

Ordinary People Regularly Reported? Looking for Patterns in the Presence of Ordinary Citizens in Television News in 20 European Countries

Knut De Swert & Ine Kuypers

To cite this article: Knut De Swert & Ine Kuypers (2020) Ordinary People Regularly Reported? Looking for Patterns in the Presence of Ordinary Citizens in Television News in 20 European Countries, *Journalism Studies*, 21:8, 1037-1054, DOI: [10.1080/1461670X.2020.1745664](https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2020.1745664)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2020.1745664>



© 2020 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 01 Jun 2020.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 1270



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 1 View citing articles [↗](#)

Ordinary People Regularly Reported? Looking for Patterns in the Presence of Ordinary Citizens in Television News in 20 European Countries

Knut De Swert^a and Ine Kuypers^b

^aAmsterdam School of Communication Research, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands;

^bDepartment of Political Science, University of Antwerp, Antwerp, Belgium

ABSTRACT


Typically, ordinary people are not the main target sources on television newsmakers' radars. Power and higher expertise make other types of sources safer and more attractive to them, although journalists may have commercial and/or idealistic reasons to use ordinary people in the news nonetheless. This study tries to map the use of ordinary citizens in the news across Europe, looking for similarities and differences and tries to link the findings to some of the reasons that may lead to (more) inclusion of ordinary citizens in the news. Three different types of ordinary citizens are distinguished and compared between countries, taking into account various types of news topics and the type of broadcaster (public or private). To answer these questions, we use a large dataset containing 28,756 (speaking) actors appearing in news items from 1096 news broadcasts from 41 television news broadcasters in 20 (mostly European) countries, taken from a 28-day constructed sample (2016), identical for all 41 broadcasters. Findings reveal rather large differences, mainly between countries, while also broadcaster types and topics influence the presence of ordinary citizens in the news. Generally, national contexts seem to matter (even) more than the commercial nature of broadcasters.

KEYWORDS

Vox pops; citizens; exemplars; news sources; comparative television news research; content analysis; television news; public opinion

Introduction

Nowadays, ordinary people are found to be largely present in (Western) European television news (Cushion 2018; Hopmann and Shehata 2011). Although contested, some studies in The Netherlands (Kleemans, Schaap, and Hermans 2017; Pantti and Huslage 2009) and Belgium (Beckers and Walgrave 2015; Beckers and Van Aelst 2019; De Swert et al. 2008) even claim a trend towards a further increase of their inclusion in the news. This study wants to add to these mostly single-country based findings by applying a cross-country comparative approach. Differences between countries and broadcasters may give insight into the different ways ordinary people are voiced in the news in different contexts. We will also distinguish different types of ordinary people, i.e., those ordinary people

CONTACT Knut De Swert  k.deswert@uva.nl

© 2020 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

somehow personally involved with the item, those who act as a role exemplar, and the pure vox pops who are totally interchangeable with any other person on the street. The differences found in this study can help the field to become more conceptually clear and apply the necessary caution generalizing single-country findings, leading to more valid normative implications of research results on the use of ordinary people as news sources.

There used to be a time when newsmakers were focused on elite sources and experts (De Keyser and Raeymaeckers 2012; Grabe, Zhou, and Barnett 1999), as they were mainly preoccupied with credibility and political balance (Gans 1979; Sigal 1973). That was a time when first politics, and thereafter also news media, were the dominant elements in the triangle of political communication, in their battle largely marginalizing the public's visibility in the news (Brants and De Haan 2010), and if present, reducing them to curlicues and curiosities. This has dramatically changed, with increased commercial pressure for nearly all news broadcasters (Croteau, Hoynes, and Hoynes 2006), with the individualization of news consumption due to the internet and social media, and with the louder appeals to "the people" by (mainly) populist politicians and social movements (Brants and van Praag 2017). This cocktail is described to lead to media populism, a situation in which media, sometimes led by certain elites, rather tailor to the demands of the audience (Esser, Stępińska, and Hopmann 2017; Mazzoleni 2008). Growing tabloidization of the media and the bigger role of entertainment and personalization in the news making process are often said to go hand in hand with a more prominent role of ordinary people or vox pops in the news (Hendriks Vettehen, Nuijten, and Beentjes 2005; Beckers 2017). This is often seen as a sign of declining news quality. On the other hand, including ordinary people in the news may also be a much more positive indication of the way news media fulfill their role in democracy. Using regular people as news sources can be an important and direct approach to hold the politicians in power accountable on behalf of the general public. More ordinary people in the news can diminish the monopoly position of elite sources (Beckers 2017) and give access to more diverse voices. The more a democracy evolves in the direction of a participatory or even a deliberative democracy (Strömbäck 2005), the more value active participation and visibility of citizens gets. Therefore, a normative evaluation of the use of ordinary people in the news requires nuances beyond their mere (quantitative) presence and depends on the model of democracy one has in mind.

It is still up for debate whether the public actually has much control over when and how people are represented in the news. Contrary to the well-known and extensively studied power battle between politicians and journalists as chefs determining the news menu, not much is known about the role of ordinary citizens in this respect. Journalists may have self-empowering considerations, linked to the opportunity ordinary citizens provide them to gain (back) power over political actors. A main advantage ordinary citizens have for journalists, especially in the form of "vox pops" or "men/women in the street", is that they are numerous, so journalists are able to cherry-pick them and their opinions according to what suits their news story best, rather than to represent public opinion. As Lefevre, De Swert, and Walgrave (2012, 116) state, they could be seen as "puppets on a string held by journalists". When Cushion (2018) studied the use of vox pops during recent British election campaigns, he concluded that vox pops serve the preconceived narratives of journalists rather than to portray a representative picture of public opinion. A normative assessment of this

then depends on the intentions of the journalist and/or media organization, which are elements we cannot consider with our data, but which we need to be aware of at all times while interpreting the results.

Clearly, precipitate generalizations based on typically single-country studies and often vaguely defined notions of ordinary people may not give a sufficient basis to normatively evaluate this phenomenon in the context of the role of news media in modern democracies. This paper adds a broad comparative account of the presence of different types of regular people in the news across Europe. The differences found can give this research field the clues they need to move further into explanatory research. This may also fuel up the academic and societal debate about the position of the general public in the news making process, questioning –also at the country level– to what extent the use of ordinary people in the news is in line with the role of the media in its particular model of democracy.

Why do ordinary people get a voice in television news?

