HYBRID MEDIA EVENTS

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Global Circulation of Terrorist Violence

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The *Charlie Hebdo* Attacks and the Global Circulation of Terrorist Violence

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Preface

This book has many beginnings, but one stands out above all others: the attack on the *Charlie Hebdo* offices in Paris on 7 January 2015. When news about the shootings began to pour into our social media feeds, we decided straightaway to start compiling research data. We followed the messaging on Twitter and Facebook, we tracked Finnish and international news sources and we witnessed the appearance of the #JeSuisCharlie hashtag.

Charlie Hebdo was not a chance selection, nor were we interested in the event simply because of the huge attention it attracted. We had already been researching attention for many years, exploring the creation and circulation of attention in a changed media environment: we wanted to understand how things, notions, ideologies and values come into being and how they exercise an impact and influence on the media through circulation. We had also studied the ways in which different actors participate in and the roles they had in these circulation processes. Furthermore, we shared an interest in the different ways that religion is thematized in the media. For years, Johanna had followed and studied violent media events, while Katja's research interest was focused on the global media circulation of different phenomena. Most of this work was grounded in an ethnographic approach, but in this case we wanted to expand and diversify our methodological toolkit. Our ambitious plan, initially, was to collect all the data from all possible sources, to study circulation patterns from one platform to another and to develop methods that combine an ethnographic approach with computational methods. However, we had neither the funding nor the resources to do this.

We, therefore, decided we should assemble a team, start to write funding applications and narrow our perspective. We were joined by Jukka Huhtamäki from Tampere University of Technology, who we had worked with before at the Tampere Research Centre for Journalism, Media and Communication COMET; and by Minttu Tikka, with whom Johanna had collaborated for many years. Throughout the project all of us on the team have shared a common commitment to better understand the changes happening in the media environment and the relationship between media and society in general — and to develop the tools and

research methods we need to achieve this understanding. This team effort is still ongoing.

Thankfully the funding we needed came very quickly. First, we secured a grant from the Helsingin Sanomat Foundation in 2015, mainly for our project 'Je suis Charlie — The symbolic battle and struggle over attention', which was focused on studying the media attention surrounding the attack on the *Charlie Hebdo* newspaper. Later, in 2017, the Academy of Finland awarded us funding for a project dealing with the relationship between the media and terrorism more generally. This ongoing project is called 'Hybrid Terrorizing: Developing a New Model for the Study of Global Media Events of Terrorist Violence (HYTE)'.[1]

However, even though we had the funding in place, it was not until six months after the events in Paris that we could start compiling the research data. As it turned out, data collection and data administration became a long-drawn-out rigmarole that went on for almost three years. Once we get the chance, we will report on this in greater detail. Based on what we have heard, colleagues in other countries seem to have very similar problems when it comes to accessing and administering large datasets. The problem is particularly difficult in cases where we have to rely for data on commercial service providers — which we do in order to gain access to social media datasets.

Because we had problems gaining access to historical data and because the volume of data was so huge, we chose to concentrate on messages circulating in Twitter. The dataset was obtained from a company called Pulsar, which specializes in mining and collecting data from different social media platforms. The decision to use Twitter data proved to be a good one, in that Twitter is very much the epitome of the hybrid media environment: it has large amounts of circulating data that are produced in different ways and organized by hashtags. Our decision was driven by practical considerations, even though we were aware that Twitter attracts disproportionate research attention compared to its user numbers. The reason for this lies in Twitter's technological design, which allows for easy data collection and data transfer in different formats. As well as taking advantage of these technological features, we have collected supplementary data from international online news providers, and to a minor extent from Facebook and YouTube.

The idea for this book was born in 2016, shortly after we had hosted the Tampere 'Workshop on Media, Event and Social Theory —

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Editors

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Chapter 1

What Are Hybrid Media Events of Terrorist Violence?

1.1. Why Do the *Charlie Hebdo* Attacks Matter?

On 7 January 2015, Paris and the rest of the Western world was holding its breath, following every movement in a manhunt launched after a terrorist attack on the French satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*. Twelve people had been killed at the newspaper's offices. The terror attack that was carried out by the Kouachi brothers, who were later shot and killed in a police raid, received massive media interest and sparked an instant global media event. The news circulated in the local, national and international news media and on social networking sites. Symbols of public mourning and messages of solidarity, but also of fear, hate and anger, travelled at high speed from one actor and media platform to another (see also Zagato, 2015; Sumiala, 2017).

While the global media was following and reporting the unfolding events, it also felt the need to try to make sense of what was happening, to offer some explanation. On 8 January, the American internet news service Kicker — which promises to 'explain top stories in a super helpful, super engaging, super empowering way' — provided a five-point list under the title '5 Reasons Why the *Charlie Hebdo* Massacre in France Matters to Everyone in the Free World'. These reasons were (Kicker, 2015)[1]:

1. Free speech is a human right, but some intensely dispute that.
2. It forces us to think about the possible limits of free speech.
3. There is a connection between extremist Islam and violence as a retaliation tactic.
4. This is part of a string of similar attacks.
5. It might feed anti-immigrant feelings in Europe.

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[1] http://gokicker.com/about/ (Retrieved 14 March 2017).

Each of these reasons was illustrated with numerous examples of texts, images and memes that circulated in the social media in the aftermath of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks. The explanations and their illustrations were focused on the political and social implications of the attacks. At the same time, the piece was a media text that circulated other media texts, a representation referring to other representations in an attempt to illustrate what had happened and why that had significance. Although perhaps unusually reflexive, the piece was otherwise just another addition to an endless stream of media texts that were trying to make sense of the media event and its consequences. As such it was closely involved in the reproduction and circulation of the event, although it failed to recognize its own role in the causation and interpretation of the event. Furthermore, the piece was grounded in a framework where the world is seen as being divided into the Free World and the rest, a threatening place that questions the values of what it means to be 'free'.

In this book, we set out to explore how the media are involved and intertwined with a global event of terrorist violence, and to identify which dimensions of the hybrid media environment play a part in the ensuing social imaginaries and symbolic battles. As a first step in this effort, the Kicker example above serves to illustrate just how involved and intertwined the media are, not only in the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, but in the process of making sense of the event.

In the hybrid media system (Chadwick, 2013), the practices of professional, journalistic and social media are closely interwoven. Lines between production and consumption are blurred, and meanings are formed in an endless circulation of texts, visuals and meanings. The internet revenue model is based on the attention economy (Davenport & Beck, 2001; Goldhaber, 1997; see also Webster, 2014), that is the success of professional media companies depends on the number of clicks and shares their stories receive. Algorithms are also used to determine which types of contents are circulated to particular audiences. This circulation takes place in the marketplace of attention (Webster, 2014), where audiences are active in creating and circulating content, but at the same time depend more and more on what social media platforms and their algorithms curate for their feed.

