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A FRAMING ANALYSIS OF ONLINE NEWSPAPER ARTICLES AND WEBLOG
ARTICLES

A Thesis

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The Faculty of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications

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by

Maria Carolina Gabriele Janssen

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ABSTRACT

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Maria Carolina Janssen

The thesis examined possible differences in framing of information in news weblogs and professional news articles. A frame analysis was conducted to answer the main question: Is news framed differently in online newspapers as compared to weblogs? Articles from four blogs and four online newspapers were gathered over a period of 30 days. A total of 43 frames were identified in the selected blogs whereas 92 frames were identified in the selected online newspapers. The most commonly identified frame in both blogs and online newspapers was the progress frame with 51 appearances. The justice frame was used least.

The articles showed differences in framing. However, the results of the study indicated that differences in framing of information are not related to the publication type (online newspaper or weblog) but are merely incidental. According to this study, framing cannot be used as an indicator for possible differences in the production and publication of news articles in weblogs and online newspapers.

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Introduction

Blogging has become a "mainstream phenomenon" not only in the United States, but globally (technorati.com, 2008). In the late 90's *the page of only weblogs*, a website created by Jesse James Garrett, counted only 23 weblogs (Blood, 2000, www.jjg.net, 2000). Today, only a decade later, there are thought to be more than 200 million blogs online (Bryan, 2009). As blogs, defined as "websites with a regularly updated list of commentary and links to information on the Internet" (Marcel, 2009), multiply, their presence in the media landscape evoke more and more attention by existing mainstream media.

The core purpose of blogging has always been the distribution and sharing of information. In the early times, weblogs were "logbooks" of the webloggers' journeys through the web. Webloggers, or bloggers, surfed the Internet and posted links and comments on what they found interesting. Rebecca Blood, one of the pioneers of blogging, called this operation "filtering" (Blood, 2000, 2002). However, as the number of blogs multiplied, so did their scope and content. More and more bloggers incorporated events and thoughts about the world outside the web into their blogs. In other words, there was an increasing number of bloggers who covered real-life events in their blogs. Technology allowed these bloggers to publish their information to a global community of people with access to the Internet. When blogs became popular, members of the conventional media feared that their field would be forced to redefine itself. They saw their "ownership of journalism" threatened by people who seemed to touch the "sphere of

journalism" (Domingo & Heinonen, 2008). Although current research shows that "fewer than seven percent of Internet users maintain their own Web log, and only one in ten read blogs on a regular basis" (Jesdanun, 2004), the impact of weblogs on traditional media and media research has been large. Tom Regan (2005) explains this by stating that the existing weblogs "are demonstrating to traditional media [that] they no longer get to decide on their own what is news anymore." Communication Professor Aaron Delwiche (2005) adds that by doing so, bloggers defy journalism's privilege of agenda-setting. Bloggers have entered a domain that was formerly exclusively occupied by journalists: news.

The *Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* (2001) defines news as "a person, thing, or event considered as a choice of subject for journalistic treatment; newsworthy material." This definition, among others, links news to journalism. This link is stressed even more in *The Dictionary of Media and Communications* (2009) in which news is defined as the "report of a current happening or happenings in a newspaper, on television, on radio, or on a Web site."

Journalism, on the other hand, has always been linked to news organizations. According to its definition by the *Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* (2001), "[journalism is] the occupation of reporting, writing, editing, photographing, or broadcasting news or of conducting any news organization as a business." The dictionary does point out the difference between scholarly writing and journalism. However, it does not refer to the writing of blogs. This definition suggests that journalism partly defines itself by being part of a media institution. A more general definition is given in the

Dictionary of Media and Communications (2009), which characterizes journalism by the "writing, collection, preparation, and distribution of news and related commentary through media."

These definitions show that the space in which bloggers find themselves is not yet clearly defined. Bloggers are not necessarily part of a news organization or any other institutionalized media, although they can be (Domingo & Heinonen, 2008). However, their blogs are definitely part of the media in general. Media is defined as "the various means of mass communication considered as a whole, including television, radio, magazines and newspapers, together with the people involved in their production" (Anderson, Bateman, Harris, McAdam, 2006). The *Dictionary of Media and Communications* (2009) includes websites as one of the means of communication. Blogs are means of mass communication and thus are part of the media.

A term for "blogger" that has become popular among researchers is that of the "online citizen journalist". However, the meaning of the word "journalist" in this sense is yet to be determined. Jay Rosen, professor of journalism at New York University, defines 'citizen journalism' as the following: "When the people formerly known as the audience employ the press tools they have in their possession to inform one another, that's citizen journalism" (Rosen, 2008).

Although blogs are ubiquitous in today's media world, few empirical studies have been published on their relationship to and impact on professional journalism (Carpenter, 2008, Domingo & Heinonen, 2008). Thus, there is a need for a deeper understanding of the effects of blogging on the audience and the conventional media. Online newspapers

can be considered as conventional media's counterpart to weblogs. Their authors share with bloggers many of the challenges and opportunities that the digital technology of the web offers.

The proposed thesis will take the approach of a framing analysis to identify possible differences in the framing of weblogs and online newspapers. Domingo and Heinonen (2008) define framing analysis as a research approach that analyzes message content in order to ascertain how the media represent a certain topic. They refer to frames as "conceptual tools which media and individuals rely on to convey, interpret, and evaluate information" (ibid.).

According to Entman (1993), "an understanding of frames helps illuminate many empirical and normative controversies, most importantly because the concept of framing directs our attention to the details of just how a communicated text exerts its power." In order to study and understand the effects of framing, the frames first have to be identified. This is what this study intends to do. It will identify the frames used in a selection of blogs and those used in online newspaper articles. It will then approach possible similarities and differences quantitatively as well as qualitatively.

The results will be analyzed by consulting existing literature on framing to show their relevance for the media research field as a whole.

In today's world, where access to communication tools that connect to a global community is easier than ever, it is more and more important to understand the potential and the effects of such tools.

The following literature review will contain a more detailed description of what online newspapers and blogs are and what role they play in the media. Furthermore, it will cover the framing theory and its importance to journalism. Once the framing study approach has been justified, and the overview and analytical framework for the study has been presented, a precise explanation of the method will be followed by the actual research and its findings.

Literature Review

Blogs and Online Newspapers

Blogs and Online Newspapers are both publication types that use the Internet as their communication platform. However, they have an odd relationship. Blogs can serve as resources for conventional journalists, but are, on the other hand, sometimes seen as parasitic to conventional journalism (Domingo & Heinonen, 2008).

Both publication types share the same technical environment. It is partly the purpose of this study to understand if this technical environment is the only thing that weblogs and online newspapers have in common. There are several characteristics that could be compared in a study on blogging versus online journalism. For instance, the diversity of sources has been compared in the past (Carpenter, 2008). The researcher of this study has selected framing as the feature of comparison. Knowing whether differences in framing exist depending on the publication type is a worthwhile contribution to the field of media research. It provides a deeper understanding for the two simultaneously existing phenomena weblogs and online newspapers. Recognizing

possible patterns in the difference of frames depending on the professional background of the author of an article allows for a judgment about the importance of a professional background in journalism for the quality of news. Before going deeper into the theory of framing however, the following section will give an understanding of the concept of blogs and online newspapers.

