Part III

Agencies

10. Documenting Social Change and Political Unrest through Mobile Spaces and Locative Media

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Abstract

In this chapter, I explore the media coverage of the Arab Spring and the reactions of Western media communities. Focusing on interactive documentaries and websites, this chapter clearly demonstrates to what extent media bring about individualized coverage to major events. Digital media especially have merged with cartographic competencies to provide topical information. Compared to the informational range of classic print media and television, these digital platforms and digitally distributed art forms create new and interactive forms of media participation.

Keywords: Locative media, Arab television, i-docs, interactive websites

Up to now, the majority of research on mobile spaces and locative media has proceeded with regard to European and American urban spaces – always taking for granted that a young, well-educated middle class is using these technologies for entertainment (Farman 2013; Hemmersam and Aspen 2015; De Souza e Silva 2015). However, there is a new awareness of media agency in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Digital media have become important factors within the changes and upheavals in this region as well as agents of social developments (Mellor and et al. 2011; Mellor and Rinnawi 2016; Sakr 2007; Kraidy 2016; Richter 2018). To keep track of the changing media landscapes, this chapter sets out to explore the practices and social dimensions of mobile media in the MENA region in contexts of political and humanitarian crises. Before focusing on the impact of social and mobile media systems, this chapter provides a short overview on television, since the quality and proliferation of television systems define the use of mobile and social media.

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Television in the MENA Region

Similarly to the Global North, the Global South has also been deeply affected by media changes from controlled broadcast systems to individualized, non-censored communication. Although broadcast and satellite television are a well-known factor in the MENA region, their organizational forms differ from European or North American television systems. Contrary to their democratic or commercial institutionalizations, the MENA region's television systems follow a different timeline. According to Mellor et al., until the 1980s television was a 'local, government-monopolized terrestrial operation with limited reach' (2011, p. 85), thus completely controlled by the state. The first commercial Arab television station was aired from broadcast facilities in London in 1991, a circumstance that, in some regard, matches the frequent cartographic situation of marking a region from foreign places. Since, Arab television has been on the rise:

> To the present date, television broadcasting in the Arab world has experienced a real revolution: not only in terms of global reach, channel diversity, and program quality, but also in terms of the increased involvement of the private sector in broadcast operations. Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU) statistics show that over 500 free-air-television channels are available to Arab viewers across the region, in addition to scores of channels furnished by cable and digital satellite TV systems. (Mellor and et al. 2011, p. 85)

The Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU) also conveys that over 65 per cent of television channels in mid 2009 were 'privately controlled and operated' (Mellor and et al. 2011, p. 85). Mellor et al. come to the conclusion that, despite the rapid surge of television programmes and stations, television has not supported democratization or cultural advances in the region: 'The emergence of a private broadcasting sector was seen as a purely commercial development, simply because it was not matched by an emergence of viable pluralistic and independent political structures with adversarial functions' (2011, p. 85).

Accordingly, it can be concluded that television does not offer a democratic, discursive media space. Liberal political communication is delegated to individualized social networks. Facing the individuality and variety of social media, there is not one common media space, but the construction of space as an individually embodied act – usually with the help of a smartphone:

> Because space, as Henri Lefebvre has famously noted, is social (and cannot be considered outside of the social), we must ask whose space is considered when looking at how locative media projects impact space (and how the space impacts these locative interfaces). (Farman 2015, p. 85)

Moreover, the turn towards networked digital cultures brings about a transformation of political powers and enables individuals to participate in political movements (Lim 2018), and, returning to this chapter's focus, in media spaces. Digital media bring about a reformulation of spatial dimensions by bloggers, artists, film-makers, and interested individuals. Contrary to the classical broadcast media such as television, mobile media activate diverse, sometimes small, groups before their knowledge infiltrates into a general media public. Lim terms this 'brokerage' (2018, p. 19). The term also refers to the change in the idea of media publics and audiences, which have to be re-conceptualized in accordance with the communication forms and audiences. This reformulation of audiences also affects the spatial dimensions of media, the media constitutions of space, and the reflections within media. Parallel to the re-conceptualization of regimes of knowledge and their respective media practices, the construction of media spaces plays an important role and has to be integrated into research agendas: the concept has to be triangulated between regimes of knowledge, media methods, and spatial practices, whereby the media and spatial practices usually merge. In the following, media examples will be understood along these lines. Additionally, there will be a close look at selfie cultures and artistic projects with media spaces, interactive documentaries, and investigative journalism websites. All these media forms generate a variety of media practices that accompany specific configurations of media spaces and political knowledge.

