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The Journalists As a Brand: a comparative study between Finnish and Portuguese Journalists

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Abstract

This work explores how personal branding started to be part of journalists' profession. In a time when journalism is said to be in crises because of globalization, reductions in media houses and European economic crisis the topic of this survey is important.

"The Journalist as a Brand" inquiry was sent to 60 journalists from Finland and Portugal in spring 2015. The comparative inquiry explored the differences in journalists' attitudes toward personal branding among Finnish and Portuguese journalists.

The research method was a questionnaire. Interviewees, who were well-known Finnish and Portuguese journalists, were contacted via email and social media tools Facebook and LinkedIn. The data were collected by semi-structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed by themes.

The survey will answer to following questions:

Are journalists making a brand of themselves as professionals? In what way branding can help journalists in their career? What are the disadvantages in personal branding?

Conclusions of the survey

Previous studies have shown that journalism has not been linked to brand building as it is, in some way, considered to be incompatible with the journalism code of ethics.

This type of scepticism can also be seen in the responses to this survey. Some of the Finnish and Portuguese journalists viewed personal branding in journalism sceptically. According to the results, the biggest problem of personal branding is that “branding is a threat to journalistic principles like objectivity”.

According to the results, Finnish journalists are more critical of personal branding than their Portuguese counterparts. Among the risks mentioned were the problem that “branding is a threat to team spirit at work” and that “branding is a threat to equality among journalists”.

Despite the scepticism, personal branding is mostly viewed in a positive light among well-known Portuguese and Finnish journalists. Finnish journalists do more personal branding than their Portuguese colleagues. Finnish journalists are also a bit more active in their use of social media than their Portuguese counterparts.

According to the results of this survey, 70 per cent of well-known Finnish and Portuguese journalists are building a personal brand of themselves as journalists – at least in some way. Personal branding is more popular among Finnish journalists; 64 per cent of them strongly agree that they are building a brand of themselves as journalists. The corresponding percentage among Portuguese journalists was 44.

Personal branding happens at least in some way on social media. 80 per cent of the respondents often share their work on social media. Among Finnish journalists the percentage was 82 and among Portuguese 78.

The responses to this survey show that personal branding benefits individual journalists, too. Personal branding was seen as important especially because it can open new work

opportunities both now and in the future.

According to this survey, personal branding is a part of journalistic work among well-known journalists today. In a time when journalism has become more market-oriented, some think that it is in crisis. With unemployment in the media field growing, personal branding can be seen as a way to stand out in a competitive labour market.

1. Introduction

1.1. Rationale of the study

Branding is a term commonly used with regards to marketing. Companies first started using it in the 1980s. In contrast, personal branding was first used in the 1990s. Lately, personal branding has started to concern individual journalists, too. As sociologist Marcel Danesi wrote, “in a sense, each person is a brand”. Arqués emphasises that the key question in personal brand is whether we choose it ourselves or whether our brand is built on the opinions of others (Arqués, personal information May 18, 2015).

Saarikoski, in contrast, has written that if a journalist doesn't have a “twinkle whatsoever – then it is time to find something else to do. The time of mediocrity in journalism is over,” he notes (Saarikoski 2014: 57).

Kortesuo (2011) argues that the only specialists in a professional group that do not need branding are those who are fine with their current position as bystanders and those who are the only specialists in their own field. However, situations in the labour market are prone to change. Even if one is the only specialist in a professional field now, in the future the competition can be fierce (Kortesuo 2011: 5). Arqués, in contrast, reminds us that a personal brand is not a matter of need and that everyone has one (Arqués 2015).

According to Kortesuo (2011: 8), a personal brand is how a certain group sees a person. A branded journalist, on the contrary, is a person who is familiar to the audience and whose distinctive style is easily recognisable (Saarikoski 2014). According to Saarikoski, a journalist can build one's personal brand on areas of expertise or personality. New technology has made it easier to brand oneself. Social media has created new ways to build a personal brand (Kuismin 2013, referenced June 16, 2015).

But is branding something that belongs only to Americanisation, nowadays a globalised

trend in journalism? Or can a journalist be a brand in Finland and Portugal as well?

This thesis asks whether personal branding has started to be a part of journalistic work among journalists. The thesis is based on research literature and a survey sent to Portuguese and Finnish journalists whose personality is a visible part of their work. Questions such as differences in branding between North and South Europe and journalists' attitudes towards personal branding will be explored.

In a time when journalism is said to be in crisis because of globalisation, reductions are made in media houses, and Europe is undergoing an economic crisis, the topic of this thesis is important.

Very little research has been made on the subject of brand journalists. Arqués has studied personal branding among writers. According to her, everyone has a personal brand.

Saarikoski spent one year in Reuters Institute in Oxford to study journalists' personal brands. The central question in his study *Brands, Stars and Regular Hacks* (2014) is whether if branding some of their journalists would help media companies in financial distress?

In her thesis Haapanen (2013), on the contrary, asks whether it is relevant to speak of journalists as brands at all.

An inquiry made by Sandberg (2014) focuses on the audience. Sandberg is interested in what Finnish audiences think about branding in journalism. Sandberg studied whether an article written by a brand journalist is a threat or a benefit to journalism.

The study *Toimittajabränditutkimus* (2008), conducted by the biggest Finnish newspaper Helsingin Sanomat, sorted out the readers' knowledge of journalists working at Helsingin Sanomat. According to the survey, the bylines play at least some role when deciding whether to read the story or not (Saarikoski 2008: 26).

This paper explores personal branding in journalism from an individual journalist's

perspective.

The thesis will answer the following questions:

Are journalists making a brand of themselves as professionals? In what way can branding help journalists in their career? What are the disadvantages of personal branding in journalism?

The research method of this study was an online questionnaire. The interviewed individuals are well-known Finnish and Portuguese journalists, contacted via email and Social Networking Services such as Facebook and LinkedIn. The data was collected and completed by a semi-structured questionnaire and analysed by dimensions.

1.2. Organisation of the paper

This thesis starts by looking at the history of branding and personal branding. It then looks at the history of brands and the history of star journalists and the change and Americanisation of journalism, which that can be seen as a birth of personal branding among journalists.

Chapter 3 introduces the studies conducted of brand journalists and branding in journalism. A study by Saska Saarikoski is at the heart of the chapter. Saarikoski studied the change of journalism and the role of branding in this change.

Chapter 4 focuses on the challenges of personal branding, the ethics of journalism, and social media rules among journalists.

In chapter 5 the survey titled “The Journalist as a Brand”, conducted in spring 2015, is covered. The survey was sent to 60 journalists in Finland and Portugal. The journalists are well-known in the areas of television, radio, newspaper, and internet. The survey explored the journalists' thoughts of branding.

The conclusion summarises the ideas of the study and the results of the survey conducted.

2. Background

2.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the basic concepts of brands and personal branding.

Scott Bedbury (2002: 12) writes that “[e]very brand has a fundamental essence that is not physical or defined exclusively or entirely by products or services.” Brands are both physical and mental objects. In a semiotic sense, meaning does not exist in any absolute sense, but in relation to other meanings (Danesi 2006: 26). The same principle applies to brands.

Looking at the history of personal branding makes understanding the phenomenon easier. Originally, the term “branding” meant the searing of flesh with a hot iron to produce a scar or mark with a recognisable pattern for identification purposes. Branding was a proof of ownership and it became a practice for keeping records on quality (Danesi 2006: 8).

Brands have their roots in naming. Across cultures, names are perceived as fundamental to the identification and personality of the individual. In psychological and social sense, a human being with “no name” is often taken to have no true existence. Thus in a psychological sense, naming means humanising (Danesi 2006: 1, 13).

However, branding as we now understand it has its roots in the late 19th century.

2.2. History of brands

Product brands originate in late 19th century United States, where a small group of product manufacturers started naming their products so customers would remember and recognise the products more easily. One of the first brand products was “Ivory Soap” by Harley Proctor. The same also happened in Great Britain, where especially food industry, like Kellogg and Nestlé, provided the first branded products to customers (Danesi 2006: 1, 13).

By the 1920s, brand products already signified specific personal and lifestyle choices. After that the consumerist society had changed for good (Danesi 2006: 1, 13).

The globalisation of brands happened in the 1960s when the marketers decided it was in their best interest not to fight images of youth insurgency but rather to enfold them outright. Marketers wanted to create an imagined youth community through which all people could come together and establish a common identity (Danesi 2006: 118).

They succeeded. Eventually “young” and “different” were the key words for advertisers and marketers who lured people into buying branded products, not because they necessarily needed them, but because they were new, cool, and hip (Danesi 2006: 118).