Following Grabe, Zhou, and Barnett (1999), this study considers as “ordinary people” all citizen sources who are presented in the news as “unknown” to the general public and unaffiliated to any organization. Traditionally, journalists do not consider ordinary people as the best information providers. The traditional journalistic routines and practices are a clear disadvantage for ordinary citizens to get a voice in the news (Lewis, Wahl-Jorgensen, and Inthorn 2004; Reich 2015). Driven by the need for credibility, which elite news sources have more than ordinary citizen sources (Miller and Kurpius 2010) and the consideration that elites’ opinions have a much greater societal impact, journalists rather turn to official sources, representatives and experts (Austin and Dong 1994; Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston 2007; Cottle 2000; Gans 1979). However, several reasons have been coined why ordinary people would be used in television news nonetheless (Hopmann and Shehata 2011; Vliegenthart and Boukes 2018). These can have two very different bases: commercial considerations and idealistic motives.

First, commercial considerations build on the fact that ordinary people are widely available, at barely any cost, potentially reducing the production costs for newsmakers in an increasingly competitive news environment (McManus 1994; Vliegenthart and Boukes 2018). At the same time, using ordinary citizens is also considered a good technique to add vividness to the news and making the news more proximate to individual news consumers, attracting viewers or avoiding them to lose interest in overly general, abstract or elite-focused news (Hendriks Vettehen, Nuijten, and Beentjes 2005).

Second, idealistic considerations of how good journalism can and should work, are often built on the ideas of civic journalism or public journalism, a set of “journalistic ideals and practices, which emphasize the importance of citizen involvement in the journalistic process and public discussion” (Ahva 2013, 791). Kurpius (2003) even explicitly discussed civic journalism as a countermovement to the commercial pressures mentioned above. Yet another example of an ideal-type of journalism involving active citizen input is “public quality news” by Costera Meijer (2003), who tried to overcome the criticism that this kind of news would not be quality news due to the lack of the (dominant) presence of power elites. In this approach, ordinary citizens are voiced in the news as a serious alternative for power elite sources, complementing or even replacing them as sources in

the news. In this line of thinking, using ordinary citizens can be a tool to truly engage citizens in political discourse, which benefits society and democracy. Views on journalism and the need for such public engagement (and the particular ways this is done) are likely to vary by country because of different journalistic traditions, education and professional socialization. These journalistic cultures, defined by Hanitzsch (2007) as “a particular set of ideas and practices by which journalists legitimate their role in society and render their work meaningful”, differ by country and region. The professional ethics of journalists are largely determined by the national contexts within which they work (Berkowitz, Limor, and Singer 2004; Hanitzsch et al. 2011).

In varying degrees, these reasons may lead journalists to give voice to ordinary people in their reporting. If commercial reasons prevail, we would expect a much more similar use of ordinary citizens across countries than if it depends more on the journalistic culture. From the rare comparative studies (over time) enlightening us about this, the findings of Cushion (2018) stand out, pointing out that second-order elections come with more vox pops in the news, mainly commenting on the importance of the elections. This indicates that UK newsmakers were inspired by more than just a commercial interest to air ordinary people’s voices, since they show variation following the political context. Others were more interested in general trends over time (e.g., Hopmann and Shehata 2011), but results from studies like that are very inconclusive (Reich 2015) and due to the various contexts they are dealing with, they do not allow for general conclusions. Up till now, these studies have been waiting for cross-country comparative studies to compare contexts. A notable exception is the comparative study by Belo, Godo, De Swert, Sendin and Cohen (2013), but this study was primarily interested in the differences between foreign and domestic news, lacked a specific categorization of ordinary people (focusing on “low status”) and had a global perspective with probably too many contextual differences between the studied countries. The main findings were that ordinary citizens were largely present in news across the globe, but not as much in countries with large media control like China and Egypt. Moreover, Belo et al. (2013) found clear but largely unexplained country differences in the presence of ordinary citizens in foreign versus domestic news. Another interesting study in this respect is the Worlds of Journalism initiative, a comparison of journalistic cultures across 18 countries (Hanitzsch et al. 2011). Particularly interesting to our study is that they do not only focus on Western democracies but also include developing or transitioning countries like Russia and Turkey, noting that in such countries, the watchdog role of journalists is much less prevalent due to high levels of media control and low levels of press freedom (Pasti, Chernysh, and Svitich 2012). At the same time, Turkey proved to have a high market orientation, leading again to (very different, commercial) reasons to include ordinary citizens. Our study will be able to compare the use of ordinary people as sources across contexts, with a larger and more geographically focused (European) 20-country sample. Only this way, we can know whether voicing ordinary people in the news is a general phenomenon or rather contingent on context.

That is why the first research question is whether ordinary people are as clearly present in the news everywhere in Europe, and if not, whether differences in presence can shed light on the conditions under which ordinary people become an important part of the news.

RQ1. Are ordinary people equally important sources in television news across Europe?

In line with theoretical considerations aligning the grown attention for the public in the news with larger societal trends like individualization and commercialization which are playing beyond the single country context, we expect ordinary people to be a considerable part of the news in all European countries, but not necessarily alike. Theories like mediatization suggest that trends in the relationship between media and politics are multidimensional and not linear (Brants and van Praag 2017; Strömbäck 2005). Media systems, and more specifically the conditions under which journalists have to work, differ by country (Brüggemann et al. 2014) and over time. According to Hanitzsch and Mellado (2011) there are political, economic, institutional and organizational influences on the production of news, and these influences and how powerful they are, vary between countries. Where professionalization is low, commercial pressure is high, and working conditions do not allow reporters the time to collect their own news sources for a story. For example, under these circumstances, one could expect citizens to be less present in the news at the expense of politicians, who are good at reaching (and sometimes pressuring) journalists with their network, resources, and experience, reducing journalists' costs of gathering information with "information subsidies" (Berkowitz and Adams 1990). Not everywhere, journalists see themselves embracing the rather adversarial role of holding those in power to account in the name of the general public, at least not to the same extent. For example Deuze (2002) found rather large differences relevant to the use of ordinary sources between journalists of Germany (least adversary of government officials and businesses and least concerned about reaching a broad audience), the UK (most adversarial, most concerned about a broad audience) and The Netherlands (middle position), three countries represented in this study.

Also within-country differences in commercialization may play a role, for example the difference between private and public ownership. As Hendriks Vettehen, Nuijten, and Beentjes (2005) suggest, ordinary citizens add vividness to a newscast, which could be a crucial element attracting a larger audience. That is utterly important in a media landscape that is increasingly commercialized, where public funds are cut down for public service broadcasters and advertiser revenues are shrinking for private news broadcasters (Croteau, Hoynes, and Hoynes 2006). At first glance, it may sound logical to expect private broadcasters to be most affected by this pressure, since the connection between viewer ratings and advertisement revenues (and ultimately survival) is more direct than for public service news broadcasters. In comparative study of television news in 14 countries, Arbaoui, De Swert and Van der Brug (2020) found that vivid storytelling, operationalized by the use of ordinary people in the news, was significantly more present in private compared to public television news. However, other studies about this hardly found any difference (e.g., Kleemans, Schaap, and Hermans 2017). This suggests that public broadcasters also have their arguments to use ordinary citizens. Viewer ratings may be equally important to them, in this case to justify governmental/public support, or they feel the need to follow suit when a private competitor decides to give prominence to ordinary citizens in their newscasts. If the amount of ordinary people used in the news is much more different between countries than between private and public broadcasters within a country, we could maybe counter-argue a quite common expectation about content differences between private and public broadcasters.

