UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

þÿ C h a r l i e   H e b d o ,   2 0 1 5 :   L i v e n e s s   a n d   a c c e l e r a t i
in a hybrid media event

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### *Charlie Hebdo*, 2015

### 'Liveness' and Acceleration of Conflict in a Hybrid Media Event

> It is difficult to speak about Time and we may leave it to philosophers to ponder the reasons. It is not difficult to show that we speak, fluently and profusely, through Time. Time, much like language or money, is a carrier of significance, a form through which we define the content of relations between the Self and the Other. (Fabian 1983/2014: xxxvii)

This citation from Johannes Fabian's seminal book *Time & The Other – How Anthropology Makes its Object* articulates what is at stake in this article – the significance of time in defining the relationship between 'us' and 'them' in today's global, violent and hybrid media events – the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks in Paris, 2015, being a case in point. In this article we examine the intensification of liveness and its effects in the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks. We argue that this intensification of 'real time' was constituted in the simultaneous circulation of messages in a variety of media platforms by a countless numbers of actors. This immediate and intensified circulation accelerated the conflict between the different participants that took part in the event, namely those who contributed to the event by sharing messages that associated with 'Je suis Charlie' (referring to the killed cartoonists) and those who posted messages to criticise the satirical newspaper and its politics of humour by creating and circulating counter-narratives of belongings around such symbolic expressions as 'Je ne suis pas Charlie' or 'Je suis Ahmed' (referring to a policeman who was killed in the raid) or even 'Je suis Kouachi' (first referring to the glorification of perpetrators and later their mocking).

In our investigation on liveness and the acceleration of conflict in *Charlie Hebdo* attacks we first re-visit the existing theoretical literature on media, event and time (see e.g. Sewell, 2005; Sonnevend, 2016; Wagner-Pacifici, 2017; Zelizer, 2018) and discuss in particular the relationship between media events and the idea of liveness (see e.g. Dayan and Katz, 1992; Ytreberg, 2017). We then move on to the empirical analysis of *Charlie Hebdo* attacks and demonstrate the

aspects of intensified liveness in circulation of selected tweets. The empirical analysis is based on a multi-method approach developed for the empirical study of hybrid media events (Anonymized et al., 2016). In this approach, digital media ethnography is complemented with computational social sciences, more specifically computational social network analytics (SNA) (Huhtamäki, Russell, Rubens and Still, 2015). The media material consists of Twitter data as well as additional media material collected on online international news media and other social networking sites. Although we fully acknowledge that Twitter is only one platform in *Charlie Hebdo* attacks as a media event, we state that it played a key role as a prominent platform during the unfolding of the attacks, through which information, images, videos, and links about the incident were circulated (see also Smyrmaios and Ratinaud, 2017; Giglietto and Lee, 2017).

In this article we apply the concept of hybrid media event in discussion of *Charlie Hebdo* attacks and refer to the type of media event typically created in the digital media, in which professional media actors, news media and ordinary social media actors alike contribute to the 'live making and sharing' of the event (see e.g. Anonymized et al., 2016; Vaccari et al., 2015). This making and sharing takes place simultaneously in a variety of digital media platforms and by various types of actors: professional media organizations, politicians, and anybody with access to social media. Hybridity in contemporary media events entail intertwining logics of professional and social media (Chadwick 2013), and expansion of events to global or at least transnational scale (Anonymized et al., 2018). Hybrid media events take place in a certain location, in this case Paris, France, but through the hybrid media environment immediately expand the national context and address audiences well beyond any national borders. Furthermore, hybrid media events may serve both the ceremonial and disruptive function. This is in contrast to the classical media event literature in which ceremoniality was given primary emphasis and the discussion on disruptive media events emerged only as a critique against the strong focus on ceremoniality and social cohesion (see e.g. Couldry, 2003). In the most recent theorizing on hybrid media events, events are seen simultaneously to enforce social cohesion among certain groups of participants, while bringing about disruption in other groups, as well as building contradictions among groups

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(Anonymized et al., 2018, 2016; Chadwick, 2013; Vaccari et al., 2015; Sonnevend 2016). Hybridity here, thus, refers not only to the properties of the media environment where meaning-making takes place, but also to the features of communication between different actors, technologies and messages and their outcomes in a media event (Anonymized et al., 2018). In other words, in a hybrid media environment the technological environment, relationships between actors as well as usage practices are hybridized, and the scope expands beyond national borders.

**Shootings in the editorial office**

The *Charlie Hebdo* attacks went off at 11:30 on the morning of January 7, 2015. On that Wednesday, French-Algerian brothers Saïd and Chérif Kouachi attacked the headquarters of the satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*, killing twelve people in the massacre. After the attack in the editorial office, the Kouachi brothers returned to their car and exchanged fire with the police officer Ahmed Merabet who was blocking their escape route. Few minutes later, they executed the injured police officer, Ahmed Merabet, at point-blank range. The killing of Merabet was documented by an accidental witness, who then posted the video on Facebook. It immediately went viral and, although the video was later removed from Facebook. Soon the newsrooms all over the world began to follow the massive manhunt after the Kouachi brothers managed to flee north out of Paris.

