner of social-constructivism. For instance, the theory of social construction of technology (SCOT), led by Pinch and Bijker (1984), argues that human interactions shape technology. In the most extreme forms of social-constructivism technological artifacts have no intrinsic properties –no essence– and are basically the product of the interpretative work people construct around them (Grint & Woolgar, 1997). In this perspective, human agency fully shapes the use of technology, no matter what the material properties of the latter are.

Given the similarity of these debates opposing determinism to voluntarism, it is somehow surprising to observe that in examining what could impact actors' actions, institutional theory has largely ignored the role of technology and materiality, whereas their role is clearly acknowledged in other streams of organization theory. It seems that given its

social-constructivist roots, institutional theory has adopted an anti-essentialist perspective where material elements are simply ignored. As I will now show, institutional theory has, very schematically, tilted between two opposite positions: (1) the dominance of structure, (2) the dominance of agency. In both cases, it has neglected the role of material and technological elements.

Dominance of structure: the immaterial iron cage

In this first perspective, the actions of individuals (or for that matter organizations) are conditioned by the structural constraints posed by institutions. Actors do not show agency and technology does not play a specific role. This structuralist approach is expressed in "new institutionalism", which focuses on the stability of the environment at the inter-organizational level (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). For instance, institutional pressures prompt all organizations within a field to adopt similar practices to gain legitimacy and support. Isomorphic processes (coercive, mimetic and normative) lead to convergence as organizations look increasingly similar (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Actors are prisoners of this "iron cage" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983: 147) formed by highly institutionalized environments and they cannot show agency. With regard to materiality, historically institutional theory developed by focusing on why organizations engage in activities that are legitimate, stressing the symbolic realm rather the material one (Suddaby, 2010). The foundational article of Meyer and Rowan (1977) posits a conflicting relation between institutional and technical requirements, between legitimacy and efficiency. Overall, new institutionalism considers actors as unreflective agents who unconsciously reproduce the social structure. Given its roots in social-constructivism, it is also more comfortable in dealing with discourses and prescriptions than with materiality.

This observation extends to explanations of change. Since institutional pressures form a structural constraint that weighs on actors and leads to stability within a field, one way to explain change has been to appeal to exogenous factors. For that, scholars have introduced the concepts of "jolts", defined as "transient perturbations whose occurrences are difficult to foresee and whose impacts on organizations are disruptive and potentially inimical" (Meyer, 1982:515). Social upheaval, technological disruptions, competitive discontinuities or regulatory change exemplify such events (Greenwood, Suddaby, & Hinings, 2002). Jolts raise the possibility of alternate templates that make change possible. While technological jolts may disrupt the iron cage, the study of these effects does not involve material elements. The common view is that rare but radical innovations significantly alter the organization's

environment (Tushman & Anderson, 1986). In these cases, technology is only a trigger whose nature, beyond some general abstract characteristics (e.g. compatibility with previous knowledge), does not really matter. Sometime, technological jolts have an indirect effect, which pushes the technology in the background. For instance, the introduction of costly technologies in hospitals leads to resource scarcity which in turn leads to regulatory changes and to new competitive structures (Meyer, Brooks, & Goes, 1990). Because what matters here is the change in the cost structure, diverse technologies such as CT scanners, kidney dialysis machines, or intensive care units are put in the same bag. In both previous examples, because the focus is on the industry level, it may be difficult to detail the specificities of technology. However, even at a micro-level, technological jolts have been examined in an abstract way. For instance, in his fine-grained ethnography of the introduction of CT scanners in hospital, Barley (1986) shows how technology is an occasion of structuring. Using structuration theory, he shows how enacted scripts, or patterns of interactions, influence the change in the professional dominance of radiologists. While he describes social interactions with details, materials elements remain overlooked as "technology is treated as a social rather than a physical object" (Barley, 1986: 78). Indeed, technology is considered as an exogenous event igniting the structuring process between the institutional realm -the structure- and the realm of actions -the working practices- where agency expresses itself. If in this account structure and agency are more balanced, materiality is still absent. The technical and concrete features of the CT scanners do not really play a role. Typically, what matters is that there is a change at a macro-level allowing actors to question existing patterns and conceive alternatives (Barley & Tolbert, 1997). The sources of this change, technological, economic, cultural or regulatory are of secondary interest.

Dominance of agency: hypermuscular supermen free from material constraints

Another way to explain change, this time endogenously, is to temper the determinism of structural pressures by introducing agency. In this perspective, actors can reflect consciously. For instance, Oliver (1991) stresses how organizations can strategically devise various responses to institutional pressures. DiMaggio (1988) introduces the concept of institutional entrepreneurs: actors who strategically try to create new institutions or transform existing ones to promote their interests. Not all change agents qualify for this definition: only the ones who promote divergent changes and are actively involved can be regarded as institutional entrepreneurs (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009). Institutional entrepreneurship insists on the pivotal role of single organizations or even individuals which sometimes leads to an

exaggeration of human agency (Maguire, Hardy, & Lawrence, 2004). Institutional entrepreneurship research has been criticized because it tends to portray institutional entrepreneurs as "heroes" who have exceptional skills to the point they form a "particular species" (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009: 67).

The main takeaway here is that institutional entrepreneurs are so skillful in shaping reality that the intrinsic characteristics of technology do not matter much. The main muscle they use is their tongue. Discourses created by actors shape how users understand a technology and their subsequent actions (Spicer 2005). For instance, the change in discourse around DDT, which shifts from casting it as an effective insecticide to a dangerous and polluting substance, leads to its abandonment (Maguire & Hardy, 2009). In this case, it is not so much the physical characteristics of DDT that matters. Rather, it is the "authorial agency" (Maguire & Hardy, 2009: 172) and the production of texts problematizing its use that lead to institutional change. Similarly, building on the theorization process (Greenwood, Suddaby, & Hinings, 2002), Munir (2005) argues that technological jolts are the product of narratives. Technological innovations such as digital photography do not cause change: they are socially constructed and subject to an ongoing theorization by institutional entrepreneurs that cast them as disruptive jolts. In this perspective, concrete technological developments such as the introduction of the PhotoCD are only props which represent "a continuation of the process of theorization, lending 'factual' support" to the social construction of reality (Munir, 2005: 101). Specific material advantages such as the ability to take an infinite number of pictures only play a role if they are theorized in a discourse by institutional entrepreneurs. In another study using the example of the practice of photography, Munir and Philips (2005) stress the importance of discursive strategies and show that institutional change is "not a result of any inherent attributes of the technology, although that was an important factor, but [was] instead due to the intense institutional entrepreneurship of Kodak" (Munir & Phillips, 2005: 1682). Examining the standardization of the Java technology, Garud, Jain and Kumaraswamy (2002) stress the importance of the social and political skills of institutional entrepreneurs in promoting their interests. The unimportance of material functionalities of technology is illustrated in their conclusion: "Essentially, even the development of technological standards is a battle fought in political and cognitive realms" (Garud, Jain, & Kumaraswamy, 2002: 210). Another example of social construction is brought by institutional entrepreneurs who, through their discourses, depict technology as tool to bring progress and wealth (Zilber, 2007).

In sum, prior research in institutional theory has overlooked the effects of technology and materiality on actors' behavior and their enactment of institutions. It has tilted between views underlining the structural effects of immaterial social forces and approaches which portray powerful actors who can shape reality through their discourse. Hence, this dissertation addresses these related research questions:

RQ 1: How does the adoption of online technology impact actors' behavior and their enactment of institutions?

RQ 2: What roles do structure, agency and materiality play in this change?

To answer these research questions, I now introduce the main empirical setting of this dissertation: social media and their use by hard news journalists. In this context, the structure is mainly represented by professional norms and values that constrain and guide journalists' behavior. Agency manifests itself in their ability to deviate from or reinterpret these structural elements. Finally, materiality and technology are exemplified by social media and more specifically Twitter.

1.2 Empirical setting

This dissertation is composed of three essays, two of which being empirical studies based on the same setting: French hard news journalists and their use of social media. The choice of my research field was motivated by my research question related to structural social forces and new technology. First, I will explain why journalists constitute an appropriate research field by stressing their attachment to professional norms and values, which act as a strong structural force guiding their behavior. Second, I will highlight why studying social media is interesting. Finally, I will introduce some contextual elements by providing a short explanation on how journalists use social media.

1.2.1 Journalists and professional norms

Because there is an ongoing debate on the degree to which journalists can be considered as professionals, I briefly tackle this issue here. Answering this question would go beyond the scope of this dissertation. Rather, I highlight the elements that show that journalists are an appropriate research field for the research questions, which do not necessarily requires journalist to be "proper" professionals.

The debate on the nature of journalism as professional activity is a recurrent one that can even be traced back to the nineteenth century (Aldridge & Evetts, 2003). The most

common argument disqualifying journalism as a profession is that it does not require a "specialized intellectual training" (Aldridge & Evetts, 2003: 266). Prior research acknowledges the contrast that journalism offers in comparison with traditional professions that have barriers to entry such as medicine or law (Reese & Cohen, 2000). Indeed, journalism remains "a very permeable occupation" with a high mobility between journalism and other forms of writing such as public relations (Abbott, 1988: 225). Still, journalists are characterized by their strong adherence to a professional ideology that gives "meaning to their work" (Deuze, 2005a: 446), and which is reflected in five ideal values: public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy and ethics (Deuze, 2005a). Given the societal role of journalism, its body of knowledge, and its ethical framework of practice, "it does take on important elements of professionalism" (Reese & Cohen, 2000: 217), and can be qualified as a "semi-profession" (Aldridge & Evetts, 2003: 553). Moreover, journalists strongly identify with their profession, sometimes even more than with their organization, the latter being a mere instrument enabling them to practice journalism (Russo, 1998).

In sum, journalists identify themselves as professionals and strive for professionalization, which is reflected in a strong adherence to a set of norms and values. I do not claim that they are *full* professionals. From the three pillars of professionalism, which can be equated to a "credentialed expertise, with disinterested service, and with a strong adherence to a set of occupational norms" (Prasad & Prasad, 1994: 1438), only the first element is missing. Still, it makes no doubt that journalists show a strong attachment to the societal value of their activity (disinterested service) as well as to professional standards (strong adherence to occupational norms). Like professionals, they "share a distinct pattern of values, beliefs, norms, and interpretations for judging the appropriateness of one another's actions" (Bloor & Dawson, 1994: 283). Hence, they constitute an appropriate research field as my focus is on the norms and values that form the social structure. This is especially true for my sample whose members work in the core of the field, i.e. in major media outlets such as newspapers where "journalists symbolize the traditional identity of the profession" (Neveu, 2009: 32).

Another argument for choosing this setting is that institutional theory and more generally organization studies have considered media as black-boxes whose importance derives from the normative content they produced, but not so much as entities that are worth to be studied per se. I argue that given the symbolic weight they have and their omnipresence in our daily life, media and in particular news providers –journalists– deserve to be studied for

their own sake, and not only in specific research fields such as mass communication or journalism studies. Media play the role of social judges by evaluating firms and leaders and through their assessments they may provoke changes in the behavior of the entities they scrutinize (Bednar, 2012; Hayward & Rindova, 2004; Pollock & Rindova, 2003). Thus, more than merely covering reality, media participate to its construction. By the discourses they produce, journalists frame issues, contribute to sensemaking and hence play a pivotal role in the construction of reality (Fiss & Hirsch, 2005). In institutional theory, media both reflect and reconstruct the rational myths prevailing in society by presenting the events under a legitimate or illegitimate light (Zilber, 2006). Many studies adopting an institutional lens have used media coverage as independent variable or as a proxy reflecting the evolution of institutional logics within a field (e.g. Desai, 2011; Fiss, Kennedy, & Davis, 2011; Hoffman, 1999; Maguire & Hardy, 2009; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010; Zilber, 2006). Organization studies cannot persist in using media content analysis without at least looking under which conditions and by whom these contents are produced. In other words, I reorient the projectors from the outputs (the newspaper articles) to the production system in order to shed light on what has remained in the shadows until now: the media organizations and their journalists.

Last but not least, researchers must account for their position in the research process, especially in grounded theory (Suddaby, 2006). Thus, I must also acknowledge that the presence of several journalists in my circle of friends, as well as my desire to tackle a research field unknown to me (as I have previously worked for a professional service firm and therefore am quite acquainted with the more "traditional" business related context) encouraged me to choose this empirical setting.

1.2.2 Norms on social media

Social media attract an increasing interest from management scholars (George, Haas, & Pentland, 2014; Ollier-Malaterre, Rothbard, & Berg, 2013). They can be defined as "media for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques [and] web-based technologies to transform and broadcast media monologues into social media dialogues" (Dutta, 2010: 2). Another definition identifies social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010:61). The first pillar of social media, the Web 2.0, is composed of an ideological component, the idea that internet is a collaborative platform, and a technological component, i.e. specific tools allowing the participatory approach (RSS, etc.). The second pillar, User

Generated Content, refers to all contents produced by users meeting three criteria: the content is publicly available (which excludes for instance emails), it requires a creative effort (which means going beyond mere duplication) and it has been produced outside of professional routines and practices (for prestige, etc.). This last condition must however be relaxed, as organizations increasingly produce contents on social media. As amateur and non-work related contents remain significant on social media, this leads to a blurring of personal and professional domains (Dutta, 2010).

The importance of non-work related contents can explain why social media remain underexplored in organization and management studies. This is a pity, since what makes social media interesting is precisely when professionals do adopt a technology that was not originally or primarily designed to be used in an organizational context. As I will show, many phenomena I examine (e.g. stepping out of the professional role identity or embracing the idea of personal branding) come from this collision from domains, where what pertains to the individual, the professional and the organization becomes blurry (Ollier-Malaterre, Rothbard, & Berg, 2013). Another important dimension related to my research questions is that social media build an enduring social space. While other communication tools may foster a determined set of norms and practices (e.g. phone is used under specific circumstances, texting for others), their material characteristics do not allow for an enduring "many to many" mode of interactions. In contrast, social media form "places" where norms and values specific to these social spaces can emerge.

In sum, social media provides an interesting venue for examining actors' behavior and their relationship to institutions because they provide a new social space characterized by specific material conditions where new norms and values can emerge.

1.2.3 Social media and journalists

Interestingly, one of the rare articles that focuses on media organizations as such, written nearly three decades ago, analyzes how a new technology (i.e. computerization) led to changes in the organizational structure of a newspaper (Carter, 1984). It is quite obvious that new technologies of information and communication are bound to affect news providers whose mission, by definition, is to collect information and communicate it to their audience. Among these new technologies, Twitter has been quickly adopted in newsrooms, even if it has sometimes provoked bewilderment and skepticism among seasoned journalists (Hermida, 2010). Its success in comparison with other social media may be linked to the fact that it

restores the centrality of the words (Ahmad, 2010). In his exploratory study of the use of Twitter at *The Guardian*, Ahmad (2010) highlights several functions of Twitter for the journalism practice. First, it acts as a marketing tool, both for the newspapers (each section of *The Guardian* has its own Twitter account) and for the journalists (who are encouraged to interact with readers and promote their work). Second, it is a collaborative research tool providing ideas and feedbacks that are particularly useful in story construction. Finally, it can break news events in real time through a steady stream of updates.

It is important to remind that the impact of the digital revolution goes well beyond the use of social media by journalists. In fact, with regard to journalism practice, the major change is brought by the transition from print to online newsroom (i.e. writing articles for the web) (Raviola & Norbäck, 2013). This is however beyond the scope of my dissertation. In this work, I only examine the impact of the use of social media (principally Twitter) by journalists. In particular, because I am mainly interested in the online social space, I mainly focus on how journalists act *on Twitter*, and the meanings they attribute to behaviors *on Twitter*: I do not make claims about change in journalism in general. While this restricted scope is a limitation of this study, I do not consider it as problematic, as institutions are above all enacted in everyday life (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Powell & Colyvas, 2008).

1.3 Methodology

In this dissertation, my approach is inductive and mainly qualitative. Because each essay already includes an in-depth explanation of each methodology, I focus here on the general approach: grounded theory. After justifying the relevance of this approach, I examine how the various data collection methods I use relate to it. Grounded theory has the particularity of being a general approach that cuts across research methods and can be used in combination with both qualitative and quantitative data (Glaser, 2002; Suddaby, 2006). Its goal is to obtain "slices" of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967: 65), that, combined together with the researchers' sensitivity, enable them to produce a rich theoretical account of a phenomenon (Weick, 2007).

1.3.1 Grounded theory and inductive theory building

This dissertation is mainly based on grounded theory, a method developed by Glaser and Strauss which can be defined as a general approach "designed to support the inductive development of theory about a phenomenon through a set of systematic procedures for the collection and analysis of qualitative data" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Locke, 2001: 17). Grounded theory fits with my epistemological stance, which is mostly interpretative. More

specifically, it is compatible with institutional theory, since both assume that the organizational world is socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012). This method is indeed "most suited to efforts to understand the process by which actors construct meaning out of intersubjective experience" (Suddaby, 2006: 634). Finally, because of its emphasis on discovery, grounded theory is well adapted for exploring a nascent and underexplored phenomenon such as social media (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Locke, 2011).

I tried to avoid the common pitfalls of this method by following guidelines and best practices (e.g. Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012; Suddaby, 2006). For that, I entered the field with a predefined, though broad, research question. However, to reduce the risk of being (unconsciously) pushed toward hypothesis testing, I avoid sticking to a single substantive area, and draw from several streams of theory when I felt it was necessary (Suddaby, 2006). For instance, I found out that boundary theory could efficiently complement an institutional lens to describe how journalists switch from one role to another.

With regard to sampling, I adopted purposeful and theoretical sampling by selecting informants that best support the development of the emerging theoretical framework (Pratt, 2009; Shah & Corley, 2006; Suddaby, 2006). For instance, as I observed the increasing importance of the concept of personal branding, I contacted "community managers" as these informants have a unique position: they both have to manage two accounts, their personal and the organizational Twitter account. As a result, they have a much more refined understanding of brand management. Overall, my sampling strategy was adapted to the needs of the research, such as increasing variability through maximum variation sampling (e.g. various tenures, positions, organizations) to uncover common patterns of interest (Patton, 1990). I also made sure I collected enough data to reach "theoretical saturation" (Locke, 2001: 38). For example, this principle led to a second round of interviews –even after I already met 87 informants- when I feel it was necessary.

I also adopted an iterative approach -constant comparison- to assess the fit between my emerging constructs and the collected data (Locke, 2001; Suddaby, 2006). During this process, numerous "memos" (i.e. short theoretical notes) and several manuscripts were successively written in an attempt to theoretically describe the observed phenomenon using the most relevant lens (Corbin & Strauss, 1990: 10). Following the mantra of "No data

structure; know nothing" (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012: 21), I repeatedly built data structures to help me think theoretically by grouping first order themes in broader, more theoretically oriented aggregates. This cycling between data collection, data analysis and literature was conducted recursively. For instance, the interval between the first and the last interviews spans more than two years. I tried to be as transparent as possible in the description of my methodology (Suddaby, 2006). For instance, in Chapter 2 (essay #1), I describe at great length what are the different stages of the analysis, how the informants were chosen, as well as how categories have been developed. I now turn to the various data collection methods to highlight their role within a grounded theory approach.

1.3.2 Interviews

Following the lead of the Gioia methodology for grounded theory, semi-structured interviews form the heart of this study, as they allow me to obtain both "retrospective and real-time accounts" (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012: 19) by the actors experiencing the phenomenon of interest. To avoid being stuck to a phenomenological level, I complemented my interviews with numerous other methods of data collection (online ethnography, examination of archival data, etc.) (Suddaby, 2006). At the same time, I avoided remaining too close to my informants' point of view by exchanging with my advisors, which enabled me to have a critical evaluation from an outsider's perspective (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012). I adjusted my interview protocol over time to reflect my further theorizing and "backtracked" prior informants for a second interview when new insights arose and required further data collection (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012: 26). I nonetheless tried to balance this need for flexibility with a constant core of questions in the interview protocol that helped me to find recurrent patterns of similarities in the process of constant comparison (Shah & Corley, 2006).

Overall, I interviewed 89 informants. The interviews ranged in duration from 30 minutes to three hours with an average duration of 83 minutes, resulting in around 124 hours of recording. The integrality of the recording was transcribed, for a total volume of about 2500 pages (double spaced). Coding of this data was conducted using the software MaxQDA.

1.3.3 Online ethnography – real time observation

Grounded theory requires considerable exposure to the empirical context as the researcher must acquire an intimate knowledge of the examined social situation. Contact between researcher and its empirical site increases the quality of its research (Suddaby, 2006). This

requirement is perfectly fulfilled by ethnography, whose central features are fieldwork, sustained and close-up observation (Fetterman, 2010; Locke, 2011). My online ethnography enabled me to understand many of the social codes and norms on Twitter. It is no coincidence that informants evoke a "Twitterverse", as this term captures a particular world with its own social rules. Its most concrete and central feature, the 140 length characters limitation, has to be experienced first-hand to be fully grasped. Many informants also pointed out their disorientation and skepticism when they first used the tool, an account which again requires a hands on experience to be fully understood. Ethnography also helps generating the "flash of insights" and hunches in the abduction process required by grounded theory (Locke, 2011; Suddaby, 2006: 639). "Abduction merely suggests that something may be" (Locke, Golden-Biddle, & Feldman, 2008: 907). In my case, online observation helped me to detect themes that could then be systematically identified as a pattern in the interviews. For instance, the sentence "Tweets are mine alone" on the profiles of several informants sparked my interest. Hence, I decided to specifically explore this idea in the interviews, which finally led me to develop the concept of "organizational distancing". Finally, as the third essay of this dissertation is fully dedicated to the specificities of online ethnography and its contrast with conventional ethnography, I do not feel necessary to elaborate more on this method at this point.

In all, I conducted over one year of real time online ethnography. During this period, informants were observed on Twitter on a daily basis. Favoring unobtrusiveness, I chose not to interact with them in the online context (Kozinets, 2010). I think that having interviewed them largely compensated for the absence of online social interactions and enabled me to get enough familiarity with the observed phenomena.

1.3.4 Use of archival data

Broadly speaking, archival research refers to the investigation of documents and textual materials, including digital texts (Ventresca & Mohr, 2002). It is alongside interviews and observation one of the core methods used in grounded theory (Locke, 2001; Shah & Corley, 2006) and in qualitative research in general (Bluhm, Harman, Lee, & Mitchell, 2011).

My empirical setting is specific because of its online nature: digital interactions are entirely mediated. Hence, online (textual) artifacts such as tweets are "sediments of social interactions" that enable the researcher to have an exhaustive account of what happened (Dirksen, Huizing, & Smit, 2010: 1050). However, as I underline in the related essay (Chapter

4), the relevance of archival data is increased when they are complemented with real time observation. For instance, in my case, the export of tweets in an Excel format, even with the timestamps, did not do justice to the rapidity of the interactions. On the other hand, having a complete record of what was written by each journalist enabled me to conduct a thorough analysis of their individual behavior through the coding of their tweets (because of its specificity, this method is analyzed in the next sub-section). Given the various forms of archival data, I adapted their use to my needs. When my goal was to examine the *actual* behavior of each journalist, as in essay #1, I downloaded their last 3200 tweets (the limit for publicly available data), regardless of their contents. When my goal was to analyze what journalists *thought* about a specific practice at the field level, as in essay #2, I systematically searched for produced discourses in newspaper articles, blog posts, and tweets using specific key words (e.g. "personal branding"). In this case, archival data were an appropriate source to study meaning structures (Ventresca & Mohr, 2002).

Overall, I downloaded around 150 000 tweets using the platform Twitonomy. I also conducted targeted searches with keywords using various search engines and databases: Google to collect blog posts, Topsy to collect tweets, and Lexis Nexis for newspaper articles. 61 documents were collected for a volume of 120 pages using targeted searches.

1.3.5 Coding of tweets and cluster analysis

My coding of tweets is inspired by content analysis, a method compatible with grounded theory as long as it is complemented with other methods of data collection, which is my case (Glaser, 2002; Suddaby, 2006). In contrast with pure word counting, which bears more positivist assumptions incompatible with grounded theory (Suddaby, 2006), my analysis of tweets requires interpretation at two stages. First, categories used for the coding have been inductively derived from the interviews and from observation. In that, my method is close to a form of "ethnographic content analysis" which shares commonalities with both grounded theory and ethnography from its emphasis on discovering emergent patterns (Altheide, 1987: 65). Second, the coding itself (e.g. to categorize a tweet as "humorous") requires interpretation. This does not exclude reliability: I ensured a relative high level of reliability through recoding by two external coders. Rather than targeting the representation of an objective reality, I consider this recoding as a way to reach intersubjective agreement. While it has positivist undertones, interrater rating can be combined with grounded theory as long as it is used as a resource for personal interpolation (Fendt & Sachs, 2007). Such combination can be seen in previous research (e.g. Butterfield, Trevino, & Ball, 1996).

Based on this coding, the subsequent cluster analysis was only the application of a data reduction technique that helped me making sense of my data. Because the variables used for the cluster analysis are themselves inductively derived, its validity is increased (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984; Ketchen & Shook, 1996). Hence, such cluster analysis is fully consistent with an interpretative approach (Guest & McLellan, 2003). In comparison with other quantitative techniques (e.g. regression), cluster analysis requires much more interpretation from the researcher (e.g. number of clusters to retain, meaning of each cluster). Ultimately, a cluster is nothing more than "a subjective entity that is in the eye of the beholder and whose significance and interpretation requires domain knowledge" (Jain, 2010: 652). For instance, in my case, reducing the number of clusters would have pulled together journalists who are too different in their behavior – a choice that did not make sense with what I observed, and was thus rejected. Finally, if the combination of cluster analysis with grounded theory is rare, it has already been used in previous research designs (e.g. Sonenshein, DeCelles, & Dutton, 2013).

Overall, I coded more than 4000 tweets, 2250 of which were double coded by external coders. Cohen's kappa varies between .70 and 0.73, with an intercoder agreement varying between 82% to 88%.

1.3.6 Ethics

Ethical issues are prominent in qualitative research, especially in online contexts (Hoser & Nitschke, 2010; Kozinets, 2010; Murthy, 2008; Pritchard, 2012; Zimmer, 2010).

For my interviews, I always made clear to my informants that they were recorded. All of them agree, which is not surprising as most of the journalists are used to record their own interviews for their professional activities. They were also informed about the broad goal and the context of the research.

With regard to online research, the guide for ethical research of the Association of Internet Researchers recommends to proceed using a contextual approach to ethics by attending to the specific needs of each case (Markham & Buchana, 2012). In my case, I concluded that the journalists within my sample were not particularly vulnerable. During the interviews, it was clear that my informants had the knowledge of the publicity of their tweets. In some cases, I even asked for help to find a tool allowing the download of tweets and they did not express any surprise about it. Hence, I did not feel necessary to inform them that I observed their online behavior and that I collected their tweets. Observation was done using

an anonymous Twitter account that makes it impossible to retrace who the observer was nor whom I observed.

In general, I took all the necessary steps to preserve the anonymity of my informants. As the content of the tweets has been manually translated, it is impossible to retrace their author, even by using reverse translation. I also made sure that neither quotes nor tweets contain personal information that may help retrace their author. The names of the media outlets have also been deleted.

1.4 Introduction to each essay

This dissertation is articulated around three essays. In this section, I highlight two points. First, I show how each of the three following chapters fits in the general framework of this dissertation. Second, I underline the specific contributions of each essay.

In chapter 2 of this dissertation (essay #1), I examine how professionals both deviate from and enforce professional norms on Twitter. Structural constraints are the norms and expectations associated to the roles of journalist and organizational member. The materiality is represented by the specific properties of Twitter (e.g. 140 character limit). Agency is present in how journalists deviate or not from norms of public expression. Based on an extensive data collection that I conducted, including more than 110 hours of recording, 87 interviews, 9 months of online observation on Twitter, the manual coding of more than 4000 tweets, I examine how journalists manage the boundaries between their personal, professional and organizational member role identities (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Ollier-Malaterre, Rothbard, & Berg, 2013). The triangulation of interviews with online ethnography (real time observation and coding of tweets) enables me to identify various forms of boundary management behaviors, such as *switching*, the alternation between two roles, *infusing*, the injection of a personal touch into the communication of news, or *organizational distancing*, an equivocal self-presentation that simultaneously stresses organizational membership and professional autonomy. A cluster analysis based on the coded tweets groups journalists into five clusters, ranging from journalists loyal to their organization to more personal oriented journalists. The contribution is threefold. First, I show how parts of the journalistic norms are transferred from the physical world into the online world. Second, I portray a boundary management behavior that has remained underexplored until now: boundary play (Nippert-Eng, 2005). I show how journalists, by seeking enjoyment and the expression of other facets of their personality that normally remain hidden (e.g. personal lifecasting, humor), cross

boundaries in various ways. Finally, I underline the importance of the specific material properties of Twitter (e.g. brevity of messages, follower system) in explaining these boundary crossing behaviors, answering the calls of scholars to examine technology in more details (Hargadon & Douglas, 2001).

In chapter 3 of this dissertation (essay #2), I examine how journalists make sense of the emerging practice of personal branding. Structural forces are formed by traditional professional values journalists appeal to as they attempt to build their understanding. Here, technology only acts as a triggering event. Agency manifests itself in the way journalists construct meaning and produce accounts to make sense of their experience. This study is partly based on the same set of interviews as the ones in Chapter 2, complemented with other interviews and 120 pages of archival data which specifically relate to the practice of personal branding (tweets, blog posts, newspaper articles). I inductively derive a process model with three stages that form a sensemaking process. For each stage, I isolate one mechanism that connects the macro institutional context to the sensemaking process at the micro level. In the first stage, as the practice of personal branding emerges, journalists simultaneously experience a disruption of their institutional context that leads to a loss in meaning. As a result, in a second stage, journalists engage in meaning construction by theorizing the phenomenon. For that, they assess its contradictions and compatibilities with their professional values. However, in the absence of guidance, the resulting theorization remains inconsistent and fragmented. In the third stage, actors recategorize their own actions, which enables them to engage in personal branding while preserving professional values at the institutional level. This paper brings two main contributions. First, I contribute to the integration of institutional theory and sensemaking by showing which mechanisms interface both levels and by using meaning as the missing link between both macro and micro levels (Weber & Glynn, 2006). I show how the institutional context informs meaning construction, though only in a limited fashion as actors combine institutional elements in their own way (Zilber, 2013). Second, I show that theorization should not only be understood as a strategic effort to shape meaning, but rather primarily as an attempt to build understanding. More generally, my findings stress the practical-evaluative and polyphonic nature of agency in the sensemaking process (Cunliffe & Coupland, 2012; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Zilber, 2007).

Chapter 4 of this dissertation (essay #3), is a methodological piece and offers a systematic review of online ethnography. Hence it is not conceptualized using an institutional framing and does not rely on the same empirical setting. Still, within this dissertation, this

article offers an analysis on how academics show agency by deviating from the structure, i.e. the traditional norms of conventional ethnography (e.g. intensive contact with informants, lengthy stay in the research field) by exploiting the material opportunities of online ethnography. In this review, materiality is manifest in the way space and time boundaries, as well as rules of engagement are redefined in online research. To make these material conditions explicit, I appeal to the concept of boundary as it addresses a pivotal question in naturalistic inquiries such as online ethnography: how do researchers define their research field? Indeed, the word 'define' derives itself from the Latin word for boundary, which is *finis*" (Zerubavel, 1991: 2). My study is based on a systematic review of articles using online ethnography within the business and organizational literature, with a final sample including 59 articles from 40 different journals. This essay offers three main contributions. First, I synthesize the emerging trends in online ethnography. Given the nascent nature of this method, a review was necessary to consolidate various practices and make an assessment of their results. Second, I discuss how the specific advantages of online ethnography act like a double-edged sword, as it may prompt ethnographers to limit themselves in their research strategies. For instance, because of the possibility to transcend time boundaries (e.g. download a database of forum posts instead of real time observation), or avoid social interactions through lurking, researchers may be tempted to limit themselves to content analysis without even getting in contact with their informants. To solve such issues, I provide suggestions for further research (e.g. combining online ethnography with conventional ethnography or interviews, or looking for research questions that integrate both online and offline phenomena). Third, I provide a systematic and interdisciplinary review of the use of online ethnography in the organizational and business literature. By doing that, I provide a tool that may help researchers to locate useful examples across various management disciplines.

The three following chapters present each essay. I will conclude the dissertation with a chapter that discusses its general contribution, avenues for future research, limitations and practical implications.

CHAPTER 2. WHAT DOES CLARK KENT TWEET? THE EFFECTS OF PROFESSIONAL NORMS AND TECHNOLOGY ON BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOR

This chapter is co-authored with Prof. Michel Lander. Previous versions of this paper were presented at the following venues: EGOS 2013, Academy of Management 2013, The Structuring of Work Within and across Organizations (SSWO) workshop 2013. It also received an R&R at Academy of Management Journal before being rejected.

Abstract

We investigate how professional norms and the material features of Twitter guide journalists' online boundary management behavior between three roles: the professional, personal and organizational-member roles. Triangulating data from 87 interviews, real-time observation, and cluster analysis of 3350 journalists' tweets, we find that journalists engage in reindividuation as they move away from their organizational-member role identity. We identify five clusters of journalists, with increasing levels of professional autonomy and individuality, who engage, to various degrees, in three types of boundary management behavior. Journalists may claim professional autonomy through *organizational distancing*, inject more individuality by *infusing* their tweets with a personal touch, and transition between roles as they *switch hats*. Our study offers several theoretical insights: it suggests that professional and organizational norms only partially transfer to the online realm; it illustrates the importance of boundary and identity play, as journalists experiment with facets of their identity that were previously hidden; and it highlights how specific material features influence boundary management behaviors.

2.1 Introduction

I allowed myself a moment of casualness, in the middle of a hectic program.

Public statement of a political journalist of Le Monde, criticized for having posted a "selfie" taken in the Oval Office while he was on assignment.

Should he have avoided posting this picture? Certainly. Journalists' Twitter accounts must be used to present journalistic content of quality, and we reminded him of this, Wednesday, during the editorial staff meeting. But to see it as an insult to journalism, you must really see journalists as either robots or action heroes.

Public statement of the editorial board of Le Monde, February 14th 2014.

Today's society is characterized by the importance of social media. The introduction of Twitter, Facebook and blogs can be considered to be technological jolts (Meyer, 1982) as their use blurs the boundaries between work and personal domains (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). The "myth of separate worlds" (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013) has been shattered and collisions between these worlds in cyberspace are increasingly frequent (Ollier-Malaterre, Rothbard, & Berg, 2013). These worlds, often centered on "the social domains of work, home and third place", can be further specified by drawing boundaries around specific roles (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000: 474). We focus on the collision of three such *role identities*: the personal, professional and organizational-member identities. We study the online behavior and the associated role boundary management behavior employed by professionals to deal with these colliding worlds (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013).

Radical changes are provoked by jolts such as technological discontinuities (Meyer, Brooks, & Goes, 1990). However, changes in technology do not automatically lead to institutional change (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994) especially in settings where resistance to change is high, as is the case in professional industries. Institutional pressures force professionals to behave in an appropriate manner (Pratt, Rockmann, & Kaufmann, 2006) and as professionals have gone through extensive socialization resulting in strong internalization of norms, beliefs and values, the extent to which a technology impacts their behavior remains an empirical question (Chreim, Williams, & Hinings, 2007; Marquis & Lounsbury, 2007). Given that norms are important drivers of online content management behavior (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013) the introduction of Twitter in a professional setting provides an interesting arena in which to study how robust the professional role identity is and how professional norms shape online and boundary management behavior. Heeding the call of scholars to distinguish between identities at the professional *and* the organizational level (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006b), we also consider the organizational-member role identity. In this study, therefore, study the interaction between organizational/professional norms and the personal role identity that results from the use of online social networks (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013) as well as to provide "a firmer grasp of the dynamics that govern the frequent and recurring transitions between these roles" (Ashforth et al., 2000: 488).

We address the call by focusing on the use of Twitter by French journalists. Based on 87 interviews with journalists at 14 media outlets, real-time observation and an analysis of 3350 of their tweets, our findings show how norms are only partially transferred on Twitter as journalists play with the boundaries between professional, personal and organizational role identities. We can discern five groups of journalists based on their adherence to the traditional journalism norms that govern newspaper article production. Across these groups, to various degrees, we find that journalists engage in three types of boundary management behavior: *organizational distancing, infusing*, and *switching hats*. The first two types refer to an increasing attempt of reindividuation away from the organization, whereas the last one refers to the transitions between role identities.

Our contributions are threefold. First, most studies focusing on radical change in professional fields analyze the introduction of a new logic (Glynn, 2000; Marquis & Lounsbury, 2007; Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2006) or a jolt that fundamentally changes the balance of power between actors (Fligstein, 1991; Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006). In our setting, the technological jolt associated with social media opens access to a new online domain, in which there is no convergence on a standard set of norms as of yet. As technological jolts such as the introduction of Twitter are socially constructed (Munir, 2005), this opens the door for alternative practices (Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006). We find two processes associated with norm construction on Twitter. Two groups of journalists engage in a process, which we label *professional norm transference*: many of the traditional norms of expression used in articles continue to be followed on Twitter. The other three groups adapt these norms through what we call *norm bricolage,* by adding a personal touch to their tweets. The adaptation of the norms, however, is constrained to a range of acceptability (Deephouse, 1999).

Second, we add to the literature on boundary management by reflecting on the importance of understanding the processes of *boundary play* (Nippert-Eng, 2005) and *identity play* (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010) when examining the nature and frequency of role transitions (Ashforth et al., 2000). While emphasis has mainly been on purposeful and strategic effort through boundary work (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009; Nippert-Eng, 1996), the journalists in our sample experiment with their role identities to tailor their professional role identity in a playful way. Boundary crossing behavior reveals other aspects of identities through reindividuation as journalists move away from their organizational-member role (Kreiner et al., 2006b).

Finally, our study examines the specific impact of a technology on norms and role identities. In the literature, technologies are often black-boxed (Orlikowski & Iacono, 2001). By stressing how specific features of a technology impact boundary management behavior, we answer the calls of scholars to examine the concrete properties of technologies more closely (Hargadon & Douglas, 2001; Mazmanian, Orlikowski, & Yates, 2013; Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2012).

2.2 Theory

2.2.1 Role identities of professionals

In order to simplify the world around them, people create boundaries that can take many forms: physical, cognitive, relational, geographical, emotional and temporal (Ashforth et al., 2000). These boundaries are constructed around domains that are "worlds that people have associated with different rules, thought patterns and behaviors" (Clark, 2000: 753). Within these social domains, people can continue to simplify by creating role boundaries that indicate the scope of roles defined by appropriate goals and activities for certain individual and social positions (Scott, 2008). They are "replete with specific goals, values, beliefs, norms, interaction styles, and time horizons" that together represent a *role identity* (Ashforth et al., 2000: 475). Individuals may endorse various roles within one social domain. Previous research has shown how people switch gears or wear various hats (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001). For instance, a senior engineer helped to reverse the decision not to launch the Challenger shuttle when he "put on his management hat" instead of his "engineering hat" (Ashforth & Mael, 1989: 30). In a work domain, even non-work identities can be triggered.

In the case of professionals working for an organization, there are three major role identities. First, there is the *personal role identity* (Creed, Dejordy, & Lok, 2010; Kreiner et al., 2009) in which people behave as private individuals, showing behavior primarily belonging to the personal domain, often related to the individual's family life, interests and opinions. Second, individuals are organizational members (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994; Maanen & Barley, 1984) that comply and identify with an organization's particular set of rules, norms and values, thus forming an *organizational-member role identity*. Third, in their *professional role identity* (Chreim et al., 2007; Ibarra, 1999; Pratt & Dutton, 2000), people are independent professionals that follow the norms and values set by professional associations that seek to steer the conduct of their members (Abbott, 1988; Freidson, 1984). We argue that of these role identities, the professional role identity is most salient in work-

related situations. Professionals pride themselves on their role because of the time and energy they invested in securing it as well as its associated status in the occupational hierarchy (Chreim et al.; Pratt et al.; Thoits, 1991). They have internalized the professional identity, making it "an extension and expression" (Ashforth et al., 2000:483) of themselves. This will result in high role identification and high role centrality (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kossek & Lautsch, 2012) whereby people *become* their role (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008; Kreiner et al., 2006b). Also, exclusionary practices, such as socialization, have strongly shaped their norms, values and behaviors leading to the removal of personal claims from the work environment, as in the situation of a surgical resident being denied attendance at his grandmother's funeral (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). Similarly, the organizational context, with its systems, structures and values, can influence professional behaviors and enactment (Chreim et al., 2007). Changes to organizational structures and systems have been shown to be actively resisted by professionals (Lander, Koene, & Linssen, 2013) when they also challenge their professional norms or identity (Marquis & Lounsbury, 2007). Overall, strongly institutionalized norms define professionalism and professionals are naturally prone to maintaining their professional identity as they abide by internalized norms acquired during their training and previous work experiences (Bloor & Dawson, 1994; Chreim et al., 2007).