RQ2. Are ordinary people more present in private news broadcasts than in public service newscasts?

A third question that needs to be addressed is whether the use of ordinary people is confined to certain news topics. This may give us a better impression of the reasons why ordinary people are used in the news. Studies like Pantti and Huslage (2009) and Kleemans, Schaap, and Hermans (2017) have done this, but we will use another, shorter list of topics (pure politics, policy-related news, and event-related news). Typically, news is not only about politics and policy. Television news contains considerable levels of event-related news, often referred to as soft news, although it may be better to avoid this last term since it is very contested and has many confusing operationalizations (Reinemann et al. 2012). According to a study by De Swert, Belo, Kamhawi, Lo, Mujica, Porath and Cohen (2013), in a European context, this can vary from barely 60 percent (Italy) to 80 percent policy/politics related news (Germany), either way leaving a large part of the news to purely event-related news like human interest stories and cultural events. If most ordinary people are voiced in the latter stories, this would point towards predominantly commercial considerations, while if they are more used in political or policy-related news items, that may indicate that ordinary people's opinions are (also) voiced contributing to societal debate.

RQ3. Are ordinary people equally present in news items, regardless of their topic?

For all three research questions above, it may matter which kind of ordinary people are considered in the analysis. As Kleemans, Schaap, and Hermans (2017) already found out, there is a big difference between presenting ordinary people who were directly involved in the news event or have a specific reason to be part of the report because of anything particular they have seen or done, compared to an interchangeable citizen, who has no specific involvement with the news topic other than any other regular citizen. This latter category of ordinary people can be referred to with the more commonly used term "vox pops". While also the presence of other ordinary people (like witnesses and exemplars from affected groups) in the news matters, and they do get full consideration in this paper, the pure representation of ordinary people by vox pops may be a finer and more enlightening indicator of the importance of the voice of ordinary people in the news. Therefore, we will consider these different types of ordinary people separately in our analysis of the above research questions, which will allow us to answer our fourth research question:

RQ4. Do different types of ordinary citizens in the news occur to the same extent, and if not, are there any patterns to be observed?

Data & methods

To answer the research questions in this study we applied a quantitative content analysis on a large-scale comparative dataset. We collected TV newscasts from twenty (nearly) European countries: Belgium (Flanders and Wallonia separately¹), Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, The Netherlands, Turkey and United Kingdom. With our selection of countries we strive to cover all different geographic regions in Europe, although Eastern Europe is slightly less represented in the sample, and even some countries at (or just over) the borders of Europe like Israel, Russia and Turkey. Various media systems are

represented in this sample, varying in the strength of market mechanisms, level of competition and the role of the state. In Russia, for example, we see a strong control and influence of the political elite on the public broadcasters and of the economic elite on the private broadcasters. News editors can feel the owners' influence and may include their opinions while considering general guidelines for news policy (Koltsova 2001). As another example, the Turkish media system is characterized by mass commercialism where the incorporation of entertainment in informative programs is very common and the distinction between hard news and editorial comments has virtually vanished (Kaya and Çakmur 2010). However, also in Turkey journalists experience low autonomy. Including all this variety, this dataset should provide a robust check of similarity, which is necessary to answer our main research question about the generalizability of single-country findings about the presence of ordinary people in the news. If less free media systems like Turkey, Russia and to some extent Serbia would stand out, this would point at the need for future research to study these systems more in depth to uncover the particular factors leading to such differences.

For each country an equal amount of newscasts from the public channel and largest private broadcaster (in terms of reach for their main newscasts) was recorded and analyzed. For every country and every channel we selected the most prominent evening newscast available, with as leading criterion the viewer ratings of the newscasts. Because news is very sensitive for (large) event bias, we used a constructed sample of 28 newscasts per broadcaster, to assure that all days of the week were equally represented and that the sample was spread over time, avoiding consecutive days to be coded. Nevertheless, we need to acknowledge dominant news topics in the sample, like the Brussels terrorist attacks at the beginning and the Brexit referendum at the end. The sample period ran from 11/03/2016 to 27/06/2016, allowing for as little interference of national parliamentary elections as possible in the selected countries. The sample had a random starting point and a four-day interval. The same days were coded for all broadcasters. In total 1094 newscasts (including 31.281 actors) were coded. Opening headlines, announcements (of later news items or other TV programs), and commercials were not coded. For this study, we also excluded sports news and weather forecasts. Actors that could not be categorized because of lacking information were made missing. In total 28.756 actors were left in the analysis.

All newscasts were split into news items and coded manually. Coders were recruited from University of Antwerp and the University of Amsterdam and were selected based on their specific language skills and availability for training sessions at either one of the two training sites. Coders were financially compensated for both their training and coding efforts according to the ruling standards. Only coders who were native speakers, or had an equivalent high level in the required languages were engaged in the coding process. They were trained intensively (in English) and had to pass several reliability tests before starting the coding process. During the actual coding process, the Inter-coder reliability of all variables used in the analysis was also calculated (Krippendorff's alpha values are reported in Table 1), based on a sample of 52 (English-spoken, but besides that randomly selected) news items coded by five of the coders. Reliability of the actor-based variables was excellent, while reliability of the topics was acceptable to good.

Table 1. Description of the variables with N-value in the dataset and inter-coder reliability (Krippendorff's α).

Variable	Explanation	Presence in dataset & ICR
Topic: Politics	Elections, international and national politics (reforms, resignation of ministers, party conventions, etc.)	$N = 5995$ $\alpha = .62$
Topic: Policy-related news	All news related to policy domains in general terms (beyond event reporting). These topics can be framed as societal issues, no need for political involvement per se.	$N = 13,997$ $\alpha = .71$
Topic: Event-related news	All news related to specific events or specific people or situations.	$N = 8118$ $\alpha = .77$
Actors: Politician	Domestic and foreign politicians (elected and candidates)	$N = 7843$ $\alpha = .95$
Actors: Representative Elites	Business leaders, people in representative functions like spokespersons of government and civil society organizations, lawyers etc.	$N = 9219$ $\alpha = .87$
Actors: Experts	Actors included because of their (academic) specialization like professors and doctors, and anyone labeled as specialist.	$N = 1757$ $\alpha = .98$
Actors: Others	Others include celebrities, athletes, royals and criminals.	$N = 1808$ $\alpha = .95$
Actors: Ordinary people	Any unaffiliated actor, i.e., not speaking or presented as an official representative of a group or organization.	$N = 8130$ $\alpha = .95$
Specification ordinary people		
Event Experiencers	Ordinary people who are not replaceable because they personally experienced something (e.g., as a victim or eyewitness) or have a relation with another relevant actor (e.g., father of the victim).	$N = 1984$ $\alpha = .93$
Role exemplars	Ordinary people who are unofficially but in some way explicitly labeled as part (and in a way representing) a larger group or occupation (e.g., teacher, traveler or student). They are to a certain extent replaceable.	$N = 5105$ $\alpha = .90$
Vox pops	Ordinary people who are completely replaceable. They are not presented as anything else than as a regular citizen or without any function (sometimes also without name). These vox pops are often seen/intended to represent general public opinion.	$N = 2056$ $\alpha = .75$