Blogs. A weblog is defined as a "frequently updated personal journal on a website, intended for public viewing" by the *Dictionary of Media Studies* (2006).

Domingo and Heinonen (2008) give a more detailed insight into the features of weblogs. To them, the core characteristics of blogs are simplicity, automatic organization of posts, directness, and briefness. Blogs are published as they are produced and their relevance is defined by comments and attention they draw from the blogger community. Blogs are described as personal spaces of self-expression which have an interpretive and subjective style. They are mostly written by one person and initiate conversation.

Before the existence of blogs, people with access to the Internet could share information through the use of mailing lists. However, this was a one-way stream of information. The emergence of weblogs in the late 90's allowed for a two-way communication flow, as is described by Domingo and Heinonen (2008): "Instead of one-way communication flows, from a few central points to countless receivers, there would be a network of communication flows between equally influential nodes capable of acting both as senders and receivers of information." Admittedly, this reciprocal exchange of information is not an invention that came with the possibilities of digital technology. The

idea of communicating news this way was created in seventeenth century England, where it was called "coffeehouse discussions." (Barlow, 2007) However, weblogs still represent a "new category of news and current affairs communication" (Domingo & Heinonen) due to the fact that they combine a two-way communication opportunity with the possibility to archive this communication flow, which was not possible with the seventeenth century coffeehouse discussions. (Barlow, 2007) "A weblog is a coffeehouse conversation in text, with references as required"(Blood 2002).

In 1997 Jon Berger came up with the term weblog for logging the web. In 1999 Peter Merholz shaped the phrase wee-blog, in an effort to point out the community that formed around blogging. Shortly after, the short form blog gained recognition and is still used when referring to weblogs today. Authors of blog articles have ever since been called bloggers.

In the beginning, when it was still necessary to have basic knowledge of the coding scheme HTML (hyper text markup language) to create a blog, few blogs existed. However, when 'Pitas' was launched in 1999, followed by 'Blogger', 'Groksoup', 'edit this page', and 'Velocinews' only shortly after, suddenly hundreds of blogs appeared. These tools provided their users with publishing possibilities that were free, quick and easy. There was no technical knowledge necessary (Gunter, 2003). Users could simply type into a box and instantly publish whatever they wrote. Distributing information became easier than ever before, and offered the possibility to reach a global community. Bloggers linked their own blogs to others that they were interested in. Whole discussions with multiple members took place in the 'blogosphere' (Blood, 2000, Barlow, 2007). The

possibilities of easy interconnectivity created large blogger communities on the web who were constantly looking at other blogs and linking and reacting to them in their own blogs.

As Rebecca Blood states, there has been a shift from the "filter-style weblog" to the "journal style weblog" (Blood, 2000). The early bloggers looked through the Internet and posted links to what they thought of as being relevant on their own blogs. Thus, they personally filtered the worthwhile from the insignificant. As the amount of information on the Internet grew, however, this task became more and more challenging. Thus, the format of the blogs themselves changed from list-like websites to more subjective and descriptive journals. Personal thoughts and essays gained significance. Weblogs could be found on any topic from names for babies, UFO sightings, to cooking recipes. However, the blogs that are subject to the study are only those whose content comes as close as possible to the definition of "news" and "journalism". That is, blogs dealing with events, current affairs, and controversies of a general public interest. The blogs looked at in the study exclude those with specialized themes, as those blogs could rather be compared to specialized magazines.

Although authors of news blogs do not try to hide their subjectivity, many of them (35%) try to prove their accuracy by linking to their sources of information (Domingo & Heinonen, 2008).

Many bloggers have made it their business to evaluate and expand on information that has previously been published by professional journalists either online or offline. In the case of online articles, bloggers usually link to the particular article and either support

or criticize it. Depending on their own expertise, bloggers might add facts to the article in question. However, bloggers do not only respond to existing articles in the media. They also report on what they themselves have experienced, seen and observed outside the media. Due to the fact that most bloggers freely speak their minds on any topic, and often criticize the media or political actions, disclose false or incorrect information by the media or wrongdoings by politicians, bloggers are often referred to as watchdogs. (Blood, 2000, 2002, Cooper, 2006, Sussman, 2004) Berry Sussman, editor of the website Nieman Watchdog Project describes the watchdog's task as the following:

> Great questions are a key to great journalism. But often, in the press of deadlines, the flood of raw information, manipulated news, deliberate misinformation and just plain junk, great questions are hard to develop. Reporters and editors need to know what's happening, why it happened, who's involved, who's affected and what happens next.
> The premise of watchdog journalism is that the press is a surrogate for the public, asking probing, penetrating questions at every level, from the town council to the state house to the White House, as well as in corporate and professional offices, in union halls, on university campuses and in religious organizations that seek to influence governmental actions. The goal of watchdog journalism is to see that people in power provide information the public should have (Sussman, 2004).

In this description, Sussman differentiates watchdog journalism from the press when he stresses that the press is subject to factors that can lead to a reduction in quality of their work.

Bloggers, if they choose the role of a watchdog, face less pressure when it comes to time or employer's expectations (which again is linked to many factors outside the organization, like advertising revenues, pressure from influential people in politics, media or the economy, etc.) (Blood, 2002). Bloggers, if they are not part of a news

organization, do not have to justify themselves in front of anyone, if they do not choose to. They hold the true freedom of the press, partly due to the anonymity of the web. For instance, they could write something that might lead to serious prosecution by law-enforcers or offended individuals if written by traditional media.

As Blood (2000) puts it, "their [bloggers] sarcasm and fearless commentary reminds us to question the vested interests of our sources of information and the expertise of individual reporters as they file news stories about subjects they may not fully understand."

Bloggers are usually part of a community which share similar interests. In addition to in-text links, most blogs have a list of links on the sidebar of their blog. This list of links can give the reader an idea of the positions and fields of interest of the blogger. When clicking on one of these links, the reader will find that many of the links of the second blog overlap with those of the first one. This shows how blogging communities form around certain fields of interest. Kumar (2004) calls these groupings "interest clusters."

Rebecca Blood distinguishes online journals from weblogs, saying that online journals are simply a digitized form of paper journals, a record of external events. Weblogs, on the other hand, are records of internal ideas. The content of weblogs is more diverse and it contains personal comments and reflections of the author, while online journals simply register certain events. Blood divides weblogs further into three subcategories. The first one is what she actually calls a blog. It is a combination of a short-form journal and brief commentary. The second category is the notebook-style

blog. This blog contains longer pieces of focused content as opposed to short commentary, and is not updated as frequently as the first category of blogs usually is. Filter-style weblogs make up the third category, which is characterized by the dominance of links. Filter-style blogs were the ones that existed first and some of them still exist. They serve as a tour guide around the web, suggesting websites and other blogs for further reading (Blood, 2002).

What distinguishes blogs from other publications is the fact that blogs allow for continuous publishing versus periodical publishing of other media. This means that bloggers can easily update their blogs anytime. Certainly, online newspapers have the possibility of continuous publishing as well, but most of the online newspapers follow the style of their printed counterparts. They are usually updated at a predetermined time to provide journalists and editors with a predictable time frame. However, whenever breaking events take place, online newspapers *can* publish information instantaneously, whereas printed newspapers would still have to wait for the (printed) publishing process to be completed.

