

The use of Twitter by corporations for agenda-setting in the media

The conflict between Transport for London and Uber

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ABSTRACT

In September 2017 Transport for London announced that Uber was to lose its license to operate in London. In response the ridesharing company started to actively campaign for their continued existence in the British capital. Other than starting a petition, the company used its Twitter account to actively argue why it should stay operational. At the same time the wider news media, specifically newspapers, started to also discuss these occurrences with seemingly similar talking points as Uber used in its tweets. This study therefore aims to answer the question: Was Uber's Twitter communication during their London license-crisis effective in setting the agenda to its benefit in major British news publications? To answer this question this study conducts a thematic analysis on the tweets sent by @UberUK over a 7-month period. The discovered themes are thereafter applied to newspapers articles discussing Uber and published during the same period by the UK's four largest papers. The study finds that both the tweets sent by Uber, as well as the news articles discussing Uber increased significantly right after the announcement by Transport for London. The qualitative analysis also shows that this increase in published tweets and news articles can both be attributed to the discussion of the conflict between Uber and London's transport authority. Finally, even though agenda setting remains a concept that is difficult to measure, based on the findings in this study we can conclude that Uber was successful in setting the agenda in major British news publications during their London license-crisis. Other than these findings this study provides interesting insights regarding corporate reputation, online activism and stakeholderism.

KEYWORDS: Agenda setting, corporate reputation, online activism, stakeholders, Uber, ridesharing, disruptors, Transport for London, United Kingdom, London, corporations, regulators, social media, print media, new media, old media, thematic analysis, qualitative research.

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1. Introduction

1.1 A brief history of Uber and its background London

In 2008, Travis Kalanick and Garret Camp were trying to hail a cab in Paris after leaving a tech conference. While standing outside, the two friends found that they were unable to hail a cab in the cold weather. Based on the frustration over this, the idea for a cab hailing-service, which would be done through an app, was born (Blystone, 2019; Uber, n.d.). In May 2010 the service named UberCab launched in San Francisco (Blystone, 2019). For legal reasons the company changed its name to simply 'Uber' later that year. It appears that Kalanick and Camp found a niche in the market with their simple and reliable service as the company quickly expanded to New York, Boston, Washington D.C., Chicago, and Seattle the following year (Blystone, 2019). In 2011 they also launched in Paris, the city where the original idea for the service was conceived. In December 2016 it was active in 500 cities (Uber, n.d.). Another milestone the company reached is the completion of 1 billion trips in December 2015, 2 billion trips in June 2016, and 5 billion in May 2017 (Uber, n.d.).

One of the major cities Uber launched in during these years is London. The service became operational in the British capital right before the London Olympics in July 2012 (Smith, 2017b). Uber first only offered their regular service, but in July 2013 it launched its more premium service 'UberX'. At first the service was hailed as an affordable transport option and a job creator, but the move by Uber into the more upscale market lead to protests by black cab-operators in June 2014. In December of that year, a cross-party committee produced a report criticizing Transport for London, which is responsible for managing all of London's (public) transport (Transport for London 'woefully inadequate' over cabs, 2014; Transport for London, n.d.). The committee slammed the transport authority's failure in regulating the taxi-market in the British capital. Nevertheless, Uber became increasingly popular and attracted more and more drivers and customers. Uber was widely criticized by regular cab operators as Uber funnels almost all of its payments through the Netherlands, thereby avoiding paying their fair share of corporate income taxes and thereby allowing the company to charge lower fares (Smith, 2017b). Some other criticisms were that Uber's drivers were less extensively trained than regular cab drivers, and the fact that they were not classified as employees so that Uber did not have to contribute to social security premiums and wage taxes.

In November 2015 Boris Johnson, the mayor at the time, claims he is unable to act against the increase in Uber drivers (Smith, 2017b). It is also claimed that David Cameron, Prime Minister at the time, had put pressure on Johnson on behalf of Uber (Smith, 2017a). The company also comes under attack from its own drivers as some of them claim that they are paid less than minimum wage by their employer (Smith, 2017b). After Sadiq Khan succeeded Boris Johnson as Mayor of London, new rules are introduced for all taxi drivers including more vigorous driving tests, required insurance, and English-language tests. The latter one may be perceived to be specifically aimed at Uber drivers as they tend to have a foreign background (Smith, 2017b). In July 2017 a British government report recommends a new employment-status with increased protections for workers like Uber drivers (Smith, 2017b). In mid-September of that year Transport for London also announces that, if Uber's license in London were to be extended, the fee would increase from three-thousand pounds, to three million pounds (Reuters, 2017). Then, on September 22nd, 2017, Transport for London released a statement in which it announced that it would no longer provide transportation app Uber with the license it needs to operate in the capital of the United Kingdom (Transport for London, 2017). In the statement, the transport authority indicates that operators such as Uber need to meet strict regulations, and that they need to display that they are 'fit and proper' to obtain and maintain such a license. As an explanation for the retraction of the license, Transport for London conveyed several reasons in its statement in which they describe the various ways Uber has failed to meet their strict requirements. They cited Uber's deficiency in corporate responsibility regarding their approach to, amongst others, reporting criminal offences, obtaining medical certificates, and preventing law enforcement from conducting their duties. The statement is concluded by stating that Uber can continue operating until all potential options to appeal the decision have been exhausted.

In response to the actions taken by Transport for London, the company appealed the decision by Transport for London in the days after the announcement. Uber also launched other initiatives to remain in operation in the British capital as being forced to cease operations there may result in similar action being taken in cities around the United Kingdom and beyond. Front and center to these initiatives was a campaign to demonstrate the support Uber enjoyed from the London public. This comprehended a petition launched by Uber itself which Londoners were able to sign if they supported Uber's operating in the

British capital and if they were in favor of Uber to continue operating there (Molloy, 2017). The petition Uber launched was hosted on the platform Change.org. In an interview with the Telegraph, UK director at Change.org, Kajal Odedra, stated that Uber's petition to fight the Transport for London's decision was the "fastest growing petition (...) in the UK this year" (Molloy, 2017). She continued by stating that the Uber-case is just an example of "(...) how powerful online campaigning can be".

1.2 Thesis outline

This claim by Odedra regarding the power of online campaigning raises interesting questions regarding online activism. Even though she claims online campaigning can be very powerful, how effective is this form of online communication really in this case? For Uber to be successful in their conflict with Transport for London they: a) first need to convince the transport authority to allow them to continue operating and b) secondly need to be allowed to continue to operate with a very profitable business model that creates and maintains that competitiveness advantage. Naturally some of this can potentially be done by effectively addressing the issues highlighted by Transport for London, but in the sense of online campaigning it can be by demonstrating a consensus among Londoners that Uber needs to remain operational in the British capital in more or less the same form as it operated. In the end, that was what people appreciated and made Uber successful.

For this study it is unfeasible to analyze all the online communication initiated by Uber in regard to the issue as the case is still ongoing at the moment of writing, and, according to the mayor of London, "(...) it could go on for a number of years" (Pitas & Addison, 2017). Additionally, the many different online outlets used by Uber would provide a vast amount of data to review. However, it is possible to select a specific period and a specific online outlet from which to analyze Uber's online communication. To that extent, this study will both analyze Uber's Twitter communication during a set period, as well as news articles published by major British news publications regarding the issue, as a measure of the conversation in the public domain. These will then be compared to contribute towards answering the main question of this thesis:

RQ: Was Uber's Twitter communication during their London license-crisis effective in setting the agenda to its benefit in major British news publications?

To answer the overall research question, several sub-questions have been formulated which will together answer this overall question. First needs to be proved that Uber used Twitter significantly more in response to the Transport for London-conflict. This will demonstrate that Uber had a clear need to communicate with their followers and was actively using Twitter as a tool to do so. Therefore, the first sub-question is: *Did Uber's use of Twitter substantially increase in response to the Transport for London-conflict?*

Second, if Uber was using Twitter substantially more during this period, we need to determine what was specifically discussed in these tweets. For this reason, a qualitative analysis of the contents of these tweets will be used to answer the question: *Did Uber's tweets published surrounding the Transport for London-decision actively discuss this topic?*

Third, to determine if there was any kind of interest among Uber's Twitter followers in regard to the conflict with the transport authority, there needs to be a clear indication that Uber's Twitter followers were more motivated to respond to- or interact with the tweets sent by Uber in response to the decision by the transport authority. Therefore, the third sub-question is: *Did the tweets sent by Uber in response to the Transport for London-conflict generate substantially more reactions and interactions?*

Fourth, to examine if this potentially increased interest was not just limited to Uber's Twitter followers we need to determine if there was also a significant increase in media coverage by major news publications. This will indicate if there was a wider interest in the developments surrounding Uber during this time. Therefore, the fourth sub-question is: *Was there a substantial increase of coverage of Uber by major news publication surrounding the Transport for London-decision?*

Finally, to prove a chronological connection between the tweets sent by Uber and the topics discussed in the news media we need to determine if the press coverage specifically contained positions taken by- or information shared by Uber via tweets previous to the information appearing in the media. Therefore, the final sub-question is: *Was new information regarding the Transport for London-conflict first sent by Uber via tweets and only thereafter repeated in major news publications?*

1.3 Academic and social relevance

Other studies have been conducted where either the effectiveness of online political activism have been studied (Christensen, 2011), or how constituents lobby their elected representatives via Twitter (Hemphill & Roback, 2014), and where the influence of the news media on Twitter has been analyzed (Valenzuela, Puente & Flores, 2017). But no studies have so far been uncovered where the effectiveness of communication by a single corporate party on Twitter has been assessed in terms of agenda setting in the media.

