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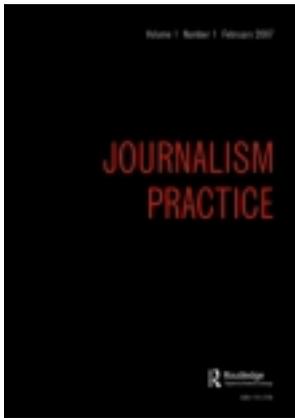
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RECIPROCAL JOURNALISM

A concept of mutual exchange between journalists and audiences

Seth C. Lewis, Avery E. Holton, and Mark Coddington

Reciprocity, a defining feature of social life, has long been considered a key component in the formation and perpetuation of vibrant communities. In recent years, scholars have applied the concept to understanding the social dynamics of online communities and social media. Yet, the function of and potential for reciprocity in (digital) journalism has yet to be examined. Drawing on a structural theory of reciprocity, this essay introduces the idea of reciprocal journalism: a way of imagining how journalists might develop more mutually beneficial relationships with audiences across three forms of exchange—direct, indirect, and sustained types of reciprocity. The perspective of reciprocal journalism highlights the shortcomings of most contemporary approaches to audience engagement and participatory journalism. It situates journalists as community-builders who, particularly in online spaces, might more readily catalyze patterns of reciprocal exchange—directly with readers, indirectly among community members, and repeatedly over time—that, in turn, may contribute to the development of greater trust, connectedness, and social capital. For scholars, reciprocal journalism provides a new analytical framework for evaluating the journalist–audience relationship, suggesting a set of diagnostic questions for studying the exchange of benefits as journalists and audiences increasingly engage one another in networked environments. We introduce this concept in the context of community journalism but also discuss its relevance for journalism broadly.

KEYWORDS audience engagement; community journalism; news audiences; online communities; participatory journalism; reciprocal journalism; reciprocity; social media

Introduction

Reciprocity, broadly defined as exchange between two or more actors for mutual benefit, is a defining feature of social life, the very “starting mechanism” through which social relations can be initiated and perpetuated (Gouldner 1960, 177). Whether it occurs between two people directly, or whether it occurs in a more generalized form as people offer help to others because of the help they received in the past or because of the help they expect to receive in the future (Molm 2010), reciprocity is considered a key ingredient for the development of trust, connectedness, and social capital—the bundle of normative expectations and networked resources that are critical for the formation and maintenance of community ties (Granovetter 1973; Putnam 2000). Thus, the health and dynamism of a community rests, in part, on the strength of reciprocity within it. Scholars have found this to be true both of geographically bounded communities (Putnam 2000) as well as virtual communities (Pelapat and Brown 2012; Wellman and Gulia 1999), such as blogging networks (Ammann 2011). As researchers have turned their attention to studying reciprocity in digital environments (e.g., Lauterbach et al. 2009), they have found that

positive reciprocity—returning one favorable action for another—encourages more active discourse and participation, helping the community flourish (Sankaranarayanan and Vassileva 2009). Research on social media, in particular, suggests that reciprocity is critical to social engagement and connectedness (Bakshy et al. 2012). Reciprocity, therefore, matters for how we think about online communities of shared interest and offline communities of shared locale, as well as the hybrid forms of community that emerge as notions of place are reconfigured in an increasingly globalized, networked world (see Robinson’s 2013 discussion to open this special issue).

In that light, this essay intends to interrogate the role of reciprocity in journalism broadly and community journalism in particular. While reciprocity has been invoked to study a variety of online social interactions, the concept has received little attention in the case of journalism.¹ And yet, as digital and dialogical modes of community—on Twitter, Facebook, and the like—become a crucial channel through which news is organized, disseminated, and discussed, it behooves scholars to consider the function of and potential for reciprocity in journalism. How might a reciprocal-minded journalism, one focused on exchanges of mutual benefit that recognize the contribution of others, fit in the contemporary media environment? How might such journalism inform a richer set of interactions between journalists and citizens on shared spaces like Twitter? How might such reciprocity contribute to new ways of thinking about audience engagement and participation in journalism? What role might reciprocity play in strengthening community journalism’s overriding purpose in connecting people to each other and to social life within their local/virtual realms?