The effectiveness of terrorist attacks has always depended on the attention they manage to attract, and the amount of collective fear they manage to instil. Terrorism cannot be separated from communication, for without communication of terrorists' messages the effect of terrorism would be significantly reduced (Archetti, 2012; Klopfenstein, 2007). Contemporary terrorism makes skilful use of the hybrid media

environment in seeking attention. At the same time, the media manifold (Couldry, 2012; Couldry & Hepp, 2016) is so complex that no individual actor — terrorists included — can control circulation in a hybrid media event (Sumiala, Tikka, & Valaskivi, 2019; Sumiala, Tikka, Huhtamäki, & Valaskivi, 2016; Vaccari, Chadwick, & O'Loughlin, 2015).

In this book, we argue that the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks need to be understood as a global media event in a string of terrorist incidents since 9/11. In the past 15 years or so since the attacks on the World Trade Center, the media environment has changed significantly, as have ways of conceptualizing terrorism in association with radical Islam (Nacos, 2016). The 9/11 attacks and their aftermath have resulted in a world where an ambiguous fear of Muslim terrorism is used as political leverage to restrict and curtail citizens' rights through surveillance and — paradoxically — constraints on freedom of speech (Cottle, 2006b). The aim of terrorism, which is to seek attention and instil fear, has not changed, and terrorism has — unfortunately — been quite successful in feeding into fear (Archetti, 2012). In other words, 9/11 provided a traumatic context for all those following violent acts of terror. Since then, the cultural imaginary of terrorism has mainly been framed in terms of Islam.

The circulation of affect makes a metonymic connection (Ahmed, 2004a, 2004b) between Islam and terrorism. That connection is now so strong that the initial reaction to any and every violent incident is to suspect Islamist terrorism (Nacos, 2016; see also Said, 1981/1997). It is not an uncommon observation that when the perpetrator is white and indigenous, the search for explanations focuses on individual personality traits and personal history, from upbringing and media usage to issues of mental health. But when the perpetrator is thought to be 'an outsider', it seems that references to cultural background and religion are explanations enough; there is no need to address individual reasons (cf. Khiabany & Williamson, 2012). For instance, in the wake of the Utøya massacre in Norway in 2011, politicians and the media in Northern Europe were quick to make comments that the perpetrator must be a Muslim. When it turned out that Anders Breivik was blond and blue-eyed and held extreme right political sympathies, the explanations shifted to his troubled childhood, absent father, bullying at school and, finally, distorted relationship with his mother (cf. Borchgrevink, 2013). By contrast, the Kouachi brothers, who were born in France and who grew up in deprived Parisian suburbs, were portrayed not as 'boys of our own' who had gone astray, but as external Muslim terrorists who had come into French society from the outside to carry out their

cowardly attacks. In this way both Islam and the attackers were framed as outsiders to France, and to the West in general (Todd, 2015).

In this book, we argue that contemporary media events of terrorist violence play out in the ways they do because of the contemporary hybrid media environment. We do not mean to suggest that technological advances are the actual cause of these events, but rather that the practices, range and reach of consequences and circulated social imaginaries of a media event are always ingrained in the technologies available, and so provide particular affordances, narratives, modes of communication, genres and repertoires. The whole of our contemporary 'social world is fundamentally interwoven with media' (Couldry & Hepp, 2016, p. 16).

Our media environment today is largely the outcome of a process of technological development geared to creating new business opportunities through the internet. This (technological) business focus has had side-effects that are felt in societies throughout the world. These side-effects include the creation of polarizing 'bubbles' that are enhanced by social media algorithms, and those bubbles make possible the fabrication and spreading of lies and rumours for economic and political gain, as well as some features of datafication that contribute to increasing inequality (cf. Pariser, 2011). Methods of branding, propaganda and promotion are used by various actors, including terrorists. These tendencies obviously tie in with wider socio-historical, economic and political developments, and the aftermath of neoliberal global capitalism. In this book, however, we apply the lens of the media event.

1.2. Towards Interdisciplinary Analysis of Media and Terrorism

Contemporary terrorist violence is a complicated and shifting area of study and discussion that is extensively covered in a range of disciplines in the social and political sciences (see, e.g., Kepel, 2017; Roy, 2016). There is also a body of literature that addresses the role of (journalistic) media in terrorism (see, e.g., Altheide, 1987; Kavoori & Fraley, 2006). The role of media in terrorism has attracted academic research interest for decades. Much of this work has focused on the contents, meanings and frames of (journalistic) media in their coverage of terrorism, be it in newspapers or television (for more on the study of media and terrorism, see, e.g., Archetti, 2012; Nacos, 2016).

The aim of this book is to advance our understanding of the relationship between media and terrorism in the contemporary hybrid media

environment where hybrid media events escalate, circulate and cumulate. Our approach is inspired by several intellectual sources, including media anthropology, international communication and political communication, and recent discussions on media and social theory. We hope to be able to produce a map of the territory of hybrid media events of terrorist violence and provide new insights into the dynamics of the present media environment, which would help people and societies better comprehend what is at stake in these conflicts rather than escalate them.

Our analysis of the unfolding of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks as a hybrid media event applies an approach that views media events as ruptures big enough in the ordinary flow of occurrences to create new meanings. In this process, we revisit some of the earlier historical, philosophical and sociological theorizing on events and bring them into a new type of dialogue with the line of media events research first initiated by Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz in 1992. In this book, we argue for the necessity of looking more carefully into the interplay between the media environment and the dynamics of global imagination activated in a given context. We claim that understanding the hybridization of the present media environment is essential in order to grasp what is happening in today's media events of terror and the global narratives that are told in those media-saturated events in the present digital age. But first, in order to set the framework for this book, we introduce and elaborate our understanding of two key concepts central to our analysis: *hybrid* and media event.

1.2.1. Hybrid

Although the concept of hybrid is enjoying current popularity in academic discourse, with numerous scholars in different fields expounding their ideas in relation to hybrid (see, e.g., AlSayyad, 2001; Smith & Leavy, 2009; Whatmore, 2002), the concept goes back quite some time. Roman statesman and philosopher Pliny the Elder (AD 79) used the concept to describe bizarre creatures from far and exotic lands, part animal and part-human (Chadwick, 2013, p. 8).

In the seventeenth century, the word was adopted to refer to mixed racial inheritance. At around the same time, it also assumed a more metaphorical meaning, referring to things that have different origins, or heterogeneous sources. In biological contexts, the concept is still used today to refer to cross-breeds between plants or animals; in computer

technology to describe mixtures of digital and analogue technologies and in the automative industry to refer to cars that run on more than one source of power. All in all, 'hybridity alerts us to the unusual things that happen when distinct entities come together to create something new that nevertheless has continuities with the old' (Chadwick, 2013, p. 9). In social sciences, hybridity is an interdisciplinary trend that cuts across several fields. In organizational studies research, for instance, there is growing interest in 'hybrid organizations' (Billis, 2010). Andrew Chadwick notes that hybridity can be seen as 'something like an ontology', a theoretical disposition providing us with the opportunity to ask and answer new kinds of questions about 'the nature of contemporary society'.

