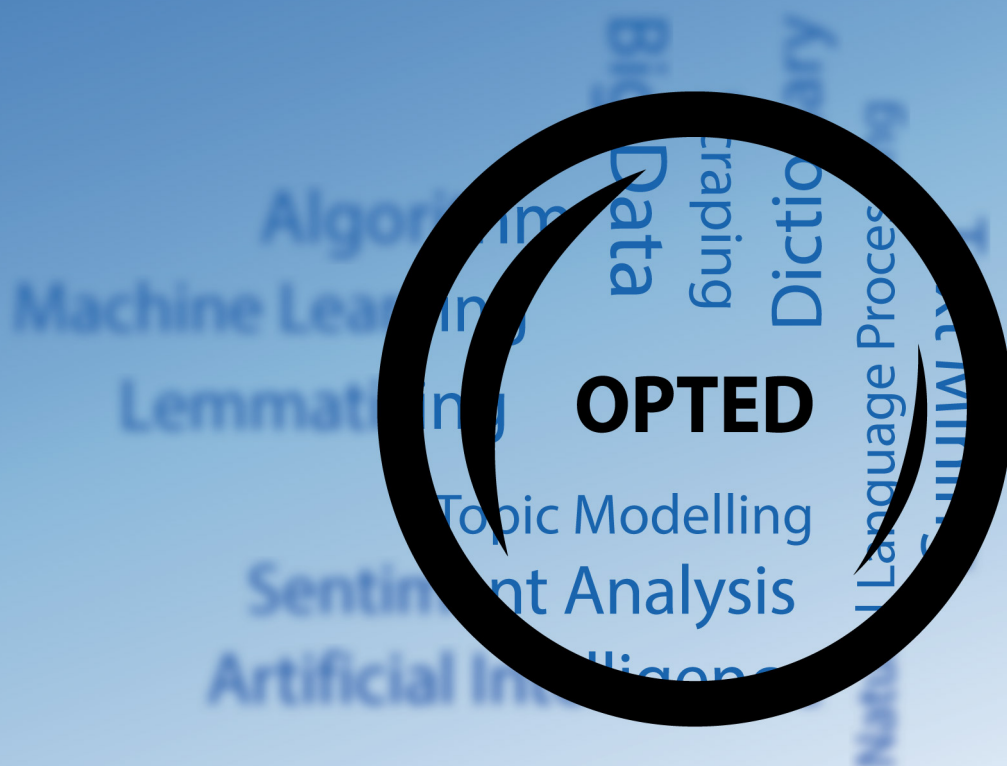# OPTED

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Conceptual Overview of Text Data**

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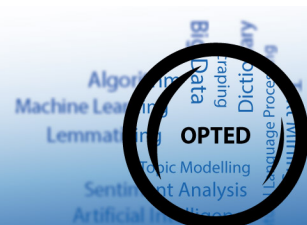
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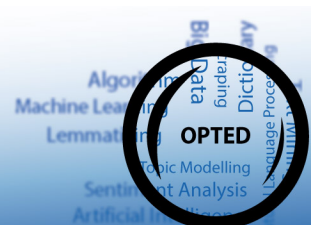
Towards an Inventory of Journalistic Mass-Mediated Political Texts: Conceptual Overview of Text Data

Deliverable 3.1

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Contents

1   Executive Summary

This deliverable provides essential preparatory work towards an inventory of journalistic mass-mediated political texts (JMPT) that—once established—will help researchers to rapidly identify and classify texts and data sources. The deliverable elaborates on the scope of Working Package 3 and clarifies the distinction to Work Packages 2, 4 and 5 within OPTED. The foundation for the inventory is a solid classification system of JMPT. This requires a clear understanding of JMPT and its key characteristics. To do so, we conducted a qualitative literature review on previous approaches towards defining and classifying journalism, mass media and their outputs. As a result, we have a broad and inclusive understanding of a JMPT, as an ostensible non-fiction text that is published by a mass-mediated news source and reports or comments on politically relevant events and ideas. We synthesized a new, nested, and interlinked approach for JMPT classification that accounts for their context-dependent and changing nature. We distinguish in our classification between news items, sources, media organisations, and media systems. These entity types are interlinked and allow for reflecting the context-dependent characteristics of JMPT. Looking ahead, we will inventorize sources, media organisations and media systems, rather than single texts. We propose a knowledge graph database as an implementation approach for the future deliverables.

2 Introduction

Information and communication from within and about politics are at the heart of political processes and understanding the current challenges to the functioning of democracy inevitably must rely on a comprehensive assessment of communicative processes. Political texts in their various forms nowadays offer a vast resource to study democracy from a supply (political elites, political institutions) and demand (citizens, non-government organisations) side, be it through the study of, e.g., political party manifestos, parliamentary debates, individual politicians (speeches, social media accounts), news media, citizen blogs, or social media. Among the main objectives of the OPTED infrastructure is the classification of these various political texts and a collection of relevant databases in the form of inventories.

Work Package 3 (WP3) specifically deals with those texts that are linked to a news source and that report or comment in a mass-mediated manner on politically relevant events and ideas. We summarize them as "Journalistic mass-mediated political texts" (JMPT). JMPT are nowadays produced by diverse groups of actors and are accessible in various formats and via various channels. The contents are for example offered in digital formats as e-paper, online newspaper, via social network sites, apps, streaming platforms, by traditional media organisations, by alternative journalism initiatives, journalistic blogs, and news aggregation sites. Responding to the challenge of a very rich but also highly fragmented media landscape, WP3 provides an extensive overview about main sources of JMPT in the European media landscape to be of use for political communication and journalism scholars, for data journalists and the interested public. In preparation of this goal, the first deliverable of WP3, D3.1, deals with the definition of journalistic mass-mediated political texts (JMPT). It then moves on to a review of relevant classification criteria for JMPT, taking into account criteria of the texts themselves but also for their production and reception context within the European media landscape. D3.1 ends with a **theoretically informed conceptual blueprint for an inventory**.

2.1 Classification as Inventory Tool

What is or can be considered political journalism and journalistic texts is an increasingly blurring field. From perspectives in journalism research, where the blurriness of concepts, the boundaries and transformation of journalism are emphasized and discussed (Ryfe, 2018; Deuze & Witschge, 2018), working towards a classification of JMPT and the cataloguing of JMPT sources seems not only challenging but actually futile. Even such seemingly basic questions as "What is the purpose of journalism?", "Who is a journalist?", "What is journalism?" (Ryfe, 2018) cannot be easily answered. However, a well-informed classification of JMPT is required in studies drawing on text-as-data approaches to select, make sense of, interpret, or compare text data.