In the evening, tens of thousands of people took to the streets around Europe and the world to show their solidarity with those killed by the gunmen. Slogan and meme 'Je suis Charlie' became the most prominent symbol of the event. Millions of people tweeted it, posted it on their Facebook pages or Twitter feeds. In addition, news media published a rich variation of photo shoots in which people were gathering together on the streets and squares of Paris and elsewhere in France and the world and held placards saying 'Je suis Charlie'.

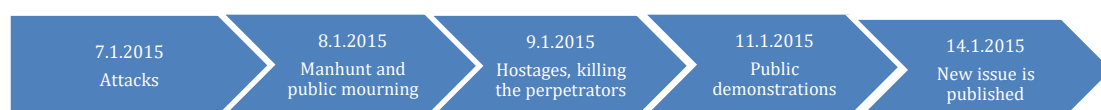| 7.1.2015 Attacks | 8.1.2015 Manhunt and public mourning | 9.1.2015 Hostages, killing the perpetrators | 11.1.2015 Public demonstrations | 14.1.2015 New issue is published |

Figure 1: Timeline and key incidents of the media event

On the following day, Thursday January 8, the attackers continued their escape, and thousands of security personnel were deployed to comb the area, approximately 90 kilometres away from Paris, where the two men were last seen. Meanwhile, in Paris, reports emerged that a policewoman had been shot and killed, but the link with the *Charlie Hebdo* attack was not immediately established. On Friday, January 9, police located the attackers in the area of Dammartin-en-Goele. The brothers were chased into an industrial complex 35 kilometres from Paris where they seized a printing works and took a hostage. In east Paris, at around 12:30 p.m., a third gunman, Amedy Coulibaly, seized a Jewish supermarket, killed four people and took hostages. It emerged that Coulibaly was responsible for the killing of the Paris policewoman Clarissa Jean-Philippe the day before. In his phone call to the French TV station BFM-TV, Coulibaly stated that his attack was synchronised with the attacks of the Kouachi brothers and that they belonged to the same group of terrorists. He also threatened to kill his hostages unless the Kouachi brothers were allowed to go free. After several hours of a hostage situation, the police special forces stormed the market and killed Coulibaly. The Kouachi brothers were also killed by the special forces on the same day.

The next peak took place on 11th of January when world leaders and people in France gathered in the streets to demonstrate the values of liberty and freedom of expression. These marches gained massive levels of visibility on the media platforms of professional and social media. The attacks escalated with the publication of a new issue of *Charlie Hebdo*; the cover featured an image of the Prophet Muhammad holding a slogan, 'Je suis Charlie', with the title 'Tout est pardonne' (all is forgiven). This number sold almost eight million copies. As the regular circulation of *Charlie Hebdo* is around 60,000, the publication of this issue became a media event in itself.

**Time, Media and Event**

In analyzing the issue of temporality in the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, it is necessary to acknowledge that the time of the course of events and the time of the media

event is never identical. Furthermore, very few occurrences in the world are transformed into media events. Philosopher Alain Badiou (2005) argues that there is an element of uniqueness and singularity in an event that breaks the ordinary flow of occurrences and incidents. Thus, we argue that the element of uniqueness (however socially constructed) is a necessary condition for an incident, or series of incidents to become a media event (see also Dayan and Katz, 1992). In that case occurrences may cohere into a media event that can be categorized, located in time and space, and given a name (cf. Wagner-Pacifici, 2017: 1). What is more, this transformation does not take place in itself, it requires transcript actions by various actors in the media, which as aforementioned, in hybrid media environment consist both of the news media and the social media, professional and ordinary media users, and is best described by the complex interplay between the different actors, messages and platforms (Anonymized et al., 2018).

The process of transforming unique incidents or occurrences into a media event is always a process that consist beginnings, middles, and ends. Media events include time horizons and, time lines (such as past, present, and future) (cf. Wagner-Pacifici 2017: 5). Importantly enough, these temporalities often exist simultaneously, hence, we should not assume any simple linear understanding of temporality in narrativizing events.

When it comes to the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks one may immediately note several narrative story lines activated as the incidents unfolded on the 7th of January (cf. Lefébure and Sécail, 2016). We may identify the story line that followed the perpetrators' actions, the manhunt, the police executing the killers, public demonstrations on January 11 and the publication of the memory issue of the *Charlie Hebdo* magazine on January 14, with immediate reactions. Furthermore, to analyze the actions within the framework of media event theory, a narrative structure with a beginning, a high point and an end is assumed (Dayan and Katz, 1992). In this construction, we claim that the media event begins with the attack against the *Charlie Hebdo* headquarters, climaxes in the public demonstrations in which world leaders march together in Paris and ends with the publication of the Charlie Hebdo 'survival issue', the first issue after the attacks. Many things happened between the beginning and the end, and it is a

matter of journalistic, audience, social media users as well as scholarly choice (!), which of these incidents are included in the narrative of the media event.

