Kari Anden-Papadopoulos and Mervi Pantti, **Amateur Images and Global News**, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2011, 213 pp., $40.00 (paperback).

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In keeping with its title, ***Amateur Images and Global News***, edited by Kari Anden-Papadopoulos and Mervi Pantti, analyzes different ways in which ordinary citizens around the world participate in the making of news by using personal digital communication technologies, including camcorders to camera-equipped telephones. In contrast with the notion of citizen journalism, or what other scholars call participatory, public, or democratic journalism—where citizens control all aspects of news making, including generating and processing news content and utilizing media tools to capture and describe breaking news— this book looks at the contexts and uses of amateur imagery in mainstream media. It also describes how different audiences and journalists perceive and value the work and products of the amateurs and how the eye witnessing of news by ordinary people has reshaped the present-day media landscape.

In a sense, the book's position differs from previous research that presents digital media as having caused only marginal changes in the communication environment (Curan, Fenton, & Freedman, 2012; Hajek, 2013). Contextually, it coincides with works that examine the use of digital tools, such as YouTube and Twitter, by ordinary people in collecting and sharing news that might otherwise never get reported. For example, in *Citizen Journalism,* a volume edited by Melissa Wall (2012), authors provide instances of democratic journalism in Britain, Burma, Canada, Iran, Kenya, Palestine, South Africa, Taiwan, and the United States. In fact, amateur journalism dates back to 1914 with H. P Lovecraft's discussion of the conflict between the United and the National Amateur Press Associations; the "halcyon days" of the amateur movement (1885–1895), while highlighting the "needs and betterment" of the amateur cause (Joshi, 2011), only makes the case for deeper enquiry into the subject in academic discourse.

Drawing their references from other well-recognized sources, the contributing authors of *Amateur Images and Global News* provide critical reviews of how the ever-evolving trend in capturing and reporting breaking news and the massive use of fast-changing information technology by ordinary citizens is affecting traditional practices and ethics in journalism. Some of the book's sections show how eye witness accounts of influential global events, such as the September 11 attacks in the United States in 2001, the London Bombings in 2005, or the South Asian tsunami in 2004, have arguably enriched the quality of journalistic reporting.

The book's 11 chapters are packaged in three parts—namely, Histories, Practices, and Circulations—and there is also a seven-page introduction by the editors as well as a three-page narrative containing contributor bios. Part I (Histories) considers various historical and theoretical perspectives on

the evolving relationship between professional journalism as we know it and public journalism, setting the pace for discussions on the role of amateur imagery in shaping mainstream media and the field itself. Part II (Practices) looks at how amateur images have been used in the media in general and also, in particular, by established news organizations in today's global community. This section contains the majority of the chapters and the bulk of the narrative (75 pages), with actual samples and footage drawn from Norway, Finland, Pakistan, the UK, and the United States. Part III (Circulations) examines the circulation of amateur images within a fragmented media landscape and explores ways in which audiences articulate and perceive the importance and veracity of amateur images.

Each chapter averages 16 pages and concludes with endnotes and references. Some chapters have conclusions, others offer suggestions on the issues examined. This content-packaging approach should allow the reader to focus on the ideas presented within the context of the topic before accessing a new topic.

The book's editors state that *Amateur Images and Global News* aims to provide an empirically based understanding of the contexts and uses of amateur imagery in mainstream media and how such imagery is perceived and valued by journalists and audiences (p. 15). The other real issue raised is that of the value and entrapments of accessing and using amateur products and content in the professional journalistic setting. How valuable are amateur images in journalistic reporting? Is the democratic reporting approach dangerous, useful, or useless in advancing good news management? In another volume edited by Melissa Wells (2012), some contributors appear to address the questions by projecting citizen journalism as a threat to professional journalism, but they insist that the former approach will not replace the work of trained journalists.