While being aware of the challenges we nevertheless provide an attempt of building a classification for JMPT that informs an inventory for such texts. There are a number of good reasons for this endeavour:

- **For any kind of systematic study**, classification is greatly beneficial if not necessary. Classifications enable the identification of differences and similarities, present an exhaustive list of dimensions, allow a coherent comparison of types, and make the study of relationships easier (Bailey, 1994, pp. 12–14). Simply said, a classification is the "best inventory tool a researcher has" (p. 13). Classification is necessary "as a foundation for explanation" and it provides a key ingredient for research designs (p. 15).

- Journalism and the global media landscape are in transformation (Deuze & Witschge, 2018; Lewis, 2012; Mythen, 2010). The same can be said for political communication (Negrine, 2008). With a good classification for JMPT and ideally an inventory for such texts and their sources, we put scholars in a better position **to study this transformation**.

- A classification and associated inventory is useful from a **research practice perspective**. In research practice, the selection of texts is an essential step that is necessarily guided by criteria. When working with digitized text, political communication and journalism researchers typically rely on online text archives such as *LexisNexis*[1] or *Factiva*[2] for the fast and relatively easy selection of data sources and texts (e.g., Trilling & Jonkman, 2018). Although some of these archives contain many pre-classified

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[1] https://www.lexisnexis.com

[2] https://professional.dowjones.com/factiva/

5

sources, they are typically closely tied to specific countries and types of sources, the meta-information per source is kept sparsely and may deviate across archives. In addition to archives, researchers may gather enormous amounts of data themselves with methods such as extracting raw data from news sources (e.g., digitizing print newspapers, or web scraping) for their specific needs (e.g., Van Atteveldt & Peng, 2018). Taken together, while the growing numbers of available data sources and text archives are welcomed, they lack all-together organisation and a systematic overview (e.g., Esser & Vliegenthart, 2017, p. 11). A well-informed and holistic classification will in fact help to **reduce the complexity** of data sources and JMPT and will assist scholars to make well-informed research decisions.

- Lastly, it is especially **country-comparative research** projects of European scale, that will benefit from classification and inventory of the OPTED infrastructure. In fact, comparative communication scholars call for classifications and typologies to identify similarities and differences (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012) and regret that there is no reliable international catalogue where one can look up media sources (Esser & Vliegenthart, 2017, p.11).

In this deliverable specifically, we undertake **preparatory work for this classification and inventory**. This involves first of all a working definition of JMPT. In order to identify major perspectives and to consider the most relevant lenses and characteristics for JMPT, we then perform a review of scientific handbooks and literature in the field. In this way, we define the rough corner points for the classification. And importantly, we also outline our plans to deal with the "blurry" and "dynamic" character of JMPT. In brief, as mentioned, "journalism" is blurry, ambiguous, and context dependent, still there are ways to "Dealing with the mess (we made)" (Witschge et al., 2018, p. 651). In essence, there are ways of systematizing work that take account of fuzziness and relatedness of categories (i.e., networks, concept maps, knowledge graphs). As we assume that a *knowledge graph* which is "a large semantic net" (Fensel et al., 2020, p. 6) will later be a particularly suitable data structure to implement the inventory, we already orient the work summarized in D3.1 to the requirements of such a structure. To **prepare a knowledge graph** and to define its structure, the first step is the identification of the essential *properties* of JMPT. The term property is borrowed from the terminology of knowledge graphs and it can be understood as dimensions or variables (e.g., Fensel et al., 2020).

Once implemented, the inventory can be used by researchers to find various data sources (e.g., archives, existing corpora) based on a wide range of criteria such as language, date, country, or publication channel. The classification structures the inventory but also informs the user about relevant selection criteria. The inventory is aimed to give researchers many options and few limitations on relevant finding textual data. It should, for example, enable the gathering of textual data published in print sources four weeks before the Brexit referendum in Belgium and Denmark, giving the researcher a quick reference where to find such data and how to retrieve it. Furthermore, the inventory also should link existing publications that used the queried data sources before, as has been successfully implemented in other data related projects, such as the Manifesto Project (Volkens et al., 2015). In this way, an interlinked inventory would also draw a map of research activities based on the criteria set out above.

We develop our definitions and classification through a qualitative literature review, where we also review key properties of JMPT. The review covered 41 handbooks relating to media, communication, and journalism research, as well as 20 journal articles.[3] Our guiding principle in the review revolved around the ontology of journalism. We looked at the perspectives and approaches that researchers use for studying journalism and media landscapes. We specifically extracted definitions, characteristics and criteria relating to the terms "journalism", "journalistic text" (or "output"), "media landscape", "media system", "mass media", and "news media". By gathering these pieces, we obtained a good foundation of established concepts in the field that inform the structure of the inventory. Our approach might not cover the field completely and is probably susceptible to blind spots. However, we believe that the most prominent and established classifications and definitions that are relevant for our aims are covered.

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[3] We ran two queries on Google Books with the search strings "handbook Europe media landscape" and "handbook journalism research", filtered by the period from 2000 to 2020, and only considered works published in English. Works about non-European regions (e.g., Asia) were excluded.

2.2   Classifying JMPTexts in Context

In journalism studies there is already a range of available classifications to cater different perspectives and research interests. For example, classification schemes for media systems aim, among others, at understanding the conditions under which journalism is practiced (Brüggemann et al., 2014; Hallin & Mancini 2004; Herrero et al., 2017). Such classifications often consider the functional perspective of journalism. Other types of classification are concerned with the producers and production entities of journalistic texts (Hanitzsch et al., 2019) or with the classification of media users who are categorized, for example, based on interaction modes (Jensen, 2008; Brandtzæg, 2010) or discourse cultures (Hellmueller et al., 2020). Last but not least, Reese and Lee (2012, p. 253) discuss the classification of news content by content features, such as format, genre, style, the medium (i.e., television, magazine, newspaper), audience appeal (i.e. highbrow/lowbrow), by its effect (i.e., anti or pro-social), and by its function (i.e., functions the content fulfils for society).

Inspired by this selection of previous works, we seek to develop a classification that starts with a clear focus on JMPT, but that equally takes into account the contexts in which the texts appear. This is important as we conceive of JMPT as entities nested in other structures which in turn also fundamentally contribute context information for classification. Let us for example imagine a short text that reports on a new government initiative that promoted the usage of bicycles in urban areas. If this text is published by a government office, readers are unlikely to refer to it as a journalistic text, but rather as a press release. However, if the very same content appears in a newspaper, readers would easily recognize it as a journalistic text. This illustrates how the context of content establishes the frame of reference and thus influences its reception. However, texts also provide properties to the source in which they appear. We intuitively know that contents of "tabloid" news outlets and "quality papers" differ from each other. In a static media landscape where news outlets consistently produce content with similar patterns and characteristics, it can be naively assumed that everything that is published by a tabloid is "tabloid content". Yet, the media landscape is not static but dynamic. New entities frequently emerge, and established ones transform, adapt, or disappear. This constant change raises the importance for researchers to study the output of journalism. For example, the phenomenon of "tabloidization" is such a transformation process that can be studied by analysing the content of entities (Wasserman, 2019).