In terms of social relevance, the rapid innovations based on new technologies, and the equally rapid adoption of these technologies by the masses are disrupting traditional markets. These changes have exposed the inability of existing legislation to deal with these new technology-driven businesses, especially as the expansion of these business regularly ignores borders and other traditional obstacles. The obsolescence of these regulations is particularly apparent in outdated labor- and tax laws, as well as in the failure to effectively enforce existing laws on these decentralized businesses. The changes do not merely apply to government. The adoption of new technology creates a totally different playing field where stakeholders like consumers, suppliers, unions, and others are also defending their own interests. Existing business are often too rigid for fast adaptation, with some exploring alternatives for a new coexistence. The example of Uber is especially relevant as it was one the first tech companies that disrupted entire markets on a global scale, while also showing how innovation is an essential ingredient for success. As a fast innovator Uber uses other disrupting and innovative technologies like social media to push its personal agenda. This makes that the traditional stakeholders have to deal with both a new disruptive company, while also faced with a new and powerful communication tool of which the traditional stakeholders often have no or little experience with. This study provides insights in terms of effective online communication via Twitter, which can be very relevant to any corporation. It reviews the contents of specific tweets and determines if the message was both relevant- and effective enough for it to be picked up by major news outlets. This study can be specifically relevant to other 'disrupting' companies. Disruptors, in this sense, refers to 'a company that changes the traditional way and industry operates, especially in a new and effective way:' (Disruptor, n.d.). The focus on Uber increases the relevance of this study a great deal as Uber is certainly not the only disruptor which is currently in conflict with governments in some way (Day, 2018; Cambridge, 2019; Bikebiz, 2017). Airbnb is just one

other example of a disrupter which is also in a standoff with regulators. Airbnb is already facing legal challenges in cities like New York, Barcelona, San Francisco, and others (Coldwell, 2014). Another similar example is the bike-share company O Bike, whose services lead to conflicts with authorities in Munich, Paris, and Amsterdam (Matlack, Nicola & Nussbaum, 2017). These companies are just some of the few whom, like Uber, have disrupted a market, and are now faced with changing-, additional-, or newly enforced regulations and are battling to remain successfully active in the markets they have entered. But even without observing the concept of disruptors, the outcome of this study may demonstrate the value of communication via social media for any organization. Specifically, those whom are trying to either change- or set the agenda in the media to their benefit. In terms of academic relevance, the examples above indicate that this study focuses on topics like effective agenda setting, corporate reputation and the management thereof on social media, online activism and the creating of stakeholders, all which will be further discussed in chapter 2.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Agenda setting theory

To understand if- and how topics discussed in the media can be influenced, we need to first discuss agenda setting theory. This theory was introduced in 1972 by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw. The concept is based on the idea that news editors play a large role in shaping the reality of their audience. The choice of the editors of what news to pass on onto their audience, what topics to omit, and the choice of how to present certain topics to their audience means that these editors manage what information audiences receive and influences how much importance the audience attaches to certain issues. This concept formed by McCombs and Shaw resulted from a study conducted during the 1968 U.S. presidential election. During this study, the authors conducted surveys in North Carolina, asking voters what they thought were the most important issues during that election (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). When they compared these findings to those topics identified as most important by the media, they found that these topics were virtually identical.

This theory relies on the assumption that the media makes conscious decisions for the selection of all possible issues and presents or frames them in a specific manner, rather than merely reflecting the stories that are already important among their audience. It also assumes that the level of importance held by the audience is related to the level of attention given to an issue by the media outlets. This means that if the media increases the attention it gives to a certain topic, this topic should become more important to the audience. It is important to note that agenda setting isn't about creating topics the audience should care about, but rather to change the framing, or alter awareness, through which the audience is influenced.

A criticism discussed by Daniel Karel (2018), is that this concept is very hard to measure. He states that previous research on agenda setting has not been successful in establishing a causal relationship between the topics prominently discussed in the media, and those topics that audiences find important. One reason for this is that these days audiences are influenced by a much larger array of news sources than in 1972. This means that it becomes more difficult to identify a direct relation between certain issues communicated by a news outlet, and beliefs held about those topics by its audience. One can combine this with the criticism that agenda setting does not work on those who have

already made up their mind. Especially when keeping in mind that the ways people consume news these days allows for a sort of 'news bubble', where consumers only come into contact with news that confirms their existing ideas (Pariser, 2012). This concept may have an effect on this study, as one can assume that, for example, satisfied users of the Uber app will already have a positive image of the company, while black cab drivers in London will likely already have a negative view of the company.

In 2017 a study was conducted to evaluate the concept of agenda setting between Twitter and traditional news outlets. This research, conducted by Jang, et. al (2017), studied the relationship of the online discussion of vaccines on social media with the discussion of vaccines in mainstream media. This study, measuring broader online discussions, found that traditional media was still setting this agenda on Twitter, opposed to what many other studies show. This study may appear to jeopardize the research design of this study. However, a different study conducted by Valenzuela, Puente and Flores (2017) focused on communalities between topics covered by professional journalists, and topics discussed on Twitter. The study used the coverage regarding an earthquake that occurred in Chile in early 2010 to make such a comparison. The study found that, contrary to popular belief, Twitter was not an echo chamber of topics discussed on television. Contrarily, the study found that Twitter influenced the topics that were discussed on TV to a larger extent than the other way around. From this the researchers concluded that social media, or Twitter specifically, may have significant agenda setting function in the media as a whole. This study provides encouragement for the idea that Twitter is effective in setting the agenda, whether it concerns topics surrounding an earthquake in Chile, or potentially regarding Uber's London license. There are however several differences between the two. First, the study by Valenzuela, Puente, and Flores focused on communalities of topics on both Twitter and in TV news coverage. This study regarding Uber, however, will focus on Twitter and news coverage in major British publications. Second, like the study by Jang, et. Al, the Chile-earthquake study focused on topics discussed on Twitter in general. This the proposed study will focus on topics brought up and pushed by a single Twitter account, specifically @UberUK, rather than a wider collection of accounts.

2.2 Corporate reputation

Having established that there is significant evidence that social media can influence the topics discussed in traditional media, we now look at a topic that Uber is effectively trying to influence in order to continue its business operation in the British capital: their corporate reputation. Barnett, Jermier and Lafferty (2006) sought to find a conclusive definition of corporate reputation. These authors found a wide array of differentiating definitions for this single concept, which they were then able to condense in three clusters of meaning. The first cluster circles around *awareness*. This category encompasses the definitions which indicated that observers or stakeholders had a general awareness of a firm but had not formed a judgment over it. The second cluster, *assessment*, includes those definitions in which observers were actively evaluating a firm and forming an opinion about it. Finally, the third cluster contains all definitions which described corporate reputation as an *asset*. This assessment explains corporate reputation as something of significance and value to a firm. The authors question if this third category should be considered a result of a positive reputation, rather than a description of the term itself. The authors conclude by forming a new definition: *“Corporate Reputation: Observers’ collective judgments of a corporation based on assessments of the financial, social, and environmental impacts attributed to the corporation over time.”*

Now that social media has emerged as a new arena of communication this both provides interesting opportunities and significant risk for businesses in terms of corporate reputation. In the past companies were only able to send messages to consumers, while the consumer was rarely able to respond. As Kick (2015) explains, the benefit here is that through direct communication corporations are now able to form a closer relationship with their customers. The downside is that companies have partly lost control of the communication regarding their brand. Their customers, and consumers as a whole, are now able to express their opinions about said company to a wide online audience at any time. This means companies need to not only produce new content, but to retain some control of their corporate reputation also become real-time moderators of social media discussions, or *‘electronic word-of-mouth’*.

Applying what is stated previously to Uber, we find that the three clusters of meaning described by Barnett, Jermier and Lafferty (2006) could all apply here. As we will find later in this study, both the tweets sent by Uber and the media coverage regarding

Uber both steeply increased during the Transport for London announcement. This may mean that many Londoners who weren't familiar with the company before may have become aware of it during this period without forming a specific opinion about it. The second cluster is however more relevant to this study. The second cluster focusses on assessment. This concept is highly relevant for this study as the assessment of Uber made by the public, Transport for London officials, and other stakeholders is paramount in the decision if Uber can continue operating in the British capital. A positive assessment could motivate a consumer to sign a petition supporting Uber to remain operating, or a negative assessment could motivate a politician to actively support the ban against Uber. The third and final cluster, asset, represents the balance between the positive and negative assessments from the second cluster. A good corporate reputation may be of high value for Uber when convincing public officials to continue to allow Uber's operations, while a deficient corporate reputation may actually be a liability in this matter. The third cluster is however less relevant for this study because, as mentioned by Barnett, Jermier and Lafferty (2006), the value of corporate reputation is a result of compounding positive assessments of a company and is not a factor that can be impacted directly. Keeping in mind the new definition put forward by the authors, one could say that Uber needs to improve the collective judgment of politicians, the transport authority and the public enough to motivate them to voice their support for the company and to sway the decision by Transport for London in their favor. As explained by Kick (2015) Uber needs to not only introduce new content telling their side of the story, but also actively respond to topics which Uber may perceive as negative for them and spin those discussions in such a way that the company is discussed in a more positive sense.

