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„Breaking Binaries: Exploring the Diverse Meanings of Journalism in Contemporary Societies”

Abstract:

“Intermediaries beyond binaries: Pioneers in/from journalism”

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Intermediaries beyond binaries: Pioneers in/from journalism

When it comes to changes through media technologies, “pioneer communities” play a prominent role. Examples of this are historically the Whole Earth Network (Turner 2006), currently the Maker and Quantified Self movement (Hepp 2016). In Bourdieu’s sense, such pioneers are “intermediaries” (Bourdieu 2010) who act beyond simple binaries: In their experimental practices, they bring together previously unrelated domains, integrate professionals as well as amateurs, and develop “sociotechnical imaginaries” (Jasanoff/Kim 2015) of the future. Remarkably, these pioneers have a dual relationship to journalism: On the one hand, important members of pioneer communities are originally (tech) journalists. On the other hand, there is also a pioneer community within journalism that acts “beyond the core-periphery dichotomy” (Deuze/Witschge 2018).

Based on these considerations, I want to address in my paper the question of how such pioneers in/from journalism cross binaries through their experimental practices. My data is based on a media ethnography (interviews, participatory observation, discourse analyses) of three pioneer communities in Germany and Great Britain: The Maker Movement, the Quantified Self Movement and the Movement of Pioneer Journalism (see Table 1).

Table 1: Examples of today’s pioneer communities

	Social domain of community	Imaginations of collectivity and societal transformation	Important events and locations	Examples for important websites and identity-creating publications
Quantified self	-Predominantly oriented to practices of the self	-Collectivity and societal transformation based on technologies of self-measuring -Interest in datafication and media omnipresence	- Quantified Self Conferences - MeetUps	- Wolf (2009): Know Thyself. In: Wired, June 22/2009. - Quantified Self website (http://quantifiedself.com), since 2007
Maker	-Predominantly oriented to practices of manufacturing	-Collectivity and societal transformation based on technologies of making and sharing -Interest in pace of innovation and connectivity	- Maker Fairs - Maker spaces, hack spaces, fab labs (partly as chains like TechShop)	- Anderson (2012a): Makers: The New Industrial Revolution. New York, London: Random House - ‘Make: Magazine’ / website (http://makezine.com), since 2005
Pioneer journalism	-Predominantly oriented to practices of publicity	-Collectivity and societal transformation based on new forms of reporting -Interest in differentiation and datafication of media	- Data journalism conferences - MeetUps	- Gray/Chambers/Bounegru (2012): The data journalism handbook. Beijing, Cambridge: O’Reilly Media - Hacks/Hacker website (http://hackshackers.com), since 2009

In essence, a pattern can be identified that both refers back to “community journalism” and at the same time breaks with it: the pioneers in/from journalism do not act as “reporters” about what is happening in their pioneer communities. In contrast, they “invent” these communities and their transgressing practices in the act of “reporting” about them.