To summarize, while certain properties of JMPT are self-sufficient, the texts are also dependent on the respective contexts in which they are nested. It is this intricate link between all different levels that contribute to the properties of journalistic texts. Therefore, we strive towards an interlinked classification system that is capable of accounting for the nested structure of JMPT.

2.3   Defining journalistic mass-mediated political text

Stretching out the scope of such a classification, we first need to understand better what we mean by JMPT and define the phenomena that we inventorize very carefully (Bailey, 1994, p. 2). To do so, we specify first each of the components **journalistic, mass-mediated, political, and text**.

Rather than defining a "**journalistic**" text as a text produced by a journalist, we define it as output produced by a news source that fulfils the mass-media character as defined below and that has the primary purpose to regularly report and comment on recent events and ideas (see also Anderson, 2012). News sources produce output that claims to be non-fictional and the audience also generally accepts this claim (Jensen 2002). Defining "journalistic" by means of focussing on the individual journalist appears less fruitful, given that prominent criteria such as legal definitions, via definitions based on values and norms, or whether a person has had professional training or not (for a summary see: Hayes et al., 2007; Johnston & Wallace, 2018, p. 16), might be impossible to obtain or vary across countries. In addition, "to members of the public at large, they [the journalists] are part of the media company and their work is seen as what the organisation—not the individual—reported today." (Hayes et al., 2007, p. 265).

Using the term "**mass-mediated**" we aim first of all at excluding interpersonal communication that is mediated but happens in a private setting (e.g., private chats, phone calls) from the classification. We rely further on the working definition by Potter (2013): By specifying mass-mediated we concentrate on textual material that is meant to achieve broad exposure within a defined target audience. Even though receiving the material may require some form of payment, or special equipment, it is in principle unrestricted. These texts are disseminated via specific technological channels (i.e., fast reach of audiences, allow public messages) and produced by a certain type of message senders (i.e., complex organisation, standardized practises, self-promotion to attract, try to get the audiences to habitual repeated exposures). By highlighting the news "producing"

activity of a message sender, we exclude news aggregation sites; in contrast news blogs and alternative news media sources are included in the scope of the definition as well as news agencies. Their audiences are people who are dispersed, who know about the public character of the text, and encounter texts—mostly automatically—in various exposure states (Potter, 2013, p. 16-17; Athique, 2017; McQuail & Windahl, 2015). It is especially the production-related specification (i.e. complex organisation, standardized practises) through which we seek to draw a rough boundary to the text types examined in WP2 (text produced by citizens/individuals).

By specifying "**political"**, we draw largely on the understanding that texts can be defined by their function for society (Reese & Lee, 2012). We mean by political that we are interested in the type of "content that has political consequences" (Reese & Lee, 2012, p.254) and relate to content that is intended to have an impact in the political sphere, i.e., an impact on collectively binding decision making processes (McNair, 2017). By focusing on journalistic political texts, we thus implicitly exclude journalistic sources that concentrate on entertainment, fictional content, or "lifestyle journalism" (Hanusch, 2019; Maares & Hanusch, 2020). Furthermore, we also implicitly exclude texts by collective political actors (e.g., parties, governments) and (political) advertisement/public relations, because their main purpose is not to report and comment, but to shape collectively binding decision-making processes (McNair, 2017).

Specifying the term "**text**", we acknowledge a broad understanding of text that goes beyond written material and that includes a variety of "other meaningful matter", such as images, maps, or sounds (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 19; Reese & Lee, 2012). Still, in the awareness that text—in the sense of an array of sentences—is most readily available and can be processed most easily with available automated content-analysis tools, we focus on this content part. Since the transfer of verbal information ("verbal text", Petöfi & Sözer, 1986, p. 298) to written text can be achieved via the process of "transcription", we include this content type into our text definition as well.

All in all, we have a broad and inclusive understanding of a **JMPT, as an ostensible nonfiction text that is published by a mass-mediated news source and reports or comments on politically relevant events and ideas.** Further descriptions and various perspectives to look at JMPT will become clearer in the properties of the classification itself.

With this working definition, we address an intersection of the text types relevant in the subfields of political communication (McNair, 2017; Semetko & Scammell, 2012) and of journalism studies (Carlson et al., 2018; Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009). Both fields give us the necessary theoretical knowledge to start building a classification. Both fields potentially belong to the main user groups of the classification.

3   Results of Literature Review

The literature review was broad and open to account for the complexity of political journalism. At the same time, we considered how the insights from the different works could be beneficial for research that is based on content analysis. When studying JMPT, researchers are interested in answering different questions, such as the role JMPT play in the political system, or the differences in outcomes of journalistic routines. Reviewing and summarizing the handbooks we identified **four perspectives** that appeared relevant to us in preparation of a classification for JMPT: a functional perspective, a usage and interaction perspective, a production perspective, and a content-centred perspective. The former three consider the bigger picture and context in which a JMPT is situated. While these are often researched by other methods than text analysis (such as surveys, e.g., Hanitzsch et al., 2019), their considerations contribute towards informing our inventory and are thus briefly summarized. The latter perspective is strongly focused on JMPT themselves and mostly investigated with content analysis. From a conceptual point of view, these different viewpoints are not necessarily separated from each other but rather emphasize the various research interests and angles.

3.1   Functional Perspective

The functional perspective is concerned with the media system as a whole. But interestingly, understanding the ascribed functions of journalistic output helps to distinguish it from other types of mediated content (Reese & Lee, 2012, p. 253).

Looking at the basics, the media in general constitute "the social space where power is decided" (Castells, 2007, p. 238) and "news content in particular provides that space" (Reese & Lee, 2012, p. 254). Journalistic texts' core function is the dissemination of new information on current events and ideas (Anderson, 2012;

Richeri, 2011, p. 130). However, the amount of available information ready to be shared would typically exceed the audiences' capacity to process them. Therefore, the journalists filter the information based on what they deem relevant for their audiences. This function of selecting what is relevant has often been described as the gatekeeping function or role (Hjarvard, 2002, p. 91; Vos, 2019, p. 90).

