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THE CELEBRIFIED JOURNALIST

Journalistic self-promotion and branding in celebrity constructions on Twitter

Ulrika Olausson

Ongoing transformations of the media ecology in the direction of greater digitization have increasingly blurred the boundaries between professional journalists and other information brokers; the former now must work hard to distinguish themselves from the latter. Notable among these developments is a shift towards the individualization of journalism, with journalists seeming to spend more time building personal brands, for instance on Twitter, than on building organizational ones. Within journalism research there is a growing interest in the use of Twitter for journalistic self-promotion and branding, but studies are still scarce, and the ways in which journalistic self-promotion is discursively constituted need further empirical and theoretical attention. By means of a critical discourse analysis of the tweets of a widely followed journalist in Sweden, and through the theoretical lens of celebrity, this study aims to contribute knowledge about how journalistic self-promotion discourses evolving in the digitized media setting are constituted. The article identifies discourses that construct celebrity through (1) “fame by association,” (2) asymmetrical communication, and (3) “lifestreaming.” It concludes by discussing “celebrification” as a vital component of journalistic self-promotion discourses as well as the power aspects of ubiquitous self-promotional discourses, which are deeply embedded in the general structures of society.

KEYWORDS social media; journalism; celebrification; CDA; journalistic identity; self-commodification; self-production; selfies

Introduction

The ongoing transformations of the media ecology in the direction of greater digitization have resulted in a partial breakup of the one-to-many communicative logic of traditional journalism (Deuze 2008; Hermida 2012). This rings particularly true for social media, whose communicative characteristics “allow for practices that deviate from established conventions” (Hermida 2013, 301) and involve attributes such as personalization, openness, connectivity, participation and interactivity (Hermida 2012). In these transformative processes the boundaries between professional journalists and other information brokers have become increasingly blurred, and journalists now must work hard to distinguish themselves from other information providers and make themselves both flexible and multi-skilled (Deuze 2007).

A notable feature of these developments is an ongoing shift towards the individualization of journalism (Deuze 2008), and journalists seem to spend more time

building personal brands, for instance on Twitter, than building organizational ones (Molyneux and Holton 2015). Notwithstanding considerable differences in how various journalists make use of social media (Gulyas 2013), there is a noticeable trend among the most active journalists to exploit social media to create personal brands and promote themselves as individual professionals rather than (or possibly in parallel with) their role as employees of a particular news organization (Bruns 2012; Hedman and Djerf-Pierre 2013; Olausson 2017). Evidently, phenomena such as branding and self-promotion – the outcomes of technological and cultural changes in journalism as well as in society at large (Molyneux and Holton 2015) – are growing increasingly visible in the digitized media landscape.

There are several reasons for the trend whereby journalists strive to profile themselves as individuals in social media. First (and perhaps foremost), promotion discourse is a general feature of late modern society and the new media culture (Marshall 2010), where the individual is continuously encouraged to promote and work on the branded self as a commodity (Jerslev and Mortensen 2015). Second, and more specific to the field of journalism, the shift towards self-promotion and branding is fueled by the internationally widespread and widely discussed crisis of journalism, where budget cuts have resulted in precarious job situations for journalists (Berglez, Olausson and Ots in press; Franklin 2014; Wahl-Jorgensen et al. 2016). Personal branding in the sense of “knowing your skills and persona, and presenting them on a well-arranged platter to others” (Brems et al. 2016), paves the way for journalists’ self-commodification, i.e. for them to increase their personal market value, as well as to become pivots around which news and opinions revolve (Molyneux and Holton 2015).

This study focuses on journalistic self-promotion and branding on the microblogging site Twitter, which has become an important platform for news journalism (Hermida 2013). Due to its public and networked nature – giving journalists direct and personal access to an audience – and its potential to grant access to the seemingly intimate and authentic, which are fundamental ingredients in self-promotion and branding activities, Twitter constitutes an excellent platform for the construction of a marketable persona (Bennett and Thomas 2014; Collings 2015; Molyneux 2015; Wright 2015). Twitter is thus becoming increasingly important for journalists’ ability to build economic and social capital, and media-savvy and multi-skilled journalists have a strong presence there (Brems et al. 2016; Bruns 2012; Hanusch and Bruns 2016). Consequently, this particular platform is an important study object for journalism research.

The overall body of research on journalism and Twitter is growing rapidly. Previous studies have examined, on the one hand, how news organizations have adopted Twitter and other social media, both as platforms for the dissemination of news and information and as marketing tools (Ahmad 2010; Barnard 2016; Greer and Yan 2010; Greer and Ferguson 2011; Hermida 2010; Messner, Linke and Eford 2012; Noguera Vivo 2013). Results indicate that social media have mainly been used to distribute news organizations’ own content (Gulyas 2014; Hermida 2013; Lasorsa, Lewis and Holton 2012). On the other hand, studies have focused on how journalists themselves have adopted social media (Canter 2014; Gulyas 2013; Hedman 2015; Hedman and Djerf-Pierre 2013; Hermida 2013; Holton and Lewis 2011; Lasorsa, Lewis and Holton 2012; Olausson 2017), and survey studies show that a large share of journalists testify to using social media on a regular basis, though the number of “around-the-clock” users might be quite small (Gulyas 2013; Hedman and Djerf-Pierre 2013). Results from surveys also suggest that journalism is being adapted to the affordances of the Twitter setting; for instance, they reveal a positive attitude towards personal branding (Hedman and

Djerf-Pierre 2013; Lasorsa, Lewis and Holton 2012). In particular, the most active journalists on Twitter seem to embrace this attitude (Hedman 2015).