2.2.2 Change in professional settings and the effect on role boundaries

Change has been studied in professional fields, such as accounting (Lander et al., 2013), health care and law (Brock, Powell, & Hinings, 1999). As Hammerschmid and Meyer (2006) point out, many authors study the encroachment of a managerial logic upon fields previously dominated by a professional logic (Reay & Hinings, 2005; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005; Thornton, 2002). Our setting does not display a shift in logic, however, it is a case of exogenous change: the introduction of a new technology. Munir (2005) shows that technological jolts are socially constructed; therefore the introduction of new technology is an opportunity for change rather than a causal agent (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994) as it paves the way for new ideas and alternative practices (Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006).

The introduction of communication technologies is blurring the boundaries between work and non-work domains (Mazmanian, Orlikowski, & Yates, 2013; Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). Online networks such as Twitter can be used both personally and professionally, potentially leading to a clash of identities and, as a consequence, can influence boundary management behavior (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013). Boundaries between roles are characterized by their permeability and flexibility (Ashforth et al., 2000), factors that have an

influence on the level of difficulty associated with moving across them. Flexibility refers to the extent to which a role can be enacted in various domains and at different times. As online technologies are not restricted by time and space, the professional identity can be activated not only at the office, but also at any location, during or outside of business hours. Inversely, the personal identity can be more readily activated at work and during business hours.

Permeability of a boundary refers to the degree to which a person can "psychologically and/or behaviorally [be] involved in another role" (Ashforth et al., 2000:474) when physically located in a domain associated with another role. Social media enhances the permeability of role boundaries for a number of interrelated reasons. First, while in dyadic conversations, information can be tailored to the person with whom the conversation is held, this is not always possible on social media. Messages are broadcast to various contacts, effectively limiting control over information disclosure and making role boundaries harder to maintain (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013). Related to this, the invisible audience (Boyd, 2007) can give users the deceptive impression that their audience is smaller than it, in fact, is. For instance, on Twitter, messages can be easily retransmitted, or 'retweeted', and publicly displayed, beyond the circle for which it was originally intended. The lack of social cues may lead to more uninhibited behavior that transgresses the usual normative expectations associated with a particular role (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013; Sproull & Kiesler, 1986). Finally, the absence of the traditional border keepers (e.g. supervisors, spouses; Clark, 2000) in online settings may also encourage boundary crossing behavior.

2.2.3 Online boundary management behavior

As boundary management is an ongoing process, boundaries must be continuously maintained (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). In relation to online social networks, individuals can manage their boundaries along two dimensions (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013). First, boundaries can be managed in terms of audience management, as actors choose with whom they communicate. Depending on their preferences, people may choose to address their personal and professional contacts separately (segmentation) or as a collective (integration). The second dimension relates to what people communicate, i.e. content management: actors select what they disclose to their audience. In the case of Twitter, however, audience management is irrelevant. Twitter can be considered public or semi-public, as almost all messages are theoretically accessible to anybody (Murthy, 2012). Since Twitter's main interest is in forwarding its communication power as a "microphone for the masses" (Murthy, 2011: 779), the default privacy setting of the tool does not enable users to select who will or will not receive their messages. As a

consequence, professionals using Twitter cannot engage in segmentation through audience management. The way professionals manage the content they publish is, therefore, of particular interest (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013).

The content professionals publish on Twitter is the product of the role identities that are active when tweeting. First, identities may be simultaneously *co-activated* (Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009). This occurs when one identity is active and a second or even a third identity is added and combined with the original active identity at the same point in time. Various types of co-activation are possible, depending on the degree of contrast between role identities and the relative salience of one role over another (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001; Ashforth et al., 2000). Second, professionals can engage in sequential *role transitions,* the psychological disengagement from one role and the activation of another (Ashforth et al., 2000). One behavior does not exclude nor imply the other, as individuals may, for instance, transition from one role to a co-activated state or to a totally new role (Ashforth et al., 2000).

2.2.4 Personal differences and preferences in boundary management behavior

Though Twitter has blurred the boundaries between personal, professional and organizational-member identities, people can differ in terms of their preferences regarding the integration of these identities (Ashforth et al., 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996). Moreover, individual differences in terms of status and hierarchical role can influence boundary management behavior. Individuals with high status that feel respected and have the deference of and influence over others (Ridgeway & Walker, 1995) are argued to be better able to co-activate or transition between roles as they experience less fear about the negative effects of boundary crossing (Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009). Similarly, power, the capacity to achieve particular ends by influencing others (French & Raven, 1959), has been argued to moderate boundary crossing between organizational and professional identities (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). Individuals that perceive themselves as powerful may resist organizational efforts to control their identities and may integrate or separate their identities at their discretion.

We must point out that professionals are hired as organizational members and, as such, there is a great deal of overlap between these two role identities as it is often the case between work roles, especially in occupational and professional contexts (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kreiner et al., 2006b). Conversely, stronger incompatibilities exist between the personal and the work-related role identities. In sum, based on our literature review we address the

following research question: *How do professional norms and online (social media) technology influence boundary management behavior by professionals?*

2.3 Research context and methodology

2.3.1 Research setting

The use of Twitter by journalists at major French media outlets offers an appropriate research setting to answer our research question for two interrelated reasons. First, journalists exhibit a strong attachment to norms and values as they constitute the source of their legitimacy (Deuze, 2005b) and this attachement is at the root of what makes journalists consider themselves professionals (Singer, 2007). While there is an ongoing debate on the extent to which journalists fully qualify as professionals, it is clear that they exhibit the autonomy and control over their own work that characterize professionals (Deuze, 2005b; Freidson, 1984). Journalists fulfill two important functions in democratic societies: they disseminate information and they survey power holders in order to expose misbehavior (Deuze, 2005b). To ensure these functions are carried out, the central professional norms applying to journalists in their treatment of news are objectivity, balance and independence, as well as the use of an appropriate narrative style (Rogstad, 2013; Schudson, 2001; Wall, 2005). They are also expected to follow the editorial line of the media they work for, which expresses the organization's collective identity (Statham, 2007). Second, journalists are among the most avid users of social networks such as Twitter using it to monitor information, disseminate news and direct their followers to their parent news sites (Lasorsa, Lewis, & Holton, 2011). Likewise, Twitter offers opportunities for self-promotion, political discussion and sharing of details of journalists' private lives (Rogstad, 2013).

2.3.2 Research procedure and data sources

Sampling. We followed a purposeful sampling approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990) in selecting the 14 media outlets for our study. Only major national media outlets were selected as they aspire to the highest standards in terms of professionalism. Therefore, we excluded tabloid style newspapers. These media outlets include 10 national newspapers (four elite, three normal and three free newspapers), two news websites and two press agencies. Newspapers are considered the core of the journalism field, especially in France where their "journalists symbolize the traditional identity of the profession" (Neveu, 2009: 32). The remaining organizations in our sample also belong to the information sector dominated by

hard news, characterized by short news cycles and high quality standards (Boczkowski, 2009; Plasser, 2005). The majority (58%) of journalists in our sample have been trained at one of the elite journalism schools as recognized by the French journalist professional association, a much higher share than for French journalists in general (16%), according to the French professional association. In all as the journalists in our sample come from elite journalism schools and are under continuous pressure to deliver high-quality articles, we believe they are highly embedded in their professional norms.

Within the selected media outlets, we combined two common methods for sampling informants. First, we adopted maximum variation sampling to uncover common patterns of particular interest within a variety of individual cases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). To that end, throughout the interview process, we targeted different departments to increase variety in terms of journalist tenure, use of Twitter, news sections and functional positions to ensure different perspectives. Our second strategy was to use snowball sampling to include information-rich key informants and critical cases (Patton, 1990). Our initial contact at a journalism school (one of the experts) provided us with a list of potential informants. We asked for informants from different newspapers with a high tweeting frequency and a large number of followers. We repeated this process when we interviewed other experts and trainers in the use of social media for journalists, as well as the first set of informants, to understand Twitter in the context of journalism in France. This led to convergence, as a few key names were mentioned repeatedly (Patton, 1990). At the same time, we also specifically asked for additional contacts that use Twitter for different purposes as well as those that are non-users.

We addressed potential informant bias in several ways. First, to avoid a community bias due to snowball sampling that potentially generates like-minded informants, we purposefully increased the variety of our sample by interviewing journalists from all hierarchical levels, from interns to editorial directors. Second, since accounts of past beliefs and intentions are more subject to bias than accounts of past behaviors and facts, we also asked for concrete events and examples from the recent past to reduce retrospective bias (Miller, Cardinal, & Glick, 1997). We guaranteed the anonymity of our informants and their organization to foster openness and reduce impression management (Alvesson, 2003). Finally, online ethnography, as a naturalistic and unobtrusive method, enabled us to observe the actual behavior of our informants while mitigating all risk of researcher influence (Tuncalp & Lê, 2014).

Research approach. We used complementary qualitative methods suitable for exploring novel phenomena such as social media (Edmondson & McManus, 2007). In-depth interviews shed light on the subjective experience of informants, allowing us to understand the mechanisms and motivations behind their boundary management behavior. Online ethnography, combining observation and the systematic coding of archived tweets allowed us to obtain a more objective representation of the actual enactment of role identities and online behavior. By triangulating both sources of data, we were able to match claims made in the interviews with actual behavior, which reinforces the validity of our results (Jick, 1979). Throughout our analysis, we also ensured the accuracy of our interpretation through member checks. Data collection and analyses were conducted in French before being translated for the purpose of reporting our findings.

Interviews with journalists and experts. One of the authors carried out in-depth interviews with 87 informants, including 71 journalists who have a Twitter account, 8 experts who are either trainers specialized in social media for journalists or power users (i.e. journalists from other types of media that have been identified by informants as frequent twitterers). We also interviewed 6 journalists who do not use Twitter and 2 newspaper web-project managers. Data from these final 8 informants helped us to understand the relationship between journalists and social media and web technology in general. The interviews ranged in duration from 30 minutes to three hours with an average duration of 77 minutes, resulting in more than 110 hours of recording (see Table 1).

TABLE 1. Sample information

Org #	Media outlets [a]	Newspaper circulation, for each issue – 2011 [b]	Website visits in visitors/month 2012 [c]	Type of informant (number of interviews)
1	Elite newspaper	>300.000	>50.000.000	Editorial director (1); Editor-in-chief (2); Assistant editor-in-chief (1); Section editor (2); Social media editor (1); Reporter (5); Intern (1).
2	Elite newspaper	>300.000	>50.000.000	Editorial director (1); Web project manager (1); Section editor (2); Social media editor (1); Reporter (3).
3	Elite newspaper	>100.000	>20.000.000	Assistant editor-in-chief (1); Social media editor (1); Reporter (7); Intern (2).
4	Elite newspaper	>100.000	>12.000.000	Editorial director (1); Editor-in-chief (1); Section editor (1); Assistant section editor (2); Social media editor (1).
5	Normal newspaper	>40.000	Not available	Web project manager (1); Reporter (4).
6	Normal newspaper	>100.000	>1.000.000	Editor-in-chief (1); Assistant section editor (1); Reporter (4); Intern (2).
7	Normal newspaper	>100.000	>30.000.000	Special correspondent (1); Reporter (2).
8	Free newspaper	>700.000	>20.000.000	Editorial director (1); Editor-in-chief (1); Section editor (1); Social media editor (1); Reporter (3).
9	Free newspaper	>700.000	Not available	Section editor (1); Social media editor (1).
10	Free newspaper	>1.000.000	Not available	Editor-in-chief (1); Section editor (1); Social media editor (1); Reporter (1).
11	(Free) News website	Not applicable	Not available	Editor-in-chief (1); Assistant editor-in-chief (1); Reporter (1).
12	(Free) News website	Not applicable	>8.000.000	Editor-in-chief (1); Social media editor (1); Reporter (1).
13	Press agency	Not applicable	Not applicable	Web project manager (1); Social media editor (2); Reporter (1).
14	Press agency	Not applicable	Not applicable	Editorial director (1); Editor-in-chief (1).
	Expert pool	Not applicable	Not applicable	Trainer (5); Power users (3).
	Totals	3.984.880	216.557.546	87 informants

[a, b, c] Titles are concealed and official figures from OJD (French professional association) are rounded to preserve anonymity.

Online ethnography. In order to fully experience the media and better understand the field while collecting an exhaustive account of what was posted, our online ethnography combined real-time observation with a systematic analysis of archival data (Tuncalp & Lê, 2014). First, during the nine months in which the interviews were conducted, one of the authors connected to Twitter nearly every day to observe the informants. Our goal was to deepen our knowledge of the field while further studying specific examples the informants gave us during the interviews. Second, we used a specific platform, Twitonomy, to collect tweets. Of the 71 journalists using Twitter, 67 have an account with publicly available data (three have not tweeted and one has a protected account). For each of these 67 accounts and for each of the 14 organizations' official accounts, we downloaded all of their publicly available tweets – up to 3200 tweets per account. We also extracted descriptive statistics such as average tweet frequency per a day, the interface they use, when they tweet etc. We also saved each informant's profile in which they briefly introduce themselves.

Member checks. We built links with practitioners through a partnership with the French elite journalism school *Ecole de Journalisme de Sciences-Po Paris*. This partnership took the form of informal meetings during the data collection process and a formalized presentation of our findings and supporting quotes after the first round of analysis. In these feedback meetings, we presented our interpretation of the data in order to ensure the reliability of our results (Nag, Corley, & Gioia, 2007).

2.3.3 Data analysis

Given the paucity of research on norms in an online context and on social media in general, we opted for a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Adhering to the principles of naturalistic inquiry and constant comparison, we cycled between our different sources of data and our emergent theorizing. Our analytical strategy had five stages.

Stage 1: Developing categories through open coding of interviews and field notes

We first conducted several rounds of open coding of the interviews and field notes using a computer-based, qualitative analysis program (MAXQDA). While our coding was open, we specifically looked for evidence of journalistic norms, beliefs and values. We paid particular attention to '*in vivo'* codes, i.e. idiosyncratic terms used by the informants, since they offer insight into their world (Charmaz, 2006). Finally, we identified one dominant theme: we found that adherence to norms, norm adaptation and violations often related to the collision between various role identities. By reviewing our categories and linking them to prior

research on roles, we found that boundary management behavior was salient and deserved to be analyzed further. At the end of this stage, we had identified three role identities (personal, professional and organizational-member), the professional norms that journalists were expected to respect, which mirrored those in the literature, and three forms of boundary management behavior (see Table 2).

TABLE 2. Emerged themes and categories: role identities and boundary crossing behavior

Themes/Categories	Representative interview data
Role identities	
Personal role	1. It's my personal account I use for professional goals. I made the choice to have only one account both for my personal and my professional life. For instance, I can say, "hey, I liked this music album or this stuff". [Firm 7, Informant 2, Cluster 3] 2. Yes, I tweet personal stuff. For instance, I love basketball, I have two, three friends that are also fans, so when there is something that gets a reaction out of me, I will tweet it. Sometimes, I also give my opinion on things that happen, but it's quite rare. [Firm 6, Informant 4, Cluster 3]
Professional role	1. It depends on the moment, the days, the tweets. […] There is a real mix of several identities, the journalist, the journalist always complaining and assessing other articles, the super happy journalist, the journalist sent by the newspaper. There is a mix, different times, different moments in life, I mean in work life. I'm not always the journalist at [name of the newspaper]. [Firm 8, Informant 5, Cluster 5] 2. Twitter is a bit like a tribune. It's "I, journalist", whereas in our newspaper it's "we". [Firm 3, Informant 7, Cluster 4]
Organizational-member & professional role	1. Is what I say the voice of my newspaper? I have no idea. Anyway, when I tweet I say to myself: "I am a journalist at [name of the newspaper]". [Firm 4, Informant 3, Cluster 2] 2. It's the editor-in-chief of [name of the newspaper] who speaks on Twitter. I have other identities on other social networks, for other spheres of my life. But on Twitter, I chose this one. [Firm 1, Informant 11, Cluster 1]
Boundary crossing behaviors	
Organizational distancing	1. The newspaper's management demanded that people create an account like JohnDoe_Newspaper. I said, absolutely not. That would be the best way to kill enthusiasm. I don't want to tweet as JohnDoe_Newspaper, I say what I want. As soon as you add the corporate element, it constrains people. They think 'I'm not doing this for my employer, but for me, so I don't need to advertise where I come from like that' and besides they feel that if the title of their media outlet is added, they will

	be monitored more closely. [Firm 4, Informant 1, Cluster 5] 2. On my profile, I've written that I am journalist at [name of the newspaper]. And as the fashionable expression goes, "The tweets are mine alone". I do not tweet as a journalist working for this newspaper. I would say I tweet as a journalist, period. [Firm 6, Informant 5, Cluster 4]
Infusing	1. Nobody will express radical political opinions. That's absolutely not how it works. Rather, there are hints… These kinds of things. We are in a grey zone between expression in one's professional capacity and one's private capacity. [Firm 1, Informant 11, Cluster 1] 2. In general, I tweet the articles I've read and found interesting. A tweet on my personal account, I can write it in a familiar way, not always, but sometimes I can give my opinion, make a joke, etc., it's much different [from the official account]. I have all the freedom I want on my personal account in term of tone and writing. On the official account, when I tweet for it, I do it the same way journalists write on the website. [Firm 10, Informant 1, Cluster 2]
Switching hats	1. It's a mix, Twitter is a huge mix, you can have hashtags such as #thingssaidduringsex and just below #Obama, which have nothing in common… I don't know why, it's both serious and not serious at the same time. [Firm 12, Informant 2, Cluster 2] 2. It's an immense community and within it there is a vast playground, with people throwing things. A playground, yes, but there's also an editorial meeting next door, with very serious debates on communism today: everything is interlaced, it crisscrosses [Firm 8, Informant 5, Cluster 5]

Coding of tweets [a]

Tone

Proper	1. [Of an official account:] It's an official account. We are a media outlet, we have an image to preserve, it's serious. We are not going to tweet stupid stuff just to be cool. [Firm 9, Informant 2, Cluster 5] 2. Print remains a super serious space. [Firm 6, Informant 8, Cluster 3]
Humoristic	1. [Twitter] is a place where you create some familiarity with the reader. I think that to achieve this, you have to sometimes allow yourself to tell a few jokes, to be a bit funnier. [Firm 1, Informant 8, Cluster 5] 2. For me, Twitter is like a big classroom. When I was in high school, I tried to make the funniest jokes in the room, I tried to be the funniest guy or the coolest or whatever. Twitter is a big classroom. [Expert pool, Informant 5]
Aggressive	1. There is not much clash on Facebook. The tweetclash is very specific: with its instantaneity, the tool prompts you to clash. And often it happens in public. It's violent. It depends, some clashes are just for fun. Others are really bloody. [Expert pool, Informant 5]

	2. My higher up told me, at a lunch, that I had to behave more appropriately, not insult people […] I think they were afraid that I was too aggressive. [Firm 1, Informant 12, Cluster 5]
Colloquial	1. When you write, the tone you use… You don't write articles the way you talk, whereas on Twitter, there is more freedom in terms of tone. [Firm 10, Informant 3, Cluster 1] 2. There is an informational aspect, but it leans toward entertainment. We are more familiar on Twitter. People have become more and more familiar, I think. [Firm 10, Informant 1, Cluster 2]
Opinion	
Objective	1. When you are a journalist, you don't have to give your opinion. People expect you to compare points of view, but not to take sides. [Firm 4, Informant 2, Cluster 2] 2. When you look at the articles on our website, they're more impersonal. There are many press dispatches in such a format, they're about facts. Sometimes there are some external comments, but above all it's about facts. [Firm 4, Informant 6, Cluster 2]
Positive	1. Sometimes I will tweet that I liked a movie or something I've seen, but it's really a tiny part of me. [Firm 4, Informant 6, Cluster 2] 2. I tweet on the articles I find interesting, my own articles, but also movies that I've seen, if there is some stuff I like. [Firm 1, Informant 12, Cluster 5]
Negative	1. I'm critical. On Twitter, we are critical. We often stress the negative points, be it about what's happening in politics or whatever. [Firm 12, Informant 3, Cluster 2] 2. We will criticize people, as long as it is not libelous, it should not be an issue. [Firm 8, Informant 2, Cluster 5]
Topic	
News	1. I want to provide information with this account, this is my job. I don't want to just say: "there are lots of people in the metro". [Firm 3, Informant 7, Cluster 4] 2. Twitter has these two main functions: news monitoring and news broadcasting. [Firm 1, Informant 8, Cluster 5]
Job talking	1. If I cover an event, I will tell stories about what went on behind-the-scenes, the moments I experienced, things like that. I will say "we're bored today in the newsroom because nothing is happening". There is this behind-the-scenes dimension, like a *making-of* (sic). [Firm 1, Informant 7, Cluster 5] 2. I can tweet stuff that would not go in an article. Like the *making-of* (sic) of an article. It's more like a transversal approach to the topic. [Firm 8, Informant 4, Cluster 4]

Lifecasting	1. I sometimes tweet stuff about my personal life, I don't do it much. It's different from journalistic work, of course. [Firm 6, Informant 6, Cluster 2] 2. I tweet as [name of her Twitter alias, which is a funny name], it's not only for my job, but also about my life, my parties. [Firm 9, Informant 2, Cluster 5]
Links	
Internal	1. [Of an official account:] Our end goal is to bring an audience on our website. Let's not delude ourselves: what we want is that they click links, either on Facebook or Twitter. We want them to click the link and go read the article on our website. [Firm 4, Informant 7, Cluster 3] 2. I don't know, maybe when you work longer at a newspaper, you think of yourself more as a journalist at this newspaper, you highlight more what the newspaper has published. I see it, for instance, some editors-in-chief often put the content produced by their newsroom on Twitter, it sometimes looks a lot like the official account of the newspapers. [Firm 6, Informant 5, Cluster 4]
External	1. If we only put articles from our newspaper it would be a bit… the audience may as well go on our newspaper's website, there is no added value then. [Firm 13, Informant 2, Cluster 5] 2. Sometime you do "link journalism" (sic), you highlight a piece of news by taking it from somebody else while mentioning their name. It's aggregative work, you cover a topic without actually writing, but by providing external links to other sources. [Firm 6, Informant 5, Cluster 4]
No link	1. [Of an official account:] We do not tweet pure information. We always put a link. Why? Because our goal is to attract an audience. If we tweeted only [pure] information, would people come to our website? I'm not sure. [Firm 12, Informant 1, Cluster 2] 2. I tweet raw news [without links], especially when I know it cannot be in the newspapers and that it will be publicly available three minutes later. There was this news item that we were only allowed to make public at noon. At 12:01 I tweeted it. I knew it would be on the web edition at 3 pm and in the print only the day after. [Firm 6, Informant 8, Cluster 3]
Formats [b]	
RT	1. We [people responsible for the official account] do not retweet much. The logic is that we tweet an article on the official account and then the journalists may choose to retweet it. [Firm 6, Informant 6, Cluster 2] 2. I have an Anglo-Saxon bias because I read in this domain, mostly articles from the Financial Times and the Wall Street Journal, so I have a tendency to retweet their stuff. [Firm 4, Informant 3, Cluster 2]

Reply	1. The official account is nice, but the personnel behind it is not identified. You don't want to discuss or have an exchange on a topic with the official account. So, this account is not really about interaction. [Firm 10, Informant 1, Cluster 2] 2. We interact more on our personal accounts than on the official account. It's because the journalists interact in their own names. [Firm 6, Informant 6, Cluster 2]

[a] Interview quotes only point toward the relevant category by which tweets were characterized. Actual examples of tweets are provided in Table 4.
[b] "New message" being the default tweet format, there is no quote on this topic.

Stage 2: Using the emergent categories to code the tweets

Using the categories that emerged during the previous stage, we developed a coding scheme to code a subset of all tweets collected. One of the authors coded the last 50 tweets posted before April 16th 2013 by each of the 67 journalists, for a total of 3350 tweets. This method enabled us to balance the necessity of maintaining a constant sample size to maximize comparability between accounts with the advantage of having a largely common temporal context, which facilitates understanding of the tweets. Previous studies have also used 50 tweets per user (Holton & Lewis, 2011; Lasorsa et al., 2011). Given the average tweeting frequency of the sample (6.53 tweets per day), this corresponds to one full week (7.66 days), an appropriate observation windows given the speed of micro-blogging, and which has been also used in other studies (Teevan, Ramage, & Morris, 2011; Westman & Freund, 2010).

Each tweet was coded according to three core features: (1) *tone*, (2) *opinion*, (3) *topic* and two peripheral features: (4) *link* and (5) *format*. Core features correspond to the central characteristics defining a role identity (Ashforth et al., 2000). They were manually coded, while peripheral features were coded through the development of scripts in Python and Excel. *Tone* defines the writing style of the tweet, *opinion* refers to the subjectivity of the tweet, *topic* refers to the subject of the tweet, *link* refers to the presence or absence of a hyperlink and *format* refers to the nature of the tweet (see Figure 1 and Table 3).

FIGURE 1. Role identities and boundary crossing behavior

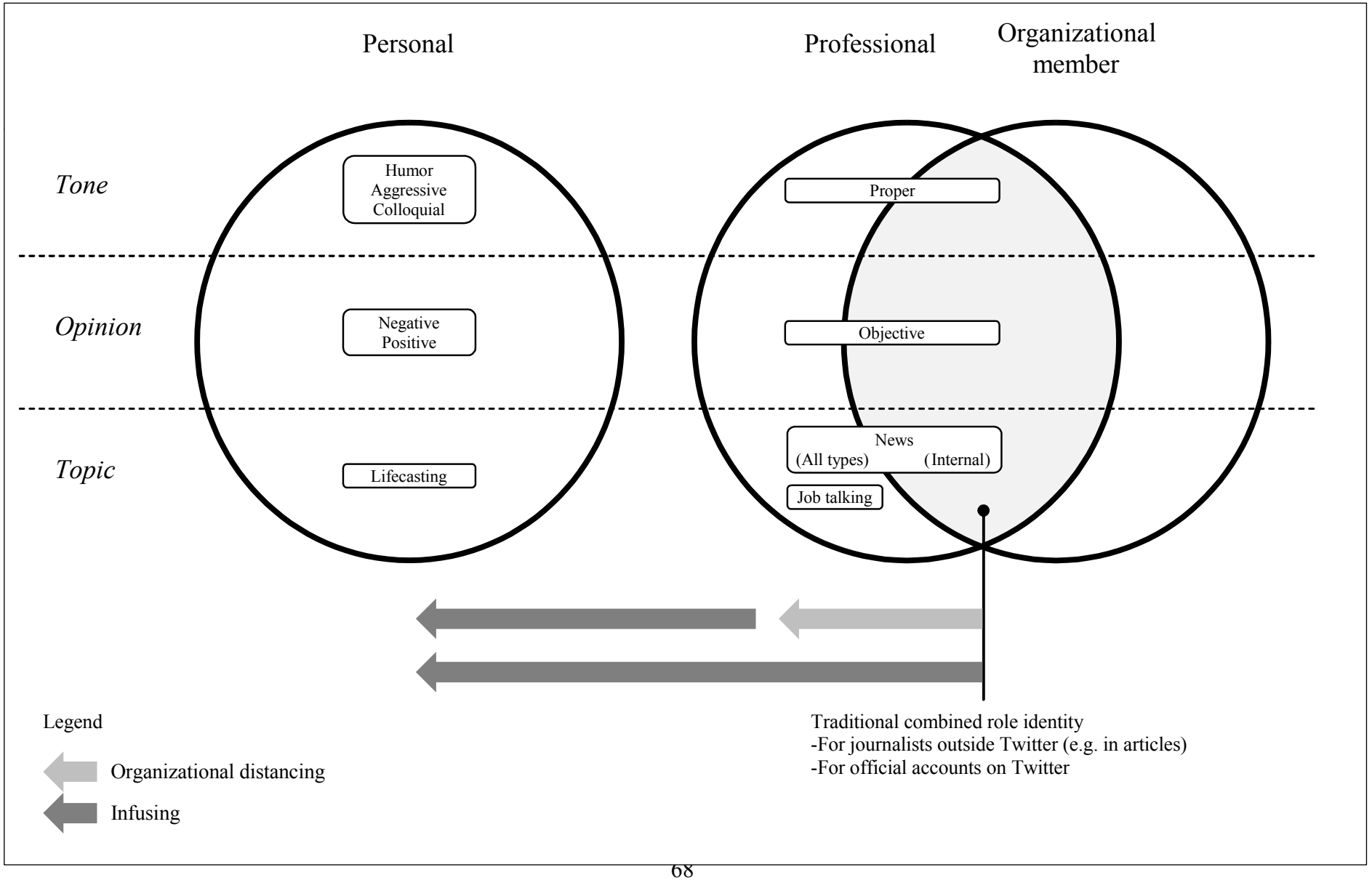


TABLE 3. Coding categories and matrix score

Category	Variations	Explanation	Coding cues	Personal [a]	Prof. [a]	Prof&Org. member [a]
Tone	proper	There is no particular dominant tone and the tweet is written in correct French	Absence of other cues	0	1	1
	humoristic	The dominant tone is humorous	Jokes, puns, funny pictures and videos	1	0	0
	aggressive	The dominant tone is aggressive	Insults, harsh or violent words	1	0	0
	colloquial	The dominant tone is colloquial	Colloquial words, smileys	1	0	0
Opinion	objective	Expresses objectivity or no judgment	Absence of judgment	0	1	1
	positive	Expresses a positive judgment	Laudatory comments, recommendation	1	0	0
	negative	Expresses a negative judgment	Disparaging comments	1	0	0
Topic	news	Mainly relates to news	Current events, public personalities	0	1	1
	job talking	Mainly pertains to the life of a journalist	Asking for help,'behind-the-scenes'	0	1	0
	lifecasting	Mainly relates to personal interests	Personal events, personal tastes	1	0	0
Link [b]	external link	Includes a link to an external website	Hyperlink to any website	1	1	0
	internal link	Includes a link to the media outlet the journalist works for	Link to the website of the media outlet the journalist works for	0	1	1
	no link	The tweet does not include any link	Absence of hyperlink	1	1	0
Format [b]	new message	The tweet is a new message	Absence of other cues	1	1	1
	reply	Specifically addressed to another user	Begins with '@' or has been sent using the Reply function	1	1	0
	retweet	Re-broadcast of a tweet from another user	Begins with RT or has been sent using the Retweet function	1	1	0

[a] A "1" Indicates that the behavior is expected in the corresponding role identity
[b] Peripheral features that have been coded through programming

Each role identity carries with it expectations along these features. We identified these normative expectations by triangulating our interview data, the real time observation of one official account and previous literature (Deuze, 2005b; Singer, 2005; Wall, 2005). Journalists working for media outlets validate both their role identity as professionals and organizational members when they tweet in the proper *tone* (i.e. a precise use of language in correct French with a neutral tonality), stick to objective accounts without expressing their *opinion*, and mainly choose news as a *topic*. Not surprisingly, there is great deal of overlap between these role identities. However, there are differences. First, as a *topic*, the category of job talking, i.e. discussing one's job (asking for help for an article, explaining the process behind the scenes), only reflects the professional role identity. For instance, organizational members, who represent the media they work for, are not expected to discuss the difficulties of their job. Second, typically, enacting the organizational-member role implies attracting the audience to the media website by posting internal *links* in order to promote organizational content. In contrast, a journalist's priority is to disseminate news, regardless of its origin. As such, they can post both internal and external *links*, including links to competing media outlets. Similarly, organizational members are only expected to broadcast original and new content (produced by their media) to a passive audience, whereas journalists can use any *format* of tweets, including retweeting (i.e. forwarding) the other users' content or interacting with other users through replies. Finally, journalists can enact their personal role identity when they do not conform to the above-mentioned expectations, such as using humor or aggressiveness for *tone*, presenting judgments as *opinion*, or engaging in discussion on *topics* such as lifecasting by tweeting about their personal tastes or life events. Based on these associations with each role identity, using the coding matrix present in Table 3, we computed three scores for each journalist reflecting how often they enact the personal, professional and the overlapping professional and organizational-member role identities. For instance, a tweet that is written in the proper *tone*, with a negative *opinion* on the *topic* of news, and posted using the *format* of a new message without a *link* score three points for the personal role (*opinion, link, format*), four points for the professional role (*tone*, *topic*, *link*, *format*), and three points for the combined professional/organizational-member role *(tone, topic, format)*.

An important point to keep in mind is that in our setting, there is a high degree of overlap between professional and organizational role identities. In particular, our informants are organizational members by virtue of being journalists, meaning we assume that they cannot activate their organizational-member identity without activating their professional one,

though the opposite *is* possible. This assumption is in line with previous research that has shown that identification with the media outlet primarily results from professional identification, the organization being perceived as a "vehicle for journalism" (Russo, 1998: 88). The difference between the score attributed to the professional role and that of the combined organizational-member and professional role yields the degree of "pure" professional identity, which reflects an adherence to journalistic norms without the organizational membership element (e.g. tweeting articles from other newspapers, discussing news with users).

To check the validity of our coding, one of the authors coded the 14 official Twitter accounts of each media outlet, for a total of 700 tweets. As they are expected to strictly adhere to traditional journalistic and organizational norms, analysis of these accounts enables us to check the robustness of our coding.

To ensure the reliability of our coding of the journalists' tweets, we trained two coders to independently code a total of 2250 tweets, i.e. 67% of our coded sample. The coders were trained and received an extensive codebook that included examples. We also made sure that the coders were familiar with the French news context in the period covered by the tweets and that they had mastered the idiosyncratic language of Twitter. Following the recommendation of Tuncalp and Lê (2014), when the coding required it, we explored the links provided, looking for additional content that enhanced our understanding of a tweet, such as articles, pictures or videos. To ensure consistent results, we proceeded in batches of 10 accounts, and checked that the intercoder agreement rate was above 0.8 after each batch. Throughout the process, we discussed the discrepancies in order to overcome them. We calculated the intercoder reliability and obtained very satisfactory results, particularly given the fragmented nature of tweets, indicated by a Cohen's kappa of .73, .70 and .70 for *tone*, *opinion* and *topic* respectively (and an intercoder agreement rate of 82%, 85% and 88% respectively).

Stage 3: Measuring patterns of behavior

Our interviews show a great deal of confusion between roles and our emergent theorizing led us toward the identification of three main patterns of boundary management behavior, two forms of co-activation and one transition between role identities. We coded these behaviors in our micro data at the tweet level to harness the "richness of individual behaviors" (George, Haas, & Pentland, 2014: 322). The first behavior, "organizational distancing", refers to an asymmetric co-activation, when journalists gain autonomy from their organization while

upholding the role of journalist. This behavior is operationalized in two ways: first, we looked at the biography of each journalist and coded the presence of a disclaimer ("tweets are mine alone"). Second, we computed the number of news items that were broadcast without internal links, which signals an adherence to professional norms while deviating from the organizational-member role identity. We consider it as more relevant than the tweet *format* to measure organizational distancing as the latter is less discriminant between both roles. We could not code for deviations from the editorial line given the complexity of defining each media position on all possible issues. The second behavior, "infusing", refers to the co-activation of the personal role with the other highly contrasting roles. It can be, but is not necessarily combined with organizational distancing. As our primary focus is on the professional role and norms of public journalistic expression, as in news articles, we examined all tweets that dealt with news as a *topic,* but were infused either with a non-proper *tone* (humorous, colloquial or aggressive) or a subjective *opinion* (positive or negative). We also measured all occurrences of tweets dealing with news that are expressed according to the expected norms of *tone* (proper) and *opinion* (objective). We must point out that there are other forms of co-activation and role-consistent combinations that could be measured the same way for the other role identities (e.g. a humorous, subjective tweet about one's personal life as consistent with personal identity). However, as our focus is on professional norms, we will not discuss these cases in our findings. Finally, the behavior "switching hats", refers to the sequential transitions between roles. We measured this behavior by comparing successive pairs of tweets: a change in core features of the tweets signals a (partial) transition in role (e.g. the *tone* of the first tweet is "proper" thus the role is "journalist or organizational member" and the following tweet is "colloquial", thus the role is "personal").

Stage 4: Identifying common patterns of roles and behavior using cluster analysis

As person-centered approaches are appropriate to identify patterns of boundary management style, we developed profiles through cluster analysis in order to uncover similarities and differences among our informants (Kossek, Ruderman, Braddy, & Hannum, 2012). To obtain a fine-grained picture, we took all possible tweet types based on their *tone*, *opinion* and *topic* as a basis for our analysis (See Table 4). As this emergent classification system was itself derived from our interviews, the cluster analysis is based on particularly relevant categories, which increases its validity (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984). Using SPSS, we followed a two-step approach. First, we performed a hierarchical cluster analysis using Ward's algorithm. The examination of the agglomeration coefficients combined with the inspection of

the dendogram suggested a five-cluster solution. In a second step, we performed a K-means cluster analysis for five clusters, with the centroid values of Ward's hierarchical analysis as seeds (Fiss, 2011), which generated the results presented here. We checked their robustness by comparing clustering results and observed a very high correspondence between K-means and Ward's algorithm (91%).

TABLE 4. Existing combinations of codes based on central features of journalist accounts

Tone	Opinion	Topic	Example of tweet	# Tweets	% Of all tweets	Cumulated %
proper	objective	news	Boston Globe confirms that one of two victims killed in Marathon explosion was an 8-year-old boy.	1079	32.2%	32.2%
colloquial	objective	news*	Com' of socialist party "The prime minister was invited on TV to publicly disclose his net worth" [com' stands for communication]	526	15.7%	47.9%
humoristic	negative	news*	The whips are missing from this contrition session #TVnews #corruption	424	12.7%	60.6%
colloquial	negative	news*	Partying three months after the death of a loved one, you find it immoral? Oscar Pistorius apparently doesn't!!	154	4.6%	65.2%
colloquial	positive	news*	A very cool article on measuring the number of demonstrators [link]	149	4.5%	69.7%
colloquial	objective	lifecasting	I want to drink a coffee on a terrace. THATZ ALL.	142	4.2%	73.9%
humoristic	objective	lifecasting	Aging is needing a quarter of an hour before remembering how to access the fourth castle in the game Link's Awakening	115	3.4%	77.3%
colloquial	objective	job talking	@user Hey, I was just preparing an article on student loneliness, if you have ppl who want to testify!	90	2.7%	80.0%
humoristic	objective	news*	In fact, *extra omnes* = everybody out #longlivethelatinists #conclave.	80	2.4%	82.4%
humoristic	negative	lifecasting	@user One day you too will have white hair, you little brat	78	2.3%	84.7%
colloquial	positive	job talking	@user We also had more or less the same figures. She had done her job too ;-)	73	2.2%	86.9%
colloquial	positive	lifecasting	Hey it's so cool having discovered the kitchen at The Buttercup downtown. Traditional / Excellent bistro.	70	2.1%	89.0%
proper	positive	news*	This is an incredible investigation of the 110 bodies found in the Aleppo river #Syria [link to the investigation]	55	1.6%	90.6%
humoristic	objective	job talking	F5 F5 F5 F5 F5 F5 F5 F5 F5 F5 F5 #livemyjournalistlife #waitingforupdate	47	1.4%	92.0%

aggressive	negative	news*	Facepalm d'or [a] [link toward a news article on a politician]	42	1.3%	93.3%
proper	objective	lifecasting	My contribution to the imaginary museum: The Leopard, Visconti's movie	39	1.2%	94.4%
humoristic	negative	job talking	Today I am going to read a book. Like all journalists on Twitter, I wanted to let you know…	39	1.2%	95.6%
proper	negative	news*	One cannot say that [name of a corrupted minister] cannot be forgiven. He should be put on trial, not put to death.	33	1.0%	96.6%
humoristic	positive	news*	Really this declaration of assets by this politician is hilarious. I know this is old, but you have to read it. [link to the funny declaration]	21	0.6%	97.2%
humoristic	positive	lifecasting	Beautiful: the spoiler generator to ruin many movies for your friends! [link]	19	0.6%	97.8%
proper	positive	lifecasting	I am reading "History of my Grandparents" by Mark J. This is an excellent book.	18	0.5%	98.3%
colloquial	negative	lifecasting	Okay, well even with robots on the big screen it's still not working	17	0.5%	98.8%
proper	objective	job talking	I am looking to contact Jane Rose, specialist in gender studies. Please let me know if you have her contact details.	11	0.3%	99.1%
colloquial	negative	job talking	Yesterday dishonest work by the show @nameofshow on me, in 50 min they retain only 1 incriminating sentence.	10	0.3%	99.4%
humoristic	positive	job talking	Much love this morning in the newsroom #FF [b] to my colleagues, I hope they will also buy coffee	9	0.3%	99.7%
aggressive	negative	job talking	Sony bullies me because I refuse to go quietly listen to Daft Punk before the interview> go to hell.	4	0.1%	99.8%
aggressive	negative	lifecasting	This guy plays soccer like a pussy.	2	0.1%	99.9%
proper	positive	job talking	A special thought for @colleaguejournalist who had met him [a prisoner] just before his escape in January 2011	2	0.1%	99.9%
proper	negative	lifecasting	This day will be long and difficult. Indeed it is already. #publictransportation [c]	2	0.1%	100.0%

[a] "Facepalm d'or" is a pun that refers to "facepalm", colloquial expression meaning slapping somebody's face and "palme d'or" of Cannes Film Festival.