We proceed by developing a framework for imagining the role of reciprocity in journalism. *Reciprocal journalism*, as we call it, builds upon and yet departs from traditional notions of audience engagement and participation, capturing the range of dynamics through which journalists and audiences may exchange mutual benefit. Following the theoretical lead of Molm (2010) and her colleagues (Molm, Takahashi, and Peterson 2000; Molm, Collett, and Schaefer 2007; Molm, Schaefer, and Collett 2007), we outline how reciprocal journalism may occur in direct and indirect (or generalized) fashions, and how such reciprocity, over time, may lead to what we describe as sustained reciprocity, or lasting forms of exchange that deepen collective trust, social capital, and overall connectedness—essential components for the vitality of communities of all kinds. Ultimately, we suggest that community journalism, because of its distinct closeness to local or niche audiences, may be an important starting point for imagining reciprocal journalism in practice.

Journalism and its Audiences: Engagement and Participation

Journalism, in the view of many scholarly critics, has gone astray in part because its professional paradigm—its emphasis on gatekeeping control over content—has become too ossified. This has occurred precisely at the time when a globalizing world demands greater fluidity and freedom, when the digitization of media and culture have ushered in a general expectation for a dialogical conversation rather than a one-way lecture (Deuze 2007; Marchionni 2013). In short, professionalized journalism lost touch with its community—a problem that the public journalism movement sought to resolve. This professional distance was understandable, even acceptable, when mass media messages

ran in only one direction, but not when society's technological capacity *and* cultural expectations held the potential for something better (Lewis 2012).

A truly digitized journalism, reformers have suggested, would lead to the "mutualization" of journalism (Rusbridger 2009), making audiences more fully part of the news process. Journalists appear to have gotten the message in recent years. There is no shortage of discussion at journalism conferences and in the trade press about increasing *engagement* with users (e.g., Sonderman 2012). In a survey, 9 out of 10 US newspaper editors identified engagement as a top priority (Mayer 2011). There is a logic to this pursuit: finding ways to engage readers—to get them actively involved with news content, not simply reading and going elsewhere online—is considered key to the economic sustainability of news models (Fallows 2012). Both in journalism and in media work broadly, "the concept of engagement has moved from the periphery to the center of how media organizations and advertisers are thinking about audiences" (Napoli 2011, 95).

News organizations have thus opened new pathways for *participation*. They invite users to comment, "like," tweet, and otherwise discuss and share news content, and they go further in asking users to contribute information—in forums, on social media, and through crowdsourcing initiatives. Participatory journalism, defined as the overall process of audiences participating with journalists and with each other in creating news and building community around news (Singer et al. 2011), represents the highest form of engagement (Napoli 2011)—the behavior that news organizations most desire. However, the literature suggests that journalists generally have struggled to accept certain aspects of participatory journalism. As Hermida (2011) notes, journalists prefer to control user engagement within carefully bounded parameters, designating users as "active recipients" who contribute source material from live events (pre-publication) or react to the news produced by journalists (post-publication). This leaves users with little role to play in constructing and shaping the news, the central processes of news judgment and presentation. Overall, empirical research finds that "deep down, most journalists do not view the user as an active participant in the news" (Hermida 2011, 189).

The Role of Community Journalism

Such resistance to user participation, or at least to altering professional practices to suit interactive spaces, appears to be greater among "elite" journalists at national news organizations, who have more to lose in reputational prestige by engaging audiences at their level (Lasorsa, Lewis, and Holton 2012). By contrast, the evidence suggests that less-elite (i.e., local or community) journalists, while behind their mainstream peers in technology adoption (Karlis, Mitchell, and Collins 2012), may be more open to process-level participation—approaching the kind of "ethic of participation" described by Lewis (2012), through which participation is seen as a normative given in digital journalism. In one study, Lewis, Kaufhold, and Lasorsa (2010) found that, on balance, community newspaper editors in one US state welcomed citizen journalism, for a mix of philosophical and practical reasons that coalesced around a shared goal in improving the comprehensiveness of community news coverage. In Australia, Meadows (2013, 50) found that community radio "put[s] the citizen back into journalism" because community-based volunteer news workers "come from *and remain part of* their local communities" (emphasis original), blurring the distance between journalists and audiences, and encouraging greater community cohesion around shared values, traditions, and intentions.