Although having more freedom than authors of the printed press, online journalists still have to follow a style that is representative of the news organization they work for (Domingo & Heinonen, 2008). Thus, their freedom is still limited by editors while bloggers do not have any such restrictions. This is partly the reason for the dynamic vitality that characterizes the blogosphere. As Blood adds in her book *The Weblog Handbook* (2002), the weblog phenomenon is a more democratic system than that of institutionalized media due to the fact that everyone can participate in the public

discourse. Wilson Louwrey (2006) shares this view: "News organizations may be more interested in containing and directing the blogging phenomenon than in fostering democratic participation."

Blood also sees the downside to blogging, though. This downside came along with the exponential growth of the blogosphere. Blogs, once filters of the web, have become so numerous themselves that users of the Internet are overwhelmed. She says that "in a world that is flooded with information, the last thing anyone needs is another source of information." (Blood, 2002) To her this is the reason why people who seek information on the Internet still stick to big news organizations. They do not have to look around to find news that might interest them but can simply absorb what is delivered to them by trusted organizations that have existed for a long time and have moved to the web recently. However, as she describes, the user who does make the effort of combing through the web to find reliable and personally intriguing news sources, does not have to do this again and again. Once users have found bloggers whom they trust and share their general ideas and views with, they can rely on them in the future to point to articles and websites that are of interest.

Although one of the biggest critiques of online citizen journalists is that they "do not possess the resources and standards of professional journalism" (Louwrey, 2006), this does not apply to all authors of blog articles. Apart from that the audience has a choice. Even authors, whose scope of knowledge might not have been as large when they first started, increase their media literacy constantly while reading numerous accounts to look for the best written or most complete one (Blood, 2002). As Blood (2002) describes

further from personal experience, bloggers learn fast how to put information into context in such a way that they can convey the message the way they want to convey it. Blood writes:

> The inclusion or exclusion of a single fact can change the entire context of a reported incident and lead the reader to draw vastly different conclusions. The same facts, presented in a different order or described using different words, can convey vastly different messages. (Blood, 2004)

This hints to the purpose of the proposed study, which is to find out if and how bloggers make use of this knowledge as compared to professional online journalists, some of whom do not only write articles for online newspapers but also blog. Thus, as was briefly mentioned earlier, the blogosphere does not consist of citizen bloggers only. News organizations realized early that they, too, could gain from the opportunities of blogging (Domingo & Heinonen, 2008).

Admittedly, the line between online citizen bloggers and professional online journalist bloggers does not present itself as being really clear. Thus, Domingo and Heinonen suggest a typology of weblogs that range within the "sphere of journalism." Journalistic weblogs are those whose content is of interest to the general public. These news blogs mostly cover political issues and events that have an effect on politics. The suggested typology reaches from citizen blogs on the one end to media blogs on the opposite end. In between, Domingo and Heinonen place audience blogs and journalistic blogs. This classification shows that the further you move from citizen to media blogs, the higher the level of affiliation with professional journalism is. It shows the bandwidth

from public blogs to institutionalized blogs. Citizen blogs are characterized by the fact that they are produced by the public outside of media companies. Audience blogs are weblogs that the audience can produce on platforms that have been provided by the media. Journalistic blogs are maintained by journalists outside their own companies. And finally, there are media blogs which are produced by professional staff journalists.

The four different blog formats fulfill different tasks in the media-audience relationship. Lasica (2002) states that citizen bloggers "commit journalism" as opposed to conduct journalism. This statement gives the impression that when the content of a blog article meets the requirements of a professional journalistic article, this is merely an accident, rather than a deliberate attempt. Further characteristics of citizen blogs are media commentary ("watchblogs"), specialized writing, and amateur reporting. Audience blogs were created by the media to promote a sense of community amongst its readers. It is an attempt by the media to close the gap between the audience and itself. This procedure is described by Heinonen (1999): "Instead of being the fellow citizens of their readers, journalists (pre)tend to act like non-committed observers."

Journalistic blogs are more similar to citizen blogs except that their authors are professional journalists. However, their task is not to convey a certain view of a media organization they work for. Journalistic bloggers have complete editorial freedom. Their blogs are not connected to a news organization. Producing news is their private business. This is where journalistic blogs differ from media blogs.

Media blogs are not subject to the same editorial control and stylistic requirements that newspaper articles are. However, editors publish media weblog entries

as they are posted. These kind of blogs boomed after 2005. They are not restricted to but largely cover special events.   They include opinion columns and deliver news commentary. As Domingo and Heinonen point out, most institutionalized media have established themselves online by "recycling" their offline contents on the web. This is partly the reason why their publication is not as continuous as that of citizen or journalistic blogs. Media blogs react and comment on citizen blog posts and react to them whenever it seems necessary (Domingo & Heinonen, 2008).

What all blogs described above have in common is that they serve the social function of creating a digital community around certain topics. Domingo and Heinonen stress that the level of affiliation to institutional media does not necessarily imply better credibility, more accuracy or a stronger influence.

This study compares the framing of citizen weblog articles (as defined by Domingo and Heinonen) with the framing of online newspaper articles.

The following characteristics, summarized by Domingo and Heinonen (2008), show the benefits of weblogs. Firstly, weblogs challenge institutional or professional journalism in an open manner. They deliver contrasting or additional information about news and current affairs. Secondly, weblogs are participatory: they communicate their content in a conversational manner. Thirdly, they question the "ownership" of journalism by playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, sorting, analyzing and disseminating news and information. Finally, their influence on the institutional media has become obvious due to the fact that news organizations, too, have started to publish blogs.

Blood explains that the task of the blogger is very similar to that of the editor in professional journalism. The good blogger takes time to review numerous versions of the same story. By doing so, he or she is actually deciding which reporters make their case in the most clear and accurate way. Although bloggers seem to be a combination of journalist and editor, Blood does not consider them a part of journalism in its conventional sense. She stresses that journalism seeks to put every story in a larger context than any individual perspective can provide (Blood, 2002). To her, weblogs and journalism are two different things. Blood gets support from the social media consultant and blogger Joseph D. Lasica, who says that citizen bloggers do not replace but complement the media in a valuable way (Lasica, 2003).

To Blood (2002) a weblog's strength lies in its position outside the mainstream media. She calls citizen weblogs "superb digests of online material". She refers to their comments and reactions to current events and the media coverage these events create.

Online newspapers. Entering the 21st century, worldwide Internet users over the age of twelve were estimated at 360 million (Gunter, 2003). This number has gone up to almost 1.5 billion users in 2008 (Pingdom, 2009). However, the digitalization of news delivery started before this exponential growth of Internet usage. In the 1970's, attempts were made to deliver news through videotext technology. One of these first services was Britain's Prestel service, which was launched in the early 70's (Becket, 1994). However, the videotext technology did not gain reputation in the long run, because response to

consumer inquiries was slow, texts had a low resolution and the technology was non-interactive (McAdams, 1995).

Newspapers were one of the biggest driving forces in the development of electronic text news services. According to Strauss and Schoder (1994), this was due to a decline of circulation figures of printed news formats. Mead Data Central of Columbus, Ohio developed the first online full-text database called Lexis in 1973. Lexis covered information for the legal profession. In 1978, Mead Data Central launched the first online database for news publications: Nexis. Among others, Nexis included the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and the *Associated Press News Service*.