The dissemination of news gives the news media also a linking function within an economic system where it distributes information about the market and thus connects all kinds of economic agents with each other (Faraone, 2011, p. 189). The linking function is also exercised in political contexts, where journalism represents public opinion (Donsbach, 2007; Fletcher, 2012, p. 36). But journalism has not only a representation function, but also influences or creates public opinions (Donsbach, 2007; Fletcher 2012, p. 41). Therefore, journalistic output supports political communication of political parties, civil society, and government by providing channels and public conversations (Fletcher, 2012, p. 36). Thus, journalistic texts function as an account of public debate and deliberation, which has often been summarized in its agenda-setting function (Fletcher, 2012, p. 41). Especially in democratic contexts, journalists additionally fulfil a watchdog function where they expose abuses of power, give a voice to the marginalized, or bring issues of justice to the public agenda (Fletcher, 2012, p. 40; Eberwein et al., 2017b). Identifying the functions of journalistic texts is relevant for our classification, because it informs our definition and understanding of JMPT. Journalistic sources can only fulfil their function to inform about recent events and ideas as long as it is recognized that they publish non-fiction texts.

3.2   Usage and Interaction Perspective

The usage and interaction perspective considers journalism and its output in relation to their audiences. This perspective is, among other, concerned with the media platforms (or channels) on which "a news story can be realized" and the platforms' technical capabilities (Erdal, 2012, p. 184). Usage and interaction behaviours of the audience differ to a large extent between print, radio, television, web, and social media (ibid). Veglis (2012, p. 214) notes that platforms or channels are push or pull oriented. Pull oriented channels depend on the user actively seeking news through acts such as switching on the TV at the right time. Push oriented channels on the other hand actively sends news to the user, which is nowadays mainly achieved with the help of the internet.

Interactivity is not only limited to the relationship between audience and journalists in formats such as letters to the editor or by leaving a comment on a news website. It also encompasses the ability of the users to engage with the content of the news item itself (Robinson, 2012, p. 62). This type of interaction can augment, but also contradict the presented content (ibid). The user gains control over the content and can customize based on personal interests and preferences (Fletcher & Young, 2012, p. 37). Specifically, the interaction possibilities provided at the level of an individual text by digitally linking content through hyperlinks, hashtags or similar, also embed a single text unit in a vast network of related items (Reese & Lee, 2012, p. 259). The space where users interact with news and journalism has grown significantly since the dawn of the digital age.

This perspective highlights that the channels used for publishing news items are highly important for their context. They constitute the possibilities for the realization of news, both for the publisher and the user. Considering the this perspective on the system level, media usage and interaction patterns differ between media systems based on cultural aspects as well as on differences in economic development (e.g., number of households reached by television, mobile phone subscriptions, mobile phone ownership, internet household penetration, Kelly et al., 2012; cross-border media use, Hafez, 2012).

3.3   Production Perspective

Works that emphasize the production viewpoint (e.g., Kelly et al., 2004; Price et al., 2013; Eberwein et al., 2017; O'Neill & Harcup, 2019; Downing, 2011; Neumann, 2019; Paulussen, 2012; Hanitzsch et al., 2019) consider the sources and types of influences on the production process of texts, where we identified three types that are frequently discussed.

A first type of influence is of legal nature. Legal influences are closely linked to concepts for freedom of press and media accountability (Kelly et al., 2004; Price et al., 2013; Eberwein et al., 2017). While legal aspects can constitute boundaries for journalists, they can also serve to protect them or even enable them to investigate by providing special access to sources of information (Johnston & Wallace, 2018, p. 20). Considering the influence of the law on journalists, points at the intricate link between the media landscape and journalistic

texts. Here, organisations of media accountability such as press councils exercise legal influences (Terzis, 2008). Legal aspects are important characteristics of a media system and the literature suggests that not only the law, but also media organisations play a role in describing the system.

Secondly, there are economic factors such as a country's GDP, purchasing power, or market size (Kelly et al., 2004; Preston et al., 2017, p.13) or aspects such as the available budget for news production (O'Neill & Harcup, 2019, p. 219). The notion of available funds for journalism also points at ownership structures, associated economic interests, and autonomy (Downing, 2011, p. 143; Kelly et al., 2004; Neumann, 2019). Thinking about funding and payment models of individual media entities the difference between privately and publicly funded news organisations is also relevant to mention (Kelly et al., 2004; Neumann, 2019) not at least as the competition of privately and publicly funded media organisations alter the configuration of media markets. Taking these economic factors together it becomes clear that a text can be seen as an economic good (Paulussen, 2012, p. 201). Timeliness and publication speed are crucial elements that give a news item economic value. Another economic influence is the aim to appeal to the target audience who are the potential "buyers" of news (Reese & Lee, 2012, p. 258; Kelly et al., 2004; Neumann, 2019).

A third influence lies in the professionalism of journalists which comes with various characteristics. Professionalization does not only entail the fact that a person makes a living by being a journalist, but also includes aspects of education, training, socialization, and ethics. To begin with education and training opportunities for journalists (Anderson & Schudson 2019, p. 139), it is important to note that both shape behaviours and practices of reporting as well as "cultivate" a professional identity (Hanitzsch and Örnebring, 2019, p. 105). Unsurprisingly, the type of education that is available for journalists varies with the media system.

Aspects such as journalistic norms and ethics greatly influence the production of texts beyond the law (Preston et al., 2017; Carlson & Lewis, 2019, p. 129; Hanitzsch et al., 2019, p. 16). The understandings of what journalism is and what it is supposed to do are, of course, far from universal and exhibit variety in different media systems (Hanitzsch et al., 2019, p. 19) and naturally change over time (Carlson & Lewis 2019, p. 125). While the mentioned types of influences are not exhaustive, there is consensus that law, economics, professionalization, and journalistic norms are constitutive forces in the journalistic process. Researchers investigate these influences by interviewing and surveying journalists (e.g., Hanitzsch et al., 2019), or by investigating ownership structures (e.g., Downing, 2012). Using research methods that are based on studying texts, we treat these influences as a black box. However, these influences are embedded in journalistic mass mediated texts.

3.4 Content-centred perspective

Focusing purely on the output of journalism provides a content-centred perspective. Most simply expressed, journalistic texts contain "the 5 W's": who, what, when, where, and why; and longer pieces also include the "how" (Hunter, 2011; Donsbach, 2007). Journalistic texts claim to be non-fictional, and report on current events and ideas (Donsbach, 2007; Wahl-Jorgensen & Schmidt, 2019; Anderson, 2012). It should be emphasized here, that merely the claim of being non-fictional is important which is established via the context in which the text is published.