Community journalism is thus about connectedness and embeddedness. It articulates and emphasizes the “local” in both geographic and virtual forms of belonging, using its rootedness within a particular community to sustain and encourage forms of “human connectivity” within that environment (Robinson 2013). As such, community journalism is a key context for imagining a more reciprocal form of journalism—one that goes beyond mere engagement and participation in the service of news organizations. Such a journalism of reciprocity would encourage two-way and multi-way forms of value exchange in and through online and offline social networks. Because of its deeper connectedness with audiences (Reader 2012), community journalism has already begun to develop one of the central components lacking in most professional journalistic attempts at incorporating audience participation—a long-lasting relationship with deeply ingrained elements of trust and goodwill. Community news organizations may be more likely to have already established strong emotional and social ties within their communities, ones that have shown particular longevity and capacity for affinity (Meadows et al. 2009; Smethers et al. 2007). This sort of stability and gradual deepening of relationships over time that is captured particularly well in community journalism is relatively absent from much of what passes for contemporary participatory journalism, but it may be a crucial component of a pathway beyond simple participation.

Reciprocity and its Application to (Community) Journalism

Human beings are all mutually, or reciprocally, dependent on others for social exchange: we give benefits and expect to receive benefits in return. The structure of such exchanges, as Molm (2010) and her colleagues (Molm, Takahashi, and Peterson 2000; Molm, Schaefer, and Collett 2007) have shown, can be *direct* or *indirect* in nature. In direct exchange, benefits flow between two actors, in one of two forms: unilaterally in reciprocated exchange (A gives to B, and B gives to A, but *without* any guarantee of something in return) or bilaterally in negotiated exchange (A and B give to each other only on agreement, as in a contract). In indirect exchange, individuals give benefits to one another and eventually receive benefits in return, *but not necessarily from the same person* (Molm 2010).

Such distinctions between direct and indirect (or generalized) exchanges have been studied for decades (e.g., Lévi-Strauss 1969), but recent attention has been given to the importance of reciprocity for understanding the dynamics of (online) communities: their formation and evolution, their network ties, the trust and goodwill among members, and so forth (e.g., Ammann 2011; Lauterbach et al. 2009). Reciprocity in online and offline settings is of great social value beyond the exchange of beneficial acts themselves. As Molm, Schaefer, and Collett (2007) point out, the value of reciprocity lies both in the *instrumental* and *symbolic* outcomes. Instrumental values are those goods (i.e., gifts, conversation, attention, favors, etc.) that are gained through reciprocity. Symbolic values are the positive thoughts, perceptions, and behaviors that may be communicated by reciprocation or observed by others.

While scholars have often considered reciprocity as a form of rational human behavior, Pelapat and Brown (2012) offer an alternative conception that roots reciprocity in the context of cultural patterns of social life and relationships. Their research and others (e.g., Ammann 2011; Lee, Antoniadis, and Salamatian 2010; Sadlon et al. 2008) have examined reciprocity within the realm of online social interactions, though the concept

has not been extended to the journalistic realm. In setting out the forms of reciprocity, we aim to illustrate how each might feed into and flow out of a journalistic context, particularly one centered on community.

Direct Reciprocity

As the adoption of social media has risen, so too have opportunities for interactions based around the sharing of and commenting on content ranging from text, photos, music, and videos to user-generated memes and mobile games. Spaces such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are built for audiences who want to seek and share specific bits of information with others. Simple actions such as “liking” a friend’s post on Facebook, retweeting a link from a news source, or tagging locations and people in Instagram photos are public invitations for reciprocation. Altogether, social media spaces allow “the actions of each individual to unfold as though on a stage,” where those individuals can experience a “level of participation but also feel the sense that they belong together” (Pelaprat and Brown 2012).

This sense of connectedness is best achieved through unilateral, or non-negotiated, forms of reciprocal exchange, as individuals give without expecting anything in return but nonetheless are likely to receive something of value in return (Molm, Takahashi, and Peterson 2000). With this direct reciprocity, there is the inherent danger that a kind act will not be rewarded: Person A gives to Person B, who may (or may not) return the favor, whether immediately, over time, or not at all (Molm 2010). Nevertheless, that risk is essential for individuals to demonstrate and develop trust and social bonding. By contrast, negotiated exchanges—for example, fixed agreements or binding contracts—carry with them less risk, but also less potential for growth in trust and affinity (Molm, Schaefer, and Collett 2007).

Direct reciprocity, therefore, is a basic building block of online community. Ammann (2011) found hyperlinks among early blogs to be a form of direct reciprocity that helped form and sustain a distinct sub-community among a much larger network of conversation online. Direct reciprocity has also been found in social networks, as in Digg or Reddit users upvoting each other’s stories (Sadlon et al. 2008), or Flickr or Twitter users marking each other’s content as “favorites” (Lee, Antoniadis, and Salamatian 2010). (But these dynamics, in some cases, may actually be considered deleterious to overall network dynamics, as a small subset of users exerts an undue influence on the visibility of content.)