The importance of brands increased in the 1980s when a culturally significant elite group called yuppies in New York were described in a story written by Bret Easton Ellis. In the novel the brands define the people and make them what they are. According to Arvidsson, Ellis' characters were defined by the items they wear, use, or otherwise endow themselves with (Arvidsson 2005: 2).

At the same time brands made an entry to the social scene (Arvidsson 2005: 3). In the 1980s, companies realised the value of brands. The rise of brands affected consumer culture and working life, as well. Also, the importance of organisation identity was understood in the 1980s (Arvidsson 2005: 3).

There seem to be few places where branding does not take place (Danesi 2006: 3). According to Danesi, “brands are no longer perceived to be just ‘things’ for consumption, but mainly as vehicles for securing a better job, protecting oneself against the hazards of old age and illness, attaining popularity and personal prestige, obtaining praise from others, increasing pleasure, advancing socially, and maintaining health” (Danesi 2006: 3).

We buy brand products and live in a brand culture. In 2015 even people are named after brands.

2.3. What is a personal brand?

According to Ganders, the term personal brand was first used in 1997 when Tom Peter wrote in his article FastCompany that “[t]o be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You” (Ganders 2014: 99).

When talking about a personal brand we specify a person in the eyes of a certain group. According to Kortessuo, a professional brand is based on knowledge, know-how, and communication (Kortessuo 2011: 40).

Sometimes a personal brand can also signify the actual person. A personal brand, however, does not include the characteristics that a person tries to hide either on purpose or unintentionally (Kortessuo 2011: 8).

What is essential is that we all have a personal brand (Ganders 2014, Kortessuo 2011, Danesi 2006, Arqués 2015). It is our unique promise of value. According to Arqués, all people have inherent talent and hence a promise that is theirs alone. It becomes our responsibility to communicate our promise of value to our market (Arqués 2015).

Questions such as 'what do people think of me', 'what skills differentiate me from my peers', and 'what is a word that describes me at work' are essential when outlining a personal brand (Ganders 2014: 99).

Personal brand is in fact a fairly clear concept. It is what people think when they think of us. Our personal brand is who we are, what we do, and what makes us different. A personal brand should always be genuine. It must be built on who we are, what our strengths are, and what we love about our work (Ganders 2014: 100).

Arqués, however, emphasises that no one needs a personal brand. It is a matter of having one. A brand is like a footprint: you may not be aware of your footprint on the sand, but you left one anyway. It is up to you if you want to take part in building your own brand (Arqués 2015).

2.4. How to build a personal brand as a writer?

According to Kortesuso and Dutti (2010), authenticity is the key element when building a personal brand. Arqués, too, stresses that if a journalist wants to build a personal brand it is essential to understand what makes them different from others. For example, a writer has to figure out what makes them different from other writers. After realising the difference, it is time to communicate that difference to the audience (Arqués 2015).

Choosing the right media is important for a journalist building one's personal brand: being where the audience is and where it feels most comfortable. Keeping an updated profile is also critical (Arqués 2015).

In personal branding, a brand journalist benefits from the social media in terms of engaging. Low-cost, accessible, and no-barriers-to-entry social media tools are good places to create a name.

Social media tools make creating a personal brand easy for people. Kortesuso stresses that social media helps professionals create a personal brand. Having one's own photo visible is essential (Kortesuso 2011: 78). LinkedIn is a good tool for strengthening ties with colleagues. On the other hand, a blog or sharing posts via Twitter are great tools for sharing ideas (Soumitra 2010: 130).

According to Saarikoski, it is beneficial to be in the limelight in many social media tools. The future of media is multi-channelled. The best tool for a journalist to build a personal brand – according to Saarikoski – is Twitter. By using Twitter a journalist can create a relationship with the audience and also build a personal brand. It is easy to link different kinds of audiences online as well as to always be available (Kuismin 2013).

Kortesuso, on the contrary, recommends building a blog. However, it is good to remember that a blog usually requires a lot of time because it involves more communication with the audience whereas Twitter requires less time per interaction. However, in Twitter, the frequency of posts must be high in order to establish a meaningful presence (Soumitra 2010: 130).

Arqués also emphasises frequency. Branding takes time and may require other resources as well (Arqués 2015).

However, not all brand journalists use social media for personal branding. According to a brand study conducted by Helsingin Sanomat in 2008, none of the brand journalists who answered the survey used Twitter at the time. It must be noted, though, that the newspaper's own Twitter feed was not alive at the time of the survey (Saarikoski 2014: 28).

2.5. Conclusions

As suggested above, good personal branding is based on a genuine image.

Social media tools have made personal branding easier than ever before. As personal branding takes time, it is essential to choose the social media tools that suit the brand and the audience in question.

It is important to remember what Korteso (2011) stresses about a good personal brand. The image and reputation have to be conveyed to the desired target group. The image and reputation of the personal brand should be strong and genuine and the personal brand itself should accept the image and reputation created among the target group (Korteso 2011: 38).

3. Brand journalists

3.1. Introduction

Personal branding among journalists appears new. First brand journalists are said to have emerged in the 1990s. However, brand journalists have existed far longer. In some sense each person is a brand.

Personal branding has also been a part of a writer's life longer than is commonly believed. This chapter focuses on the history of brand journalists, the reasons behind personal branding among journalists, and the benefits gained.

3.2. History of brand journalists

Self-branding among journalists is not a new phenomenon. Famous journalistic personalities existed in the 19th century already. Writers like Mark Twain or Winston Churchill were journalists but also public heroes. At the end of the 19th century journalists like Joseph Pulitzer and Randolph Hearst started publishing newspapers. The next century saw a rise of many legendary journalists in Europe and in the United States. Emile Zola, Ernest Hemingway, George Orwell, Martha Gellhorn, Robert Capa, and Ilya Ehrenburg are names known decades afterwards (Saarikoski 2014: 36).

In the 1950s a new trend in journalism could be seen on television. Classical journalistic values were combined with thick hair and symmetrical facial features. One of the star journalists was Barbara Walters who signed a one million dollar deal in the mid-1970s. After that, every American network wanted their own celebrity anchor (Saarikoski 2014: 36).

The most famous investigative journalist pair of all time, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, made an impressive contribution to journalism with their work on the Watergate scandal in the 1970s (Saarikoski 2014: 35, 36). The 1960s and 1970s also saw the birth of New journalism that used literary techniques in journalism - journalism that would read like a novel (Wolfe 1973: 9). One of the faces of New journalism was

Hunter Stockton Thompson, a famous adventurer and journalist.

The first official brand journalist – as we understand the word nowadays – is said to be Matt Drudge who started to run his own URL called Drudge report in 1996. It was a subscriber-based newsletter that broke into the mainstream. The Drudge report was the first news source to publish news about Monica Lewinsky (saydaily.com, referenced June 16, 2015).

After 1996 many journalists followed Drudge's lead, namely, they built businesses around their own name. The idea behind this is to make money by creating an audience who reads the stories collected by a particular journalist (saydaily.com, referenced June 16, 2015).

The digital age has made it easy even for the unknown journalists to become brands. The digital age and social media have produced a new set of star journalists, who often combine classical journalism with active engagement in social media and digital journalism. Most of them work in traditional media organisations. Baghdad blogger Salam Pax aka Salam Abdulmunem, independent White House reporter Paul Brandus, online publisher Arianna Huffington, New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof, another New York Times writer Brian Stelter, Britain's most followed tweeter Neal Mann, and the Times confessional columnist Caitlin Moran are just a few examples. What combines them is their talent and personality, use of social media, and industrious self-promotion (Saarikoski 2011: 35, 36).

3.3. Change of journalism and branding

Risk society is a term introduced by Ulrich Beck in 1986 in his book *Risikogesellschaft*. Beck notes that industrial and scientific progress brings with it risks and hazards that people have not faced before (Beck 1992: 1).

Journalism has also undergone big changes during the past years. The biggest change

is the economic crisis. The number of newspaper readers has declined. In the United States, the newspaper industry is the fastest-shrinking industry. What is paradoxical is that at the same time, website traffic is very high. The only thing missing is money (Saarikoski 2014: 38).

Journalists in the US have already started to find new ways to survive for example by building personal brands and launching their own websites (Saarikoski 2014: 38).

According to Gynnild (2005), journalism has become more market-oriented. There are both verbal and symbolic signs of that. For example, journalists are often called “news producers”. “News production” is used increasingly when referring to journalists' work. An increasing number of news workers are also building one-man enterprises (Gynnild 2005: 113).