The killings in the Jewish supermarket provide an example. They were not immediately included in the news media in the prominent media narrative constructed around the incidents following the massacre at the *Charlie Hebdo* headquarters. This is perhaps because it was first unclear whether the killers had coordinated their actions at the *Charlie Hebdo* headquarters and the supermarket. It was only when Coulibaly, the perpetrator in the Jewish supermarket incident, announced that his attacks were supporting the Kouachi brothers that the connection became explicit. Yet, there was widely shared unbelief in the truth-value of Coulibaly's statement. The same type of narrative puzzlement also appeared in relation to the Jewish victims. The issue of who counts as a legitimate victim, and thus subject to public mourning, was disputed in professional media and circulated in Twitter. In the case of the *Charlie Hebdo* magazine – the cartoonists were given the most visibility, leaving less attention to those who were killed in the assault (e.g. the cleaner). In addition to the cartoonists, the second most publically addressed death was that of a Muslim police officer, Ahmed Merabet, while much less visibility was given to the death of the bodyguards killed at the headquarters and the female police officer Clarissa Jean-Philippe killed by Coulibaly. Moreover, the Jewish victims killed in the supermarket assault were given much less attention in the global media narrative constructed around 'Je suis Charlie' than the cartoonists.

Put it short, not only do we have to acknowledge that the time of the incident in *Charlie Hebdo* attacks and the time of *Charlie Hebdo* as a media event is not the same, but also the narrative elements in *Charlie Hebdo* as media event is constructed and always a product of a complex process of selecting and disregarding of incidents. This selection process is desynchronized, taking place while the events unfold, but also afterwards, when the event is remembered and commemorated. The desynchronization of the process is strengthened by the hybrid media environment, as rumours and speculations are mingled with eyewitness accounts and professionally produced news reports sometimes also circulating unconfirmed and false information. The partially accidental narrativizing of the event takes place 'on the go', but also afterwards, in analysis,

commemoration and remembering of events. In Sonnevend's (2016) terms, at this point the timeline of the event has become part of the narrative and mythologization of the event.

**Liveness in Media Events**

One of the central debates in theorizing media events more broadly has to do with the element of time and in particular *liveness.* In the original media event theory developed by Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz (1992), liveness is a defining feature of media events and has implications for the power of media in society. The element of liveness underlines the fact that events are transmitted in 'real time', as they occur. The condition of liveness is created by broadcast technology, and thus, it is also rooted in the technological framework of the time, dominated first by radio and later television broadcasting (see e.g. Ellis, 2000). In his book *Television and the meaning of live* media historian Paddy Scannell (2014) explains the fundamental relevance of 'live' as follows:

> The meaning of 'live', then, concerns what it is to be alive and this question is raised, in our kind of world, in relation to technologies for the transmission and recoding of events and performance as they happen 'live and in real time and the experience of this. To enquire into the meaning of 'live' is to be drawn perforce into a consideration of the essence (the essential meaning) of radio and television both of which began as live *broadcast* media. (Scannell, 2014: 43, emphasis in original).

Furthermore, in the vocabulary of Sylvie Agacinski (2003) we have moved into the time of the media. In this media time, "we experience the liveness of broadcasting in the immediate now of the particular program" (Scannell, 2014: 45). This experience is intensified in media events:

> Collective attention is monopolized by and focused on the event, which is covered by television *en direct*, live and in real time as it really happens. The time of the event, the time of television and my-times of countless

viewers all converge in the experimental, living enunciatory now of the event as it unfolds in a shared, common public time (Scannell, 2014: 178, emphasis in original).

One of the main critiques of Dayan and Katz's approach to media events is their claimed anachronism and unwillingness to discuss the broader frames embedded in the experience of liveness in media events. Barbie Zelizer (2018) discusses 'mnemonic schemes', temporal frameworks of interpretation that guide the ways in which media events are produced as well as made sense of in 'real time'. Julia Sonnevend (2016) adds another important dimension in providing a time-sensitive narrative approach to the analysis of media events. She identifies five key features in making, what she calls iconic global events: 1) foundation: the narrative prerequisites of events; 2) mythologization: the development of resonant message and elevated language in the event; 3) condensation: encapsulation of event in a simple short narrative, and a recognizable visual scene; 4) counter-narration: stories that go against the prominent event narrative; and 5) remediation: the event's ability to travel across multiple media platforms and changing social and political contexts (Sonnevend 2016: 3).

To follow Zelizer (2018) and Sonnevend (2016) we claim that while in the present condition the live streaming of digital media has intensified the sense of liveness in hybrid media events, it has not taken away the temporality of frames and schemes applied to make those events and interpret them as part of the live experience (cf. Jordheim, 2012; Koselleck, 1985; Ytreberg, 2017).