America Online (AOL) and Compuserve provided interested users with electronic versions of online newspapers on an experimental basis even before the Internet emerged as the news medium it is today. The *Mercury News* was one of these electronic publications. It went online in 1993 and became, what Gunter (2006) describes as "a cutting edge electronic news publisher." The online version of the newspaper included features that were not possible in its former medium. These features, listed by Bates (1999) included a news archive that dated back to 1985. It expanded on local information and provided its readers with a news bulletin board, which enabled them to communicate with each other and with the staff of the *Mercury News*. Another feature was that readers could sign up for a personalized news service, which let them choose their field of interest via keywords. They would then receive emails that contained articles that covered topics of their interest.

The *New York Times* followed soon after in 1994 and launched @*times*, which offered news stories, reviews, and information on cultural, arts and leisure activities in New York City.

In the late 90's, when the possibilities of the Internet exploded due to the fast pace of technical innovations, the number of users grew exponentially as well. Newspapers feared that the evolving media could take even more of their readers away. (Nicholas, Frossling, Martin, Buesing, 1997). However, according to Domingo and Heinonen (2008) this never happened to such an extent as was feared in the late 90's.

Nevertheless, newspapers felt alarmed by the new medium and decided that their only chance was to participate in it. Newspapers saw themselves faced with the fact that their audience had changed. The Internet did not drive users away from news, however, it made them more picky. Readers realized their own power within this new medium. The supply of information grew day by day and they could pick whatever was of personal interest to them. A shift took place in the emphasis of supply and demand. This trend has since been referred to as "news personalization" or "news customization." (Gunter, 2006) Gunter quotes Michael Cunningham who was convinced that this development

> is shifting power to the people, and threatens the dominance of traditional mass media forms. The 'digital consumer' will be able to pull out the information and entertainment they want, when they want it, in a format they want – whether images, audio, text or graphics, or a mixture of four (Kwan, 1996).

Newspapers had to catch up. Being from the older medium, they had to ask themselves several questions when entering the new medium:

What is the ideal format for an online news site? What should it contain? What are the best way(s) to present online news to attract readers, regardless of their age, and eventually advertisers who wish to gain access to specific markets? What are the best pricing mechanisms? (Powers, 1997)

Blogs, on the other hand were born into the medium. Making the most efficient use of it came natural to them. Thus, it is not surprising that conventional news organizations looked towards similar mechanisms that were evolving on the Internet itself, to imitate their use of the medium. However, the intention of blogs and online newspaper articles has been different since their appearances on the web. Bloggers were not professionals in the field of news publishing. They had jobs and lives outside the Internet. To them it did not necessarily matter if their blogs were read by only few or by one million people. From the very beginning it was the intention of the blogger community to experiment with the possibilities this new, free medium had to offer. Certainly, it was in the blogger's interest to share the outcomes of these experiments. This urge for sharing grew, as online publishing possibilities themselves grew. When bloggers could insert photos and sound and were able to design their blogs to a certain extent, all these opportunities were explored. However, bloggers have defined themselves mainly through the content of their blogs, which has drawn attention from other bloggers and thus, blogger communities formed around "interest clusters."

This development was well observed by the conventional media. However, they were ultimately driven by revenue (Gunter, 2006). This is the biggest difference between conventional online journalists and online citizen bloggers. Due to the fact that professional news organizations have to make profit, their journalists have to take many

factors into account when writing a story. Bloggers however, do not have to justify themselves in front of anybody. Online journalists have to satisfy not only their readers, but also their news organizations, possible advertisers, etc.

Political views and economically powerful influences come into play as well. Since current affairs in the real world happen the way they always happened, journalists cannot simply adjust their choice of what to cover in order to satisfy the needs of everyone involved. The current number of media outlets (online as well as offline) would make any effort of omission of information too obvious. Since journalists could not influence the actual facts, they had to perfect their skill of the framing of news. That way, they could still cover everything, without falling behind their competitors. On the other hand, they had a tool to direct the absorption of news to a certain extent.

Summary. The introduction to the two publication type concepts, namely weblogs and online newspapers, points out some of their differences and similarities: the requirements they have to fulfill, the technical standards they are subject to, expectations from readers, their social acceptance and their recognition of being sources of credible news.

The study will go one step further to see what other differences exist. The attempt is to find out whether possible differences in framing depend on the outer factors that formally define both publication types. Do bloggers, too, frame in certain ways to gain readers attention and recognition just as professional journalists do? If they do, what

seems to be the trend and what are their reasons? These are some of the questions that the study is trying to answer.

Blood and Lasica, who share the opinion that journalism and blogging are two different things, get support from Gunter (2006) who refers to Aknife (1997) when he states:

> Although it is true that, in theory, anyone can set up a Web site and calls it an electronic newspaper, producing a news site that is likely to attract readers in large numbers and over time requires more than simply putting up a standard Web site with the name of a newspaper on top.

Online newspapers and weblogs are two different news outlets that share the same general platform: the Internet. The following section will introduce the concept of framing as one of the possible features for distinction.

Framing

According to Bateson (1972), a frame specifies the relationship between several connected elements in a text. Specifying this relationship can lead to a better understanding of the issue or topic that is covered in the text. Thus, any message contains two elements: first, the specific content and second, a frame that shows how the message as a whole should be interpreted. Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson (1967) add that "such communication on communication helps the receiver to structure and define reality."

The frames used in a message can be detected and studied through frame analysis. Charlotte Ryan (1991) describes frame analysis on the receiving side of a message as the following :

> In sum, frame analysis is a tool for ordering information about how people perceive political problems. We can use frame analysis to listen and grasp the fears and pains of a class, a community, or a nation, and then to crystallize their understanding of a problem.

There are two starting points in the approach of framing. The first one is the implementation of framing, which is always done when information is put into text. Authors apply frames to their messages and texts to deliberately guide the reader's interpretation of that text. This is a very subtle and powerful way to influence an audience.

Media researchers are taking the approach on framing from the opposite end. They try to decode the frame that has previously been applied to the message by the author. After finding certain frames, researchers can draw conclusions on what the author wanted to convey, how he wanted to convey it and what his intentions for doing so might have been. Once the intention for a certain way of framing has been detected, media researchers can look at its actual impact on the audience. Thus, they can decide whether the frame was successful or not.

Framing analysis is an important technique which plays a role in the understanding of social interconnections and dynamics, and cultural behavior. The following section will give a deeper understanding of framing and framing analysis to point out the importance of the proposed study for the field of mass media research.

Concept of framing. A research group that was lead by James W. Tankard in 1990 described a frame as "a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration." (Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss, & Ghanem, 1991)

The term frame refers to its meaning in the physical world, where a frame can be a picture frame or the framework of a building. Tankard (2001) summarized the different functions of frames. According to him, the picture frame stands for the isolation of certain material and the drawing of attention to it. The frame discussed in media studies serves the same function. The shape and color of a frame suggests a tone for viewing the isolated material, which can be a picture, a photo, or any other piece. The same is happening with the framing of messages, where frames suggest a certain way of interpretation. The frame of a house is its organizing and supporting structure. Frames in communications serve as the organizing idea of a message.