2.3 Online Activism

Now we know that Uber needs to set the agenda in the media in such a way it has a positive effect in regard to their corporate reputation, we now look at how this can be achieved through the online domain. As discussed briefly in the introduction, a 2011 study by Christensen focused on online political activism, and the effectiveness thereof. It is useful to first understand that regular- or offline political activism constitutes regular citizens taking conscious actions to impact political decision-making. This may include in-person demonstrations, strikes, petitions, and more. Christensen (2011) explains that some of these

forms of offline protests have digital counterparts like, for example, online voting and online petitions. These forms of online activism have several benefits to them. Using digital methods means that protest can be coordinated easily and quickly spread to a wider audience, often at little to no cost. The author also discusses possible downsides of this form of activism. Christensen (2011) states that Online Activism is often criticized as the participants are accused of not truly committing to a cause, and that they merely participate to improve their own self-image while no significant change is achieved. Christensen (2011) concludes that, even though many slacktivists never undertake any additional action outside of their effortless online activities, this is not necessarily a negative occurrence. He argues that these *“effortless Internet activities are at worst harmless fun (...) without any effect on real-life politics”*. While online activism may mean that the quality of protesters may decrease, the significantly increased quantity of protesters may however contribute to generating awareness to certain topics, and even motivate others to engage in other, offline manners. This study by Christensen (2011) shows that, even though online activism may not be as effective as offline actions, it can certainly serve a useful purpose.

Another useful study, which was also briefly discussed previously, specifically regards lobbying politicians via Twitter. A study conducted by Hemphill and Roback (2014) focusses on the phenomenon where citizens directly lobby their representatives using Twitter. The authors discuss how previous research focused on how, for example, people communicate with each other on social media, or how members of Congress use social media themselves. In this study, which was conducted in the United States, the authors however analyzed hundreds of tweets sent by citizens to members of the United States Congress, and created a manner of categorizing the tweets, separating them by different kinds of strategy of lobbying used. Hemphill and Roback (2014) found that, contrary to past assumptions, citizens do not simply ‘shout their opinions on issues’ but rather that they use sophisticated lobbying techniques in their tweets in an attempt to reach their goals.

In the case of Uber, the company is not simply an online activist, but rather an actor that attempts to instigate online activism to fight the decision by Transport for London in both the online- and offline world. By creating a petition that can be signed online, Uber has created an ideal opportunity for potential slacktivists to conduct in an effortless online activity which allows them to feel good about themselves afterward. The virtual signatures gathered utilizing this petition could be then utilized to demonstrate that the company is

widely supported by the people of London and beyond. The study conducted by Christensen (2011) also describes that online activism can be useful to generate attention. This can again be useful for Uber as they attempt to move attention towards subjects that may benefit them and thereby potentially setting the agenda in the wider media. While the study by Hemphill and Roback (2014) focusses on the Twitter traffic from citizens directly towards members of Congress, it establishes that sophisticated techniques can be- and are used to lobby via Twitter. While Uber's ultimate goal is not to influence their immediate followers, motivating them to take action using sophisticated techniques is certainly a means to their ends.

2.4 Stakeholders

An initial review of the concept 'stakeholder' immediately uncovers that there are exceptionally many definitions of this term. Friedman & Miles (2006) list over 50 unique definitions in their book regarding the topic. In search of a definitive explanation of the term they first identify the people or groups who may be a stakeholder. They classify this as any group "(...) of people with a distinguishable relationship with corporations." The authors explain this group of stakeholders goes beyond shareholders or the owners of the corporations, but also includes their customers, employees, suppliers, distributors and the communities which they serve. However, other groups may even be indirect stakeholders to a company. This includes governments who receive tax income and even competitors who may have a reverse stake as failure of their competition may benefit them. To include all these various groups the definition provided by Freeman (1984), "Any group who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives", seems most complete even though it remains quite broad.

As the potential termination of Uber operations in the British capital could be very disadvantageous to any of its stakeholders, it is important to identify who these stakeholders are, and how they can be mobilized in support of Uber and its goals. Customers certainly have a stake in Uber's success. Failure of Uber may mean fewer transport options, lower quality alternatives and more expensive alternatives. Its drivers are certainly also a stakeholder as (part of) their income depends Uber. Even though drivers may argue that they are underpaid, reminding them that the alternative scenario is no income at all, which would hardly be appealing. Local communities may also benefit from

Ubers continued existence as, for example, Uber is often credited for preventing intoxicated people driving themselves home after a night out, potentially preventing many accidents (Haskins, 2018). Even the government may be a stakeholder, were it not for tax income it would be for employment for its citizens. Using agenda setting Uber could effectively remind all these parties that they have a stake in their company by putting focus on these respective areas. They could then motivate their stakeholders to either act in favor of Uber. In a governmental sense this could mean renewing their license, but customers and drivers could voice their support of Uber via the petition mentioned earlier.

Effectively identifying the stakeholders and their motives will provide a useful tool when analyzing the tweets sent by Uber as this will allow insight into why certain topics may be pushed actively up by Uber, while others may be ignored or purposefully spinned. Naturally Uber would rather put focus on their drivers possibly losing employment, rather than their drivers being allegedly underpaid. Successfully setting the agenda in this sense could motivate stakeholders to act in the interest of the corporation.

3. Methodology

3.1 The selected research method

As this research looks to find a deeper understanding of the communications by Uber via Twitter, and by major news outlets via their publications, a **qualitative** research method has been used. As Nkwi, Nyamongo, and Ryan (2001) state "Qualitative research involves any research that uses data that do not indicate ordinal values". Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2012) elaborate on this by emphasizing the flexibility this definition provides regarding the selection of data, wherein it is possible to use different kinds of data collection, making it very suitable for this study. They also emphasize that a qualitative study can allow for a much more refined interpretation of the data.

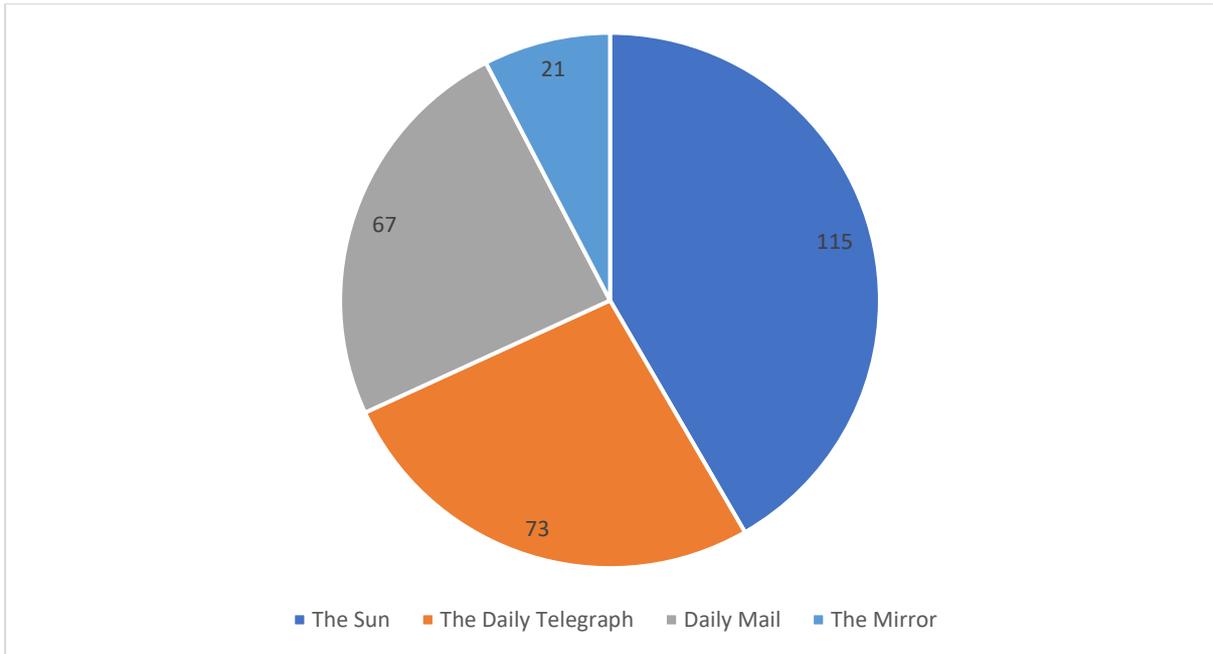
As the topic of this study has only recently occurred, an **exploratory** analysis has therefore been selected. According to Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012), in an exploratory study a researcher carefully reads the data, looking for codes, themes and patterns. They explain that some exploratory study methods are used to create a theoretical model based on findings in the data itself. The research method most commonly associated with exploratory qualitative analysis is "grounded theory". This theory was specifically developed as a comprehensive analysis tool to allow for the accurate interpretation of the richness and nuance within a dataset. Grounded theory is used to identify categories and concepts within text which are then linked to formal theoretical models (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss 1967). According to Charmaz (2006), grounded theory provides a researcher with guidelines for "collecting and analyzing data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data (...)" (2006). However, conducting a fully-fledged grounded theory approach based on these strict guidelines is a very extensive and time-consuming process and not feasible for the purposes of this study. Therefore, this study will draw inspiration from grounded theory while conducting a more feasible qualitative content analysis, specifically a **thematic analysis**. A thematic analysis is used for identifying, analyzing and reporting on themes found within a dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). While this method provides useful guidelines for conducting the analysis, the decision of what counts as a theme is left largely to the individual researcher.