In her analysis on terrorism and the media, Agnieszka Stepinska (2010) points out that the perpetrators of 9/11 responded to the new timing of newsrooms in order to maximize the damage and attention. Instead of planning the attacks to fit the traditional deadline logic of journalism, this terror event was planned to suit the logic of continuously updating online journalism (see also Niemeyer, 2010). The 9/11 attacks took place in the United States in the morning, which meant it was already afternoon in Europe, and evening in Asia and Australia (Stepinska, 2010: 210). This carefully planned timing made it possible for the whole world to watch the terror event as unfolding on the

screens, even though people lived in different time zones. This created, for a moment, a global audience – 'us' sharing the history – at the very same moment. Stepinska argues for a correlation between the timing, the feeling of unity and the sense of togetherness experienced around the event in its very first moments. Countries such as France, Germany, Syria and Iran, which have traditionally criticised the United States for its political actions, especially in foreign politics, had now joined in to offer sympathy for the wounded America. This belonging and togetherness was expressed in France's *Le Monde* in the statement 'We are all Americans'. The moment did not last very long, and the consensus began to dissolve just days following the attacks. As the shock began to fade, new narratives evolved, and the respective societies returned to their old positions (Stepinska, 2010: 213-214). Stepinska's example from 9/11 is illuminating because it shows how the liveness of disruptive media events may produce social cohesion, if only to be realized in an ephemeral moment.

Andrew Hoskins' analysis of disruptive media events offers a more sceptical reading than that of Stepinska. Hoskins (2004) pays attention to the 'real time lens' through which media events are mediated and its implications to the memory of past events. According to Hoskins (2004) the live coverage of media events contributes to the shaping of the *past* in the event by continuously producing and circulating new images of the events. This, Hoskins claims, collapses the memory associated with the given event. These new structures of temporality connected with new digital media technologies and related possibilities to visualize those events, transform our experience of the past. Media operate a 'framework' of memory by continuously assisting the reconstruction of our past and dominating the visual image of the present. Media can create and recreate the past by using powerful visual images, thus enabling the recollection of a process that is, today, media-afflicted. The scattered, mobile, simultaneous and voluminous live coverage of media events produces 'fog' that collapses memory. For Hoskins, 'fascination in and with the present does not translate into understanding of the past' (Hoskins, 2004: 123). As a result of the emerging structures of mediated temporality, even the most documented events in history rapidly fade away from collective memory. In the contemporary media environment, stories, images and visuals about the event become media

narratives and mythologized points to remember. In other words, they are building blocks of the mnemonic schemes that activate as interpretative frameworks in later resembling events. This was true for the 'Je suis Charlie' meme as it circulated in countless variations in later events.

In what follows, we focus our analysis of temporality by examining, in particular, the aspects of liveness and narrativity in the case of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks. We follow here Sonnevend's (2016) work on the narrative dimensions of global iconic events and apply it in analysing the liveness of the hashtags. We investigate the temporal dynamics between the three key hashtags (#jesuischarlie, #jenesuispascharlie, #jesuisahmed) that began to circulate on Twitter immediately after the killings began in Paris. Finally, we discuss the effects and consequences of liveness and the immediate interpretations that take place 'on the go'.

**On method and material**

Our analysis is based on a multi-method approach developed for the empirical study of hybrid media events (Anonymized et al., 2018, 2016). In this approach, computational social science—more specifically, a combination of automated content analysis (ACA) (Boumans and Trilling, 2016) and computational social network analytics (SNA) (Huhtamäki et al., 2015)—is used in concert with a qualitative approach— specifically, digital media ethnography. A combination of the qualitative approach and digital media ethnography is applied to provide a more nuanced, in-depth interpretation of what content is circulating and when, and how this material connects with the 'where' in the digital landscape, hence constituting temporal as well as spatial links and connections in the hybrid media event (Anonymized et al., 2018).

The analysis consisted of three interconnected phases: 1) Digital media ethnography collected during the time of the event provided the first outline of the event; 2) Automated content analysis and social network analytics carried out with the quantitative media data constructed the digital field for research; 3) Digital media ethnography provided an in-depth interpretation of what content was circulating and how this material connected with the 'where' in the digital media platform, hence constituting links and connections in the digital media

necessary for the social meaning making of the event (see also Anonymized et al., 2016: 8). The practices of fieldwork consisted of participating in the digital media platforms and tracing how actors, audiences, texts, images and posts travel from one platform and context (starting from Twitter) to another; identifying those repetitive patterns of symbolic communication and detecting the social encounters created in these digital activities.