Beyond that, researchers have studied the elements that make news interesting and determine their newsworthiness. This area is often summarized as the study of news values (O'Neill & Harcup 2019, p. 213). News values are inherently linked to the judgements and routines of journalists, and thus are also part of the production perspective of news. However, by taking a content-centric perspective, researchers can infer which news values are predominant in the newsrooms. There is a growing and changing list of news values that researchers are investigating. Most commonly, news items are interesting when they are about power elites, make reference to individuals, follow-up on existing stories, report on celebrities, or cover crises (O'Neill & Harcup, 2019, p. 216-217; Patterson, 2007, p. 38). Of course, these examples are far from exhaustive, and some news values are not of a binary nature, but rather continuous. The study of emotional closeness or distance that is established in a journalistic text is an important representative of this type of news value (Burggraaf & Trilling, 2020, p. 117; O'Neill & Harcup, 2019, p. 217).

News values point at the quality and style of a journalistic text which in turn are also related to the professionalism of journalists (Fletcher & Lynn, 2012, p. 37). As mentioned above, journalistic norms and values and thus the understanding of "professionalism" are subject to cultural contexts. Therefore, content elements that constitute an appropriate style and quality vary across media systems (Wasserman, 2019, p. 283).

In most cultural contexts, there is a distinction of news content being objective or subjective, where the former is considered to be more professional than the latter (Hunter, 2011, p. 8). Defining objective reporting is notoriously difficult as there are a variety of elements that contribute to the abstract concept of objectivity. Typically, objectivity entails that "only the facts" are reported, and that the facts are separated from values (Wahl-Jorgensen & Schmidt, 2019, p. 265; Ward, 2020, p. 107). From a content-centred perspective, it is rather challenging to identify when a news item reports facts, because it is unclear whether a piece reports facts in their entirety and truthfully. Another approach towards investigating the content characteristics of professionalism and objectivity is by considering the tone of news content. Frequently, researchers understand objective reporting by being free from emotional language, whereas subjective reporting tends to cater to emotions rather than to reason (Wahl-Jorgensen & Schmidt, 2019, p. 265). However, the relationship between facts and emotions is also very complicated and debatable. Journalistic texts may feature emotional language to tell stories which makes their content more appealing to their audiences, but this does not necessarily mean that their reporting is subjective or distorts "the truth" (Pantti, 2019, p. 157). In other words, there are different journalistic styles that prefer one way of reporting over the other. Nevertheless, the emotional closeness or distance and tone of a journalistic text are frequently investigated regardless of their interpretation or cultural context and it is the choice of style that contributes to understanding the differences of journalistic sources.

News bias is another aspect that is linked to the concepts of professionalism, style, and journalistic quality. Journalistic texts can exhibit various types of bias, such as a preference for domestic stories (geographic bias), reporting favourably on corporations (corporate bias), or frequently reporting on "negative" events (Kaid et al, 2009, p. 463). For the purpose of this project, we are mainly interested in types of bias that relate to politics, such as partisan bias. Political bias can be expressed through different means. Journalistic texts may frequently feature certain actors or issues and provide them with an advantage in public visibility (Reese & Lee, 2012, p. 256). Thus, certain topical areas may be more prominently covered in the news over others. The usage of quotes is also a common way of presenting a particular viewpoint and weighting it against another (Baden, 2019, p. 236). Further, bias can be introduced by the tonality surrounding said actors and issues, where the choice of words creates a favourable or unfavourable view.

In any case, by studying the bias and framing at the content level, researchers can draw conclusions to the connected media entities and media systems. This level of news output allows us to identify patterns in certain media entities and to systematically compare them with each other.

Another key aspect of the content-centred perspective are the modes of communication. While traditional newspaper texts mainly rely on written words and photographs, radio mainly broadcasts spoken words, and televised news make use of moving images and spoken words (Robinson, 2012, p. 62). The basic modes of communication a "text" uses are therefore written, visual, and auditive. While written text, still images, and graphics are considered to be static in nature, videos and sound are characterized as dynamic content elements, because these elements are sequentially built up (Veglis, 2012, p. 215). With the dawn of digitalization, journalistic texts have increasingly become integrated, meaning that they use several modes of communication simultaneously (Robinson, 2012, p. 62). Journalistic texts on websites frequently feature multimedia or rich media content, such as a written text, a gallery of photos, infographics, as well as videos. It is then at the users' disposal to choose with which type of content they want to interact. "Traditional media" such as newspapers or linear TV typically offer fewer choices.

Finally, journalistic texts are also embedded in a visual context that appears to be understudied. The layout and presentation of a piece also give weight to particular aspects of a text (e.g., Lonsdale, 2014). The choice of heading size, accompanying imagery, usage of large pull quotes, pictures with overlaid text and much more are all present in "traditional" and "modern" media. Regardless if a journalistic text is in the form of a video, a TV broadcast, or a picture post on a social media such as Instagram, the visual composition also contributes in classifying and allocating text types. Newspapers that are considered as "tabloid" also have a distinct visual language from so-called "quality papers". While these characteristics are not subtle, few studies paid attention to this aspect of content-centered analysis.

4   Synthesis

Our proposed blueprint towards a holistic classification for JMPT consists of four distinct types of entities: **news item**, **source**, **media organisation**, and **media system**. News item is the smallest unit and derived from the content-centred research perspective. News items are linked to and nested in the entities source, media organisation and media system. The latter three entity types are informed by the production perspective as well

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as the usage and interaction perspective. Additionally, the functional perspective contributes to our understanding of media organisations and media systems.

Each type has a distinct array of possible properties that describes it in detail. For example, a media organisation can have a numeric property that counts the number of employees and a geographic property that locates its headquarter. Thus, properties are able to contain a large variety of data levels and also have the capability to contain nested data structures.

From the perspective of a single JMPT, the latter three entity types (i.e., source, media organisation, and media system) describe its context and the properties of the news item describe the item itself. The relationship of the entity types is illustrated in Figure 1.

The way this blueprint is designed, is that if a news item is linked to a specific source entity for example, the news item also inherits properties of the source. The same applies to the other entity types. If a news item is assigned to a specific media system, the related properties (and their levels for the specific country) are linked as context-relevant to the news item. Entities can have multiple linkages, for example a large media organisation can have several local subsidiaries which theoretically enables us to study complex ownership relations. Multiple linkages also enable to connect media organisations across media systems to account for the transnational characteristics of media.

A last general clarification relates to the **geographical and temporal** scope of the classification. It seeks to be of use for the classification of JMPT published in EU member states or for European audiences. The basic aim of the classification and ultimately the inventory is to **cover the European media landscape as comprehensively as possible**. From a temporal perspective, the classification should be suitable for JMPT published today (2021), and—going back in time—refer at least to texts since the turn of the millennium. All in all, while many of the properties may be useful for the mapping of the global media landscape and for texts published before 2000, we customize the classification to the property types most relevant in a European context and in the last 21 years.