[b] #FF, or Follow Friday, is a friendly gesture. Traditionally, on Friday, users may recommend their followers or favorite people to others.

[c] The use of hashtags (#) is not coded as colloquial if it is appropriately used as a keyword, which conforms to the standards of official accounts.

*Is an infused news tweet

Stage 5: Combining all data to develop theoretical arguments

First, we combined all our sources of data using the coded tweets, but also more general data provided by Twitonomy on each account (total number of tweets since account creation and the number of followers) and data on the profile of each informant collected during the interviews or from a web search on the professional (age, sex, academic background, and experience). While we could not measure power directly, we coded the best available proxies, which were hierarchical status, quality of the media outlet, and organizational tenure. We also coded for time (business hours being defined as the period spanning 8am to 8pm on weekdays, which covers most of the fluctuating schedules in our sample) and space (indicating whether the tweet had been sent from a mobile device or a desktop computer). We then returned to the interviews and recoded the data in light of the observed patterns. This time, we used focused coding (Charmaz, 2006) to identify the factors that could explain the patterns of behaviors. In particular, we asked questions such as : What are the enabling material features of Twitter that can explain the behavior? What are the rationales provided by the journalists that can explain the observed differences in behavior? For this, we focused on the journalists' perception of their audience's expectations – i.e. what journalists think they are expected to do and on the material properties of Twitter.

2.4 Findings

2.4.1 Role identities on Twitter

The analysis of our data suggests that journalists enact three role identities on Twitter: the personal, the professional and a combined organizational-member/professional role identity. Indeed, while the organizational-member role identity could theoretically be enacted separately (e.g. by a marketing manager working at a newspaper), this is not the case in our sample, as all informants are members of the organization because they were hired as professionals. Moreover, the strong association between the *raison d'être* of the media outlets in our sample and journalistic goals suggests that organizational identification will be tightly linked to professional identity (Russo, 1998). Hence, it is not surprising that all informants combine both role identities. This is supported by the fact that virtually all (98%) journalists who mention their media outlet in their bio also mention their profession or journalistic activities. The more journalists combine both professional and organizational-member role identities, the closer their expression aligns itself with the collective organizational voice. This implies a stronger loyalty and adherence to the media outlet's editorial line, which is

mainly expressed by tweeting contents produced by the media. A journalist, who wants to distance himself from such corporate attitudes, explains:

> *If I only tweeted as a journalist working for [name of the press agency], I would only tweet about our press dispatches. [Firm 13, Informant 2, Cluster 5]*

For instance, the official Twitter accounts, which are sometimes managed collectively or even by machines and mostly only retweet contents of the media outlet, are close to the ideal type of an entirely overlapping professional and organizational-member role identity.

However, journalists can activate their professional role identity separately. They may tweet content that serves journalistic purposes (e.g. links to news, including external sources) or relates to their job (e.g. talking about their job) and which does not necessarily relate to their organizational membership. This result is in line with previous research that stresses the autonomy of professionals in general and journalists in particular (Chreim et al., 2007; Deuze, 2005b; Russo, 1998). An informant explains how she enacts her role as journalist while enjoying editorial autonomy on Twitter:

> *Yes, I tweet in a personal capacity, but I tweet as a journalist. […] Twitter enables you to select your own news [whereas] in a newspaper we are working within a hierarchical structure. […] On Twitter, you are like a journalist at the head of a mini press agency [Firm 2, Informant 6, Cluster 3]*

Finally, the personal role identity refers to attributes that characterize an individual and differentiate him or her from others (Kreiner et al., 2006b). In our context, this refers to all elements that pertain to an individual, including a personal *tone*, subjective *opinions* and *topics* dealing with an individual's life. For instance, a journalist can engage in lifecasting:

> *If I attend an exposition, or if I'm on vacation, or on a patio, and I think that the view is very nice, I can tweet a pic, it has nothing to do with journalism, it's personal I think. […] But I think it should represent like 10% of my tweets [Firm 12, Informant 2, Cluster 2]*

In sum, on Twitter journalists enact three role identities that span a continuum from a collective, impersonal organization (strongly combined organizational-member/professional role identity) to increasing degrees or personalization, with autonomous professionals (strong professional role identity) and individuals claiming their uniqueness (strong personal role identity) (Kreiner et al., 2006b).

We now turn to the results of our coding. First, the analysis of the official accounts confirms the validity of our coding: the lowest value is for the personal role identity (56.93),

the highest values are for the professional role identity (245.79) and the combined professional/organizational-member identity (238.14), with an extremely high overlap between both identities (a difference of only 7.65, which represents the share of 'pure' professional role identity).

For the journalists, we observe that the professional role identity is highly salient (mean for complete sample of 192.79). The combined professional/organizational-member role identity is the least enacted role identity with a mean of 121.6. The reasonably large difference between them (71.15) seems to suggest that professional journalists see themselves as autonomous when tweeting. The personal role identity is enacted second most often (148.54). In sum, in contrast with the combined professional/organizational-member role identity that characterizes the traditional journalistic expression of the official accounts or of articles in newspapers, we observe a reindividuation as Twitter creates room for professional autonomy and individuality (Kreiner et al., 2006b).

When writing articles for their newspapers or their newspapers' websites, journalists largely conform to the professional norms of reporting news (see table 4). The articles are intended to be informative and objective and journalists are expected to keep personal opinions to themselves and use appropriate wording, refraining from writing in colloquial, humorous, or aggressive tones. 32.2% percent of the 3350 tweets analyzed do, in fact, follow these norms as they are written in a proper *tone*, with an objective *opinion* and provide informative news. This is by far the largest category of tweets and it clearly demonstrates that journalists continue, to a very large extent, to behave in line with the professional role. This seems to suggest that the professional norms that guide journalists' behavior in the physical workspace are transferred to the online realm. As a robustness check, we observed that the official accounts indeed broadcast 92.7% of their tweets in this form.

While the dominant form remains tweets that are written in line with the norms of the profession, the subsequent four types of tweets, which together account for 37.4%, are all professional tweets infused with personal opinion or written in a non-proper manner, thus mixing the personal and professional role. Interestingly, the five dominant types of tweets, representing nearly 70% of all tweets, are all news related rather than personal life related or instances of job talking.

Overall, these results are in line with our interview data in which all informants stress the role of Twitter as a means of monitoring and broadcasting news. However, in contrast to

the official accounts, journalists do not stick to the combined professional/organizational-member role identity as they cross boundaries and move toward more autonomy and individuality.

2.4.2 The material properties and rationales behind professionals' boundary management behavior

Traditionally, in their articles, journalists only activate their combined professional / organizational-member role identity. On Twitter, we identify three types of boundary management behavior: (1) *organizational distancing*, as journalists gain autonomy by asymmetrically co-activating the professional role over the organizational role, (2) *infusing*, as they go further toward individualization by co-activating the personal role with the other role identities, (3) *switching hats*, i.e. transitioning between roles. In particular, we show how the material properties and the specificities of Twitter encourage these types of is behavior.

Two important points must be made. First, we focus on the presentation of boundary-crossing behavior rather than on its opposite as these are the behavior that is specifically enabled by Twitter. Second, each material property cannot be ascribed exclusively to one behavior. In our presentation, however, we highlight the most influential material properties for each behavior (see Table 5).

TABLE 5. Material properties of Twitter

Material property	Representative interview data
Independence of the platform	1. I don't know if we are legally responsible for the journalists' Twitter accounts. I don't think so… I don't think so, because these are individual accounts. We [as an organization], we have an official account. [Firm 4, Informant 4, Cluster 2] 2. It's the ambiguity of Twitter, it's a media outlet, but it does not have an editorial line, and it does not belong to a media group. You belong to a newspaper, but the Twitter account does not. [Expert pool, Informant 2]
Absence of control ex-ante [a]	1. The 'copy flow' is something fundamental and has existed for centuries: nothing is published without validation by the hierarchy, or you are not a newspaper. But when social media appeared, suddenly you have your journalists publishing without having their 140-character messages validated. It does not go through the copy flow and that's a huge issue for the media. […] I don't know if you can imagine, but given the amount of work that proofing articles is, if on top of that you have to proof 140-character tweets, and you have to be available immediately because tweets are instantaneous, it becomes hell, just crazy. […] I think it's impossible to have a tweet validation system. [Expert pool, Informant 1] 2. When tweeting, the journalist is not controlled. [Firm 1, Informant 10, Cluster 4]
Absence of social cues	1. The fact of being in front of your screen… You say what you wouldn't say in real life. It's as if you addressed people who are in front of you, but dematerialized. Sometimes people forget they are addressing real individuals. [Firm 2, Informant 5, Cluster 1] 2. People say unbelievable things because they are behind their screens. Things they would never say in public if we were all seated at a table. [Firm 14, Informant 2, Cluster 2]
Brevity and reactivity	1. 140 characters let you to get jabs in. You have to be concise, these are flashes of wit, it prompts you to answer very quickly and to find these flashes of wit. [Firm 13, Informant 3, Cluster 1] 2. Bam bam! It's like playing ping pong! I talk to you, you talk to me, a third person answers, we don't even know where he came from! [Firm 10, Informant 4, Cluster 1]
Invisible audience	1. We could say, with some irony, that Twitter is the journalists' water cooler. It's a place where we chat, we exchange information. It's like a water cooler, but open to the public. A water cooler that was being broadcasted, like on reality TV shows. [Firm 1, Informant 11, Cluster 1] 2. It's a bit like a conversation on the street, in a café, at home… With the habit, the people, their avatar, you recognize them, they seem so familiar, you have the impression you can see people's soul. So, you talk in confidence, but sometimes you forget you're not addressing one person, but 10 000 people. [Firm 3, Informant 6, Cluster 4]
Historical development [b]	1. I've been on Twitter since 2008 and it was not very well known then, it was something for 'geeks', there was more fooling around. It was 'lol', there was this 'among us' dimension, we were only following each other, web journalists, we were less

	'bothered'. It was between us. Now the people who come on Twitter are much more like average citizens. [Firm 1, Informant 7, Cluster 5] 2. This 'small community of insiders' dimension, […] You have this feeling that it's 'among us' even if there are more and more people. [Firm 8, Informant 7, Cluster 5]
Spontaneity	1. You're alone with your material in your hands. You just type, you push the send button, and within a second it's online. There is this spontaneous aspect. [Firm 8, Informant 7, Cluster 5] 2. [About a journalist fired for a joke:] I don't know him, but I think he fell into the trap of spontaneity. [Firm 7, Informant 2, Cluster 3]
Space and time availability	1. I'm starting to use Twitter as soon as I wake up. After, while I'm working, I share links, transmit funny or interesting stuff I see. And looking at Twitter is probably one of the last things that I do in the evening, before falling asleep. [Firm 1, Informant 12, Cluster 5] 2. When you are tweeting, you may not be at the office, you might be in the metro, in your bed. You take your phone, you think 'that's funny, I'll retweet that' without thinking much more. [Firm 3, Informant 5, Cluster 4]
Horizontality	1. With our press agency, it's real information. It's treated, selected, put in perspective, validated, assessed by professionals. On Twitter, you don't see the difference between a bad joke and a report on the last 30 people that have died in Syria after a bombing. A tweet remains just a drop in the bucket. [Firm 13, Informant 1, Cluster 3] 2. There is no hierarchy. You organize your own hierarchy by selecting the accounts you follow. But when it appears on the screen, there is no hierarchy. [Expert pool, Informant 7]
Virtual character	1. For some people, Twitter is a way to build, to use a lousy journalism neologism, a 'Twittidentity'. Some twitterers are very funny on Twitter and completely boring in real life, it does not always match who they really are. It's a game. […] Some even create fictitious characters that are totally detached from their real personality. [Firm 6, Informant 6, Cluster 2] 2. I think everybody is a character on Twitter. Me, I am in my character of journalist, meaning I'm partially myself. I think people who know me will, maybe, I don't know, find only 20% of myself on Twitter. […] You reinvent yourself… I mean, you don't completely reinvent yourself, but I think it's part of the personality that shows up. [Firm 3, Informant 7, Cluster 4]

[a,b] We consider these properties to be "quasi-material" (Barley et al., 2011: 890), meaning their origin can ultimately be social, but users treat them as an objective constraint over which they have no control.

2.4.3 Organizational distancing

Organizational distancing, claiming autonomy from the organization while maintaining the professional identity. A first boundary management behavior characterizes the attempts of journalists to create some space for themselves by reaffirming their professional autonomy, which we term organizational distancing. In that case of asymmetric co-activation, in comparison with the traditional combined role identity journalists have in their newspaper, the professional identity gets a higher salience than the combined professional / organizational-member role identity (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001). Still, it is a co-activation as journalists still remain, in an ambiguous way, partially attached to their media outlet. We must point out that as it is difficult to differentiate oneself on Twitter, self-enhancement is considered necessary. Hence, nearly all journalists (91%) highlight their membership to well-known media outlets in their Twitter biographies in an effort to stand out. It is, in a sense, "a socially constructed and legitimated identity available to actors in the field" (Maguire, Hardy, & Lawrence, 2004: 658) the use of which enables journalists to increase their reach by growing their audience:

> *It's our newspaper that matters, not us. I know very well that if I leave the newspaper tomorrow, my Twitter account would become worthless. The founder of our newspaper once said, 'there is no great journalist, there are only great journals'. [Firm 3, Informant 9, Cluster 5]*

However, this membership claim is sometimes (in 17.9% of all profiles and 19.7% of profiles mentioning their media outlet) accompanied by references to the autonomy of the journalist by stating that their tweets only reflect their own opinions and not the editorial line or the media they work for. To that end, journalists add the disclaimer: "My tweets are mine alone". The disclaimer has been heavily criticized for its uselessness since the affiliated newspaper will suffer regardless of it if inappropriate tweets are posted since readers associate the newspaper with the journalist.

> *[This disclaimer] is nonsense. I mean, as soon as you associate your name with a brand, it does not only commit yourself. It seems obvious to me. So, no, it doesn't make any sense. [Expert pool, informant 7]*

While nearly all journalists mention their organizational membership on their profile, they all refuse to formally associate their account with the media brand they are linked to, as they want to maintain ownership of their account. For instance, an account named '@JohnDoe' is acceptable, but not '@JohnDoe_LeMonde'.

Of course, the choice of the journalists in their affiliation is only possible because of the independence of Twitter as an externally hosted platform that is not formally associated to their media outlet. For instance, top management is unsure about the ownership of the tweets:

> *It's a grey area. On the blog, yes, because the blog is hosted by our newspaper's website. It's our brand, our logo, it's our responsibility. However, with a tweet, that's not so clear. Twitter is a platform that we don't own. Journalists have personal, professional accounts, sometimes both. That's a grey area that we haven't clarified yet. [Firm 1, Informant 2, Cluster 3]*

Journalists also reaffirm their professional autonomy by tweeting competitors' content. Only tweeting their own newspaper's links is, for some journalists, viewed negatively as highly corporate behavior. Most journalists have clearly expressed the fact that they are not on Twitter to advertise for their newspaper. Finally, journalists may also deviate slightly from the collective voice of the newspaper when they choose to cover topics that are not included in the editorial line, as long as they do not take position.

> *For instance, at the beginning of this political affair, the editorial line of our newspaper was 'not a word on that'. Somebody who only read our newspaper would not know about this affair. However I tweeted other newspapers that covered it because it was news and they… they [the management] won't blame you for passing on news. I never had a problem with that. One could blame the newspaper [for not covering the issue], but not the journalists for covering the issue. Anyway, posting a link is not taking position, it's just passing on news. [Firm 2, Informant 5, Cluster 1]*

2.4.4 Infusing

Infusing, injecting a personal touch by co-activating the personal role identity. Journalists can even go further in moving away from their organizational member role identity by invoking their uniqueness as individuals. Infusing mixes together highly contrasting elements of the personal and the professional or the combined professional/organizational-member role identities. While most journalists still tweet predominantly in traditional newspaper style, Twitter allows journalists to deviate from this norm and inject a personal touch through *tone* (colloquialism, humor, or aggression) or *opinion* into their work-related tweets. They show some personality in order to provide some contrast to the 'cold' and abstract entity that is their media outlet. An expert, who also manages a news magazine, explains:

> *We have an official account, but we know that it works better when it's the journalists' personal account that retweets news because there is a relationship with the other users that is not the same. There is more trust, complicity with the user, things that do not exist with the official account. [Expert pool, Informant 7]*

As we pointed out previously regarding organizational distancing, top management cannot accuse journalists of wrongdoing when they act professionally by covering issues that fall outside the editorial line or by using external sources. In contrast, it could theoretically control the tweets to prevent unprofessional behaviors. In the traditional newspaper production process, routines and structure emphasizing collective work play a central role (Singer, 2007). Therefore, the result of collective work is under heavy hierarchical control.

> *Under French law, I'm a co-author of a collective work named [name of the newspaper]. Thus I write by myself and I was hired on the basis of my personal qualities, but I know at the same time that I must obey a set of common rules that make the house what it is [name of the newspaper] [Firm 1, Informant 1, no Twitter account]*

In contrast, many of the older journalists occupying senior management positions tend to ignore Twitter and other social media, as they are less comfortable using it. As such, border keepers such as supervisors, who usually enforce boundary separation, do not act efficiently (Clark, 2000). Contrary to what is published in print and online articles, there is no ex-ante control on tweets as this is technically impossible, given the instantaneity and reactivity of the tool. Reluctant to formalize a code of conduct that would endanger the journalists' spontaneity, French management instead counts on the journalists' sense of responsibility and often refers to the Wall Street Journal's 'Don't be Stupid' rule.

The absence of ex-ante hierarchical control and border keepers enable journalists to infuse their tweets with a personal touch, an activity they experience as highly enjoyable. This idea is reflected in the fact that when asked about a metaphor in relation to Twitter, the most common picture that journalists conjure up is of the school playground, cited by more than 10% of our informants:

> *The playground dimension of Twitter is interesting, especially the entertainment dimension. It's about clashing, throwing in some funny links, cursing at each other; it's really a playground. [Firm 11, Informant 1, Cluster 4]*

In this arena, the most common form of infusing is through the use of a tone that is more colloquial than is used in traditional channels. A journalist comparing them explains:

> *The tone on Twitter, it's much less serious and academic than in print. [Firm 6, Informant 6, Cluster 2]*

Journalists enter a game, which is sometimes experienced as a competition for attention. Humor is the first and most important way to attract attention and differentiate oneself:

> *On Twitter there is a competition, a contest to … to surprise people. It's about being noticed, finding the most incisive expression or the funniest, or the catchiest. It can lead the author to give free reign to his mood rather than thinking and giving a balanced judgment […] it is like a panache contest, in joking, in irony, in teasing, in derision. [Firm 1, Informant 10, Cluster 4]*

Another somewhat childish behavior that is characteristic of this playground is being aggressive. For instance, the concept of 'tweetclash' refers to the rapid exchange of aggressive tweets between users. These duels are characterized by a high degree of hostility, which is reinforced by the rapidity of the exchange and its public dimension. An informant compared it to a "*cockfight*" [Firm 13, Informant 3, Cluster 1]. This type of confrontation is seen as a (partly) playful activity.

> *A tweetclash is a fight with several users on the same topic. […] 140 characters, it's very quick, you don't present arguments, it hurts a lot. It's a game, you have to be very quick, it's about witty remarks, it's a literary genre. [Expert pool, Informant 7]*

For instance, in the following tweets, a journalist in our sample writes in a quite aggressive and very condescending tone about news. In an effort to limit length, only his responses are included here:

> *You don't have a dumber answer?*
> *[He stole] whole articles, not excerpts. So, see you, honey.*
> *Yes, [your] half-assed accusation makes me angry. [Firm 11, Informant 1, Cluster 4]*

Aggressiveness is also increased by the absence of social cues in computer-mediated interactions, as one journalist explains:

> *On Twitter, you can meet somebody for the first time and insult him by telling him he's talking rubbish. You are not face-to-face! Some people insult others, I'm sure that if they were facing each other they wouldn't dare. There is an aspect of, 'I'm behind my screen, so I'm not risking anything!' [Firm 10, Informant 4, Cluster 1]*

These two key ways of injecting a personal touch, humor and aggressiveness, are fostered by the 140-character limit. The condensed format of the messages compels journalists to reduce their formulations to their essence, which leads to corrosive humor, cutting remarks and overall, catchy and striking expressions.

> *The brevity, it's not bad for somebody living by his pen because it's a good exercise to be constrained to 140 characters… It makes your brain work, to find the right expression, the one that hits the bull's-eye. [Firm 5, Informant 3, Cluster 4]*

Besides variation on *tone*, a second way journalists infuse their tweets is by injecting some subjectivity. Expressions of *opinion* on Twitter have become more commonplace. By

complying with journalistic norms and offering some personality at the same time, journalists develop a style that must reconcile both subjectivity and neutrality. As a social media editor who manages both the newspaper's account and her personal account explains:

> *Of course, I have more freedom with my personal account. If I retweet news from our website, I can add to a short personal comment to the tweet, I can afford to do that. [Firm 12, Informant 2, Cluster 2]*

As boundaries between public and private domains become less pronounced, journalists may think they are acting in a private context whereas their messages are publicly available, falling into the trap of ignoring an invisible audience (Boyd, 2007).

> *Do we know who we are really speaking to? Is it a public message, a semi-public, a private message? I think these questions have not been answered yet and when there is misconduct on Twitter, it's because people have not mastered the tool, it's a new way to broadcast messages. [Firm 3, Informant 5, Cluster 4]*

This phenomenon is exacerbated by the historical evolution of Twitter. In its early stage, it remained a relatively confidential space, mainly populated by a core of young web journalists. As a result, the feeling of being in a small insider community has prevailed long after it had become a public space, home to a much broader audience.

> *I think we were in a discovery phase, with this idea that it was a bit like a space among us, and now it has become a public space, it's no longer a space where there were only 2000 guys, who were doing what they wanted and nobody was watching us. Now there are editor-in-chiefs, your boss is online, so you can't do everything you want. [Firm 13, Informant 3, Cluster 1]*

While all expressions of opinion are, in fact, violations of the norm of objectivity, there are both minor and major infractions of this norm in the journalists' opinions. For example, though he appreciates a satirical treatment of news, this journalist does raise an eyebrow when others disclose their political preferences too clearly:

> *There are people that take a position on Twitter that they would not take in their media and I find this surprising. […] Some said they were in political meetings, as a participant. […] When you are journalist, you try to find a balance. […] Before Twitter, people would not share their political preferences. They disclose stuff they would not disclose anywhere else. […] We should maintain some discretion, on Twitter and in our papers. [Firm 6, Informant 3, Cluster 5]*

More serious transgressions of the norm of objectivity do happen, but journalists in our sample mainly report observing this behavior in others. This is an occasional behavior, both

because it is often negatively sanctioned and corrected and it is often brought on by exceptional circumstances (e.g. the heat of a presidential campaign that leads to excesses).

> *Last year, during the presidential campaign, it was a Golden Age. People and even politicians dared to say some bawdy stuff. Before, it was confidential. You could address an audience confidentially. It's no longer the case. So many people have burned their fingers. [Firm 7, Informant 3, Cluster 2]*

Some salient cases were mentioned by different informants; for instance, five informants from various media outlets mentioned the story of a journalist who was fired a few hours after having tweeted a sexist joke about a politician's wife. One informant explains:

> *It was humiliating to women. I told myself that it was not possible for somebody with 40 years of experience to say that on Twitter. Perhaps he did not comprehend the reach of the tool? He must have thought he was talking in his living room. But he forgot that the window was open and that 5000 people were following him. And that these 5000 people could retweet the content to everybody. In one day, 500 000 people had read what he said. It's not like he said it on TV, but it's not far off. [Firm 10, Informant 4, Cluster 1]*

The most well-known example of misconduct (mentioned by 31 informants) remains the case of the ex-French First Lady, a journalist herself, who tweeted political support to an adversary of the candidate endorsed by her husband, the president –the candidate the president endorsed being the president's ex-partner. She not only broke journalistic neutrality, but also aired dirty laundry in front of a public audience. Such mistakes are easier to make due to the spontaneity enabled by the tool, which is another consequence of the brevity of the messages. A journalist comments on this scandal:

> *It's the spontaneity of this tool that causes that. Immediacy, spontaneity. I have Twitter with me, so I can say anything, immediately. This case is a good illustration. An emotion just goes out, without a filter. [Firm 2, Informant 6, Cluster 3]*

This violation of objectivity has negative implications for various stakeholders such as readers, sources and colleagues, as journalists may lose their credibility and be accused of bias.

> *You have to show some reserve in your function. For instance, when a president is elected, you don't mock him on that night. They [the general public] do not understand. We spend our time struggling against critique like 'you journalists are all biased'. By behaving like that, you give a glaring demonstration; it is as if you were to say 'ok, what I'm writing is biased because I have conviction'. [Firm 1, Informant 7, Cluster 5]*

A last way of infusing with opinions that also may yield negative consequences is when journalists express personal opinions that directly go against their organization. Again, this

may be caused by the fact that their voices can carry beyond a small circle, as demonstrated by the stories of journalists having been punished for their imprudence in expressing strong critique which should have remained private:

> *I remember one time I got into serious trouble. […] It was on the headline of our newspaper, I had criticized it [on Twitter] using expressions… that were too direct in public. It caused a mini-storm. [Firm 3, Informant 3, Cluster 4]*

This last example leads us to introduce an important point: infusing and organizational distancing are by no means mutually exclusive. They can be overlapping, but do not have to be, as illustrated in Figure 1. For instance, journalists may simultaneous choose to tweet about an affair outside the editorial line (organizational distancing), while also giving their personal opinion (infusing). Given this proximity, it is logical that a number of material features explain both behaviors.

2.4.5 Switching hats

Switching hats, transitioning between roles. Whereas the other behaviors are measured at one point on time, switching focuses on the sequential transition between roles. Both types are independent, as individuals may partly disengage from one role to transition into a state of co-activation (e.g. a switch from traditional news to infused news) or into a full new role (e.g. switch from traditional news to personal lifecasting). Our analysis suggests that journalists frequently switch between roles (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001). First, as is the case with other communication technologies, the portability of Twitter makes it easy for professionals to transcend space and time demarcations (Mazmanian, 2013; Perlow, 2012), which in turn prompts them to switch between role identities as boundaries become permeable (e.g. news tweeted from home has a greater chance of being alternated with lifecasting tweets).

The nature of Twitter, with its very shorts messages, enables journalists to switch roles in an almost instantaneous manner. Switching manifests itself in the very different content that journalists may publish, sometimes in very quick succession. First, journalists working on hard news use Twitter to broadcast information about critical issues that can be qualified as serious, such as politics and economics. However, at the same time there is content circulating on Twitter that is characterized by its light and humorous tone. This juxtaposition of elements is reinforced by the speed of their succession.

> *On Twitter the 'lolcat' [a funny cat picture] or jokes circulate alongside the New York Times paper one must read on that day. It's a big mix. […] In half a second, Twitter*

jumps from the playground and fooling around to the most important news of the day. [Firm 11, Informant 1, Cluster 4]

Moreover, all messages, whatever their source or content, are presented the same way. This absence of differentiation strengthens the switching effect as no priority or hierarchy organizes the messages. A journalist stresses this horizontality:

On Twitter everything mixes up and gets horizontalized. It's up to the reader to sort stuff. Twitter, compared to a journalist, does not prioritize information. It extremely horizontalized since every Tweet has the same importance on your timeline, each message has the same form. [Firm 8, Informant 5, Cluster 5]

Informants invoked the idea of a *"break"* [Firm 11, Informant 1, Cluster 4], which conveys the idea of interruption and hence the momentary shift away from their professional role. A journalist describes how in the midst of all the seriousness, there must sometimes be room for amusement:

Twitter, it's not like a machine, sometime you must allow yourself to have fun, you must throw one serious piece of news out there then one less serious piece after it, then a picture of…I don't know… of a taxi that just got a flat tire just in front of you… [Expert pool, Informant 7]

In mixing contents, they may unduly irritate part of their audience. As journalists are followed for journalistic content, this behavior is sometimes judged as inappropriate. A journalist who gave up using Twitter explains:

Journalist should be much more parsimonious in their tweeting […]. During the European Summits, which lasted the entire night, I saw people who tweeted the whole time because they had nothing else to do. Tweeting that it's raining in Brussels, it's news that I could have done without. [Firm 6, Informant 7, no Twitter account]

There is a fine line between what is considered appropriate or inappropriate, as demonstrated by the following excerpt:

We don't care about personal tweets! There are journalists who tweet their holiday pictures or a straight flush because they are currently playing poker. It's so lame! We don't care. We don't care at all. […] 20% of my tweets are not linked to my job: sports for example. I tweet results, comments, etc. So I allow myself these small things. It's not personal. It's semi-personal. [Firm 7, Informant 3, Cluster 2]

To sum up, journalists on Twitter do not stick to their traditional combined professional/organizational-member role identity. Rather, they experiment with new selves by crossing boundaries. Overall, the persistence of Twitter as an online world offers

opportunities to try new combinations of role identities, virtual characters, as a journalist explains:

> *Twitter is an addictive media that I would compare to videogames. When we are on Twitter, is it real? There are some people on Twitter who create characters, like in video games. That's why we call them [the pictures profiles] avatars. [Firm 3, Informant 6, Cluster 4]*

2.4.6 Differences and communalities between professionals in their boundary management behavior

Our cluster analysis shows that journalists in our sample can be grouped in five clusters, with increasing levels of salience of the personal role identity (see Table 6). In this section, the following quotes originate exclusively from journalists belonging to the cluster being discussed.

TABLE 6. Journalist clusters and official accounts

	Official accounts (n = 14; 700 tweets)	Loyal objective journalist (n = 9; 450 tweets)	Autonomous journalist (n=14; 700 tweets)	Balancing journalist (n=12; 600 tweets)	Infusing journalist (n=17; 850 tweets)	Sarcastic journalist (n=15; 750 tweets)
Role as a person	56.93 (6.94)	109.44 (16.33)	124.86 (15.75)	148.92 (9.83)	162.24 (11.38)	178.27 (9.18)
Role as professional	245.79 (4.04)	224.33 (7.86)	213.21 (6.99)	191.50 (7.66)	182.59 (8.95)	167.40 (8.02)
Role as org. member & prof.	238.14 (12.09)	170.44 (20.40)	152.50 (18.43)	114.75 (10.86)	104.00 (15.21)	89.07 (14.22)
Diff. prof – org. member & prof.	7.65	53.89	60.71	76.75	78.59	78.33
Org. distancing: Disclaimer & media name	0%	33.3%	0%	33.3%	17.6%	13.3%
Only media name	100%	55.6%	92.9%	58.3%	76.5%	73%
No media name	0%	11.1%	7.1%	8.3%	5.9%	13%
Org. distancing: News tweets without intern. links	5.2%	65%	73.4%	72.6%	88.1%	85.2%
Infusing news occur.	3.50 (3.13)	11.40 (4.22)	19.80 (3.02)	16.50 (5.39)	32.53 (4.23)	23.53 (7.66)
Non-infusing news occur.	46.36 (3.39)	34.56 (4.22)	24.50 (3.44)	16.08 (3.58)	8.59 (3.99)	5.73 (3.60)
Switching occur.	6.14 (4.97)	21 (4.09)	30.36 (4.62)	34.08 (4.17)	28.88 (4.47)	32 (4.02)
Non-switching occur.	43.86 (4.97)	29 (4.09)	19.64 (4.62)	15.92 (4.17)	20.12 (4.47)	18 (4.02)
Humoristic tweets	1.4%	12.4%	11.9%	25.2%	24.2%	44.8%
Aggressive tweets	0%	0%	0.3%	0%	3.3%	1.9%
Job talking tweets	0.3%	1.8%	5.3%	15%	9.4%	9.3%
Lifecasting tweets	0%	6.2%	6.1%	19.8%	8.4%	32.1%

Top 5 tweet combinations	Proper, objective & news (92.7%) Colloquial, objective & news (4.7%) Humoristic, objective & news (0.8%) Humoristic, negative & news (0.6%) Proper, positive & news (0.3%)	Proper, objective & news (69.1%) Colloquial, objective & news (6.9%) Humoristic, negative & news (6.9%) Colloquial, positive & news (3.6%) Humoristic, objective & news (2%)	Proper, objective & news (49%) Colloquial, objective & news (21%) Humoristic, negative & news (6.4%) Colloquial, negative & news (3.1%) Proper, positive & news (3%)	Proper, objective & news (32.2%) Colloquial, objective & news (11.3%) Humoristic, negative & news (9.8%) Colloquial, objective & lifecasting (5.8%) Humoristic, objective & lifecasting (5.5%)	Colloquial, objective & news (23.5%) Proper, objective & news (17.2%) Humoristic, negative & news (15.7%) Colloquial, negative & news (9.8%) Colloquial, positive & news (7.4%)	Humoristic, negative & news (20.8%) Proper, objective & news (11.5%) Colloquial, objective & news (10.7%) Colloquial, objective & lifecasting (9.5%) Humoristic, objective & lifecasting (7.5%)
Reference to other interests	0%	0%	14.3%	25%	47.1%	40%
Age	N/A	34.11 (9.79)	37.86 (11.75)	31.57 (6.11)	35.94 (9.60)	35.13 (8.20)
Experience	N/A	10.72 (9.73)	13.43 (12.29)	8.42 (6.04)	12.47 (9.97)	10.03 (7.82)
Tenure	N/A	9.09 (9.75)	4.04 (4.44)	5.22 (4.03)	7.04 (8.67)	6.63 (5.70)
Female	N/A	55.6%	35.7%	41.1%	17.6%	6.7%
Type of newspaper	N/A	22.3% free newspapers 22.2% normal 33.3% elite 22.2% press agency	28.6% free newspapers 14.3% normal 42.9% elite 14.3% press agency	8.3% free newspapers 33.3% normal 50.0% elite 8.3% press agency	35.3% free newspapers 17.6% normal 47.1% elite	33.3% free newspapers 6.7% normal 53.3% elite 6,7% press agency
Hierarchical status	N/A	11.1% intern 44.4% reporter 22.2% (asst.) editor-in-chief 11.1% social media editor 11.1% other	21.4% reporter 21.4% (asst.) section editor 14.3% (asst.) editor-in-chief 21.4% editorial director 21.4% social media editor	8.3% intern 33.3% reporter 16.7% (asst.) section editor 8.3% editorial editor 33.3% social media editor	5.9% intern 47.1% reporter 17.6% (asst.) section editor 23.5% (asst.) editor-in-chief 5.9% social media editor	60% reporter 20% (asst.) section editor 13.3% (asst.) editor-in-chief 6.7% social media editor
Tweets since creation	33796.36 (27239.23)	3018.22 (3675.72)	4336.29 (3112.58)	4382.25 (5940.58)	5561.76 (5328.00)	11663.00 (12660.59)

Followers	276386.01 (394744.1)	2337.78 (2600.15)	4773.93 (5953.09)	3106.67 (2332.02)	5631.71 (6931.19)	15179.80 (26244.76)
Business hour tweets	35.29 (6.03)	25.33 (13.08)	31.43 (13.97)	35.25 (9.84)	31.41 (10.82)	33.53 (8.81)
Platform web (desktop)	46.29 (7.34)	37.11 (15.65)	35.86 (16.73)	33.83 (18.18)	29.24 (17.28)	25.27 (16.51)

Cluster 1: The loyal objective journalists. Loyal objective journalists tweet by far the most frequently according to the existing norms used for newspaper publications. The majority of their tweets (69.1%) conform to the traditional standards of broadcasting news. Their score for the professional and organizational-member role identities are the highest across the clusters. These journalists very much integrate these two roles: while the proper, objective and news tweets are characteristic for both roles, the difference lies in the extent to which these news items are based on internal, external or no links or whether it is a new message, a reply or a retweet. A small difference between both values (53.89), as is the case with this cluster, means that most messages include internal links to articles from the newspaper, with few retweets from other sources or interactions with other users. Hence, they are the group closest to the official accounts in the way they behave and exhibit rather corporate and 'cold' behavior. The personal role is the least enacted amongst this group, which is also reflected in their bios in which none of them mention non-journalistic interests. An editor-in-chief explains how he feels journalists, including himself, should tweet:

> *I warn my journalists by telling them "be careful of what you publish, even if it's your personal account, it's also the corporate image you convey, so you must avoid talking nonsense." But in fact it's something I apply more to myself, personally. On my Twitter account, I write differently than I would on an ordinary forum, where I could be very indecent. But maybe it's because I wrote that I'm editor in chief of our newspaper on my Twitter profile that I have integrated that in the way I use Twitter. [Firm 10, Informant 4, Cluster 1]*

In terms of boundary management behavior, they infuse their messages much less, distance themselves less from their organization and switch between roles less often as compared to the other clusters. Other interesting observations are that this category includes more women as compared to the other groups and that organizational tenure is highest for this cluster. Finally, these journalists have the least number of followers on average, but also tweet the least frequently.

Cluster 2: The autonomous journalists. Similar to Cluster 1, *autonomous journalists* mostly enact their professional role, but their commitment to the organizational-member role is much less pronounced. While the bulk of their tweets also follow newspaper standards (49%), these most often do not include links at all or include links to other newspapers (73.4%), which signals a form of organizational distancing. Indeed, for autonomous journalists, what matters is the news itself, no matter where it comes from. For instance, a journalist from a web outlet explains:

> *Yes, I tweet from other sites, but I act as a journalist. I will tweet exclusive news, the stories that have a real informational value. You find this type of news everywhere. If I arrive in the morning and there is a scoop from [name of another media outlet], I tweet it. Because this information… It has value because it is exclusive. [Firm 12, Informant 1, Cluster 2]*

Their tweets are much more often infused with the personal role and they switch more between roles as compared to Cluster 1. Still, as in the case of Cluster 1, humor (present in only 11.9% of all tweets) and non-work related topics (14.3% of profiles) have a very limited place, as a journalist specialized in the media industry explains:

> *It's extremely rare that I tweet about personal events because I assume nobody cares. […] I am not a fun person. Maybe I would tweet a fun verbatim of a media CEO. But not if it's not related to media. [Firm 4, Informant 2, Cluster 2]*

Interestingly this group has the highest mean experience, but the lowest organizational tenure.