The digital data consists of 5,159,097 tweets, in which 28.83% were original tweet posts and 71,17 % were "engagements", which refers here to re-tweets and/or comments. The keywords used to collect data were: *je suis Charlie*, *je suis ahmed*, *je ne suis pas Charlie*, *#jesuischarlie*, *#jesuisahmed*, *#jenesuispascharlie*, and the languages included in selecting the data were French, English, and Arabic. The empirical material collected covers the time period between 7 January – 16 January 2015, which marks the time frame between the beginning of the attacks at the *Charlie Hebdo* headquarters on the 7th of January to two days after the publication of the new Charlie Hebdo issue (which took place on 14th of January). The Twitter data is complemented with other media materials such as online news by prominent media houses, including the BBC, CNN, *Independent*, *The Guardian*, *Daily Mail*, *The New York Times*, *Le Monde*, *Libération, Le Figaro* and *Aljazeera English*.

Twitter offers a fruitful context for the study of hybrid media events. First, in contrast to Facebook, Twitter provides an application programming interface (API) that allows access to the majority of the data published through the service (cf. Vis, 2013). Second, although we fully acknowledge that Twitter is only one platform in the hybrid media event, we state that it played a key role as a prominent stage during the unfolding of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, through which information, images, videos and links about the incident were circulated. Third, Twitter has become a key platform for breaking news, and therefore, events that draw attention tend to surface on the platform. Finally, Twitter offers rich data that also sheds light on other forms of media. Several media organisations, politicians and authorities use Twitter, and the content and actors from other media platforms are also present through a hypermedia chain (cf. Kraidy and Mourad, 2010).

***Liveness: the acceleration of tweets***

**'I am'**

Only some twenty minutes after the *Charlie Hebdo* massacre had started at 11:30 a.m., French time, the French journalist and artist following the news in the media, Joachim Roncin from *Stylist Magazine* decided to comment on the news by declaring a visual slogan or meme 'Je suis Charlie' on Twitter. The message of the image turned immediately into a hashtag that flamed globally, and became the most re-tweeted message in the history of Twitter at the time. According to the BBC news (3. Jan 2016) it was used 1.5 million times on the day of its publication and about six million times over the next week on Twitter, as well as Instagram and Facebook.

However, the slogan 'Je suis Charlie' was not born in a void. As Sonnevend (2016) suggests, in order for something to become an event, it needs to have a foundation and narrative prerequisites. The phrase 'I am' has a long history in expressing solidarity and support. One of the most famous versions of it appeared in the speech of President John F. Kennedy in June 1963, when he wanted to emphasize the support of United States to West Berlin during the Cold War by saying *Ich bin ein Berliner* – I am Berliner. Another well-known version of the slogan appeared after 9/11, in 2001, when French newspaper *Le Monde* declared in a headline on the first page of its September 12 edition *Nous sommes tous américains* - We are all Americans. Ten years later, in 2011, an adaptation of the phrase was in the use of Occupy Movement that was against social and economic inequality.  In this case the slogan was turned into *We are the 99%*, referring to statistic where 1% represents the wealthiest people in society. Thus the slogan denoted solidarity to those 'rest' who were paying for the mistakes of the wealthiest percent during the economic crisis. The latter half of the slogan, *Charlie* for one, refers straightforwardly to Charlie Hebdo magazine and it's editorial staff, that the attack was aimed. However, it has its own narrative foundations as well. Editorial offices have been under a threat of violence previously after publishing similar type of Muhammed caricatures that appeared several times on Charlie Hebdo. Perhaps the most noteworthy case has been the *Jyllands Posten* that received threats after publishing the Mohammed caricatures

in 2005. The conflict around *Jyllands Posten* and the cartoons swirled about for a long time causing riots and violent protests on a transnational scale (Eide et al., 2008). Against this backdrop it is easy to see that the slogan *Je suis Charlie* has its historical roots in several narratives that resonate in people's minds at the moment of a conflict.

The temporality associated with the hashtag had multiple layers that were escalated by its narrative dimensions. The visual scene of the slogan consisting on black, grey and white elements encapsulated the event in a recognizable visual scene (cf. Sonnevend, 2016). The word 'Charlie' is written on the same font as on the cover of *Charlie Hebdo* magazine. The black square background offers references to death, funerals and mourning. The combination of the content and its visual representation condensates the event in a short simple narrative as it manages to tell simultaneously about violence and support. The visual slogan can be seen both as an obituary notice of *Charlie Hebdo* and a message of solidarity for *Charlie Hebdo*.

The aspects of the slogan invite different actors to remediate it, and consequently enhance the event's ability to travel across multiple media platforms (cf. Sonnevend, 2016). As the slogan 'Je suis Charlie' appears simultaneously as a content, as a visual image and as a technology-driven property, and a hashtag, it has enormous ability to travel across multiple media platforms. As content, 'Je suis Charlie' offered an easy message to take part, in order to publicly react to the attack. Furthermore, as a clear and effective black and white image, it is visually catchy and easy to reshape and reproduce. The visual representation of 'Je suis Charlie' disseminated and circulated in several forms. In the pictures and videos taken from the demonstrations on Wednesday and Sunday evening, we can see people holding up self-made 'Je suis Charlie' signs and smartphones of which screens the text glows. Another example is the viral photograph from the Agence-France Presse (AFP) office where the journalists are holding A4 prints, with 'Je suis Charlie' visual slogan. Different versions of these images and videos showing people holding the slogan, taken both by professionals and amateurs, appeared again and again in the print and online publications of mainstream media as well as on myriad of social media platforms. Moreover, the visual appearance of 'Je suis Charlie' inspired several