FIGURE 1: ILLUSTRATION OF INTERLINKED ENTITY RELATIONSHIPS
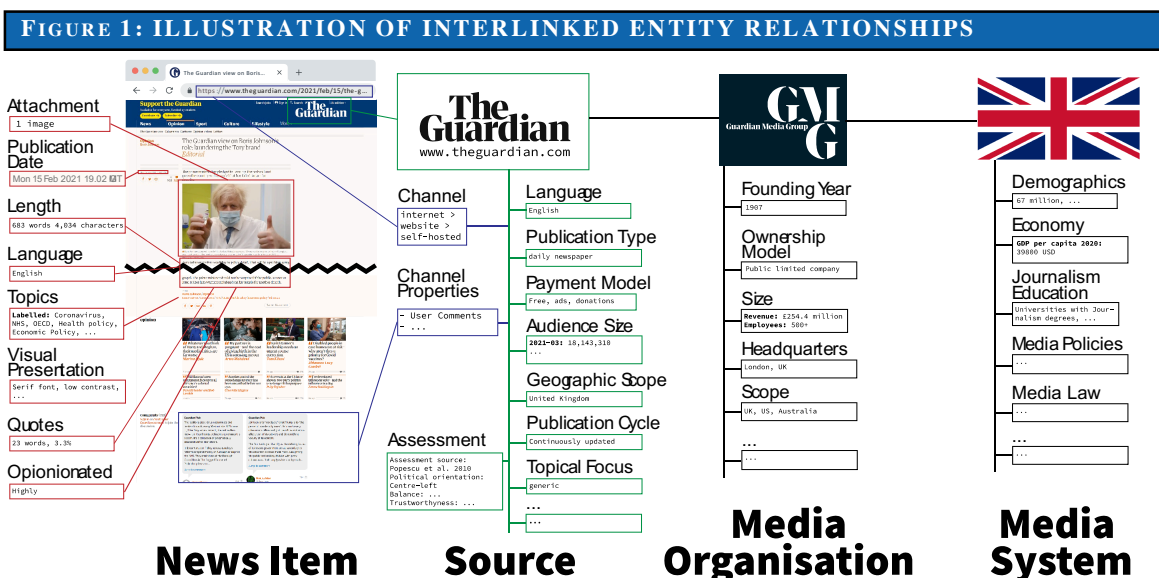
4.1 News Item

A news item is defined as a **single text that is published by a journalistic source**. In the context of this inventory, one text (or *document*) constitutes the smallest element. However, it is possible to further dissect a document to smaller units such as paragraphs or sentences (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 97). As mentioned above (p. 8), the text is ostensibly non-fictional and gains this quality via the authority of its source (Donsbach, 2007; Wahl-Jorgensen & Schmidt, 2019; Anderson, 2012).

Looking at **exogenous properties**, a news item has a publication date, a length (e.g., word count), and uses at least one language (may derive from the source). Another understudied but relevant property is the visual presentation of the text. The formatting of text elements such as the headline, teaser, or body through

choices of font family, weight and size influence the perception of the content. Additionally, materials attached to the text such as pictures, videos, hyperlinks, or entire documents are also a distinct property for classification.

Endogenous properties may require some form of content analysis but can also be pre-labelled by the source. News items have at least one topic with varying degrees of specificity. While some items elaborate on a topic in great detail, others might report on a topic very superfluously. Some news items have topic information attached to them through the section in which they appear in or through tags. Furthermore, there are properties that are essential from a theoretical perspective but are unlikely to be formally labelled. This includes the number of quotes used (Broersma, 2019), the degree of opinion expressed (Hunter, 2011; Wahl-Jorgensen & Schmidt, 2019; Ward, 2020), or the emotional distance or closeness that is established in the text (Burggraaf & Trilling, 2020; O'Neill & Harcup, 2019). Measuring and operationalizing these endogenous properties is challenging and subject to debate. An overview of all properties is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: EXEMPLARY SELECTION OF PROPERTIES TO CLASSIFY NEWS ITEMS		
Property Type	Property	Definition
exogenous	Source	Source that published the news item
	Date	Publication date of news item
	Length	Number of words in the news item
	Language(s)	Language(s) used in news item
	Visual presentation	Formatting elements (e.g. font size, weight, and family; layout)
	Attached materials	Other materials that are directly attached to the news items (e.g. pictures, videos)
endogenous	Topic	Information motivating the news item (e.g. labelled through section or tags)
	Quotes	Number of words marked as direct or indirect quotes
	Opinionatedness	Evaluation of degree of opinion expressed
	Emotionality	Emotional distance or closeness established in the text

4.2 Context: Describing Source, Media Organisations, Media System

4.2.1 Source

We define **source** as the **"brand" names** used by media production organisations to advertise ("brand") their news items to the audience **via a designated channel**. Media organisations or production companies often hold a bundle of sources. Co-ownership models of sources are thinkable, even though empirical cases are probably rare. Importantly, while a source can change ownership over the course of time, the audience would not necessarily notice, because the appearance of the source (or brand) may remain stable over time.

Channels are the technologies used to publish news items to the audience, such as a print newspaper, a website, or even a Facebook page (Erdal, 2012; Veglis, 2012; Robinson, 2012). Each source can only be associated with a single channel, because the **channel constitutes the possibilities of audience interactions** (Fletcher & Young, 2012). Even if the exact same text is published in print and online versions of the same newspaper, both of them are embedded in different contexts. This means that in the logic of this classification, the Instagram profile, website and print edition of *The Guardian* are all distinct sources. However, they are connected via their media production organisation and they share the same branding. Besides the degree of interactivity, the environment and push/pull orientation differ between channels. They also have varying capabilities of interlinking texts. The channel can also determine the payment model used to access the news items by the source. Additionally, unlike printed channels, the content of digitally published news items is always

subject to alterations at a later stage. The capabilities of channels are not necessarily stable over time. Newspapers used to be black and white only, and websites did not support video streaming in the early stages.

The channel of a source can decide about the regulatory scope of news items. For example, the responsibilities of regulating media organisations may differ between print newspapers and broadcast TV. Therefore, the rules and regulations a source is subjected to, may also be constituted by the channel.