There has also been some recent scholarly interest in the use of Twitter for journalistic self-promotion and branding (Brems et al. 2016; Hanusch and Bruns 2016; Molyneux 2015; Molyneux and Holton 2015; Molyneux, Holton and Lewis 2017; Olausson 2017; Ottovordemgentschenfelde 2017). Studies show, for instance, that journalistic branding is becoming a pervasive activity on Twitter, that branding activities are intertwined with more traditional news work, where journalists struggle to find a balance, and that journalists' Twitter profiles are used for self-promotional purposes. However, research is still scarce, and the ways in which journalistic self-promotion on Twitter is discursively constituted need further empirical and theoretical attention. By means of a critical discourse analysis, and through the theoretical lens of celebrity, the present study aims to contribute knowledge about how journalistic self-promotion discourses evolving in the digitized media setting are constituted. More specifically, the article deals with, in the words of Marshall (2010, 38), "the (journalist's) production of the on-line self and how it is informed by celebrity culture." As noted by Jerslev and Mortensen (2015), self-production and personal branding constitute the very core of celebrity activity, which has developed into a quite potent element of contemporary culture, not least due to the emergence of social media (Marshall 2014).

Applying the Framework of Celebrity Studies to Journalism Research

It is true that there is wide acknowledgement within celebrity studies of the importance of journalism for the construction of celebrity, i.e. of how journalists contribute to the (re)production of celebrities (Marshall 2014). However, as suggested by Marwick and boyd (2011), the current networked media landscape has resulted in a transformation of celebrity culture – how celebrities are produced and how celebrity is practiced. In line with this, an important theoretical assumption of the present study is that due to these changes, the current "celebrity sphere" (Muntean and Petersen 2009) has expanded to include not only non-media personalities such as musicians, artists, royals, and politicians, but also actors from the media sector itself, i.e. journalists. The study thus delves into the theoretical framework of celebrity studies in order to explain how journalistic self-promotion on Twitter is discursively constituted at the same time as it transcends it somewhat. Instead of directing analytic attention to journalists *and* celebrities, commonly labeled celebrity journalists, the study focuses on journalists *as* celebrities, here conceptualized as "celebrified" journalists.

Celebrity is generally understood as "a famous person" (Marwick and boyd 2011). However, Marwick and boyd (2011) emphasize that "practicing celebrity and having celebrity status are different" (p. 156), and conceptualize celebrity as a "performative practice" (p. 140) rather than a description or label. Similarly, celebrity is in this article viewed as a learned discursive behavior and as constituted by discursive processes of "celebrification" ¹ (Jerslev and Mortensen 2015, 2) in which celebrity is constantly reproduced. Thus, the celebrity persona is viewed as a discursive construct, produced and sustained for public consumption with the purpose of building social or economic capital (Page 2012).

The construction of celebrity could also be understood in terms of "micro-celebrity," which Senft (2008) defines as a practice for self-commodification that "involves people 'amping up' their popularity over the Web" (p. 28). Micro-celebrity is a discursive practice that is used by both already-famous and non-famous people in order to (re)produce

celebrity (there thus being no distinction between “micro-celebrities” and “real celebrities”). Its distinguishing characteristics are (a) that popularity is acknowledged as a main goal, and (b) that the self-presentation is carefully constructed to be consumed by (c) the audience, who are treated as fans rather than friends or followers on social networking sites (Marwick and boyd 2011).

In sum, the constructionist nature of the concepts of “celebrification” and “micro-celebrity” implies that the celebrified journalist on Twitter is not necessarily (but could be) a well-known and already famous journalist who happens to be tweeting. As suggested by Molyneux and Holton (2015), journalists using Twitter are likely to learn the discursive behaviors of the Twitter community, including the very different norms that apply, for instance, to famous people from the entertainment field. This could lead individual journalists to develop new communicative practices which are largely absent from traditional news journalism, such as celebrity discourse. The celebrified journalist could therefore be a journalist without any significant (pre-existing) fame who “borrows” the discursive characteristics of celebrity in social media for self-promotional purposes.

The article has four sections including this introduction. The second section accounts for the discourse theoretical and methodological framework and introduces the material studied, consisting of 197 tweets by a widely followed Swedish journalist. In the third section the results are presented. These are thematically structured around the central findings as discourses that construct celebrity through (1) “fame by association,” (2) asymmetrical communication, and (3) “lifestreaming.” The concluding section discusses “celebrification” as a vital component of journalistic self-promotion discourses, as well as the power aspects of ubiquitous self-promotional discourses, which are deeply embedded in the general structures of society.