cartoonists and artists to create their own versions of it, that started to circulate in news media and popular culture. For example, the famous American animation *The Simpsons* aired a tribute to *Charlie Hebdo* victims where one of the characters, Maggie, appeared holding a black flag with words 'Je suis Charlie'. All these different means of communicating the narrative 'Je suis Charlie' in the digital media condensed a mythology of Western community who unitedly defends its shared values of freedom of speech and expression.

Finally, besides of the slogan's captivating content and visual appearance, it was its property as a hashtag that ultimately guaranteed its rapid remediation on social networks. It is no exaggeration to say that the liveness effect (to follow Scannell's 2014 insight) in the case of #jesuischarlie, had a global appeal. Hashtag is one of the most emblematic properties of current media environment, and it is in use of social media giants such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. An illustrative visualisation of this global appeal is a Twitter heat map created by Simon Rogers. It visualizes the temporal and spatial distribution of #jesuischarlie during the first two days of the attacks (7-8 Jan., 2015)[1]. The basis of the animation is a world map where the #jesuischarlie tweets are shown as lights.  At first there are few lights in France and its neighbouring countries, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Netherlands and United Kingdom as well east and west coasts in United States. However, only after few hours entire Europe, United States, capital area of Canada, Latin America, east coast of Brazil, South Africa, India, Japan, Australian Capital Territory and New Zealand are flashing white light stating #jesuischarlie. Simultaneously, the map illustrates how certain areas, such as Middle East, remain mainly dark.

These aspects pushed 'Je suis Charlie' into remediation and circulation simultaneously through multiple time zones. This means that both the professional news media and ordinary media users could participate in this hybrid global media event by tweeting and posting the slogan. The countless variations of hashtags, memes and images began to circulate in the global news media as well as social media.  This intensified the aspect of liveness in the media event, as it seemed that the 'whole world' was reacting to the killings

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[1] https://srogers.carto.com/viz/123be814-96bb-11e4-aec1-0e9d821ea90d/embed_map
(accessed Feb. 4, 2019)

simultaneously at countless media-saturated spaces and platforms. The intensified experience of 'here and now' in the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks and related narrativization offered numerous possibilities for global publics to perform a sense of connectivity and belonging in the immediate aftermath of the killings.

Our data shows (figure 2) that the first peak in #jesuischarlie appeared immediately after the first release of Roncin's meme. The second peak took place during and after the January 11 demonstrations in which many world leaders gathered in the streets of Paris to show solidarity with the victims of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks. Thereafter, the number of tweets decreased dramatically.
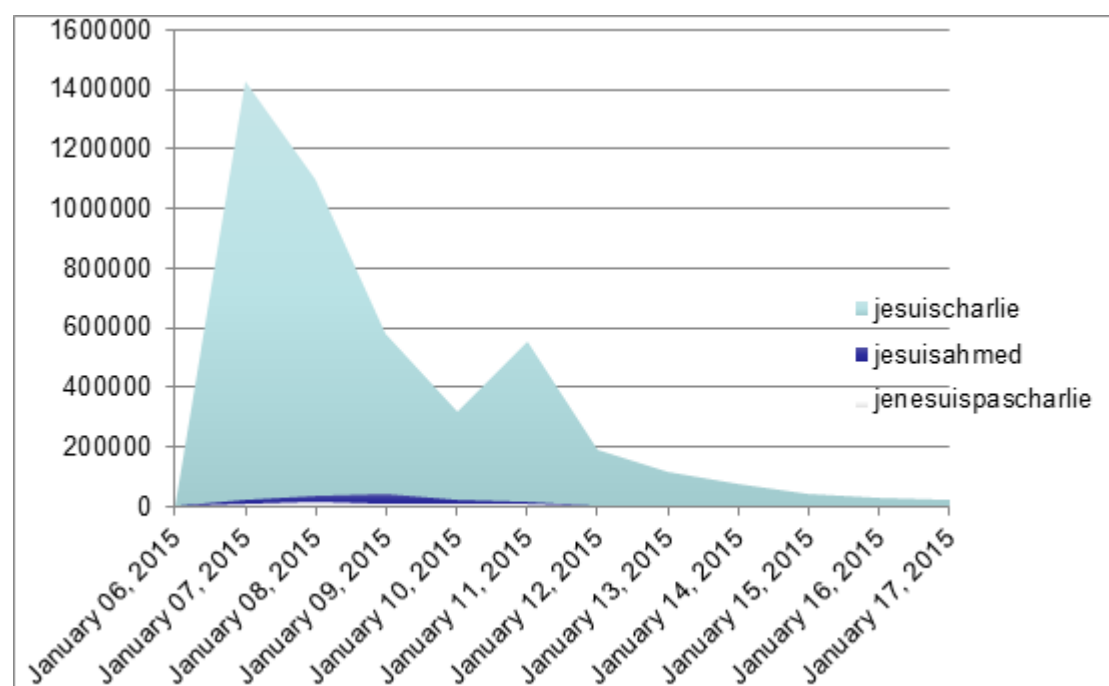