Several elements that play a role in framing are: schemata, frame packages, framing devices, and reasoning devices (Van Gorp, 2007). It is important to understand these elements since they play a crucial role in comprehending the findings of a frame analysis. Schemata are described as mentally stored clusters of ideas that guide the individual's processing of information. A frame package is a cluster of logically organized devices that function as an identity kit for the frame. The frame package consists of the framing devices and reasoning devices.

Framing devices include the word choice, metaphors, exemplars, descriptions, arguments, and visual images. Reasoning devices are explicit and implicit statements that deal with justifications, causes and consequences.

Frames are core elements of every culture, although their presence is often very subtle. Gamson (1992) notes that "the process of social construction remains invisible." To Reese (2001) "frames are organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world." To him and others, culture relies on frames to function the way it does. According to Goffman (1981), people are sensitive to different frames depending on their cultural background. However, people can be sensibilized for frames, depending on the persistence of the frame. Entman refers to this phenomenon as "cultural stock of frames." (Entman, 2009) This has to be kept in mind by journalists or other individuals who apply frames in order to convey a certain message.

This study is taking this phenomenon into consideration and tries to show whether different framing in different publication types is actually measurable. The researcher believes that the frames used in the transmission of messages in one part of the country might not be recognized in another part, due to a different mindset of the people. If the frame is not recognized by the receiver, it is more than likely that the receiver of the message will not interpret it in the way the sender wanted them to. In that case the sender has failed to convey his message. The researcher believes that different frames are not only perceived differently in different countries or different parts of one country, but also on a more local level, in different parts of one city, basically depending on the social

environment. After the study has been conducted, the researcher will discuss these assumptions on the basis of the findings.

According to Robert Entman (1993), frames are manifested "by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments."

Baldwin van Gorp (2007) points out that a distinction has to be made between framing by the media and framing through the media. The latter refers to the influence of frame sponsors, who can be interest groups, spin doctors, or advertisers who are concerned with directing the perception and the frame selection of journalists according to their interest (Entman, 2009). In this case, journalists are used as tools to apply the desired frame. Framing by the media means that influences external to the journalist are not taken into account. However, it is hard to separate external influences, since journalists are as much subjects to cultural shaping as any other individual. The distinction rather refers to the demands that are explicitly requested by frame sponsors. Among others, these demands can be certain expectations of a layout, choice of words, and the placement of an advertisement. The researcher assumes that webloggers are less affected by such expectations. This assumption will be carried out further in the method and findings sections.

Before going deeper into the concept of framing analysis to locate it within the phenomenon of frames, it is important to mention that frames play a role in at least four locations of the communication process, as described by Entman (1993). These locations are communicators, text, receiver, and culture. Communicators (authors of texts) make

framing judgments and apply frames according to their own belief systems. The text contains the actual frames. The receiver of the message (the reader) either perceives or does not perceive the applied frames. Finally, culture is described as "the stock of commonly invoked frames [...], culture might be defined as the empirically demonstrable set of common frames exhibited in the discourse and thinking of most people in a social grouping."

According to this categorization, frame analysis takes place within the fourth location: culture. Part of this culture, media research in particular, tries to understand this interrelation to explain it to other members of the same culture, the public.

Van Gorp (2007) points out that communicator, text, receiver, and culture are not only to be found in different locations but on different levels as well. He says that framing involves the

> interplay that occurs between the textual level (frames applied in the media), the cognitive level (schemata among the audience and media makers), the extramedia level (the discourse of frame sponsors), and, finally, the stock of frames that is available in a given culture.

Frames are very important and powerful elements of communication. However, their study is not an easy task due to "vagueness that persists and the absence of an unequivocal conceptualization." (Van Gorp, 2007) The researcher hopes that this study will help to shed more light on this phenomenon which plays such a crucial role in the understanding of culture and communication.

Framing analysis. In mass communication research, framing analysis can be located somewhere in between discourse analysis and content analysis, usually combining qualitative and quantitative methods. (Neuendorf, 2002). According to Reese (2007), framing analysis is more culture bound than content analysis. Framing analysis serves as a tool to find out how people perceive certain messages. It helps the researcher to "grasp the fears and pains of a class, a community, or a nation, and then to crystallize their understanding of a problem." (Ryan, 1991)

This framing study will be combined with a content analysis due to the "strongly abstract nature of frames" (Ryan, 1991). Framing analysis has been seen as a secondary research method compared to studies on agenda-setting and priming by some researchers. However, frames differ from agenda-setting and priming in several aspects. Multiple studies on priming and agenda-setting have already been conducted, which is one of the reasons the researcher decided for the approach of a framing study. The researcher hopes to be able to draw more attention to framing. Framing is a concept of high complexity and thus incorporates many aspects of communication and the shaping of culture, some of which are not at all and some are only slightly touched by priming and agenda-setting.

Van Gorp points out two main differences between framing and priming. They are defined by constructionism and the distinction of issues and frames in framing analysis. Constructionism means that media content constitutes a dependent and an independent variable. In this study the dependent variable is the frame and the independent variable is the publication type. Furthermore, the framing process takes into consideration the different levels of journalistic production and the interpreting audience.

Thus, constructionism is defined by the fact that framing integrates several aspects of the communication process and is not limited to only media content or only media effects (Ryan, 1991). As opposed to priming and agenda-setting, framing incorporates a wider range of factors. Thus, the findings of a framing study lead to conclusions that cover a wider range of cultural components. The second main difference described by van Gorp is, that while agenda-setting and priming are for the most part concerned with the covered issues themselves, framing allows the communicator (the frame-applicator) to cover one issue from multiple angles. At the same time one frame can be the same for several different issues.

The framing analysis is more complex and labor intensive than other forms of communication research (Ryan, 1991).   However, it leads to a broad cultural understanding. Thus, the researcher has decided that a framing study is a worthwhile approach to understand the differences in message transfer and their meaning in the distinction of weblogs and online newspapers.

Summary. Tankard (2001) states that "the concept of media framing is important because it offers an alternative to the old 'objectivity and bias' paradigm, it helps us understand mass communication effects, and it offers valuable suggestions for communication practitioners." Framing analysis is the study of the concept of framing. Different approaches to framing and its effects have been made by other researchers in the past. However, the researcher believes that the approach of a framing analysis will

expand on such existing literature and lead to a broader understanding of framing and its interrelations with communication and culture.

Overview and Analytical Framework

After the topic and purpose of study has been introduced and definitions and explanations of weblogs, online newspapers, framing and its analysis have been provided in the previous sections, the thesis will now point towards the actual study that has been conducted. The researcher has tried to make the history of news and its two publication types (online newspapers and weblogs) clear and introduce reasons for the demand of further research. The researcher has then described the chosen research approach, which is that of a framing analysis in combination with a content analysis. The literature review has shown that several studies have been conducted on online newspapers, blogs and framing individually. However, little research exists on the interplay of all three phenomena. Thus, the researcher has chosen to look at how framing in weblog articles differs from framing in online newspaper articles and has developed the following research questions.

Research questions.

RQ1   Are differences in framing of news in weblogs versus online newspaper articles a coincidence or does the difference depend on the publication type (whether it is a weblog or an online newspaper article)?

RQ1a Which frames are mostly used in selected online newspapers?

RQ1b Which frames are mostly used in selected weblogs?

RQ1c Are there differences in framing of articles in selected online newspapers and weblogs?