Analytic Framework and Material

In order to analytically capture journalistic self-promotion and branding in constructions of celebrity, the analytic framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA) was used. The reason for this choice is that CDA’s view on discourse, not only as language in general but as language as a *social practice* (Fairclough 1993), resonates well with the constructionist understanding of celebrity as a “performative practice” (Marwick and boyd 2011, 140), and the focus of CDA on the commercialization of language (Fairclough 1993). CDA thus centers on relations between semiotic and other social elements, and the nature of this relationship is regarded as context-dependent; i.e. it varies between institutions and organizations, times and places (Fairclough 2009).

In particular, Fairclough’s (1993) theorizing on the marketization of public discourse in late capitalist society informs the analysis. The marketization of discourse refers to what Fairclough (1993, 142) describes as “the colonization of discourse by promotion.” Drawing on Wernick’s (1991) idea of a promotional culture, Fairclough (1993) conceptualizes the *promotional culture as discourse* as a vehicle for marketing not only goods and services, but also ideas and people, across the discourses of various social fields and institutions. In the marketization of discourse, the component of “conversationalization” plays a significant role by opening up public discourses to informal discursive elements of the private domain, thus making them more accessible to all (Fairclough 1993). Fairclough (1993, 140) describes this process as a “synthetic personalization” closely linked to the objectives of promotional discourse. This overall commercialization of language has, according to Fairclough (1993, 141–142), led to an extensive reorganization of boundaries between the discourses of

various social fields and institutions, generating many new hybrid and partly promotional genres.

Three discourse-analytical categories suggested by Fairclough for the purpose of analyzing the marketization of discourse (1993, 135; 2009, 164), and applied in Twitter analysis by Berglez (2016), were used for the qualitative analysis presented here to identify the discursive practices that serve to construct the self-promoting, celebrified journalist:

- *Genres* are semiotic ways of acting and interacting such as news or job interviews, reports or editorials in newspapers, or advertisements on TV or the Internet (Fairclough 2009, 164), and from broader language and media culture, for instance chatting, debating, small-talk, or storytelling genres (Berglez 2016, 175).
- *Discourses* are semiotic ways of constructing aspects of the world that can generally be identified with different social positions or perspectives (Fairclough 2009, 164), for instance professional, lay, public, private/personal, journalistic, economic, political, commercial, popular, or educative discourses (Berglez 2016, 175)
- *Styles* are “ways of being” in their semiotic aspect (Fairclough 2009, 164), involving more detailed accounts of how various genres and discourses become realized, for instance in terms of a humorous, formal, informal, antagonistic, critical, or ironic style (Berglez, 2016, 175).

A critical discourse analysis, guided by the three analytical categories presented above, was performed with a particular emphasis on visual tweets because of their potential to convey core self-promotional ingredients such as authenticity and intimacy (Busetta and Coladonato 2015; Farci and Orefice 2015). Twitter has evolved from being primarily a textual medium to including visual images of various kinds, not least in the context of journalism (Olausson 2017), and the concept of discourse is not restricted to spoken or written language but also incorporates multimodal forms (Fairclough 2009). Additionally, interactive replies to the (re)tweets were included in the analysis, given that they shed light on the ways in which the celebrified journalist is discursively forged.

Case and Material

The case and material of this study derive from Sweden, a country which is often characterized as a “digital hotspot” (Hedman and Djerf-Pierre 2013, 374). The use of Internet and digital media in Sweden is among the highest in the world, and Swedish media houses have been eager to adopt digital and mobile technologies (Westlund 2012). Sweden thus constitutes a fruitful case for examining journalistic self-promotion in a digitized setting.

As the empirical case for the present study, the journalist Niklas Svensson (@niklassvensson), a politics reporter at the national tabloid *Expressen*, was selected. Svensson is ranked as one of the most influential (in terms of number of followers) j-tweeters in Sweden,² producing a multitude of daily updates. It would be an exaggeration to suggest that Svensson enjoys widespread fame beyond the Twitter sphere but he is definitely someone who could set an example for (younger) journalists on this platform (Molyneux and Holton 2015). At the same time, he embodies the journalist who “borrows” the discursive characteristics of other social fields for the construction of celebrity, and constitutes therefore a fruitful case for the current study.

In addition to working as a more traditional politics reporter at the newspaper *Expressen*, Svensson hosted the web-TV event *Bar & Politics*,³ which was recorded in

Stockholm before a live audience and broadcast on *Expressen.se*. According to its Twitter account, @Barpol, the mission of Bar & Politics was “to put tough questions to leading politicians in live broadcasts.” The materials of this study, consist of 197 tweets and retweets published by Svensson during the time period 12–14 March 2014. This time period encompasses a broadcast of the Bar & Politics event, which took place a few months before the 2014 election in Sweden, and was extensively covered by Svensson (labeled “the j-tweeter” below) on Twitter under the hashtag #Barpol. The Bar & Politics broadcast was included in the studied time period as a “critical discourse moment” (Carvalho 2007, 226), with an assumed potential to trigger a variety of ways of constructing the journalist persona including the celebrified one. The analysis is, however, not restricted to the Bar & Politics broadcast, but also includes the more general tweeting activities of Svensson (see also Olausson 2017).