3.2 Acquisition of the research data

The research data has been acquired in the following manner. First, a set period must be determined within which this study will operate. To be able to distinguish changes in Uber's operating on Twitter after the Transport for London announcement, as well as the changes in the discussion of Uber in the media, it is important to include a period of time before the announcement. To ensure enough tweets can be analyzed, and based on the amount of activity on the @UberUK account, a period of two months before the announcement by Transport for London will be included. As previously discussed, the appeal against Transport for London's decision may take a very long time, even years, and therefore it is not possible to analyze the whole process from start to finish for the purposes of this study. Therefore, the cut-off has been set at February 22nd, exactly 5 months after the announcement by Transport for London. This leaves us with a 7-month period from July 22nd, 2017 to February 22nd, 2018, including two months prior to the announcement by Transport for London. Second, after determining the time frame for research, the next step is to collect the tweets sent by Uber during this 7-month period. To do so, a program called 'GetOldTweets' has been used to not only scrape the content from all the tweets sent by the @UberUK account, but also the number of replies, retweets, and favorites. The reason for focusing on Twitter has a wide array of reasons. When studying the effect that Uber's communications have on the topics discussed in the press, one may be tempted to include data from Uber's press releases, other corporate communications, television statements, Facebook posts, and other possible forms the company may use to communicate their message. However, for the purposes of this study, it is unfeasible to focus on all of these communication vehicles, without compromising on the quality and thoroughness of the research. As discussed by Valenzuela, Puente, and Flores (2017), Twitter specifically excels at agenda setting. The authors discuss how a majority of news professionals use Twitter on a daily basis, not to produce, but to consume information on it. They also note that, as discussed above, Twitter influences what is on TV more than the other way around. According to Parmelee "Twitter can set the agenda for what journalists are covering" (Hinsliff, 2016). A subsequent reason why the outcome of this study may again be proved valuable is that, as McCombs (2004) describes, the power of news media is that it is able to focus the public's attention on a select number of topics. Combining this information with

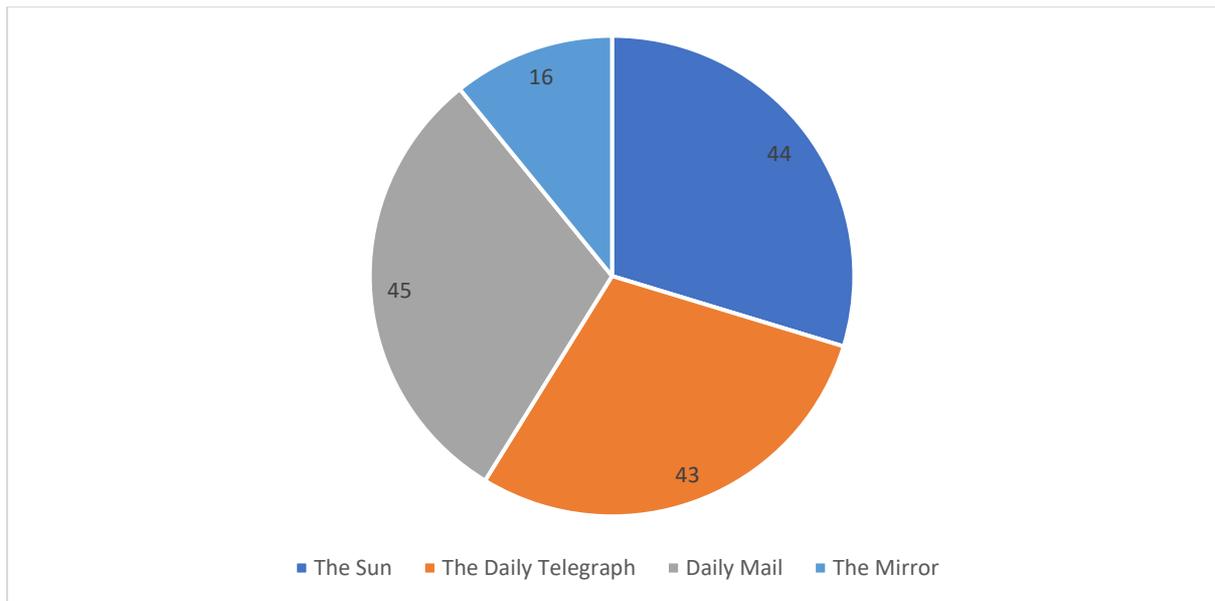
what is discussed above, journalists 'echo' the information discussed on Twitter, which is then redistributed again via other media to a much wider audience.

The third step required gathering data from major British news outlets. As it is unfeasible to focus on the media industry as a whole, the focus had to become more specific. According to a non-partisan survey funded by the Pew Research Center, over 95% of news stories with actual *new* information came from the so-called 'old media', and the vast majority thereof from newspapers (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2010). The study found that most news in the other, more modern forms of news media are just reused or echoed from newspaper content. For this reason, this study will use newspaper outlets as a representation of the news media as a whole. The publications selected for this study are; Daily Mail, The Sun, Daily Mirror, and The Daily Telegraph, as they were all ranked in the four most read newspapers in the United Kingdom in 2017 (Ponsford, 2017). Using Lexis Nexis, articles from these publications have been scraped during the same period as described above, namely July 22nd, 2017 to February 22nd, 2018. In Lexis Nexis, the articles from those outlets will be filtered by simply using the keyword 'Uber'. All articles then produced by Lexis Nexis are included in the data corpus. It is important to note that, within Lexis Nexis, many options are available for further filtering data. The data used for this study was only curtailed by restricting the pool of articles to the geographical area 'Europe', and merging 'moderately similar' articles. After gathering all tweets and news articles pertaining to the boundaries set above a data set emerged of a total of 23 tweets and 276 full length news articles. The distribution of the news articles is displayed in graph 1.



Graph 1: The number of news articles included in the dataset, separated per news outlet

After an initial review of these compiled articles, a number of news articles have been determined to be irrelevant in regard to this research. The reason for this is that some articles used the word 'Uber' in a different manner than when referring to Uber as a company. An example of this can be found in The Sun on February 17, 2018 where the paper refers to a diet as 'uber healthy'. As discussed in the methodology chapter, these articles have been labeled a 'noisy topic'. As the exclusion of these articles changes the distribution of articles as displayed in graph 1, below in graph 2 is an adjusted visualization of the distribution of articles per news outlet. This refinement infers that the amount of full-length news articles included in the dataset is now 148.



Graph 2: The number of news articles included in the dataset, excluding noisy topics, separated per news outlet

3.3 Data processing framework

The first step is for the contents of these two forms of publications to be effectively coded. To produce a valid framework for this we look to a 2011 study which claims to be one of the first to compare tweets with traditional media (Zhao et al, 2011). In this study, New York Times articles were gathered from a three-month period, analyzed, and labelled. Thereafter, a representative sample of tweets was scraped during the same three-month period. The tweets were then also analyzed and were assigned the most similar label found in the New York Times data set. All Twitter topics that were not compatible with the New York Times-labels were either assigned to a new topic category or labelled a 'noisy topic'. For this study, the method from Zhao et al. needed several alterations to work for the purposes of the to be conducted analysis, as well as to keep it feasible. First, in the method described above, the news articles were coded first, where after the codes from those articles were applied to the tweets. For this study this order will be reversed. As this study attempts to uncover whether the @UberUK-account was successful in setting the agenda in the traditional media, one naturally has to start by first exploring what sort of topics were discussed by Uber in its tweets. So, in this study the tweets sent by @UberUK from the 22nd of July 2017 to the 22nd of February 2018 have first been manually coded. Hereafter these codes have been used to then manually code the collected news articles from the same

period. Additionally, in the study by Zhao et al. (2011) all topics that were found not to correspond with topic categories found in the New York Times were either given a new label or labelled a noisy topic. To keep this study feasible, and to keep the codes relevant to this study, only topic-categories found in the @UberUK-tweets will be included. All topics found in the news articles that were not discussed in the tweets sent by @UberUK will be assigned the 'noisy topic'-label.