Smartphones and Geotagged Selfies

In the context of what has been called 'locative media', one of the most typical media habits is the use of smartphones by refugees. Although the smartphone is considered a luxury item, it has come to be the most valuable communication and orientation device, since it is used for communication, self-representation, and spatial orientation (Literat 2017, p. 4). Although it is an indispensable tool for communication, anti-refugee propaganda commented on refugees' possession of smartphones, which presumably turns them into 'economic migrants' (Literat 2017, p. 2). More than four million Syrians have fled their country, in what the United Nations has labelled the 'the worst

refugee crisis in 25 years' (quoted in Literat 2017, p. 1). The debate about financial support and immigration options for refugees has been transported into European media. The 'refugee selfie' is especially a point of debate and a marker for the supposed cheating of refugees. As Literat remarks,

> anti-refugee commentators on social media have been especially vitriolic on one particular way refugees use smartphones: taking selfies. These images of refugees taking selfies – and significantly, not the selfies themselves – have been published in various media outlets, from *Time Magazine* to *The Daily Mail* and *The Daily Mirror*. Following their publication online, the images are then picked up and circulated via social media (especially Twitter, Facebook and Reddit), where they are fodder for further discussions and, most often, outrage. (2017, p. 2)

Besides the possession of the luxury item smartphone, the practice of selfie-taking seems to contradict the general concept of being a refugee. In a politically vitriolic and adverse treatment of refugees, the selfie represents a forbidden media practice, which is attributed to advertising and leisure time. The desperate refuge from a war-torn country 'fundamentally conflicts with the image of the refugee in our cultural imaginary, in which refugees are presumed to be sad, disconnected, and uprooted' (Literat 2017, p. 4).

However, taking a selfie is not just a technologically advanced form of self-portrait. The selfie's technology and social practice implies the sharing of the image on social websites such as Flickr, Instagram, or Facebook. Exiled from the original, located home community, the selfie thus offers participation in a virtual, social space. Moreover, selfies are usually geotagged, which connects them to a specific place. Eszter Zimanyi experiments with the aspects of the geotagged selfie by looking up the specific places of refugees on Instagram. Thus she points at the geotagged aspects of the selfie, which is added to the digital social communities (Zimanyi 2017, p. 7), insofar as the 'geotagged selfie offers an opportunity for the refugee to re-inscribe himself/herself into place after becoming stateless' (Zimanyi 2017, p. 10).

By taking selfies, refugees inscribe themselves into a new geographical space as part of the embodiment structures Jason Farman describes as connected to the phenomenological debate on film and digital media, as it is conceived by – among others – Vivian Sobchack (1988) and Mark Hansen (2004). The latter notably discusses the affective impact of digital art on the body by exploring what he calls the 'affective dimension' (Hansen 2004, p. 101) or the 'pre-sensory moments of vision' (Hansen 2004, p. 27). Affection especially takes on a dominant role in the connection between experience and medium,

as Hansen argues with reference to Henri Bergson: 'There is no perception without affection. Affection is, then, that part or aspect of the inside of our body which we mix with the image of external bodies [...]' (Bergson quoted in Hansen 2004, p. 100). Whereas Hansen speaks of digital art, Farman accounts for the smartphone and its affective structures, which he considers as embodied media that help to connect to material spaces and thus shape individual, spatial embodiments, since the spaces are a hybrid of 'material' and 'medial' spaces, which can be experienced through virtual media (2012, pp. 16–34).

With this theoretical background in mind, I understand the refugee selfie as an individual inscription into space and also as an individual negotiation of the topic's visual politics. One of the first acts is to inform relatives and friends of the safe advent on an island and about the local whereabouts. As Katazyrna Marciniak observes, the visual discourse – 'viscourse'[1] – of the refugee is dominated by opposing patterns, which includes the refugee having safely arrived at the shore, like Tom Stoddard's famous photo of a father with his child celebrating their safe arrival on the Greek island of Lesbos.[2]