The survey *Journalistit muuttuvassa maailmassa* conducted in 2007 among Finnish journalists found the same. According to the respondents, working practices in newsrooms have changed to become more market-oriented. Multi-channel and speedy work practices are now part of daily life. Journalists also feel that tabloidisation and rush weakens the quality of journalism (Jyrkiäinen 2008: 6).

Gynnild argues that business skills are essential for today's journalists. This means demonstrating good skills in branding and economy. Mastering personal risk-taking appears essential as well. Risk-taking is a part of modern working life – workers are continually forced to test their personal risk limits. Risk-taking is an integral part of a freelancer's life but also a part of the life of those who work on contract (Gynnild 2005: 113). The practices of journalism have also changed.

According to Arqués, journalists are professionals in the market of news gathering and dissemination. The readers, however, trace news more and more by the author. Computers can already gather information. The value of personal branding lies in this change (Arqués 2015).

3.4. Change of journalism and Americanisation

Americanisation is a term used often to refer to the entertaining qualities in journalism.

Americanisation was first used in the beginning of the 1900s in the United States, Germany, and likely elsewhere in Europe, too. This was a time of imperialism and colonial expansion. Two big states rapidly expanding industrial and military might, Germany and the United States - with its agrarian settler colony and dynamic, highly modern industries and growing urban populations - were in focus (Berghahn 1999: 5).

According to Volker Berghahn (1999), Americanisation refers to a process by which ideas, practices, and patterns of behaviour that were first developed and spread in the US first sparked the interest of some Germans. The Germans introduced them into public discussion. Those who were convinced by these ideas began to import them as well as the practices with the help of Americans. The ideas, though, were only a partial picture of America and the ideas were fixed into pre-existing structures, practices, and patterns of behaviour in Germany (Berghahn 1999: 5-6).

The adaptation process was not easy. The ideas faced resistance from those who rejected these elements as alien and inappropriate to German society. Sometimes the ideas were rejected in the first phase. Anti-Americanisation also occurred. Sometimes a strange mixture was formed, with specific American content that varied from issue to issue, from social group to social group, and from region to region (Berghahn 1999: 6).

American hegemonic pressure has had different phases. During and immediately after World War I the pressure became stronger but weakened afterwards. The new rise took place in the 1920s when the American industry became a model for Germany. That was a time when German entrepreneurs and trade unionists travelled to industrial centers in the United States to study transferability. The cultural offerings did not lose their charm during the recession in the United States. In 1945 American hegemonic pressure was greater than ever in Germany (Berghahn 1999: 7).

Americanisation benefited United States, as well. Over the course of years, the United States wanted to convince the European elites that the United States had become the leading cultural power and the country spent millions of dollars on cultural ventures

(Berghahn 1999: 8).

The American forms of journalism were widely imitated in the late 19th century Europe (Rasmussen 2014: 18). The term Americanisation started to mean commercialism, as opposed to more “serious journalism”. Americanisation has been thought to mean journalism that can “shock” and “astonish” (Rasmussen 2014: 17).

The ideas of Americanisation and its prominence in European journalism differ depending on the scholar. According to Hallin and Mancini (2004), the American liberal model has clearly become increasingly dominant across Europe. However, Hallin and Mancini also highlight the need for more concrete bottom-up studies of Americanisation.

One part of Americanisation is the so called New journalism represented by Hunter S. Thompson and his self-proclaimed style. Over the course of years this style has broken into mainstream journalism as well (Rasmussen 2014: 23).

3.5. Journalist as a brand

Branding and journalism have traditionally not been linked. Ida Sandberg studied brand journalists in her thesis *The Journalist Matters* (2014). Sandberg asked readers what kind of added value a journalist's brand can give to a journalistic article, what a brand represents to the readers, and whether if a journalist can even be a brand in the first place (Sandberg 2014: 3).

According to Sandberg, Finnish readers think that a journalist can be a brand and that a brand can also bring some added value to the article. The respondents thought that a brand can for example increase the article's reliability and credibility and that it can highlight its expertise. A brand can also help the reader understand the article better and increase its attractiveness and its general visibility (Sandberg 2014: 3).

The survey conducted in 2008 by the biggest Finnish newspaper Helsingin Sanomat provided similar results. Helsingin Sanomat asked its readers which journalists they know and follow. The survey also clarified the readers' opinions about mugshots and bylines. According to the survey, 56 per cent of readers knew at least one Helsingin

Sanomat journalist by name. The study also revealed that the bylines play at least some role when deciding whether to read the story or not (Saarikoski 2008: 26).

According to the study, the topic and the headline were more important to readers than the name of the author. However, especially young readers wanted to have mugshots and bylines with the articles (Saarikoski 2014: 23).

3.6. Who are brand journalists?

According to Saarikoski (2014), the brand journalist is a person who is familiar to the audience and whose distinctive style is easily recognisable. A journalist can build their personal brand upon areas of expertise or personality. Some of the journalists who have a personal brand comment on their own life while others tell nothing about their personal life. These kinds of special brand journalists are so good at what they do that audience follows them because the brand guarantees quality (Kuismin 2013, referenced June 16, 2015).

It is, however, important to note that the readers and audiences can see a personal brand in a different way than, for example, employers and colleagues. A journalist may be a brand in the eyes of professionals but not in the eyes of the audience (Kortesuo 2011: 8).

According to Haapanen (2013), the more formal journalism the journalist is involved with the less personal branding is needed. If the content is more entertaining or if emotions are involved, personal brand of the journalist becomes more important (Haapanen 2013: 32).

If a journalist wants to build a personal brand, it is recommended to specialise in a topic or an area of one's passion. On the other hand, the journalist should use some strategic skills: selecting a topic too marginal or too popular may not be wise. According to Saarikoski, being good at something does not suffice. One has to be the best. (Kuismin 2013, referenced June 16, 2015).

Saarikoski (2011) describes traditional journalists and brand journalists in the following way:

Traditional journalist:

One platform

Low personal profile

Loyalty to institution

Serious, trustworthy, critical

Facts, news, scoops

loops

“Telling people what’s going on”

Brand journalist:

Multi-platform

High personal profile

Loyalty to followers

Playful, speculative, ironic

Comments, debate, news

“Asking people what’s going on”

Personal branding among journalists can happen by the person's own will or by a newspaper's will. Helsingin Sanomat, the Finnish newspaper that has done research into brand journalism, does not engage in the practice itself. According to brand journalist research carried out by Helsingin Sanomat in 2011, some journalists have become brands within Helsingin Sanomat through years of traditional newspaper work. Systematic brand-building or self-promotion has not been carried out (Saarikoski 2013: 28).

Helsingin Sanomat has, however, used brand journalists in the newspaper's own advertising, e.g. in promotional films. Still, the brand journalists of Helsingin Sanomat are ready to promote the newspaper by their own will e.g. by performing on television. Some are ready to go as far as to personally go out and sell subscriptions or copies of the newspaper, if needed (Saarikoski 2014: 28).

However, according to the survey, the brand journalists in Helsingin Sanomat have usually gained fame outside newsroom work as well. For example, all the seven respondents in the brand journalist study had published a book – most of them work-related. All of the respondents to the survey also represented the newspaper in public events or in other media at least occasionally. Despite the public appearances,

none of the journalists in Helsingin Sanomat had received training or instructions for speaking in public or performing on television (Saarikoski 2014: 28-29).

3.7. Social media in personal branding

Social media have changed the balance of power between media institutions and individuals, Saarikoski notes (2014: 36). According to Hedman and Djerf-Pierre (2013), the strength and composition of a journalist's social media network is a part of a journalist's personal brand. Activity on social media improves both the media company's and the journalist's brand (Hedman & Djerf-Pierre 2013: 372).

The State of the News Media 2015 report notes that the social aspect of internet has been on the rise and has given a whole new dynamic to the information embodied. Research conducted in 2014 revealed that nearly half of adult respondents using internet had seen news relating to politics and government on Facebook during the past week. Friends and algorithms influence greatly what a user sees on Facebook (Mitchell et al 2015: 4).

Facebook is far more popular as a source for news about politics and government than other social media sites such as YouTube and Twitter. When 48 per cent said they got political news in the past week from Facebook, the corresponding percentages were 14 for YouTube, 9 for Twitter, 6 for Google Plus, and 3 for LinkedIn (Mitchell et al 2014, referenced June 1, 2015).