3.4 Applying the research method

As discussed previously, a thematic analysis will be used in this study to identify, analyze and report on themes found within a dataset. Braun & Clarke (2006) have demarcated this method in six consecutive steps. First a researcher has to become familiar with the data he or she has gathered. This entails carefully reading and re-reading the data, while possibly making notes indicating the meaning within throughout this process. After becoming familiar with the data, the next step is for a researcher to again review all the data and assign initial codes to short segments of it. Braun & Clarke (2006) emphasize that it in this phase it is important that all data coded, as even seemingly irrelevant extracts may reveal meaning later on. The third step begins with comparing all the codes generated in phase 2 and to group these instances of meaning into general categories based on specified meaning or interpretation. The boundaries of these groups can be based on many different features like similarity, event-related, cause-effect and more. The most common basis for grouping content is repetition, whereby multiple instances of the same meaning/interpretation occurring are grouped together (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012). In step 4 the discovered themes are reviewed, and the researcher first determines if some themes perhaps need to be refined, redetermined or scrapped. This means the coded extracts are read again to determine if several extracts together form a clear theme. If not, the researcher needs to determine if this is caused because the theme itself could be better defined, or that some data simply does not fit within the theme. Second, the entire data set is read again to determine if the generated theme's cover all of the data. In the fifth step entails generating a definitive label for each theme. This includes writing down the 'story' the data tells, but also creating concise titles which clearly indicates to the reader what a theme is about. In the 6th and final phase provided by Braun & Clarke (2006) is producing

the report. In this phase it is particularly important to not just describe the data, but to provide interesting examples or extracts to demonstrate the validity of the created themes.

Relating this methodical approach by Braun & Clarke to the framework discussed in paragraph 3.3, the 6 steps discussed have been applied to the tweets sent out by @UberUK during the period this study comprises. The grouping of the initial codes into themes has been done by based on the repetition discussed by Guest, MacQueen & Namey (2012). The themes found in the tweets sent by Uber have thereafter been applied to the news articles. To examine possible causation the comparison between tweets and news articles is excellent to determine sequentialism. Even though tweets can be sent at any time, newspapers are only published once a day in the morning. This makes it relatively easy to determine if newspapers discuss the topics discussed on Twitter a day earlier, or that tweets discuss topics published in newspapers that same morning.

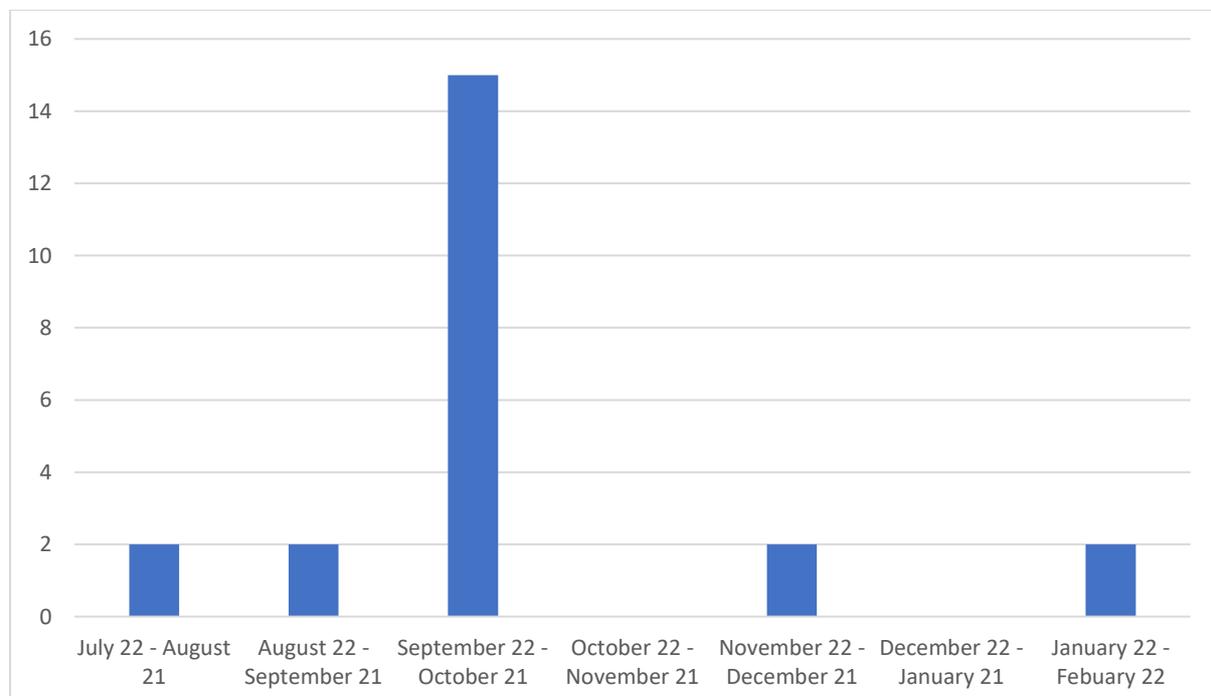
3.5 Suitability of the method

As discussed in paragraph 3.1 this study required a method that was both exploratory and qualitative to allow for a comprehensive review of the research data. This would enable the generation of themes and to facilitate the search for potential causality. By using the guidelines provided by Braun & Clarke (2006) in this study, and applying these to the framework provided in the study by Zhao et al (2011), this thesis provides an extensive exploration of the dataset comprised of tweets and news articles, and provides for a substantive quantitative and qualitative comparison between the two and a concrete explanation of events relating to the dispute and the London transport authority.

4. Results

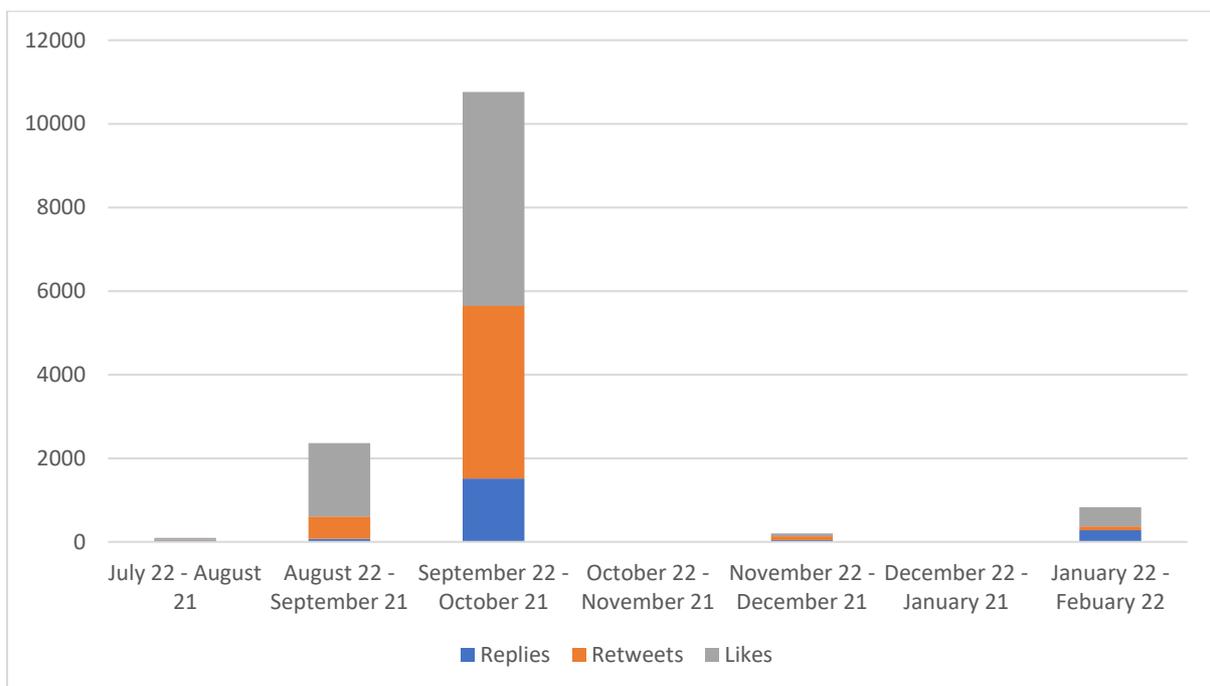
4.1 General quantitative observations within @UberUK's tweets

The first thing that stands out when one observes the tweets scraped during the seven-month period this study focusses on, is that during this period Uber sent out 23 tweets in total with the first one posted on the 14th of August 2017 and the last one on the 16th of February 2018. Without further context of how other companies and institutions use their Twitter accounts it is difficult to indicate if this is low, normal, or excessive use of the communication tool by a company. What is however very telling is that in the two months prior to the Transport for London announcement @UberUK tweeted four times in total. On the day of the announcement itself and the following period, namely the 22nd of September to the 21st of October, @UberUK tweeted 15 times, as can be seen in graph 3. That is a 650% increase compared to the previous period between August 22nd and September 21st. Observing the entire period concerning this study, over 65% of tweets sent by Uber during these seven months were sent between September 22nd and October 21st. Without considering the contents of the tweets themselves, we can surely deduce that Twitter was very eager to communicate with their followers in the days after the Transport for London announcement.