In this study, we will analyze the data at the actor-level. An actor is defined as any person in the news who communicates for at least three seconds or one sentence (speaking, singing, sign language) on screen, with the exception of news anchors and reporters (they were excluded). Unfortunately, a limitation of this study is that we did not register what the ordinary people actually said, as Beckers, Walgrave and Van Den Bulck (2018) did and proved to be a valuable addition. For all actors, the name and the capacity or function in which they appeared in the news were coded. For the purpose of this study, we categorized these actors into several groups (see Table 1). "Politicians" include both domestic and foreign politicians, "Experts" include mainly academic or medical people explicitly labeled as sharing their expertise, "Representative elites" capture all actors speaking for an organization, business or the government, and the category "Others" mainly contains celebrities, athletes, and royals. Finally, our main category of interest is "ordinary people", including all people who are speaking without a formal role and who would not be recognized by the news audience. These were further categorized into three groups: Event experiencers, Role exemplars, and Vox pops. *Vox pops* are random people (or at least presented that way) who are asked to comment on a case or issue. They could be replaced by any other person because they do not have any exclusive information on the matter or the event. These actors are presented in their role of citizen, and could easily be seen as representing public opinion (Lefevere, De Swert, and Walgrave 2012). *Event experiencers* are people who are speaking in the news because of a particular

involvement or experience they have related to the event the news item is about, directly (e.g., by witnessing a crime) or indirectly (e.g., by being related to a victim of an accident or crime) and who are in that way not replaceable by just anyone else. Finally, Role exemplars refer to ordinary people who are presented as exemplars for something they are doing, a role they have or play, or what they are. In that capacity, they are more easily replaceable by other exemplars from the same group. An example would be an interview with a teacher (or a student) when a news item is about educational reforms. On the other hand, when they would ask a random citizen on the street about his or her opinion about educational reforms (at least if this is the way the journalist is presenting it), this person would be categorized as a vox pop.

For the research question about the topics of the news items in which ordinary people appear, we divided the news items in the database into three groups: "Politics" contains purely political news items about appointments and resignations of ministers, party conventions, institutional reforms, elections, and international relations. Items that were also related to actual policy on a certain domain were excluded here – and counted with "Policy-related topics". These involve all news items beyond mere events, usually talking about proposed, planned or debated policy. Touching upon a societal issue from a thematic, not just episodic perspective, sufficed. The third group of news items are the mainly "event-related" news items, which are specifically about incidents, events, and concrete happenings, for example a car accident, an earthquake or a report on a bank robbery.

Given the fact that our coders were allowed to assign up till three topic codes per news item, there are news items that are both policy-related and event-related, and thus there is a limited (7.8 percent) overlap between both. Items about international terrorism and conflicts (apart from international relations as such) were not classified in any of the three categories (11.6 percent).

Results

The main goal of this study is to find out to what extent ordinary people are present in television newscasts and if their presence is similar across country borders. [Table 2](#), in which the 41 broadcasters in this study are ranked based on the percentage of ordinary people in their newscasts (column 4), shows that this is clearly not the case. A large variation appears to exist between broadcasters. Even if we do not take the outlier Telecinco (the commercial broadcaster in Spain, of which half of the actors shown in the news are ordinary people) into account, the difference between the broadcasters voicing most ordinary people and those most hesitant to use them is large, from over 40 percent ordinary people to barely 10 percent. Ordinary people do not seem to be regularly reported in all European countries, at least not to the same extent. This means scholars should be cautious in generalizing single-country findings beyond borders. The difference does not seem to be totally random. Towards the East of Europe, much less ordinary people are seen on television news, notably in Poland, Russia, and Serbia. An illustrative example is a relatively long item about abortion at the Polish public broadcaster, including experts, civil society actors, a politician, and several religious representatives, but no ordinary people. But also the more Central-European German-speaking public broadcasters (ARD and ZDF for Germany, and SRF1 for Switzerland) prefer to keep the share of ordinary people in the news very low. On the high end, we do see

Table 2. Presence of different types of actors in television news by broadcaster.

Broad-caster	Country-Pub/priv	N	Ordinary people	Politicians	Repr. elites	Experts	Others
Telecinco	Spain (Pr)	1023	49.5	25.0	16.6	3.9	5.0
France2	France (Pub)	969	42.0	12.8	32.9	6.9	5.4
TRT	Turkey (Pub)	631	40.9	28.5	20.8	4.8	5.1
TF1	France (Pr)	1196	40.6	6.7	36.3	6.0	10.5
RTL4	The Netherlands (Pr)	630	39.5	15.1	32.5	7.9	4.9
RTL-tvi	Belgium Fr. (Pr)	1018	37.1	13.5	39.7	5.0	4.7
TVI	Portugal (Pr)	1388	36.5	19.5	32.3	2.2	9.5
ALPHA	Greece (Pr)	864	35.5	28.1	28.1	2.5	5.7
RTL	Germany (Pr)	405	33.8	16.3	30.1	11.6	8.1
TV4	Sweden (Pr)	337	32.6	16.9	34.1	8.3	8.0
NOS	The Netherlands (Pub)	594	32.5	21.7	35.4	5.6	5.1
RTBF	Belgium Fr. (Pub)	913	32.5	15.6	37.5	7.1	7.3
TeleZuri	Switzerland (Pr)	292	32.2	17.8	36.3	5.5	8.2
SVT1	Sweden (Pub)	583	29.7	21.6	39.8	7.7	1.2
Artuz2	Israel (Pr)	488	29.3	20.9	31.8	6.4	11.7
NOVATV	Bulgaria (Pr)	680	28.8	28.5	32.9	6.6	3.1
BBC	UK (Pub)	480	28.5	33.1	24.4	7.3	6.7
NRK	Norway (Pub)	885	28.2	17.5	36.2	7.5	10.6
VRT	Belgium Nl. (Pub)	912	28.0	23.7	36.2	4.4	7.8
VTM	Belgium Nl. (Pr)	883	27.9	24.0	36.6	4.1	7.5
RTP	Portugal (Pub)	1147	27.7	33.2	30.9	3.1	5.1
Canale5	Italy (Pr)	543	27.1	34.6	32.0	2.9	3.3
TV2	Norway (Pr)	466	27.0	25.3	36.3	4.5	6.9
Fox	Turkey (Pr)	680	26.9	49.0	19.0	1.9	3.2
TVE La1	Spain (Pub)	1067	26.5	32.6	23.7	5.9	11.2
RAI	Italy (Pub)	698	26.2	35.2	24.6	4.3	9.6
ZDF	Germany (Pub)	376	25.8	34.0	29.8	8.2	2.1
NTV	Russia (Pr)	599	24.5	25.9	35.2	8.5	5.8
RTE	Ireland (Pub)	447	23.7	38.3	30.9	5.1	2.0
ITV	UK (Pr)	404	23.5	31.4	27.0	10.9	7.2
TV3	Ireland (Pr)	209	23.4	38.3	34.0	3.3	1.0
BNT	Bulgaria (Pub)	785	20.0	38.5	31.2	5.5	4.8
IBA	Israel (Pub)	327	19.0	29.7	30.3	8.0	13.1
Russia1	Russia (Pub)	1172	17.7	27.6	40.0	6.1	8.6
RTS1	Serbia (Pub)	740	17.3	36.2	32.3	8.0	6.2
PRVA	Serbia (Pr)	573	15.2	46.6	26.4	7.5	4.4
TVP1	Poland (Pub)	1072	13.7	30.0	36.8	16.4	3.1
SRF1	Switzerland (Pub)	430	13.5	32.1	39.8	9.8	4.9
ARD	Germany (Pub)	299	12.7	52.8	28.8	3.7	2.0
TVN	Poland (Pr)	1143	12.2	40.5	36.6	8.2	2.5
ERT1	Greece (Pub)	408	11.3	57.1	25.7	2.0	3.9
Average		28,756	28.3	27.3	32.1	6.1	6.3