But the concept of hybridity does have its problems. Analysing hybridity is inherently difficult, as it implies the existence of pure baseline forms, before they are mixed and blended, and historically it has proved hard to find such forms. Following Edward Said, Marwan Kraidy refers to the concept of hybridity as 'contrapuntal', which he says is 'well suited for understanding the relational aspects of hybridity because it stresses the formative role of exchanges between participating entities' (Kraidy, 2005, p. 13).

Our aim in this book is to explore hybridity in the context of the contemporary media environment. To that end we have identified three writers — Marwan M. Kraidy (2005), Bruno Latour (1993) and Andrew Chadwick (2013) — whom we will be referring to in order to describe aspects of hybridity that can help us understand hybrid media events.[2]

Bruno Latour's idea of hybridity is twofold, or rather two sides of the same coin. On the one hand, he talks about how the distinction between nature and culture/society in modern Western thinking is counterintuitive and counterproductive; on the other hand, he emphasizes the hybridity between human and non-human actors. In his famous book-length essay *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993), he calls for an anthropological approach to Western societies that sees beyond the distinctions between institutions in the modern West. Latour uses the media, and newspapers in particular, as an example of compartmentalization. His essay begins with a description of his wading through *Le Monde*, where the world is neatly separated into sections: science, politics, economy, law, religion, technology and fiction. Latour's critique is

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[2]It is noteworthy that Chadwick's theory of hybridity draws heavily on the thinking of Kraidy.

focused not on the media, however, but on academic thinking. For him, the problem lies in different 'fiefdoms of criticism': epistemologists are all focused on facts and insist on the real; sociologists are obsessed with power and the collective and deconstructionalists are fixated on the constructed and discursive. His practical solution is the Actor Network Theory (ANT), which proposes to look at (hybrid) networks of actors, both human and non-human, in a seamless fabric of nature-culture — all actors that are at once real (like nature), narrated (like discourse) and collective (like society) (Latour, 1993, p. 6).

Marwan M. Kraidy (2005) takes a communicative perspective and discusses hybridity in the context of culture, international communication and media. Hybridity, he says, typically requires cross-cultural contact: it involves 'the fusion of distinct forms, styles, or identities that span across national or cultural boundaries'. This contact can assume the form of either movement of cultural commodities, such as media programmes or exchange through the media, or movement of people. Both involve the transfer of ideas and practices, giving way to hybridization. But Kraidy's approach extends beyond culture as he points out that present-day hybrid media are shaped by politico-economic considerations, in that 'the pervasiveness of hybridity in some ways reflects the growing synchronization of world markets' (Kraidy, 2005, p. 9). Furthermore, Kraidy notes that hybridity is fully compatible with globalization.

Both Latour and Kraidy place great weight on the question of culture. Latour (1993) talks about the relationship between the West and the non-West, while Kraidy criticizes the discursive, unhelpful division between 'the West' and 'the rest'. Latour insists that it is the West that has separated nature from society, and that by viewing the two on a (hybrid) nature-culture continuum it would be possible for the West to undo the division of cultures. He suggests that if the division between nature and culture is no longer seen as an epistemological question, then the West could also be viewed through the anthropologist's lens. This is very much taken for granted in contemporary anthropology, where it is just as ordinary and commonplace to study 'our own' societies as it is to explore 'the other'. In recent years, media ethnographical approaches have particularly contributed to this line of inquiry (see, e.g., Rothenbuhler & Coman, 2005). Yet the cultural and symbolic division between us and them has certainly not disappeared.

Andrew Chadwick's (2013) starting point is what Latour would call modernist: he works from the premise that hybridity is about blending institutional boundaries and roles. Chadwick is particularly interested in exploring the relationship between media (as in journalism) and

politics. His approach derives from political communication, and he takes a special interest in elections. His analysis is firmly rooted in the Anglo-American context, and his concept of hybrid media system reflects this particular socio-geographic-historical context. In his own words, his aim is to 'provide an empirically informed interpretive account of key aspects of systemic change in the political communication environments of Britain and the United States', countries that have 'what are now best characterized as hybrid media systems' (Chadwick, 2013, p. 3). In this context, hybridity refers to the integrated roles that so-called older and newer media play in political communication in these two countries. Chadwick's focus is to study systemic characteristics, particularly with a view to seeing how the logics of older and newer media practices intertwine and how newer media practices interpenetrate the practices of both the older media and politics.

As we can see, then, the concept of hybridity has been used in different ways in relation to media and communication. The epistemological premises of the three approaches discussed above differ to some degree, which obviously presents a challenge for combining them and using them together. Having said that, there are also important similarities and points in common. All three writers acknowledge the presence of hybridity in culture, and the presence of hybridity across different domains of society.

But our aim and purpose here is to take inspiration from each of these three writers and to apply their theories in ways that are relevant to our case, that is to global hybrid media events of terrorist violence. From Latour, we adopt the idea of hybridity between human and non-human actors, the seamless fabric of nature-culture that is manifested in our contemporary media environment that intertwines technology, human action and discourses. Kraidy provides us guidance when we discuss power relations in global hybrid culture and in the world of international communication and media, and imbalances caused by overly simplified views of the relationship between 'the West' and 'the rest'. He also provides us with the tool of critical transculturalism, which allows us to focus on power in intercultural relations by integrating agency and structure into international communication analysis. Chadwick's empirically grounded idea of the hybridity of the media system helps us gain an analytical view of our empirical data, which consists of hybrid materials from both older and newer media outlets. Having said that, we step back from Chadwick's emphasis on old and new media logics and from the systemic approach, and use the concept of hybrid media environment

instead of system. For us, environment more accurately reflects the kind of flexibility and openness that is necessary to understand the floating dynamics at play in today's hybrid media events of global violence. Furthermore, unlike Chadwick, we do not tie our discussion to a particular national media system, but take a wider view on media events.

1.2.2.   Media Event

Events in human life have been the subject of theorizing by philosophers, historians, sociologists and social theorists alike (see, e.g., Abbott, 2001; Badiou, 2015; Deleuze, 1994; Sewell, 2005; Wagner-Pacifici, 2017). However, the first *theory* of media events was developed by communication scholars, Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz, who had written about media events throughout the 1980s and in 1992 published *Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History*. Their book has gained prominence not only in media and communication studies, but more generally in social science thinking about the interplay between media and public events in modern society.

Dayan and Katz's original idea was that a media event is a special genre that is powerful enough to interrupt the everyday media flow, bring the viewer into touch with society's central (sacred) values and invite the audience to participate in the event (Dayan & Katz, 1992, pp. 5−9). In their lexicon, media events have (a) their own grammar; (b) their own meaning structure (story form or script) and (c) their own practices characterized by live broadcasting: the interruption of daily media rhythms and routines, the scripting and advance preparation of the event, a huge audience (the 'whole world' is watching), social and normative expectations attached to viewing ('must see'), the ceremonial tone of media narration and the intention to connect people. As the story evolves and takes form, media events can be divided into 'conquests', 'contests' and 'coronations'.