Exogenous properties of a source include its audience size (e.g., number of subscribers), publication language(s), geographic scope of the content (local, regional, national, global, foreign), payment model, publication cycle, and publication type (e.g., "newspaper", "online news", or "news agency"). Sources may further be described by their topical focus, which may be rather specific (covering mainly, financial, or economic news) or generic. Some property types only apply to print such as the production format (tabloid format, lite version). An important property where its evaluation is subject to debate is the source's political orientation or ideological position and the distinction between quality and boulevard source. Among the available approaches for gauging this property, we would argue in favour of expert assessments or audience surveys. Popescu et al. (2010) provide a framework and data where experts completed standardized surveys for the largest news outlets in Europe and map them on various ideological dimensions. See **Error! Reference source not found.** for an overview of the just briefly addressed properties.

TABLE 2: EXEMPLARY SELECTION OF PROPERTIES TO CLASSIFY SOURCES		
Property Type	Property	Definition
general	name	Common brand name of source
media organisation-related	ownership	Media organisation that owns the source
economic	payment model	Monetary requirements for accessing news items (e.g. free, freemium, metered paywall, hard paywall)
routines	publication cycle	Routine that determines the intervals for publication (e.g. daily, weekly, constantly)
	topical focus	Topics as annotated by archives (e.g. General news, vs. Financial news)
	publication type	Self-ascribed publication type label (e.g. newspaper, news agency, magazine)
channel-related	channel	Technology used for publication of news items
	push/pull	Pull orientation: user actively seeks out news; Push orientation: media outlet sends news to user
	interlinking	Capabilities to link to other resources
	interaction capabilities	Available capabilities of users to interact with the source
audience-related	audience size	Number of users in a set time interval (e.g. daily site visitors, annual subscribers, followers)
	audience residency	Viewers of digital content by country in a set time interval
	language(s)	Written language or languages of a publication
	main geographic scope of content	Primary geographic frame of reference (e.g. global, national, regional, foreign)
assessment	political orientation	Primary alignment of the source with political parties and degree of influence (e.g. expert assessment according to Popescu et al., 2010)
	trustworthiness	Perceived trustworthiness by audience (e.g. through surveys)
	balance	Extent various arguments are presented in debates (e.g. expert assessment according to Popescu et al., 2010)

4.2.2 Media organisation

We define **media organisations** as collective actors with media-related purposes. There is a great variety within the subtypes of media organisations which have different goals and operating logics. For the purpose of the inventory, the subtypes of primary interest are **media production organisations** which are more or less directly **engaged in the production and publication of JMPT**. They are the unit responsible for the production of at least one specific source; It is basically, the editorial team which handles the text production and mass-mediated distribution (see page 7).

Other media organisations mainly link and relate to the media system and describe its configuration (see below), such as journalistic associations, media accountability institutions, as well as research institutions and media related NGOs (Terzis, 2008). A press council for example, an organisation of media accountability, can be described with properties like type of regulation (e.g., self-regulation, co-regulation), or degree of state intervention in the press council's affairs (Eberwein et al., 2017).

When describing media production organisations, among the property types (see Table 3 for an example) relevant for most if not all of them are: geographic scope (e.g., Media companies such as Reuters may have a global vs. national or regional scope), size of the organisation (e.g., budget, employees), founding year, or their autonomy (publicly or privately funded), location of headquarters. Each organisation type can of course be described with more information.

Media companies are described in terms of dynamical ownership information. A media company can have several holdings consisting of other media organisations such as production companies. For example, the *Bertelsmann AG* holds a large amount of production companies[4] such as the *RTL Group Entertainment*, *Gruner + Jahr Newspaper and Magazine Publishing*. The holdings in turn may lead to entities linked to concrete sources (e.g., *N-TV*, or *Sächsische Zeitung*). Some public repositories such as *Wikidata* have an API that allows to query this type of relationship and thus would pose a practical way to retrieve this data point.

A rather complicated property of media production organisations is the degree of professionalisation of the editors and production team (Kelly et al., 2004). While the theory would require to include it in the inventory, it is practically not feasible to include at this point.

The distinction between media production organisation and media company is not always relevant. The information (categories and levels) for a media company may be almost identical to the information about the media production organisation. But in certain cases, the distinction is useful, especially considering smaller and newer sources. The distinction enables tracing potential dependencies and ownership structures in a cluttered and highly competitive media market. If a media production organisation produces "only" one source, the properties described in Table 3 can also be mostly overlapping.

TABLE 3: EXEMPLARY SELECTION OF PROPERTIES TO CLASSIFY MEDIA PRODUCTION ORGANISATIONS/MEDIA COMPANIES

Property Type	Property	Definition
general	name	Canonical name of organisation
	funding year	Canonical year organisation was founded
	ownership model	Private, public, state-funded, etc.
	headquarters	Location
	scope	Primary geographic frame of reference (e.g. global, national, regional, foreign)
economic	size	Amount of resources at disposal (e.g. annual budget, profits, employees)

Note. As described in the text, the outlines properties can be linked to media production organisation/media company but also to journalists' and employer organisations, media-related NGOs, media research institutions, organisations of media accountability.

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[4] see: http://beta.cjr.org/resources/?c=bertelsmann

4.2.3   Media System

A **media system** is defined as the "largest" entity type with its own **set of rules and conditions that are relevant for practicing journalism**. A media system constitutes the conditions under which media production is realized. From a theoretical perspective the boundaries of a media system can be drawn at various lines. Belgium for example, is a federal state with three officially recognized languages. The media is subject to different conditions depending on the language and location of its publication (De Bens, 2004). Thus, it is theoretically possible to define Belgium as three separate media systems. However, for sake of practicality we define that the countries constitute the boundaries of media systems. Countries have their distinct set of rules that are usually consistently applied within the governed territory, and the media organisations operating within the system are subject to these rules. Additionally, each country has different conditions that shape the production process of journalistic texts (Kelly et al., 2004; Price et al., 2013; Eberwein et al., 2017; Terzis, 2008). Consequently, the rules and conditions set by the media system are implicitly embedded in journalistic texts. For the purpose of this inventory, there is a fixed set of media systems for this classification, which are the countries that are in the scope of OPTED (EU countries, UK, Israel, and Norway).

Classifying JMPT by country implicitly relates to the publication location of a text and/or to the audience it is mainly targeted at. While the targeted audience and publication location are often identical, there are plausible cases that could deviate from this pattern.

There are numerous generic properties that help to describe countries in geographic, demographic, political, cultural, or economic terms (Kelly et al., 2004; Preston et al., 2017, p.13). These properties capture a media system's general profile and are very broad. This includes straightforward information such as a country's geographic size, population size, number of households, distribution of age, and GDP. Further, we also include properties that describe the working mechanics for the political system such as election procedures or legislative periods (Kelly et al., 2004). Finally, cultural aspects should also be included such as the extent of secularization.