the commercial news broadcasters of the latter countries appear, but most notable is the position of the French television news. Both public and commercial television news in France give a large platform to ordinary people, to some extent followed by the French-speaking Belgian newscasts. Generally, some notable exceptions not considered, most differences between broadcasters within countries are relatively small. This clearly indicates that factors related to the national context matter, and outweigh commercial factors in a cross-country comparative account. In countries like France, Belgium (both Dutch and French-speaking), Serbia, Ireland, Italy and Norway, the margins between the public and the commercial broadcasters are very small and totally insignificant in comparison to the cross-country differences. Finally, it is noteworthy that both broadcasters of the Netherlands have fairly high amounts of ordinary people in their newscasts, leading to some caution to generalize findings of studies like Kleemans, Schaap, and Hermans (2017) on Dutch news to other European country contexts.

Table 3. Presence of type of actors by broadcaster type and topics (in % of all actors).

	<i>N</i>	Ordinary people	Politicians	Elites	Experts	Others
Broadcaster type						
Public	14,935	25.4	29.1	32.4	6.7	6.4
Private	13,821	31.3 ***	25.3 ***	31.7 NS	5.5 ***	6.2 NS
Topics						
Politics	5995	12.4	66.9	14.7	4.1	1.9
Policy-related	13,997	27.4	21.9	38.9	8.1	3.7
Event-related	8118	36.4	11.6	34.5	4.7	12.7
Average	28,756	28.3	27.3	32.1	6.1	6.3

Note: Significance: ***($p < .001$) Using Mann-Whitney U-test.

Even if it is certainly not a black and white story of private broadcasters voicing more ordinary people than public broadcasters, eight out of the ten broadcasters with most ordinary people are private broadcasters. Our second research question focused on the difference between public and private broadcasters. The overall results (see Table 3) show a clearly significant difference between both broadcaster types when it comes to ordinary people. The presence of ordinary people on private broadcasters is almost six percent higher, and the table also reveals that instead, public broadcasters seem to voice politicians and experts significantly more. In only one out of 20 countries, the public channel has significantly more ordinary people in the news and that is Turkey ($U = 184,556$, $p = .000$), while for ten countries, i.e., Russia ($U = 326,868$, $p = .001$), The Netherlands ($U = 173,952$, $p = .011$), Germany ($U = 70,027$, $p = .014$ with ZDF; $U = 47,761$, $p = .000$ with ARD), Israel ($U = 71,536$, $p = .001$), Portugal ($U = 726,519$, $p = .000$), Switzerland ($U = 51,038$, $p = .000$), Bulgaria ($U = 243,350$, $p = .000$), Belgium (French-speaking) ($U = 343,333$, $p = .034$), Spain ($U = 420,574$, $p = .000$) and Greece ($U = 139,500$, $p = .000$) the private broadcaster has significantly more.

Our third research question involved the topics of the news items in which ordinary people appear. The differences are large in this aspect. Ordinary people may be voiced quite often in the news, their presence does not seem to be equally divided over topics. Unsurprisingly, purely political news items contain the least ordinary people. Two-thirds of the actors in these political news items are politicians, who are the expected main protagonists in news items like this. But also in the other news items, there is a clear difference between event-related news items (in which ordinary people appear very frequently, about one-third of the actors) and policy-related news items (in which a quarter of the actors is an ordinary citizen). Generally, ordinary people are still clearly outweighed by the more representative actors like politicians and other elites representing government, businesses and civil society organizations. But, interestingly, voices of ordinary people are clearly preferred over the input of independent experts. This result seconds recent research by Beckers and Van Aelst (2018) and Cushion (2018) who found that citizens' voices are more prevalent than expert sources on television news in Flanders and in UK elections.

Finally, in line with RQ4, we look a bit closer into what kind of ordinary people are featuring European television news broadcasts. When thinking about ordinary people in the news, one might spontaneously think about vox pops, but the distribution as presented in Table 4, shows a different pattern. Only in Spain (both private and

Table 4. Presence of different types of ordinary people in television news by broadcaster.