As noted and discussed elsewhere (Olausson 2017), selecting the most widely followed journalists as study objects has been criticized by several scholars for being atypical, i.e. for forming bodies of empirical data that are not representative of the majority of journalists (Hermida 2013; Lasorsa, Lewis and Holton 2012). However, when studying social change of whatever kind, this type of representativity is not always required or even desirable. Discourse works in both conventional, socially reproductive ways, and creative, socially transformative ways, and it is an important mission of CDA to capture its dual implications (Fairclough 1993). This means that embryonic discursive transformations, atypical of the larger population, give us important clues about what is going on in a certain social practice and what direction a process might take, i.e. what journalism might become (Olausson 2010; 2014; 2017). Thus, the non-representative but *critical* case (Esaiaasson et al. 2012) of the present study will enable the identification of not only reproductive, but also transformative discursive mechanisms working towards a “journalism /.../ breaking with classic narrative structures and deviating from long-held and fiercely defended norms” (Hermida 2013, 306).

As for the generalizability of the results, the study does not attempt to contribute general knowledge about journalistic self-promotion in a statistical sense. If that was the aim, the quantity of investigated journalists and the number of tweets would have been important methodological issues to address. Instead, the generality of the results should be viewed in theoretical terms as contributing to the understanding of how journalistic self-promotion discourses that are evolving in the digitized media setting are constituted.

Obviously, the study’s focus on journalistic self-promotion does not preclude the existence of other and more reproductive discursive practices in the j-tweeter’s Twitter feed during the studied time period. J-tweeters make use of a variety of discourses that do not necessarily – even if they sometimes seem contradictory – exclude each other (Olausson 2017). This means that emerging journalistic discourses such as those related to self-promotion are not inevitably replacing conventional ones; it is quite likely that the j-tweeter, for instance, both makes use of the discourses and genres associated with traditional journalistic identity and discursively constructs a celebrified persona, although this duality is not the focus of the present study.

When it comes to qualitative analysis of social media, there are always ethical issues to take into consideration such as whether or not to reveal users’ identities. In the present study, the factual usernames are displayed in line with the criteria put forward by Marwick and boyd (2011: 143), namely that the analyzed tweets are published in the public domain and also are searchable on Twitter.

Results

This section presents the analysis of journalistic self-promotion and branding through constructions of celebrity. It is thematically structured around the central findings, celebrity constructions through (1) “fame by association,” (2) asymmetrical communication, and (3) “lifestreaming.” When these three celebrification modes are clustered together in an integrated analysis, the celebrified journalist appears quite distinctly.

Constructing Celebrity through “Fame by Association”

Selfies have become a significant phenomenon in the digitized media landscape, and constitute, as noted by Busetta and Coladonato (2015, 1) “notable example(s) of how the interaction between social networking and recent forms of visual self-representation is reshaping traditional notions such as privacy and celebrity.” Offering an instant opportunity to construct a marketable star image, the selfie has become a widespread tool for branding and self-promotion (Koliska and Roberts 2015; Wright 2015), and is probably the latest way of “*crafting the self*” through the use of digital technology (Farci and Orefice 2015, italics in original).

The celebrity group-selfie, which has gained momentum in the digital age, includes multiple participants and constitutes a particular form of the ordinary selfie (Jerslev and Mortensen 2015). In this type of selfie, photographers not only present intimate and authentic images of *themselves* to the world, but they also present themselves *in relation* to a particular group of other people (Wright 2015). Thus, the celebrity group-selfie is all about the (re)presentation of strong social relations to (other) famous people (Jerslev and Mortensen 2015), where the participants are either “borrowing” worth, status, and cultural capital from other participants with greater fame, or “lending” these elements to participants with lesser fame (Wright 2015).

Through a humorous and playful style that paves the way for personalized, informal and popular discourses and genres, the j-tweeter studied here constructs celebrity through “fame by association” (Bull 2010, 177, cited in Wright 2015) in group-selfies. In one of these, taken at the Bar & Politics-event (Figure 1), he depicts himself together with, and on the same side as, the then leaders of the four political parties constituting the “Alliance for Sweden”: Fredrik Reinfeldt (then Prime Minister and leader of the center-right Moderate Party), Annie Lööf (then Minister for Enterprise and leader of the Center Party), Göran Hägglund (then Minister for Social Affairs and leader of the Christian Democrats), and Jan Björklund (then Minister for Education and Science and leader of the Liberal People’s Party).

Figure 1: Fame by association: Photo 1



In slightly different versions, this particular group-selfie came to flood the j-tweeter's Twitter feed during the investigated period. Here, professional journalistic discourses rooted in the ideal of detachment from the people under scrutiny, i.e. the four party leaders, are exchanged for informal and semi-private ones. The image with its happy smiles indicates friendship and having a cozy time together, thereby instantaneously dissolving the genre boundaries between journalistic interrogation and friendly small-talk. This discursive re-organization is realized not least through the humorous style permeating the image: the Minister for Education and Science, Jan Björklund, who was blinking at the moment the picture was shot; the rather awkward position of the Prime Minister, Fredrik Reinfeldt, who is half blocked by the j-tweeter; and the j-tweeter himself, who seems very happy with the situation, laughing unreservedly (cf. Olausson 2017). As noted by Jerslev and Mortensen (2015), the kind of group-selfie in which celebrity is constructed seldom offers new, substantial information, but focuses on the fun, social, exciting and glamorous aspects of the event in order to nurture the relationship with "fans."