Dayan and Katz's original work has a strong focus on *ceremoniality* and its power to promote social cohesion. Their subtitle — 'The Live Broadcasting of History' — points to the existence of a temporal aspect in a media event (cf. Sreberny, 2016; Zelizer, 2018). Dayan and Katz (1992) maintain that in many cases, the patterned story forms of a media event are closely intertwined and in live interaction with each other. This is to say that a media event can involve elements of more than one story form (e.g., the story form of 'contest' can also include

elements of another story form, such as 'conquest'). Furthermore, the form of an event may change, transforming into another story form as the event unfolds (e.g., from conquest to coronation). It is also important to acknowledge that all these scripts are embedded in deeper symbolic meaning structures in a given culture (Dayan & Katz, 1992, pp. 28–29). Dayan and Katz indicate that the significance of media events lies in their ability to reach a larger audience than any event that requires physical presence. In so doing, they take the question of a media event pointing beyond itself to a new mediatized level. In their thinking, the audience itself is well aware of this as they follow the unfolding media event in different locations, which may be private, semi-public or public, local, national or transnational, and even global.

Since the publication of Dayan and Katz's book almost thirty years ago, media event theory has stimulated much debate among media and communication scholars, as well as has attracted recognition for its theoretical innovation (Hepp & Couldry, 2010, p. 2; see also Cottle, 2006a; Couldry, 2003; Couldry & Hepp, 2017; Dayan, 2010; Fiske, 1994; Hepp & Krotz, 2008; Katz & Liebes, 2007; Kyriakidou, 2008; Liebes, 1998; Nossek, 2008; Rothenbuhler, 1998; Scannell, 1995, 2001, 2017; Sreberny, 2016; Sumiala, 2013; Sumiala & Valaskivi, 2018; Zelizer, 2018). The main criticisms against Dayan and Katz's approach have concerned (1) the assumed ceremonial and integrative functions of media events, (2) the attempt to exclude any disruptive or traumatic events from the focus of their theory, (3) the strong focus on television and broadcasting and (4) the presentist tendency in media events, which freezes events in time (see also Sonnevend, 2016, p. 10).

Scholars in the critical tradition (see, e.g., Cottle, 2006a; Couldry, 2003, 2012) have argued that Dayan and Katz's initial account of media events assumed too straightforward a relationship between media coverage and audience endorsement, thereby obscuring the ideological construction of social order. Tamar Liebes together with Menahem Blondheim (Liebes, 1998; Liebes & Blondheim, 2005) has insisted that the theory of media events needs to expand towards disruptive events of terror and violence (see also Cottle, 2006a; Couldry, 2003; Fiske, 1994; Kellner, 2003; Kyriakidou, 2008; Rothenbuhler, 2010; Scannell, 1995, 2001). In addition, given the globalization of communication through the internet and social networking sites, critics have called for a re-contextualization of the explicit focus on TV and broadcasting (e.g., Hepp & Couldry, 2010). It has also been argued that the theory fails to reflect fully enough on the act of time in media

events. It fails to explain how the narratives of and around media events change, endure or even fade over time (Sonnevend, 2016, p. 11).

Media historian Paddy Scannell (2014, p. 179) has contextualized the debate around media event theory and points out that Dayan and Katz 'knew full well that they were taking a very different stance to most if not all current academic orthodoxies'. Scannell argues that the core of the critical response was a dislike of the idea of public life as theatre. Referring to Dayan and Katz, Scannell (2014, p. 180) writes: 'They were at odds with all those, who one way or another, were dismissive of public life as theatre and television as its publicity agent.'

While Scannell (2014, p. 180) sees certain value in analysing media events as a form of exercise of power, which can mask social inequality in society and promote the existing hegemonic order (e.g., fascism aestheticizing politics), this criticism also stands as a deflationary view and does not do justice to Dayan and Katz's idea. Scannell (2014, p. 180) explains:

> […] Ceremony and spectacle have always been part of public life in any society, and objections to them are as old as the events themselves. Puritanism has an iconoclastic dislike of conspicuous public display which offends its austere worldview. Utilitarianism grumbles that such things are a waste of time and money, both of which could be better spent on less idle and more practical things. By any cost-benefit analysis, ceremonial events are irrational. They are neither useful nor necessary. To be sure, issues of power and inequality are centrally important concerns in any society and any politics. But now and then, societies choose momentarily (as all of us do), to take time out from the grittiness of ordinary life and celebrate. Media events are precisely not to be judged by the usual political criteria and if they are, they will simply slip through your fingers like butter. Any political interpretation of media events is deflationary.

But even before Scannell's defence, Dayan and Katz both separately responded to some of the criticisms against their original theory and readjusted their ideas. In their article 'No More Peace! How Disaster, Terror and War Have Upstaged Media Events', Katz and Liebes (2007, 2010) suggest that the focus of analysis should indeed shift from

conquests, contests and coronations to disaster, terror and war. According to Katz and Liebes (2007, p. 157):

> We believe that cynicism, disenchantment, and segregation are undermining attention to ceremonial events, while the mobility and ubiquity of television technology, together with the downgrading of scheduled programming, provide ready access to disruption. If ceremonial events may be characterized as 'co-productions' of broadcasters and establishments, then disruptive events may be characterized as 'co-productions' of broadcasters and anti-establishment agencies, i.e. the perpetrators of disruption.

Furthermore, Katz and Liebes suggest that marathons of terror, natural disaster and war — media disasters — should be distinguished from media events as a separate genre, as these mediatized disasters have become far removed from the ceremonial roots of original media events (Cottle, 2006a; Liebes, 1997; Liebes & Blondheim, 2005). In more recent work, scholars of media events (e.g., Sonnevend, 2016; Zelizer, 2018) argue that none of the earlier forms of media events have in fact disappeared, but they continue to exist side by side. Our argument is that this is one of the aspects of hybrid media events. These events may be both ceremonial and disruptive, and the emphasis may shift during the course of events, depending among other things on the context out of which these typically global events have unfolded.