Broad-caster	Country (Pub/Pr)	N	Ordinary people	Event experiencers	Role exemplars	Vox pops
Telecinco	Spain (Pr)	1023	49.5	6.6	16.3	28.5
France2	France (Pub)	969	42.0	10.6	30.1	8.3
TRT	Turkey (Pub)	631	40.9	12.8	22.7	9.7
TF1	France (Pr)	1196	40.6	6.5	36.1	5.8
RTL4	The Netherlands (Pr)	630	39.5	10.3	21.4	12.1
RTL-tvi	Belgium Fr. (Pr)	1018	37.1	6.6	18.4	16.3
TVI	Portugal (Pr)	1388	36.5	6.3	30.6	4.6
ALPHA	Greece (Pr)	864	35.5	10.5	25.8	6.1
RTL	Germany (Pr)	405	33.8	5.7	21.7	9.4
TV4	Sweden (Pr)	337	32.6	7.4	15.4	12.8
NOS	The Netherlands (Pub)	594	32.5	4.7	18.5	13.6
RTBF	Belgium Fr. (Pub)	913	32.5	6.6	18.5	10.2
TeleZuri	Switzerland (Pr)	292	32.2	4.8	22.6	5.8
SVT1	Sweden (Pub)	583	29.7	5.5	21.8	7.2
Artuz2	Israel (Pr)	488	29.3	19.5	7.6	3.1
NOVATV	Bulgaria (Pr)	680	28.8	10.3	17.4	3.2
BBC	UK (Pub)	480	28.5	7.7	15.6	9.4
NRK	Norway (Pub)	885	28.2	3.1	19.9	9.2
VRT	Belgium Nl. (Pub)	912	28.0	4.3	19.3	7.6
VTM	Belgium Nl. (Pr)	883	27.9	6.2	20.4	5.3
RTP	Portugal (Pub)	1,147	27.7	5.8	23.2	2.4
Canale5	Italy (Pr)	543	27.1	7.0	10.7	12.2
TV2	Norway (Pr)	466	27.0	6.2	16.3	8.2
Fox	Turkey (Pr)	680	26.9	12.8	10.9	7.9
TVE La1	Spain (Pub)	1067	26.5	4.7	11.4	12.4
RAI	Italy (Pub)	698	26.2	11.0	12.6	4.2
ZDF	Germany (Pub)	376	25.8	1.3	16.5	9.8
NTV	Russia (Pr)	599	24.5	9.8	16.9	1.0
RTE	Ireland (Pub)	447	23.7	9.4	10.3	6.3
ITV	UK (Pr)	404	23.5	9.2	9.4	8.2
TV3	Ireland (Pr)	209	23.4	9.6	12.0	2.4
BNT	Bulgaria (Pub)	785	20.0	5.9	14.3	2.5
IBA	Israel (Pub)	327	19.0	11.3	8.0	0.6
Russia1	Russia (Pub)	1172	17.7	5.1	15.7	1.8
RTS1	Serbia (Pub)	740	17.3	3.2	13.2	2.8
PRVA	Serbia (Pr)	573	15.2	1.0	13.8	4.5
TVP1	Poland (Pub)	1072	13.7	6.3	7.6	1.2
SRF1	Switzerland (Pub)	430	13.5	0.7	10.9	4.2
ARD	Germany (Pub)	299	12.7	2.0	7.0	4.0
TVN	Poland (Pr)	1143	12.2	5.8	8.5	0.3
ERT1	Greece (Pub)	408	11.3	3.2	6.4	2.5
Average		28,756	28.3	6.9	17.8	7.1

public broadcaster) and in Italy (private broadcaster), vox pops are the most prominent type of ordinary people in the news. On average, only about a quarter of all ordinary people in the news are vox pops (corresponding to just over seven percent of all actors in the news). The most frequently found ordinary people in the news are “Role exemplars”, people who used by the journalist as an exemplar of a certain group of people in a certain role, be it a situation or profession. They speak for themselves, and they are still interchangeable with many other people who belong to the same group, but not by just anyone. This type of regular person seems to be very popular across Europe, and the high proportion of this type seems to be responsible for the very intensive use of ordinary people in general by the French news broadcasters, not the vox pops. For example in France, several items on economic issues were found in our sample, often including experts or representative elites, but usually also one or even several role exemplars, like employees of

Table 5. Type of ordinary people by broadcaster type and topic (in %).

	<i>N</i>	Ordinary people	Event experiencers	Role exemplars	Vox pops
Broadcaster type					
Public	14,935	25.4	6.0	16.4	6.2
Private	13,821	31.3	7.8	19.2	8.2
		***	***	***	***
Topics					
Politics	5,995	12.4	1.4	4.2	7.6
Policy-related	13,997	27.4	4.5	21.6	6.5
Event-related	8,118	36.4	13.6	18.9	7.0
Average	28,756	28.3	6.9	17.8	7.1

Significance: ***($p < .001$) Using Mann-Whitney U-test.

affected businesses. The third category of ordinary people is the one that is hardest to avoid/replace. The Event experiencers are ordinary people who have been a victim or have been otherwise involved in a certain situation (like witnessing something or being related to a victim). Journalists may not be able to replace them so easily with another ordinary person, but they could of course use an elite source (police representative) or avoid using actors altogether. It looks like this practice is very much linked to country-specific factors, possibly elements of news cultures. In some countries, journalists may not have learned to make news with certain sources, or are discouraged to use them by professional socialization. While for example in Serbia, none of the broadcasters is inclined to use this type of ordinary people, they seem to be quite commonly used by both broadcasters in Israel, where one, on the other hand, would rarely see a vox pop. Clearly, not only the extent to which ordinary people are used in news varies across Europe, but also the way they are used.

Finally, linking up RQ4 with RQ2 and RQ3, we combine these types of ordinary people with broadcaster type and the topic division we discussed before. From Table 5, it becomes clear that not just the total proportion of ordinary people in the news varies significantly between private and public broadcasters, but that this is also valid for each of these subtypes separately. Private broadcasters, generally, give more voice to Event experiencers, Role exemplars, and vox pops. When looking at the different topic categories, we see that Event experiencers are best represented in the event-related news items, although they are still outweighed by Role exemplars here as well. The latter are most common in policy-related news items. Vox pops are not confined to a specific type of news topic and are well-represented in the political news items, where the other two types are largely absent.

Conclusion and discussion

The main goal of this study was to find out whether ordinary people are equally and similarly reported in various (European) countries, in order to have a better idea of the generalizability of some of the findings by recent scholars, based on single-country studies. The answer is negative. This study urges for much more caution in generalizing findings beyond country borders. While on average ordinary people are clearly present in European newscasts, we found that variation between countries is quite large, which is noteworthy given the lack of any explicit claim in current research

that would point at country/media system differences when it comes to the specific topic of ordinary people, or more specifically vox pops in the news. This study seems to confirm that the use of ordinary citizens is yet another element of news making that is linked to, largely nationally determined, journalistic cultures (Hanitzsch et al. 2011). The results of this study clearly invite future research to find out what could be behind these cross-country differences. Since some geographical clustering can be observed, the rather scattered pattern of media system characteristics in Europe (Brüggemann et al. 2014) could be a starting point. But with great differences between countries like Spain and Greece, other factors must be playing as well. Factors related to journalistic cultures, linked to journalistic education, professional training and socialization, role conceptions and working conditions are other promising and necessary avenues. As our results often show similar sourcing within country borders, outweighing commercial factors, future studies may be inspired to shift focus from commercialization and market pressure towards country-specific journalistic cultures.