Apparently, this appropriation of popular discourse by journalistic discourse does not constitute a professional dilemma to the j-tweeter being studied. On the contrary he republishes said group-selfie (Figure 1) together with a tweet voicing his thoughts about using the selfie as his background picture on Twitter. The shift to a genre that to a large extent resembles the colloquial – seemingly inviting followers to respond – is evident:

New background image for my phone. Or maybe not. [#val2014](http://instagram.com/p/lfioSYApnY/#val2014) #Barpol 14 Mar 2014 (posted by @niklassvensson)

Figure 2 is another version of the group-selfie analyzed above, where the main components are the same but the quality, in terms of image sharpness, is noticeably worse. The seemingly unrehearsed presentation of the j-tweeter and the four party leaders together with the blurred focus amplify the impression of authenticity – a key element of celebrity discourse – and contribute to undermining the discourse boundaries between public and private, journalism and entertainment. The informal and cheerful style established in the

image is further underscored by the accompanying tweet, which informs readers about a “fun evening.”

Figure 2

Fame by association: Photo 2



Found a couple more pictures in my phone now. We're talking about #selfie and #barpol. Fun evening. <http://instagram.com/p/lgCfn-gpn7/> 13 Mar 2014 (posted by @niklassvensson)

The turn from professional to popular discourse is further augmented when, as an extension of the selfie-event (Wright 2015), *Expressen.se* ascribes the very moment in which the group-selfie was shot (Figure 3) the importance of a news event in and by itself. When linking to this article, the j-tweeter adds to the humorous style established in the article's headline "Selfie-chaos: Won't you join us, Fredrik – see the party leaders' (and host's) worst picture ever" by tweeting "It wasn't that bad, was it?":

Figure 3

Fame by association: Photo 3



It wasn't that bad, was it? <http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/barpol/#barpol> 14 Mar 2014
(posted by @niklassvensson)

The j-tweeter also publishes another image capturing the actual moment of the group-selfie's creation (Figure 4) – a kind of meta-photo that reveals elements that could have been excluded from the group-selfie itself (Wright 2015). The spectator is thereby offered further proof of authenticity: that the selfie actually displays the “truth” and is as free from staging as it aspires to be. The textual tweet, where the j-tweeter in a humorous and informal style announces a competition for “funniest picture,” further adds to the manifestation of popular discourse and the reorganization of conventional journalistic genres towards informal small-talk with an imagined spectatorship or “fans.”

Figure 4

Fame by association: Photo 4



Who took the funniest #Barpol-picture when I took my #selfie? This one probably qualifies.
(posted by @niklassvensson) 13 Mar 2014

As proposed by Jerslev and Mortensen (2015), this type of visual communication, which aims to simply show off, invites users to share, comment on and like the images. In this case, the playful and informal style is also present when the j-tweeter's followers confirm their involvement by sharing various images of the selfie-event, as shown in the examples below. Arguably, the entire event builds on the j-tweeter and his followers' shared understanding that the seemingly desirable and actively pursued popular discourse can be found in this pleasant and cozy "middle ground" (Collings 2015, 512). As it seems, people experience a sense of belonging through the selfie by being in on the joke, together with the celebrity practitioner (Collings 2015).

Stylish selfie "@niklassvensson: @ErikCarlsson" 13 Mar 2014 (posted by @Ulrikamj69 with Figure 1)

Use this as a header or cover image!! @niklassvensson @annieloof 13 Mar 2014 (posted by @Gustavahlen with Figure 1)

Got lost driving in Bredäng and missed ONE #barpol. And then this happened. 14 Mar 2014 (posted by @ribbefjorden with Figure 2)

According to Molyneux (2015), journalists often retweet messages about themselves as part of building a personal brand, and the j-tweeter engages in such a process, for example by retweeting the above tweets. This contributes to further destabilizing conventional journalistic genres and discourses that build on the professional ideal of detachment from the people under scrutiny and the use of neutral language.

In sum, appearing in a group-selfie together with people with pre-existing fame provides access to the "star firmament, increasing and/or demonstrating one's social and cultural capital and, in turn, one's economic value within the symbolic economy" (Wright 2015). By using the group-selfie as a self-promotional tool on Twitter, the j-tweeter constructs not only transparency and authenticity, which both are essential elements of celebrity discourse, but also a position for himself at the forefront in setting current media trends (Wright 2015). In the process of discursively constructing celebrity through "fame by association," the j-tweeter permits, in various ways, the conventional professional genres and discourses of journalism to collapse into popular entertainment genres, and its conventional formal and public styles to transform into the informal, humorous and dialogic styles characterizing the marketization of discourse.