To revert to the responses of the original authors, Daniel Dayan (2010), in his article 'Beyond Media Events: Disenchantment, Derailment, Disruption', also revised his thinking about media events. For him, the 'macabre accoutrements to televised ordeals, punishments, and tortures' and the emphasis on 'stigmatization and shaming' in today's mediatized public events have caused media events to lose their potential to reduce conflict; instead, they 'foster divides, and install and perpetuate schisms' (Dayan, 2010, pp. 26–27). As a result, media events, in Dayan's revisit to the theory, tend to lose their distinct character and instead gravitate towards other genres. New media events are no longer clearly differentiated entities, but are spread out on a continuum. Dayan (2010, p. 27) suggests that this 'banalization of the format' produces what he calls 'almost' media events. Dayan reminds us that the pragmatics of media events have changed as messages have become multiple, audiences selective and social networks ubiquitous. Dayan

(2010, p. 27) summarizes the difference between televised, ceremonial media events and media events of contemporary media circumstances:

> Interpersonal networks and diffusion processes are active before and after the event, mobilizing attention to the event and fostering intensive hermeneutic attempts to identify its meaning. But during the liminal moments we described in 1992, totality and simultaneity were unbound; organizers and broadcasters resonated together; competing channels merged into one; viewers gathered at the same time and in every place. All eyes were fixed on the ceremonial centre, through which each nuclear cell was connected to all the rest.

Dayan leaves his reader in a state of scepticism. For him, the most likely consequences in today's 'contested territory of media events' are disenchantment and the loss of the 'we' — the most critical functions of media events (see also Dayan, 2006). Viewed from the present perspective, however, the ideas of enchantment and 'we' have certainly not disappeared, even in today's violent media events of hybrid appeal. Rather, we argue, we have seen an intensification of 'we' as it continues to reach new audiences in the present digital media environment. We may call this yet another hybrid aspect of current violent media events with global appeal.

1.3. On the Hybridization of Media Events

Among the attempts to develop media event theory in the global, digital framework, beyond the national and TV broadcasting context, the work of Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp has been particularly influential. Hepp and Couldry (2010, p. 9) argue that in theorizing about media events today, we should not perceive them as 'placed' at a defined locality, but rather as disembedded, or even ubiquitous communicative practices. That is, we should understand media events today as translocal, transcultural and transnational phenomena articulated by a connectivity of different actors, platforms and communication processes (see also Hepp, 2015; Latour, 2005). Understood in this way, media events may be structured at once around relatively centralized power structures, such as national and global mainstream media — say the BBC or CNN — and multicentric power structures such as social networking

sites and the communication technologies embedded in those structures (cf. Hepp & Couldry, 2010, p. 9).

To follow Couldry's (2012, p. 79) insight in today's world, media events may have become rarer, yet the media's special relationship with events and the larger social world it addresses remains crucial. Research therefore needs to give greater emphasis to the processes of mediation and/or mediatization of events, instead of focusing on one medium only (such as TV). Couldry and Hepp's revised definition (in Couldry, 2012, p. 79) describes media events as:

> Certain thickened, centering performances of mediated communication that are focused on a specific thematic core, cross different media products and reach a wide and diverse multiplicity of audiences and participants.

This definition fits well the current condition in which the media is deeply involved in competition for attention and in an explicit battle for legitimacy (symbolic value) and survival (economic value) (see also Couldry, 2012, p. 79).

Julia Sonnevend's (2016) work on global iconic events provides yet another important perspective for the analysis of today's media events of global and digital appeal — that is, the significance of narratives and their circulation in today's media events. Sonnevend (2016, p. 2) has a special interest in what she calls global iconic events as 'news events that the international media cover extensively and remember ritually'. In her analysis, global iconic events have the capacity to transcend national boundaries in a lasting manner. However, Sonnevend claims (2016, p. 2) that global iconic events are never universal. This is to say that even though they can be transported from one context to another, they are not necessarily transported by everyone and to everywhere. Sonnevend (2016, pp. 2−3) explains: 'Global iconic events touch many hearts, but they do not have the same meaning for everyone. International news events enter a strongly fragmented political and journalistic space, which makes it hard for them to get unequivocal international recognition.' Global iconic events are thus always contested or ignored in some place.

Furthermore, Sonnevend is interested in global ceremonial events and in rethinking how narratives travel (across time, space and media platforms) in such events in the present global and digital context (Sonnevend, 2016, p. 20). She suggests that these events have five narrative dimensions: (1) foundation: the narrative prerequisites of events;

(2) mythologization: the development of their resonant message and elevated language; (3) condensation: the encapsulation of an event in a simple short narrative, and a recognizable visual scene; (4) counternarration: stories that go against the prominent event narrative and (5) remediation: the ability of the event to travel across multiple media platforms and changing social and political contexts (Sonnevend, 2016, p. 3).

To sum up, then, the debate on media events is still very much alive, and new theoretical angles are being introduced into the discussion around those spectacular moments of history in which something exceptional and unique breaks the flow of ordinary and mundane life and calls for mediatized participation. Many scholars of media events agree today that while the media environment has changed radically since the late 1980s and early 1990s when Dayan and Katz wrote *Media Events*, the interest in making and shaping media events, whether ceremonial and/or disruptive in nature, remains undiminished. The phenomenon of media event still exists in social reality today and can be studied as a category that is reformed in the digital media.

Present-day research on media events gives more focus to the growing role of new global communication technology in enabling today's media events and to the complex relationships between the actors and media platforms involved in making and participating in those events on a global scale (Vaccari et al., 2015). These changing conditions also pose a major challenge for rethinking not only what today's media events are, but what they do in telling the story of 'us' (and often 'them') in these global high moments of ceremony and/or disruption. Therefore, Barbie Zelizer (2018), Julia Sonnevend (2016), Annabelle Sreberny (2016) and other scholars give special attention to the narrative elements and the contextual frameworks in which today's media events appear and are made sense of.

We argue in this book that to analyse today's media events as hybrid means to pay special focus to the complex interplay between the different actors, messages and platforms that contribute to the making of a media event. To be more specific, this hybrid interplay, we claim, is created in a complex network of mass media, internet-based and mobile communication technologies, and it creates relatively fluid social intensifications between and among different actors. As such, hybrid constellations in today's media events may comprise elements of ceremonial mass media communication, but they increasingly often converge with contemporary forms of vernacular mass self-communication (see also Castells, 2009).

Furthermore, we acknowledge that the level of connectivity in hybrid media events between 'official' and 'viral' narratives of the event may vary greatly from case to case. This means that the idea of the 'whole world' watching, as applied in the original media theory (Dayan & Katz, 1992), needs to be approached as an experience that is scattered onto a multiplicity of screens. As Julia Sonnevend (2016) reminds us, while people may be taking part in a hybrid media event on a global, iconic scale, they are connected to it in different ways. They will be using different communication media to follow the event, associating with different — and even conflicting — narratives circulating in connection with the event, and so feel connected with different groups and identities involved in the event. What follows as a consequence is a multiplicity of shared experiences around a hybrid media event and related sociality.

And yet, this ubiquity of a hybrid media event by no means diminishes its social and cultural power in the present world. Quite the contrary, we argue that today's hybrid media events may be perceived as more global, visible and omnipresent than ever; they speak to a larger and more heterogeneous audience than ever. Consequently, the question of power embedded in social integration as underlined in Dayan and Katz's (1992) original theory needs to be addressed at several levels. Multiple collective imaginations and related social, cultural and political implications may be simultaneously at play, and they may also be in conflict with each other. As we will argue later in this book, this condition of multiple narratives and related collective imaginations and the symbolic battles and uneven hierarchies between them may paradoxically heighten the significance of simplified and condensed narratives that have wide-ranging cultural, historical, political and religious resonance in communicating terror and violence in today's world.