The latest research – The Digi News Report by Reuters Institute – found similar results. According to the report, Twitter is losing its power as a news source while the popularity of Facebook is rising. According to the report, 35 per cent of Finnish social media users use Facebook as a news source. The second most popular news source was YouTube with 10 per cent of Finnish social media users using it as a news source. The third most popular (7 per cent) news source is Suomi24, a discussion forum. Only 5 per cent of Finnish users use Twitter as a news source. What is relevant is that 46 per cent of Finnish respondents name internet as their main news source the number having been 37 per cent only one year earlier (Uutismedia verkossa 2015, referenced June 18,

2015).

Social media showed its power in 2011 during the so called “Arab spring” when Twitter emerged as a key source for real-time logistical coordination, information, and discussion among people in the Middle East and around the globe. According to the survey titled 'The Revolutions Were Tweeted: Information Flows During the 2011 Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions', individuals can be seen more trustworthy than organisations if they are more successful in seeding prominent information flows. For example, during the Arab spring in Tunisia – a country where Western media were not very welcome to work – tweets from bloggers had the highest number of retweets. The situation was different in Egypt, where journalists overtook the activists as a top source (Lotan et al 2011: 3, 24, 25).

However, the popularity of tweets does not mean that individuals are better at spreading quality information than media institutions – sometimes even the opposite is true if information with uncertain value is spread (Lotan et al 2011: 3, 24, 25).

Saarikoski (2014) also points out that the social media favour individuals over institutions. A good example of this is Twitter, where nine of the most followed Twitter-accounts in 2012 belonged to individuals, most of them pop-stars. According to Jason Fry, the digital age favours individuals over institutions because people respond better to names and faces than to logos (Saarikoski 2014: 36, 38).

3.8. Benefits of branding journalistic work

According to Sandberg, a brand journalist can help the reader understand the article better. This is particularly interesting because one of the key tasks of journalists is to help the reader understand. Sandberg's study revealed that if an article is written by a brand journalist it is easier for the reader to set in context. The reader can, for example, reflect the article in light of the earlier stories by the same journalist and consider whether the article should be treated with seriousness (Sandberg 2014: 39).

The brand of the journalist can bring a kind of depth to a journalistic story. This,

however, depends entirely on the readers and the images they get while reading the article (Sandberg 2014: 39).

The threshold to click/open the well-known journalist's column may be lower than in cases where the author is unknown to the reader. Even if the topic of the article is considered less interesting, the number of readers usually increases if the writer is well-known (Sandberg 2014: 39).

Haapanen (2014) notes that a brand journalist can offer the audience something personal, something that makes the bond between the journalist and the audience more intimate. Audiences usually require personality from the journalist, something to identify with. This also means that the specific journalist does not hide behind anonymity and is ready to take on the responsibility of their work (Haapanen 2014: 30-31).

According to Sandberg, a single reader is, on average, interested in between one to four individual journalists' work. Even though things like the topic of the article matter more than the name of its author, the interest towards an article increases if the author is well-known (Sandberg 2014: 39).

Personal branding carries benefits to the journalist, too. According to Saarikoski, branding increases equality among journalists. In the future more and more journalists can be stars when in the past only few could be. Tools like social media have helped journalists build brands more easily (Saarikoski 2014: 57).

Brand journalists may benefit newspapers, as well. Some newspapers admit that they actively promote some of their journalists. A study made by the biggest Finnish newspaper Helsingin Sanomat in 2008 showed that especially the foreign correspondents were brought into the limelight (Saarikoski 2014: 25).

In times when media houses can be said to undergo a crisis, brand journalists are the best promoters for newspapers. And as Reetta Meriläinen, the former news editor in Helsingin Sanomat says, every newspaper needs star reporters to stand out and raise interest (Saarikoski 2014: 29).

Tiina Haapalainen, who has studied the importance of personal brands in television journalism, notes that a personal brand benefits not only viewers but also media companies. It is easier for a reader to choose the right topics quickly by taking advantage of personal brands. Companies will also benefit if the general public's attention is easier achieved (Haapalainen 2013: 30).

According to Haapalainen, branding will also create more open journalism. When the audience knows the background of the journalist, the relationship between the journalist and the audience is closer. However, the relationship does not need to be positive. An irritating journalist can also commit the audience (Haapalainen 2013: 30).

3.9. Problems in branding journalistic work

Personal branding may also cause fear and scepticism. In particular, cultural practitioners and scientists have criticised branding. They have felt that a branding culture can kill the true content. Some, like Sakari Kiuru, the head of Finland's National broadcasting company YLE, even think that brands and images can possibly undermine democracy (Sandberg 2014: 11).

Sometimes readers are worried about combining news journalism and branding. Are news more or less neutral if the journalist is a brand? On the other hand, brand journalists can stop the illusion that journalism is objective. If a journalist is a brand, it may develop the media literacy: a journalist is human, not a machine (Sandberg 2014: 12).

Arqués stresses the same. Brand journalists are logically biased because they share the news with their own angle. Is this the end of objective news as we know them (Arques 2015)?

White (2015) notes that objectivity is not even possible in journalism. "Journalists, they argue like other citizens, are deeply embedded in the social and political realities of the communities they serve" (White 2015: 36).

Haapalainen (2013: 13) argues that speaking of personal brands in journalism seems to

some level to be incompatible with the journalism code of ethics. Branding refers to the concept of commercialism, which is against the idea of independent journalism.

Personal branding causes fear in newsrooms, too, as the study by Helsingin Sanomat in 2008 showed. At that time people feared that a brand journalist might get too much attention and influence. The hard-working, low-profile people were more respected (Saarikoski 2011: 30).

Different opinions towards personal branding exist among brand journalists too. According to Saarikoski (2014), those brand journalists in Helsingin Sanomat who had a more distinctive personal style were more sceptical or even bitter because of the lack of respect they had in working life than those brand journalists with a more specialist approach (Saarikoski 2014: 30).

According to Saarikoski (2011: 54), personal branding still breeds strong scepticism within the newspaper both amongst the journalists and even amongst some of the editors, even though it is strongly promoted at the company level. In general, anonymity is thought to go hand in hand with neutrality and objectivity, qualities highly respected in the news world (Saarikoski 2011: 30). Perhaps the reason for this lies in the ideal of an incorruptible journalist.

Criticism is to be exercised in terms of journalism and the quest for individual profit. The Council for Mass Media in Finland emphasises that journalists must not misuse their position. A journalist may not deal with issues that may lead to potential personal gain nor demand or receive benefits that might compromise his/her personal independence or professional ethics (Guidelines for Journalists, January 1, 2014).

Some journalists, guided by the traditional norms of detachment and neutrality, may also regard branding and networking as problematic, especially in social media. By creating a personal brand, journalists who are active in social media may expose

themselves to criticism from colleagues who choose not to get involved in social media. But are non-users of social media also more critical of the general notion that individual journalists and news organisations must “build a brand”? (Hedman & Djerf-Pierre 2013: 368-385)

Sometimes personal branding can be a problem to the newspaper as well. According to Jason Fry, some famous journalists like Wolf Blitzer or Andersson Cooper already overshadow their institutional brands. Before, the value of the stars accrued to their institutions. In the day of social media the strong brands now focus on their own work and start conversation with the audience. This can happen on the author's own page. Readers engage with the stars, not with the media institutions (Saarikoski 2014: 38). Many companies have lost their followers when a skilful professional leaves the place (Saarikoski 2014: 43-44).

According to Willis, many journalists have become celebrities in the United States. When journalists cover the lives of celebrities, they often become celebrities themselves. This results in celebrities covering celebrities. At the same time there are signs present of news media changing into show business. More and more journalists do not have any professional qualifications. There are journalists like Jon Stewart who are more known for their comedy routines than their reporting. However, Willis points out that a brand journalist has to be genuine, above all. Otherwise the journalist may cause some angst among media consumers (Willis 2010: 107-123).

In the day of star journalism, the quality of journalism can suffer. The problem in internet journalism is that it is often bad – not that it is personalised. After all, the number of well-known journalists among ordinary is, according to Nick Davies, usually very low (Saarikoski 2014: 48).

3.10 Conclusions

As we have moved from print and movies through television towards social media, celebrity culture has changed. Celebrities have – as a result of social media – become more ordinary, more intimate, and more connected than before. This change from

enthusiastically adored to casually liked has important consequences for the media, too (Saarikoski 2014: 35).

The practices of media have also changed dramatically in the last years. According to Saarikoski (2014), anonymity was still an essential part of journalistic practices in the national newspaper of Finland, Helsingin Sanomat, in the 1970s. True, neutral, and impersonal information was respected. The situation has changed little by little. In the 1980s, more personal writing with bylines started to occur in Helsingin Sanomat, too. The bylines have slowly become a part of journalistic practices. Today even small news pieces may have a big byline, if not a mug shot (Saarikoski 2014: 31).