Graph 3: The number of tweets sent by @UberUK, separated in 7 equal intervals

When examining the amount of interactions users had with the tweets sent out by @UberUK a similar image emerges. Interactions in this case are instances that a user has either replied to a tweet, retweeted a tweet, or liked a tweet sent by @UberUK. As can be seen in graph 4, in most periods the amount of interactions barely registers. In the entire 7-month period, 14,248 interactions occurred with tweets sent by @UberUK. 10,760 hereof, over 75%, took place between September 22nd and October 21st. This provides a clear insight that the followers of @UberUK were a lot more eager to interact with Uber via Twitter than otherwise. Even the higher number of tweets sent by Uber does not account for the increase of interaction, as around 65% of tweets were sent out during this period, while more than 75% of interactions took place in the same period.

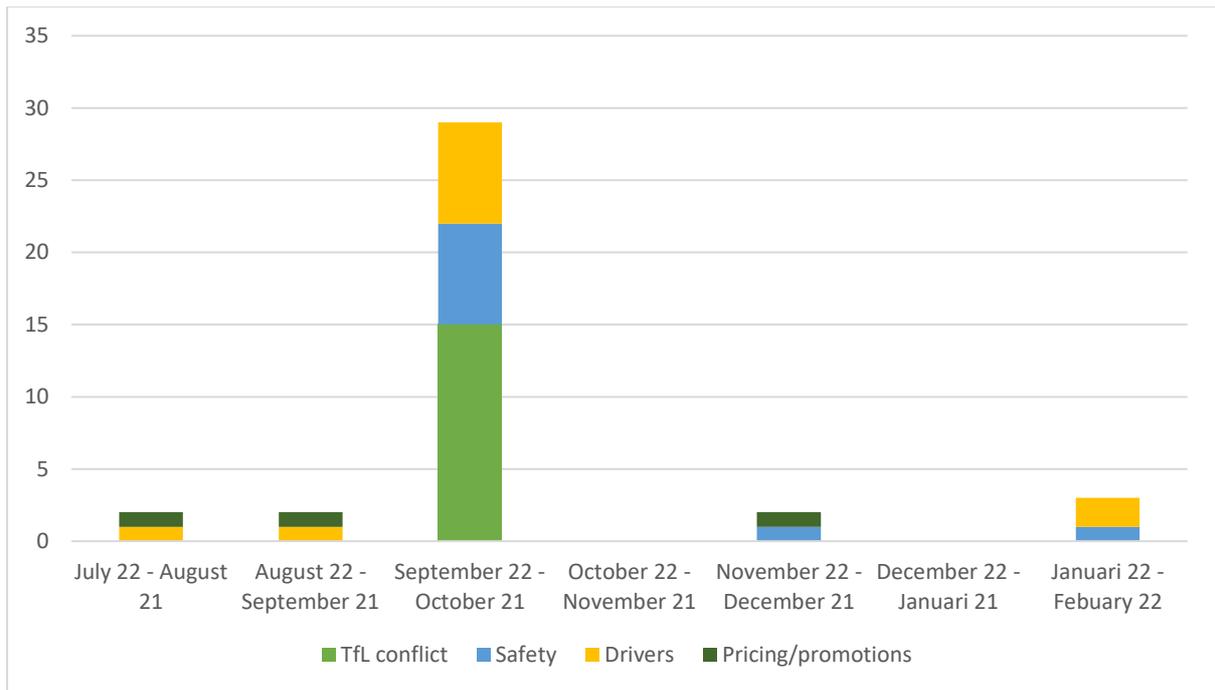


Graph 4: The amount of interactions with tweets sent by @UberUK, separated in 7 equal intervals

The general quantitative observations above provide a compelling motivator to qualitatively examine the tweets sent by Uber to see if the significant increases starting in the third period can actually be attributed to efforts by Uber regarding the conflict with Transport for London.

4.2 Coding of @UberUK's tweets

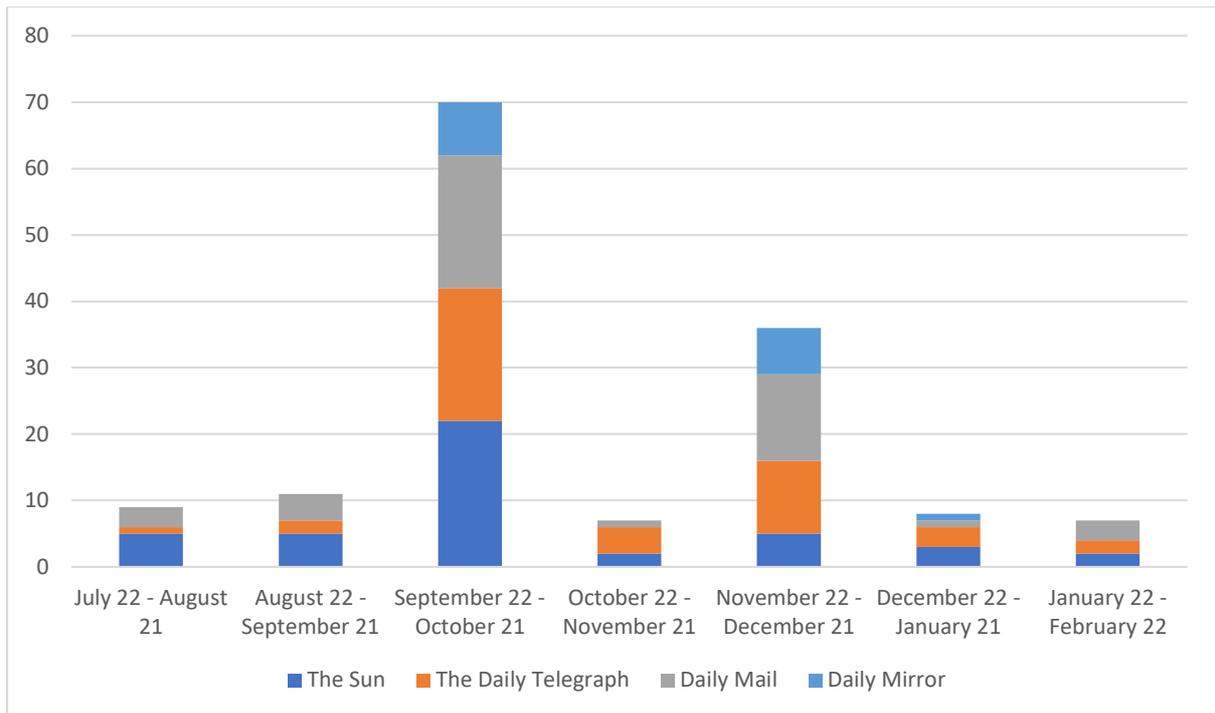
During the qualitative analysis it became apparent that Uber's Twitter communication could be sorted into four categories or themes. *Safety* was an issue much discussed by Uber. Naturally this included the physical safety of passengers whom, for example, with Uber have a safe option to travel home, but also emphasizing the safety of drivers in regard to having received the proper training and/or accreditation. Finally, this label also includes the cyber-safety of passengers and drivers while using Uber in regard data breaches of their platform. The second label created regards *drivers*. As discussed, drivers are discussed regarding their safety in multiple aspects, but Uber also uses their twitter account to communicate with, and about their drivers regarding topics ranging from changes in their service, to working together with drivers regarding clean-air initiatives. During the aftermath of the Transport for London decision Uber also heavily emphasizes the effects a ban would have on their drivers, indicating tens of thousands of drivers losing their job. The third label regards *pricing and promotions*. This is a fairly straight-forward label which includes instances related to rates, like when users could get discounts and Uber temporarily disabling surge-charging for various reasons. The fourth and final label regards the *Transport for London-conflict*. After the announcement by Transport for London, Uber actively promotes counter arguments for the decision. This ranges from low costs for passengers, jobs for drivers, passengers feeling safe knowing where their ordered cab is and who the driver is, and more. What is also included under this label are promotions of a petition started by Uber to gather signatures of supporters of them operating in the British capital. After considering the previously discussed, four distinct categories have emerged. These four categories have been labeled as '*Safety*', '*Drivers*', '*Pricing/promotions*' and '*The Transport for London-conflict*'. Naturally in some cases tweets contained two or more of these topics, in which case multiple labels have been assigned to the tweet. The use of these labels over time can be observed in graph 5. An interesting aspect of this distribution is that Uber only discusses the Transport for London-conflict in the period right after September 22nd, the day of the announcement by transport authority. This topic is not discussed in any of the other periods.