Figure 2. Amount of the hashtags #jesuischarlie, #jenesuispascharlie and #jesuisahmed

As the figure 2 indicates, #jesuischarlie emerged almost immediately after the first news of the attack. This was confirmed by Joachim Roncin in an interview by the BBC on 3 January 2016 on the eve of the first anniversary of the attacks. In the interview, Roncin discusses his motivation and the social dimension associated with his tweet:

> 'I was deeply shocked, but I wasn't frightened'… The slogan took off because 'we're trying to feel a community', he says. 'It is very reassuring to be all together

whenever something horrible happens.' [...] for [...] Joaquim Roncin, the meaning of his slogan is still straightforward. 'Je suis Charlie is just an expression of solidarity, of peace,' he says. 'And that's all'.[2]

In our interpretation, this speeded global circulation of #jesuischarlie created a fleeting sense of belonging and togetherness (cf. Stepinska, 2010). In the evening of 7 January 2015 many seemed to share Roncin's emotional response and attitude towards the attacks. Tens of thousands of people took to the streets not only in Paris and France, but around Europe and the world to show solidarity with those killed by the gunmen. In this public ritualized mourning and commemoration the cartoonists were put at the centre of attention, as the slogan 'Je suis Charlie' suggests. In many messages associated with the slogan the cartoonists were given a symbolic role as advocates not only of the French values of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, (liberty, equality and fraternity) but also the mythical values of modern Western civilization. In line with Sonnevend's (2016) thinking we argue that the mythical message of the event was crystallized and condensed around hashtag and slogan Je suis Charlie and the countless versions made out it. This temporary belonging, built around not only the solidarity towards the victims, but also the determination not to cave in to 'the other', the Muslim terrorist, can also be seen from the lens of a 'disaster utopia', a temporary utopian society that rises from the 'hell' of a disaster and the acute crisis it causes to the order of the society (Solnit, 2009; Anonymous et al., forthcoming 2019). Throughout the hybrid media environment, a temporary sense of community was transmitted to media users in remote locations beyond national borders.

### *I am not*

The whole globe, however, did not participate in the #jesuischarlie solidarity, not even all those who had access to the mediated event. The symbolic identifications around 'Je suis Charlie' were also contested and challenged in the

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[2] http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-35108339

global media environment in different types of counter narratives (cf. Sonnevend, 2016). While the stages unfolded, new, conflicting interpretations arose, this time not just in relation to the events themselves but also as commentary to the first interpretation and expression of solidarity. In some comments and messages in the digital media the cartoonists were blamed for their views and actions, which their opponents considered blasphemous, misogynist and racist (cf. Titley et al., 2017). Instead of bringing the fate of the cartoonists close to the mourners, these messages communicated a certain type of distance between the cartoonists as victims and the people participating in commemorating their death. The critics held the cartoonists responsible for fuelling conflicts between the different ethnic and religious groups in society and hence, not worth public mourning, but blame in the present digital age. As a result, #jesuischarlie was soon followed by several copycat versions and formulations, beginning with 'je suis' or 'je ne suis pas' (I am not). One of the most explicit hashtags commenting on #jesuischarlie was #jenesuispascharlie.

Figure 2 shows that #jenesuispascharlie appeared almost immediately after #jesuischarlie. In terms of volume, however, it remained much smaller. In our interpretation, #jenesuispascharlie became a representation of a myriad of opinions that opposed or were critical towards the 'Je suis Charlie' mass declaration. This hashtag, then, provided an outlet of different types of sets of counter narratives created to criticise those identifying with 'je suis Charlie'. The texts and images circulating in association with #jenesuispascharlie seemed to be stemmed from the fear that solidarity around 'je suis Charlie' was turning into an exclusive social activity that overshadowed more nuanced responses and reactions to the event. In some messages connected with 'jenesuispascharlie' it was stated that, in fact, only very few could be as brave as the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoonists; thus, they should have no right to call themselves Charlie (e.g. *The Week*, 2015). In addition, some messages declaring not to be Charlie stated solidarity towards Muslims who felt insulted by *Charlie Hebdo* caricatures. One of the most explicit criticisms associated *Charlie Hebdo* caricatures as misogynistic, racist and guilty of blasphemy. In other comments, *Charlie Hebdo* was claimed to get 'what it deserved' after insulting so many parties and ethnic and religious groups (cf. Titley et al, 2017).