However, there is also the absolute counterpoint of this narrative: the body of dead child, Alan Kurdi, washed up on the Turkish shore.[3] In all these images, the shore also denotes a mythological shelter against the waves and the empty spaces of the sea. Thus the images of the living or dead bodies on the shores bring about intertextual references to narratives of shipwreck and rescue. This contextualization of shipwreck and European mythology explains why refugee selfies have been subject to artistic considerations. As Frosh resumes, 'the selfie is the production of the mediated phatic body as a visible vehicle for sociable communication with distant others who are expected to respond' (2015, p. 1623). The Chinese artist Ai Weiwei reacts to these contrasting images with a photograph of himself lying on the shore, which expresses the tragic end of a flight in a paradoxical turn: the body has arrived on the shore, not safely and triumphantly, but as a lifeless dead body.[4] In a further turn, this image could be read as commentary on refugees' situation in host countries. Sometimes the islands' shores figure as natural

1 Karin Knorr-Cetina has coined the German term *Viskurs*, referring to a combination of textual and visual discourses. I relate to this concept and translate it as 'viscourse'.

2 https://www.theannenberg.org/person/tom-stoddart/.

3 Helena Smith, 'Shocking images of drowned Syrian boy show tragic plight of refugees', https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/02/shocking-image-of-drowned-syrian-boy-shows-tragic-plight-of-refugees.

4 Monica Tan, 'Ai Weiwei poses as drowned Syrian infant refugee in "haunting" photo', https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/feb/01/ai-weiwei-poses-as-drowned-syrian-infant-refugee-in-haunting-photo.

borders for the refugees, who are sometimes confronted with the stereotypical antipathy of the alt-right's biologically orientated rejection of their identity.

A further artistic reaction to the refugee's situation is offered by the Sri Lankan rapper M.I.A., who, having arrived in London as a refugee herself, produced and directed a video titled *Borders*, in which she restages iconic images of the refugee situation as tableaux vivants with dark-skinned actors. In this video, she visually re-enacts the iconic media images of refugee situations, such as the wired fence (which has to be overcome), the boat, and the advent on the shore. Placing herself centrally within the image, she sings 'Borders: What's up with that?/ Politics: What's up with that?/ Your privilege: What's Up with that?/ Broke people: what's up with that?/ Boat people: what's up with that?'. Through choosing exclusively men, she avoids the feeling of empathy in humanitarian crises, and can easily meet and undercut anti-migrant sentiments. Concerning aspects of media embodiment, the video's mise en scène offers the most radical relationship between body and image. By constructing iconic images by staging human bodies, the term 'embodiment' is taken more than literally, since the space is the space of the individual body, culminated in a perverse 'ornament of the masses' (Kracauer 1995, pp. 75–88). These images evoke the Busby Berkeley musical films in the use of bodily ornamentation, but they turn them into a perverse demonstration of the refugee's body, which is aligned with the land. Contrary to the manifold images of individual refugees, this underlines the fact that refugees come ashore in great numbers and that they are politically conceived of as an anonymous mass.

Interactive Documentaries

If we perceive the selfie and its geotagged possibilities as a new form of media space, the interactive documentary (i-doc) can be understood as a sampled collection of these images. A relatively new and collective form, the i-doc steps back from the construct of the documenting subject in the form of the film-maker in favour of documentary production as a collective event. In this context, the idea of documentary work as active mapping is pointed to, as Brian Winston's foreword to Judy Ashton's publication on i-docs clearly voices:

> Any project that starts with the intention to engage with the 'real' and does so by using digital technology. Unlike the traditional linear 'closed', Barthesian 'readerly' documentaries, with i-docs, at the intersection between the linear and the digital, the audience become active agents within a 'writerly', more open, documentary text. (2017, p. xv)

This development from the authorizing documentary subject towards the documenting collective, using a variety of digital media, parallels the development within cartography from institutionalized cartography towards collective geo-webbing, proceeding based on mobile digital technologies. Both cartographic and documentary activities have established a collective turn within these media practices. One of the questions arising from these changes points to the authority of speech, or who is allowed to speak for whom. Canadian film-maker Kat Cizek makes the demand for collective agency explicit when she says:

> Co-creation for me is a method or an intention to make media with people that aren't media-makers. As I go into different disciplines and worlds I see that there are very specific definitions of co-creation as being type of, for example, social entrepeneural approach. So the term is causing as many problems as it's solving. But for me co-creation is a very broad term that implies a thoughtful process, which involves a collaboration with the intent to make quality media *with* partners instead of just *about* them [...]. Technology allows us to be collaborative in new ways. (2017, p. 39; emphasis in original)