Social media have also started to be a part of journalists' work. Studies have shown that people prefer information via individuals rather than via organisations. Social media tools help people "follow" the brands they prefer over institutions.

At the same time personal branding has started to concern more journalists. The above-mentioned changes have made it easier for a common journalist to become a brand. With high unemployment, personal branding may help journalists stand out in the labour market. Personal branding benefits news organisations, as well. Well-known journalists promote newspapers and may make news easily comprehensible to the reader.

However, if the personal brand is not genuine, the branding fails. It is not a matter of being liked. Even an irritating journalist can engage audiences. But faking always fails.

4. Social media, branding, and ethics in journalism

4.1 Introduction

The use of social media has changed the practices of journalism around the world.

Social Networking Services (SNS) are web-based services that – according to Boyd and Ellison (2008) – allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a

bound system. Social Networking Services like MySpace, Facebook, or Bebo have attracted millions of users since their beginning. The SNS are often used daily (Boyd & Ellison 2008: 210-211).

In addition, the SNS allow users to articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection. The SNS also allow viewing and crossing the user's list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nomenclature and nature of these connections vary from site to site. In some sites the communication happens between pre-existing social networks but some help strangers connect based on shared interests, political views, or activities. The shared quality can be e.g. a racial, sexual, religious, or national identity (Boyd & Ellison 2008: 210-211).

The SNS are not special because they allow individuals to meet strangers but rather because they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks. Because of that, possibilities exist for connections that may otherwise not be made. However, the users of SNS are not always trying to connect with new people. Instead they are communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network (Boyd & Ellison 2008: 211).

Several academic and industry surveys reveal that the number of journalists using social media increases every year (e.g. Cision 2012; Hermans, Vergeer, and Pleijter 2011; Oreilla PR Network 2012; Quadrant Communications 2012). Professional social networking services like LinkedIn and micro-blogs like Twitter are especially popular among journalists (Opfgenhaffen & Scheerlinck 2014: 727-728).

For example, in Sweden 9 out of 10 Swedish journalists use social media for private purposes. For professional purposes the percentage was 85 in a survey conducted in 2011-2012 (Hedman & Djerf-Pierre 2013). In Belgium, the professional use of Twitter among journalist is 51 per cent according to a survey made in 2012 (Opfgenhaffen & Scheerlinck 2014: 727).

The use of social media among journalists increases after important news events. This happened for example during the revolution around Tahrir Square in Cairo or the

murderous attacks by Anders Breivik in Oslo in 2011 (Opfgenhaffen & Scheerlinck 2014: 728). The real power of social media was also seen during the Arab Spring in 2011.

Social media can be used as a way to communicate with readers but also for personal branding.

According to Johansson (2015), 43 per cent of Swedish journalists use social media for self-promotion purposes. That can happen for example in professional social media groups where professionals share their ideas, advice, and articles with colleagues.

Previous research on the subject by Ester Appelgren (2014) studied a Nordic journalistic Facebook group called Datajournalism. In her research Appelgren noticed that the need to use Facebook groups was motivated by the need to develop competence and skills that are related to data journalism (Appelgren 2014: 2).

According to Appelgren's study, the most common posts in this Facebook group were the ones that promoted a data-journalistic project. According to Appelgren, 22 per cent of the people who post for promoting a data-journalistic project used phrases such as "being proud of their own work" or "this is a shameless marketing of my own work". The tone of these promoting posts was "almost boastful" (Appelgren 2014: 9-11).

Hedman and Djerf (2013) point out that praising someone else's work can actually increase a person's social capital. Appelgren notes the same. According to Appelgren, commenting on other people's work in a positive way on social media can be seen as a sophisticated way of giving credit to oneself (Appelgren 2014: 10-11).

4.2. Ethics in journalism

Freedom and responsibility are essential in journalism. Journalism serves the public but also entertains. This is why it is hard to think of media as mere commodities. Free competition in a free market does not automatically guarantee people the right to information that should be complete, comprehensive, pluralistic, true, and fair. What interests the public is not always the same as public interest, which is often thought of

as the duty of journalism. We sometimes forget the the citizen-centered perspective and use a consumer-centered perspective instead (Soura & Filgardo 2007: 6, 9).

Ethical rules for journalists are in place in most European countries. Advice pertaining to personal gain exist both in Finland and in Portugal. E.g. in Portugal, the rule relating to personal gain as follows:

“A journalist must reject requests, functions, and benefits that could jeopardise his/her independent status and professional integrity. A journalist must not use his professional status in order to get personal benefits.” (Portugal Code: Union of Journalists' Code of Ethics 1993, referenced June 17, 2015)

The guidelines for Finland are registered by The Union of Journalist in Finland (UJF). The union safeguards the interests of journalists and of journalism in general. In Finland the rule takes the following form:

“The journalist must not abuse his/her position. The journalist may not handle issues which may lead to potential personal gain nor demand or receive benefits which might compromise his/her personal independence or professional ethics.” (Guidelines for Journalists, January 1, 2014, point 4, referenced May 15, 2015)

According to White (2015), journalists' poor knowledge of the journalism code of ethics can be a problem inside newsrooms. In his report “Untold Stories: How Corruption and Conflicts of Interest Stalk the Newsroom”, White focuses on how economic crises affect journalism. The problems vary from country to country but the result of the analysis is clear-cut: economic crises have an effect on journalism. In Turkey, for example, newspapers are equipped with the owner’s messages – advertorial or otherwise. In the United Kingdom, journalism is in trouble especially because of pressure by the news outlets' proprietors. Many high-ranking journalists in the United Kingdom also go into politics, thus skewing journalism’s perception of the society and its issues (Journalism

research news 2015, referenced June 17, 2015).

White reminds us that many think that ethical journalism and high standards are old-fashioned in a world where financial and commercial points matter a lot (White 2007: 5). However, global principles of ethical journalism were adopted by the 1954 World Congress of the International Federation of Journalists and amended in 1986 (White 2007: 6).

4.3. Social media rules for journalists

The general trend in journalism is that journalists around the world use social media increasingly. Research on the issue has also increased in recent years.

Because social media have become part of journalists' free time and work practices, several media organisations have adopted rules or recommendations for journalists on how to use social media. Specific social media guidelines are familiar in many newsrooms. A study on Flemish journalists in 2015 revealed that most of these guidelines are about personal opinions, when one may or may not retweet other users' messages, and whether or not and when one may publish scoops (Opfgenhaffen & Scheerlinck 2014: 727).

These rules exist because there are two sides to social media. On one hand, news organisations want to promote the presence of their journalists on these platforms. Social media may get the public more involved in the news and allow for greater visibility. But potential dangers exist, too. One fear is that the objectivity of journalism is in danger with the influence of personal messages (Opfgenhaffen & Scheerlinck 2014: 727).

One topic of interest is the question of who owns the social media page of a given journalist.

5. “The Journalist as a Brand” - A survey of Finnish and Portuguese journalists

5.1. Introduction

A survey titled “The Journalist as a Brand” was sent to 60 well-known journalists from Finland and Portugal in the spring of 2015. The comparative survey explored the differences in journalists' attitudes toward personal branding between Finnish and Portuguese journalists. The differences in practices of branding among journalists were also explored. The purpose of the survey was to find out if personal branding has become a part of journalistic work among journalists.

The research method was an online questionnaire. The interviewed individuals were well-known Finnish and Portuguese journalists, contacted via email and SNS such as Facebook and LinkedIn. The data was collected and completed by a semi-structured questionnaire and analysed by dimensions.

The research questions were:

Are journalists making a brand of themselves as professionals? In what way can branding help journalists in their career? What are the disadvantages in personal branding in journalism?

The questions used in the survey were structured and semi-structured. The respondents answered the following five questions:

Do you personally use social networking services (SNS)? Do you use SNS to share your professional work? Do you think you are building a brand of yourself as a journalist? In what way is branding helping or could help you in your career? Do you think there is or could be any disadvantage in making yourself a brand as a journalist?

The Likert scale, commonly used in research that employs questionnaires, was used. The format was a typical five-level Likert item:

1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

5.2. Respondents' background

The inquiry was sent to 60 journalists whose names are well-known to audiences in Portugal and Finland. The fields of the journalists were television, radio, newspaper, and the internet.