Beyond these, we consider properties relevant that specifically relate to mass media. Among these are for example country level properties related to broad media systems typology (Hallin & Mancini, 2004a; 2012a), to journalism education (e.g., number of university courses for journalism, percentage of all journalists with university degree per country,), to media production conditions, to media policies and media law (e.g., media freedom laws, forms of regulation, Price et al., 2013; Terzis, 2008), media accountability (e.g., the forms, instruments, and authorities, Eberwein et al., 2017). We further consider categories that describe country level media use patterns (e.g., number of households reached by television, mobile phone subscriptions, internet household penetration, Kelly et al., 2012; cross-border media use, Hafez, 2012).

This list of properties (see Table 4) is not exhaustive, and we believe the necessary amount of detail is still subject to debate and empirical investigation. However, such properties are useful to describe a text in its broader context. They can give an estimation to questions about the potential audience size, provide information about possible censorship or production conditions of texts. To give an example, by assigning a news item to a specific country (e.g., Austria), the levels of the country-related properties that apply to Austria can be implicitly tagged for the individual text.

Property Type	Property	Definition
generic	name	Common name for system
geographic	area	Area in km²
economic	GDP	Per capita
demographics	residents	Description of population (e.g. density, age distribution)
	number of households	Housing units and excludes persons living inside collective living quarters such as hotels
political	relationship to the EU	Full member vs. EFTA vs. EEA state
	electoral system	Election cycles and routines
cultural	language	Official languages, unofficial languages

TABLE 4: EXEMPLARY SELECTION OF PROPERTIES TO CLASSIFY MEDIA SYSTEMS

	secularization	Importance of religion in political processes (e.g. expert assessments)
journalism education	education opportunities	Number of journalism university courses (e.g. Bachelor, Master and PhD and graduate diploma)
	human capital	Number of employed and unemployed journalists
media policies and media law	laws	Legal considerations relevant for journalism and media (e.g. media freedom laws)
	press freedom	Evaluation of pluralism, independence of the media, quality of legislative framework and safety of journalists (e.g. freedom of press index)
media use	broadcast usage	Penetration of broadcast media and frequency of TV and radio usage
	print usage	Frequency of printed media usage
	technology	Preferences of devices used for media usage (e.g. smartphone, tablet, computer)
	internet use	Penetration of internet access and frequency its usage
	social media use	Preferences for specific channels and devices used

5   Conclusion

With this deliverable we provided **essential preparatory work towards an inventory** of JMPT that—once established—will help researchers to rapidly find and classify text and data (re)sources. This laid conceptual groundwork in a cluttered field that will lead towards a systematic overview of JMPT. By reviewing over 60 handbooks and Journal articles, we identified the essential properties of JMPT and their contexts towards a holistic classification scheme.

Identifying the fundamental characteristics or properties that capture the essence of JMPT is a non-trivial task. At this stage of the development, we were not looking for a final classification, but more importantly for the **essential properties** that build the foundation for classification and ultimately an inventory of JMPT. Critically assessed, one could say that we used a working definition for JMPT that is in itself already highly blurry. We confined this classification to **political** texts in the conceptual stage, but practically it might be challenging to determine for instance which texts are relevant for collectively binding decision-making processes. "Journalism" is also a concept that is notoriously difficult to define. Of course, it would be possible to approach this from a legal point of view, because journalism and media production organisations frequently enjoy a special status. However, the legal aspects vary greatly across countries and would also not be helpful in covering the boundaries of journalism. We developed an understanding that clearly excludes specific producers of texts such as political parties, but at the same time is as inclusive as possible at the boundaries of journalism. At this point, we expect this preparatory work to have a decent performance for covering "traditional" journalism. However, the coverage at the borderlands of journalism is subject to empirical investigations. Further, it is also unclear at this stage to determine the effectiveness of a classification system that relies on political borders drawn by countries. Media have been globalized for a long time and are thus not anymore strictly separated by country borders. Through the internet, audiences interact with mediated content from any country and in any language by using translation tools. But this is also where the advantages of knowledge graphs become evident. They allow for multiple and nested properties and therefore make it possible to account for news sources that are for instance operating across borders and have international audiences. Knowledge graphs can not only store complex structures, but also enable browsing and querying the data flexibly.

Some properties will not be easily available for various reasons. For example, determining the audience size is rather straightforward for news sources using a social media profile, but can remain unknown for printed newspapers that do not publish subscriber counts. Another example is the political orientation through expert assessments, where we only have some data points available for selected media. Even though there will likely be gaps in the data, we believe that this is acceptable, because we are convinced that an inventory that tries to

include as much data as possible is useful for other researchers and also shows clearly where research is left to be done.

Looking ahead, ultimately, we will use the classification to create an inventory that is practically useful and caters to various research interests. Being fully aware that journalism is a living phenomenon and change is in its nature, we seek for ways to ensure that the classification and the inventory is capable to account for the ever-changing nature of the media landscape. In fact, the inventory should be living as well and the structure at the implementation stage needs to be able to accommodate this specification. We are confident that semantically connected database structures such as knowledge graphs present a suitable choice. Outlining our next steps, this review provided decent coverage, will be used as a starting point but the list of properties will be expanded. Although many of the identified property types and concrete properties are simple to survey in practical research, there are some properties where the measurement methods are yet unclear. Furthermore, the approach so far has been theoretical and conceptual, a next step will be to verify the properties empirically. Not only the properties are to be tested, but also the concept of an interlinked knowledge-graph database. This would shed a light on the feasibility of the classification criteria and also help to gauge the completeness of defined properties.

In practical terms, we will not be able to actually inventorize, store and distribute single news items from across Europe. But we will develop a common set of "universal" criteria and meta information that researchers should include in their databases. This will facilitate the selection, access and work with textual data. Moreover, we will inventorize sources, media organisations and media systems and link them to existing databases and corpora, eventually working towards a map of the European media landscape.

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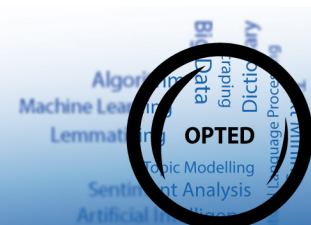
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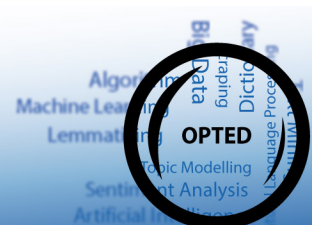
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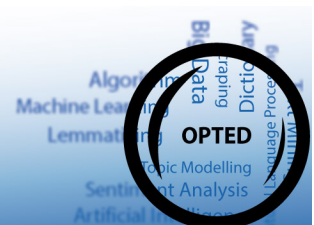
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