Constructing Celebrity through Asymmetrical Communication

As shown above, the j-tweeter encourages conversation; i.e. he deploys a personalized discourse that invites responses and allows photos to be the starting-point for reactions and discussions. As Collings (2015) argues, selfies have the intrinsic potential to make the social media feed actually feel social, in that they give an impression of proximity and reciprocity. However, notwithstanding this discursive turn towards informal, humorous and, in several instances, dialogic styles that characterizes the selfie-event, the j-tweeter does not really engage in interaction with followers on this occasion.

As noted by Marwick and boyd (2011), though theoretically open to all, celebrity discourse, when it comes down to it, is not a democratizing discourse in which followers' voices are as important as the voice of the celebrity practitioner. In order to successfully construct celebrity, it is vital that "fans" recognize that the relationship is inherently asymmetrical, otherwise the celebrity practitioner "is famous only in his or her own mind" (Marwick and boyd 2011, 155). Consequently, the discursive construction of celebrity does *not* involve the many-to-many communicative pattern that the group-selfie analysis presented above might suggest (and that the communicative logic of Twitter permits). Instead, the interaction that accompanies the group-selfies is characterized by the traditional mass communicative logic of one-to-many, and reinforces a more conventional vertical relation between the celebrified journalist and his "fans" (Jerslev and Mortensen 2015; Marshall 2010; Marwick and boyd 2011; Page 2012; cf. Berglez 2016).

An illustrative example of this is when the j-tweeter directly and informally addresses the individual follower, "you"⁴ in the quotation below, with a request for questions to ask the party leaders of the Alliance:

What do you want me to ask the Alliance party leaders in #Barpol tonight? #val2014 #val14 #svpol 13 Mar 2014 (posted by @niklassvensson)

This particular tweet garnered more than 30 replies from various followers, some of whom acknowledged by the j-tweeter with a "like." However, the one comment he replies to – in the exemplary informal style by ending the tweet with a smiley – is a suggestion from a political commentator on Swedish Radio, i.e. a nationally famous (and widely followed) professional peer:

@niklassvensson How does it feel when center-right commentators describe the "reversal" and the increase in school funding as just election tactics? 13 Mar 2014 (posted by @TomasRamberg)
@TomasRamberg Thanks for the good question. Watch tonight's broadcast! :) 13 Mar 2014 (posted by @niklassvensson)

The j-tweeter also highlights this particular question from the political commentator at Swedish Radio in a subsequent tweet, when promoting the show after the broadcast:

Watch yesterday's #Barpol – when Fredrik Reinfeldt answers the question that @tomasramberg asked on twitter: <http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/barpol/> #val2014 14 Mar 2014 (posted by @niklassvensson)

Obviously, the scope of the present study does not allow for saying whether or not the j-tweeter asked the party leaders the questions suggested by his other followers. It is also beyond the reach of this study to determine if the j-tweeter in fact responds to followers' comments on other occasions, but if he does that would not really matter – celebrity is not practiced all the time and in every situation (cf. Olausson 2017). What is significant here, though, is that the one-way-communicative pattern prevails *despite* the obvious turn to personal and conversational discourse, i.e. the apparent invitation to two-way interaction. *Still* – and even more importantly – there seems to be room for interaction when the "right" people reply, who perhaps are people with the potential to contribute a certain amount of celebrity capital. In this process, it is likely that connections with professional peers, such as

displayed here, play a significant role in the ongoing work to produce and update the online self (Marshall 2010), and that is why the j-tweeter makes room for responding to their comments, though it would be a more effective way of handling the hectic situation to ignore them as well.

A similar phenomenon is visible when another media practitioner with a background at *Expressen*⁵ publishes a meta-photo (Figure 5) along with a tweet requesting that the j-tweeter post the actual selfie. The j-tweeter responds by doing precisely this (Figure 1), thereby establishing the playful and humorous style which then came to characterize the entire selfie-event. The dialogue continues, as shown in the quotation below, with a humoristic reply referring to Jan Björklund (here informally called “Janne”) who blinked at the moment the picture was shot.

Figure 5

Asymmetrical communication: Photo 1



@niklassvensson Good show! Now I demand to get to see the selfie. 13 Mar 2014 (posted by @ErikCarlsson)

@ErikCarlsson 13 Mar 2014 (posted by @niklassvensson with Figure 1)

@niklassvensson Haha, Janne needs some practice with selfies, I can see that. 13 Mar 2014 (posted by @ErikCarlsson)

What happens after this initial conversation, however, is that the interactive component ends; i.e. neither the j-tweeter nor @ErikCarlsson responds to the four subsequent comments from other followers in this particular thread.

What is shown here could be interpreted as an example of what Berglez (2016, 177) describes as a semi-private form of “backstage chatting” performed by a “Twitter elite” *in front of* their followers in an asymmetrical top-down manner. As suggested by Marwick and boyd (2011), Twitter allows for the public display of casual friendships; the humorous interactions and friendly small-talk appear to afford authentic glimpses of the people behind the personas and convey to “fans” a sense of belonging – of actually participating in the event. If this line of interpretation is correct, the one-to-many communicative logic which

characterizes celebrity discourse is complemented by another mode of mass communication, conceptualized by Berglez (2016) as *few-to-many*.