Graph 5: Instances of label-use in the tweets sent by @UberUK, separated in 7 equal intervals

4.3 General quantitative observations within the news articles

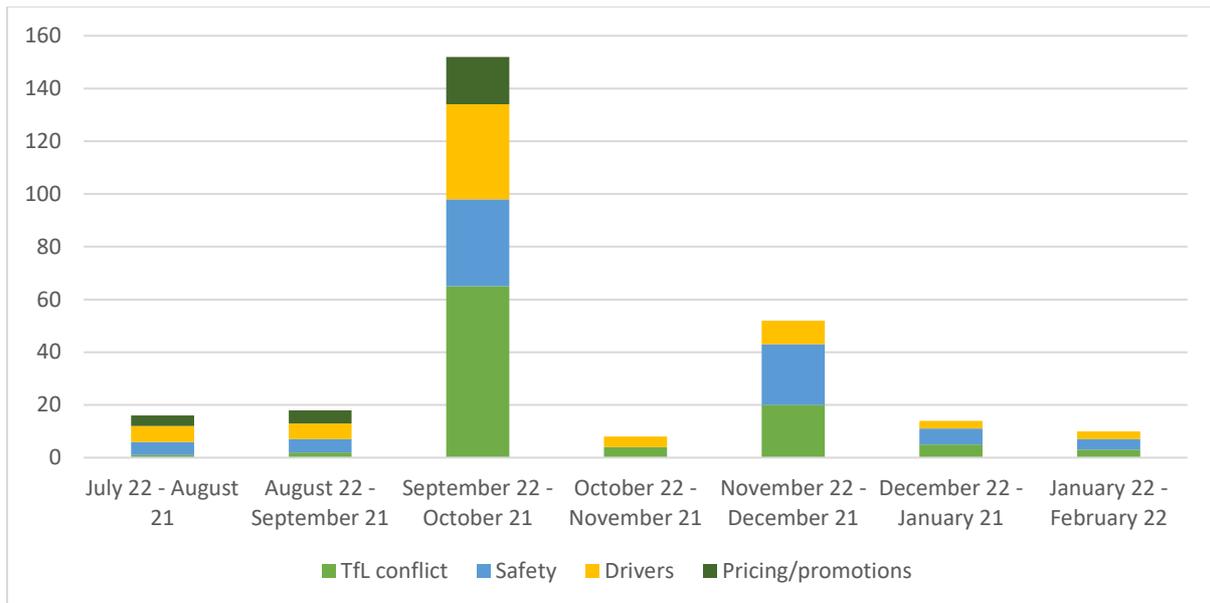
As discussed previously, the total amount of news articles included in the dataset is 148. After separating these per period, as previously conducted for the tweets in graph 3, it becomes clear that there are two interesting periods. As can be seen in graph 6, a significantly higher amount of news articles regarding Uber has been published between September 22nd and October 21st, 2017. This was to be expected as this is around the period of the Transport for London-decision. However, the period between November 22nd and December 21st also stands out. This period also contains a much higher number of published articles compared to the other remaining periods. When comparing this to the graph 3 a clear differentiation appears between the number of tweets and news articles.



Graph 6: The number of Uber-related news articles, separated by outlet, separated in 7 equal intervals

4.4 Coding of the news articles

As discussed previously, by filtering out the news articles that were labelled a ‘noisy topic’ when compared to the Twitter-data, the total amount of relevant news articles included in the dataset decreased from 276 to 148. When applying the four labels discovered in the tweets, interesting patterns emerge which can be observed in graph 7. The Transport for London-conflict is barely mentioned in the months leading up to the decision by the transport authority. This topic is discussed in only three articles between July 22nd and September 21st, 2017. Moreover, it is now apparent that between November 22nd and January 21st safety was a more important topic than the Transport for London-conflict. The qualitative analysis below should uncover if an Uber-related safety incident took place in this period, which would explain the increase in news articles in the period, as well as the focus on safety within these articles.



Graph 7: Instances of label-use in the news articles, separated in 7 equal intervals

4.5 Qualitative comparison between @UberUK's tweets and the news articles

4.5.1 July 22nd to September 21st, 2017

As discussed previously, the total period observed in this study ranges from July 22nd, 2017 to February 22nd, 2018. On the first day of this period the first outlet discussing Uber is the newspaper The Sun. This regards an article which several promotions, one of which is for a £10 discount off an Uber-ride. For this reason, this article was assigned the 'pricing/promotions' label. On the 29th of July the Daily Mail published an article titled 'How safe is your Uber?'. This article discusses an incident where a man, who had only been an Uber driver for 3 weeks, harassed his female passengers. Thankfully his second potential victim was an undercover policewoman who immediately arrested the man. In response to this occurrence the Daily Mail recalls other similar incidents from the past. It also discusses ways in which drivers allegedly try to avoid regulations, meant to keep passengers safe, to cut costs. This article has been labeled with 'safety' and 'drivers'.

Similarly, on August 6th The Sun published an article discussing how 70.000 people who had attempted to obtain cab licenses had a criminal record, some with severe crimes like rape or murder. It specifically discusses how a wide array of convictions were found among the applicants for "roles as London cabbies and Uber drivers". Naturally this article has also been labeled with 'safety' and 'drivers'.

Then, on August 14th Uber sends out a tweet discussing how the company is making changes “based on drivers’ feedback”. The URL included in the tweet links to a page discussing topics like tipping drivers, paid waiting time, drivers’ ratings, trip cancelations, and more. It in no way discusses drivers in the same way the previous news articles have, rather focusing on changing and/or improving the drivers’ experience. However, as the tweet still clearly discusses, and is aimed at Uber drivers, is labeled as such. On the same day the Daily Mail discusses Uber in two articles. Both discussing how Uber has failed in reporting sexual assault incidents and other crimes by its drivers to the authorities. The second article discusses a comment given by Transport for London regarding how the failure to report these crimes could potentially affect Uber’s license to operate in the British capital, which the transport authority currently had under review. Both these articles have been assigned the labels ‘safety’, ‘drivers’, & ‘Transport for London-conflict’. Finally, The Sun also published an article on this day discussing the same topics discussed in the two Daily Mail articles, and therefore has been assigned the same three labels.

A day later, on August 15th, both The Daily Telegraph and The Sun echoed the tweet sent by Uber a day earlier. Both papers discuss a new option announced by Uber where riders are now able to tip their drivers through the app. Additionally, both papers discuss new fees for riders who either cancel their trip or let drivers wait for more than two minutes. As these articles discuss the exact same topics referred to in the tweet by Uber, they have been assigned the same label, namely ‘drivers’.

On August 16th Uber tweets out a promotion for Tesco customers. The customers of this supermarket can redeem vouchers for credits towards Uber rides. This tweet has been labeled ‘pricing/promotions’. This message by Uber was not discussed in any papers in the following days.

From August 17th to September 7th Uber did not send out a single tweet. However, other than the Daily Mirror, the remaining three papers keep discussing Uber during this period. The Sun discussed Uber in four articles. On August 21st the paper discusses an incident where an Uber driver was recorded bragging how he was tempted to rape a female passenger. A day later the paper discusses a court case against an Uber driver, also regarding alleged rape. Both these articles were assigned the ‘drivers’ and ‘safety’ label. On September 1st the Sun published an article wherein a ‘terror suspect’ is identified to be an Uber driver. This article was labeled with ‘drivers’ and ‘safety’. Finally, on September 3rd, the

paper published discussing smartphone use on holiday. This article praises Uber saying the drivers are friendly and the price is low. This article has been assigned the 'drivers' and 'pricing/promotions' label. During the same period, The Daily Telegraph published one article discussing Uber. On September 5th, discussing a news Uber competitor named Taxify. As the article focusses mainly on Uber's pricing, this article has been labeled 'pricing/promotions'. The Daily Mail published several articles during this period, starting on August 25th. On this day the paper published an article arguing for improved taxi laws to protect passengers, specifically citing "a string of Uber driver attacks". This article was assigned the 'safety' label. On September 1st the paper also publishes an article wherein the 'terror suspect' mentioned above is discussed. This article was therefore assigned 'drivers' and 'safety'. Finally, on September 4th the paper again discusses safety concerns regarding drivers. The article also specifically discusses how Uber's operating license is up for renewal at the end of the month. For these reasons this article has been assigned the 'drivers', 'safety', and 'Transport for London-conflict' labels.

On September 8th Uber finally tweets again. Not regarding any of the safety incidents previously discussed, but rather regarding their Clean Air Fund, meant to reduce pollution by making £150 million available for drivers to acquire electric vehicles. The tweet also includes an URL for more information. This tweet has been assigned the 'drivers' label as the funds are meant to assist drivers.

A day later both The Daily Telegraph and The Sun publish articles discussing this announcement and providing more information about it. Both papers discuss how most of the fund will be financed by a pricing increase by Uber, therefore both articles are assigned the 'pricing/promotions' label. Only the Daily Telegraph discuss how the funds will be available to drivers, so only their article is also assigned the 'drivers' label.

On September 13th the Daily Mail published an article discussing how members of parliament have called for Uber's operating license to be revoked. In this context several grievances with the company are summed up mentioning the failure to report drivers' misconduct, as well as improper compensation for drivers, tax avoidance and more. Based on this MP Wes Streeting said he did not believe Uber to be fit to operate in London. A letter was sent by the MPs to Transport for London urging it not to renew Uber's license. Uber responded by stating how over 40,000 drivers depend on the app for their income. For these reasons this article has been assigned the 'drivers', 'safety', and 'Transport for

London-conflict' labels. After September 13th the Transport for London conflict is no longer mentioned in the press until September 22nd.

On September 15th Uber tweets again, this time sharing that they are aware of “an incident” at Parsons Green, a district in London. For this reason, they have turned off their surge pricing and will refund all trips from the affected area. This tweet has been assigned the ‘pricing/promotions’.

A day later The Sun discussed the incident at Parsons Green, which entailed a bombing of an underground carriage. The article specifically discusses how Londoners accused Uber of increasing their fares by more than 100%. The article continues by stating the information that Uber stated in their tweet, discussing how the surge pricing was removed and how Uber pledged to refund all trips from the area, even referring to the exact time Uber sent out the tweet halting the higher fares.