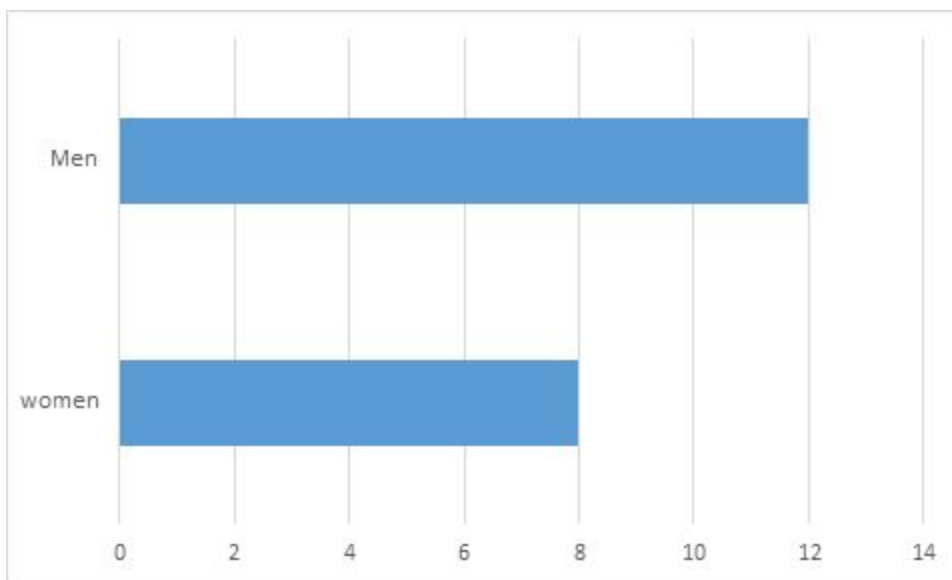


Image 1: The gender distribution

20 answers were received, 9 of whom were from Portuguese journalists and 11 from Finnish journalists. 8 were women and 12 were men. The age of the respondents varied from 33 to 56 years.

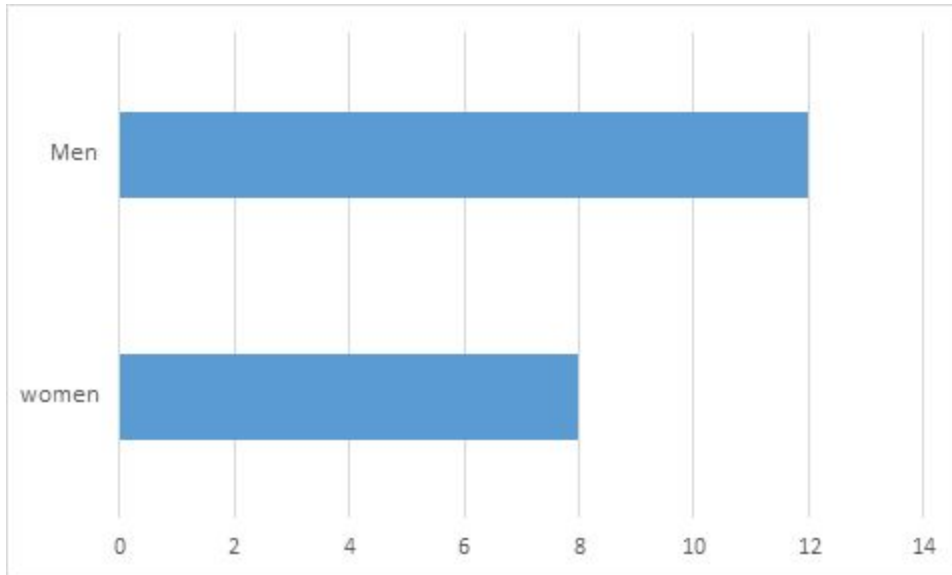


Image 2: The age distribution

The respondents' age varied from 33 to 56 years. Most, 40 per cent, of the journalists were 51-61 years old. 35 per cent of the respondents were 40-50 years old and 25 per cent of the respondents were 29-39 years old.

The opinions of journalists aged 18-29 and 62-72 are missing.

5.3. Personal branding among journalists

The survey “The Journalist as a Brand” reveals that both Portuguese and Finnish journalists mostly see personal branding in a positive light.

The majority of respondents share their work on social media. 16 out of 20 respondents, 80 per cent, replied that they “often” share their own work on SNS . Two respondents, 10 per cent, never share their work on social media, and one respondent, 5 per cent, almost never shares. 5 per cent sometimes share their work.

The results show that both Portuguese and Finnish well-known journalists are building a personal brand of themselves.

Image 3 shows that personal branding is popular among well-known journalists.

Number 5 means that a journalist “strongly agrees” with the question “do you make a

brand of yourself as a journalist?”, number 4 means “agree”, number 3 “neither agree nor disagree”, number 2 “disagree”, and number 1 “strongly disagree”.

According to the survey, the majority, 70 per cent, of well-known Finnish and Portuguese journalists that responded to the survey are building a personal brand of themselves as journalists – at least in some way. Personal branding is more popular among Finnish journalists; 64 per cent of them strongly agree that they are building a brand of themselves as journalists. The same percentage among Portuguese journalists was 44.

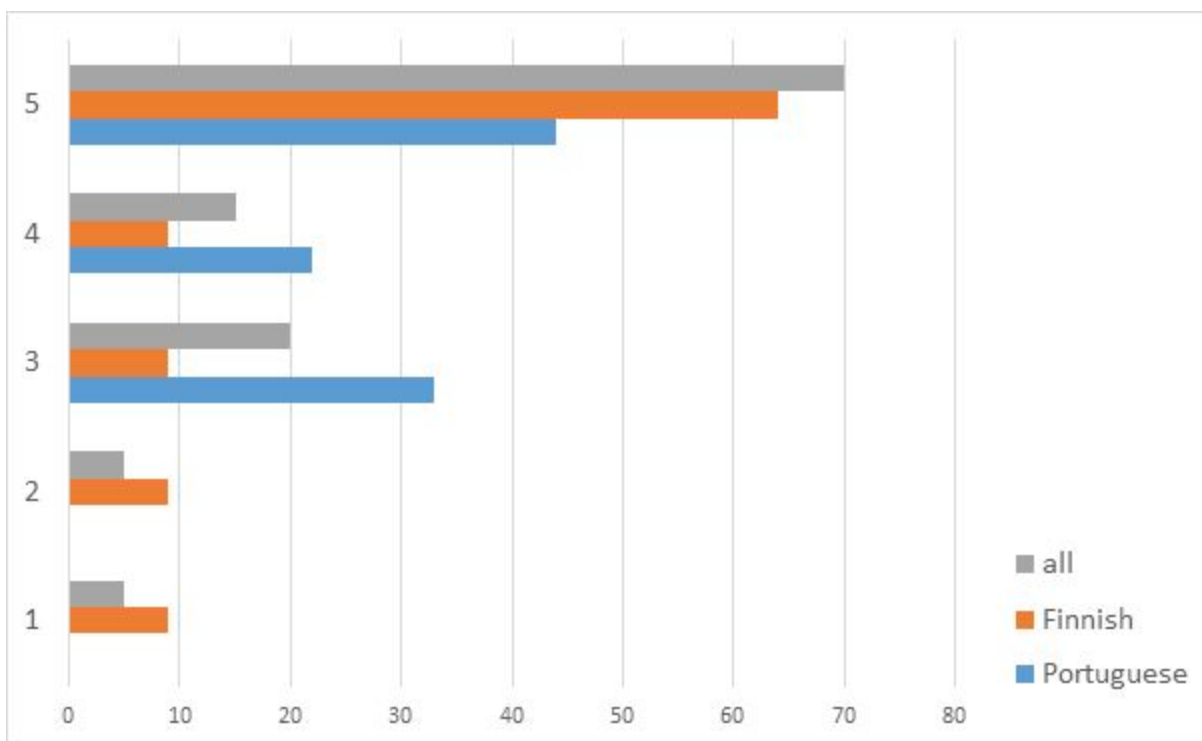


Image 3: Personal branding among Finnish and Portuguese journalists

5.4. The use of SNS

The responses to the survey revealed that well-known journalists personally use social networking services (SNS) a lot. 50 per cent of the respondents use social media “often” (number 5). Only one respondent did not answer the question at all.

Image 4 shows the differences between Portuguese and Finnish journalists. 82 per cent

of the Finnish journalists personally use social media tools often or quite often (number 5 or number 4). Among Portuguese journalists this percentage was 79.

The rest of the journalists, 15 per cent, personally use social media “somewhere in between” a lot and not at all (number 3). The conclusion is that journalists use social media actively and that Finnish journalists are more active in their use of social media than their Portuguese colleagues.