RQ1d Are there differences in framing of selected online newspaper articles and selected weblog articles, depending on location and cultural environment of the publication?

RQ1e Which frames are mostly used in each selected publication?

RQ1f If differences in framing of articles in selected online newspapers and weblogs are found, what does this difference mean?

RQ1g If no differences in framing of articles in selected online newspapers and weblogs are found, what does this mean?

RQ1h If differences in framing of articles in selected online newspapers and weblogs are found, depending on their location and cultural environment, what does this mean?

RQ1i If no differences in framing of articles in selected online newspapers and weblogs are found, depending on their location and cultural environment, what does this mean?

RQ1j Where do more differences in framing occur? In online newspapers versus weblogs or in different locations/cultural environments?

In order to answer the research questions above, the researcher followed the method that is described in the method section below.

Method

The researcher has chosen eight online news outlets from five different states in the United States. Four of these outlets are weblogs and four are online newspapers. The newspapers and weblogs are listed below:

Table 1, List of Online Newspapers and Blogs

	Online Newspaper	Webadress	State
1	SFGate	http://www.sfgate.com/	CA
2	IVPressonline	http://www.ivpressonline.com/	CA
3	Seattle Times	http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/home/index.html	WA
4	The Post and Courier	http://www.postandcourier.com/	SC
	Blog	Webadress	State
5	Beyond Chron	http://www.beyondchron.org/news/	CA
6	Madisonparkblogger	http://www.beyondchron.org/news/	WA
7	Joemonahansnewmexico	http://www.joemonahansnewmexico.blogspot.com/	NM
8	Milwaukee World	http://milwaukeeworld.com/	WI

To create a comparable context, the researcher took only those articles into consideration that deal with current affairs and issues of public interest, such as politics, economy, education, healthcare, etc. All chosen articles are from the time period between December, 1st 2009 and December 31st, 2009. The researcher has tried to select at least one article for each day in each publication. However, in some cases no relevant article existed for a certain day.

As for the newspaper articles, the researcher has captured articles by going into each website's archive and choosing the advanced search option. In the case of *SFGate*, the following keywords were used to narrow down the search results: "climate, change, global, terror, security, politic, obama, economy, health, afghanistan, white house, washington, government, crisis".

The results showed about 2000 articles for that month. Therefore, the researcher selected the source option "SFGate only", which reduced the article list to around 1000 articles.

A similar procedure was done for *Seattle Times*. However, the *Seattle Times* advanced search does not offer the keywords option. Thus, the researcher decided to narrow down the search by selecting the option "local news only" which additionally filtered out many of the Associated Press articles that seemed to be dominant in a larger search range. *The Post* and *Courier* and *IVPressonline* offered a search by date only.

In all cases, the researcher read through the articles one by one to decide which one would be relevant for the research. Topics like, sports, entertainment, individual stories, crime, art, lifestyle, science, natural catastrophes, seasonal news and updates (like

Christmas, etc.) were filtered out right away. The researcher then decided to chose the

first public interest article (as listed above) for each day that showed up on the list.

To receive the relevant articles from the blogs, the researcher went to the archive

of each blog and selected the postings for the chosen period of time (12/01/09-12/31/09).

In a further step, the researcher identified the most common frames. These were

1. regress frame

2. progress frame

3. justice frame

4. critical frame

Previously, the researcher had started out with the following frames:

1. human interest frame

2. conflict frame

3. progress frame

4. regress frame

5. justice frame

6. special interest frame

7. civic frame

To start out, the researcher used these frames as an approximation while reading

through the chosen articles. However, their definitions built up only in the process of

data gathering itself. Soon it became clear that not all of these frames have the potential

to be measured in the context of this study. Human interest frame, conflict frame, special

interest frame and civic frame seemed to leave too much room for speculation. While

trying to match certain reasoning devices with the chosen frames, it turned out that only a few of the anticipated frames were actually applicable. Those are regress frame, progress frame, justice frame and critique frame.

According to Van Gorp, this is a typical approach to a framing study. He points out that part of conducting a framing analysis is to react flexibly towards possible changes that occur throughout the study (Van Gorp, 2007). Thus, the following step-by-step instructions given in *The Constructionist Approach to Framing: Bringing Culture Back In* (Baldwin Van Gorp, 2007) were followed as closely as possible. However, the chronological order was changed in parts due do the researchers reaction to the developing dynamic of the study.

1   The frame packages were reconstructed

2   Reasoning devices and framing devices were identified

3   a) an inventory of frames was drawn up on the basis of media content

        b) a frame package matrix was generated.

Once the data were collected and processed, I analyzed the interrelation of the frames of both publication types. In order to do so, I divided the data into two main groups: online newspapers and blogs. This means that the data that was previously collected in detail for each news source were combined for each publication type to conduct a chi-square test.

Chi-Square Test

The following tables show the possibility of an association between the type of frame and the publication type, which has been calculated by using chi-square. There are two ways that show whether a relation exists between frames and publication type. The p-value has to be either higher than the test-statistic (chi² crit) or smaller than 0,05 to answer the first research question with yes (= a difference of framing depends on its publication type).

Table 2, Observed Frames

Frame	Blogs	Online Newspapers	Total
Regress Frame	10	19	29
Progress Frame	14	37	51
Justice Frame	3	5	8
Critical Frame	16	31	47
Total	43	92	135

Table 3, Expected Frames

Frame	Blogs	Online Newspapers	Total
Regress Frame	9.24	19.76	29
Progress Frame	16.24	34.76	51
Justice Frame	2.55	5.35	8
Critical Frame	14.97	32.03	47
Total	43	92	135

chi² crit = 7.81

df=(r-1)*(c-1)=3

Level of significance: 95%

p-value: 0.86

As these tables show, the p-value is 0.86 which is neither higher than the statistical-test number of 7.81 nor lower than 0.05. Thus, the null-hypothesis, which states that no relation exists (except proven wrong through this test), is correct. According to the results of the chi-square test, the researcher has to conclude that research question one needs to be answered with no. A difference in framing does not depend on its publication type (blog or online newspaper).

Matrix

      The following table shows the reasoning devices that lead the researcher to identify the four frame devices. The table does not list in which specific newspaper or blog the particular reasoning device was found. For detailed information on the sources of the reasoning devices one can refer to the appendix. The assignment of reasoning device and framing device represents the view that was presented through the article.