Thus, contrary to geo-webbing, which can be applied from outside the respective region, i-docs seem to rely on the actual events being displayed, since they are usually shot with a smartphone or a video camera by active participants from inside, guaranteeing their participation. These recordings can be post-produced or collected on a website and made accessible over the internet. These conditions apply to the website of the Egyptian media collective Mosireen presenting an online archive of the Egyptian revolution and the events around Tahrir Square. The collection '858.ma – an archive of resistance' provides raw footage of the revolutionary events. The number 858 refers to the number of individual videos presented by the collective, which informs the site's visitors: '858 is, of course, just one archive of the revolution. It is not, and can never be, *the archive*' (emphasis in original). Before giving access to the videos, the website informs visitors about the group's history, intent, and media practice. The 858 video clips are organized by place, topic, date, month, and keywords. Thus, the mapping aspect becomes one of the determinations for events, since users can change a certain place and are presented with the respective videos. Through this presentational form, the drop-down menus map the different places of the uprising, providing a spatial dimension to the revolutionary action. Although these videos cannot be checked for the truthful documentation of events, it is nonetheless

true that they offer proof of hidden crimes and human rights violations in closed societies with media censorship (see also Dang and Strohmaier 2018). Through the open access, they offer material for further documentary and aesthetic film production, as the Syrian film-maker Ossama Mohammed has done in his documentary *Silvered Water, Syria Self Portrait* (2014), which uses the material of 1001 Syrian citizens.

Another project documenting flight from Syria is the Abounaddara Group collection, which was displayed as part of an exhibition on Arab Art in the New York City New Museum in September 2017. As the review mentions, the Abounaddara Group offers more than 250 videos online; most of the film-makers are anonymous. The group's intent is to offer alternative media coverage to the mainstream media, as one of their members recounts:

> If we accept the mainstream representation of the conflict in Syria we just have two actors. A gentleman who is a dictator but he is very polite, he smiles, a very attractive guy, but he is a criminal – and the ugly jihadists. But we don't see the society. We don't see ordinary people. So we try to show those people who are not victims, not heroes, they just try to struggle for freedom and to live with dignity. (cited in Krüger 2018)

According to this principle, the group offers a documentarian display of everyday life in Syria, avoiding direct depictions of war. Contrary to the Egyptian Mosireen collective, Abounaddara does not present names or places; it instead presents an anonymous, nameless Syria as a virtual space. On Facebook, the group rejects the clichéd media images of a war-torn Syria on account of their reproduction of

> old Orientalist clichés constraining Syrians ever since their first appearance on screen in a film by the Lumière brothers. [...] Syrians are subject to a regime of representation that treats them in a way that violates the principle of dignity inscribed in stone on the pediments of global institutions. [...] It also threatens Syrian society, whose fate rests on the production of images that so little reflect reality. (Abounaddara Films)

The film collective's rejection of mainstream media images clearly corresponds to the structure of the site. Contrary to the Egyptian Mosireen Group and their effort to establish a political discourse and symbolic value to the Egyptian revolution, Abounaddara expressly refuses to become a part of the journalistic-documentarian intent to inform about topical situations. The Facebook site instead connects the group's work to a European film culture

and specifically to the visual and aural history of the French Resistance, with a link to an interview with Alain Resnais on *Nuit et Brouillard* (*Night and Fog*) from 1955 and a link to Léo Ferré chansons, which are underlined by images from the resistance. There are references to the French 1968 revolt and a recent post, in French and German: 'La mort n'éblouit pas les yeux des Partisans/Der Tod blendet die Augen der Partisanen nicht' (Abounaddara Films). The collective's Facebook presentation makes clear that they want to bypass the actual Syrian situation in order to address wider issues of resistance. However, this intent shapes their grasp on the spatial aspects of their website. As just mentioned above, contrary to the approaches of activists, who eagerly locate their videos within real situations and places, Abounaddara employs opposing strategies. Guided by the intellectual and theoretical critique on the 'Orientalism' of media images, they clearly dis-locate their videos and re-locate them within the European romantic discourse of historical revolutions and resistances. This is cleverly done not so much on the group's website, but through networking on social media, which shifts the focus away from the Syrian situation to a general discourse on revolution and resistance.