Cluster 3: The balancing journalists. Cluster 3 is comprised of journalists who are even in their number of infusing occurrences and news tweets conforming to traditional standards, hence we termed them the *balancing journalists.* In their treatment of news, they try to reconcile the opposing poles of personalization and professional norms. The difficulty of achieving this balance is stressed by this journalist:

> *The distinction is not really simple to achieve and this is what is super interesting too: knowing where you draw the line, to what extent you are personal or to what extent you are professional. Either you are too partial or you are too objective, and it will not interest people. [Firm 7, Informant 2, Cluster 3]*

In terms of their top five tweet types, we see that while their dominant form is still the conforming tweet of proper, objective, news (32.2%) they also tweet news regarding their personal life both in a colloquial (5.8%) and in a humoristic way (5.5%). Overall, balancing journalists are the most diverse as they not only tweet about news and personal life, but are also the first to talk about their job as journalists (15% of all tweets). Thus, such journalists also strive to preserve a personal dimension in their choice of topic, which is reflected in the audience they think they address:

> *I would say that the people I am following and people who follow me are around 25% personal and 75% professional. [Firm 7, Informant 2, Cluster 3]*

Cluster 4: The infusing journalists. Cluster 4 journalists have the highest mean score on infusing their tweets, especially with opinions. As such, we labeled this category the *infusing journalists*. In contrast with the first three clusters, this group's primary type of tweet no

longer conforms to traditional norms (23.5%) and the conforming tweets come in second position (17.2%). The four non-traditional news tweet types together account for 56.4% of their total number of tweets and are all infused with either humor or colloquialism or are negatively or positively opinionated. Whereas the personal role in Clusters 3 and 5 are partly linked to lifecasting, all top five tweets in this group are linked to news. In particular, considering the top five tweets, infusing journalists are the ones who use a form of subjective (negative or positive) opinion most frequently. An extreme example of an infusing journalist is given by a journalist who is also a strong feminist. She has been warned by her superiors for being too partisan:

> *People always remind me that 'here you are an activist, here you are journalist'. People told me I was mixing these too much. [Firm 8, Informant 6, Cluster 4]*

This group also employs more aggressive tweets (their sixth favorite tweet type) as compared to the other groups, which sometimes are the result of strong opinions:

> *We have had many tweetclashes on journalistic issues. I often fought against [name of a journalist], who is editor-in-chief of a news website, who has a reactionary view of journalism. We disagree, we clash, sometimes a bit intensely. [Firm 3, Informant 6, Cluster 4]*

Cluster 5: The sarcastic journalists. We have named the final cluster of journalists the *sarcastic journalists* as their favorite tweet type (20.8%) is on news, but is written in a humoristic and negative way. Interestingly, the four other top five tweets exhibit objectivity. A journalist from an elite newspaper rationalizes how satire, an expression of personality, remains compatible with journalistic "neutrality", as long as both political sides are the subject of teasing:

> *Even if you are a journalist, you have your individuality and the right to say, "I think…" […] Recently, the Minister of Sport talked about Laura Flessel as a judoka. For the Minister of Sport, that's not very nice, since Laura Flessel fences. So, I liked making fun of her. However, I care very much about being as critical of the right wing as I am of the left-wing politicians. [Firm 3, Informant 1, Cluster 5]*

More generally, the sarcastic journalists have a strong sense of humor as it is present in nearly half of their tweets (44.8% of all tweets). It is, therefore, not surprising to observe that the personal role is dominant over the other roles. This salience is also reflected in a high frequency of lifecasting (32.1% of all tweets). A young press agency journalist for whom tweeting about non-work related issues is important explains:

I may tweet as a journalist, but it's only one aspect of my personality, it's not my whole personality. When I'm running the New York marathon, I'm tweeting it. It's not as a journalist, it's as myself. At the same time, I cannot forget I'm journalist at a press agency, thus I won't tweet for whom I've voted, what I think about a particular politician. But, I think what's interesting about Twitter is that you can go beyond your role and tweet other things [...] to avoid reducing people to their job. [Firm 13, Informant 2, Cluster 5]

These journalists have by far the largest number of followers, which tends to confirm the observation that showing personality on Twitter, either by being fun or by lifecasting is appreciated. They are also mostly reporters in terms of hierarchical rank, but interestingly come mostly from the most elite newspapers and are predominantly male.

2.4.7 Comparison across clusters

A comparison across the clusters shows that high levels of personal identity seem to be associated with high levels of professional autonomy (represented by the difference in scores between the professional and combined organizational/professional identities): Clusters 3 to 5 all have over 75 points on this differential score. In other words, while their overall level of professional identity is lower than for Clusters 1 and 2, these journalists distances themselves more from their media outlets when they tweet as journalists.

Comparing the boundary management behavior across clusters, we observe that *infusing* clearly characterizes Cluster 4 and 5, as a sign of personality that contrasts with the "coldness" of Cluster 1. Interestingly, the salience of the personal role can be achieved through different ways: mainly through *infusing* for Cluster 4, whereas for the *sarcastic journalists* it is also complemented with lifecasting. *Organizational distancing* offers contrasting results. The number of news posts without an internal link provides a fairly consistent picture as it globally increases across clusters. Interestingly, it suggests that claiming professional autonomy from the media is also related to a search for greater individuality, either by lifecasting (Clusters 3 and 5) or by adding a personal touch to the news through infusing (Clusters 4 and 5). This supports the idea that organizational distancing and infusing are two distinct behaviors, which, far from being mutually exclusive, can potentially be combined in a search for reindividuation. In contrast, the presence of disclaimers provides inconsistent results. This observation could be attributed to the fact that the group of informants that do not include a disclaimer encompass both those who do not need to, as they behave in a way that is consistent with their organization and others that simply feel that including a disclaimer is useless and hypocritical. Some informants also put

jokes in their disclaimer (e.g. “Tweet are mine alone. So it seems.”), making its interpretation even more ambiguous. Finally, all clusters, with the exception of the *loyal objective journalists,* exhibit more *switching hat*s than continuity. In other words, transitioning between roles is a pervasive behavior of journalists on Twitter.

In sum, our data suggests that journalists experiment with deviation from the traditional combined professional/organizational-member role identity to various degrees. The *loyal objective journalists* mainly stick to both organizational and professional norms. *Autonomous journalists* activate their professional identity more strongly through organizational distancing. *Balanced*, *infusing* and *sarcastic* journalists not only claim professional autonomy, but also inject their personal role identity into the topic they choose or the way they deal with news.

With regard to possible antecedents, overall, even if there are slight differences across the clusters, journalist characteristics such as education in an accredited school, age, experience, and the power proxies (type of newspaper, hierarchical status, and to a certain extent tenure), do not account for the boundary management behavior displayed. Interestingly, we did observe differences linked to gender, as the salience of the personal role increases with the percentage of males in the cluster. Particularly in the two clusters that use more aggressive tones, we see more males. This increase in the enactment of the personal role identity also corresponds to an increase in the number of followers. Interestingly, several informants (6) compared the competition to attract followers to a “weenie size competition”.

If we consider space demarcations, the increased use of mobile devices may suggest a more technology-comfortable profile as the personal role increases, but the differences remain relatively small. Time demarcations provide an even less conclusive picture. For instance, while the first cluster does tweet primarily from the web, rather than a mobile device, this restriction (purposefully or not) in terms of mean score is not much different from the other groups. Interestingly, *loyal objective* journalists also tweet as much during business hours as they do during home time, thus exhibiting their professional role outside office hours. Similarly, the third cluster, the *balancing journalists*, with the highest tweet frequency during business hours, has a middle value in terms of professional role identity.

2.5 Discussion

In this study we set out, through systematic analysis of interviews, online observation and coding of tweets, to answer the question of how norms and technology impact the way in which journalists behave online, how they differ in their behavior and what the rationales behind this behavior are. In particular, we examine how Twitter affects the way journalists manage the boundaries between their role identities. We look at three role identities (Ashforth et al., 2000) professionals may exhibit online: the personal, the professional and the organizational-member role. Our data suggests that journalists move away from their organizational-member role through three types of boundary crossing behavior. Through this analysis we contribute to the literature by answering two salient yet unaddressed questions: (1) how and to what extent do professional norms influence boundary management behavior online (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013)? And (2) what is the frequency and what are the dynamics behind role transitions (Ashforth et al., 2000)?

2.5.1 Contribution to the institutional literature

The institutional change literature offers various scenarios for how norms in a professional field can be subject to change. Most studies focus on the radical change catalyzed by the introduction of a new logic that challenges the current professional logic (Marquis & Lounsbury, 2007; Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2006; Reay & Hinings, 2005; Thornton, 2002). Other studies have pointed to the role of jolts in triggering upheavals that fundamentally change the balance of power between actors (Fligstein, 1991; Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006; Meyer, 1982; Tushman & Anderson, 1986). Our case, the introduction of Twitter in the professional field of journalism is an example of such a technological jolt, but contrary to most studies that investigate the process of institutional change in the physical realm, Twitter offers a new online arena in which no set of agreed upon professional norms exists that constrains behavior. The question thus becomes: how do professional norms in the traditional physical realm impact online behavior (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013)?

Professionals are exposed to institutional pressures forcing them to behave in socially appropriate ways (Pratt et al., 2006). Likewise, exclusionary practices such as socialization have resulted in the internalization of norms and beliefs (Bloor & Dawson, 1994; Chreim et al., 2007) and the removal of personal identity elements from the work environment (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). Similarly, it is suggested that the disclosure of inappropriate information not in line with professional norms undermines respect and affinity with professional contacts and leads to the individual no longer being viewed as a prototypical

member of the group, thus reducing co-worker respect (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013; Tyler & Blader, 2000). While there are many reasons why professional norms should be carried over to the online realm, countervailing forces do exist. The material properties of Twitter (length of the messages, invisible audience, etc.) as well as the absence of social control by border keepers, allow professionals to deviate from these norms. Our findings show that in nearly a third of all their tweets, journalists carefully manage the content of their messages by adhering to newspaper article norms for reporting news. In an effort to be considered legitimate by conveying the image of objective journalists, two groups purposefully maintain strict boundaries between their professional and personal role identity (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013).

The *loyal objective journalist* and the *autonomous journalist* write tweets in the traditional manner, while the former also acts more in line with the organizational-member role whereas the second deviates more from organizational norms. The journalists in these groups thus maintain quite impermeable boundaries between their personal and professional identities with the latter being the most salient (Ashforth et al., 2000). Interestingly, however, the way they maintain these boundaries is not apparent. Based on the lack of conclusive findings for our measures of temporal and spatial barriers, it seems that the antecedents explaining differences in boundary management behavior are of a cognitive nature. This leads us to suggest that journalists in these groups engage predominantly in a process we term *professional norm transference* from the physical realm to the online sphere.

However, not all journalists strictly adhere to traditional norms in this new space. The *balancing, infusing* and *sarcastic journalists* all allow the personal role identity to seep into in the professional identity albeit to various degrees. In our case, through *infusing* professional messages with opinions, humor, colloquialism and aggression in particular, these journalists experiment with variations on professional norms which increases traction with their audience. Interestingly, while previous theorizing has suggested that by conforming to existing norms, professionals increase professional respect and liking (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013), we find journalists adapt professional norms brought in from the physical realm for precisely that reason – if we assume that the number of followers reflects respect and liking. While we cannot comment on the causality, the two groups that infuse their messages with personal role identity elements the most actually have the highest number of followers on average. Whether this is because they infuse or they infuse because they think their followers expect this from them, we cannot discern. However it does seem that rather than suffering,

they benefit from it in terms of liking as indicated by their large number of followers. A possible explanation could be that as their followers not only consist of professionals, the liking provoked by the disclosure of personal elements counterbalances the potential loss of respect from other journalists (Collins & Miller, 1994; Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013). This finding resonates well with Deephouse's (1999) strategic balance theory at the organizational level. Drawing on institutional theory and the strategic differentiation literature, he demonstrates that organizations are required to adhere to socially acceptable templates for organizing in order to remain legitimate in the eyes of their stakeholders (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Heugens & Lander, 2009). Yet at the same time, they need to differentiate themselves to establish their strategic position and increases their performance (Baum & Mezias, 1992). Hence organizations that behave sufficiently in line with ordained templates for organizing, but are strategically differentiated enough will perform optimally (Deephouse, 1999). Organizations that select strategies outside this 'range of acceptability' are subject to scrutiny and their legitimacy is challenged (Ashforth & Gibbs, 1990). Based on this, we suggest that professionals, when moving to an online space, are similarly able to either strictly adhere to the ordained templates and transfer the norms to this realm or strategically differentiate themselves. This differentiation, however, should be within the range of acceptability. As we have demonstrated, minor variation of norms are frowned upon, but not condemned; yet major violations seriously harm professional legitimacy. Ollier-Malaterre and colleagues' (2013) model that suggests that violating professional norms should lead to decreased liking and respect could, therefore, be adapted to include this range of acceptability. This also opens the door to the idea that norms are constellations of elements of which parts can be adapted to simultaneously ensure adherence and differentiation, pointing to a process of bricolage (Aldrich, 2010) what we refer to here as *norm bricolage*.

2.5.2 Contribution to the boundary management literature

We also add to the literature on boundary management by examining the frequency and the dynamics behind role transitions (Ashforth et al., 2000). We suggest that most of the boundary crossing behavior (*organizational distancing, infusing* and *switching hats*) reflects a process of boundary play, which has not been fully articulated nor sufficiently empirically explored to date. Boundary play refers to the imaginative manipulation of shared cultural-cognitive categories for the purpose of enjoyment (Nippert-Eng, 2005).

Two dimensions contrast boundary play from boundary work. The idea of work broadly refers to actors engaged in a purposeful effort to manipulate some aspect of their social context

(Phillips & Lawrence, 2012). Indeed, boundary work is seen as a difficult endeavor through which "individuals engage in the effort of constructing, dismantling, and maintaining" boundaries (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009: 707). Second, boundary work involves a high level of strategic agency toward the realization of precise objectives as it is defined as "the strategies, principles, and practices that we use to create, maintain and modify cultural categories" (Nippert-Eng, 1996: 7). Trefalt (2013) offers a typical example of boundary work, in which individuals make an effort to achieve relational goals or solve conflicting demands. In contrast, the idea of play generally emphasizes enjoyment and the pleasurable process over outcomes (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010). In the case of boundary play, individuals tinker with boundaries mainly for amusement (Nippert-Eng, 2005). In the context of the boundaries between role identities, we link boundary play to identity play, which refers to the provisional trial of possible selves in a pleasurable way (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010). In our context, playing around with role identities enables journalists to experiment with alternate selves and express other facets of their personality. Through exploration and experimentation they try to tailor their professional identities "so that they better fit their sense of the self" (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010: 11; Ibarra, 1999; Pratt et al., 2006). In our case, journalists experiment to find an optimal balance between their three role identities by engaging in a reindividuation process, toward more professional autonomy and more uniqueness (Kreiner et al., 2006b).

Most of the pre-requisites for boundary play are present in our setting. First, Twitter is social media, which offers a virtual playground that is partly separated from the offline world (Nippert-Eng, 2005). The impression of privacy created by an invisible audience (Boyd, 2007) provides an seemingly safe space for experimentation (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010). Such playing is also fostered by the spontaneity that the brevity of the messages encourages. Finally, boundary play is appealing because it offers a refreshing contrast to the traditional, everyday professional norms that continue to exist in the real world or in the official accounts, alongside these experimentations (Nippert-Eng, 2005). In our data, the first and most obvious manifestation of boundary play is the recurrent comparison of Twitter to a "playground" as well as the depiction of childlike behaviors such as teasing or disputes. Many journalists have underlined the enjoyment they felt in this context. The observed deviation from traditional norms is a by-product resulting from boundary play rather than the result of a goal oriented approach. More specifically, our data suggests there are at least three possible forms of boundary play. *Organizational distancing* is a way for journalists to distance themselves from their organization which enables them to experiment more freely (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010)

while still drawing on the organization's legitimacy. *Infusing*, mainly through the injection of humor or colloquial expressions into news, reflects the intention to break free from traditional expression caveats by twisting the normal rules of everyday professional life (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010). Finally, the juxtaposition of unusual elements and agility in the manipulation of categories (Nippert-Eng, 2005) is clearly seen in *switching hats*, as funny cat pictures and reports of terrorist attacks are posted within minutes of each other.

Two nuances of this argument must be identified here. First, an activity can almost instantly change from play to work (Nippert-Eng, 2005). This is reflected in the informant accounts of famous cases of journalists who crossed the line and were immediately punished for committing a "foul" and "going too far" in their boundary play (Nippert-Eng, 2005: 306). Second, whereas the ideal types of boundary play and work clearly contrast with each other, the reality is more complex as intrinsic enjoyment is sometimes hard to distinguish from more goal-oriented approaches. For instance, one expert who compared Twitter to a classroom also stressed that in a classroom, they are always pupils trying to be the most funny and popular. Another expert mentioned that organizing a tweetclash can be a way to gain followers. Finally, the ambiguous profiles of some journalists show they are still trying to maintain legitimacy (e.g. mentioning their media outlet) while experimenting with their role identities. Hence, while the majority of journalists stress the enjoyment of tweeting, the play can sometimes be used partly as purposeful tactic. Indeed, some research strands suggest that the distinction between work and play may be more blurred than it appears (Sorensen & Spoelstra, 2011).

Finally, in relation to both the boundary management and the institutional change literature, we highlight the specific role of technology, which is often black-boxed (Orlikowski & Iacono, 2001). While norms are said to be "instantiated in and carried by individuals though their actions, tools and technologies" (Powell & Colyvas, 2008: 277), these last two are usually overlooked. Previous research has underlined the importance of material elements such as physical and temporal demarcations in manipulating boundaries (Kreiner et al., 2009; Nippert-Eng, 1996). In particular, online technologies blur existing boundaries as different worlds collide (Boyd, 2007; Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013). However, previous research has pointed out that the literature tends to treat technology as abstract and indeterminate (e.g. the Internet, genetic engineering) while the public confronts it in specific and concrete forms (e.g. Yahoo, Dolly the sheep) (Hargadon & Douglas, 2001). For instance, boundary research may at times consider technology at a macro-level by grouping various

technologies -ranging from laptops, e-mail, cell phones to voice-mail, PDAs or pagers- into one homogeneous group (Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, 2007; Fenner & Renn, 2009). While such aggregation may be appropriate to examine broad issues such as the impact of communication technology as a whole, it masks subtler differences between technologies. Other studies, often using a sociomaterial lens, provide more nuance by closely analyzing detailed material elements, going as far as describing how individuals wear their mobile device (Mazmanian, 2013), or examining a specific feature of a technology such as the asynchrony of email (Barley, Meyerson, & Grodal, 2011; Mazmanian et al., 2013). Our study increases understanding of the role of material properties by extending its scope to a relatively underexplored technology: social media and more precisely, Twitter. By underlining the material properties of Twitter, as they allow for the blurring of the boundaries between role identities, we provide a meticulous account in which very specific material details (e.g. the 140 character limit, independence of the platform), matter more than the material features common to communication technologies in general (e.g. ubiquitous use in space and time). Hence, we expect that the observed dynamics would unfold partly differently in other social media such as blogs, Facebook or LinkedIn. Identifying the common material features across various technologies in order to link them more clearly to specific effects would be an interesting venue to explore. For instance, as social media are all individual oriented, we are bound to observe common traits such as a high salience of the personal role identity, but with divergent manifestations depending on the other material features. Lastly, our study also provides an example of how technology interacts with norms in a very detailed way both in their transference and their bricolage. While previous studies in the institutional change literature have shown the importance of considering a particular social context at a micro-level to understand practices (Zilber, 2002), we push this idea further by taking material properties into consideration as they also define a situation and favor various roles (Thornton et al., 2012).

2.5.3 Practical implications

Our findings have several practical implications for both professionals and their organizations. As Ollier-Malaterre and colleagues note: "being able to create and maintain appropriate boundaries and to negotiate one's identities online are quickly becoming critical skills that most employees need to master" (2013: 664). We see clear evidence of this in our data. The presence of an invisible audience and the absence of border keepers who may act preventively have led to some serious online norm violations by professionals resulting in job

loss, for example. There are limits to the extent that Twitter is a safe playground in which to experiment with possible selves and identifying and understanding these limits is important. Hence, we suggest that professionals keep track of and learn from others that have seriously transgressed. Having said this, however, the online sphere does offer professionals an opportunity to play with and integrate their professional and personal identities in an effort to develop a personalized professional identity, which can lead to less dissonance caused by trying to keep these identities separate.

For organizations, previous research stresses the difficulty of exploiting playful behavior in an organizational context (Sorensen & Spoelstra, 2011). Indeed, managers should not underestimate the difficulty of navigating between various role identities, all the more as boundary play enfolds in an experimental context. Overall, in our setting, it seems that boundary play remains both beneficial to the professionals and to the organizations as enjoyment of the activity encourages the use of Twitter which, in turn, serves professional goals in a global sense. In addition, it also helps individuals to relieve accumulated work-related tension. Still, the absence of rules leads to the commission of 'fouls' which in turn negatively impact the image of the organization. Thus, managers are confronted with a dilemma. They may either set rigid rules that discourage the freedom and spontaneity necessary to enable boundary play, effectively diminishing what makes it enjoyable, or give individuals free reign, which may lead to potentially damaging behavior. Training professionals by providing them with advice rather than rigid guidelines seems to be the best solution to balance these needs. In particular, rather than setting up static organizational policies such as the 'Don't be Stupid' rule or a document enumerating company rules, educating professionals on the use of social media in an interactive and dynamic way through training sessions, occasional reminders and analysis of near-miss cases that may have caused problems may be preferable.

Professional journalists and their newspapers should also contemplate the impact of their behaviors vis-à-vis other types of journalists such as tabloid journalists, for instance. These journalists are expected to include opinions and humor in their reporting (Deuze, 2005a). Given that we already see the introduction of humor and some degree of subjectivity with our more reputable journalists, serious media outlets should reflect on the possible confusion that may arise in terms of positioning. One possible solution to this would be to acknowledge the different channels of expression a media outlet offers: print, website, hosted blogs, official and individual Twitter accounts; and make clear that each of these serves a

different purpose and is positioned differently. For instance, these distinctions could be made by using different physical layouts (e.g. a special page presenting official accounts and one for the journalists' accounts making clear that they are managed independently).

2.5.4 Limitations and future research

Like any study, ours also has limitations. First, even though we take time into account (online ethnography, sequence of tweets) to a degree, a large part of our data is cross-sectional in nature (interviews, some of the statistics). Hence, we cannot establish the existence of causal relationships. We can *only* suggest that a relationship exists between cluster membership and boundary management behavior, with a weak relationship with number of followers and personal characteristics. A longitudinal dataset, including, for instance, the evolution of the number of followers across time would have allowed us to understand how norms evolved and how personal characteristics impact boundary management. Second is the issue of generalizability. We have focused on a particular, relatively homogenous set of professionals: elite journalists. The question remains as to how well our findings relate to other professional fields. While some hospitals, for example, have already forbidden doctors from connecting with patients on social media (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013), this is difficult to guarantee in the context of Twitter. As audience management behavior is scarce due to its material properties, content and open boundary management skills are of vital importance. In still another setting, members of the United States Department of Justice are advised not discuss cases online (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013). Similarly, there are examples of United States Marines that have been demoted because of Facebook posts and, in our case, journalists have been fired for their tweets. While the consequences of professional norm violations are similar, journalists are different from other professions in one key respect: their job is to communicate with their audience, whereas this is not strictly necessary in the case of soldiers or doctors, for instance. While the latter may tweet information on new medical procedures or in the case of accountants a new service they offer or a client they have attracted, their primary task as professionals is not to disseminate information. Journalists, however, will compare themselves to one another, as in their case there is competition to win followers both for themselves and for their newspaper. Hence, we posit that norm violations and infractions are likely to be more frequent here. This is, however, an empirical question that remains to be answered and, as such, we invite future research to investigate online behavior in other professional fields.

Other areas for future research relate to our contributions as described above. First, the fact that we find significant differences in the way journalists tweet by either transferring norms from the physical realm or adapting them, suggests that, in time, sub-cultures could potentially be produced (Bloor & Dawson, 1994; Maanen & Barley, 1984). Alternatively, due to the material properties specific to the technology, it is possible that in time these groups will settle on a particular set of norms that become dominant online. Future research could investigate the microdynamics of how these different clusters of journalists come to coexist online over time and what type of norms become dominant, if any. A focus on the tactics used by journalists in reaching this state is also an interesting research avenue.

Second, while it is likely that professional norms on Twitter will eventually reach an institutionalized state, what happens if these differ from the norms that influence behavior in the physical space? As professionals are carriers of institutional norms (Zilber, 2002), how will the discrepancy between professsional norms in physical and online spaces lead to subsequent revisions in the norms that apply in the physical realm? This question opens to door for future research to investigate how reinterpreation of norms in the online space may lead to evolutionary change in physical realm professional norms from within the professional field (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996).

A third topic for future research relates to the antecedents of boundary play and the interaction with personal characteristics. While we have looked at physical, geographic and temporal boundaries and their differences among our different groups, no salient differences were revealed. This raises a very interesting question as we do observe different degrees of boundary play that do not provide a consistent picture: why do some journalists play more than others? Why do they prefer one form of boundary play and tend to ignore others? The absence of conclusive findings on journalist characteristics, with the exception of gender differences, hints to the possibility that cognitive boundaries are the likely force behind the demarcation of roles. Previous research points out that demographic characteristics are not sufficient to explain differences in boundary management (Rothbard, Phillips, & Dumas, 2005). Rather, some people may not develop the cognitive imagination necessary to play with boundaries (Nippert-Eng, 2005). Hence, further research could examine whether or not it is cognitive processes that explain why particular individuals engage in boundary play more than others.

Finally, introducing the concept of boundary play extends the scope of boundary management research. Research on boundary work has focused on the strategic efforts of individuals to set boundaries for their own interest. Adding the complementary concept of boundary play enables us to shed light on subtler, less conspicuous behavior that has remained under the radar where enjoyment trumps strategy. For instance, liminal spaces at the margin of work and play in which more freedom is offered such as Google's 20% 'free' time, team building events, office dinners or casual Fridays (Sorensen & Spoelstra, 2011) may provide interesting areas to explore. More generally, individuals may engage in boundary play in any context such as using humor in the workplace to improve leadership or ingratiation (Avolio, Howell, & Sosik, 1999; Cooper, 2005; Duncan, Smeltzer, & Leap, 1990). Overall, boundary play stresses the provisional and spontaneous nature of boundary management behavior (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010; Nippert-Eng, 2005), which tends to confirm the unstable nature of role identity boundaries already hinted at in previous work (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006a).

2.5.5 Conclusion

By fostering boundary play, Twitter and its material properties in particular enable variations in professional norms to arise and permit the exploration of new combinations of role identities, though restricted to an online playground. While most of these slight deviations from norms and experimentation go unpunished, things can sometimes go wrong. In essence, playing is allowed, but only to a certain degree. Overall Twitter makes disembeddedness possible as it fosters the co-activation and transition between various role identities in the form of boundary play (Ashforth et al., 2000; Ashforth & Johnson, 2001; Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009; Nippert-Eng, 2005). In our case, we observe both journalists who continue, in large part, to enact their combined professional and organizational role identities in this new space and others who prefer to disclose previously hidden aspects of their self, be it more professional autonomy or more individuality, and which are "brought into sight" (Kreiner et al., 2006a: 1317) by Twitter. In fact, it is probable that some behaviors such as humor or aggressiveness were already present in real life, but restricted to the private, hidden sphere. This revelatory mechanism offers an explanation of the fact that individuals who are embedded can nevertheless become agents of change (Creed et al., 2010) and develop a set of behavioral rules in this new space. Still, the journalists in our sample, either because they continue to adhere to existing norms even when presented with the possibility for change or because they only slightly deviate from this pattern by adding a personal touch for

amusement, look like the average Clark-Kent-employees that populate most organizations. In any case, their experimentation in identity play does not make them "hypermuscular Supermen" (Suddaby, 2010: 15) who seek to completely redefine professional norms in the online world.

CHAPTER 3. NO FAME, NO BLAME? MEANING CONSTRUCTION IN THE FIELD OF JOURNALISM

Previous versions of this paper were presented at the following venues: EGOS 2014, Academy of Management 2014, Academy of Management Doctoral consortium 2014 (OMT), Transatlantic Doctoral Consortium (TADC) 2014. It received the award for AOM Best papers proceedings (OMT) in 2014.

Abstract

In this article, we examine the dynamics of meaning construction and their relation to the institutional context. Based on an analysis of the field of French news journalism, we examine how journalists ascribe meanings to the emergent practice of personal branding on Twitter. We isolate three mechanisms that connect institutional context and sensemaking process. First, institutional breakdown leads to meaning confusion. In a second stage, as journalists attempt to restore meaning, they engage in theorization by appealing to their professional values. In the absence of guidance, this theorization produces fragmented and sometimes inconsistent accounts. Finally, journalists recategorize their own actions, which enables them to preserve professional values while engaging in personal branding. We contribute to the integration of sensemaking and institutional literatures and shed a new light on theorization as a practical and retrospective attempt to engage in meaning construction.

> *You used the expression "build your personal brand." I want us to let that expression marinate in its own foulness for a moment, like a turd in a puddle of pee, as we contemplate its meaning and the devastating weight of its implications. This is a term born of the new approach to journalism, a soulless, marketing approach…*
>
> Gene Weingarten, two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, in response to an inquiry by a journalism student

3.1 Introduction

As this colorful quote suggests, the practice of personal branding, broadly defined as using marketing techniques for self-promotion, triggers fierce reactions in the field of hard news journalism, traditionally dominated by strong professional values where market elements are

considered with a wary eye. The radical stance taken by Gene Weingarten is all the more interesting when we take into account that he is a prominent journalist whose well-kept Twitter account qualifies him as having a "powerful personal brand" in the eyes of some of his peers. In this paper, we investigate how meaning is constructed around the practice of personal branding in the field of hard news journalism in France. Although meaning plays a central role in the social construction of reality, it has nearly "disappeared" from institutional theory (Suddaby, 2010: 15) and many scholars have called for a closer examination of its dynamics (Suddaby, Elsbach, Greenwood, Meyer, & Zilber, 2010; Zilber, 2008; Zilber, 2013). In particular, despite various calls to connect institutional research with the study of sensemaking, there is little integration between these two fields (Jennings & Greenwood, 2003; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014; Weber & Glynn, 2006; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005; Zilber, 2008). We tackle this challenge by examining the connections between institutional context and sensemaking. Because it is strongly institutionalized, the field of hard news journalism provides an ideal empirical setting to examine how actors make sense of an emergent practice using the institutional context. More specifically, we examine the meanings ascribed to personal branding. As this practice originates from marketing, it raises conflictual meaning attributions. Moreover, its development linked to a new technology, social media, creates a context of equivocality and uncertainty which triggers sensemaking as actors attempt to reestablish order and stability. We triangulate multiple sources of evidence, with over 124 hours of interviews with 89 informants, online ethnography and various types of archival data (tweets, blogs, newspaper articles). We induce a model involving three mechanisms connecting institutions to each stage of the sensemaking process: breakdown, meaning construction and action. First, an institutional breakdown leads to confusion and equivocality. To restore meaning, actors then engage in theorization: they appeal to institutional templates to make sense of their experience. Finally, they recategorize their own actions, which enables them to reconcile the reproduction of professional values with their engagement in personal branding.

Thereby, we contribute to the integration of institutional theory and sensemaking by showing which mechanisms interface both levels (Weber & Glynn, 2006). By focusing on the dynamics of meaning construction, we show how the institutional context informs meaning construction, though only in a limited fashion, as actors combine institutional elements in their own way (Zilber, 2013). We also shed a new light on theorization, by showing that it is not necessarily a strategic effort to shape meaning, but primarily an attempt to build

understanding. More generally, our findings underline the practical-evaluative and polyphonic nature of agency in the sensemaking process (Cunliffe & Coupland, 2012; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Zilber, 2007).

3.2 Theory

3.2.1 Meaning construction in institutional theory

Meaning refers to what is signified and forms the intangible part of structures and practices (Zilber, 2008). It plays a central role in institutional theory, as an institution can be assimilated to "a crystallization of meanings in objective form" (Berger & Kellner, 1981: 31). More generally, the core tenet of institutional theory is that social structures, as they become infused with values, acquire meanings beyond being mere instrumental tools (Selznick, 1949; Suddaby, Elsbach, Greenwood, Meyer, & Zilber, 2010). Being extra-subjective, these social structures and systems of meanings exist at a macro-level. Like grammar rules, they exist independently from individuals' speeches but constrain them as social stipulations (Barley & Tolbert, 1997; Weber & Glynn, 2006).

More specifically, institutions are supported by three "pillars" that provide "stability and meaning" to social life (Scott, 2008: 55). The regulative pillar refers to the constraining effect of institutions through coercive processes such as rule-setting, monitoring, and sanctioning, either through formal or informal channels. The normative pillar emphasizes the importance of norms and values in prescribing which behaviors are appropriate. Finally, the cognitive-cultural pillar stresses how shared understandings are taken-for-granted and form a socially constructed reality. In particular, the "hyphenated label cognitive-cultural emphasizes that internal interpretive processes are shaped by external cultural frameworks" (Scott, 2008: 57).

However, this interpretative process leading to shared understandings is often treated as implicit. Institutional research tends to treat it as a "black-box" and to overlook how meaning is produced and negotiated among actors (Zilber, 2013: 83). Early institutional works stress the structural and constraining effects of institutions (Barley & Tolbert, 1997; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Hirsch & Lounsbury, 1997; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). In this perspective, meanings and institutions reproduce themselves in a quasi-automatic manner. Similarly, much of the research on institutional change appeals to mechanistic models based on punctuated equilibrium, simply shifting from one position to another (Delbridge & Edwards, 2007). In such approaches, institutionalism tends to reify institutions and overlooks

its cognitive roots, and in particular how individuals interpret a situation (Holm, 1995). The role of cognition is then mainly restricted to the fact that institutions are taken-for-granted. Because these studies have been mostly conducted at the field or industry levels and stress the structural effects of institutions, they ignore the construction of meaning by individuals.

Recent works have reintroduced agency and individuals. They however focus on specific actors with outstanding abilities to manipulate meaning, even in the most confusing situations. Change agents such as institutional entrepreneurs actively shape institutions in order to promote their own interest (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009; DiMaggio, 1988). To present their propositions in a positive light, they engage in theorization, which is "the rendering of ideas into understandable and compelling formats" (Greenwood, Suddaby, & Hinings, 2002: 75; Strang & Meyer, 1993). However, how they make sense of a particular situation and build their understanding is not really examined. Rather, institutional entrepreneurs are rational actors who perfectly know what they do and how to promote their interests. In particular, their ability to manipulate meaning in a strategic way manifests itself even in the most confusing and uncertain situations. This is the case of emerging fields, which are characterized by high levels of uncertainty (Maguire, Hardy, & Lawrence, 2004), or settings including contradictory prescriptions (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009). Institutional entrepreneurs are also able to transform exogenous jolts, which by essence are unexpected and confusing events, into field transformation. For instance, activists manage to promote autonomy and new cooking practices in the wake of the social upheaval of May 68 (Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2003). Similarly, organizations are able to use technological discontinuities to promote their understanding of the photography practice (Munir, 2005). Finally, beyond this focus on these specific actors, how other individuals make sense of a situation and ascribe meaning to a practice remains underexplored.

In sum, institutional explanations either ignore individuals and consider meaning as simply taken-for-granted or, at the opposite, describe them as rational actors in full control of the situation, who are able to strategically manipulate meaning. In both case, the interpretative process of how actors make sense of a situation is not addressed. Such observation is not surprising given the initial focus of institutional theory at a macro-level. Some recent works however invite to examine more thoroughly how actors construct meanings at a micro-level (Powell & Colyvas, 2008; Zilber, 2008). This is why we now turn to the sensemaking perspective.

3.2.2 The sensemaking process

Sensemaking is the process through which individuals work to understand confusing and ambiguous events (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Weick, 1995). While some depict it as an individual process, management studies have underlined its collective dimension, as meaning is negotiated among actors and is made within an organizational context (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Hence, sensemaking is an inter-subjective process which enfolds at the micro-level (Weber & Glynn, 2006). While meaning construction plays a central role in sensemaking, it only constitutes one of the three stages identified by prior research: the perception of a confusing situation, meaning construction and action (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014).

First, sensemaking is triggered when people encounter disruptive events which, by violating their expectations, create uncertainty and equivocality. Such "breakdowns" (Patriotta, 2003: 359) result, among others, from significant events such as organizational crises, disasters or environmental jolts (Meyer, 1982; Weick, 1988; Weick, 1993). However, these unexpected events only trigger sensemaking if the associated cues receive enough attention so that they are bracketed and noticed (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). Moreover, the presence of strong group norms or organizational systems may inhibit this effect (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). For instance, actors may ignore the cues signaling incoming crises because of norms and organizational processes that consider unsafe behaviors as acceptable (Vaughan, 1996; Wicks, 2001).

In the second stage, once sensemaking has been triggered, actors try to restore order by constructing a shared understanding of the situation. Although they face the same events, organizational actors may interpret it differently because of their various positions, interests and backgrounds (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). They attempt to reach a shared meaning by constructing collective narratives (Patriotta, 2003; Santos & Eisenhardt, 2009). Leaders play an essential role as they can guide meaning construction and promote their own understandings. However, all organizational members actively contribute to sensemaking as they can choose to adopt or resist the sense they have been given (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Hence, meaning construction is a collective process that rests on actors' active participation. The sense that is given to events by some can be negotiated and contested by others.

In the third stage, actors take action in conformity to their interpretation of the situation (Weick, 1993). It is important to mention that, though this process has been presented linearly, sensemaking is ongoing and action also precedes cognition (Weick, 1995; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). Through their actions, individuals are dynamically creating the environment they are making sense of (Orton, 2000).

3.2.3 The interplay between institutions and sensemaking

In sum, institutional explanations tend to overlook how meaning is built at a micro-level. In particular, it is assumed that some actors are easily able to make sense of the situation and act strategically, even in the most confusing settings. Hence, the sensemaking perspective, given its focus on "the realities of agency, flow, equivocality" (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005: 410), provides a useful theoretical complement. Nevertheless, despite the calls by scholars to connect institutions and sensemaking, both research streams remain parallel and there is little empirical studies that explicitly examine their interconnection (Jennings & Greenwood, 2003; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014; Schultz & Wehmeier, 2010; Weber & Glynn, 2006; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005; Zilber, 2008). This leads us to ask the following research questions: "How do actors make sense of an emerging practice in a situation characterized by equivocality? What are the institutional mechanisms that underlie the sensemaking process?"

To reconcile both streams of research, we build our research on the work of Weber and Glynn (2006). They propose a model distinguishing the institutional context at a macro-level from actors who engage in sensemaking at a micro-level. Both levels are linked in a recursive relationship (Barley & Tolbert, 1997; Giddens, 1984). In a top-down fashion, institutions constrain sensemaking by shaping what is taken-for-granted and providing the frame through which reality is constructed (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Weber & Glynn, 2006). Conversely, in a bottom-up fashion, sensemaking and actions by individual actors enable institutions to be reproduced. We now turn to a description of our methods and empirical context.

3.3 Research context and methodology

We use grounded theory as it is most suited "to understand the process by which actors construct meaning out of intersubjective experience" (Suddaby, 2006: 634). We heed the call of scholars to examine the connection between institutional context and sensemaking by focusing on the mechanisms that bridge both levels (Weber & Glynn, 2006; Weick, Sutcliffe,

& Obstfeld, 2005). Social mechanisms are the "cogs and wheels" of a theory that explains how different elements of a system function together (Davis & Marquis, 2005: 336). Their intermediate status between pure description and universal laws made them well adapted for grounded theory approaches which aim at developing middle-range theories (Charmaz, 2008; Suddaby, 2006).

3.3.1 Research context

Practices are "patterns of activities that are given thematic coherence by shared meanings and understandings" (Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012: 879). This thematic coherence does not exclude conflicting meanings. For instance, in her study of a rape crisis center, Zilber (2002) shows how the same practices could be understood either from a therapeutic or a feminist point of view. In our case, we study the meanings attached to the emerging practice of personal branding on Twitter.

Numerous labels have been attached to the concept of personal branding, such as human brands, self-marketing, self-branding or person marketing (Lair, 2005). The absence of consensus on the terminology signals the nascent nature of this phenomenon (Shepherd, 2005). Its core idea is that marketing techniques previously used for organizations, products and services can be transposed to humans, especially for career goals. It is a subset of self-marketing techniques with an emphasis on distinction and differentiation (Shepherd, 2005). A foundational work is Tom Peter's article in management magazine *Fast Company* that recommends developing "a brand called You" (Peters, 1997). A flurry of practitioner writings has been subsequently published, accompanied with numerous websites, workshops, and consultancy offers, giving this practice the status of management fashion (Abrahamson, 1996). The blurriness of its definition makes personal branding a well-adapted context for an analysis centered on meaning and sensemaking, since when "a concept is poorly defined, it requires substantial interpretation" (Fiss & Hirsch, 2005: 32).

The appearance of personal branding practices in the field of journalism has been fueled by the growing economic pressure on newspapers (decreasing sales and diminishing advertising revenues) which has augmented competition among journalists on the job market. Multiplications of short-term contracts and internships are increasingly replacing fixed full-time positions. Personal branding by journalists comes in many different forms, but all practices share the purpose of differentiation for career goals. Social media, and Twitter in particular, are ideal for creating individual portfolios and promoting oneself as they allow

journalists to express themselves on their own account. In France, the first journalists began to use Twitter around 2007. The debate around personal branding emerges around 2009, when the use of Twitter by journalists becomes more widespread, and peaks in the years 2009-2011. It then decreases, to the point that the debate becomes "forgotten" in 2013 [Text 18].