1.4.   The Five Elements of Hybrid Media Events

To further advance our understanding of hybridity in today's media events, we use five analytical elements. We have extracted these elements from our categorization of the key narrative components of the media event in focus (what happened in the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks) and their production (how and by whom were these happenings brought about) and with what consequences.

We call these elements the five As of global hybrid media events. The five As are as follows: actors, affordance, attention, affect and acceleration. In a nutshell, the first two elements — actors and affordances — form the environment of the hybrid media event. The third element — attention — is the motive power or fuel of the hybrid media event, and the fourth — affect — is the element that accumulates and directs attention and its circulation. Finally, the fifth A — acceleration — is a consequence of all other elements and of what takes place in a hybrid media event because of the conditions formed in the elements.

1.4.1. Actors

It is impossible to think about the past, present or future in media events without considering the actors who create those events (see, e.g., Wagner-Pacifici, 2017). In this book, we draw particularly on Latour's (2005) ideas about actors and agency and the idea of human and non-human connectivity in making and shaping today's media events. In line with Latour (2005, p. 5), we are specifically interested in those associations and connections between different types of actors (individual, non-human and collective) that appear in present media events and how the sense of the social and belonging is created in those human–non-human encounters.

Our present-day media events typically involve multiple actors. In addition to more traditional orchestrators of media events, such as journalists in mainstream news media, PR professionals, officials and the political establishment, we find that today, ordinary media users, different activist groups and perpetrators (in this case terrorists) are also actively involved in creating and maintaining media events. As discussed above, the social reality of events is brought to the fore through complex processes of computational logics and algorithmic constellations. Simply put, the more we click and share certain types of materials related to the event, the more we are offered those contents on our screens and in our news feeds. José van Dijck (2013) calls this quantified sociality. This requires a methodological orientation that enables scholars to empirically trace those human and technological associations and encounters in a variety of networks created in and around today's media events. So, while actors have always played a central role in creating media events, we argue that for a rigorous analysis of today's hybrid media events, it is necessary to broaden our category of actors

and include non-human actors and agency in those events, and furthermore to pay closer attention to the globalized and intensified dynamics between the different actors contributing to the event.

1.4.2.   *Affordance*

Today's media events are made possible in and by digital communication technology. As discussed above, our understanding of the concept of actor takes into account both the human and the non-human actor and the individual and the non-individual actor, as well as their relationship with the broader media environment and social structure. The concept of affordance provides the theoretical link between social organizing in the media event (by different actors) and the technology available for communicating it and bringing it into social existence in a certain way. The concept of affordance, then, allows research to reach beyond the division between actor and structure (Faraj & Azad, 2012).

The roots of the concept of affordance lie in the issue of the relationship between human perception and technology. Initially, James J. Gibson (1979, pp. 129–130) saw affordance in terms of what things enable us to do, as a concept that 'is neither an objective property nor a subjective property; or it is both if you like… It is equally a fact of environment [artefact] and a fact of behavior [action]. An affordance points both ways: to the environment and to the observer' (additions by Faraj & Azad, 2012, p. 249). This means that a same object affords different possibilities of action depending on the conditions of the actor. Affordance is the reciprocal and immediate relationship between the environment and organism (Faraj & Azad, 2012, p. 249). In the case of a media event, the affordance of YouTube may be different to a perpetrator who makes and shares a martyr video by using that communication technology before an attack than it is for an ordinary media user who uses that same technology to make a mourning video to pay respects to the victims killed in the attack and shares it on YouTube.

Our aim in this book is to take a relational view on the concept of affordance and to see affordances as emergent properties of 'what can be done' (Stoffregen, 2003 in Faraj & Azad, 2012, p. 249). In our understanding of the concept, affordances are thought of as opportunities for action rather than properties of the environment. An object in the environment offers different possibilities of action depending on the actor's motivation and abilities (Faraj & Azad, 2012, pp. 250–251). Importantly enough, these properties should be seen as not just

personal, but also social properties. Questions of ethnicity, language and gender, and questions of power, social status and profession are social conditions that influence the possible affordances in using social media technologies.

1.4.3. Attention

Contemporary media events offer an unlimited supply of media contents, and it is in principle possible for anyone to engage in media production. Human attention, however, is necessarily limited in supply (Webster, 2014). This condition is described as the marketplace of attention (Webster, 2014) or attention economy (Davenport & Beck, 2001), highlighting the fact that attention is now the motive force of circulation in the contemporary media environment. In practice, the tracking of attention (in the form of clicks, likes, shares, etc.) has become the means with which internet platforms gain their revenue.

The growth of global internet advertising and social media platforms has profoundly affected the business logics and advertising markets of news media industries, which used to operate on a national basis. As a result, even journalistic media have been driven to search for clicks and shares. In other words, the actors with an interest in and capability for attention management in contemporary, hybrid media events are now many and varied: they are not just limited to the journalistic media institutions that before the internet used to set the agenda for public discussions. In a hybrid media event, anyone with a mobile phone or computer, internet access and Twitter account can circulate messages publicly. This, however, does not necessarily mean the message will gain wide attention. That depends on the power relationship between the actors involved and on their resources and abilities to use technological and social affordances. That said, the division of resources in present-day hybrid media events is highly unequal, and professional news institutions such as CNN are in the position to invest much greater resources in winning the battles of attention in those media events.

In the symbolic battles waged in today's media events, all actors — institutional, professional, terrorist and civil — are keen to manage attention. Depending on the situation, they may either vie for attention or try to avoid attention. Conscious communication strategies are intertwined with less intentional commentary and media texts that become key tools in creating and shaping global media events of terrorist violence. All this seeking of attention in today's media events affects public

discussions. Attention is accumulated and directed through the circulation of memes, visuals, texts and videos. Also, affective contents tend to accumulate attention more easily than neutral contents (see also Papacharissi, 2015).

1.4.4.   Affect

In this book, we have found Sara Ahmed's (2004a) understanding of affect particularly useful. Ahmed views affect and emotions as social and cultural practices rather than individual psychological states. She points out that affects are not properties of signs or commodities, but are produced in the circulation of signs or commodities. Affect, then, is a means to gain attention, accumulate attention and manage meanings. Ahmed's discussion of hate as affective economy is relevant to our analysis of the hybrid media event, as she points out that 'emotions do not positively inhabit anybody or anything, meaning that "the subject" is simply one nodal point in the economy, rather than its origin and destination' (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 46). In the circulation of hate, sticky, affective words and metonymic connections are particularly important. Connecting 'terrorism' with 'Islam' is one of these sticky connections that has continued to gain in strength since 9/11 (Ahmed, 2004b). Ahmed also points out that in discourses of 'war on terrorism', the issue of public mourning or grievable and ungrievable bodies becomes a question of legitimate and illegitimate lives (see also Butler, 2004). What is more, the process of sticky affects circulating and gathering attention (and sidelining attention from other matters) in today's hybrid media events is continuing to gather speed, spearing simultaneously into a multiplicity of digital media platforms. This intensified circulation of affects adds an important dimension to the analysis of today's hybrid media events, as it affects and shapes the construction of the social reality of those events.