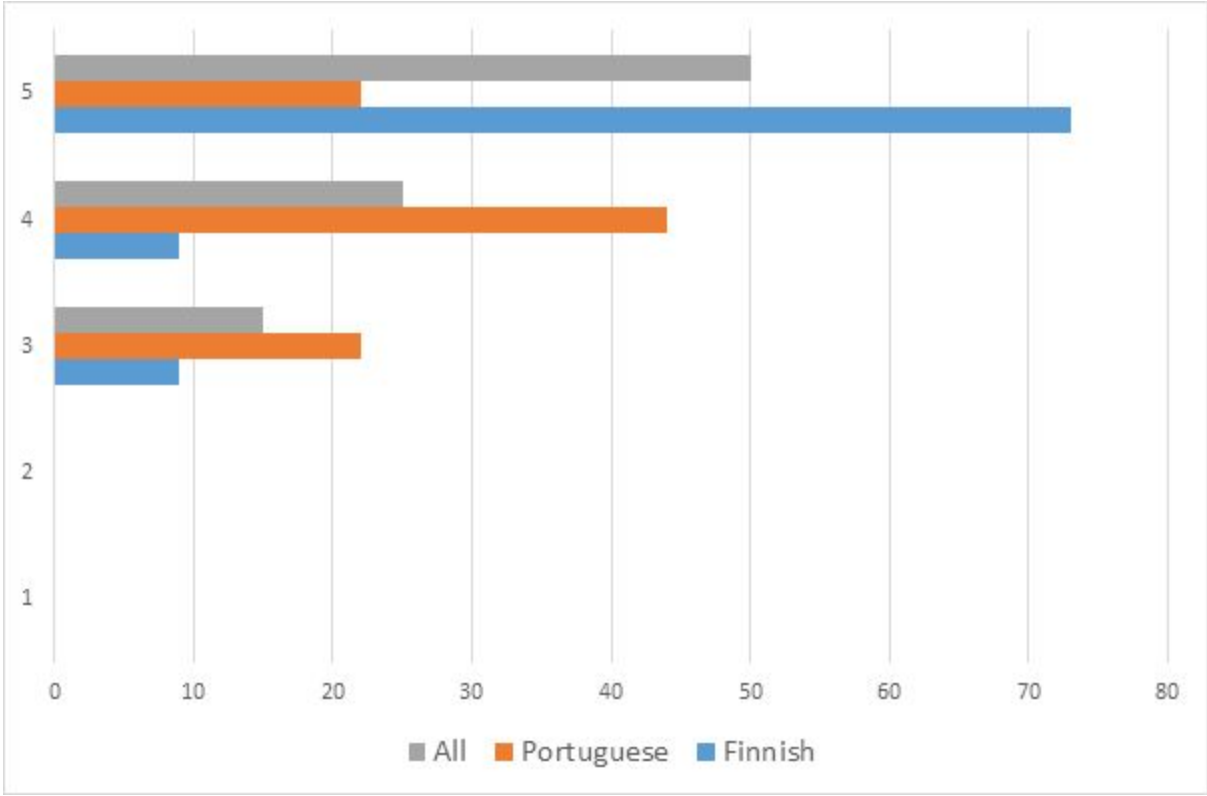


Image 4: How much journalists use social media personally.

5.5. The benefits of personal branding

According to this survey, personal branding is worthwhile most importantly because it creates new work opportunities and makes it easier to get work now and in the future. The number of journalists who think that branding creates new work opportunities was 90 per cent.

A small majority of the respondents, 55 per cent, thought that there is no risk in personal branding. 30 per cent thought that personal branding causes risks. One respondent answered “have no idea about it”. 10 per cent of the journalists thought that personal branding is a risk to journalistic principles such as objectivity.

The survey shows that personal branding can help journalists especially in terms of employment.

Personal branding was seen to benefit journalists in terms of helping them acquire new work opportunities now and in the future, helping them get specialised in some fields, and helping in terms of financial income.

Image 5 shows that personal branding is thought to benefit journalists especially by creating new work opportunities and contacts. Among all the well-known journalists 90 per cent held this view. 89 per cent of Finnish journalists and 83 per cent of Portuguese journalists thought that personal branding will create new work opportunities and contacts.

The respondents had found out that personal branding also has some other benefits:

“Creating my own media.”

“To get more proximity with the public.”

“Getting more news stories from sources by being more visible.”

“Strengthens the newspaper brand.”

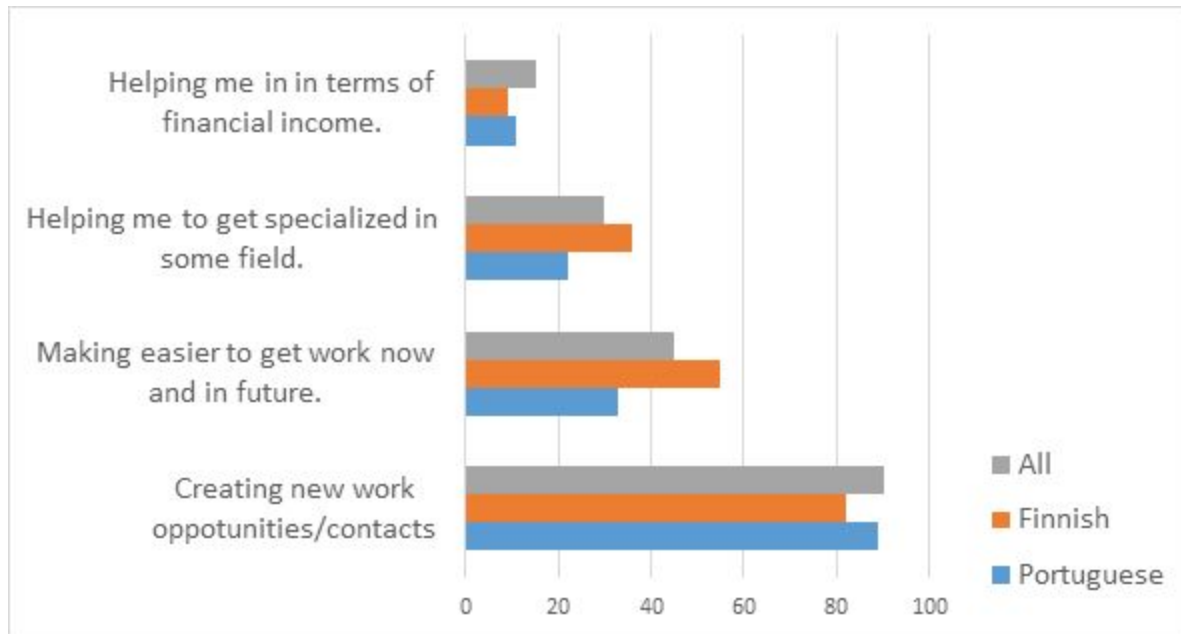


Image 5: In what way branding can help journalists in their career?

5.6. Disadvantages in personal branding

The answers of the Finnish and Portuguese journalists varied the most in the question regarding the potential threats in personal branding.

According to the survey, Finnish journalists are more critical towards personal branding than Portuguese journalists. When only 22 per cent of Portuguese journalists thought that there are some risks in personal branding the number was 55 among Finnish journalists.

However, Finnish journalists are branding themselves more often than Portuguese journalists.

According to the survey, the biggest problem in personal branding is that “branding is a threat to journalistic principles like objectivity”. 10 per cent of all the well-known journalists thought that objectivity can be in risk if journalists brand themselves. Among Finnish journalists the percentage was 9 and among Portuguese journalists 11.