This empirical setting makes a compelling context for the study of institutions and sensemaking for three main reasons. First, journalists exhibit a strong adherence to the norms and values of their profession, which makes the institutional context we are interested in particularly salient (Deuze, 2005). Second, as the practice of personal branding finds its root in marketing, it is bound to raise conflicts, as market and professional values are often opposed. Finally, the social space offered by Twitter plunges journalists in a confusing setting which is bound to trigger sensemaking. Whereas many sensemaking studies examine crisis situations, we extend this perspective to an everyday context (Maitlis, 2005; Rouleau, 2005).

3.3.2 Data collection

To build an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, we triangulate across multiple sources of evidence, including interviews, (online) ethnography and archival data. This combination of methods is well adapted to capture institutional meaning construction and sensemaking processes (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Zilber, 2002).

Interviews with informants. We interviewed 89 informants in 15 news outlets. We met some informants several times and revised our protocol interview to adapt it to our theoretical progress (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012). Informants were first selected to maximize variation within the sample so that we could extract patterns from a wide range of subjective experiences (Patton, 1990). Concretely, we targeted informants at different stages of their careers (from juniors to retired journalists), at various positions (from interns to newspaper directors), in different news sections, and with diverse experiences with social media and personal branding. As our focus is on the construction of the meaning of this online practice, all our informants have experience in social media, mostly with Twitter (84 informants), or blogs. We also used snowball sampling to get critical cases (Maitlis, 2005; Patton, 1990). For instance, some informants were suggested to us because they were considered by others as archetypes of journalists engaging in personal branding. As we collected the data, we used inductive reasoning and constant comparison techniques (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). We promised anonymity to encourage candor and openness (Cornelissen, 2012; Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012).

All of our journalists are affiliated with some of the most established and respected French news organization. This ensures that they are firmly embedded in their institutional context. Together, the newspapers that are covered by our sample of informants have a daily circulation approximating 4 million issues. The websites have an accumulated online presence of over 215 million visitors a month. A pool of expert journalists, power users and trainers in social media, complete the sample. They were included because they brought a more distanced look which helps completing the subjective accounts of our other informants. Our interviews lasted from 30 min to 3 hours with average interview duration of 83 minutes, totalizing over 124 hours of recording (See Table 1). Interviews were transcribed representing around 2500 pages of double-spaced text. All interviews were conducted and analyzed in French and quotes were subsequently translated.

TABLE 1. Sample information

Org #	Media outlets [a]	Newspaper circulation, for each issue – 2011 [b]	Website visits in visitors/month 2012 [c]	Type of informant (number of interviews)
1	Elite newspaper	>300.000	>50.000.000	Editorial director (1); Editor-in-chief (2); Assistant editor-in-chief (1); Section editor (2); Social media editor (1); Reporter (5); Intern (1).
2	Elite newspaper	>300.000	>50.000.000	Editorial director (1); Section editor (2); Social media editor (1); Reporter (4).
3	Elite newspaper	>100.000	>20.000.000	Assistant editor-in-chief (1); Social media editor (1); Reporter (7); Intern (2).
4	Elite newspaper	>100.000	>12.000.000	Editorial director (1); Editor-in-chief (1); Section editor (1); Assistant section editor (2); Social media editor (1), Reporter (1).
5	Normal newspaper	>40.000	Not available	Web project manager (1); Reporter (4).
6	Normal newspaper	>100.000	>1.000.000	Editor-in-chief (1); Assistant section editor (1); Reporter (4); Intern (2).
7	Normal newspaper	>100.000	>30.000.000	Special correspondent (1); Reporter (2).
8	Free newspaper	>700.000	>20.000.000	Editorial director (1); Editor-in-chief (1); Section editor (1); Social media editor (1); Reporter (3).
9	Free newspaper	>700.000	Not available	Section editor (1); Social media editor (1).
10	Free newspaper	>1.000.000	Not available	Editor-in-chief (1); Section editor (1); Social media editor (1); Reporter (1).
11	(Free) News website	Not applicable	Not available	Editor-in-chief (1); Assistant editor-in-chief (1); Reporter (1).
12	(Free) News website	Not applicable	>8.000.000	Editor-in-chief (1); Social media editor (1); Reporter (1).
13	Press agency	Not applicable	Not applicable	Social media editor (2); Reporter (1).
14	Press agency	Not applicable	Not applicable	Editorial director (1); Editor-in-chief (1).
15	News magazine	Not available	Not available	Section editor (1); Reporter (1)
	Expert pool	Not applicable	Not applicable	Trainer (5); Power users (3).
	Totals	3.984.880	216.557.546	89 informants

[a, b, c] Titles are concealed and official figures from OJD (French professional association) are rounded to preserve anonymity.

Online ethnography. Online ethnography can be defined as "research techniques to study the cultures and communities that are emerging through computer-mediated communications" (Kozinets, 2002: 62). Broadly speaking, it is the adaptation of ethnographic methods to online culture. Real time observation allows for field immersion and is well adapted to conduct naturalistic inquiry in an unobstrusive way (Tuncalp & Lê, 2014). We subscribed to the Twitter feed of the journalists we interviewed and followed their contributions daily for one year. Following ethnographic traditions, this close up and sustained observation aims at understanding "how and why agents act, feel, and think in the way that they do" (Locke, 2011: 614). This phenomenological approach enables us to better grasp how actors engage in sensemaking and relate to their institutional context (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Weber & Glynn, 2006; Zilber, 2002).

Archival data. Additional insights on the conflicting meanings surrounding personal branding were gained through secondary data in the form of tweets, blog posts and newspaper articles. 61 documents were collected that amount to around 120 pages. Archival data provide a very effective way to examine meaning construction (Ventresca & Mohr, 2002; Weick, 1993). To collect the data, we used the Factiva database (for newspapers), Google (for blog posts) and the search engine Topsy (for tweets) with keywords such as "personal branding", "brand journalism", "self-marketing" and their derivates. In accordance to the connected nature of online data, we complemented this systematic search with an approach based on following the links between articles to get sources that may be not correctly referenced (Tuncalp & Lê, 2014). While our focus is on the field of hard news journalism in France, we also included texts in English if they were explicitly mentioned by French journalists.

3.3.3 Data analysis

We followed an inductive method based on iterative coding, moving between data and emerging concepts, as it is typical in interpretative research designs (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012; Locke, 2001). Coding was done using the software MaxQDA (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Data analysis comprised three major steps. First, we coded for pattern of meanings reflecting the subjective experience of our informants. In the second step, we looked for theoretical categories that could explain how these patterns of meanings relate to each other. Finally, we develop a theoretical framework linking institutional context and sensemaking process. While this analysis is presented here sequentially, it was intermingled with constant comparison between data and theoretical insights, as well as with further data collection. We now describe each step in details.

Step 1. Identifying patterns of meanings (first-order coding). We began our analysis with a very general research question by asking ourselves what were the various meanings attached to the practice of personal branding. For that we coded all instances of verbatim and texts that refer to the definition, understandings and implications of personal branding. We tried to stick to our informant accounts in order to fully capture their lived experience. This is also at that stage that online observation was most useful as it enabled us to go native and immerse ourselves in the Twitterverse. Hence, we could experience first-hand some of the events they went through, such as cognitive overload. At the end of this stage, we had a complete but disparate list of codes describing the various meanings journalists attach to personal branding.

Step 2. ***Developing theoretical categories (second-order coding)***. This stage of analysis allowed us to create categories that explain the observed phenomenon using theoretical concepts. First, we ordered the meanings journalists attach to personal branding and clustered them into groups that formed the basis for our second-order themes. Going back and forth to the literature, we referred to existing concepts or created new ones when necessary. It is at that stage that we discovered how journalists appeal to existing institutional templates to build their understanding. Disconfirming cases that deviate from the dominant patterns were included in our theorizing (Patton, 1990). Our categorization indeed made clear that the accounts journalists built were not always fully coherent, and included inconsistencies within the same template.

Step 3. ***Crafting an integrative framework (process model)***. In this final step, we integrated our findings in a consistent framework. For that, we developed the model linking institutional context and sensemaking. This enabled us to switch from a static data structure to a more dynamic process model (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012). In particular, we took care to reflect on how both levels were connected with each other. Once our model constructed, we reexamined the interview transcripts to check that it adequately fit their content. We also reflected on the boundary conditions of its application, such as the pre-existence of strong professional values.

3.4 Findings

As journalists face a new technology and the resulting practice of personal branding, they struggle to make sense of it. We identify three critical mechanisms that connect each stage of the sensemaking process with its institutional context. First, an *institutional breakdown,* provoked by the disappearance of the regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive pillars,

leads to a confusing situation. Second, as actors try to restore meaning, they engage in *theorization.* They reflect upon the contradictions and compatibilities of personal branding with their professional values. Finally, they *recategorize* their own actions so that they are no longer considered as personal branding. This in turn enables them to maintain professional values while engaging in the new practice (See Figure 1 and Table 2).

FIGURE 1. Data structure

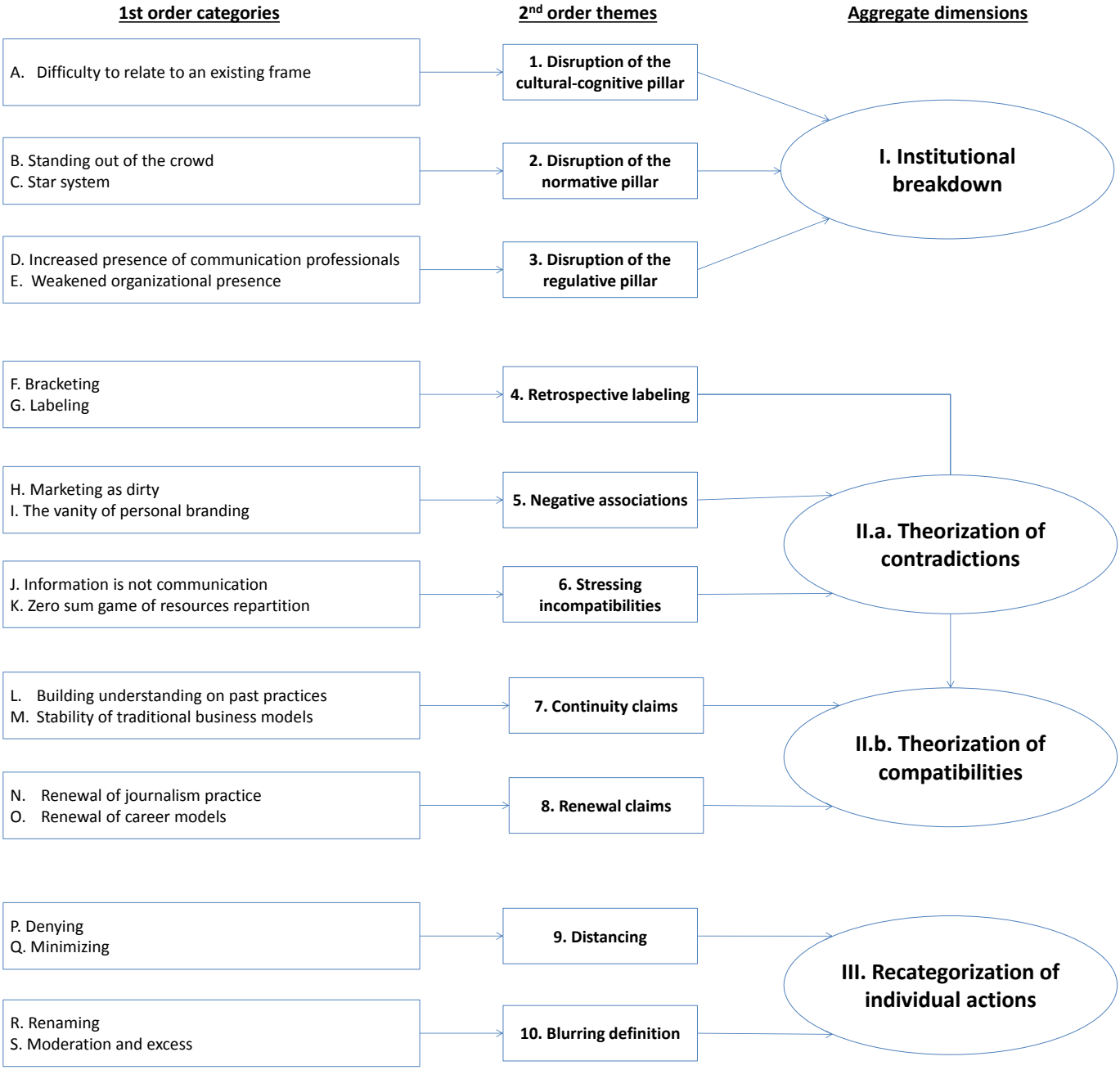


Table 2: Dimensions, themes, categories and data

Dimension, themes and categories	*Representative data*
Mechanism 1: Institutional breakdown	
1. Disruption of the cultural-cognitive pillar	
A. Difficulty to relate to existing frame	A1.Communicating about yourself is only one of the functions. Twitter can be used to monitor news, monitor sources, construct professional networks, collect data on particular topics, self-promotion or promotion for your media. [Expert 3] A2. Some would like to consider it as a journalistic product, but no! Some would like to consider it as a marketing tool where you can create trends, but no! Some would like to consider it as an immense MSN, but no! Some would like to consider it as a big Netvibes, but no! Because in fact, Twitter is all of them, you see?" [Firm 8, Informant 5]
2. Disruption of the normative pillar	
B. Standing out of the crowd	B1. Yes, the follower number matters. I'm not into the contest of who has the biggest one… I mean the biggest list of followers (laugh)… but if you say something, you like… the more people can potentially come across it, the more interesting it is. It's like when you write an article, the more it is read, the more gratifying it is for the one who wrote it." [Firm 6, Informant 6]
	B2. Twitter is crowded. So you have to stand out from the crowd. […] It's like a store front and a store front has to be nice and attractive. [Expert 7]
C. Star system	C1. It's like a mini star system within journalism that enables you to be known. On Twitter, there is a metric, and as in all measurement system, you have people above and other below, which creates a hierarchy of attention on people. [Expert 5]
	C2. The career model of journalists may become similar to the ones of actors. Only a fraction of journalists would get stable jobs with high salaries. […] The term of personal branding worships reputation. [Text_04]
3. Disruption of the regulative pillar	
D. Increased presence of communication professionals	D1. Twitter is a space used by professionals, that is to say mainly journalists, communication professionals, and now politicians. [Firm 1, Informant 10]
	D2. Twitter is a community where there are mainly journalists, people working in the communication and advertising. [Firm 13, Informant 2]
E. Weakened organizational presence	E1. Slowly, my editors in chiefs are learning about this. Until recently, it was mainly used by young people. Now, all our bosses had trainings in social media. One month ago, my editor in chief followed me on Twitter. Anyway, he won't understand anything. [Firm 9, Informant 2]
	E2. There are some editors in chief who have Facebook but there are many others who did not use Facebook nor Twitter and who did not know what happened on social networks. [Firm 1, Informant 6]
Mechanism 2: Theorization of contradictions and compatibilities	

4. Retrospective labeling

F. Labeling

F1. I did personal branding before people labeled it as such and I did not have the impression to do personal branding. It's just somebody who put a word on something which already existed. [Expert 9]

F2. Personal branding named something which existed before, but at a infinitesimal scale, because before having 300 followers meant already a lot. But at some point, we begun talking about several thousands of followers. At that point, something changed. [Expert 3]

G. Bracketing

G1. Between 2007 and 2009, we have a phase of 'construction', so we were not challenged by people accusing of doing personal branding. I think the concept has emerged when tensions appeared within Twitter. People had so different uses. In 2009, some of them had, from their own point of view, a very professional use, whereas others were telling their life, while doing journalism as well. There was this tension. Before, it did not exist, because we were still constructing the uses. [Firm 15, Informant 1]

G2. There were some events where Twitter became a source of information: manifestations in Iran, earthquake in Haiti, the plane which landed in the Hudson river. The first picture was broadcasted on twitter. Suddenly, beyond the original circle of users, journalists became interested in this platform. [Expert 10]

5. Negative associations

H. Marketing as dirty

H1. I immediately attacked this concept. Creating a brand, in order to make money… I am not doing this job for the money – even if I need money to live. [Expert 9]

H2. When you've written a paper you are particularly proud of, you want to show it… It's all this stuff we call in a dirty way "personal branding". [Firm 8, Informant 7]

I. The vanity of personal branding

I1. I think ego, for many people on Twitter, is huge. It's the paradise! Twitter for egocentric is great, it's like 'I talk and everybody listen to me' and you can have the impression to talk to many people even if you have only 20 followers. […] There is an aspect 'follower meter', some people come to the office shouting 'Hey, you see, I have 10 followers more than you', we laughed quite a lot on that. […] It's good for the ego, it butters you up. It's nice for narcissism. [Firm 10, Informant 4]

I2. Some journalists have ego. It's because they sign. I don't know much profession where you are continuously writing what you produce. I'm talking about the print. I think it make people crazy. They are not all crazy, but it's a big issue. So Twiter, where you put your name, your status, and where you are your own media, it can only comfort this. It creates ego and make people crazy. [Firm 15, Informant 2]

6. Stressing incompatibilities

J. Information is not communication

J1. For journalists, there is a major cultural difference: communication is the absolute Evil, for sure. It's Pavlovian. For many journalists, communication is about mental manipulation, so it's something they don't want to be associated with. It's brainwashing, totally anti-ethic. They want to distinguish themselves from communication. [Expert 6]

J2. Journalism and communication do not share the same perspective. Sometimes, communication may appeal to tools and styles that are the ones of journalism. But fundamentally, the goals are different. [Expert 9]

	K. Zero sum game of resource repartition	K1. Personally I think that journalists who tweet the whole day… I wonder how they can work … because tweeting the whole day takes a ridiculous amount of time. And showing off… I'm not a fan of personal branding. [Firm 2, Informant 3]
		K2. I spent more time on Twitter at the beginning, now it's less because I have too much work, so I have less time for that. [Expert 7]
7. Continuity claims		
	L. Building understanding on past practices	L1. Personal branding isn't new. There is an individual component in this profession. There was always some form of stardom, of people who transcend their media and sold their name beyond the media they belonged to. However, it is now no longer the prerogative of a small elite. [Firm 15, Informant 2]
		L2. Many journalists and newsroom directors invented and used personal branding way before it was theorized by Tom Peters in 1997. [Text_05]
	M. Stability of traditional models	M1. Most journalists cannot live from this. In other professions, when you are in direct relation with customers, personal branding can help you federate enough people so it becomes profitable. But if I sell my brand "Mr. John Doe", I won't make a living from this. I can only use this to be in contact with other journalists, editors in chiefs, to show I'm there. [Expert 7]
		M2. Personal branding is one tool among others. It's a tool, and not what makes a journalist. And no journalist can live from that. He won't make it. [Firm 3, Informant 6]
8. Renewal claims		
	N. Renewal of journalism practice	N1. It brings many advantages: saying as much as you want to, having an interface with the external world. I'm also more visible. There are researchers who look at my blog, sociologists, etc. It brings me a bit of notoriety more than in the paper. [Firm 5, Informant 4]
		N2. With the multiplication of offers, readers have changed their habits. Why pay the whole newspaper when you are only interested in one section? That's why the concept of press "on demand" emerged. And as the articles become a product, journalists become brands. Personal branding, already very developed on Twitter, could then skyrocket. [Text 34]
	O. Renewal of career models	O1. Your brand is important because the world of journalism has changed. Previously, your work was diffused through big institutions such as the New York Times. Now, you can no longer rely on your firm: it changes, evolves, sometimes dies. Your brand is all you have left. [Text 15]
		O2. Internet, as a wonderful tool to spread news and to do self-promotion could contribute to transform the signatures of the press in brands that could sell themselves alone, without the support of a well-known media outlet. [Text 16]
Mechanism 3: Recategorization of individual actions		
9. Distancing		
	P. Denying	P1. Personal branding is a word that most journalists are not comfortable with. Nobody is going to tell you 'I'm doing personal branding'. So, for journalists, it's

	hard to define. If you asked me if I know people doing personal branding, I could not tell you, because nobody is claiming it, it's like for the hipsters [Expert 5]
	P2. I have the impression the most common reaction is natural, it's denial. It is "no, no, I'm not going too far". Anyway, what do you want to answer to such accusation? You got caught with one hand in the cookie jar, it's hard to defend yourself. [Expert 6]
Q. Minimizing	Q1. People react by minimizing by saying "no, I'm not doing so much of it !" [Firm 15, Informant 1].
	Q2. I simply tweet my articles. But I'm quite far from all this [personal branding] stuff. I just do it so my articles reach more people. If it enables me to be spotted by other professionals, good for me, but I do not do it in this spirit [Firm 10, Informant 3]
10. Blurring boundaries	
R. Renaming	R1. The concept is now out of fashion because it has been concealed. The practice is still there and will persist. Of course now we won't use the word personal branding. We say self-promotion, networking… [Firm 4, Informant 8]
	R2.I don't like this word [brand], I don't consider myself as a brand, rather as someone having a digital identity. [Text 14]
S. Moderation and excess	S1. There is the idea of moderation. The guy who retweet the compliments made to him, it's bad. The people who spam your timeline, in a kind of logorrhea, who have an opinion on everything, just in order to highlight their name are discrediting themselves. I think you have to be there, quite regularly, but in a moderate way. Your intervention has to make sense and that's how you sell yourself better. If you are doing it 40 times a day… it's very bad. [Firm 15, Informant 12]
	S2. It's about fine-tuning, it's hard to know. There is the idea that there may be socially acceptable personal branding, which would be posting the articles you have written on social networks. This behavior is rather accepted. But at some point, you are doing self-celebration, and that's totally different. It's a bit like the frontier between taking selfies and narcissism: when does it turn into self-contemplation? [Firm 15, Informant 1]

3.4.1 Mechanism 1: Institutional breakdown

Usually, a mix of curiosity, skepticism and awkwardness is common when one discovers a new tool, and it indeed reflects many informants' experience. However, the effects induced by the use of Twitter go far beyond and deeply affect the foundations of journalist's habitual practices: it breaks the institutional pillars that usually provide stability and meaning to their experience (Scott, 2008), plunging them in a confusing situation. This setting also plants the seeds of a practice that will later be conceptualized as personal branding, though at that stage it remains emergent and not recognized as such.

Disruption of the cultural-cognitive pillar

Actors subjectively interpret the objective conditions defining a situation to make sense of it (Scott, 2008). Usually, their shared understanding is so deeply ingrained that it is taken-for-granted and defines the reality, the "way things are" (Scott, 1987: 496). For instance, journalists, in the context of their office work, usually take for granted that what they are doing (e.g. interviewing, writing articles) is journalism. Taken together, these elements form "frames through which meaning is made" (Scott, 2008: 67).

However, because Twitter is a highly flexible tool, it is difficult to relate it to an existing frame. In particular, some of its functionalities can encourage self-promotion, but only indirectly. Hence, there is no dominant interpretation that is taken for granted. For instance, in 2009, Twitter's tagline changed, which leads to different understandings. The question addressed to the users by the interface switched from "What are you doing?" to "What is happening?". The first question prompts a post about private activities, as it is the case on Facebook. At the same time, because of its focus on the individual ("you"), it also includes the seeds for personal branding, as the latter is largely based on self-presentation (Labrecque, Markos, & Milne, 2011). Conversely, the second question rather stresses the role of Twitter in reporting news and information sharing. However, in the case of the journalists, it can also motivate them to engage in personal branding, as it gives them the opportunities to show off their own writings and news articles. An early adopter, who later built a very strong personal brand, explains how she begun engaging in personal branding without having a clear understanding of what was expected:

> *At that time, we did not see what it was for. Twitter asked you what you were doing, so it was like a reduced blogging platform. When I went to the US, I saw more and more bloggers using Twitter to spread their blog posts. So I opened an account, to spread my blog posts without exactly knowing what it could bring to me. [Expert 2]*

More generally, a number of journalists have a hard time understanding the nature of Twitter when dealing with it for the first time. Self-promotion is only one among numerous other functions and the concept of personal branding has not been theorized yet. The tool offers a variety of uses, hence its nature remains fuzzy, undefined, and escape "typifications" that contribute to give meaning by providing standard schemes of interpretation (Berger & Luckmann, 1966:54).

Disruption of the normative pillar

Normative systems define goals and the appropriate way to achieve them (Scott, 2008: 64). For instance, the normative pressures journalists usually face are the ones common to their profession, such as informing their readers using ethical standards (e.g. objectivity, autonomy). The pressure of professionals to heed prevailing norms and their accountability to others' expectations is also an important source of sensemaking (Cornelissen, 2012).

Twitter has however its own social space with particular norms. Hence, journalists who join it face a disruptive experience. A concept widely used by our informants to refer to the social space formed by users of Twitter, "Twitterverse", interestingly evokes the picture of a closed and autonomous world, in which particular norms reign. First, because of the overwhelming amount of data, users have to differentiate themselves in order to be heard, which is the fundament of brand positioning (Labrecque, Markos, & Milne, 2011). Second, Twitter works in a pyramidal fashion. There is an asymmetrical relationship between writer and reader. Writers become their own media and address messages to their followers, whose number is publicly displayed. Having a great number of followers is a sign of influence and prestige, at least within the Twitterverse. A journalist, who was earlier much more involved in Twitter, explains how he lost the interest in this closed world:

> *When you don't play the game of Twitter, when you no longer belong to it… when you leave this microcosm and then look back, you say to yourself that it was not so interesting. Yes, it's a microcosm. You have people who participate, they have the impression to live and be something… whereas it's quite uninteresting in fact. [Firm 13, Informant 3]*

The importance of reputation is also increased by the fact that Twitter has been used by all kinds of public personalities, with a strong dominance of celebrities. For instance, the ten

Twitter accounts that were most followed in 2009[1] includes six people from show business (e.g., Britney Spears and Stephen Fry), one politician (Barack Obama), and three organizational accounts. Studies have shown that celebrities –including outside social media- have developed a "human brand" that reinforces attachment (Thomson, 2006). As a result, the vocabulary relative to the star system is common on Twitter, which also includes journalists. An article asks if famous journalists on Twitter could be compared to "jetsetters" [Text 11]. A journalist explains how celebrity in the Twitterverse can be attractive for some colleagues:

> *There is a fantasy about celebrity, a kind of intellectual fantasy. It's like the desire to be famous, but famous in this environment. [Firm 8, Informant 5]*

Disruption of the regulative pillar

Finally, the undermining of the regulative pillar can also favor the emergence of new meanings (Maguire & Hardy, 2009; Weick, 1993). Normally, journalists' behaviors are regularized through hierarchy and organizational rules. Sanctioning process may involve diffused mechanisms such as folkways, shaming or shunning activities (Scott, 2008). Peer pressure has been identified as a strong element of the regulative pillar (Wicks, 2001). However, this presupposes that actors agree on the rules that should be enforced.

In our case, the strong presence on Twitter of communication professionals, supporters of personal branding, fosters the emergence of this practice. Indeed, our archival data shows that French communicants already talked about personal branding on Twitter in 2007, two years before it will be introduced under this term in the journalism field. A journalist explains how it is expected that the rules of the game conform to the actors who are populating the social space:

> *I see Twitter as a world that composed for one half of journalists and for one half of communication professionals, so the rules which apply correspond to that. [Firm 6, Informant 6]*

The strong presence of communication professionals also contrasts with the weak organizational presence of the journalist media outlets. Organizational accounts were created relatively late on Twitter. With the exception of two organizations, most organizational newspaper accounts were only set up around or after 2009, two years after the first French journalists adopted its use. As a result, it enabled the early adopters to differentiate themselves

[1] In 2014, the proportion is roughly the same, though the accounts have changed: seven people from show business, one politician and two organizational accounts

without having to take into account their organization's brand. Years later, for some organizations, this lack of development of their organization's brand on Twitter is still persistent, as this editor-in-chief relates:

> *The organizational account fills its function on Twitter, but we are not very advanced on this aspect. [Firm 6, Informant 1]*

The weak organizational presence can also be seen in the reduced presence of the management on Twitter, especially in the early stages. In general, actors with more power in organizations are in a stronger position to influence the sensemaking of other organizational members (Mills, Thurlow, & Mills, 2010; Weber & Glynn, 2006). Hence, when leading organizational actors are missing, employees do not receive any guidance, which in turn favors meaning confusion (Cornelissen, 2012). Senior editors occupying management positions were not very knowledgeable about Internet, and hence, were unable to provide any supervision on how to make sense of the emergent practice of personal branding. A journalist points out how the lack of interest of his management both results in more autonomy but also in the absence of guidance:

> *The editors do not have much to say, because they are not very interested. They are not very connected. This gives some freedom to the journalists. The management do not invest much into such stuff because they don't have a clue, they are a bit afraid. [Firm 6, Informant 6]*

In sum, the weakened organizational presence has a double impact. Journalists feel free to engage in practices that escape the traditional organizational framework, such as promoting their own work rather than the collective one of their organization. However, in uncertain situations, this absence of guidance can plunge actors in a state of confusion as they are on their own (Weick, 1993).

3.4.2 Mechanism 2: Theorization of contradictions and compatibilities

The disruption induced by the institutional breakdown provokes a sense of chaos which prompts actors to engage in meaning construction to restore order and stability (Weber & Glynn, 2006; Weick, 1995). This second mechanism is constituted by two stages. First, journalists pinpoint the phenomenon through retrospective labelling. Then, they engage in a double theorization of contradictions and compatibilities.

Retrospective labeling

Although journalists began to use Twitter in 2007, the controversy around personal branding surfaced only around 2009. In other words, the reflection on this new practice was constructed

retrospectively. Naming a new phenomenon is the first step in theorization as it inscribes the new practice on the cognitive map of the field (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). None of our respondents was able to pinpoint the origin of the concept of personal branding, though some texts explicitly refer to the work of Tom Peters. Many journalists however associate this label, correctly, with its American origin and the field of marketing. They also agree that it probably spread to their field through Twitter. In any case, labeling was conducted to retrospectively name a pre-existing phenomenon. Journalists situate the introduction of the concept of personal branding in the field of journalism around 2009, which is approximately two years after the first French journalists begin to use it for professional purposes. This observation is confirmed by our examination of tweets, blog posts and newspaper articles on personal branding within the field of journalism: they all date from this period. The posterior labeling is made explicit in the following quote:

> *Progressively, there was this phenomenon called personal branding. I think personal branding existed before people talked about it, I mean for journalists. I think there was Twitter, then journalists using Twitter and at some point people started to say: "You know, what you are doing, it's called personal branding". [Firm 4, Informant 8]*

This finding resonates with prior works who assimilate sensemaking to "inventing a new meaning (interpretation) for something that has already occurred during the organizing process, but does not yet have a name" (Magala, 1997: 324). As we now show, the retrospective nature of sensemaking also comes from the fact that it first required sufficient attention.

Attention to journalistic practices on Twitter, including personal branding, was raised by several events. One of them, repeatedly quoted by our informants, is the plane crash landing in the Hudson river, whose news was broken through Twitter in 2009. While it is not directly related to personal branding, this event redirected the focus of attention on Twitter as a tool for reporting news and practicing journalism –in contrast to more private uses-, which framed the reflection around professional values. Many journalists began to show interest for this tool and to question what behaviors were appropriate in the context of journalistic use. The link between the focus on Twitter as a journalistic tool and the emergence of tensions related to personal branding is clear in the following account:

> *I think the debate [about personal branding] arose around 2009, because between 2007 and 2009 journalists were still becoming acquainted with the tool and for that to happen it needed a much more frequent use by journalists. Key events were the Hudson river*

plane landing and some other events. Then, the tool became much more popular among journalists, and it created some disagreement. [Expert 6]

In our case, only when the phenomenon was worthy of interest did it rise reflection. Such observation supports prior works which associate the problematization of an issue to triggering events (Maguire & Hardy, 2009).

First theorization: Theorization of contradictions

Once attention on the issue of personal branding has been raised, journalists reflect on its implications. One way to construct meaning is to appeal to theorization, which is a "strategy for making sense of the world" (Strang & Meyer, 1993: 493) by formulating chains of cause and effects. In other words, theorization simplifies the understanding by clarifying the flaws and virtues of novel practices. In their attempt to build accounts that can explain what they are doing, actors use the symbolic resources at hand which are the prevailing rational myths (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Zilber, 2006). In our case, actors assess the novel practice in respect to their professional template. As this reflection is not guided, it is fragmented and leads to divergent theorizations that are neither integrated nor consistent, even among themselves (Maitlis, 2005).

Journalists both consider the contradictions and compatibilities of personal branding with their habitual journalistic practice. Though both theorizations are here presented separately for clarity purposes, it is important to stress that they are intertwined. In particular, with few exceptions, most informants do not only relate on one kind of theorization. The first kind of theorization opposes the personal branding practice to journalistic values. Because the theorization is fragmented, it does not form a fully consistent account. On top of the classical opposition between market and professional values (Glynn, 2000; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999) other conflicting and non-related elements are integrated such as the rejection of narcissism or resource scarcity.

Negative associations

The wording of the expression "personal branding" (which is not translated and called as such in French) is associated with negative connotations. However, in our case, these negative meanings do not result from attempts by institutional entrepreneurs to demonize the practice (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006) or create antagonist associations (Creed, Scully, & Austin, 2002). Rather, they are automatically triggered by this vocabulary, as they go against core journalistic values.

The first negative association comes from the word "branding". Because it evokes the market, marketing and Anglo-Saxon capitalism, the practice automatically acquires a pejorative connotation among journalists. One of them stresses the capitalist domination that such Anglicism evokes by making an Orwellian comparison:

> *It's important to stress that personal branding is an Anglicism. It has been 20 years that the market is conquering western society and it came from the US. Marketing consultant are using so many Anglicisms, it's the Newspeak of business. In our profession we have to be critical toward events, whereas business is be essence non critical [Firm 3, Informant 6]*

Interestingly, the label of "personal branding" is negatively considered by the quasi-totality of our sample, including the ones who were designated as key branders by others.

Whereas the first negative association focuses on the "*branding*" part, another critic addresses the "*personal*" part of this practice as it leads to inflated egos. Indeed, the asymmetric dimension of Twitter encourages a self-centered perspective as it puts the poster in the role of a spokesman addressing an audience. A journalist describes the inner struggle he has to deal with as he attempts to refrain from such vanity:

> *I think that on any online social network, there is some vanity, some pride. Indeed you start from the principle that what you'll put will interest people; it's already a form of pretentiousness. There is some form of vanity and pride, […] I try to minimize it, I know it exists, I think I'm aware of it, that is exactly why I try to minimize this aspect. But it exists, for sure. [Firm 7, Informant 2]*

In fact, the most common and recurrent comparison for personal branding, spontaneously quoted by a dozen of informants within our sample, is a pun in slang ("personal branling") which refers to the ideas of masturbation, self-indulging and engaging in unproductive activities with a strong pejorative connotation. A journalist explains how self-contemplation is about people pleasuring themselves rather than their audience:

> *Personal branding is 'personal self-indulging', because on these social media, it's the reign of King Narcissus. It's all about you, the 'like' you get on Facebook, the 'mentions' on Twitter, the retweet of your links, articles. Is it really information? Theoretically, you write for you reader, the final goal is to bring something to your reader. Here, it's only narcissism, about you trying to become a brand. [Firm 3, Informant 6]*

Stressing incompatibilities

As actors try to make sense of practices on Twitter, they appeal to "ontological" worldviews, i.e. casting activities as inherently incompatible (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005: 50). The first incompatibility comes from the fact that personal branding is also a tool promoted by

communication professionals. Indeed, our informants stress the fact that in general journalistic content should not be mixed with promotional content. In fact, some journalists go as far as comparing communication to the "absolute Evil" [Expert 6]. In a context where journalists are under high pressure to produce quick contents, and may be tempted to only reformulate press dispatches they receive from communication professionals, the porosity between communication and information is deemed as "threatening" [Text 12]. Because of their proximity and their interdependence, journalists pay great attention to stress the difference that exists between both occupations:

> *We are always opposed to communication professionals. We use them, but we are in opposition to them because they want use to write about their products. We can talk about their products, but we may not agree with their vision. Avoid doing communication is one of the first things you learn at the journalism school. So, everything that could be assimilated to communication, as personal branding, is not well considered. [Expert 5]*

A second incompatibility stated by our informants stems from the resource partition between their paid job as a journalist writing newspaper articles, and their unpaid, but nevertheless professional activities on Twitter. If skeptics simply dismiss Twitter for being a "waste of time" [Firm 13, Informant 3], even users acknowledge the time-consuming nature of the tool. A member of the direction of a newspaper, who is also himself using Twitter, explains how these competing tasks create a tension in terms of resource allocation:

> *A risk would be that it becomes a second job, that journalists spend more time on Twitter than doing their job of journalist, so we have to be attentive to this issue. [Firm 4, Informant 4]*

In sum, once the practice of personal branding has been identified as such, it has triggered a theorization underlining its contradictions with journalistic values, based on negative associations and on the emphasis of incompatibilities. However, these contradictions do not form an articulated discourse.

Second theorization: Theorization of compatibilities

In their attempt to construct meanings, journalists also look for compatibilities between the new practice and their professional values. Again, accounts are not totally consistent and result from a fragmented process of meaning construction. Whereas continuity claims underline the commonalities between past and current practices, renewal claims stress the novelty of the practice as a way to incarnate the future of journalism.

Continuity claims

Continuity claims lessen the gaps between novel and past practices. Because events are socially constructed, the scope of change and its significance result from actors' interpretation (Munir, 2005). To interpret novel situations, actors choose from their existing understandings, which are based on established institutional templates (Hargadon & Douglas, 2001; Munir, 2005). Such interpretation can be seen in the following quote, where a journalist underlines how personal branding is anchored in a pre-existing tradition. Social media is only considered as an enabler that makes it more democratic:

> *Personal branding is not so new, it's just much simpler. The fact that journalist has an individual visibility has existed for a long time, look at the journalists that participate in TV shows, write books, etc. It's absolutely normal and the nature of things. […] With social media, it has only become accessible to all, whereas, before, publishing a book or being invited to a political talk show was more selective. [Firm 1, Informant 11]*

Previous literature has underlined how institutional entrepreneurs could leverage the use of previous understanding in shaping new ones (Maguire, Hardy, & Lawrence, 2004; Munir, 2005). The association of new practices to older taken-for-granted practices is a common tactic to ease their adoption (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). However, in our case, the fact that actors refer to pre-existing schemas is not so much the product of a promoting strategy as a genuine attempt of sensemaking. In fact, many journalists who underline the link to established practices also dismiss personal branding, which they consider as a fad:

> *I think this expression does not mean anything. They are some concepts who are not really new but at least help you to think differently or make things change, but in that case, I think it does not bring anything because journalists have always signed their papers, and it was already a form of branding. [Firm 3, Informant 3]*

Many journalists also stress continuity by emphasizing the limited scope of what personal branding could change. Ultimately, personal branding is only considered as a tool to reach traditional goals, such as getting a job in a newspaper. This does not fundamentally put into question the role of the journalists and the necessity for them to be integrated in organizations to be able to survive. A journalist stresses how he considers that this practice is not financially sustainable by itself:

> *Personal branding, in itself, does not bring money. It's nice to promote yourself and have thousands of followers but you have to produce journalistic contents and live from it. And then, personal branding is no guarantee you will manage it, though it can help to get more work by providing contacts to editors-in-chief. [Firm 15, Informant 1]*

Renewal claims

Whereas continuity claims emphasize common elements with past practices, renewal claims present personal branding as a way to reinvent journalism. Innovative elements are presented as being in the service of professional values rather than opposing them. First, personal branding, because it insists on the personality of each journalist, is presented as creating a more human link with the audience, which contributes to the renewal of the journalism practice:

> *Ultimately, the self-awareness you gain from defining your brand as a journalist will make it easier to authentically engage your audience, connect with colleagues and build trust with the public. [Text_01E]*

This ability to build a community in turn leads to greater visibility on the job market, as comments one informant on her blog:

> *Readers of media trust personalities more compared to big organizations. So if you create your own brand, employers will want you to join their brand. [Text_03]*

Besides, in a context of decreasing interest in traditional news channels, any way to reach a wider audience is seen as positive by most journalists. A social media trainer explains in a blog post the necessity to use marketing techniques as a necessary step to achieve journalistic goals:

> *Today, young people read less newspapers, the attention of the audience is fragmented: TV, radio, internet, games, etc. We are bombarded with informational stimuli and we have to sort them. Thus, the journalist must promote his content and adopt a bit of marketing talk […] You have to package your product. It's not dirty, because the goal is noble: to attract the maximum of people and instill intelligence. [Text_02]*

Personal branding is also sometimes considered as a way to overcome the challenges posed by the economic crisis that affects the news industry by contributing to the emergence of a new career model. In that view, personal branding is not only considered as a tool to reach traditional career goals. It is conceptualized as a way to replace traditional failing organizational structures by helping journalists to be their own media. A more moderate and common view is to see journalists as becoming more independent as they gain mobility between media outlets. This social media trainer explains how journalists can emancipate themselves from one media in particular, but nonetheless has to join another one:

> *People can exist without their media, there are plenty of examples. Take for instance John Doe. When he came on Twitter, he created his audience. His audience is not linked*

to his newspaper and when he leaves, he will leave with his audience and bring it to another outlet. [Expert 3]

3.4.3 Mechanism 3: Recategorization of individual actions

The stage of meaning construction is followed by the stage of action. However, because the previous phase has brought two mutually exclusive theorizations with contradictory and fragmented meanings, journalists must cope with this ambiguity. In particular, to be able to engage in personal branding while avoiding the negative framing, they recategorize their individual actions. Whereas theorizations apply to personal branding in general, recategorization consists in characterizing one's own behavior so that it no longer corresponds to the practice of personal branding. As a result, around 2013 the practice has become relatively widespread, but it no longer generates much debate, not because it has become accepted, but rather because recategorization enables it to remain hidden. As one of our informant jokes in 2013:

Personal branding is an expression which is a bit dated. It's sooo 2009! [Firm 3, Informant 6].