The organization of collective material is also undertaken by the German documentary project *My Escape* (2016),[5] which edits a collection of individual smartphone videos into a narratively coherent documentary on the topic of escape. Diverging from the collective websites, the documentary points to the refugee situation, independent of the topical situation; the film conflates refugees' stories from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iran into a coherent documentary narrative of their dire situation. Although the film is constructed from a compilation of individual videos, it is edited into a narrative on flight and escape. Correspondingly, the film starts with a sequence displaying a bomber dropping its deadly weapons on a residential area, while off-screen a voice shouts 'Allahu akhbar', accompanying the sound of explosions. The sequence ends with a zoom in on the bomb exploding into apartment buildings and people running away from the scene. In terms of the construction of filmic space, this documentary seems at first to display a conventional setting and subverts it at the same time. Although the narrative starts with a clear image of the residential situation and Arabic sounds, it does not specify the place, and it is undercut by the following stories of flight and escape from different countries. By dispersing the narrative subjects and their origins, the film dislocates stories and characters by constantly shifting the point of

5 https://www1.wdr.de/mediathek/video/sendungen/wdr-dok/video-my-escape--meine-flucht-100.html.

view. Characters tell individual stories of flight from a variety of countries, and they often present their smartphones with videos and photos. Through the constant shifting in character, place, and story, the film accentuates the situation of flight and escape with the iconic places and situations: driving in a car, walking through a desert area, waiting in a refugee camp. Thus, *My Escape* (2016) transfers the individual, locative smartphone videos into a traditional documentary without narration or a filmic subject. In this way, the film functions on a double level as multidimensional collection of individual clips and traditional documentary at the same time. Additionally, the film sports a Facebook site, which allows for communication with the film-makers, and it offers further information on connected activities.

Investigative Jounalism Websites

Contrary to the locative features of 858.ma, the investigative site bell¿ngcat uses open-source and social media investigation to explore a variety of subjects, and it 'brings together contributors who specialize in open-source and social media investigation', and creates 'case studies so others may learn to do the same'.[6] bell¿ngcat was founded by the journalist Eliot Higgins, who also ran the *Brown Moses Blog* up to 2016. Besides Eliot Higgins, the site lists several international contributors with short biographical notes and a picture, which makes it a collective project, but contrary to the locative aspects, international reporters who seek to reflect and examine international media coverage inform the site. The home page links to different international regions; after Africa and America, the MENA region comes third. The reports from the MENA region include a close inspection of the events in Syria. Under the headline 'Schrödingers's Strike: Who Hit These Buildings in Raqqa, Syria', Jeanne Sanya and Christiaan Triebert offer a detailed investigation into the news coverage of the bombing of a civilian block of buildings in Raqqa. The story starts with a summary of media events, which poses relevant questions and underlines the uncertainty of international journalism and the usage of unspecific imagery:

> The Russian Ministry of Defense accused American-led Coalition of bombing a block of civilian buildings in Raqqa, Syria. However, a year earlier, the Russians said it was *them* who targeted leader of the Islamic State in those exact same buildings. What is going on here? (2018; emphasis in original)

6 https://www.bellingcat.com/about/

To analyse the factual events behind the bombings, Sanya and Triebert refer to satellite images of the buildings before and after the bombings, which had been tweeted by the official Twitter account of the Russian Ministry of Defence (MoD). According to the authors, a similar post appeared on the Russian MoD's official Facebook page as well. In the course of their analysis, Sanya and Triebert compare satellite images from 2017 and 2018 and come to the conclusion that the images 'show exact the same location in Raqqa, Syria'.[7] Because of these images, the authors trace the exact location of the buildings near the Al-Ala mosque, which is documented by an image of the respective mosque as 'shown on Wikimapia with Bing satellite imagery' (Sanya and Triebert 2018). A photo published in 2015 shows the mosque's interior. Having established the specific place with the attached symbolic meaning of a mosque, the article offers two images of the destroyed mosque published by local activists on social media, showing the perspective from the ground of the location shown in the aerial photos of the Russian Ministry of Defence. According to the website, the local activists of *Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently* are convinced that the mosque was destroyed by the US-led coalition in 2017. The photos had been published on Facebook and Twitter, and they have been geolocated to the 'same site as shown in the Russian MoD satellite imagery' (Sanya and Triebert 2018). At the same time, there is a video to be found on Facebook, which shows the damaged but not completely destroyed mosque.