Another invitation to future scholars based on this study is to be clear and explicit about their conceptualization of ordinary people in the news. Some of the current inconsistencies in extant research seem to be due to differences in who is considered an ordinary news source, since this study shows that there is more than the pure vox pop, and that other categories expose differential use of ordinary sources across countries and broadcasters. Whether it is the Spanish love for vox pops, the Israeli tendency to give voice to Event experiencers or the impressive soundboard Role exemplars get in France, new and specific studies, using additional methods are needed to find the origin of and mechanisms behind these specific country differences. Again, specific journalistic traditions, role conceptions and practices may explain e.g., the particular focus on Role exemplars in France, much more than any commercial factor. Content analysis alone may not suffice to get to the bottom of this. Collecting comparative data on media systems and journalistic cultures is hard, but keeps on developing. It is an important limitation of this study that considering these factors in the analysis was beyond its scope, but the results may indicate promising points of departure for future studies, at least.

At the moment, it seems like there is much more we do not know about the mechanisms behind using ordinary people as sources in the news than we may have thought. Variation is larger than expected, and the reasons for including them may be more diverse and complicated than expected as well. Earlier, we considered using ordinary citizens as news sources interesting from a commercial, idealistic and practical journalistic self-empowering perspective. The finding that in most countries, the private news broadcasters voiced significantly more ordinary people than the public broadcasters, which is also confirmed by an aggregate analysis, confirms the well-supported idea that commercial arguments are at play when newsmakers choose ordinary people as sources in the news. Public broadcasters cannot (or will not) look away from this phenomenon, but can permit themselves to follow the trend a bit more moderately. However, the commercial factors seem to be much weaker than commonly assumed. As also Beckers and Walgrave (2015) found in their study about Flanders, differences can become very small, and as our results show, national factors seem to be much stronger, leading to much more country clustering than broadcaster type clustering. Another important limitation of this study prevents us from firm conclusions here. Although large-scale and comparative, this

study remains a snapshot of the situation in 2016. Previous studies (Beckers and Walgrave 2015; Hopmann and Shehata 2011; Kleemans et al. 2017; Pantti and Huslage 2009) have shown that the use of ordinary people in the news is prone to considerable changes over time. If the use of ordinary sources is prone to interactive or dialectic processes over time, our study would not pick this up, while these processes could explain cross-country differences within this snapshot.

From a normative perspective, our study may be received with moderate enthusiasm by those who value the presence of ordinary people in the news from a perspective of democratic inclusion, since our results give them ammunition against cynics claiming ordinary people would only be in the news for commercial reasons, or strictly about events. Regular citizens, sufficiently visible in the news and expressing themselves in news items about politics and policy, are empowering for the populace. Civic and public journalism believers will welcome this (Kurpius 2003). The results in this study clearly show that in most European countries, when newsmakers turn policy-related issues into news items, elites and politicians are not the only definers. Elites still dominate (even for event-based items), but they do not monopolize the range of voices in the news as much as some claim (Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston 2007). Mainly as Role exemplars, ordinary people are heard in the news, and in some countries like France and Spain, their voice is even very loud. On the other hand, the outspoken country differences we found, also in the kind of ordinary citizens presented in the news, warn for superficial and generalized optimism, as careful monitoring and scrutiny of the use of ordinary citizens seems to be needed, linked to the specific media system's role in the particular democracy it is serving. Since our findings also support the existence of deeply-rooted journalistic cultures, it does not give solid ground to expectations of swift changes in the presence of ordinary citizens in the news. Future longitudinal research needs to confirm this.

A worry that was coined earlier in this manuscript was that the use of ordinary citizens would facilitate journalists to control the news content. While this study certainly is not a formal test of this thesis, it does show that in most countries, journalists have the opportunity to do this. The relatively limited share of real vox pops, the kind of totally interchangeable ordinary citizens who would be the easiest to manipulate, indicates that journalists are clearly not using their full potential in this respect, especially in some specific countries. When news media want to pick up an adversarial role, acting in the interest of the general public, they may consider using more of this potential to directly challenge power elites with these ordinary alternative sources.

In its rather unique comparative nature, this rather descriptive study can be a valuable benchmark and inspiration for future research on the use of ordinary sources. Follow-up studies including an over-time comparison may tell us more about the direction certain systems of media and politics are heading. Commercial factors may have paved the way for ordinary citizens to become part of the news in many European countries. Commercial arguments remain, but for all broadcasters. National contexts and journalistic cultures seem to be strong factors, especially in determining how these ordinary citizens are used. Our data indicate that there are large variations in this respect. Only based on further scrutiny of the actual considerations of journalists while making news with ordinary citizens, we may be able to know whether these ordinary sources can be beacons of hope for public opinion to be part of deciding what is news. Combining an account of the

use of ordinary sources with reporters' journalistic role conceptions, studied with an eye for national system characteristics and news cultures, seems to be the way to move forward in this field.

Note

1. For Belgium, we treat the two language-based regions, Flanders and Wallonia, as two different countries in this research. Belgium is a federal state with two completely separate media systems, which urges us to consider them separately.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

References

- Ahva, L. 2013. "Public Journalism and Professional Reflexivity." *Journalism* 14 (6): 790–806.
- Arbaoui, B., K. De Swert, and W. Van der Brug. 2020. "Sensationalism in News Coverage: A Comparative Study in 14 Television Systems." *Communication Research* 47 (2): 299–320.
- Austin, E. W., and Q. Dong. 1994. "Source v. Content Effects on Judgments of News Believability." *Journalism Quarterly* 71 (4): 973–983.
- Beckers, K. 2017. "How Ordinary is the Ordinary (wo) Man on the Street? An Analysis of vox pop Characteristics in Television News." *Journalism Practice* 11 (8): 1026–1041.
- Beckers, K., and P. Van Aelst. 2019. "Look Who's Talking: An Analysis of Actors in Television News (2003–2016)." *Journalism Studies* 20 (6): 872–890.
- Beckers, K., and S. Walgrave. 2015. "Man in de Straat: Meer dan Opvulling in het Televisienieuws: een Onderzoek Naar vox Pops in het Televisienieuws (2003-2014)." *Nieuwsmonitor* 24: 1–11.
- Beckers, K., S. Walgrave, and H. Van den Bulck. 2018. "Opinion Balance in vox pop Television News." *Journalism Studies* 19 (2): 284–296.
- Belo, A., E. Godo, K. De Swert, A. Sendin, and A. Cohen. 2013. "Actors in Foreign News." In *Foreign News on Television*, edited by A. Cohen, 87–105. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Bennett, W. L., R. G. Lawrence, and S. Livingston. 2007. *When the Press Fails*Political Power and the News Media From Iraq to Katrina*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Berkowitz, D., and D. B. Adams. 1990. "Information Subsidy and Agenda-Building in Local Television News." *Journalism Quarterly* 67 (4): 723–731.
- Berkowitz, D., Y. Limor, and J. Singer. 2004. "A Cross-Cultural Look at Serving the Public Interest: American and Israeli Journalists Consider Ethical Scenarios." *Journalism* 5 (2): 159–181.
- Brants, K., and Y. De Haan. 2010. "Taking the Public Seriously: Three Models of Responsiveness in Media and Journalism." *Media, Culture & Society* 32 (3): 411–428.
- Brants, K., and P. van Praag. 2017. "Beyond Media Logic." *Journalism Studies* 18 (4): 395–408.
- Brüggemann, M., S. Engesser, F. Büchel, E. Humprecht, and L. Castro. 2014. "Hallin and Mancini Revisited: Four Empirical Types of Western Media Systems." *Journal of Communication* 64 (6): 1037–1065.
- Costera Meijer, I. 2003. "What is Quality Television News? A Plea for Extending the Professional Repertoire of Newsmakers." *Journalism Studies* 4 (1): 15–29.
- Cottle, Simon. 2000. "Rethinking News Access." *Journalism Studies* 1 (3): 427–448.
- Croteau, D., W. Hoynes, and W. D. Hoynes. 2006. *The Business of Media: Corporate Media and the Public Interest*. Thousand Oaks: Pine forge press.
- Cushion, S. 2018. "Using Public Opinion to Serve Journalistic Narratives: Rethinking vox Pops and Live two-way Reporting in Five UK Election Campaigns (2009–2017)." *European Journal of Communication* 33 (6): 639–656.

