Meaningful encounters: theorizing relationality in pioneer journalism.

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'Meaningful Encounters': Theorizing relationality in pioneer journalism

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Theorizing audience engagement

- Mission impossible? (Steensen, Ferrer-Conill & Peters, 2020)

- A gap between rhetoric and practice; passive, transactional conception in legacy newsrooms (Anderson, 2011, Carlson, 2018, Ferrer-Conill & Tandoc, 2018, Nelson, 2018)

- A "relational-transactional continuum" (DeVigal, 2015)

- Meaningful engagement and community-centred journalism (Wenzel, 2020)

- "Relational journalism": a vehicle to rebuilding trust (Lewis, 2020)?

Defining 'relationality'

- A 'relational epistemology' as a way to repair journalism (Callison & Young, 2019)

- Relationality at the core of contemporary subjectivity: identities both real and constructed (Gibbons, 2017):

"In a crisis-ridden world, subjects are once more driven by a desire for attachment to others and to their surroundings (wherever boundaries are drawn between in-group and out-group or between inside and outside). In such a fragile and fragmentary reality, the decentred self asserts itself by grounding its subjectivity in lived experience as well as in the interactions between our bodies and our environments." (Gibbons, 2017, p. 130)

Pilot Study: Pioneer legacy journalism in the UK

- 12 in-depth semi-structured interviews in six London-based newsrooms

- Multimodal discourse and interactive design analysis of 12 story artefacts

- Findings: relationality, "audience first" philosophy (Anderson & Borges-Rey, 2019)

- Core concepts (Grounded Theory): *Relatability, Resonance, Personal Relevance, Empathy, Impact*

- "Pioneer journalism" as effort to reconstruct journalism (Hepp & Loosen, 2019)

Research Questions

How is meaning in pioneer journalism co-produced and what are the implications for the way pioneer journalists relate to their audiences/publics?

- How is pioneer journalism produced through the interaction between various actors and values?

- What are the encoding strategies pioneer journalism producers employ to reach their imagined audiences?

- How do the strategies of meaning production, or encoding of "designed affordances" (Shaw, 2017), manifest in story interfaces?

Methodology: Mapping the field

- 'Follow the thing' approach to constructing the multi-sited field (Marcus, 1995)

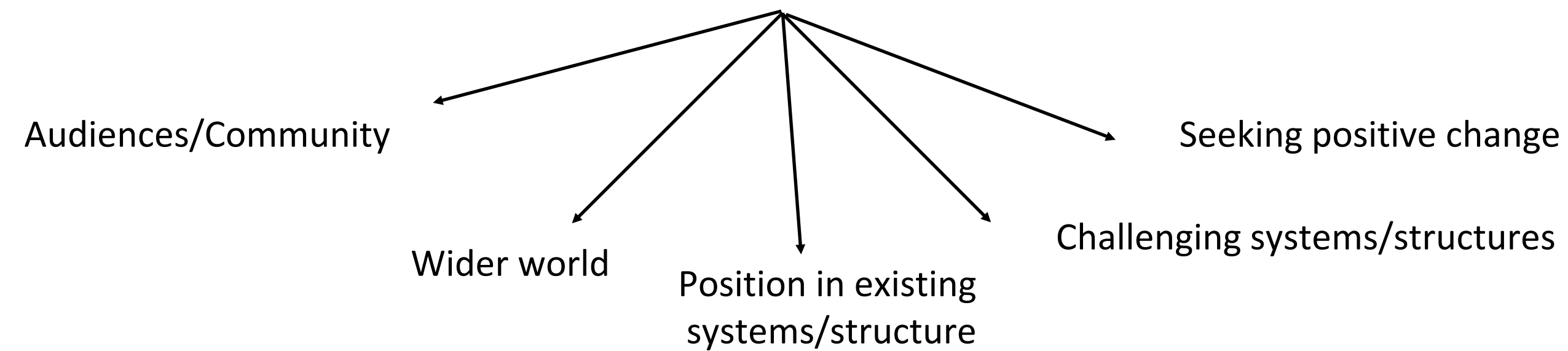- Initial sample of 22 pioneer journalism organisations

Shared/common values:

1. *Collectivity* (incl. community and co-creation)

2. *Making a difference* (impact, solutions, stories that matter)

3. *Relationship building* (incl. listening, care, empowerment)

4. *Integrity* (honesty, transparency, editorial independence)

5. *Public service/public interest*

6. *A better future* (idealism, hope, justice, democracy building)

7. *Reimagining journalism* (innovation, diversity, open subjectivity, focus on regional voices, local-global nexus)

"Meaningful journalism" (Coda Story)

Meaningful journalism and relationality

Relationality ('meaningful encounters')

Audiences/Community

Wider world

Position in existing
systems/structure

Challenging systems/structures

Seeking positive change

"Relational journalism" (IndigiNews)

"Meaningful lives, meaningful knowledge" (Wapatoa)

Methodology and Fieldwork

Stage II of sampling: WJS classification of journalistic cultures (Hanitzsch et al., 2019)

Journalism organisation	Country of operation
The Current	Pakistan
Outriders	Poland (also global)
DoR	Romania
R.AGE	Malaysia
New Naratif	Singapore (covering South east Asia)
Bureau Local	UK

Multi-method qualitative design:

- 35-40 in-depth interviews

- Artefact analysis of stories (critical multimodal discourse analysis and interface design analysis)