The BBC (3 Jan. 2016) illuminates the conflictual interpretations of the live unfolding of the events that resulted in identifying with different hashtags:

> 'The first thing to happen – and quickly – was that many declared they felt alienated by "Je Suis Charlie" because, despite the horrific events, they still disagreed with the magazine's editorial line. Those cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad for example, didn't just offend Islamists – they were criticised by many others as racist. […] Within just a day of the January attacks, a counter-hashtag peaked – "Je Ne Suis Pas Charlie" or "I am not Charlie" – driven by users from France and the West but also popular in the Middle East, Latin America and Pakistan'.

Around the same time as #jenesuispascharlie, #jesuisahmed appeared. It turned out to be a bigger hashtag than #jenesuispascharlie. The hashtag was inspired by the video on the killing of the Muslim police officer Ahmed Merabet. An ordinary media user, *Jordi Mir*, used his mobile phone to record the progress of events: how the perpetrators escaped the building, executed the police officer and drove off in their car. Mir posted the video on Facebook but quickly came to regret his decision and removed the video. The removal was too late as the video had immediately gone viral, and the live recording of the killing spread in the professional mainstream media and social media alike.

The hashtag #jesuisahmed was a reaction to #jesuischarlie. It is important to note that as an employee of *Stylist Magazine,* the designer who drew the 'Je suis Charlie' meme, Rancin, identified with the producers of the *Charlie Hebdo* magazine. This identification was then expanded to a more general sense of 'us', the white, secular, laïcité France, and opposed with a wide spectrum of Muslims. There was a strong call for Muslims to renounce Islamism, and even Islam (Todd, 2015), and #jesuisahmed can be seen as a reaction to these interpretations. The hashtag #jesuisahmed offered a possibility to communicate to the world that Muslims are part of the French (and in fact Western) society. While opposing to the Western interpretation of the course of events, this hashtag also attempted to strengthen solidarity towards the Muslim community in France.

**Conclusion: Intensified liveness in hybrid media event accelerates conflict**

Our research demonstrates how communicative actions in a hybrid media event have a global appeal and take place simultaneously in multiple time zones and spatial encounters. In this article we have argued that this type of liveness, experienced and carried out simultaneously in multiple platforms, favours stereotypical narratives and immediate interpretations when it comes to making sense of the incidents unfolding before the eyes of global audiences. In this condition, incidents are interpreted 'en direct', but within the framework of older narratives and mnemonic schemes as well as mythologization of certain ideas (of shared Western values) and positions (e.g. victims, villains, heroes) in the narrative. The speed of circulation, as described in the dissemination of #jesuischarlie, intensifies the feeling of the present and the sense of togetherness 'here and now'. To follow Fabian's insight (1983/2014: xxxvii), this type of intensification of the experience of time as a carrier of the relationship between 'us' and 'them' also accelerates the fracture between those who are and those who are not Charlie. Consequently, the simultaneous dissemination of conflicting messages that arise from their narrative prerequisites and appear in a condensed, mythologizised and remediative form and their related interpretations contributes to creating a multiplicity of juxtaposed solidarities and enmities (cf. Sonnevend, 2016). Immediate reactions cause counter-reactions, and the circulation of reactions intensify the conflict. In our research we could see this in the immediate formation of #JesuisCharlie solidarity and in counter reactions – and countersolidarities – such as #JenesuispasCharlie and #JesuisAhmed.

The French sociologist Emmanuel Todd (2015) asks why, during what he calls the 'hysteria' of the French society, the *Charlie Hebdo* perpetrators were immediately interpreted as 'them' – as Muslim terrorists threatening Western values, freedom of speech and French society – rather than simply seeing them as misguided, disillusioned crazy youth from the suburbs, 'our' own, if strayed.

We contend that this happened partly due to the effects of liveness that was activated in this hybrid media event, which gave preference to instant, emotional reactions of interpretation and identification. Although the media has been portrayed as creating a space for imagined communities since the early days of

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nations (Anderson, 1983), the acceleration of meaning production and the complexity of the hybrid media environment precipitates up the process of interpretation (cf. Ytreberg, 2017). Metonymic, affective and sticky connections (cf. Ahmed, 2004), such as the mnemonic schemes of the terrorist Muslim, are readily available in a media event of terrorist violence.

Andrew Hoskins (2004) maintains that – what he calls – the 'real time lens' in contemporary media events contributes, not only to shaping the present, but also the *past* of the event. This, according to Hoskins, collapses the memory associated with the given event. For Hoskins then, in contemporary media events, 'fascination in and with the present does not translate into understanding of the past' (2004: 123). Our empirical analysis of *Charlie Hebdo* as a hybrid global media event suggests something else. The globally intensified and multiplied temporality associated with circulating messages, such as #jesuischarlie, rather calls for the presence of the narrative, interpretative frames used in the past and carry them further to be used in similar instances in the future. The challenge for the future research could be to provide new analytical tools to think beyond these connections and look for the new ways to think about liveness and narratives in less conflict provoking ways.

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