Further research on the photos documents that the local activists used screenshots from a video from the A'maq New Agency, 'which functions as IS's auxiliary media wing', and minor damage to the mosque can be observed between 1 August and 13 August. As a next step, Christiaan Triebert uses satellite images from TerraServer/DigitalGlobe to show that the mosque must have been destroyed between 13 and 25 August 2017. They present a territorial control map of Raqqa, Syria from 25 August, from Liveuamap (Live Universal Awareness Map), which displays the respective area circled in red; the subtitle informs us that 'the area is being encircled by the Syrian Democratic Forces, supported by the U.S.-led Coalition' (Sanya and Triebert 2018). The investigation concludes that it cannot be decided who was responsible for the bombing of this area of Raqqa. Of importance here is the insight into interconnected informational media, which are condensed within the article on the bell¿ngcat website.

The article starts with information on the author Christiaan Triebert, a freelance journalist specializing on the Syrian war. Following on general information about the bombing, Triebert relates to the official Twitter and

7 https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2018/07/13/schrodingers-strike-hit-buildings-raqqa-syria/.

Facebook profiles of the Russian MoD, which accuse the coalition forces of the bombing. This information is supported by a screenshot of the respective tweet; a link connects to the Facebook site. These are followed by Russian satellite images before and after the respective bombing. These images are countered by Bing satellite imagery on Wikimapia in which the area is still intact. Next, the article offers images from the inside of the mosque, displaying men at prayer – the most peaceful images amongst the imprints of war. The next images are activists' photos of the destroyed area, with the mosque displaying some damage, but still intact. These images are supported by an activist video also documenting the mosque's dome. These images are followed by satellite images tweeted by Triebert, and finally images from Liveuamap about this area. To sum up, the impressive variety and complexity of digital images, video proofs, and cartographic information distributed over the social networks provide a collective cartographic knowledge. Comparing this article with the regular German news show *Tagesschau* and the respective correspondents' networks, the deficiency in the German news coverage becomes striking, especially in comparing the thin network of MENA correspondents with the collective activity of freelance journalists. Compared to the multifarious activities of videographers, bloggers, and journalists in the MENA region, the German television channel ARD (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*) foreign correspondent's network looks relatively meagre. The network of media correspondents is displayed on OpenStreetMap, which proves the evident lack of media correspondents in the MENA region: one correspondent in Morocco and another in Cairo. Compared to the political influence and the evident instability of this area, the number of correspondents is more than insufficient.

A further point for discussion is the presence of collective mapping sites. Wikimapia is a website that combines satellite cartographies with a limited wiki system, relying on the maps of Google Maps but with the chance to switch to maps from Bing, OpenStreetMap, or Yahoo. Wikimapia is run by Alexander Korjakin and Jewgeni Sawelew and is registered in Moscow. There is no impressum on the website and no further information on the project's general intent; the user can add remarks and symbols within each place on the map. There is more information provided with Liveuamap, which, according to the website's organizers,

> is a leading independent global news and information site, dedicated to factual reporting of a variety of important topics including conflicts, human rights issues, protests, terrorism, weapons deployment, health matters, natural disasters. […] Our innovative map-centric approach to organization

> of information will allow our viewers to quickly find the stories most relevant to them, and in geographies of their interest. […] Liveuamap was founded in 2014 by a team of devoted software developers and journalists who wished to inform the world about the Ukrainian conflict.[8]

The site also offers a list of additional links to Facebook, Twitter, and other social networks, and it informs about the founders and the legal situation. Compared to the rather clandestine site Wikimapia, Liveuamap appears to be a well-organized and well-funded enterprise: the pro version offers Google Satellite maps. Similar to Wikimapia, the free version offers open maps, and users can integrate message and information via a set of icons, including to another information sources, usually social networks, that expands on the message. The site advertises as follows: 'Liveuamaps is opendata-driven [sic] media platform that change [sic] the way you receive latest news. Explore a map, messages, pictures and videos from the conflict zone'. This cartographic news website somehow offers a continuation and expansion of the Egyptian 858.ma with its collection of videos from the Egyptian revolution. Liveuamaps connects individual messages to mapping systems – alongside the map, the news can be viewed and followed up through individual videos and further information on social media.

In conclusion, these diverse means of connecting locative media to cartographic places bring about a variety of geographical and media configurations. These forms of collective journalism and information systems focus on nations and events, which lack proper and democratically organized media systems and are shaken by situations of violence and war that are not covered by internationally established journalists and media correspondents. Thus, these areas are withdrawn from official mapping activities – our knowledge of these war-torn regions is brought about by the manifold efforts of media activists.

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