1.4.5.   Acceleration

As pointed out above, the element of speed has special relevance to the analysis of today's hybrid media events. The idea of speed points towards the temporal and spatial acceleration of media events. In this condition, information in the form of images, news, messages, memes and videos travel fluidly between actors, platforms and devices and cross geographical and cultural borders at ever-increasing pace. To follow

John Urry (2007), there is no stasis in present media events, only processes of creation and transformation. This idea draws our attention to the speed and de-stability of movement in today's hybrid media events. In his book *Empires of Speed: Time and Acceleration of Politics and Society*, Robert Hassan argues that the temporal speed of contemporary society reaches into every realm of the social, bringing rapidity to the very core of our collective and individual existence (2009, p. 8). The logic of 'social acceleration', which is forcing us to work faster, move faster and think faster, is also central to creating and maintaining today's media events. The social norms of digital media have it that people are expected to connect faster, share faster and participate constantly (see also van Dijck, 2013). Nevertheless, as Hassan (2009, p. 17) argues, '[t]he present Empire of Speed based upon computer-driven acceleration is one where there is no one in control because politics can no longer synchronize (keep up) with the pace of change that has become an end itself'. The same logic, we argue, prevails in hybrid media events of terrorist violence where perpetrators, authorities, journalists, victims, witnesses and other actors are able and expected to connect with each other faster than ever, with often unpredictable consequences.

The accelerated spatial and temporal movement of information in today's media events also enters into the conflicts, shaping them inside out and outside in. This has implications for their internal organization, external development as well as for their outcomes and consequences (cf. Cottle, 2014; Eskjær, Hjarvard, & Mortensen, 2015). The implications of acceleration are seen at all levels, from global (macro) to national (meso) and individual (micro), as the networked and digital 'world has become a singular, interconnected place where major changes tend to have effects and implications for nearly everyone' (Hassan, 2009, p. 7). Finally, to follow John Urry (2007, p. 6), we claim that issues of movement, of too little or too much, of the wrong sort or at the wrong time, are central to the workings and outcomes of present-day media events. This very much holds true in the case of hybrid media events of terrorist violence where the mediated movement of information may become a matter of life and death and a matter of media ethics in society.

1.5. Analysing Hybrid Media Events on Twitter and Beyond

For the scope of this book, Twitter offers a useful starting point for the study of hybrid media events. In this present 'event society' (Therborn, 2000, p. 42) or 'society of experience' (Huyssen, 2000, p. 25) saturated

with media events, communication has also become an increasingly event-based activity (cf. Murthy, 2012, p. 1064). In this situation, Twitter has become a key platform for breaking news, and therefore events that draw attention tend to surface first on that platform. Also, Twitter provides rich data that shed light on other forms of media. Several media organizations, politicians and authorities use Twitter, and content and actors from other media platforms are also present through message circulation (cf. Kraidy & Mourad, 2010). As Dhiraj Murthy says: 'Organizing social life by events presents opportunities for everyday people and traditional media industries to tweet side-by-side' (Murthy, 2012, p. 1064). In this context, Twitter has been described as a prominent symbol of change in the media landscape:

> If we allow ourselves to paraphrase the CNN effect of the 1990s, this changeover in the media landscape could be called the Twitter effect. As was true for the CNN effect, which was caused by more than just the CNN organiza-tion, the Twitter effect must also be considered as a sym-bol of a much broader phenomenon, concerning several online tools oriented to the publication of user-generated, real-time content (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc.). (Bruno, 2011, p. 8)

Previous studies on Twitter events (such as political elections or sport events) also give emphasis to the role of audiences in co-producing a media event, alongside traditional mass media (cf. Girginova, 2015; Kreiss, Meadows, & Remensperger, 2014). Furthermore, in the field of crisis communications, Twitter has been at the centre of many discus-sions. From the Arab Spring to the 2011 London riots, Twitter has been identified as a prominent platform for citizen communication in several revolutions, protests and movements, connecting people and bypassing gatekeepers, whether they be the authorities or journalists (cf. Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Procter, Vis, & Voss, 2013). From the journalistic viewpoint of crisis reporting, the first ever 'Twitter disaster' was the 2010 Haiti earthquake: in the first 24 hours following the quake, news organizations depended for their coverage on social media, espe-cially the easily accessible flow of information on Twitter (Bruno, 2011). In times of crisis, ordinary people can actively produce information, and they can also link and share published news stories from main-stream news media (Utz, Schultz, & Glocka, 2013).

   In this book, too, Twitter provides an important empirical context for the analysis of hybrid media events. We gained access to Twitter data through a third-party social media analytics service called Pulsar (http://www.pulsarplatform.com/). The data were collected using three search and filtering criteria: search terms, time window and language. All the tweets collected were sent during 7−16 January 2015. The phrases and hashtags gathered included: 'je suis charlie', 'je ne suis pas charlie' or 'je suis ahmed' or any of the hashtags #jesuischarlie, #jenesuispascharlie or #jesuisahmed. Furthermore, all tweets selected were written either in English, French or Arabic. The total number of tweets was 5.2 million, of which 1.5 million were original tweets and the rest retweets.

   While the Twitter data provide the starting point for our quantitative analysis and offers empirical evidence of the networked relationships between the different actors involved in the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, we also use other media materials such as stories published by online news media and other social media in order to gain a clearer understanding of the workings of this hybrid media event. This complementary material consists of a wide range Anglo-American and French news media such as CNN, *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, the *Daily Mail*, *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde* and *Libération* through to other international media houses such as *Al Jazeera English*. Finally, our analysis of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks as a hybrid media event also made use of other social media platforms such as YouTube and Facebook.

1.5.1. *Three Empirical Phases*

The empirical analysis of today's hybrid media events requires a specific methodological setting. We call it a multi-method model, which sets the rhythm of the analysis and closely integrates quantitative and qualitative research approaches (for a more detailed description of our methodological approach, see Sumiala et al., 2016). More specifically, in this book we combine computational social science — automated content analysis (ACA) (Boumans & Trilling, 2016) and computational social network analytics (SNA) — with a qualitative approach, particularly digital ethnography. The different approaches follow a certain chronological order and are brought into dialogue as follows:

1. the first empirical outline of the event is provided by means of digital ethnography;
2. the digital field for research is constructed by means of automated content analysis and social network analytics; and

3. an in-depth interpretation of what (substance/content) is circulating and how this material connects with the 'where' in the hybrid media environment, creating the links and connections necessary for the social meaning making and interpretation of the event in a hybrid media environment, are provided by digital ethnography.