Another aspect of the asymmetrical logic of celebrification processes is that it prevents the marketization discourse that permeates the selfie-event from being seriously challenged. This is despite the fact that far from every commentator actually goes along with the humoristic style; several instead express criticism of a perceived lack of professional integrity on the part of the j-tweeter. The quotations below constitute a compilation of comments related to various versions of the group-selfie, which by their critical style could serve as invitations to revert to professional journalistic discourses (original tweets in italics).

#Alliance photo bombs @niklassvensson's selfie in #barpol 13 Mar 2014 (posted by @jonten359 with Figure 4)

@jonten359 @niklassvensson Is this appropriate? 13 Mar 2014 (posted by @Fiedeli92)

@Fiedeli92 Well it's a selfie, not a photo bomb. :) I'll leave it to others to judge how

professional it is, coming from a politics reporter. 13 Mar 2014 (posted by @jonten359)

@jonten359 Exactly. I was referring more to the politics reporter. Doesn't exactly convey credibility. 13 Mar 2014 (posted by @Fiedeli92)

Use this one as a header/cover image!! @niklassvensson @annieloof 13 Mar 2014 (posted by @Gustavahlen with Figure 1)

@Gustavahlen @niklassvensson @annieloof it's a bad sign when political journalists and politicians seem to enjoy each other's company so much... 13 Mar 2014 (posted by @Forfattartips)

HERE IT IS: The Alliance selfie from tonight's #barpol 13 Mar 2014 (posted by @Expressen with Figure 1)

"The press is not supposed to be cozy with the powerful" [English in original] RT @Expressen The Alliance selfie from tonight's #barpol. 13 Mar 2014 (posted by @ChrChristensen)

However, by refraining from responding to the comments that deviate from the informal and humorous style and instead adopt a critical tone, the j-tweeter dismisses the opportunity to return to conventional journalistic genres and discourses.

In sum, for the discursive construction of celebrity to succeed, it is of vital importance that an asymmetrical relation be maintained between the celebrified journalist and the ordinary tweeter. Through the humoristic style and personalized discourse, followers are invited to participate – are offered a stake in the event – an invitation that, however, is effectively neutralized through the one-to-many, or perhaps few-to-many, communicative logic which is distinctive of celebrity discourse.

Constructing Celebrity by "Lifestreaming"

When journalists use social media to disseminate information pertaining to them personally and not to their news organization, the individual becomes the brand, Bruns (2012) argues. By sharing glimpses of the private sphere the celebrity practitioner blur the line between themselves and "fans," as the branded self involves shaping and displaying not only their public appearance, but also to a large extent their daily lives (Jerslev and Mortensen 2015). This "public private self" (Marshall 2010, 44) is a result of the idea that fans hope to see the authentic and intimate in social media, i.e. something different from what is publicly available elsewhere. This in turn implies an increasingly blurred boundary between frontstage and backstage – between professional and private discourse (Collings 2015).

The celebrity practitioner's attempts to symbolically reduce distance and maintain social bonds with "fans" by mixing and merging professional and private discourses, corresponds well with the "lifestreaming" (Marwick and boyd 2011, 147) potential of social media in general and Twitter in particular (Molyneux and Holton 2015). Obviously, these kinds of lifestreaming-tweets are not intended to convey meaningful information (Marwick and boyd 2011); instead, the most active journalists on Twitter may write about "whatever strikes their fancy – including the mundane details of their day-to-day activities" (Larsosa, Lewis and Holton 2012, 249). Accordingly, the j-tweeter studied here does not hesitate to inform his followers about his private life when creating affiliations with followers and sustaining "digital intimacy" (Marwick and boyd 2011, 147; cf. Olausson 2017).

Such mixing of professional and private discourses is particularly visible in the example below. The tweet starts by referring to editorial work that the j-tweeter has just carried out, but in the next sentence the professional discourse is abandoned in favor of a private one, where he, in a casual style, mentions planning to meet someone who will help him fell a couple of trees in the yard of what presumably is his summer house.

Material for my Sunday spread submitted. Now off to Norrtälje to meet up with a tree feller. Pictures of chainsaw coming. 14 Mar 2014 (posted by @niklassvensson)

Visuals shared from Instagram reinforce the private discourse when illustrating the setting in which the trees are felled; one is a video showing the actual felling process accompanied by the tweet "There goes the oak. Instagram.com/p/lh6AAJgpmO/", and a second (Figure 6), consisting of two separate photos from the scene. These photos show the yard, "Before. And After." as put in the accompanying tweet.

Figure 5

Lifestreaming: Photo 1



Before. And After. Instagram.com/p/lh62JUApnm/ 14 Mar 2014 (posted by @niklassvensson)

Similarly, the j-tweeter shares photos from his Instagram account, as in the example below (Figure 7), which together with the tweet “Could definitely be worse off. Fire in the fireplace, South African in my glass – and Steffo on #letsdance” inform his followers about how he relaxes and spends his leisure time watching TV by the fireplace with a glass of wine. The colloquial style and references to cultural symbols that resonate well with the addressed spectatorship jointly work to strengthen the private discourse.