Table 4, *Frame Matrix*

Frame Reasoning Device	Regress Frame	Progress Frame	Justice Frame	Critical Frame
	crime is rising	supermarket put up grease-recycling station	people w/ paid off felony's to receive permission to do social work	jailed stalker released from prison early
	high stress level due to fear of unemployment	market for houses in affordable price range has recovered	Huckabee's campaign might be overshadowed by wrong prison-release decision he made	economic downturn leads to rising crime
	climate change sooner than expected	acceptance of odd marketing like bright orange signs for selling fish in posh neighborhood, due to general economic state	governor to be impeached for misconduct of tax money	Nancy Pelosi rules White House rather than Obama
	Latin America to lose democracy	California student dept among	governor to be impeached due	no healthcare bill yet

		lowest	to misconduct of tax money	
	water shortages rising in CA	SF mayor to pay back city for use of police officers as security	attorney in prison for failing to pay fines	Obama signs off deal with China during climate conference
	unemployment not sinking	more steps taken towards cleaner energy	attempt to impose stricter regulations by suspending beverage license, failed	charity options in new search engines give people illusion that they are doing something good
	Obama's immigration policy doesn't find acceptance	google earth introduces tool to aid reforestation (AD)		Seattle governor visits climate conference for economical reasons
	2010 census expected to be the hardest ever conducted	grassroot democracy: programming to search open government data		weatherization money MUST be spent to not lose further funds
	budget cuts in healthcare, welfare, and education	hospitality market in SF rising		female veterans don't see same respect their male counterparts get when returning home
	LGBT-community will decide mayor election in Houston	large diversity in CA		healthcare, welfare, and education cuts but state employee wage raises
	government transparency is	good job-seeker/job offer		sewage spill

	decreasing instead of increasing	ratio in San Jose		
	state budget cuts lead to cuts in education	Seattle city council spokeswoman with vision		tunnel turns into deciding element for Seattle mayor election
	cultural decay through entertainment media	program to set up schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan		religion leads to less economic prosperity
	loan worthless	garbage company starts neighborhood contest to reduce garbage		Ellis act leads to elderly having to move out of apartments
	global warming is increasing	legalization of marijuana		naked model poses for animal rights, covered with cross only
	unemployment rate at all time high	stimulus grant towards company that might offer 200 jobs		Obama sends more troops to Afghanistan
	South Carolina state economy bad, state owes fed and is in bad shape due to mismanagement	job-equality for disabled		Progressives are told to sit down and shut up
	less consumer spending during holiday season	economic downturn forces people to see value of recycling		psychiatrists describe medication too easily
	general noise levels rising in whole country, health threat	reducing impact fee to mobilize economy		border patrol can stop anyone anywhere in the state

	budget cuts lead to bad conditions in juvenile prisons	Obama is sending more troops		air quality fee both good and bad for economy
	budget cuts lead to less home-service for disabled	more spending during Christmas		health care taking over government instead of the other way around
	economic downturn forces rich family into selling business and private houses	dealing with juvenile offenders early		waste of valuable water
	New Mexico's gambling tribes are taking first major financial hits	rising amount of jobs in green economy		Obama has not created more jobs
		conjunction of San Diego and Imperial Valley counties might lead to stronger economy		Obama to send more troops to Afghanistan
		unemployed mother gets help from fund		import of radioactive waste
		Charlston economically smart city		imposing impact fee
		health care providers take a step towards consumer demands		lower unemployment rate
		fed reserve chairman Ben		using Christmas to

		Bernanke serves as prototype for students from low-income area		promote politicians
		climate conference in Copenhagen used wisely by Obama		TSA heavy hand but security leaks
		bankers need to be controlled more efficiently		opposition research not beneficial to "good" politics
		more charity donations inspite of economic downturn		South Carolina mistakenly did not apply for federal money for foreclosure counseling program
		judge makes way for more transparency through blogging about his position		senator Ben Nelson doing "back-room deals" for healthcare
		less tax money used for subsidizing government administrations conveniences		employment security commission unable to take care of its business
				carelessness of Homeland Security
				traffic restrictions on common tax paid road to satisfy few wealthy residents
				county executive

				keeps budget lean by letting city take care of some of county duties
				Thailand sends Hmong refugees back to Vietnam
				education act is unnecessary
				public safety director takes on more power than common
				city of Rio Rancho paid Hewlett Packard a lot of money and tax benefits to get their company to build a service center there but number of potential employees questionable

The frame package matrix displays the different factors that lead to the decision on these four frames. It seems obvious that most articles were considered to have a critique frame, followed by the progress frame and regress frame. The articles that were considered of having a justice frame were present the least.

The researcher matched the content of the articles with the frame category according to the following criteria:

1. Regress frame: a regress frame was chosen when the content dealt with a (negative) situation that leads to another negative situation like a chain reaction or a downwards spiral, no direct human interaction is mentioned in such an article

2. Progress frame: an article was considered to have a progress frame when it seemed to promote the situation or event described within the article itself; thus, when the mentioned situation was described as being positive and motivating

3. Justice frame: justice in justice frame does not necessarily refer to crime (as was mentioned earlier: crime stories were not part of this research), in this case it rather describes content that seems to be framed in a way that the author wants or describes justification for actions or people involved in the story

4. Critical frame: the critical frame is probably the frame that hides the journalists bias the least, articles were matched with this frame category when the author seemed to promote critical thinking about the person, event or situation, described in the article; articles that fit into this frame are obviously trying to opinionate the reader

The chosen frames represent the framing that the researcher believes were chosen by the author to transport a message in a certain way. They do not represent the opinion of the researcher. Thus, the same sentence can appear in the regress frame category in

one article and in the progress frame category in another article. The frames do not display the content but the overall presentation of the article. For example, the phrase "Obama sent 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan" was placed into the regress frame in an instance where the article focused on the negative effects of sending more troops to Afghanistan. The same phrase existed in an article that was chosen to have a progressive frame, since the author agreed to the decision of sending more troops. He made that clear by listing several reasons how an increase in troops will benefit the United States.

After these frame packages were reconstructed, presented in the matrix, and a chi-square test was conducted, possible differences in framing were detected and evaluated. The researcher will list the evaluation in the following findings section.

Findings

Chi-Square Test

Firstly, saying there is an association between the frame type and the publication type is saying that the different types of frames are spread differently between blogs and online papers. For example, progress frames might occur more often in blogs than papers and justice frames might occur more often in papers than blogs.

Secondly, the expected frequencies assume that there is no association, and that the overall proportion of all frames together which exist in blogs or papers is also the individual proportion for each separate frame. Thus, since about a third of total frames were in blogs, the expected frequencies say about a third of each specific type of frame should also be in blogs. The chi-squared test compares the observed frequencies to the

expected ones, and says how likely the observed frequencies are, assuming there is no association. If the p-value is very small, this could be translated as saying blogs and papers have different strategies for using frames to get their messages across. If the p-value is not very small, that means that there is not enough evidence of an association to conclude there is one. The p-value for this chi-square test is 0.86. This value is not small enough to prove that an association between differences in framing and the publication type exists.

These are the quantitative results of the study. Looking solely at the p-value, the researcher has to conclude that no relation exists between difference in framing and the publication type. According to the results of this calculation, the differences in framing are incidental.

However, a qualitative look at the findings does not necessarily support such an absolute conclusion. The chi-square test compares the observed frames with the expected frames. The test does not take anything else into consideration.

The frame matrix shows that most articles are allocated in the critique frame. The progress frame and regress frame follow in number. The justice frame is presented the least in both publication types. Table 2 shows that out of 135 detected frames, 92 were found in online newspapers and 43 were found in weblogs. 16 weblog articles had a critical frame, 14 articles were framed with a progress frame and 10 articles were framed with a regress frame. The justice frame was represented three times in weblog articles. Online newspapers show a similar ratio. Articles in online newspapers showed 31 critical

frames, 37 progress frames and 19 regress frames. Five articles were framed with a justice frame.

The sample for this study was not very large. Thus, findings may not lead to a final conclusion about the association of differences in framing of articles and their publication type. The following section will focus on the evaluation of the findings.

Evaluation

As is mentioned above, the p-value is neither small enough nor close enough to the statistical-test number of 7.81. Thus, there is not enough evidence to prove that an association between frame and publication type exists.