As explained above, global hybrid media events interrupt the daily routines of the media and people's everyday life. This moment of massive media saturation and circulation of information produces the first methodological challenge for the study of hybrid media events. This first phase of chaotic information flow requires a digital ethnographic perspective in which the events are followed and organized into a timeline. In the case of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, we started our pilot study while the events were still unfolding. As digital ethnographers, we traced the news in the mainstream media, such as the BBC, *The New York Times*, *The Guardian* and *Le Monde*, as well as on Twitter, YouTube and Facebook. Our personal media streams also included national news outlets, as well as friends and family members in our native Finland and around the world, reporting and commenting on the events from different local perspectives. We identified certain prominent messages, hashtags, posts, memes and images circulating in those media environments. To give one example, it was soon announced that the hashtag #JeSuisCharlie was the most-tweeted message in the history of Twitter, offering a simple and interesting lead to be followed in the course of events.

This first ethnographic phase of the analysis is best described as suggestive, and it may well be that its findings are challenged in the subsequent phases of quantitative and qualitative analysis. Yet it is a necessary stage for the process to follow, for it provides the first suggestive sketch of the initial chaotic information flow around the events. It offers crucial insight into the timeline of the event, into what might be interesting, relevant and peculiar about the incidents as they evolve, and so gives direction for the analysis in the next phase. As well as providing a timeline of the media event, this concrete stage of data gathering yields large volumes of field notes, screenshots, memes, images, videos and links.

In the next phase, social network analytics are applied to present a more general overview of communication around the events with more data. In the case of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, the media platform in focus was Twitter. In this so-called helicopter stage of the analysis, social network analytics are used to construct the research field and

provide an overview of the data, and to map certain elements that are considered relevant based on the first phase of the pilot study. As explained above, the data collected prior to the analysis was acquired through the social media analytics platform Pulsar using several search words. We began with the hashtag #JeSuisCharlie and identified certain key groups: actors including ordinary media users and professional media houses. This helped us to empirically illustrate communicative networks created around the event — where and when they took place and how they existed in relation to each other.

In the third and final stage of the empirical analysis, the networks mapped by means of quantitative analysis and social network analytics and its visual illustrations are revisited from an ethnographic point of view. The quantitative analysis draws a map of the field and provides orientation for the ethnographic immersion. It helps to uncover aspects and elements in the event that call for more detailed analysis, and so contributes to producing a more holistic understanding of the ways in which the event is created and made sense of in the hybrid media environment studied.

The fieldwork phase in a hybrid media environment integrally involves a dense description of the observations made in the form of field notes and data documentation and recording by any means available, including screenshots and prints (cf. Sumiala & Tikka, 2013). In order to capture the research object in a highly complex and dynamic environment, it is useful to go back to the timeline and re-evaluate the first sketch of the events against the quantitative framework and then to make any necessary readjustments. In this phase, the researcher needs to reassess the relationship of the incident with the larger event and the key nodal points in this process. This can be done by searching for facts connected with the events and identifying certain key elements such as time, place and people by collecting other online media materials. This can be a challenging task in the hybrid media environment, for hybrid media events host and entice myriads of interpretations, misunderstandings, rumours and intentional misinformation.

After reidentifying the basic elements in the event, the researcher can begin to add layers of meanings to the event. This can be done in two overlapping ways: it is possible, first, to conduct ethnographic fieldwork by following paths and trails of links, streams and algorithmic suggestions offered by Twitter and other social media platforms, but it may also be useful, second, to conduct digital ethnography by simultaneously approaching the event from different directions, for instance by using search engines to run searches on different online media sites.

In these overlapping processes, the digital ethnographer will develop a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of the event and eventually be able to make interpretations of those more or less visible and hidden representations, discourses, actors and symbols and related communicative practices that contribute to creating and maintaining different types of social imaginaries of solidarities, belongings and exclusions embedded with the media event.

A multi-method approach to studying hybrid media events can thus be described as a prismatic methodological tool. It helps to shed light on different empirical layers, aspects and elements in the material. This requires a careful and ongoing reflection of the empirical process.

1.6.   Structure of the Book

This book is structured as follows. In Chapter 2, we begin our empirical analysis of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks as a hybrid media event by (re) constructing its main narrative storyline. We focus on the first 10 days after the shootings, up to the publication of the *Charlie Hebdo* 'survival issue' and its immediate aftermath. As we demonstrate in the second chapter, these days constitute the main narrative storyline of the event. It includes the rupture (the attacks, manhunt and killing of the perpetrators), the height of the public response (demonstrations in January followed by public funerals) and the climax (the publication of a new issue of *Charlie Hebdo*). In this chapter, we draw on Julia Sonnevend's (2016, p. 3) ideas of the narrative construction of the event and its five key dimensions as discussed above: foundation, mythologization, condensation, counter-narration and remediation. Our analysis in Chapter 2 is mainly based on digital ethnographic fieldwork conducted on various media platforms in phases one and three.

Chapters 3 to 6 provide an empirical analysis of the interplay between the narrative and hybrid elements (e.g., the five As) in the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks. The cases are selected for analysis based on their meaning, prominence, visibility and relevance in making sense of the media event. In Chapter 3, we draw on quantitative analyses of the Twitter data and identify the most popular and retweeted actors and hashtags in the attacks. In addition, we show how affordances between actors and technologies contributed to imposing communication between certain actors and messages.

In Chapter 4, we turn our empirical gaze to the aspect of attention and to how attention directs the process of meaning making in the

Charlie Hebdo attacks. In this chapter, we examine the circulation of attention in the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks by analysing the death of police officer Ahmed Merabet and the related public and official responses to his tragic death on the street. The empirical analysis of Merabet's media death is based on digital ethnographic fieldwork in phases one and three.

In Chapter 5, we investigate the aspect of affect in the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks and look at how the circulation of emotions contributed to shape sense-making in this media event. In particular, we focus on the mediatized rituals of public solidarity created around the slogan and meme 'Je suis Charlie' and its counter-rituals. Special attention is given to the ways in which those mediatized rituals were performed on various media platforms by diverse actors and for different purposes. The empirical material of this chapter is based on a combination of digital ethnographic analyses of Twitter data and other online media materials.

In Chapter 6, we examine acceleration as the last key element in the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks. Our empirical analysis is based on digital ethnography conducted on the two hostage situations in the attacks. In this chapter, we illustrate how the intensified circulation of actors and messages shaped the meaning making of the event and impacted on the roles of the parties involved, that is, the perpetrators, news media, hostages and officials.

In the concluding chapter, we revert to the interplay between terror and media events in the present digital condition. We summarize the key features of hybridity in the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks and critically reflect upon the ethical consequences of this hybridization of today's media events and how they influence the present media research on globalized societies, using the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks as our case in point.