Journalists may be engaging in this sort of direct reciprocity when they retweet each other’s content on Twitter, or in replying to non-journalist Twitter users, both of which happen relatively often (Artwick 2013). This suggests a starting point for reciprocal journalism: more frequent and purposeful forms of direct exchange with community members, whether in offline or online spaces, thereby establishing a pattern of responsiveness and mutual concern. Indeed, some journalists are already conversing with the public through social media. As two examples, *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof frequently engages his 1.4 million Twitter followers by re-posting their content, helping them contextualize news stories, and conversing with them throughout the day. Similarly, NPR senior strategist Andy Carvin responds publicly on Twitter to questions asked of him, puts questions of his own to his followers, employs hashtags to build discourse (and, potentially, communities) around certain topics, and consistently provides sources for his followers to go deeper into those topics (see also Hermida, Lewis, and Zamith *in press*). Both journalists rely on direct

reciprocation for these processes to function, as followers provide them with information based on expectation of receiving a rich stream of information in return.

These richer forms of reciprocity in social media, specifically around geographic or niche interests, may be ephemeral in a sense—the exchange of information may last only a matter of seconds on Twitter, for example—but they nonetheless encourage others in the community to more actively reciprocate. They are further enhanced, we argue, when users create community norms that encourage indirect reciprocity.

Indirect Reciprocity

While direct mutual exchanges can serve to enhance individual relationships, indirect or generalized exchanges provide the bedrock of social networks, especially online (Gaudeul and Giannetti 2013). In networks of many, or millions in the case of today's popular social media platforms, individuals may indeed reciprocate directly with one another. They are equally likely to spread their exchanges to others within their social networks. Molm, Collett, and Schaefer (2007) define this as *indirect reciprocity* (or what others have referred to as *generalized reciprocity*): when the beneficiary of an act returns the favor not to the giver, but to another member of the social network. Person A gives to Person B, who gives to Person C, and so on. Such gestures benefit members of the network and indicate to other potential members the bond shared within that group.

By working collectively, members expand their capacities to relay information more quickly and accurately, to connect one another with sources, to match resources with individual and community needs, and to build trust (Baker and Dutton 2006). In doing so, they make better use of resources, discover and share new ones, navigate through problem-solving more quickly, and cut down on the time and effort such problem-solving might normally require (Baker and Dutton 2006). Indirect reciprocation may occur in more generalized ways than direct reciprocation given the volume of networks and the time often needed for actions or information to spread within them. Notably, indirect forms of reciprocity may be more general in nature because of those factors: i.e., Person A may provide for Person B, who, while not immediately reciprocal, stores away the motivation to reciprocate mutually or with Person C at a later time. As Lauterbach et al. (2009) put it, reciprocation or the observation of it can be remembered and recalled for times when returning the favor or introducing a new one seem more appropriate.

Though participants in a network of indirect reciprocity are often unaware of precisely how the reciprocity reaches them in that network, indirect reciprocity has been shown to be more effective than direct reciprocity in producing social solidarity, social unity, and trust, as participants begin to see themselves as more of a collective identity (Molm, Collett, and Schaefer 2007; Putnam 2000). Some research has found indirect reciprocity to be a primary factor influencing behavior in online communities, such as Jian and MacKie-Mason's (2008) study of motivations for sharing files in peer-to-peer networks. Similarly, the work of Holton et al. (in press) demonstrates that social media users may be using hyperlinks as indirect forms of reciprocity, seeking information while including links within their tweets. In a study of Twitter users, the researchers found that the greatest motivator for sharing links was not the sharing itself but actually seeking information. Other social media and digital content platforms provide structure for similar indirect reciprocity whereby the seeking and sharing of information, along with a dialogue and policing among users, helps to develop communities. Sites such as Reddit encourage users

to build upon user-posted content, commenting and ranking content and the users who post it.