Other research on the importance of quality of broadcast sources in advancing professional journalism has stood on the premise that images captured in real time by ordinary people may lack content and angles that only the trained photojournalist would be capable of capturing. Similarly, only the professional news editor, not the news consumer, may raise the question of trust. The fact is, citizen journalism does not identify every citizen's voice—a camcorder owner reporting on a story normally does not reflect the perceptions of other citizens. Further, since there are no barriers to earning the title "journalist," and no required exams or specific license is needed to practice journalism (Raaum, 2001, p. 67), news-making activities should not be subjected to journalistic standards. This argument is buttressed in the book by Helle Sjovaag's stance in her article, "Amateur Images and Journalistic Authority" (Chapter 4). She describes the extent to which journalistic authority is being threatened, because professionally collected images are being substituted for user-generated content (UGC) in the coverage of news. To elucidate media reliance on citizen-supplied media content, she cites cases in which Norwegian television news organizations incorporated amateur images of the London Bombings and Benazir Bhutto's assassination into their breaking news coverage. "The cases," Sjovaag states, "are framed as terror events, and they both happened abroad, making the news organizations reliant on secondary sources such as television channels in the UK and Pakistan for amateur images" (p. 81).

Liina Puustineen and Janne Seppanen, authors of "In Amateurs We Trust: Readers Assessing Non-Professional News Photographs" (Chapter 10), also make allusions to the relevance of citizen

journalism in the news business when they argue that amateur news photography shows how media companies encourage people to take part in the content creation of journalism. The trust that readers of print and online newspapers have in amateur photographs resembles the trust people have in locally produced food or local grocery stores (pp. 177–191).

The word choice in parts of the book is sometimes vague and can easily be misarticulated. Some of the statements seem inflammatory or lacking in evidence. For example, one contributor writes, "In the case of recent shootings, young killers have created home videos expressly to gain news media attention." Within the same paragraph, we see this:

> While offering documentary evidence as well as potential insights into the motivation and intent of the actors involved, these messages can by their very existence elevate the newsworthiness of the event itself, iconize those responsible for it and encourage others with like-minded aspirations to carry out similar acts. (p. 145)

Without offering an explanation, the juxtaposed statements suggest that: (a) young home video creators are perpetrators of violence; and (b) home videos are constructs of violence. It would be difficult to connect a picture with an act of violence unless the narrative can show a correlation between the image and a pattern of behavior. It is not clear whether the author meant "juveniles," "young people with the capacity to kill," or what the author describes as "young killers." If it is true that killers create videos only for instant gratification, one must wonder why, throughout the essay, there is no mention of legal ramifications for the young killers' actions, such as an arrest, especially since their action gets media attention. Although recorded messages have the capacity to elevate the worthiness of news, it is the editor's decisions to select news items or edit video content, and it is public perception of news salience and its desire to consume specific news content that matter the most. By not fully explaining the cause-effect argument, the author leaves the average reader thinking that any young person with access to a camcorder and computer, who is able to create and broadcast home videos, is a threat to society. This is faulty reasoning, as it gives the impression that having knowledge about the "recent shootings" and producing deadly home videos can raise one's profile through media attention and generate more news value, whereas the same practice can produce another story line, such as taking the initiative to prevent violent situations. In other words, the line should be drawn between what constitutes analysis of journalistic situations and sensational discourse disguised as a tutorial for opinions about dealing with social unrest.

The scope of the book's content is limited, the title itself elusive. Examples are drawn mainly from Europe, the United States, and parts of Asia; there is no analysis of amateur images or news coverage from other continents. It should be noted that not all amateur images can be captured using only modern information technology and not all world citizens have access to television, the Internet, and other mainstream media. There are regions in parts of the world that remain unreached by the camera. Hence, the title of the book, *Amateur Images and Global News*, is misleading. This reviewer suggests that if the editors are to produce another edition of this book, they should consider including cases and news items from other continents or provide an appropriate subtitle, as news cannot be global if millions of people in developing countries still do not have access to television or other cyber-mediated content.

Despite those shortcomings, the book is well-structured, the language well-edited, and the ideas succinctly developed and appropriate for journalism scholars and professors, as well as for researchers involved in the journalistic enquiry. Graduate students, and to some extent, photojournalists and videographers looking for employment could find the book an entertaining read, as it describes the usefulness of amateur images in the media business and offers another angle to the ongoing argument about journalistic professionalism, news consumption patterns, and the future of broadcast journalism.

Amateur Images and Global News may have implications for starting a dialogue on the redefinition of news management and on legal ramifications in the use of amateur images across national borders as well as on the search for common ground for international broadcast media laws.

References

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