Distancing

The example of Gene Weingarten, introduced at the beginning of our article, is a typical case of denying, a pragmatic reaction when legitimacy is threatened (Suchman, 1995). During our interviews, we observed that most journalists who were designated by other informants as key personal branders did not acknowledge this status. One of these journalists, who has been accused of practicing personal branding, verbalizes this feeling:

I have observed it, when people attributed it to me, or when I see how some attributed it to others. There is often an instinctive reaction of denial, to say: "No, no, I'm not doing that!" [Firm 15, Informant 1]

Another variation that journalists use to distance themselves from the practice is to minimize the importance of such behavior. One common technique is to appeal to humor and irony. As the behavior should not be taken fully seriously, and hence does not "count", it allows journalists to transgress conventional boundaries. A recurrent example is the use of the hashtag #selfpromotion that is included as a disclaimer, as this journalist explains:

On your Twitter account, you will be very afraid to do personal branding. One thing that was not there before, and you do now, is to put the hashtag #selfpromotion to announce clearly: "Hey people, this is a bit of self-promotion". You have the impression people are apologizing for doing this self-promotion. [Firm 4, Informant 8]

Blurring definition

Vocabulary plays a central role in shaping meaning (Zilber, 2008). Prior research has shown how corporate naming practices increase organizations' legitimacy by reflecting the prevalent symbolic prescriptions of their field (Glynn & Abzug, 2002; Glynn & Marquis, 2005). More generally, naming is a powerful way to legitimize new practices as it shapes reality by specifying what should be recognized or ignored (Loewenstein, Ocasio, & Jones, 2012; Oakes, Townley, & Cooper, 1998). Rhetorical strategies play a pivotal role in justifying the adoption of new practices (Green, 2004; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). In our case, journalists who prefer to cast personal branding under a particularly positive light replace it by other terms less loaded with market meaning, which makes the practice less controversial. The uncoordinated nature of this re-naming is visible through the multiplicity of labels that are used. Hence journalists may refer to "*entrepreneurial journalism*", "*project journalism*" [Text_07], "*hallmark*" instead of "*brand*" [Text_06].

Another way journalists exploit the blurriness around the definition of personal branding is to define it in terms of quantity. Prior research shows that meaning can be contracted or expanded depending on the circumstances (Zilber, 2008). In our case, personal branding is presented as an excess. Under this threshold, the practice remains acceptable or at least tolerated. However, the "right" amount of personal branding is undetermined and appears as highly subjective. A social media trainer explains how there is a continuum of behaviors ranging from acceptable to inappropriate:

> *There are several levels, several degrees in the 'illness' (laugh). The first level is to highlight what you have produced. The second level, it's when you start talking about yourself. You put on a performance, you add the emotional part on top of the professional one. The third level, that's the worse, that's when you dissociate yourself from others: 'I meet important people', 'I belong to an elite that you cannot reach'. I consider this one as the negative personal branding. Typically it's 'personal self-indulging'. [Expert 6]*

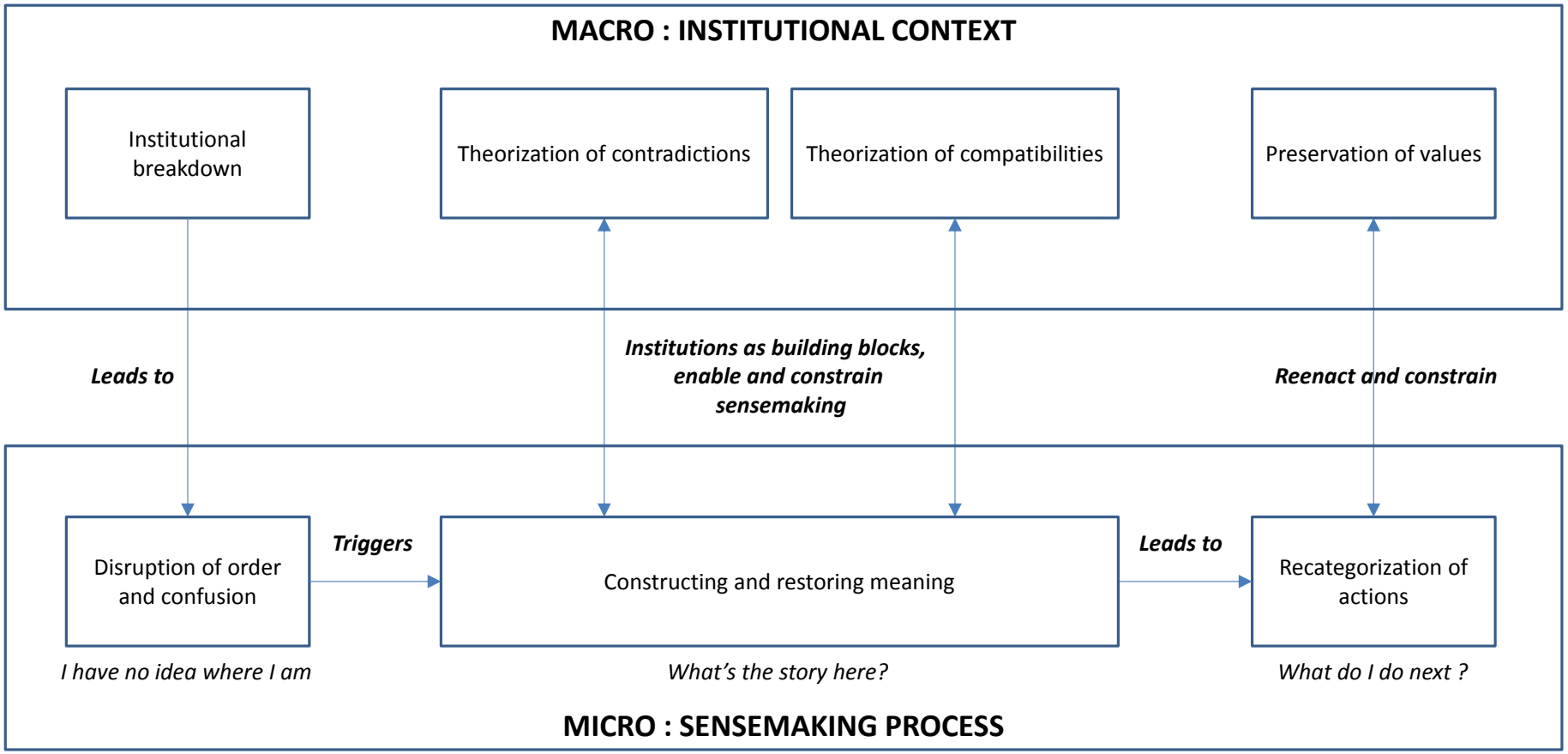
In sum, our findings suggest that journalists recategorize their own actions on an individual basis which enables them to engage in personal branding while continuing to adhere to traditional professional values. Though the practice has become relatively widespread, it is not legitimate because it still bears negative associations. At the macro-level, recategorization contributes to the reproduction of professional values, the same way ceremonial conformity and decoupling preserve institutional myths (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). However, at the difference of decoupling, which is purely instrumental and manipulative, here the extent of authenticity remains open to interpretation, as journalists may unconsciously try to reduce the

cognitive dissonance between their beliefs and their actions (Festinger, 1962). This, again, points out the importance of sensemaking in institutional reproduction.

3.5 Discussion

The broad question motivating this study was to explore how actors make sense of an emerging practice in an equivocal situation, and more generally to examine the mechanisms that relate sensemaking to institutions. We studied the construction of the meaning attached to the emerging practice of personal branding in the field of journalism. Using our findings, we now introduce two main contributions. First, we integrate the institutional and sensemaking literatures by providing a model explaining the recursive relationship between institutions and sensemaking. Second, we introduce a more nuanced view of agency and theorization.

FIGURE 2. Sensemaking process and institutional mechanisms



3.5.1 Integration of institutions into the sensemaking process

Our study answers the call of scholars to integrate institutions and sensemaking (Jennings & Greenwood, 2003; Weber & Glynn, 2006; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). In particular, few studies have empirically explored the recursive relationship between sensemaking and institutions (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). We induced a process model, presented in Figure 2, to show how both levels are interwoven (adapted from Weber & Glynn, 2006). In particular, we highlight three mechanisms that interface sensemaking and institutional context. The interplay between both levels, which varies for each stage of the sensemaking process, is symbolized by the arrows. According to our model, actors first experience institutional breakdown as they face a new context and new practices they are not familiar with, which in our case are brought by a new technology, Twitter. The collapsing of the cultural-cognitive, normative and regulative pillars leads to a sense of chaos and ambiguity (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). The breakdown and equivocality antecedents to sensemaking find their roots in the disappearing of usual institutional templates, which prompts actors to think: "I have no idea where I am" (Weick, 1993). Interestingly, this effect of institutions on sensemaking is achieved through their absence, rather than, as the traditional view stresses, through structural constraint. This relationship is expressed by a top-down arrow.

The loss of structure triggers the desire to restore meaning (Weber & Glynn, 2006) which forms our second stage. In this stage, actors start asking "What's the story ?" (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005: 413). To answer this question, they engage in sensemaking by theorizing the practice of personal branding (Strang & Meyer, 1993). For that, they appeal to their professional values to make sense of what is happening, using institutions as a resource to construct meaning (Zilber, 2008). This theorization entails three central features of sensemaking. First, it is conducted only when the phenomenon gets sufficient attention to be noticed and bracketed (Nigam & Ocasio, 2010; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). This is consistent with the idea that critical events must first become the focus of attention before they have institutional impacts (Hoffman & Ocasio, 2001). Because of this time discrepancy, theorization is conducted retrospectively. When personal branding is bracketed and identified as such, the practice is becoming widespread. While retrospection is central to sensemaking (Weick, 1988; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005), it is also present, though not systematically, in institutional processes. For instance, organizations may try to retrospectively legitimize their past actions in light of current social values (Ashforth &

Gibbs, 1990; Jennings & Greenwood, 2003). Finally, sensemaking involves labeling, which generates understanding by assigning the phenomenon to a particular context and generate a common ground (Corley & Gioia, 2004; Weick, 1993; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). Labeling and naming are also central to institutions because they categorize phenomena. Hence, labeling provides the "critical first step" for further theorizing (Glynn & Marquis, 2005; Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006: 226; Loewenstein, Ocasio, & Jones, 2012). More generally, we observe that institutions both constrain and are influenced by sensemaking. As they provide the building blocks for constructing a story explaining what is happening, their content necessarily limits sensemaking. At the same time, because of the contradictions between institutional templates and the availability of competing explanations, actors may favor some institutions over others in their meaning construction. This relation is expressed by double sided arrows.

The third stage involves action, as actors wonder "What do I do next?" (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005: 412). In their attempt to build a story of what is happening in the absence of guidance, actors have constructed fragmented and inconsistent accounts (Maitlis, 2005). In particular, the negative associations due to the label of personal branding prevent the practice to become fully legitimated. To solve this tension, actors dissociate themselves from the practice either by distancing themselves or by playing with the boundaries of its definition. Indeed, categories and labels, given their socially constructed nature, exhibit strong plasticity (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). From an institutional perspective, the blurriness around the definition of personal branding gives actors more discretion in the way they ascribe meaning to a particular practice. We can draw a parallel with organizations, which have more latitude when the contents of the institutional demands they face are not well specified (Goodrick & Salancik, 1996; Greenwood, Raynard, & Kodeih, 2011). This "loose coupling of rhetoric and action", which can potentially be supplemented by hypocrisy (Vaara, 2003: 880; Weick, 1995) enable both the practice to be enacted –though under a different label- and the professional ideals to be preserved through ceremonial conformity (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). At the same time, journalists still care enough to display a façade of acquiescence. Hence, institutions still do constrain their behavior, though more superficially. This relation is hence expressed by double sided arrows.

Our model has several implications. First, by focusing on meaning construction, we provide a missing link common to both institutional and sensemaking literatures. Answering the call by scholars to explicitly examine the dynamics of meaning (Suddaby, Elsbach,

Greenwood, Meyer, & Zilber, 2010; Zilber, 2008; Zilber, 2013), our process shows that meaning is progressively elaborated with various interpretations at the actors' level, "on the ground" (Zilber, 2013: 83). If systems of meanings exist at an extra-subjective level, they are not automatically embraced as such by actors. Our process shows that after a breakdown, meaning construction involves a mixed recombination of available institutional elements rather than a consistent one to one adaptation. If some theorized elements belong to a system of meaning (e.g. elements relative to the market), we also find a variety of cultural elements that simply do not fit in one particular institutional template (e.g. vanity). Their only common point is that they are all "tested" for contradictions and compatibilities against professional values. The latter only furnish a loose backdrop on which journalists try to place the meaning of the new practice. Furthermore, our findings suggest that even if a practice becomes widespread, its meaning can remain non-legitimate. Recategorization also points out toward the difference of attributing meaning to one own actions and others' behavior. Such nuances remain invisible in studies that only focus on practice adoption, which would only conclude that the practice has become institutionalized. Conversely, following the calls of scholars to integrate the institutional context into sensemaking (Jennings & Greenwood, 2003; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014; Weber & Glynn, 2006; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005; Zilber, 2008), we show that institutions guide sensemaking, albeit in a limited way. Still, our findings suggest that institutions do far more than only determining what is unthinkable because taken for granted. Overall, our model provides a more complete, multilevel process of sensemaking that connect individuals' meaning construction to the broader institutional context.

3.5.2 Theorization as sensemaking

Our second contribution relates to the nature of agency in sensemaking and the definition of theorization. Previous research in sensemaking has mainly underlined the totalizing dimension of institutions (Weber & Glynn, 2006). Institutions constrain sensemaking by defining which actions are conceivable and taken for granted whereas other options are "meaningless, even unthinkable" (Barley & Tolbert, 1997; Zucker, 1977: 728). This "internalized cognitive constraint" (Weber & Glynn, 2006: 1640) completely precludes the enactment of alternatives. For instance, in Wicks' study of a mine disaster (Wicks, 2001), the institutionalization of a mindset of invulnerability leads miners to overlook possible dangers. In a recursive process, shared understanding is enacted in routines which in turn lead to the recreation of structures that reinforce the initial understanding (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010).

Conversely, research on institutional entrepreneurship has framed actors as meaning-makers (Zilber, 2007) who "instill institutional structures and practices with meanings […] to further their own interest" (Zilber, 2008: 159). In prior research, theorization has been mostly considered as a tool used by institutional entrepreneurs to promote social change (David, Sine, & Haveman, 2013). Because theorizing accelerates the diffusion of new practices, prior research associates it with high levels of agency from actors who want to further their interests. Typically, actors who conduct theorization are described as "champions" (Tolbert & Zucker, 1996: 183) who engage in "cultural entrepreneurship" (Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001: 545) by framing the need for change to their advantage. For instance, proponents of the nouvelle cuisine theorize the role of what it is to be a chef to promote their movement (Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2003). Compelling arguments to justify or refute change directed at the accounting profession are theorized (Greenwood, Suddaby, & Hinings, 2002; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). Institutional entrepreneurs engage in theorization to motivate the adoption of new HIV treatment practices (Maguire, Hardy, & Lawrence, 2004). In other words, this research assumes that theorizing is about furthering a particular agenda through deliberate manipulation.

In contrast, our model brings a more nuanced view of agency which also sheds a new light on theorization. Our study underlines how, in the absence of guidance, institutions provide the cultural blocks with which actors build their understanding in an autonomous way. Indeed, culture refers to the "the publicly available symbolic forms through which people experience and express meaning" (Swidler, 1986: 273). Hence, sensemaking is influenced by the values that are most salient in a particular setting. In our case, the controversy around personal branding is partly the mirror of fears and hopes that exist in the field of journalism as a whole which is strongly shaken by the opposition of market and professional values (e.g. crisis of current business models and necessity to rethink the profession of journalist). In sum, as the institutional context provides the rational myths from which actors derive their understanding, it necessarily constrains the "stories" they can build. However, it only acts as a context and it does not exclude some agency. First, as institutional breakdown acts as a disruptive event, this triggers a sensemaking process where actors "switch their cognitive gears from habits of mind to active thinking" (Patriotta, 2003: 363) and reach a form of "conscientization" (Mair, Marti, & Ventresca, 2011: 840). They no longer follow institutional templates, but become active re-interpreters of meaning (Zilber, 2002). In the second stage, the presence of institutional contradictions also enable them to act

reflexively (Seo & Creed, 2002). In the third stage, actors recategorize their own actions so that they are able to defend their self-interest while preserving the core journalistic values. Hence, rather than exerting a total constraint, institutional templates form a "tool kit" (Swidler, 1986: 273) from which actors pick up different pieces to make sense of their experience. In our case, there was a disagreement over the meaning of personal branding, with views underlining contradictions and compatibilities.

However, we also show that actors are not purely rational nor in full control of their actions (Zilber, 2008). First, our findings show that personal branding appeared on Twitter without being theorized as such. Personal branding could emerge either because the technical system required it (e.g. necessity to stand out of the crowd) or under the influence of external constituents (e.g. professional communicators). During the phase of institutional breakdown, journalists did not think much on the implications of their behavior since the phenomenon did not attract enough attention. Furthermore, career advantages were still minimal, given the fact that Twitter was not considered as a major journalistic tool yet. These results contrast with the traditional view of institutional entrepreneurs who purposely develop strategies and bring more support to recent approaches which underline the unintentional nature of their actions (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009). Second, during the stage of meaning construction, rather than having a clear-cut and polarized struggle of supporters and opponents, we have a mixed picture, with actors adopting ambiguous positions and developing inconsistent accounts. Indeed, in the absence of guidance, sensemaking is bound to lead to fragmented accounts (Maitlis, 2005). For instance, continuity claims are not consistent with renewal claims even if they both theorize the compatibilities of personal branding with journalistic values. While the theorization of contradictions shows more coherence, it nonetheless regroups disparate arguments based on market elements, vanity or resources repartition, that do not really form a consistent narrative. Our results suggest that theorization is not only about trying to promote the diffusion of a practice. It is essentially a mechanism through which actors try to make sense of the world. Easing the diffusion of a practice is rather one of its consequences rather than a constitutive element. Our findings also support the "polyphonic" nature of agency, with actors that construct a variety of stories (Zilber, 2007: 1050). These results are in line with prior work underlining the polyphonic nature of sensemaking, open to multiples voices and contestation, with narratives that are not always deliberate and coherent (Cunliffe & Coupland, 2012; Weick, 2012).

Finally, in the third stage, we observe that professional values still hold and actors prefer to recategorize their actions rather than openly promote new practices. Actors who were the most successful at developing their brand and who were considered as key branders by others were also the ones that deny any purposeful intent in their behavior. Recategorization is only about one's own behavior, not field transformation, and typically signals a reactive response. This result suggests that actors deploy "practices that fit both the field and their personal trajectory" (Gomez & Bouty, 2011: 935) : though there was not much planned strategy, journalists were nonetheless reflective enough to think about the career implications of their actions and to balance it with the necessity to conform to professional values. In contrast with previous works which show how institutional entrepreneurs transform their field to fit their interest and promote new ideas, in our case the scope of this attempt to influence meaning is much more limited, as the goal is not field transformation, but simply to profit from and rationalize an individual behavior a posteriori.

Overall, our study suggests that actors exhibit here a form of practical-evaluative form of agency, by making judgments and choices in the face of ambiguity and uncertainty (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). In this, we rejoin previous works that have underlined the practical nature of sensemaking (Dorado, 2005). In that sense, what we observe is closer to sensemaking, where actors attempt to develop an understanding for themselves, than to "sensegiving", which is a specific form of meaning shaping which aims at influencing others (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991: 433). However, boundaries between both processes are permeate and practical and political modes of actions are not completely separate (Holm, 1995; Rouleau, 2005). In our case, if journalists genuinely believe that they are not doing personal branding or if they only engage in a conscious attempt to convince others, or if it is a mix of both (e.g. journalists convincing themselves in an attempt to make others believe) remains open to interpretation. In any case, if intention is present to some extent, the retrospective and the fragmented nature of the theorizations, as well as the absence of desire to radically transform the field signal practical consciousness rather than planned strategy.

3.5.3 Limitations and further research

We can wonder to which extent our results could be transposed to other settings and which are the boundary conditions for it to apply. Obviously, our model only accounts for particular settings where actors who are traditionally embedded in their institutional context are exposed to disrupting events that put into question their original frame of reference. While our model examines how values are reproduced, it supposes that they are already given and internalized.

It is the breakdown of institutions in a new setting that triggers sensemaking and also their internalization that enable actors to make sense of their experience. In both cases, it supposes that some institutions are already pre-existing. Hence, future research could explore how sensemaking can lead to the emergence of institutions where there were none.

Another generalizability issue relates to the extension of our findings to other professional fields. Other professional sectors, while sticking to professional values, may be less reluctant to adopt market related practices. For instance, it is conceivable that professional services firm members, because of their proximity to the economic sphere, would be more open to integrate such market elements. We can wonder to which extent the resulting sensemaking would prove more consistent in the absence of contradictory institutional template.

Finally, this study mainly focuses on meaning rather on actual practice. The same way we point out that some works examine what has been institutionalized rather than how meaning is constructed, the opposite applies to this study: we did not look much at how journalists engage in personal branding. While such limitation does not impact the analysis of the dynamic of meaning construction, it may obscure differences among actors. Hence, future research could examine if meaning construction varies in function of the way actors engage in a particular practice.

3.5.4 Implication for practice

For practitioners, these findings provide some useful insights about how new technologies and work practices could be promoted within an organization. As we saw, the introduction of even a relative simple technology and the associated work practice leads to a fair amount of uncertainty and equivocality. Hence, the integration of new practices requires support from the organization. In particular, this assistance should not be restricted to technologies and work practices that are introduced by the management at the organizational level. In our case, Twitter and personal branding diffused at the field level with only a late intervention of management (who promoted it once it was already relatively widespread). Hence, managers must scan their environment for new trends and emerging work practices so that they can, if necessary, support their adoption in their early stage. At the same time, we observed that journalists and professionals in general are able to think reflexively, to exhibit practical skills and to put new practices into perspective. This suggests that a rudimentary attempt to impose new practices and meanings in a top-down fashion may provoke backlashes. Thus, managers should adopt a position of facilitator. They can ease the adoption of new work practices by

stressing the positive meanings that are attached to it by relating them to valued institutions. For instance, communication actions highlighting their congruence with existing values might be appropriate. Likewise, training seminars should not only teach practical and technical matters but also help professionals to understand the concrete links between new technologies and their mission. We can assume that the internalization by professionals of these elements in their own sensemaking leads to a stronger and more lasting effect.

CHAPTER 4. (RE)LOCATING BOUNDARIES: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF ONLINE ETHNOGRAPHY

This chapter is co-authored with Prof. Deniz Tuncalp. Previous versions of this paper were presented at the following venues: EURAM 2012, EGOS 2012, EGOS 2013, Academy of Management 2013. It has been published in a special issue of Journal of Organizational Ethnography on new forms of ethnography (Rouleau, De Rond, & Musca, 2014).

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to systematically review online ethnography and its boundary challenges. The paper especially focuses on how researchers draw space and time boundaries, and how they engage their online field. For that, we perform a systematic review of existing literature and identify 59 papers adopting online ethnography in 40 different journals. This review may help researchers to locate useful online ethnography examples across various management disciplines and contribute to the maturation of this method. It also synthesizes emerging trends in online ethnography and show how advantages specific to this method prompt online ethnographers to limit themselves in their research designs.

4.1 Introduction

How do ethnographers engage a research field in an online world with fuzzy space and time boundaries? Despite its marginal status within ethnography (Garcia et al., 2009), online ethnography has taken a prominent place among online research methods (Jankowski and Van Selm, 2005). Fieldwork being the most characteristic element of any ethnography (Fetterman, 2010), researchers must carefully consider how they draw the boundaries of their field and how they engage it: "a research field is never something just 'out there' and neutral. It is always created through deciding and constructing its boundaries" (Scaramuzzino, 2012:47). Boundary definition is a challenging task in the online world because space, time and social relations are restructured (Hine, 2000; Prior and Miller, 2012). This article reviews how online ethnographers define and cross boundaries, and argues that online ethnography has not yet fully explored this complexity and tends to be locked into particular research designs.

Our contribution is threefold. First, we synthesize the emerging trends in online ethnography, discussing how researchers draw space boundaries, set time boundaries, and engage their field. Second, we discuss how the specific advantages of online ethnography act like a double-edged sword, as it may prompt ethnographers to limit themselves in their research strategies. We provide suggestions for further research complementing previous studies. Third, we provide a systematic and interdisciplinary review of the use of online ethnography in the organizational and business literature. We hope this helps researchers to locate useful examples across various management disciplines.

Prior reviews have examined the strengths and weaknesses of online ethnography (Beaulieu, 2004; Hine, 2008; Jang, Terry and Lê, 2013; Murthy, 2008, 2011, 2013; Sade-Beck, 2008; Scaramuzzino, 2012). It is mainly praised for cost-effectiveness, sample accessibility and unobtrusiveness, while keeping a naturalistic context (Kozinets, 2010; Murthy, 2013; Scaramuzzino, 2012). Drawbacks include higher risks of misrepresentation, difficulties to interpret non-contextualized data in an impoverished social context and the complexity of ethical considerations (Garcia et al., 2009; Kozinets, 2002; Prior and Miller, 2012). While these articles discuss the potentiality of this method, they do not offer a systematic treatment on how prior research has explored these possibilities. Our article fills this gap by offering a review of the current state of research from a boundary perspective.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. The next two sections present our theoretical framework and our methodology. Section 4 presents the results of our review. Finally, we conclude the paper by discussing the potential and pitfalls of online ethnography.

4.2 Theory

A field site can be defined as "the stage on which the social processes under study take place" (Burrell, 2009:182). While the observation that a field site is constructed rather than discovered is crucial to contemporary practice, the practical work of defining a field site remains understudied (Burrell, 2009). Defining the field is "both an act of exclusion and inclusion" (Burrell, 2009:182) and is equivalent to drawing its boundaries: "the word 'define' derives from the Latin word for boundary, which is *finis*" (Zerubavel, 1991:2). As Hammersley and Atkinson (1983:32) emphasize, settings are not naturally defined and their "boundaries are not fixed but shift across occasions […] through processes of redefinition and negotiation". Hence, it is up to the researchers to decide where they draw the limits of their field. Boundaries can be defined as "the physical, temporal, emotional, cognitive, and / or

relational limits that define entities as separate from one another" (Ashforth, Kreiner and Fugate, 2000:474). Similarly, Nippert-Eng (1996) considers space and time as the fundamental blocks that form categories. For instance, both domains of work and family respectively have their own space (the office, home) and time (office hours, leisure time). Hence, space and time form the two major categories that ethnographers must consider when drawing the boundaries of their research field.

4.2.1 Space boundaries

The idea of a research field as a single bounded space, containing a whole culture, has eroded over time. Traditionally, the central rite of passage for anthropologists was a lengthy stay in an exotic culture. Sociologists studying modern society were also prompted to "go out" and explore a specific area (Van Maanen, 1988). The ethnographers could then claim, with authority, that they have "been there" (Jordan, 2009). In the 1980s, multi-sited ethnography insisted on mobility and the idea of following entities such as people or objects (Marcus, 1995). This suggestion is not new and can be traced back to anthropologists' foundational works (e.g. Malinowski, 1922). However, it is with the rise of connection technologies that enables people to be at two places at a time (e.g. surfing on the web while staying at home) that "location began to blur in earnest" (Jordan, 2009:186): a new space has emerged, based on flows, "organized around connection rather than location" (Hine, 2000:61).

For online ethnographers, the first challenge of drawing space boundaries is to decide over the degree of online/offline integration, which is reflected in the literature by various definitions. Beaulieu (2004) uses the terms "virtual ethnography", "online ethnography" and "cyberanthropology" to refer to "ethnographies that deal with 'the internet' as topic or context of study" (Beaulieu, 2004:142), or in other words, as ethnography 'on' and 'of' the Internet. Similarly, Hine (2000) both examines how cultures develop online and how the use of the Internet is socially shaped in "real world". In contrast, Kozinets's definition of netnography as "research techniques to study the cultures and communities that are emerging through computer-mediated communications" (Kozinets, 2002:62) only focuses on online interactions. Our study examines all forms of online ethnography. However, because our scope is restricted to the specific challenges linked to the online world, it only covers part of the broader concept of "digital ethnography" (Murthy, 2008:837), which encompasses all forms of ethnography mediated by digital technology (e.g. taking field notes on a smartphone for a conventional ethnography).

4.2.2 Time boundaries

Time boundaries must be drawn as well, considering researchers' limited resources. As observation around the clock is impossible, "some degree of time sampling must usually be attempted" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983:36). Most ethnographers agree that ethnography, "notorious for its time and labor intensiveness" (Smith, 2007:228), should span an extended length of time (Cunliffe, 2009). Not only ethnographers must stay a long time, but they also should be able to "respond 'in the moment'" (Yanow, 2012:192). In conventional ethnography, the major temporal discontinuities are linked to the entrance and exit from the field, as researchers need time to take some distance to look back reflexively (Gold, 1958). Although they are rarely explicitly articulated, time constraints (e.g. professional, familial obligations) make sustained fieldwork difficult (Smith, 2007).

4.2.3 Rules of engagement

Finally, ethnographers must also consider how they cross the boundaries separating them from their research object, i.e. how they engage their field and relate to their informants. Boundary crossing is reflected in the common idea that the ethnographer is "an outsider entering the field" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983: 53) to get the "insider's view of reality" (Riemer, 2008:205). Other spatial metaphors such as "immersion" (Cunliffe, 2009:227), to "delve deeply" (Riemer, 2008:211) or "frontier-breaking work" (Murthy, 2008:839) convey a similar idea.

4.3 Methodology

To cover the fragmented nature of online ethnography, we performed a systematic review based on Tranfield et al.'s (2003) three steps procedure. We examined all completely indexed years (i.e. until 2012 at the time of the study), using the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) database as a reliable source for peer-reviewed articles. In order to obtain a comprehensive sample, we used very general keywords such as "online ethnography" (including derivatives and synonyms such as "netnography", "Internet", etc.) resulting in an initial set of 518 articles. Each author screened all papers to select a subset fulfilling following criteria: empirical, related to organizational or management issues and acknowledging the use of ethnographic methods in an online setting. We obtained a final sample of 59 articles.

Our analysis is founded on a qualitative stage followed by the use of simple descriptive summary data. First, the qualitative stage enabled us to develop a broad understanding of the data set. Following an iterative process, and using a grounded approach

(Glaser and Strauss, 1967), we identified a number of categories and subcategories. Selected sentences and their coding were crosschecked, recoded and refined several times. The identified categories were discussed until sufficient interpretive convergence was achieved. In the second stage, we categorized each paper according to the emergent categories of stage 1 in order to identify general trends. Each author separately categorized a few articles, and results were compared afterwards. Disagreements were discussed until an agreement was reached. This sometimes led to the redefinition or refinement of a category as the process went on. Though this process does not allow a conventional assessment of interrater reliability, it is often used in inductive research (Trefalt, 2013). This is not an issue here as our emphasis is on the description of general trends rather than on using the obtained figures to engage in statistical computation. During the process, we also used mind-maps (Buzan and Buzan, 1993) to discuss and visualize the identified categories.

4.4 Findings

Table 1 lists the journals where the 59 articles of our sample have been published. The wide dispersion over 40 journals shows that online ethnography has diffused into a variety of academic circles. The publication years reported in Table 2 also illustrates its progressive adoption in recent years. However, the modest number of online ethnographies in comparison to the size of the population (i.e. all publications) still signals its nascent nature. Figure 1 presents a mind-map describing the categories that emerged from our qualitative analysis.

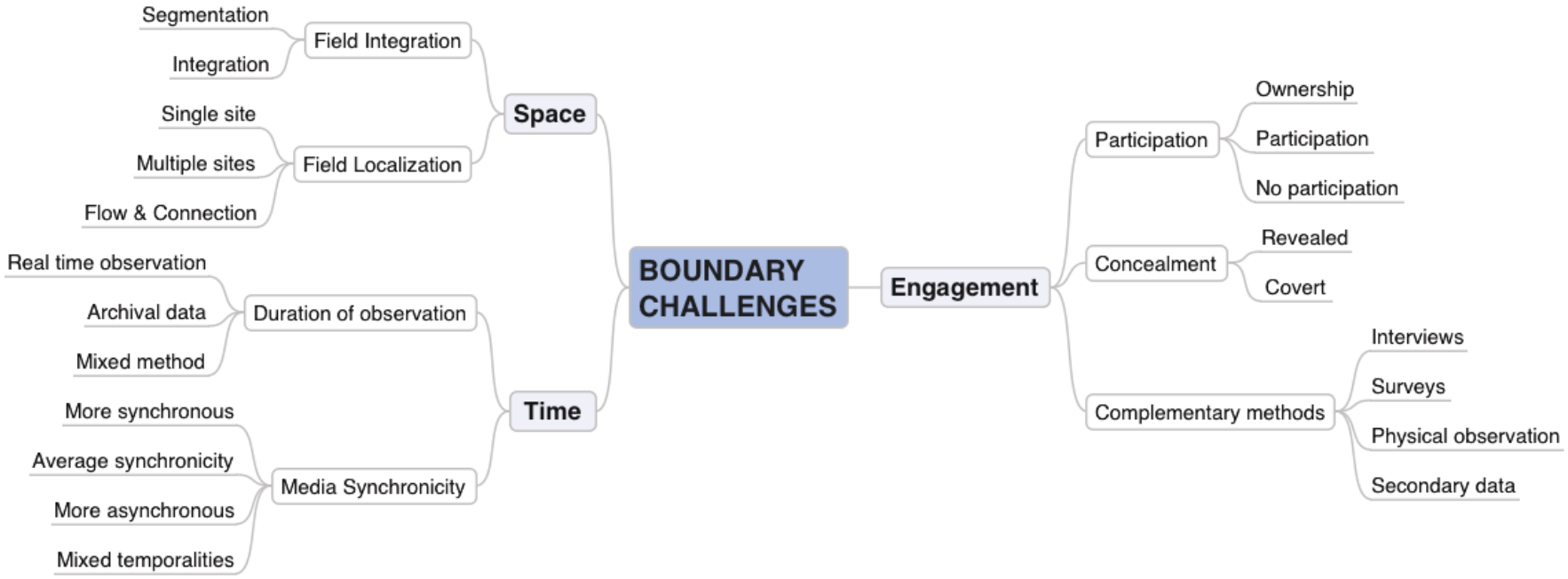
TABLE 1. Academic journals and the sample counts

Journal name	Count
Accounting, Organizations and Society	1
Business Horizons	1
Creativity and Innovation Management	2
Decision Support Systems	1
Electronic Commerce Research	1
European Journal of Marketing	3
Field Methods	1
International Journal of Consumer Studies	1
International J. of Contemporary Hospitality Management	4
International Journal of Hospitality Management	1
International Journal of Human-Computer Studies	1
International Journal of Information Management	1
International Journal of Market Research	2
Journal of Advertising Research	1
Journal of Business Research	7
Journal of Consumer Culture	1
Journal of Consumer Research	1
Journal of Documentation	1
Journal of Electronic Commerce	1
Journal of Information technology	1
Tourism Management	3
Journal of Interactive Marketing	2
Journal of Macromarketing	1
Journal of Marketing	2
Journal of Marketing Research	1
Journal of Service Management	1
Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	1
Long Range Planning	1
Management Decision	1
Managing Service Quality	1
Marketing Theory	2
New Media & Society	2
New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia	1
Organization Science	1
Psychology and Marketing	1
Science, Technology & Human Values	1
Sociology	1
Systems Research and Behavioral Science	1
The Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science	1
The Information Society	1
Tourism Management	3
Total number of articles	59
Number of journals	40

TABLE 2. Years, Sample Counts and Papers

Year	Count	Papers
1999	1	Ward (1999)
2003	1	Brown *et al.* (2003)
2004	1	Shoham (2004)
2005	1	Nelson and Otnes (2005)
2006	2	Cova and Pace (2006), Jeppesen and Frederiksen (2006)
2007	2	Füller *et al*. (2007); Woodside *et al*. (2007)
2008	7	Biddix and Park (2008), Cromie and Ewing (2008), Fong and Burton (2008), Loureiro-Koechlin (2008), Mathwick *et al*., (2008), Skågeby (2008), Yim *et al.* (2008)
2009	9	Andreassen and Streukens (2009), Burrell (2009), Cromie and Ewing (2009), De Valck *et al.* (2009), Dwivedi (2009), Hsu *et al.* (2009), Rokka and Moisander (2009), Skågeby (2009), Tikkanen *et al.* (2009)
2010	8	Adjei, Noble and Noble (2010), Akoumianakis (2010), Arruda-Filho, Cabusas and Dholakia (2010), Belz and Baumbach (2010), Chan and Li (2010), Dirksen *et al*. (2010), Jayanti (2010), Kozinets *et al.* (2010)
2011	14	Braunsberger and Buckler (2011), Cole (2011), Fernandez *et al.* (2011), Fisher and Smith (2011), Hienerth *et al*. (2011), Janta (2011), Jawecki *et al*. (2011), Jeacle and Carter (2011), Pentina and Amos (2011), Podoshen and Hunt (2011), Pongsakornrungsilp and Schroeder (2011), Skågeby (2011), Sundin (2011), Wei *et al.* (2011)
2012	13	Ertimur and Gilly (2012), Janta *et al.* (2012), Lorenz-Meyer (2012), Lugosi *et al.* (2012), Michels (2012), Mkono (2012), Noble *et al.* (2012), Prior and Miller (2012), Radford and Bloch (2012), Russo-Spena and Mele (2012), Seraj (2012), Sigala (2012), Takhar *et al.* (2012)
TOTAL	59	

FIGURE 1. Boundary Challenges in Online Ethnography – Emergent Categories



4.4.1 Emergent categories identified in boundary setting

Categorization of space boundaries

At first glance, accessing the field in online ethnography is an easy task since researchers do not have to leave their comfortable seat. However, as there is no clear "place" to carry out fieldwork, defining the field turns into a rather skillful accomplishment for researchers (Burrell, 2009). Indeed, online communities are defined in symbolic rather than physical terms (Rheingold, 1993). They are "imagined communities" where the symbolic communion in members' mind matters more than geographical proximity (Anderson, 1983). Hence, space boundaries may be difficult to establish as there is no geography to suggest an "obvious" field site.

Hine (2000:64) summarizes well the first dilemma online ethnographers face: "Cyberspace is not to be thought of as a space detached from any connection to 'real life'". Researchers must decide to which extent online space can be considered in isolation of its "real life" counterpart. From a boundary perspective, this choice is reflected in the continuum between segmentation and integration (Ashforth et al., 2000), which forms our first categorization. Some studies only focus on online spaces and lean toward pure netnography by segmenting the online phenomenon from the offline world. Conversely, researchers may try to integrate both dimensions in their research question.