More specific to the news media, Twitter hashtags work along several levels of what Pelapat and Brown (2012) have identified as necessities for successful (indirect) reciprocity: an open invitation, a simple and public responsiveness, and a recognition of others. Hashtags allow users to develop and search out interest-specific topics, encountering other users and content organized around such interests. They also facilitate multi-dimensional forms of reciprocal sharing as users—even while perhaps responding directly to another user on Twitter—relay hashtagged information that may facilitate more generalized communication among a collective set of users following that hashtag. For example, such reciprocal exchanges are evident in the kind of collaborative, networked forms of gatekeeping and framing that occurred during the Arab Spring, as the tweets around the #Egypt hashtag led to certain actors and frames being crowdsourced to prominence, thereby challenging the traditional roles of journalism (Meraz and Papacharissi 2013). Generalized reciprocity thus functions as a means through which more fluid and hybrid forms of journalism may occur, especially on shared spaces like Twitter. The longer and more enduring such reciprocal exchanges occur, the more lasting their impact as a form of community.

Sustained Reciprocity

Sustained reciprocity encompasses both direct and indirect reciprocity, but does so by extending them across temporal dimensions. Both direct and indirect reciprocity can be enacted nearly immediately—particularly in a digital environment marked by an abundance of real-time information, and in times of community crisis or breaking news—but do not necessarily exist longer than that. News users may, for example, post a magnanimous comment to a news article at a site they have never visited before and may never visit again, expecting that their goodwill will be reciprocated. But in order to reach its fullest expression, reciprocity must operate in an environment in which relationships that operate on and continue to foster trust are maintained over time. The expectation of future interaction is the foundation for deeper reciprocity and the only form of assurance in reciprocal exchanges; when people value the continuation of a relationship, they are less likely to exploit one another (Molm, Takahashi, and Peterson 2000).

This kind of sustained and continually growing relational trust and goodwill is a necessary ingredient in the transformation from simple, general social norms to genuine community—indeed, community with the dynamism described by Putnam (2000), whether local or virtual (Wellman and Gulia 1999), and with the organizing ethos of “human connectivity” around shared place or purpose (Robinson 2013). Building such community is a difficult task with a significant long-term payoff. The way that social networks are monitored and improved can foster repeated, structured patterns of giving that are integral to building the bonds that create long-term reciprocity and sustain community (Baker and Dutton 2006; Molm 2010). When extended over time in this way, the opportunities for reciprocity to develop into a virtuous and sustained cycle become greater (Gaudeul and Giannetti 2013), helping form stronger ties within and across communities.

An example of this is evident at the community news level. *The Houston Herald* serves a community of approximately 2000 in the US state of Missouri and hosts a

Facebook page with more than 3000 likes.² The page—run by the newspaper’s editor and publisher—combines links to stories, breaking news, and community announcements, and it is used by members of the community for dialogue about the news, the town of Houston, and the people who live there (Mayer 2012). The page, like that of many community news organizations, is a “town megaphone.” It is also a sign of the success of sustained indirect reciprocity, in which journalists have helped create a space where mutual conversation among the audience and the journalists serving them is driven by an expectation that their own efforts to engage in constructive public discussion will be met by similar goodwill and understanding.

To foster this type of reciprocation, Mayer (2012) advocates creating conversations by capturing community members’ interests beyond the news. In social spaces like Facebook, such conversations promote both direct and indirect reciprocity. By offering more community-oriented material—such as photos of a parade or comments on a youth sporting event—and asking users to contribute to it, they provide starting points for conversations that build direct reciprocity in the immediate sense. But they also promote indirect reciprocity in a larger sense, as users witness their fellow community members come together to discuss issues relevant to them and, over time, begin to reciprocate that discussion with trust that it will be received in the same spirit. In this way, direct and generalized forms of reciprocity, re-engaged over time, can lead to sustained reciprocity and, in turn, more sustainable spaces for community interaction.

Discussion: Reciprocal Journalism as a Framework

As a host of scholars have shown, reciprocity is a key facet of community development and perpetuation: social relations begin with and build outward from a series of exchanges for mutual benefit. Molm and her colleagues have theorized the distinct structural elements of direct and indirect (or generalized) forms of reciprocity; in building on their work, we have suggested including sustained reciprocity to acknowledge the temporal dynamic of this process, emphasizing the importance of repeated engagements with both kinds of reciprocity to foster enduring community vitality. Applying these direct, indirect, and sustained forms of reciprocity to journalism, we have argued that reciprocity in journalism can contribute to accomplishing the normative goals of both community and community journalism: a deeper sense of connectedness.