- De Keyser, J., and K. Raeymaeckers. 2012. "The Printed Rise of the Common man: How Web 2.0 has Changed the Representation of Ordinary People in Newspapers." *Journalism Studies* 13 (5-6): 825–835.
- De Swert, K., A. Belo, R. Kamhawi, V. Lo, C. Mujica, W. Porath, and A. A. Cohen. 2013. "Topics in Foreign and Domestic Television News." In *Foreign News on Television: Where in the World Is the Global Village?* edited by A. A. Cohen, 41–62. New York: Lang.
- De Swert, K., S. Walgrave, M. Hooghe, V. Uce, and A. Hardy. 2008. *Het Vlaams televisienieuws onder de loep: een vergelijkend onderzoek, 2003–2008*.
- Deuze, M. 2002. "National News Cultures: A Comparison of Dutch, German, British, Australian, and US Journalists." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 79 (1): 134–149.
- Esser, F., A. Stępińska, and D. N. Hopmann. 2017. "Populism and the Media: Cross-National Findings and Perspectives." In *Populist Political Communication in Europe*, edited by T. Aalberg, F. Esser, C. Reinemann, J. Strömbäck, and C. de Vreese, 365–380. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gans, H. 1979. *Deciding What's News*. New York: Pantheon.
- Grabe, M. E., S. Zhou, and B. Barnett. 1999. "Sourcing and Reporting in News Magazine Programs: 60 min Versus Hard Copy." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 76 (2): 293–311.
- Hanitzsch, T. 2007. "Deconstructing Journalism Culture: Toward a Universal Theory." *Communication Theory* 17 (4): 367–385.
- Hanitzsch, T., F. Hanusch, C. Mellado, M. Anikina, R. Berganza, I. Cangoz, C. Mihai, and S. Virginia Moreira. 2011. "Mapping Journalism Cultures Across Nations: A Comparative Study of 18 Countries." *Journalism Studies* 12 (3): 273–293.
- Hanitzsch, T., and C. Mellado. 2011. "What Shapes the News Around the World? How Journalists in Eighteen Countries Perceive Influences on Their Work." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 16 (3): 404–426.
- Hendriks Vettehen, P., K. Nuijten, and J. Beentjes. 2005. "News in an Age of Competition: The Case of Sensationalism in Dutch Television News, 1995–2001." *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 49 (3): 282–295.
- Hopmann, D. N., and A. Shehata. 2011. "The Contingencies of Ordinary Citizen Appearances in Political Television News." *Journalism Practice* 5 (6): 657–671.
- Kaya, R., and B. Çakmur. 2010. "Politics and the Mass Media in Turkey." *Turkish Studies* 11 (4): 521–537.
- Kleemans, M., G. Schaap, and L. Hermans. 2017. "Citizen Sources in the News: Above and Beyond the vox pop?" *Journalism* 18 (4): 464–481.
- Koltsova, O. 2001. "News Production in Contemporary Russia: Practices of Power." *European Journal of Communication* 16 (3): 315–335.
- Kurpius, D. D. 2003. "Bucking a Trend in Local Television News: Combating Market-Driven Journalism." *Journalism* 4 (1): 76–94.
- Lefevere, J., K. De Swert, and S. Walgrave. 2012. "Effects of Popular Exemplars in Television News." *Communication Research* 39 (1): 103–119.
- Lewis, J., K. Wahl-Jorgensen, and S. Inthorn. 2004. "Images of Citizenship on Television News: Constructing a Passive Public." *Journalism Studies* 5 (2): 153–164.
- Mazzoleni, G. 2008. "Populism and the Media." In *Twenty-first Century Populism. The Spectre of Western European Democracy*, edited by D. Albertazzi and D. McDonnell, 49–64. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- McManus, J. H. 1994. *Market-driven Journalism: Let the Citizen Beware?* London: Sage Publications.
- Miller, A., and D. Kurpius. 2010. "A Citizen-eye View of Television News Source Credibility." *American Behavioral Scientist* 54 (2): 137–156.
- Pantti, M., and K. Husslage. 2009. "Ordinary People and Emotional Expression in Dutch Public Service News." *Javnost-The Public* 16 (2): 77–94.
- Pasti, S., M. Chernysh, and L. Svitich. 2012. "21 Russian Journalists and Their Profession." *The global journalist in the 21st century*, 267.
- Reich, Z. 2015. "Why Citizens Still Rarely Serve as News Sources: Validating a Tripartite Model of Circumstantial, Logistical, and Evaluative Barriers." *International Journal of Communication* 9 (22): 2412–2433.

- Reinemann, C., J. Stanyer, S. Scherr, and G. Legnante. 2012. "Hard and Soft News: A Review of Concepts, Operationalizations and Key Findings." *Journalism* 13 (2): 221–239.
- Sigal, L. V. 1973. *Reporters and Officials: The Organization and Politics of Newsmaking*. Lexington, MA: DC Heath.
- Strömbäck, J. 2005. "In Search of a Standard: Four Models of Democracy and Their Normative Implications for Journalism." *Journalism Studies* 6 (3): 331–345.
- Vliegthart, R., and M. Boukes. 2018. "On the Street and/or on Twitter? The use of "Every day" Sources in Economic News Coverage by Online and Offline Outlets." *Digital Journalism* 6 (7): 829–846.