The second choice ethnographers face relates to the location of the research field. As Dodge (2005) suggests, online ethnographers may build maps of social interactions patterns to find their way in the online space the same manner explorers used to map *terra incognita*. Such observation follows a broader trend of conventional ethnography to become de-territorialized (Van Maanen, 2006). To reflect this development, we distinguish three categories. Single site studies focus on one bounded location. In multi-site studies, taken here in a narrow sense, ethnographers consider multiple locations, but still with the idea that the boundaries of each location mark the end of their field. Finally, in the flow approaches, researchers try to follow connections over locations and field boundaries do not necessarily overlap with available "obvious" frontiers such as the technical limits of a website.

Categorization of time boundaries

The first type of boundary relates to the mode of treatment and reconstruction of time during an online ethnography. Online experience is entirely mediated by multimedia artifacts such as texts, pictures, videos, etc. As "sediments of social interaction" (Dirksen, Huizing, and Smit, 2010:1050), these artifacts form a rich source of data and most of them remain available for analysis a long time after having been produced. Conventional ethnography also appeals to artifacts, as "in some settings it would be hard to conceive of anything approaching an ethnographic account without some attention to documentary material" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983:128). However, in online ethnography, the omnipresence of artifacts breaks the linearity of time, as ethnographers do not even need to attend the events to retrace them, what Hine (2000:95) qualifies as "temporal collage". While both conventional and online ethnographies use archival data, they differ in the way ethnographers relate to the time when the artifacts were produced. In conventional ethnography, artifacts and archival data are used to complement real life experience. In contrast, online ethnographers can only observe artifacts. For instance, communication on a forum is constituted by the posted messages. Hence, ethnographers can either decide to study these messages in real time, as they are progressively posted, or they can choose to download them in a bulk and treat them as archival data. While the first approach, with its emphasis on real time experience and lengthy period of observation, is closer to conventional ethnography, the second approach is closer to content analysis. Hence, we identify three categories: the use of real time as live experience, the use of archival data in reconstructing time, or a combination of both approaches.

The second type of time boundaries relates to synchronicity in the layering of temporalities. Since online communications are always mediated, a new temporal layer arises in online ethnography. For example, comparing letters exchange with modern instant communication, Hammersley and Atkinson (1983:138) explain that "the density and speed of the latter can create a more intense sense of shared experience and of a shared social world". Moreover, the hybridization of online communication leads to a blurring of time boundaries. For instance, social network websites combine media with different temporalities, such as static pages, forums, instant messaging. To reflect the diversity of time scales online researchers face, we coded four categories: research on highly synchronous (e.g. instant messaging) and highly asynchronous media (e.g. email), in between (e.g. forums), or a combination of them.

Categorization of boundary crossing in field engagement

The third dimension we identify is how online ethnographers cross the boundaries separating them from their research object and relate to their informants. Three major issues arise. The first issue relates to the researcher's degree of participation. To reflect the continuum it can span (Gold, 1958), we distinguish three categories, from no participation to full engagement, with a special case as a third category: researchers may develop an ownership of the field by building their focal community. This *modus operandi* has an experimental dimension as the "natural setting" is artificially created. The second issue relates to the disclosure of the researchers' presence and identity, as they either choose to conceal or reveal their position. This dilemma is particularly acute since one of the main advantages of online ethnography is its unobtrusiveness (Beaulieu, 2004; Kozinets, 2010). Finally, we looked at the complementary methods that are used to engage the field beyond online ethnography.

4.4.2 Classification of boundaries setting in online ethnography

Article classification for space boundaries

First, online ethnographers decide over the degree of online/offline integration and the location of their site (See Table 3a and 3b). For 59% of studies, the focal phenomenon is purely online and considered as an independent environment on its own. The predominance of "pure" online studies shows that online interactions have their own specific dynamics that may worth examining separately, as illustrated by statements such as: "we build an exploratory conceptual framework [to capture the] dynamics of virtual world experiences" (Tikkanen *et al.*, 2009:1358). Alternatively, for the rest of the sample, the online dimension is only a part of a broader phenomenon that also takes place "in real life", as for instance the case of Polish migrant workers (Janta, 2011).

TABLE 3a. Space boundaries

Field Integration			Field Localization		
	# Articles	Repartition		# Articles	Repartition
Segmentation (purely online)	35	59%	Single site	26	44%
Integration (online and offline)	24	41%	Multiple sites	24	41%
			Flow and connection	9	15%

TABLE 3b. Space boundaries – Decision criteria

Categories	Criteria	Examples	Quotes
Segmentation	Research question focuses on a purely online phenomenon	Study of an online community dedicated to cooking	"Our research site is a virtual community dedicated to culinary matters." (De Valck, van Bruggen, & Wierenga, 2009: 186)
Integration	Research question integrates an offline dimension	Study of Polish migrant workers in the UK using online forums	"This paper aims to draw from a wider study that explores the experiences of Polish migrant workers in the UK's hospitality sector across the UK" (Janta, 2011: 803)
Single site	Field site is limited to one website / social media	Field is a firm hosted user community	"a case study based on one firm and its single community" (Jeppesen and Frederiksen, 2006: 52)
Multiple sites	Field site is limited to several websites / social media that are not directly linked together	Field is two popular travelers message boards	"In this paper India's online destination image is explored through consumer generated data on two popular message boards, Lonely Planet's Thorn Tree (TT) and India Mike (IM)." (Dwivedi, 2009: 227)
Flow and connection	Field site is not defined ex-ante (progressively built), with an emphasis on the links between sites	Studying the Facebook metadata / exploring Facebook and various forums	"By moving outside the borders of one specific forum, [...] the relevance and credibility of the data in relation to the research question will increase." (Skågeby, 2009: 64)

Many research designs attempt to integrate online and offline approaches. For example, Ward (1999:96) describes: "the physical, despite its apparent morphing with the virtual, continues to place restrictions on people's lives, and so a community that exists entirely in text based virtual space is implausible." Some researchers integrate communities that are present in both worlds: "EQ magazine also offers a bridge between the 'on' and 'offline' world, that […] helps offset some of the limitations of online research" (Cole, 2011:449). Depending on the research question, similar topics can lead to different boundary settings. For instance, as Jeacle and Carter (2011) examine the ranking mechanism of TripAdvisor, they exclusively focus on the website. In contrast, Woodside et al. (2007) also look at traveler reviews, but as they explore a broader phenomenon -how cities become iconic brands-, their research design includes the offline dimension.

Our classification should not mask the heterogeneity within each category. Within the studies integrating online and offline, some deal with communities going online, such as wedding brides (Nelson and Otnes, 2005), or 'Freegans' (Pentina and Amos, 2011) whereas others deal with the context of the use of Internet (e.g. sitting in a cybercafé, looking at computer screen) (Burrell, 2009; Hine, 2000). Similarly, studies of phenomena that are exclusively online are very diverse. For example, the focus may be on people, algorithms (Jeacle and Carter, 2011) or hyperlink network structures (Biddix and Park, 2008). We should also mention the case of virtual worlds, which further blur online and offline, as exemplified by online ethnographer Boellstorff's choice (2008) to put the biography of his Second Life avatar on his book back cover.

Beyond the question of the online/offline integration, online ethnographers have to choose the localization of their field. A first possibility is to restrict their field to a single site (e.g. a forum). In that case, the boundary is drawn by aligning the field site with the available technical demarcations, such as the domain name or the access given by one user registration. A second approach is the multi-site study, where researchers apply the same methodology, but in multiple sites. Finally, researchers can follow a flow, trying to get a global understanding that goes beyond the limitation of one of several bounded sites. The analysis of our sample gives a surprising result. We could think that in a world without physical boundaries, researchers would be free to extend their observation. Instead, a significant part (44%) limits them to one "place". This choice can be explained by several factors. First, a research object may only be present in a single site, as for instance the idiosyncratic algorithms of TripAdvisor (Jeacle and Carter, 2011). There might be also practical reasons. For instance, the

use of quantitative analysis as a complementary method, which requires a homogeneous sample (Mathwick, Wiertz and De Ruyter, 2008) or the download of messages from a single database are both simplified in a single site study. Finally, technical demarcations such as a website name may provide easy, nearly taken-for-granted boundaries.

Online ethnographers also make good use of multi-site studies (41% of articles). This method is commonly used for comparison across cases, for instance across various platforms (e.g. Lego, IBM, Coloplast) sharing a similar context (e.g. user-centric business) (Hienerth, Keinz, and Lettl, 2011). Another recurrent motive is to try to get a broader sample of a large community that spans beyond the boundaries of a particular website. For instance, it is quite logical that the Polish migrant community (Janta, 2011) or the community of women preparing their weeding (Nelson and Otnes, 2005) span over several websites. Some research designs combine both motives. For instance, Fong and Burton (2008) look at three discussion boards in the US and at three discussion boards in China, trying to simultaneously maximize their sample size within each country while drawing comparisons between both cultures. The popularity of online multi-site approaches can probably be explained by the low marginal cost of including one more site in a study. Indeed, the most common method for site selection uses screening, which narrows down the choice from an initial larger sample (e.g. Füller, Jawecki, and Muhlbacher, 2007).

Ethnographies based on flows only represent 15% of our sample. This is quite surprising given the fluid nature of online space, "open to constant sculpting and resculpting" (Ward, 1999:97). This relative low number contrasts with the richness in the data that such approach may provide. For instance, by following a flow of data beyond a single site, researchers have mapped how organizational cultural elements could be divided between a "civilized territory of mass communication" (an official website) and a "virgin territory" (a network of blogs) where fans could express themselves (Cova and Pace, 2006:102). However, getting this richness involves a trade-off: "By moving outside the borders of one specific forum, there may be losses in […] research 'control', but the relevance and credibility of the data […] will increase" (Skågeby, 2009:64). Setting boundaries becomes then particularly complex as researchers may loose their way while trying to navigate in an endless flow of data. To reduce this complexity, most researchers in our sample who adopt a flow approach start with one or several central focal places and subsequently complement their data collection in peripheral locations (e.g. Pentina and Amos, 2011).

Article classification for time boundaries

The first choice online ethnographers face relates to the length of real time observation. As archives covering a long period of time (e.g. all forum messages posted in six months) can be downloaded in one click, the "observed period" is no longer coupled with the duration of real time observation. However, reading automatically retrieved forum posts is not the same as experiencing events in real time. Trying to recreate the experience frame can be tough for researchers. For instance, members of an online community may spend entire nights chatting, which make formal data collection procedures difficult (Rutter and Smith, 2005). On the other hand, spending time on site bring numerous advantages in terms of contextualization. Especially in synchronous media, it is the shared history of time spent together as well as the repetition of online interactions that compensate for the relative paucity of interaction cues. Researchers spending insufficient time on an online field may then be limited in their understanding (Kendall, 1999). Only 22% of our sample experience events in the field with real time observation (See Table 4a and 4b). Archival data plays a major role as 78% of the studies use some form of textual analysis, many of them being netnographic studies.

TABLE 4a. Time boundaries

Duration of observation			Media synchronicity		
	# Articles	Repartition		# Articles	Repartition
Real time observation	13	22%	More synchronous	2	3%*
Archival data	19	32%	Average synchronicity	25	42%*
Mixed method	27	46%	More asynchronous	15	25%*
			Mixed temporalities	17	29%*

* Numbers may not add up to 100 due to integer rounding.

TABLE 4b. Time boundaries – Decision criteria

Categories	Criteria	Examples	Quotes
Real time observation	Observation in real time over longer periods	Daily observation of a user community	"We observed the Propellerhead online communities for approximately one hour per day during a three-month period" (Jeppesen and Frederiksen, 2006: 52)
Archival data	Download of archival posts for retrospective analysis	Download of texts from forums on ecology	"Our primary data set consisted of naturally occurring textual data obtained from the online discussion site of the community. It was gathered and downloaded from the community forums and discussion sites" (Rokka and Moisander, 2009: 201)
Mixed method	Use of both methods	Participant observation and download of past posts on a message board	"The first author joined the Listserv in November 2008, and regularly contributed to online conversations [...] In addition, both authors content-analyzed the Listserv's postings from January 2004 until December 2009" (Pentina and Amos, 2011: 1770)
More synchronous	Media with high interaction speed (video, chat, virtual world, IM, Twitter...)	Media is a chat-room	"An Online Chat-Room Ethnography" (Shoham, 2004: 855)
Average synchronicity	Media with average interaction speed (Forum, Facebook...)	Media is an aviation forum	"A.net hosts the world's most active aviation discussion forums" (Seraj, 2012: 211)
More asynchronous	Media with lower interaction speed (mail, user reviews, blogs, homepages, Wiki, LinkedIn...)	Media is homepage of laboratories	"The second section explores how laboratories and geographies of knowledge making (Traweek 2000) were performed on the institutional home page, a site that also has received little attention in STS" (Lorenz-Meyer, 2012: 244)
Mixed temporalities	Various media with various temporalities	Composite media with chat, forum, email	"The interactive aspects of the Cybergrrl Village include a real time chat channel, bulletin board (BB) forums, a quick mail system (QM) and an internal e-mail system." (Ward, 1999: 97)

The second issue relates to the synchronicity of the observed media, which reflects the speed of the exchange. Interestingly, only 3% of online ethnographies have selected highly synchronous media like online video rooms, instant messaging environments or virtual worlds, which contrasts with their pervasive use in everyday life. One can assume that this can be due to their recent development and the technical difficulty of collecting data from such dynamic environments. For a significant majority of our sample (42%), media with medium interaction speed have been preferred. This is largely due to the popularity of forums and more recently Facebook pages as research fields. More asynchronous media (e.g. homepages, e-mails, etc.) comes in second position, probably because the slower rhythm of interactions provides less data to work with.

Article classification for boundary crossing in field engagement

In order to engage their field, researchers must choose their degree of participation, which involves a trade-off between avoiding observation bias and improving relationships with community members (Pongsakornrungsilp and Schroeder, 2011). Surprisingly, non-participants observations, while they may be contradictory to some ethnographic traditions, represent a high proportion (58%) of our sample (See Table 5a and 5b). For example, Fuller, Jawecki and Muhlbacher (2007) only perform content analyses without any direct involvement. In contrast, in some rare cases, researchers may exhibit extreme participation, and even ownership of their research field. For instance, Cromie and Ewing (2008) establish an Open Source Software (OSS) community by themselves, like an *in-vivo* experiment, although this choice may face realism issues as they depart from naturalistic conditions.

TABLE 5a. Crossing boundaries: Form of engagement

Researchers' participation			Researchers' concealment			Complementary methods		
	# Articles	Repartition		# Articles	Repartition		# Articles	Repartition
Ownership	2	3%*	Revealed	21	35%*	No	26	44%
Participation	20	34%*				Yes	33	56%
No participation	34	58%*	Covert	23	39%*	Incl. interviews	19*	32%**
Not Available	3	5%*	Not Available	15	25%*	Incl. surveys	10*	17%**
						Incl. physical observation	8*	14%**
						Incl. secondary data	7*	12%**

* Numbers may not add up to 100 due to integer rounding.
** Numbers may not add up to match with the sum due to multiple complementary methods in some of the papers.

Table 5b. Crossing boundaries for Engagement - Decision Criteria

Categories	Criteria	Examples	Quotes
Ownership	Researchers have a form of ownership on the field	Creation of an Open Source Software community for research purpose	"Thus we decided to do something rather more. difficult: construct a virtual OSS community specifically for the purposes of the study" (Cromie and Ewing, 2008: 639)
Participation	Researchers participate in the observed community	Researcher's involvement in a lead user community	"At Coloplast, one of our research assistants participated in a community and lead user project between 2008 and 2009, gaining deep insights" (Hienerth, Keinz, & Lettl, 2011: 351)
No participation	No participation	Observation without participation of blogs	"Although we did not participate directly in the focal blogs our analysis reflects the participative component that is a hallmark of interpretive depth in both ethnography and netnography" (Kozinets, De Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010: 73)
Covert	Researchers concealed their presence	Researchers do not inform participants that their posts is analyzed	"Finally, as the data was collected from public sites, it was decided not to inform the participants or ask for their permission, nevertheless, the names of participants have been deleted to ensure anonymity." (Janta, 2011: 806)
Revealed	Researchers reveal their presence and identity as researchers	Researchers inform the participants	"When conducting the netnography, we informed all utopia members of the subforum 'Eating and Drinking' about the research activity and its intention. Furthermore, we provided our contact details to respond to questions raised by online community members." (Belz and Baumbach, 2010: 307)
No complementary method	No other method than online ethnography is mentioned	Research based on netnography without complementary methods	"An empirical study was conducted employing netnographic evidence from three different virtual worlds and related user-generated blog discussions" (Tikkanen, Hietanen, Henttonen, & Rokka, 2009: 1357)
Yes (Use of complementary method)	Other methods are specified	Mixed method involving a survey and a netnography	"Based on a large-scale survey (N = 1007), and a three-year netnographic study of members of a virtual community, this paper aims to provide an in-depth insight into how consumers participate in, and are influenced by online social information networks." (De Valck, van Bruggen, & Wierenga, 2009: 186)

A vast range of possibilities exists between these two polar positions. For example, Podoshen and Hunt (2011:1335) qualify their participation to an online Jewish community as immersion even though they use ”the passive and observational netnographic approach”. In contrast, Tikkanen et al. (2009:1358) celebrate online 3D worlds such as Second Life or World of Warcraft as “immersive networking realities” and they purposefully experience online games for hours to immerse themselves with extensive participant observation and direct involvement. Finally, another nuance to consider is the researcher’s relational position within a community, which can span from core member to occasional user (De Valck, van Bruggen, and Wierenga, 2009).

Second, researchers must choose to conceal or reveal their identity. In 35% of our sample, ethnographers choose to signal their existence in the field as researchers. For example, Skågeby (2008) not only informs the community members but also collected permissions before publishing any quote. On the other hand, many researchers (39%) choose to stay “undercover”. This reflects the unobtrusiveness of online ethnographies where researchers tend to analyze “publicly” available data with anonymization and sanitization of sensitive information without informing the participants. A quite disturbing result is that a large proportion of studies (25%) do not report any information on this topic. Such observation raises acute ethical issues, as the frontier between private and public data is not always clear, and obtaining informed consent from participants may be challenging in online settings (Pritchard, 2012; Zimmer, 2010).

Finally, we have examined how researchers engage their field with complementary approaches. Ethnography traditionally lets a great room for employing additional methods such as interviews, document analysis or even surveys (Watson, 2011). Interestingly, only 14% of our sample combines online ethnography with offline observations. As we have previously shown, many studies do include a research focus that relates to offline behavior. However, most of the observations are only made online. Even interviews, that are the most common complementary method, are sparsely used (32%). To sum up, current practice of online ethnography seems to favor “lurking” behaviors, with limited or no participation nor real life interactions with the observed people such as physical observation or interviews.

4.5 Discussion

In comparison with conventional ethnography, online ethnography has a number of advantages: it is less obtrusive, more accessible and more convenient (Kozinets, 2002). We

believe these advantages have significantly contributed to the diffusion of this method. However, we argue that the same properties that confer this apparent simplicity should also raise the researchers' level of attention as it may lock them into some of the research approaches we have observed in this study. We summarized our views in Table 6.

TABLE 6. Current trends and opportunities of online ethnography

	Current Trends	Future Opportunities
SPACE BOUNDARIES	Low integration of online and offline spaces Dominant focus on "pure" online communities Dominance of bounded sites Technical demarcations replacing physical demarcations	Integrating online elements as a part of normal life Studying communities with both online and offline anchoring Considering the method in a broader context (e.g. "digital ethnography") Stepping out of the vision "one website = one field" Emphasis on tracing and connections in a network
TIME BOUNDARIES	Emphasis on archival data over real time observation Emphasis on content analysis Very few number of studies on synchronous media Numerous research on forum and messages boards	Emphasis on the live and subjective researcher's experience Emphasis of contextualization over data comprehensiveness Using more synchronous media New ways of collecting and presenting data and results
FIELD ENGAGEMENT	Low degree of participation, partly linked to an emphasis on content analysis When participation, great variety of roles Dominance of lurking behavior Emphasis on unobtrusiveness Lack of information on researcher's relation to informants Balance between pure online ethnography and complementary methods	Higher degree of participation in the observed communities Exploring change in roles and degree of participation during the research Signaling of the researcher's presence – cooperative relationship Clear statements on ethical position in research accounts More integration with direct interactions (physical observations, conventional ethnography, interviews)

We observe that many online ethnographers still consider online space as a separate domain with limited interactions with the offline world. They also tend to favor bounded sites. As a basis for drawing boundaries, technical demarcations (e.g. name of a website, access to a forum through a single registration) seem to have replaced physical ones. However, as technology becomes gradually embedded in our lives, we encourage further research to integrate methods that are more adapted to the fluid and increasingly pervasive nature of online space, stepping out of the vision "one website equals one field". We are not advocating one research design over another. However, as we have illustrated, methodological choices should match research questions. Overall, as "distinctions between a virtual life and a real life ultimately collapse as the latter subsumes the former" (Murthy, 2011:161), this increased integration needs to be reflected in the development of appropriate research designs. Hence, we rejoin authors who recommend removing barriers between online and offline spaces in research (Czarniawska, 2008; Garcia et al., 2009; Hallett and Barber, 2013). For example, online ethnographies combined with real life interviews or conventional ethnography should be encouraged (Kozinets, 2010; Murthy, 2011). Conversely, conventional ethnographers should be open to the possibility that they may be "pulled into online spaces" (Hallett and Barber, 2013:9) if their informants are interacting there as well. Overall, even if online ethnography presents specific challenges, it can be included into a broader move toward a form of "digital ethnography" (Murthy, 2013), where it would become one approach, among many others, to apprehend a multifaceted reality.

With regard to time boundaries, the use of archival data, often at the expense of real time observations, encourages us to question what lies at the heart of (online) ethnography. To which extent can researchers understand "how things works" (Watson, 2011) without some form of real-time intensive observation, which is "the *sine qua non* of ethnography" (Watson, 2012:16)? Hence, we suggest that future research comes back to the roots of ethnographical discovery as "the most important element of fieldwork is being there" (Fetterman, 2010:9). All forms of interpersonal interactions should be accounted for, including their instantaneous dimension (Yanow, 2009). For instance, archival data (e.g. a database of tweets) could be complemented by real time observation or even recording through video capture (Kozinets, 2010: 100). We think that the development of such representations could contribute to the use of visual methods that remain underrepresented in organizational studies (Meyer et al., 2013). We also suggest emphasizing the subjective experience of the ethnographer, for instance

through auto-ethnographies, diaries, etc., rather than a singular emphasis on data comprehensiveness with archival analysis.

As in conventional ethnographies, online ethnographers must reflect on how they engage their field (Gold, 1958; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). However, the possibility of exclusively working on archival data and avoiding co-presence may prompt some online ethnographers to avoid participation, whereas some scholars consider it as a pivotal prerequisite (Watson, 2011). The high proportion of stealthy behaviors we observe in our sample confirms previous assessment of a disproportionate number of covert projects in online ethnography (Murthy, 2008). Conventional ethnography sometimes appeals to covert research designs, especially in sensitive contexts. Online ethnography offers concealment by default. While this "lurking" approach removes the disturbing effect of the researcher's presence, it also negatively impacts the collected data (Beaulieu, 2004:147) as ethnographers may miss out major parts of the observed phenomenon that can only be learned by "living simultaneously in two worlds, that of participation and that of research" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983: 89). We believe that future research should foster more overt participation. For instance, researchers could switch roles during a research project, with direct interactions following a first phase of lurking. Finally, we observe that a relatively high proportion of articles do not even tackle this issue, which raises ethical concerns. Ethical implications in online research have been abundantly discussed in the literature (Hoser and Nitschke, 2010; Kozinets, 2010; Murthy, 2008; Pritchard, 2012; Zimmer, 2010). Hence, we urge researchers to make clear how they dealt with ethical issues such as informant's protection or consent. The ethic guide from the Association of Internet Researchers, updated in 2012 to include recent technological developments (e.g. Web 2.0) can be used as a starting point.

To sum up, it seems that online ethnography has the defects of its virtues: its advantages may lure researchers to forget that all forms of ethnography remain demanding. Previous authors have warned about its "productivity advantages" (Murthy, 2011:161). For instance, by obtaining data too easily researchers are prevented from doing the effort of writing field notes, which is an important part of the ethnographic experience (Boellstorff, 2008). We made a similar observation. The absence of physical displacement may prompt researchers to stay within the boundaries of a single site, focusing only on online interactions. Similarly, one can be tempted to favor a retrospective document analysis over time consuming live observations since online exchanges can be compressed into a single chunk of archival data. Finally, the unobtrusiveness of online ethnography does not prompt researchers

to participate and interact with the people they observe. Hence, we think that future research would gain to switch perspective, from focusing on the practical advantages of this method to exploring more challenging way to do fieldwork.

Interestingly, many of our suggestions, while specific in their application to online ethnography, are comparable to the ones proposed for conventional ethnography, such as an emphasis on mobility, the role of the researcher as the central instrument of knowing, or new ways to present data (Czarniawska, 2008; Van Maanen, 2006; Yanow, 2012). Finally, we want to emphasize that our assessment does not mean that current online ethnographic studies, many of them of great quality, are inadequate. Rather, the suggestions we propose must be seen as complementary, in order to consolidate and extend this method. Most of the time, our methodological suggestions involve a trade-off (e.g. more participation versus unobtrusiveness). We hope our study may be used to provide guidance to organizational ethnographers who want to explore online footprints but are unsure on how they should adapt their methodology.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Reminder of the research objectives and main contributions

How does the adoption of online technology impact actors' behavior and their enactment of institutions? What roles do structure, agency and materiality play in this change? These are the key questions of this dissertation. I conducted almost hundred interviews, analyzed thousands of tweets, numerous newspapers articles and blog posts to answer this question. I first define the practical-evaluative component of agency. I then examine for each chapter the links between structure, agency and materiality.

Emirbayer and Mische (1998) distinguish three elements of agency, which respectively correspond to time orientations: past, future and present. First, habitual agency, which is turned toward the past, emphasizes iteration: actors reactivate past patterns of actions, which leads to the maintenance of institutions over time. Because it involves a "low level of conscious reflection" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998: 975), and emphasizes the reproduction of unproblematic, habitual patterns, it is mostly assimilated to structural effects within the institutional literature. Emirbayer and Mische (1998) quote as examples the works of new institutionalists which underline the routinized and taken-for-granted nature of institutions as well as their persistence (e.g. DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Zucker, 1977). In other words, this habitual agency is roughly equivalent to the structure. In contrast, projective agency stresses the imaginative efforts of actors as they attempt to "give shape and direction to future possibilities" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998: 984). Here, actors are capable to distance themselves from the schemas that constrain them. This strategic stance is the one that is exemplified by "heroes" such as institutional entrepreneurs, who impose their plans and shape favorable situations. Finally, practical-evaluative agency stresses how actors deal with the "demands and contingencies" of the present (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998: 994). Actors give a judgment based on the particularities of an emergent situation. They engage in improvisation and show practical wisdom as they face the dilemma and ambiguities of changing situations.

My findings show that actors mostly exhibit a form of practical-evaluative agency, which corresponds to their capacity to "make practical and normative judgments among alternative possible trajectories of action, in response to emerging demands, dilemmas, and ambiguities of presently evolving situations" (Battilana & D'aunno, 2009: 47; Emirbayer &

Mische, 1998). This form of agency is made possible by the introduction of online technology which introduces a new situation. This in turn enables journalists to partly escape the structural social forces that usually guide and constrain their behavior. Depending on the case, the role of materiality is more (chapter 2 and 4) or less pronounced (chapter 3). In all cases, actors' actions remain guided by practical needs and conditions which fit the contingencies of their particular situation, rather than by strategic plans. In other words, actors make do with their situation, rather than shape it as institutional entrepreneurs would do. I now highlight for each chapter the similarities and differences in this pattern that links structure, agency and materiality. These results are summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1

	Focus	Observed change in the structure	Evidence of practical-evaluative agency	Role of materiality and technology
Essay #1	Public expression of journalists	On Twitter, journalists adopt new forms of public expression, infusing a personal touch in their tweets, distancing themselves from their organization, and switching from one role to another.	The practical nature of agency can be seen in bricolage and boundary play.	Specific material characteristics of Twitter enable the crossing of boundaries between roles that are usually separated. As a result, journalists enact contradictory sets of norms and expectations.
Essay #2	Meaning ascribed by journalists to the practice of personal branding	Journalists build their own brand on social media. This practice is emergent and its meaning is progressively constructed as journalists begin to think reflexively on its consequences.	The practical nature of agency can be seen in the fragmented accounts (toolkit) and the unplanned and retrospective nature of sensemaking.	Technology enables the emergence of a new practice. It also opens a new social space where traditional expectations are disrupted, which leads to a breakdown and loss of meaning.
Essay #3	Research practice of online ethnographers	Researchers go away from the traditional ethnographic norms of being part of the field, and move toward a more distant approach of ethnography.	Researchers exhibit practical agency as they adapt their research methods to pragmatic needs (flexible opportunism).	Space and time boundaries, as well as rules of engagement are redefined by online technology.

In chapter 2 (essay #1), journalists acting online either import traditional journalistic norms or deviate from these as they cross the boundaries of their role identities. Specific material properties of Twitter (e.g. 140 character limit) play a central role in fostering behaviors that go against traditional norms of public expression (e.g. aggressiveness). In that case, technology plays the role of an enabler that allows actors to step out of their traditional roles. However, journalists do not have a specific idea of how they should act. They engage in "bricolage", a characteristic form of practical-evaluative agency (Battilana & D'aunno, 2009: 48). Bricolage essentially regroups three elements: make-do, the combination of resources for new purposes, and using the resources at hand (Baker & Nelson, 2005). For instance, journalists combine hard news with humor, mostly in a spontaneous way that nonetheless has practical implications such as adding humanity to their profile. Such behavior corresponds to the "improvisation" of practical-evaluative agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998: 994). The concept of "play", where primary drivers are enjoyment and discovery rather than goals and objectives (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010) also evokes practical consciousness: actors do not act as "institutional automatons" (Battilana & D'aunno, 2009: 47) nor have precise goals or plans in mind. In particular, the "fouls" that journalists commit when they go too far reflect the fact that the "consequences of their actions cannot be controlled and will often 'feed back' " in unforeseen ways given an uncertain context where rules are not fully defined yet (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998: 994). At the same time, structural forces still exert powerful influences. This can be seen in norm transference, as some journalists dutifully apply the norms corresponding to traditional expectations.

Overall, in this case the role of materiality and technology is one of an enabler, which opens the door of the iron cage of structural constraint. If individual journalists choose to step out of their conventional roles or continue to enact traditional norms seems to depend on personal preferences or characteristics (e.g. cognitive abilities). In any case, I do not observe technological determinism, which does not mean that materiality plays no role. On the contrary, I have identified very specific technical features (e.g. independence of the platform, space and time availability, etc.) that make this enabling function possible. Hence, as some scholars suggest, a materialist approach does not necessarily imply a deterministic vision (Leonardi & Barley, 2008).

In other words, while technology acts in very specific ways, it does not force actions. In that, this observation rejoins the concept of affordance introduced in the sociology of science (Hutchby, 2001). Affordance refers to the possibilities that an object offers for action. These possibilities both depend on the object itself, but also on the actors' nature. For instance, affordances vary according to the species: a rock may be a shelter for a lizard, a weapon for a human being, etc. In the context of the sociology of science, affordance means that technology has some inherent intrinsic properties. However, these properties alone do not fully determine humans' actions: rather they open up a range of possibilities and constraints. Actors who exhibit practical-evaluative agency then adapt to these specific circumstances.

In chapter 3 (essay #2), journalists try to make sense of the new practice of personal branding by appealing, among others, to their professional values. In that case, the introduction of new technology enables the emergence of a new practice that requires interpretation from actors. Again, the situation is dominated by practical-evaluative agency. Actors "contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment" (Battilana & D'aunno, 2009: 47). For instance, they envision the possibilities of social media and personal branding as a renewal of journalism. They also refer to past templates to either highlight the continuity or the incompatibility with traditional journalism. In both cases, they engage in a sensemaking that signals awareness,but does not reflect a consistent worldview. Rather, actors make do with the institutional resources they have at hand. They grasp the available "building blocks" that are "littered around the social landscape" (Meyer & Rowan, 1977: 345) to build an understanding of new and ambiguous practices. The unplanned nature of this meaning construction can be seen in its retrospective nature. Furthermore, the toolkit metaphor signals the "situational improvisation" that is typical for practical-evaluative agency (Swidler, 1986; Weber, 2005: 228). While this observation is close to the bricolage observed in chapter 2, it differs on two points. The first difference is conceptual, as the toolkit metaphor specifically refers to culture. Whereas bricolage regroups disparate elements, they do not necessarily relate to culture (e.g. mixing organizational and personal elements). Here, the emphasis is on the combination of cultural elements (professional values, market, etc.) to make sense of an emerging practice. The second and related nuance is that because here the focus is on meaning construction, the combination of elements only concerns the understanding of personal branding rather than how the actual practice is enacted. Previous research has shown how various meanings could be attributed to the same

practice (Zilber, 2002). Hence, combination of disparate meanings (e.g. what actors think about it) should not be conflated with combination of elements at the concrete practice level (e.g. what actors do) as it is the case in Chapter 2.

With regard to materiality, in this study, technology only acts as a trigger, close to the opportunity for re-structuring that Barley examines (1986). The subsequent theorization and recategorizing are largely independent of technology. Because the role of technology is more contextual, it is not limited to Twitter. Basically, all types of social media, such as blogs (including blogs hosted by the organizations), as long as they offer the possibility to present an individual portfolio, would exert similar effects. Some informants for instance mentioned that more and more, social networks such as LinkedIn are used by journalists to engage in personal branding. In contrast, in chapter 2 (essay #1), the material elements are very specific to Twitter. Typically, the 140 characters limit, the speed of the exchanges or the independence of the platform are very specific to this technology and are required to explain how journalists behave. Still, in Chapter 3 materiality plays a role as the emergence of personal branding at a large scale remains specifically linked to the development of social media and social networks which all primarily focus on individuals (in contrast with other web technologies),.

In chapter 4 (essay #3), researchers both stick to the traditional norms of conventional ethnography (e.g. researchers staying within the boundaries of one research field) and deviate from them (e.g. research designs do not always involve a lengthy stay on the field). In that case, technological features change the relationship of actors to space, time and social boundaries. As a result, actors engage in a "flexible opportunism" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998) characteristic for practical-evaluative agency. This form of agency is also visible in the interpretative work of researchers: because rules of conventional ethnography have to be adapted to the online circumstances, researchers have to show practical wisdom in their transposition of these rules (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). For instance, some researchers have replaced the requirement of real time sustained observation by downloading vast amounts of online data (e.g. forum postings) that correspond to a long period of online exchanges. Again, actors exhibit practical-evaluative agency by selecting only some practices while ignoring others as they simply drift toward the less demanding path (Battilana & D'aunno, 2009). There is no strategy here, as most researchers

conducting online ethnography, except for the ones theorizing its form (e.g. Kozinets, 2010) do not focus on the specific future forms it should take.

Materiality plays a central role here. It is because space, time, and rules of social engagement are redefined in the online world that norms of conventional ethnography have to be adapted and reinterpreted. Finally, if this chapter regroups the widest range of technologies within the same bag (forum, mailing lists, social media, etc.), each one involves specific considerations. For example, I made clear that methodological challenges vary in function of the synchronicity of the media: data from synchronous media (e.g. instant messaging) are more difficult to collect because of their ephemeral nature.

In sum, this dissertation shows that (online) technology does have an impact on actors' behavior and how they enact institutions. However, this impact is neither totally deterministic, nor totally controlled by individuals. Actors are neither cultural dopes nor "hypermuscular supermen" (Suddaby, 2010: 15). Rather they look like the average Clark-Kent-employees that populate most organizations and act pragmatically within a particular context that is characterized by specific material conditions. Whereas previous research has only focused on the structural constraints formed by institutional pressures, I also show the importance to take into account the specific material conditions that define a situation and the associated practical-evaluative agency.

A caveat should be introduced here. In my setting, I did not observe institutional entrepreneurs. Still, there may be other "hypermuscular Supermen" outside the field of journalism. For instance, the founders of Twitter, by creating this new tool, have inadvertently introduced change within the field of journalism. Depending on the chosen definition, they may qualify or not as institutional entrepreneurs. If we focus on potency rather than intentionality, "agents without any grand plan for altering their institutions, or even awareness that they are contributing to changes that diverge from existing institutions" (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009: 70) may qualify as institutional entrepreneurs. For instance, Mutch (2007) introduces the example of Sir Andrew Barclay Walker, who was pursuing profitable activities which resulted in innovation in organizational practice. In that case, "the aim was to be an entrepreneur rather than an 'institutional entrepreneur'" but it nonetheless led to institutional change (Mutch, 2007: 1124). The founders of Twitter would however not be considered as institutional entrepreneurs if we adopt a definition centered on interest. In that case, institutional entrepreneurship refer to

"activities of actors who have an interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create new institutions or to transform existing ones" (Maguire, Hardy, & Lawrence, 2004: 657). Dacin, Goodstein and Scott (2002:47) also stress the centrality of interests: institutional entrepreneurs "serve as agents of legitimacy supporting the creation of institutions that they deem to be appropriate and aligned with their interests". This is the definition I refer to in this work. In any case, irrespective of the chosen definition of institutional entrepreneurship, my dissertation offers an account that departs from a projective and strategic form of agency to underline its more contextualized and emergent counterpart: practical-evaluative agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). There is here no doubt that in the case of Twitter, its creators did not plan to change the field of journalism, nor even envision what it would be, as one of its co-founder recalls: "With Twitter, it wasn't clear what it was. They called it a social network, they called it microblogging, but it was hard to define, because it didn't replace anything. There was this path of discovery with something like that, where over time you figure out what it is. Twitter actually changed from what we thought it was in the beginning, which we described as status updates and a social utility" (Lapowsky, 2013).

A second observation relates to the scope of change. As our focus is on deviations from the traditional norms and values guiding the profession of journalists, we overall observe a moderate degree of deviation from the structure. For instance, as illustrated in Chapter 2, on Twitter, journalists achieve a balance by remaining within a range of acceptability. We can however wonder to which extent the fact that journalists are able to express themselves outside the traditional channel of their media constitutes in itself a divergent change. Current observations also point to a moderate deviation, at least until now. While some journalists are able to regroup a huge number of followers, their success remains relatively modest in comparison to the organizational accounts. For instance, the Twitter account of the three most prestigious media outlets of my sample range from 1 to 3 million, whereas the order of magnitude of the most followed French newspaper journalists are typically one order of magnitude lower (from 100 to 300 000). This contrasts with the overall ranking of Twitter accounts, where stars and celebrities dominate over organizational accounts. More importantly, media outlets still have a much greater weight in the social debate than individual journalists. Typically, journalists on Twitter only bring a complementary perspective on news. They may develop their individual view on news, be it through their tone, or the positioning of their personal brand, but ultimately

they mostly refer to articles published by media outlets (through links), be it their own or from competitors. Hence, while it is possible that in the future these alternative channels of expression become increasingly important, for the time being their role is still limited.

5.2 Future research

5.2.1 Integrating materiality into institutional research using a practice perspective

By showing how material elements impact actors' behavior and their enactment of institutions, this dissertation answers the call for integration of materiality into institutional theory (Jones, Boxenbaum, & Anthony, 2013; Monteiro & Nicolini, 2014). One remaining question is which theoretical form further integration should take. Some scholars suggest appealing to other theories, such as social construction of technology, actor-network theory (ANT) or textuality (Jones, Boxenbaum, & Anthony, 2013; Pinch, 2008). Given my findings which highlight the practical nature of action, I suggest that future institutional research turns to practice theory. After first introducing this perspective, I will explain why this theoretical lens is adapted. I then point out concrete avenues for future research. Finally, I will stress the necessity to explicitly examine the compatibilities of other theoretical streams with institutional theory.

According to the practice perspective, the most important unit of analysis to understand organizational phenomena are the practices (Nicolini, 2013). Practices refer to "organized human activities", like educational, cooking or management practices (Schatzki, 2005: 471). Practice is about what people actually do. But it is not simply doing: it is "doing in a historical and social context that gives structure and meaning" to what is done. In this sense, practices are always social (Wenger, 1998). Rather than a coherent unified theory, the practice based approaches form a family. The interest for management research in practice theory has developed in the broader context of a "practice turn" in contemporary social sciences (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina and Savigny, 2001:1; Whittington, 2006), through the work of theorists like Bourdieu (1980), De Certeau (1990), Foucault (1975) and Giddens (1984).