Reciprocal journalism, as we have theorized about it here, is a way of imagining how forms of reciprocity—whether direct or indirect, immediate or over time—may lead to better community and, indeed, better journalism as well. Reciprocal journalism does not describe some wholly new kind of journalism, for it is evident in several existing forms of participatory journalism—but, nevertheless, it points to the unrealized potential for a participatory journalism that has mutual benefit in mind, that is not merely fashioned to suit a news organization’s interests but also takes citizens’ concerns to heart. At a time of tension between professional control and open participation in digital communication (Lewis 2012), when news organizations are desperate for engagement with audiences and yet also reluctant to allow audiences into the news construction process, reciprocal journalism suggests seeing journalists in a new light: as community-builders who can forge connections with and among community members by establishing patterns of reciprocal exchange. By more readily acknowledging and reciprocating the input of audiences, and by fostering spaces for audiences to reciprocate with each other,

journalists can begin to fulfill their normative purpose as stewards of the communities they serve.

For scholars, the reciprocal journalism concept provides an additional analytical framework through which to explore the nature of journalists' relationship with audiences and communities, either online or offline. It opens a set of diagnostic questions for these social conditions: What benefits is each participant giving, and to whom? What benefits is each participant expecting to receive, and from whom? What benefits is each participant actually receiving, and from whom? How is the relationship between benefits received and given negotiated—by contract or culture? Directly or indirectly? And, over time, to what extent are these dynamics leading to sustained reciprocity? Such an approach not only helps researchers identify whether and what type of reciprocity might be present in a journalistic social setting, but it also helps open new windows into larger social dynamics, such as the exercise of power or the motivations for media use. This approach could prove especially useful in studies of community journalism, as scholars seek to untangle the complex set of relationships and interactions that embody each particular community.

For example, the lens of reciprocal journalism can be used to consider some of the research published in this special issue. Just as socio-technical systems can be “designed” for reciprocity (Pelaprat and Brown 2012), the structural features and attitudes of community journalism, at the point where journalist and reader meet in online forums, need to be optimized for reciprocal give-and-take (Meyer and Carey 2013). In emphasizing the centrality of a sense of virtual community to online participation around news, Meyer and Carey also indirectly affirm the crucial role of reciprocity as well. Their measurement of community is inextricably bound up with reciprocity, using statements like “I get a lot out of being in this group” that tie a sense of ongoing benefits received with a willingness to contribute to potentially enlightening discussion. As Robinson (2013) notes, “[T]oday's community journalist must complete [the] communicative loop, using virtual realms such as commenting spaces or social media platforms to ensure the connection has been maintained and that it is re-affiliated continuously”—pointing to the need for sustained reciprocity. However, there is a real question as to whether community members want to (or will) reciprocate the efforts of journalists in providing information that is beneficial to the community. Karlsson (2013) found that online citizen journalism in Sweden, of what little he could locate, was almost entirely self-interested, hardly designed with the public's benefit in mind. Meanwhile, St. John, Johnson, and Nah (2013) found that Patch.com's professional journalism, in mimicking traditional reporting practices, also lacked engagement with the community. Reciprocal journalism may be situated to resolve these problems of disconnectedness. As it sheds new light on journalist–audience dynamics and geographic–virtual forms of community, reciprocal journalism may help re-affiliate the local and its space of shared interest (Hatcher and Haavik 2013; Robinson 2013).

We caution, of course, that reciprocal journalism is an exploratory concept, devised more as a heuristic device for understanding the journalist–audience relationship in a community setting than as a prescription to solve journalism's ills (though we believe there is at least some merit in that regard). Clearly, it is neither feasible nor desirable for journalists to attempt direct reciprocity with their audiences of thousands, though journalists like Kristof and Carvin have demonstrated ways to make such exchanges fruitful. Nor may it be possible for every news organization to mediate indirect and sustained reciprocity around hashtags or Facebook groups, as we have described. Simply put, there are transaction costs associated with engaging audiences, and in many cases

journalists cannot (or will not) bear that cost when it cuts into what they see as their core journalistic activities (Robinson 2011).

Nevertheless, and despite its idealism, reciprocal journalism suggests that journalism can be re-imagined to realize the full potential of participatory media frameworks. As an ethic of participation gains momentum in professional newsrooms (Lewis 2012), an approach deeply informed by reciprocation reorients that ethic to center on what audiences expect and receive from journalism, in addition to what those audiences can contribute. With the ethics of participation and reciprocity existing alongside each other, news organizations can help build stronger communities and further cement their own roles in those communities by considering the community's expectations as inextricably bound with their own.

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NOTES

1. One exception is the work of Barger and Barney (2004), who suggest that journalists and citizens have an ethical, reciprocal obligation to distribute and act upon information for the democratic good.
2. See <https://www.facebook.com/houstonherald>.

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