Figure 7

Lifestreaming: Photo 2



Could definitely be worse off. Fire in the fireplace, South African in my glass – and Steffo on #letsdance Instagram.com/p/liOtGagpi1/ 14 Mar 2014 (posted by @niklassvensson)

In this way, the j-tweeter constructs celebrity by appearing to offer a peek behind the curtain (Marwick and boyd 2011). This is even more evident in the more or less private comments and conversations with other people, which the j-tweeter lets his followers observe. Here, he makes use of the playful style and terminology of private discourse, such as “Dad”⁶ along with a smiley in the quotation below.

@Niklassvensson How’d it go with the hot water heater? 14 Mar 2014 (posted by @JorgenModig)
@JorgenModig Problem solved. Dad fixed it by telephone. :) 14 Mar 2014 (posted by @niklassvensson)

As it seems, the lifestreaming element of the construction of celebrity is characterized by an informal and often intimate style. This is also apparent in the quotations below, where the j-tweeter turns to the genre of everyday small-talk when directly addressing followers with observations and chitchat that do not carry any substantial information related to his

profession. Instead, he talks to them pretty much in the same way as he might talk to members of his family.

Time to turn out the light. Long day tomorrow. #Barpol. 12 Mar 2014 (posted by @niklassvensson)

Goodnight and sleep tight, wherever you are⁷. 12 Mar 2014 (posted by @niklassvensson)

To sum up, not only does the livestreaming mode of constructing celebrity involve a mixing of professional and private discourses and genres, but the intimate style results in a complete merging of the professional and private dimensions. When bringing his followers all the way into the discursive domains of the private, the j-tweeter takes the “synthetic personalization,” which according to Fairclough (1993) is distinctive of promotional discourse, to its completion.

Concluding Remarks

This study has shown that celebrity, not as an external label but in its constructionist sense as discursive processes of celebrification, is a vital ingredient in journalistic self-promotional discourses. As shown in numerous previous studies of journalists, it is the frequent users of social media who are the most likely to accept personal branding and blurring of the boundaries between professional and private discourses in social media (Bruns 2012; Dahmén Rogstad 2014; Hedman and Djerf-Pierre 2013; Holton 2012; Lasorsa, Lewis and Holton; Olausson 2017; Vis 2013). I would suggest that the ambition of j-tweeters to construct celebrity is closely linked with this. For instance, an important reason why the local news journalists in a study by Canter (2014) rarely revealed any personal information on Twitter is probably their lack of celebrity ambitions. Obviously, without such aspirations celebrification practices such as allowing followers a “peek behind the curtain” would appear redundant.

Among the active j-tweeters, the “borrowing” of celebrity discourse in the journalistic field, or, in discourse analytical terminology, its *recontextualization* (Fairclough 2009) could be viewed in two ways: on the one hand, as a colonization of the journalistic institution by the entertainment field; and on the other hand, as a strategy pursued by this particular group of journalists to appropriate the external discourse in the recontextualizing field (Fairclough 2009). It should be mentioned, however, that the construction of celebrity is not necessarily an intentional discursive practice. Self-promotion through practicing celebrity is one of many individualization movements in society, and is more generally embedded in wider trends, where self-promoting discourses themselves become commodities as forms of “searchable talk” (Page 2012, 182). In this way, the links between particular discursive practices such as engaging in few-to-many communication, within a certain social field such as journalism, and overarching structures of hegemony and power, may very well be invisible to the celebrified journalist. Thus, self-promotional discourses may function as ideology in the Gramscian sense, i.e. as naturalized taken-for-granted systems of thought (Fairclough 1993), which makes them all the more powerful. As already noted by Fairclough in 1993, it is increasingly difficult *not* to be involved in self-promotion, because it “is becoming part-and-parcel of self-identity” (p. 142).

Finally, there is reason to acknowledge once again (cf. Olausson 2017) the multi-skilled journalist’s ability to engage in cross-media production with simultaneous

connections to various social media such as Instagram and web-TV, as shown in the present study. If, as argued by Collings (2015), journalists are good at promoting themselves via linked or embedded media, the consistent use of tagging, and references to other social media, they can construct a coherent celebrified self across the web. Obviously, this is further facilitated if journalists, like the j-tweeter in the present case, also have instant access to the platforms of legacy media for their self-promotional activities.

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¹ cf. "process of celebritisation" (Turner 2010, 13).

² <http://www.twitterbarometern.se/>. Downloaded September 26, 2016.

³ In Swedish: "Bar & politik."

⁴ In Swedish: "Du," i.e. informal second-person singular.

⁵ Currently Director of social media issues at the tabloid *Aftonbladet*, according to his Twitter account (January 30, 2017).

⁶ In Swedish: "Pappsen," which is a highly informal expression.

⁷ Possibly a popular cultural reference to the TV-series "The Midnight Caller," popular in Sweden in the late 1980s.