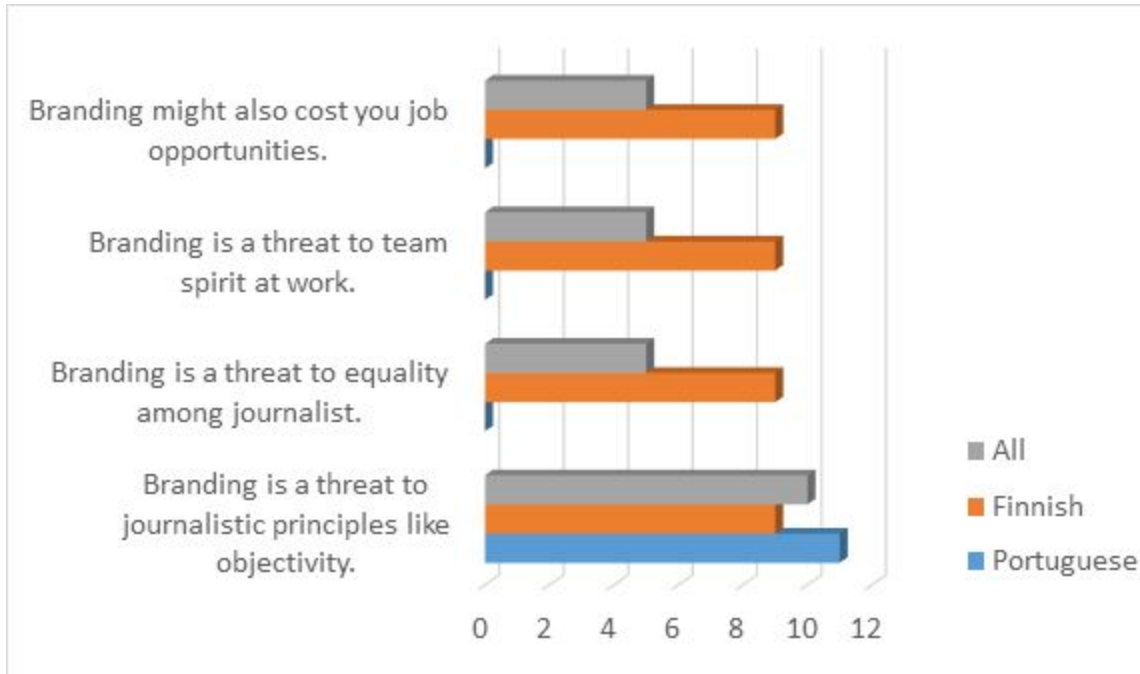


Image 6: Threats in personal branding among journalists

There were also other risks that were considered potential.

“Branding is a threat to journalistic principles like objectivity.”

“Branding is a threat to team spirit at work.”

“Branding is a threat to equality among journalists.”

“Depending on your personal brand, branding might also cost you job opportunities.”

“There is a threat that your readers are divided to fans and haters and some of them don't read a great story just because of your irritating personality. And then there is envy. You don't get more money but you are more noticed. But I don't find it a threat in my own team rather the journalists in other media envy you or us.”

“Well, if branding is the main issue, journalism is not, so I don't think it's through branding that you get attention / work / etc., but through your work, what you actually do.”

One respondent also noted that “branding doesn't make a good journalist” and one

answered "I have not thought of it".

6. Conclusion

Improving the continuity of operations is likely to be on the agenda of every media institution. In times when virtually everyone can create free content online there is a growing need for branding within media companies. Strong brands make it likely for the user to return to a specific content provider again and again.

The respondents of this survey have also realised the value of personal branding for media institutions. One respondent thought that personal branding is beneficial in terms of attaining “better proximity with the public”. Another respondent wrote that personal branding is beneficial in terms of “getting more news stories from sources by being more visible”.

However, not all journalists use social media as a forum for sharing their work. Only one of the 11 Finnish journalists who responded to this survey has a public profile and shares their work publicly. Portuguese journalists have public profiles more often and they share their work on Facebook more. The result of this study was that Finnish journalists use more social media than their Portuguese counterparts. 82 per cent of the Finnish journalists personally use social media tools often or quite often when among the Portuguese journalists the percentage was 79. The difference lies in publicity. Finnish journalists seem to use Facebook for more private purposes than Portuguese journalists.

For professional purposes, Finnish journalists use Twitter more than Facebook. The profiles are public and the posts are partly professional – like sharing articles – and partly daily notions from private life. This is particularly interesting because new research has shown that Facebook is far more popular as a source for news about politics and government than other social media sites such as Twitter. When 48 per cent of people use Facebook as a source for news, the percentage is only 9 for Twitter.

However, with the amount of permanent jobs decreasing, personal branding is essential for individual journalists as well. This study explored whether personal branding has started to become a part of journalistic work, the ways it can help journalists in their career, and the advantages and disadvantages it can have on journalism.

The survey titled “The Journalist as a Brand” was sent to 60 well-known journalists from Finland and Portugal in the spring of 2015. The response rate was 33 per cent with 11 Finnish journalists and 9 Portuguese journalists responding. The survey was only sent to journalists who are already well known in their field.

Self-branding among journalists is not a new thing. Famous journalistic personalities existed in the 19th century already. In journalism, personal branding – as we now know it – became popular in the 1990s. The first brand journalist is said to be Matt Drudge who developed the subscription-based newsletter Drudge report in 1996.

Previous studies have shown that journalism has not been linked to brand building as it is considered to be incompatible with the journalism code of ethics. The Finnish Guidelines for journalists say: “The journalist may not deal with issues that may lead to potential personal gain nor demand or receive benefits that might compromise his/her personal independence or professional ethics”.

This type of scepticism can also be seen in the responses to this survey. Some of the Finnish and Portuguese journalists viewed personal branding in journalism sceptically. According to the results, the biggest problem of personal branding is that “branding is a threat to journalistic principles like objectivity”. 10 per cent of the respondents thought that objectivity can be at risk if journalists brand themselves. 9 per cent of Finnish and 11 per cent of Portuguese journalists held this view.

According to the results, Finnish journalists are more critical of personal branding than their Portuguese counterparts. When only 22 per cent of Portuguese journalists thought that there are some risks in personal branding, the corresponding percentage was 55 among Finnish journalists. Among the risks mentioned were the problem that “branding is a threat to team spirit at work” and that “branding is a threat to equality among journalists”.

Despite the scepticism, personal branding is mostly viewed in a positive light among well-known Portuguese and Finnish journalists. Finnish journalists do more personal branding than their Portuguese colleagues. Finnish journalists are also a bit more active in their use of social media than their Portuguese counterparts. 80 per cent of all the respondents use social media personally. The percentage of respondents using social media was 82 among the Finnish and 78 among the Portuguese journalists.

The results are similar to those of latest studies. The number of journalists using social media personally increases every year. Social media have also changed the balance of power between media institutions and individuals.

According to the results of this survey, 70 per cent of well-known Finnish and Portuguese journalists are building a personal brand of themselves as journalists – at least in some way. Personal branding is more popular among Finnish journalists; 64 per cent of them strongly agree that they are building a brand of themselves as journalists. The corresponding percentage among Portuguese journalists was 44.

Personal branding happens at least in some way on social media. 80 per cent of the respondents often share their work on social media. Among Finnish journalists the percentage was 82 and among Portuguese 78.

However, as previous studies of brand building have shown, personal branding is not always conscious. It often happens as a result of elaborate work over the years. This

kind of thinking was also prominent among the responses to this survey. The respondents emphasised that personal branding does not make a good journalist and that it is the work that matters. One of the respondents answered:

“Well, if branding is the main issue, journalism is not, so I don't think it's through branding that you get attention / work / etc. but through your work, what you actually do.”

According to previous studies, personal branding in journalism can help media institutions differentiate between journalists in a competitive market and help the audience create a special bond with the journalist.

The responses to this survey show that personal branding benefits individual journalists, too. Personal branding was seen as important especially because it can open new work opportunities both now and in the future. 90 per cent of the journalists believed that personal branding will create new work opportunities and contacts. The percentage of respondents holding this view was 89 among the Finnish and 83 among the Portuguese.

According to this survey, personal branding is a part of journalistic work among well-known journalists today.

In a time when journalism has become more market-oriented, some think that it is in crisis. With unemployment in the media field growing, personal branding can be seen as a way to stand out in a competitive labour market.

Information society needs journalists who are ready to work with their own face instead of hiding in anonymity. With this comes an increased responsibility for one's own mistakes. Personal branding can open opportunities that are beneficial not only for the reader and the newsrooms but for individual journalists too.

After all, it is all about the desire to do one's job well.

“Getting more news stories from sources by being more visible.”

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The Journalist as a Brand

A comparative inquiry between Finnish and Portuguese journalists

Name

(Will not be published.)

Gender

Age

Email address

(Will not be published.)

Do you personally use social networks sites (SNS)?

(Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all Yes, a lot

Do you use SNS to share your professional work?

(On newspapers, TV, radio or online.)

1 2 3 4 5

No, never Yes, often

Do you think you are building a brand of yourself as a journalist?

1 2 3 4 5

I totally disagree I totally agree

In what way branding is helping or could help you in your career?

Creating new work opportunities/contacts.

Making easier to get work now and in future.

Helping me to get specialized in some field.

Helping me in in terms of financial income.

Other:

Do you think there is or could be any disadvantage in making yourself a brand as a journalist?

Yes. Branding is a threat to team spirit at work.

Yes. Branding is a threat to journalistic principles like objectivity.

Yes. Branding is a threat to equality among journalist.

Yes. Branding creates monetary inequality among journalist.

No. There are no risks in branding my personal work as a journalist.

Other:

Submit

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.