For our purpose, adopting a practice perspective is appropriate for four main reasons. First, a practice perspective brings the role of materiality to the foreground as "the site of the social is a mesh of practices and material arrangements" (Schatzki, 2005: 472). For instance, the educating practice that develops between teachers and students can only be understood at the

light of the material layout (e.g. blackboards, communication networks such as email). Deriving from this insight, a whole stream of research has developed around the concept of technologies in practice, which posits that enacted technology structures are recurrently produced in everyday action (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011). Obviously, this observation is close to the structuration model of reproduction of institutions (Barley & Tolbert, 1997). This leads us to the second point: a practice perspective is compatible with institutional theorizing, as prior works show. For instance, the writings of major practice theorists have later contributed to seminal advances in institutional theorizing (e.g. Bourdieu and his concept of field). More recently, it has been suggested that strategy-as-practice and neo-institutional theory can be cross-fertilized (Suddaby, Seidl, & Le, 2013). More importantly, a major stream of institutional research, institutional work, finds its roots in practice theory (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). Third, this compatibility with institutional theory is increased by the fact that the practice perspective is a family of theories. This in turn enables some flexibility. For instance, within the multiple streams of practice theory, some are humanists, such as the one defended by Schatzki (2001), whereas others, adopting a posthumanist stance, posit an equal role for humans and non-humans (Monteiro & Nicolini, 2014). By adopting a "toolkit" approach to practice theory (Nicolini, 2013: 214), institutional theorizing can select compatible elements without renouncing to core assumptions such as the central role of humans in reproducing institutions. Finally, practice theorists have in common that they attempt to overcome the duality of structure and agency, or as Schatzki (2005:465) calls, between "individualism and societism". This attempt to tackle the agency/structure debate can prove useful in helping institutional theory to balance the polarized views depicted in Chapter 1. As I previously mentioned, this perspective also resonates with the form of practical-evaluative agency I have observed in my setting (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998).

I now turn to the possible concrete avenues for research within this framework. First, current conceptualizations of materiality in institutional research lack systematization. For instance, in their analysis of the legitimizing work of prizes, Monteiro and Nicolini (2014) examine how material arrangements contribute to various forms of institutional work. However, they do not analyze how specific forms of materiality (e.g. physical artefact vs digital ones) exert different actions. There are two possible explanations for this underdevelopment. First, in order to systemize the role of materiality, multiple cases are required. An analysis across cases would indeed enable the identification of recurrent patterns specific to a particular form of materiality.

However, given the nascent state of research in materiality, there may be a lack of empirical material. Hence, future research should aim toward providing multiple case studies. The second reason is theoretical. Many streams of research in materiality stress relationality, where entities have no fixed attributes as they are only defined in relation to other entities (Cecez-Kecmanovic, Galliers, Henfridsson, Newell, & Vidgen, 2014). For instance, in this perspective, trying to identify an attribute specific to a technology does not make sense as its characteristics will vary in relation to the situation, the practices that are adopted, etc.., Future research could probably benefit from relaxing this assumption to adopt a "weak form of relationality" (Cecez-Kecmanovic, Galliers, Henfridsson, Newell, & Vidgen, 2014). This does not imply that we should return to a pure essentialist approach where matter would intrinsically have some immutable properties. A middle ground could be reached by developing studies based on configurations, which would both acknowledge the relational nature of material assemblages while systemizing their effect. We could examine how specific material attributes are more compatible with some types of institutional work. For instance, Monteiro and Nicolini (2014) suggest that the durability of an artefact (e.g. a building) creates a strong material anchor that favors institutional maintenance.

Finally, there is the need for epistemological and ontological clarification. Within a practice lens, some approaches may be easier to connect to institutional theory than others. For instance, several institutional scholars have suggested combining insights from Actor Network Theory and institutional theory (e.g. Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Lounsbury, 2008). While there are obvious connections between both streams (e.g. the concept of translation), they do not share the same foundations. ANT, as a posthumanist perspective, does not make distinction between humans and non-humans. This could be at odds with a conceptualization of institutions based on a socially constructed reality. Such observation does not necessarily mean that these approaches are incompatible. There have already been works that combine a posthumanist stance and institutional theorizing (e.g. Monteiro and Nicolini, 2014). These works however do not question the underlying assumptions of both theories. Therefore, it would be interesting to examine what are the explicit points of convergence and divergence between these theories. Otherwise, the risk of appealing to multiple streams of research without examining their foundations is that institutional theory "loses focus and coherence as it becomes infused with the agendas and priorities of distant paradigms" (Suddaby, 2010).

5.2.2 Exploring the role of the audience

One issue that could be explored in future research is the role of the public audience. Traditionally, in organization theory, the audience refers to external constituents that observe and evaluate members but do not directly participate. This concept shifts the focus toward the organization's environment as it "allows researchers to […] move toward an open-system model of cultures where a cultural group can no longer be understood solely by looking at its internal dynamics" (Weber & Dacin, 2011: 4). Institutional theory usually assimilates audience to specific key stakeholders which are the targets of organizational messages such as activist groups, political leaders, media or other corporations (Elsbach & Sutton, 1992). In the particular context of journalism, the audience should be understood in a broader sense that also encompasses the general public that receives the tweets (followers and readership).

Audiences play a central role in establishing legitimacy which reflects the degree of "congruence between the behaviors of the legitimated entity and the shared (or assumedly shared) beliefs of some social group" (Suchman, 1995: 574). In other words, legitimacy results from the conformity of an actor's behavior to the (assumed) expectations of its audience. As my approach is phenomenological, I did not collect data from the audience; rather, I focused on what journalists thought they were expected to do. My findings show that journalists mostly "imagine" their audience (Marwick & Boyd, 2010: 114): they mainly pay attention to the few social media users they interact with, using these cues to imagine who their larger audience is. This observation confirms the fact that even an imagined audience can guide behavioral norms (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Future research could go beyond examining these imagined normative expectations by shifting the focus to the actual audience and study how they have contributed to the changing practices in the field of journalism. As in much computer-mediated communications, actual readers on social media differ from the imagined audience (Marwick & Boyd, 2010). Hence, looking at how the actual audience reacts to the messages sent by the journalists may improve our understanding of legitimating processes. I now introduce two possible lines of inquiry. The first focuses on the role of the audience as interpreter of discourse. The second goes further: readers are treated as field actors in their own right who co-create norms through their meta-discourse on journalistic practices.

Traditionally, institutional research mainly focuses on the production of discourses rather than on their interpretation. For instance, in their analysis of the change in the conceptualization of whales (e.g. from wild beasts to appreciated animals) Lawrence & Phillips (2004) examine how popular elements such as movies convey particular representations. However, they do not analyze their reception or interpretation by the public. It is assumed that discourses accurately reflect societal evolutions. There have been increasing efforts by researchers to take into account the "consumption side" of institutional messages by organizational stakeholders (Lamertz & Heugens, 2009: 1250; Phillips, Lawrence, & Hardy, 2004). Such endeavors, however, do not address the end consumers. For instance, Lamertz and Heugens (2009) analyze the consumption of the discourse produced by the Canadian beer brewing industry by news media. However, how the public audience subsequently reacts to the accounts of the media is not explored. Media research has shown that the public, far from being passive, also reinterprets messages (Jenkins, 2006). Hence, looking at the interpretative process of the public would provide additional insights into how certain institutional messages resonate or not with the larger audience. It would be also interesting to examine how expectations vary within the audience. Prior research has shown that the structure of an audience affects institutional dynamics. For instance, various groups interpret and respond to the messages of an institutional entrepreneur differently (Kahl, Liegel, & Yates, 2012). In the case of journalism, some followers may have a very different conception from others of what is acceptable in terms of humor in news reporting. Hence, future research could examine how the degree of heterogeneity within the audience could impact norm formation.

We could also go beyond the paradigm of the audience as sole interpreter of messages. The role of consumers / users in institutional change remains underexplored, although they have been acknowledged as being an integral part of an institutional field (Ansari & Phillips, 2010; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This is especially true in the context of the emergence of Web 2.0 technologies, which have blurred organizational boundaries as well as the traditional distinction between users and producers (Ansari & Munir, 2010). Customers already co-create products in virtual environments (Nambisan, 2002). Therefore, in a similar way, it would not be surprising that the audience may play an increasing role in co-creating the norms and values that guide the online behavior of professionals. In my empirical setting, it seems that the journalists conform quite accurately to the expectations of their actual audience. The injection of a personal touch (Chapter 2) or the development of a personal brand (Chapter 3) are in line with prior works

showing that the public rewards personal expression on social media (Hermida, 2013). This suggests that their audience was not completely imagined: on social media consumers have been able to be in direct contact with journalists; replying to their posts, relaying messages that may be accompanied by additional remarks, as well as discuss new journalism practices in personal blogs and social network sites. This meta-discourse on new emerging journalistic practices on social media should also have had an influence on the journalists' behavior. Systematically investigating this meta-discourse to better understand how consumers have interpreted, but also shaped journalists' presence and practices on social media with their input and feedback, would give a completer picture of the sources of institutional change.

5.2.3 Exploring the role of power

Another area for future research would be to examine the role of power in the dynamics of institutional and technological change. Power can be broadly defined as a relational concept which refers as "the capacity to influence other actors" (Fleming & Spicer, 2014: 239). Because my focus is on institutional change in an emerging and confusing setting, the body of research on power related to the control of uncertainty seems to be the most appropriate. These works have stressed the control over the sources of uncertainty as a foundation for power: "those who get the upper hand in the game are those who control most of the crucial uncertainties" (Crozier & Friedberg, 1981: 8). Based on this insight, similar observations were later developed in the strategic contingency theory: within an organization, subunits which most effectively cope with uncertainty are the ones which have most power, since they reduce the impact of uncertainty on other organizational activities. In turn, this control confers power as dependencies are created (Hickson, Hinings, Lee, Schneck, & Pennings, 1971). The resource dependency approach suggests similar insights, as power comes from the control of rare resources central to the organization (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Among the multiple sources of uncertainty whose control confers power, technology is a major one. For instance, in his ethnography of a cigarette factory, Crozier (1964) shows how the maintenance workers held much power by being the only ones having the knowledge guaranteeing the functioning of the machines. The level of uncertainty is even higher as new technologies are introduced: such change offers an opportunity for employees to gain influence (Burkhardt & Brass, 1990). Hence, it could have been expected to observe power struggles in the field of journalism as social media are, in the early stages, only mastered by a minority.

However, in my empirical setting, power did not appear as a salient issue. For instance, as explained in Chapter 2, I did not identify status nor power as influential factors in explaining boundary crossing behaviors. This result is however not based on a quantitative analysis and only a statistical study could test such relationship empirically. In Chapter 3, social media enable the democratization of personal branding, which was previously reserved to a particular elite (e.g. columnists). Therefore, social media potentially introduce a shift in the balance of power. There are three explanations which could account for the absence of conclusive findings on this matter. First, in France social media are still in an emerging state and as a result the gatekeepers and traditional power holders (e.g. editors) have not shown much interest in this topic. Furthermore, the individual social media accounts do not have enough importance yet to be considered as strategic assets. This in turn does not give much leverage to challengers (e.g. young journalists using social media) as the issue is simply not acknowledged by current power holders. As power is relational (Fleming & Spicer, 2014), for a dependency to appear, it first implies that both parties at least acknowledge the importance of what is at stake. Second, in my empirical setting, the level of uncertainty is probably still too high (i.e. the evolution of social media is too unpredictable) to be effectively controlled by one group of actors. As I have shown in Chapter 3, many journalists experience confusion and are still struggling to make sense of their situation. Finally, some of the current power holders, even if they do not well master new technologies, may nonetheless have a head start. For instance, some columnists may automatically have a high number of followers, even before they tweet anything, simply because they are already well-known. In other words, while social media empower new incumbents, some of the current power holders may remain influential as they transfer their celebrity from the newspapers to social media. This in turn limits the scope of political struggles.

This situation may evolve in the future and political issues may become more conspicuous as the balance of power continues to shift in favor of new journalists successfully using social media. Prior work has shown that early adopters of a technology are able to reduce uncertainty, which enables them to gain power (Burkhardt & Brass, 1990). The fact that social media pertain to individuals even increases this leveraging power as journalists can only be encouraged, but not forced to use their personal social media accounts to promote or support organizational goals. Hence, in other settings where traditional power holders are more aware of the importance of technological developments, and where social media have a greater impact, the political struggles

within the organizational power structures may be more salient. For instance, in the US, many reporters revealed that sharing articles and engaging with readers through social media is now considered a key metric for success by which they are measured (Risi, 2015). In contrast, this was absolutely not the case in my sample. More generally, power issues may become more significant in settings where social media are developed enough to be a high-stake issue, but still not widespread enough to be fully mastered by all actors. Such intermediary state would create a source of uncertainty that could be leveraged by social media experts and early adopters against traditional power holders.

To examine these phenomena, future research could return to methods used in classical organizational works such as the rich case studies of lower echelon workers by Crozier, as recently advocate by multiple scholars (Bamberger & Pratt, 2010; Suddaby, 2010). Such focus may "bring actors and social agency back in to the study of institutional change" (Castel & Friedberg, 2009: 324) by examining the behavior of common Clark-Kent-employees while stressing their strategic attempts to maintain or acquire power. Interestingly, the perspective developed by Crozier and Friedberg also tries to find reconciliation between structure and agency. For that, the authors propose the concept of game (Astley & Van de Ven, 1983; Crozier & Friedberg, 1981). On the one hand, actors are parts of a whole system and must obey to structural rules. On the other hand, within this game, actors are free to choose how they can achieve their objectives. In particular, the ability to leverage power is highly contingent and depends on a specific setting. For instance, in the previously mentioned example, the power of the production maintenance personnel comes from the fact that they were the only ones having the knowledge of how the machines work, which was specific to this organizational setting. This observation resonates with my findings that agency is highly contingent to material conditions. Because this perspective stresses the ability of actors to creatively take advantage of uncertain situations, it could be used in future research to reflect the practical-evaluative form of agency suggested by Emirbayer and Mische (1998) that shares a similar focus.

5.2.4 Exploring the qualities and antecedents underlying practical-evaluative agency

My dissertation shows that actors exhibit practical-evaluative agency when they face new challenging settings. However, I do not examine what the individual qualities required by such form of agency are. For instance, in Chapter 3, my focus is on the intersubjective nature of

sensemaking. As a result, the question of which abilities are required for individuals to be capable hermeneutists remains unexplored. In Chapter 2, my findings suggest that the differences between journalists' behavior may be of cognitive nature. I now sketch the main qualities that actors should possess to engage in practical agency and suggest how future research could connect to this line of reasoning.

First, because actors must be able to navigate complex situations, the major required faculty is a form of practical intelligence that is close to intuition. Such conception of judgment departs from the deliberative thinking that is usually highlighted in rationalistic accounts and points toward a specific form of cognitive faculty that Aristotle labelled *phronesis*, translated as prudence or practical wisdom (Shotter & Tsoukas, 2014). For instance, phronetic leaders are able to intuitively grasp salient features of an ambiguous situation. At the same time, a certain amount of reflexivity it also needed, as it enables actors to escape the social structure they are embedded in. For instance, "making sense of events requires stepping outside one's lived experience and analyzing it retrospectively" (Gioia, 1986). The amount of required reflexivity is however at a lesser level than the one needed to craft strategic plans (Seo & Creed, 2002). Emirbayer and Mische (1998:978) draw on Giddens to make clear that the level of reflexivity is intermediate: "By distinguishing between three levels of consciousness—the unconscious, practical consciousness and discursive consciousness—he [Giddens] in effect constructs a continuum between the unreflective and reflective dimensions of action". A similar idea is put forward by Heidegger (Chia & Holt, 2006; Heidegger, 1927), where the focus is on being-in-the-world and lived experience, and where practical consciousness precede any theoretical reflection. Finally, creativity and resourcefulness are also required as actors are facing new and emergent settings and must constantly improvise new solutions. For instance, prior research has shown the links between creative processes and sensemaking: at the individual level, frames and cognitive maps are developed that enable the development of creative actions (Drazin, Glynn, & Kazanjian, 1999). Creativity is also required in practical activities such as bricolage (Baker & Nelson, 2005). Beyond the outline I have just provided, future studies have yet to address what other qualities are involved in practical agency.

A related question is to which extent these qualities are widespread among individuals. My work assumes that all individuals exhibit some form of common sense, as "practical

judgments […] fall within the potentiality of all persons" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998: 996). However, it could be that some individuals adapt more effectively or more quickly than others to emerging and uncertain situations. It would be interesting to explore what are the antecedents and situational factors (e.g. social position within a field) that make some individuals more prone to initiate change or make more sense of a confusing situation. There is also clearly value in examining to which extent the qualities required for practical agency overlap with the ones characterizing projective agency. For instance, while some individuals may successfully deal with an evolving situation by improvising, they may lack the long-term orientation to design future projects and visions. Conversely, the ability to draw plans and think strategically on a global scale does not necessarily imply effective reflection at a more local and operational level. Metaphorically speaking, future research could explore what distinguishes great soldiers/field officers from great generals. Prior research in institutional entrepreneurship, which tends to emphasize strategic agency (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009), has sometimes conflated both dimensions. For instance, among the social skills characterizing successful institutional entrepreneurs, some points toward practical agency (e.g. navigating specific special context) whereas others reflect more strategic abilities (e.g. crafting and sharing visions) (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009; Fligstein, 1997). While in some cases both sets of qualities are reunited (e.g. Napoleon was both a master in operational manoeuvers and a campaign strategist), a more balanced account of agency would be reached by analytically separating them.

5.3 Limitations

Because each essay already stresses its own limitations, in this part I acknowledge the limitations common to the whole dissertation. I also try to explain why such limitations arise and what future research could do to overcome them.

The first limitation relates to the difficulty of building a process study in such empirical setting. Process research is concerned with "understanding how things evolve over time and why they evolve in this way" (Langley, 1999: 692). Chapter 2, though it includes some data collected over time (e.g. 3200 last tweets) essentially remains a cross-sectional design. In contrast chapter 3 presents a process whose precise timeline remains however hard to pinpoint. This limitation comes from the online nature of the examined phenomenon. First, in comparison with other forms of archival data (e.g. newspaper articles), online data are highly unstructured (George,

Haas, & Pentland, 2014). Moreover, they are also difficult to collect without specialized knowledge. For instance, during the course of my PhD, many websites who granted access to tweets became useless or closed as Twitter changed its technical requirements. As a result, getting homogeneous data over a "long" period of time is challenging. Given the ephemeral nature of tweets and the huge amount of postings, most tools are only designed to go back a few weeks or months back in time. Going further back in time involves a loss of data (e.g. you no longer obtain a complete slice of data for a time period, but have to appeal to a targeted search) which is hard to evaluate. Hence, to build the process in chapter 3, I had to conduct targeted searches (using keywords) rather than collecting all data for a particular time period – for the simple reason it was simply impossible or beyond the resource a single scholar could appeal to– as far as I know. One way to overcome this limitation is to fully plan a study in advance by choosing a phenomenon that is still emerging. Indeed, it is simpler to record data as it is created (e.g. new posts and tweets) than going back in time trying to collect it retrospectively. This in turn limits the range of phenomena that one can explore to present and future events. For instance, French journalist began to use Twitter three years before I started my PhD, thus I had to collect online data retrospectively.

A second limitation is the restricted role given to the organizational level in my study. Though my research appeals to "organization theory", I have not elaborated much on the organizational level. This is mainly due to the nature of the phenomenon itself as social media focus on individuals. In fact, my original research design did acknowledge the importance of organizational structures. However, as I collected data and confronted the phenomenon, I observed that organizations were remarkably absent in the institutional dynamics of my setting. This can be explained by the fact that social media, often used semi-privately, escape organizational control, and by the lack of knowledge of management on these issues. As I pointed out in my essays, this absence does have consequences. In Chapter 2, the absence of coercive control gives free reigns to journalists' expression. In Chapter 3, the reduced presence of organizational brands eases the development of the journalists' individual brands. More importantly, the lack of guidance from the management in sensemaking leads to a fragmented meaning construction. Hence, the organizational level does play a role, but mainly through the passivity of the management and its absence. Future research could examine social media in other countries such as the United States, where it seems that the management plays a greater role on

those issues. For instance, there have been discussions over the ownership of a Twitter account, with a case settled out of court in 2012 between a journalist and its previous employer (Angelotti, 2014). Organizational guidelines on social media are also more common in the United States and the early adoption of this technology there may have led to an increased awareness of the management on related issues. In any case, from a purely theoretical point of view, I think that my contribution remains relevant as institutional processes, including within organizations, are fundamentally enacted by individuals (Powell & Colyvas, 2008).

The third limitation of this dissertation is that I mainly focus on online phenomena. This is especially the case in Chapter 2, where I do not examine the impact of online norms on "real life" working practices as the focus is purely on what happens on Twitter. In contrast, in Chapter 3, the practice of personal branding is not limited to the online sphere, though the focus is again on social media. Even if I myself in Chapter 4 advocate for the further integration of online and offline research, examining both domains at the same time remains a great challenge. Because of access and resources limitation, I was not able to complement my online research with conventional ethnography. Hence, future research could try to link both domains, be it conceptually (e.g. examining the impact of online practices on offline practices) and methodologically (e.g. integrating conventional ethnography with online ethnography).

The last limitation of my dissertation is that it does not examine much boundary maintenance, which consists in bolstering a boundary in order to preserve it against external assaults (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). This can be explained by the fact that maintaining a boundary first supposes that its outlines are sufficiently defined. In my setting, boundary crossing behaviors are still nascent. Journalists are still carving the free space that enables them to express themselves more autonomously (Chapter 2) or develop their own personal brand (Chapter 3), without exactly knowing where these boundaries end. Hence, in my analysis, disclaimers such as "Tweets are mine alone" are considered as a form of boundary crossing (creating a new space for personal expression which did not previously exist), rather than boundary maintenance. Still, in my setting I have observed some instances of boundary maintenance. First, many journalists protect their intimate life by either not posting about that at all, or restraining related updates to Facebook. Because Facebook is based on symmetry –both parties must agree to establish a "friendship" relationship– the circle of people receiving the messages is more reduced. Facebook

also integrates privacy parameters that enable the segregation of contents depending on the receivers. As a result, while personal opinions and everyday personal experiences (e.g. going to the cinema) are sometimes published on Twitter, journalists reserve their most intimate elements –typically, family related posts such as children pictures– to Facebook. In this case, the material separation between Facebook and Twitter is a simple way to segregate contents for different audiences. Similar compartmentalization strategies have been highlighted by previous research as a way to maintain boundaries (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996; Ollier-Malaterre, Rothbard, & Berg, 2013).

A second example of boundary maintenance relates to the management of the personal brand. In one case, an informant quoted the example of a media outlet creating a webpage aggregating the Twitter accounts of its journalists without asking for their consent. This created an organizational affiliation they did not necessarily ask for and some journalists complained to the management. They perceived the management initiative as a trespassing over their brand and reacted accordingly to defend their boundaries. However, within my sample, such outright rejections are rare. In most cases, both journalists and media outlets engage in a mutually beneficial game: they leverage each other brands, journalists gaining legitimacy by appealing to organizational brands, and media outlets gaining audience through the networks of their journalists. This mutual cooperation sometimes leads, as I have shown in Chapter 2, to ambiguous positioning as journalists want to stress their autonomy and organizations not to be held accountable for the excesses of their members. The fact that journalists engage in boundary maintenance in the above mentioned example was probably due to the management faux pas in not asking for authorization before acting. Finally, a last form of boundary maintenance relates to the profession of journalism. Professions engage in boundary maintenance as they defend their jurisdictional turf against neighboring professions (Abbott, 1988). For instance, in Chapter 3, though it has not been conceptualized in terms of boundaries, the contrast established between journalism and communication constitutes an attempt to differentiate both occupations. As it has been pointed out, defending this boundary is all the more important for journalists as both activities present striking similarities in terms of practical tasks (e.g. writing and diffusing contents). My findings suggest that the maintenance of the boundary differentiating journalism from other occupations rests on normative arguments. In other words, journalists characterize their profession by its attachments to specific norms and values. Several journalists have also

acknowledged that their profession does not require a specialized expertise. For instance, while they recognize that members of their profession have specific competences (e.g. good writing), they also mentioned that outsiders could develop similar skills providing that they get enough time and experience. All these observations are consistent with my presentation in Chapter 1 of journalists as a "semi-profession" (Aldridge & Evetts, 2003: 553) which mainly defines itself by its normative claims rather than by a specific body of skills or knowledge.

Finally, in a context where any social media user can produce content, we could have expected journalists to feel threatened by non-professionals such as bloggers and think the former would struggle to defend their occupational boundary against the incursion of amateurs. Prior works in journalism studies examining the relationship between blogging and journalism have provided mixed findings, ranging from complementarity to rivalry (Lowrey, 2006). Within my sample, journalists did not express much concern. They simply pointed out that very few people manage to live from their writings outside media organizations. Hence, blogging is not considered as a competitive occupation that could threaten or replace journalism. In fact, by adopting some of the codes of blogging on social media (opinionated post, building of a community around an individual), we could even argue that journalists have gone beyond their own occupational boundaries to encroach into the jurisdictional turf of the bloggers. Of course, at the opposite, we could also claim that blogging has managed to infuse journalism with its own values.

5.4 Practical implications

A Wall Street Journal article from October 2014 titled "Should companies monitor their employees' social media?". Such a question illustrates the importance of examining social media related issues in organizational context. Not a day goes by without confrontations between workers and organizations reaching the headlines. This issue is particularly acute as, given the nascent nature of social media, the legal implications of actors' behavior are not clear yet. For instance, several employees of a US non-profit organization were dismissed for complaining in a Facebook thread about their workload. Later, the ruling was retroactively ruled unlawful as the National Labor Relations Board decided that it is legal to vent about your employer on social media if specific conditions are met (i.e. if you are speaking on behalf of a group of employees and if your intention is to improve the conditions of your job) (Meister, 2013). Legislative bodies,

regulatory agencies and courts have to "play catch up with technology as well as social mores" (Cavico, Mujtaba, Muffler, & Samuel, 2013: 31). In sum, organizations should take the challenges raised by social media seriously, all the more that they present a grey area. This section on practical implications is divided in three parts. First, I show how my results can bring insights to other professions beyond the field of journalism such as health care or law. Given that one of the duties of an academic is to teach, I also included a focus on higher education. In the second part, I provide recommendations on how HR professionals can face social media related challenges. I examine two main levers of actions: designing trainings and formulating guidelines and policies. Finally, I show how other technological trends in the workplace raise similar issues to the ones observed in my dissertation. For that, I take the example of the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) trend.

5.4.1 Implications for other sectors

My results extend to other industries and to various professions. In Chapter 2, I have mainly pointed out the contrasts between the news industry and other sectors. Here, as my focus is on practical implications, I rather want to underline the common concrete challenges that span beyond the scope of my empirical setting. Many sectors which have adopted social media are facing the same set of issues such as the difficulty to manage boundaries or the development of behaviors that do not conform to traditional norms. For instance, in the health care industry, studies have shown that the posting of unprofessional or inappropriate contents (e.g. pictures of unconscious patients or physicians appearing inebriated) is relatively widespread among medical students and health care providers. This in turn can reflect poorly on the entire profession (Greysen, Kind, & Chretien, 2010). Besides, traditional demarcations such as the patient/physician boundaries are crossed more easily on social media. For instance, it is not uncommon for practical physicians to receive friend requests on Facebook from patients or family members, which raises issues of confidentiality and separation of personal from professional contents (Bosslet, Torke, Hickman, Terry, & Helft, 2011). Conversely, some practices, such as looking up information about patients on the Internet, while not wrong in itself, may be perceived as a boundary violation and compromise of trust by the concerned parties (Chretien & Kind, 2013). Finally, physicians are increasingly acknowledging the role of social media in building a personal brand (Panahi, Watson, & Partridge, 2014), a practice which could potentially lead to excesses similar to the ones I observed in my setting such as narcissism and

vanity. Similar observations can be made for other professions. For instance, lawyers face various ethical risks on social media including trespassing the attorney/client boundary, breaching the duty of confidentiality (e.g. revealing information such as a current investigatory trip through geo-localization), violating legal advertising rules (e.g. a LinkedIn invitation can possibly be considered as an advertising action), and engaging in the unauthorized or inadvertent practice of law (e.g. tweeting about a prospective case) (Lackey & Minta, 2012). All these examples point to the same conclusion that heavily relates to my findings: because of the specific material conditions introduced by new online technologies, traditional professional norms have to be reinterpreted and pragmatically adapted. In particular, as examined in Chapter 2, the blurring of boundaries may reveal parts of the identity that usually remain hidden. More generally, the list of examples of employees getting into trouble because of social media can be extended to nearly all sectors way beyond the circle of professionals: cases involved flight attendants (e.g. posting suggestive pictures in company uniforms), firefighters (e.g. for liking an inappropriate post on Facebook related to a victim), employees of a pizza chain franchise (e.g. posting a joke about tampering with the food on Youtube), etc.. (Cavico, Mujtaba, Muffler, & Samuel, 2013). Even Talibans lost credibility and provided intelligence by inadvertently geo-localizing their tweets (Noack, 2015)!

The implications of my work also extend to academics and the sector of higher education. As it is the sector we belong to, I think it deserves a special focus. As teachers, we have to think about the boundaries we may cross on social media. For instance, academics have stressed the change in tone toward less formality on social media, as well as a new timing in communication toward around-the-clock availability. Both changes can affect their relationship to their students (Snowden & Glenny, 2014; Veletsianos & Kimmons, 2013). Because they reduce the social distance between students and teachers, social media may put academics' authority into question as the latter violate the expectations of their students through their online behavior. Conversely, it exposes students to the risk of appearing under a negative light to the eyes of their teacher if they, for instance, post pictures of extra-scholar activities (e.g. partying the day before an exam may create a negative bias). There are however advantages in using social media as a communication tool between teachers and students. First, social media enable both teachers and students to become more acquainted on an interpersonal level. As a result, teachers can better know their students and their individual specificities beyond the limited scope of classroom interactions. On

top of better feedbacks and enhanced exchanges, this bond strengthening may also prove mutually beneficial in later context (e.g. evaluations and teacher's letters of recommendation). Second, social media can improve communication between students and teachers as it offers a new space which is not dependent upon time constraints. In this domain, progress can be made as a recent study shows that students are more open to the educational use of Facebook than most faculty (Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman, & Witty, 2010). To exploit the advantages of social media, the safest solution for teachers is probably to create a separate account for work related issues. Another option would be to create a special space dedicated to the class. For instance, a closed Facebook group (rather than a personal friendship invitation) or using specific tools (e.g. Edmodo) would offer a compromise between the informality of social media and the necessity to maintain a boundary between teachers and students. Finally, another related issue is, as I pointed out in Chapter 4, that time boundaries are redefined in online space. Students may expect to receive immediate answers. Conversely, they can resent the professor's intervention as intrusive if it is not timely done (e.g. posting homework at night). Hence, academics should also try to re-establish some time constraints. For instance, they could restrain themselves by logging into their professional social media accounts only during the day.

5.4.2 The role of HR professionals in overcoming social media related challenges

I now turn to Human Resources (HR) professionals, who play a central role in overcoming social media related challenges. For instance, according to a survey of KPMG, HR professionals are by far the ones primarily responsible –before the IT or marketing departments– for creating an organization's social media policy (KPMG, 2012). As I have shown, employees are knowledgeable and creative as they exhibit practical agency. At the same time, when they face new technologies or new practices, some guidance is necessary. Hence, management and HR professionals must find the right balance between imposing and laissez-faire. I successively look at the two main levers of action that HR professionals can appeal to in order to solve social media related challenges: training and guidelines/policies.

Training in social media is the first lever of action. According to some practitioners, by the year 2020, social media training in the workplace will be as common as ethics and diversity training (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). In chapter 2, I have shown the importance of boundary management skills. Therefore, organizations should ensure that professionals are able to acquire

these skills through training. One risk is to dismiss this necessity by underestimating the required skills to navigate social media. Indeed, it is quite simple to subscribe to Facebook or Twitter, which can give the misleading feeling that their use is unproblematic. Hence, training should be conceived as a way to make professionals sensitive about this issue. Case studies (e.g. boundary violations and "fouls") would provide solid examples that can raise awareness and teach professionals which behaviors should be avoided. As I have previously pointed out, there have been numerous cases of boundary violations in various sectors which provide a great quantity of material for raising awareness. More generally, training should not only transmit technical knowledge, but also provide guidance in the use of new technologies and emphasize their social dimension (e.g. explaining the expected behaviors or the codes specific to an online community).

As I have shown in chapter 3, the impact of technology is emergent, and meaning construction enfolds over time. Accordingly, training should also be dynamic and evolve over time. The multiple changes in Facebook and Twitter privacy policies as well as their historical development toward a broader audience illustrate the necessity to take into account the fluctuating dimension of social media. In its early stages, Twitter was not even used at all for professional goals, not to mention personal branding. Hence, any training should be revised over time to check its adequacy with current trends. On a related issue, because social media are *social*, they require a continuous support that is based on conversation, feedback and exchange. It is probably best if there is someone within the organization who is able to answer professionals' queries. It could be for instance either the social media editor / community manager if the organization has one, or technology friendly employees who are in charge of IT related issues. Even a referent who is more knowledgeable about these issues could be chosen among the professionals. This presence would ensure that professionals receive simple and updated advice whenever they feel it is necessary.

The second lever of action, formulating policy and guidelines for social media is more complex. Because of the rapid evolution of social media, inscribing rules of behavior into a static document is not necessarily the best solution as the latter may quickly become obsolete. More generally, I think that broad guidelines, in complement to training, make more sense than constraining rules and policies in promoting appropriate behaviors on social media. In any case, explicit guiding principles (even with no coercive values) can be used as a reminder of which

kind of behavior is expected. There is especially one point that organizations and HR professionals should clarify: the ownership of social media accounts. Given the high number of litigious cases, especially in the US, formal documents should above all detail the ownership of professionals' social media accounts. This does not mean at all that an organization should always try to own social media accounts. For instance, journalists who know that they own their Twitter account are more prone to develop a strong personal brand that their media outlet can then leverage to increase its own readership. Overall, if HR professionals feel necessary to develop a social media policy, rather than reinventing the wheel, they can draw on numerous examples of a site dedicated to social media governance (http://socialmediagovernance.com/policies). Such initiative could prove more useful in larger organizations, where there is a greater need for formalization. This was the case in my sample, where only the largest media outlet (an international press agency) felt necessary to homogenize social media practices across countries through a formal document.

Another important point to be taken into account is that social media policies can also backfire. First, as pointed out by some informants of my sample, stringent rules can suppress the spontaneity or authenticity that characterize social media, eliminating much of their added value. Second, by policing the content published on the grey area of social media, organizations may expose themselves according to the motto "if you control it, it's yours" (Bussing, 2011). In other words, a company may become liable for what its employees say on social media if it attempts to direct their behavior but fails to mitigate misconducts. Another related legal issue is that policing employees' personal accounts may violate a multitude of laws ranging from privacy rights to whistleblowing directives. Finally, the monitoring of employees' social media accounts requires a huge amount of resources that could be used for other purposes.

Last but not least, I have here focused on the challenges brought by social media and new communication technologies as they relate to my findings. However, beyond their "dark side", it is worth to quickly show that social media can also be effectively leveraged as tools by HR professionals. First, they can be used for recruiting. Through social networks, organizations can reach a vast pool of candidates for a modest cost. Background checks can be conducted to screen the most promising candidates. HR professionals can also enhance the reputation of their organization as an employer using online word of mouth. Second, social media ease talent

management. They can help finding experts within a company or be used as a training tool (e.g. facilitating group discussions). They can also be used to keep contacts with former employees so that their resources can be leveraged (e.g. knowledge of a process). Finally, social media represent a great way to communicate internally. Not only do they enable the quick dissemination of news (e.g. informing on promotional events conducted by the organization, training opportunities, and emergency notifications) but they also improve exchanges with employees. For instance, they enable HR professionals to take the pulse (e.g. on job satisfaction) in a more natural and conversational way than formal surveys would do.

5.4.3 Similar challenges for other technological developments

The last point I want to make is that some implications of my work also extend to other technological trends than the development of social media. The new trend of BYOD (Bring Your Own Device), sometimes called BYOT (Bring Your Own Technology) or consumerization of information technology (Schalow, Winkler, Repschlaeger, & Zarnekow, 2013) gives a typical example of how the boundaries between work-related and private spheres are blurring and how material elements play a pivotal role in this change. The main idea behind BYOD is that employees should be able to bring personally owned private devices (e.g. consumers' devices such as personal laptops, smartphones) to their workplace and use them to access organizational resources such as a firm's information system. According to a survey conducted by McKinsey in 2012 on 3000 workers, 80 percent of the smartphones used for work were employee-owned (McKinsey & Company, 2012). The BYOD approach has several benefits. First, as it shifts the expenses to the workers, it saves cost for the firm. Second, it increases productivity and user satisfaction. Indeed, as workers are used to interact with the device they like, they do not have to stick with the material issued by the IT department. Moreover, as employees tend to upgrade their device more regularly than their organization, it ensures that they use cutting edge technology.

BYOD does however bring boundary related challenges. First, because the devices are owned by the users, it becomes more difficult for organizations to limit their uses to work-related applications. Conventional interdictions such as forbidding the access to social networking sites during work hours may become more challenging to set up. This is not the case yet, as currently in nearly all jurisdictions, an employer is permitted to prohibit the use of social media sites during work, both on equipment provided by the employer and on the employee's own devices.

However, some countries such as Japan or Argentina prohibit actual interferences with employees' own devices and the legal environment may lean toward this direction (Proskauer, 2013). More generally, defining what are the expectations related to a device owned by the workers may prove tricky, if not legally, from a normative point of view. Another issue relates to the safety and the ownership of the data. Because the access to the firm's network is granted to various devices, this increases security and confidentiality issues. More importantly, in case workers quit their organization, there may be a disagreement on the ownership of the data present in the employees' device. As we can see, many of the challenges here are similar to the ones observed in my dissertation, such as the right of the organization to monitor contents produced/accessed by their employees, the issue of ownership and the impact of materiality on the interplay between personal and professional spheres.

Finally, beyond the example of BYOD, there are other trends blurring private and professional boundaries and which raise similar challenges such as telecommuting or digital nomadism. The impact of materiality or rather from dematerialization also appears in the development of flexible office spaces and collaborative co-working spaces. Hence, many of the insights I have pointed out here could also be relevant to other major technological developments in the workplace. As communication technologies become pervasive, the office is increasingly becoming an abstract concept. Some authors even argue that work could become a mindset independent of place and the time of the day (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). Such observation highlights the importance of pursuing research using a social-constructivist lens such as institutional theory while taking into account the effects of material transformations brought by technology.

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ABSTRACT

Does Clark Kent tweet? Structure, agency and materiality in institutional theory

This dissertation examines two main research questions: How does the adoption of online technology impact actors' behavior and their enactment of institutions? What roles do structure, agency and materiality play in this change? Its main conclusion is that actors mostly exhibit a form of practical-evaluative agency by taking advantage of an emergent situation which is characterized by new material conditions. The dissertation is articulated around three essays. In the first essay, I investigate how professional norms and the material features of Twitter guide journalists' online boundary management behavior. In the second essay, I examine the dynamics of meaning construction and their relation to the institutional context. In the third essay, I systematically review online ethnography and its boundary challenges. Finally, in the last chapter of the dissertation, after presenting its limitations and avenues for future research, I highlight the practical implications of my work.

Keywords: institutional theory, sensemaking, agency, structure, materiality, social media, technology, boundary, online ethnography

SYNTHESE

Clark Kent twitte-t-il ? Structure, agence et matérialité dans la théorie institutionnelle

Cette thèse examine deux questions de recherche: Comment l'adoption des technologies en ligne impacte-t-elle le comportement des acteurs et leur reproduction des institutions ? Quels rôles jouent la structure, l'agence et la matérialité dans ces changements ? Ma principale conclusion est que les acteurs font preuve d'une forme d'agence pratique en tirant avantage d'une situation émergente qui est caractérisée par de nouvelles conditions matérielles. La thèse s'articule autour de trois essais. Le premier essai examine comment les normes professionnelles et les caractéristiques matérielles de Twitter guident la gestion des rôles endossés par les journalistes. Le second essai analyse les dynamiques de la construction de sens et leur relation au contexte institutionnel. Le troisième essai consiste en une revue de littérature systématique portant sur la méthode de l'ethnographie en ligne. Dans le dernier chapitre de ma thèse, après avoir présenté ses limitations et des pistes pour des recherches futures, je souligne les implications pratiques de mes travaux.

Mots-clés: théorie institutionnelle, construction de sens, agence, structure, matérialité, réseaux sociaux, technologie, frontière, ethnographie en ligne