Since the sample size is relatively small, one could assume that this conclusion is not valid. However, it gives an incentive to prove exactly that, whether a larger sample size or different approaches would lead to the same conclusion. The researcher is now convinced that a framing study cannot be completed in a single analysis. Different approaches have to be combined in order to move closer and closer to a representative conclusion. Realizing this is one of the unanticipated but yet important conclusions of this study. Thus, further studies on framing are necessary and worthwhile to fully grasp all factors that play a role in framing.

The researcher originally decided to do a framing analysis and use the chi-square test to prove whether the main research question can be answered with yes or no. The study showed, however, that a quantitative approach alone might not lead to a clear answer to that question. Thus, the researcher thinks that further studies of frames through

different approaches are necessary in order to fully understand the meaning of the results of this study. This means that the results of this study alone provide only a part of the complete picture. As was stated earlier in this thesis, many factors play a role in creating and producing news. Accordingly, all factors need to be identified and compared through studies similar to this one.

Yet, this study generated results. The progress frame has been the dominant frame in the selected online newspapers as well as in the weblogs (RQ1a, RQ1b). Taking a look at the chi-square tables, one can easily spot this fact. Although the researcher is aware that the findings of this study lead to a number of continuative questions, it goes beyond the scope of this particular thesis to follow up on each newly arising question. One of these questions that give an impulse for further research is why the progress frame seems to be the dominant one in both publication types. So far, the researcher can only say with certainty that the progress frame is the dominant frame (RQ1c). The researcher also observed differences in framing depending on the location of the news source. As an example, the blog *BeyondChron* focuses much more on immigration and diversity than the blog *Madison Park Blogger* which is located in an upscale Seattle neighborhood (RQ1d). These differences however, where not captured in the chi-square test. It is one of the factors that are visible in a qualitative analysis. Since differences in framing depending on location were observed, it would be interesting to find out whether there is an actual measurable relation between location and frame choice. In a further step, one could examine whether a possible relation can be responsible for an alteration of the results of this framing study. In other words, if there is no measurable relation between

differences in framing of weblog articles and online newspaper articles, does that mean that cultural clusters, which depend on geographic location, influence the framing of articles to a larger extent than the professional background of an author?

The sample shows that some articles dealing with the same topic were framed differently in the two publication types. Such differences in framing could depend on whether the news source is dependent on a governmental or private organization that seeks profit or wants to promote certain ideas. If the news source is completely independent from such influence, this could be visible in its framing (RQ1e). Differences in framing depending on the location of the news outlet represent the schemata, which are mentally stored clusters of ideas, as described by Van Gorp (2007). These schemata depend on the surrounding community of the communicator (RQ1f & RQ1g). As mentioned earlier, there are several factors that play a role in the process of framing. Differences in framing have been found. However, according to the chi-square test, these differences are not related to the publication type. Taking all factors of the production of news into account, the researcher expected to find differences in framing. It was highly unlikely not to find any differences.

So far, the results show that differences in framing do exist. However, the chi-square test did not provide enough evidence to demonstrate a relation between differences of publication type and differences in frames (RQ1i).

Going back to the beginning of this thesis, differences between weblogs and online newspapers are inherent. Many such differences exist, many factors have already been compared in previous studies, and more could be compared in future studies.

Articles could be disassembled completely and would provide any researcher with enough material to conduct thorough studies on differences and similarities of weblog articles and online newspaper articles. I selected only one of these many possible characteristics of comparison: framing.

The framing of information is a fascinating concept since it is very subtle but extremely powerful at the same time. Frames guide the consumer's perception of a piece of information. Admittedly, the frame of each article is not always easy to detect, and misinterpretations are a common risk. Thus it is even more important to conduct further studies into the framing of news.

Summary

In this study, I tried to analyze the relationship between difference in framing of articles and the publication type of these articles. In order to conduct the study, two publication types were chosen due to their relative newness in the history of media. These publication types are online newspapers and weblogs.

I have given a brief overview of the evolution of weblogs and online newspapers. The definition of *news* and *journalism* was followed by the definition of *media* and *citizen journalism* to provide a context and justification for this study. After explaining the concept of framing and framing analysis, I introduced the method, followed by the actual study.

In order to understand the changes that have taken place and thus the importance of doing research in this area, one only needs to compare the news environment of 1690, when the first American newspaper was published, with today's news world.

In 1690, the publisher of *Publick Occurrences, Both Foreign and Domestick*, Benjamin Harris, wanted to replace "false rumors," which were being spread by word of mouth at that time, by a paper that would state actual facts (Parcell & Sloan, 2002). In the early times of professional news production, few news outlets decided what was newsworthy and what was not. As more and more news sources entered the arena, more and more events were seen as newsworthy by different news organizations. However, what was news was still decided by a comparatively small number of people in the news organizations. As news organizations grew, so did the distance between journalists and their "fellow citizens" (Domingo & Heinonen, 2008).

The rise of the Internet in the early 90's opened a door to the previously rather exclusive world of news production to the public. There were now two giant branches of news production. The one that was occupied by professional journalists who worked for newspapers, TV and radio stations and the new one which is now occupied by both professionals as well as amateurs in the field, people who simply want to share personal concerns and interests with their community or the rest of the world (Domingo & Heinonen, 2008).

Part of the question that is raised in this thesis goes back to that very first American newspaper, which was created to gather and present the truth about events. "The desire to publish truth has always been in the press from the very start. The basic

question in that endeavor, however, is as old as humanity itself. What is truth?" (Parcell & Sloan, 2002).

The aim of this study was not to determine the accurate definition of truth. However, it has looked at the way "truth" (true reality) is being conveyed in different ways in different publication types through different frames. That is based on the assumption that real events are happening in a specific way. And although there can be many ways to describe an event, there is only one truth to it. This is why the study of framing is so important. Consumers of news have to understand the tools which news producers use to lead the consumers opinion into a certain direction without necessarily telling a lie.

The first American newspaper was supposed to truthfully inform citizens of what was going on outside their direct range of perception. Truthful, credible and newsworthy information were driving elements of professional journalists.

Professional journalism today still holds these as core elements. However, according to Domingo and Heinonen (2008), journalism is not only carried out by professional journalists anymore. In this century more and more citizens "commit journalism" (Lasica, 2002) as well.

With this study the researcher tried to give an understanding of what the news environment looks like today. Its purpose was to determine whether the publication type (blogs and online newspapers) of news content is related to the frame that is being applied. (Are frames selected by the authors of the articles or by frame sponsors?)

The results of this study showed two things in particular: 1. Differences in framing exist, 2. Differences in framing do not depend on the publication type. These results are true for this particular study and this study only. The scale of this study is not large enough to draw overall conclusions. If this study would be representative for all existing online newspaper articles and weblog articles, it would mean that there is no difference in framing of news by professional journalists and online citizen journalists. It could mean that the way authors frame depends on the individuals' unique background and interest rather than on his or her educational and professional background only. This would be in contradiction with exclamations by many professional journalists who say that webloggers' news cannot be accepted as news in the way professional journalists news are considered news.

The researcher of this study has tried to provide valid reasons to initiate a discussion about the assumption that maybe online citizen journalists are not that different from professional journalists. This study did not lead to a final conclusion to this debate but points out the necessity for its expansion.

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