It is interesting to note that during this period before the Transport for London-announcement Uber does not discuss the potential conflict with the transport authority at all. Additionally, it seems that Uber never responds to topics discussed in the media. During the same period the potential conflict between Uber and Transport for London is discussed three times by the press. Several other topics regarding safety and Uber’s drivers are extensively covered as well. When reversing this perspective several instances can be observed where topics discussed by Uber in a tweet are then discussed in the papers a day later. After September 16th Uber isn’t mentioned in the press anymore until September 22nd.

4.5.2 September 22nd to November 21st, 2017

Then on September 22nd Transport for London announces its decision to not renew Uber’s operating license. The reason given in this announcement are Uber’s approach to reporting serious criminal offences, its approach to obtaining required medical certificates, its recruiting policies, and its impeding of regulatory bodies (Transport for London, 2017). As could be expected, this announcement explains the sudden steep increase in tweets by Uber, visualized in graph 3, and articles about Uber, visualized in graph 6. In response to the decision Uber sent out two virtually identical tweets asking their followers to sign a petition in support of Uber and to save 40.000 drivers’ livelihoods. As the petition asks Londoners to support Uber’s drivers, and Uber itself, both these tweets have been assigned the

'Transport for London-conflict' and 'drivers' labels. It is clear that Uber wants to display their popularity in the British capital, as well as connecting their fate to that of its drivers.

As newspapers only publish once a day, the Transport for London-conflict is not mentioned in any papers on the 22nd of September. The Mirror did however publish an article discussing the bombing at Parsons Green discussed previously. In the context of terroristic attacks, it also mentioned the case from early September where a 'terror suspect' was identified to be an Uber driver. This article was assigned the 'drivers' and 'safety' labels.

A day after the announcement by Transport for London all papers respond to the news. A total of 21 articles discussing the conflict were published on the 23rd by all four papers combined. The Daily Mirror reported several arguments given by Transport for London and others against Uber. It however also reported how more than 344.000 people had already signed a petition in support of Uber the evening before. This petition is the very same petition Uber had promoted in its tweets. The Daily Mail published several articles relating to Uber. The title of their first piece is very telling: "Backlash as 300.000 tell Khan: you've got it wrong". This of course refers to the petition by Uber demonstrating that Londoners disagree with their mayor. The Mail also quotes several other politicians opposing the decision, like Minister for London Greg Hands stating that Sadiq Khan is threatening 40.000 jobs. This statement closely echoes the stance taken by Uber in their tweets. Other articles more thoroughly discuss the reasons for the decision made by Transport for London. The Telegraph writes that mayor Sadiq Kahn is accused of "(...)undermining London as a global hub of business innovation by banning Uber (...)" and also discussed the petition. It quotes the same statement by Greg Hands regarding the 40.000 drivers that could lose their jobs, and 3.5 million users that could be left without a transport option. Additional articles in the paper discuss some of the reasons given by Transport for London for the ban, while also further criticizing the decision. These criticisms range from calling the act 'more worthy of Venezuela' to stating there are twice as many Uber users than people who voted for mayor Sadiq Khan. The articles published in the Sun continue with this trend of criticism. Even though the paper does agree that Uber has issues that needs to be addressed, there appears to be a clear focus on the downsides of the ban. This ranges from fears of higher prices, to again referring to the 40.000 drivers losing their jobs. The paper even mentions an allegation that Mayor Khan may have been influenced in his decision by political donations he had received. In general, the papers seem to discuss

both the fate of the 40.000 drivers as well as the petition launched by Uber, indicating that Uber was successful in setting the agenda in regard to these topics. However, the newspapers also discuss additional topics, specifically discussing matters related to safety put forward by Transport for London.

Uber, of course, also kept tweeting on the 23rd. The company sent five tweets on the 23rd of September. The first thanked the 500.000 people who had signed the petition in support of Uber so far. The next tweet discusses safety features that Uber provides to its user like tracking drivers and knowing the location and time of arrival of their cab. In this Tweet Uber also mentions the number of 3.5 million users in the capital, seemingly echoing the statement by Greg Hands. In a third tweet Uber emphasizes how their drivers pass the same background checks other cab drivers, and that their drivers are licensed by Transport for London itself, again shifting more towards addressing safety concerns. Thereafter Uber sent out a tweet in support of their 40.000 drivers in London, ensuring there are doing everything to ensure their jobs remain secure. Finally, Uber sent out another tweet emphasizing how it's app allows a user to know who their driver is before getting in the car, providing riders with their driver's name, picture Transport for London license number and rating. On this day Uber keeps promoting their petition and again puts focus on their 40.000 drivers potentially losing employment. Additionally, the company addresses the topic of safety for the first time, perhaps in response to news coverage. It does however only focus on safety benefits their service provides, like knowing a driver's name, being able to track a driver, required background checks and more.

Only two papers, namely The Daily Mail and The Sun, published articles regarding Uber the next day. The Daily Mail reported how nearly 580.000 people have signed the petition to save Uber. It also discussed fears that people may be put in danger late at night without Uber, seemingly echoing the safety benefits discussed by Uber a day earlier. The article also specifically discusses how Uber is very popular amongst it's 40.000 drivers. Additionally, the allegation that Mayor Sadiq Khan may have been influenced through campaign contributions from GMB, suggested to be an anti-Uber group, is repeated here. A second article specifically targets the Mayor himself, stating that his political leanings have heavily influenced the decision, again mentioning campaign contributions by GMB. The Sun writes about a petition it conducted itself, finding that 70% of voters want Uber's license to be reinstated. Additional polling by the paper show that 50% of voters feel unsafe in the

regular black cabs and that 80% never had a bad experience with Uber. The paper further discusses the inconvenience the ban will bring, and again quotes Greg Hands and his statement that Khan is threatening the jobs of 40.000 Uber drivers, a point originally tweeted by Uber. The paper also emphasizes the more affordable prices of Uber rides compared to regular cabs. Finally, it also mentioned the 500.000 signatures Uber has gathered for its petition. The paper hereafter discusses the reasoning behind Transport for London's decision on the matter, discussing among others safety concerns. The topics discussed in the media on this day again echo the topics promoted by Uber a day earlier. However, though the papers practically only discussed Uber as a safety risk a day earlier, they now discuss Uber's safety record in much more positive terms, the Daily Mail even stating how banning Uber would "(...) put people in danger when out late at night.", a complete reversal from the safety narrative a day earlier. The Sun's own polling mirrors Uber's petition and also highlights how the people of London want the taxi company to remain operational.

August 24th also saw several more tweets from Uber. The first is sent out at midnight and discusses how Uber transported over 200.000 customers that night. The next tweet again emphasizes how many people rely on Uber, claiming that they have 3.5 million users in the British capital. Uber also argues multiple times that people benefit from having access to many different transport options, perhaps inviting a comparison. Another tweet sent out by Uber on the 24th thanks its followers for the 700.000 signatures they gathered on their petition. Several other tweets further discuss the benefits of Uber regarding passenger safety, discussing again that their drivers are have the same license and undergo the same background checks as other cab drivers, and how riders tell Uber they feel safer always being able to see the location of their cab. Uber ends the day with thanking its followers.

The next day, on the 25th of August, all papers publish articles discussing Uber. The Mirror discusses the petition started by Uber, stating that at the time of publication 650.000 people had signed it. It repeated some of the reasons given by Transport for London why Uber's is not to be renewed, specifically discussing safety issues, how drivers are not properly vetted, and treatment of drivers. The papers also printed that Uber indicated that they are open to a conversation with Mayor Khan to discuss what reforms are needed to regain their license. The Daily Mail also discusses the Uber-petition, informing their readers that the number of signatures is approaching 700.000, and indicating that Mayor Sadiq Khan

was under increasing pressure to reverse the decision to ban Uber. It also discussed Uber announcing being open to a conversation with the London mayor regarding sick pay for their drivers and limiting their working hours. The paper continues by stating that Uber claimed that mayor Khan and Transport for London were not willing to meet with the company thus far. Based on this Chris Philp, a member of parliament, commented that Khan's refusal for talks with Uber is disgraceful. In a second article in The Daily Mail this narrative is continued. It states that "Khan appears not to have thought for long about the consequences for the 40.000 or so Uber drivers (...)". The article continues to discuss the ease of use and the low prices of the cab hailing-app. It also describes Uber as a safe travel option, especially for women travelling at night. The arguments given by transport for London are also discussed but are refuted by simply stating that Uber's users aren't bothered by these issues. The Daily Telegraph also notes that mayor Khan may have not been aware of the major backlash the Uber-ban would generate, even stating that the mayor may have seen his actions as 'easy propaganda'. The paper compares Uber to other public transport options, stating that regular cabs are more expensive, and that Uber is more convenient and safer than public transport. The latter being illustrated by the option to see the drivers name and being able to track a journey. Finally, The Sun also published an article on the 25th discussing Uber's appeal to mayor Sadiq Khan for a dialogue and changes the taxi-hailing service is willing to make like offering sick pay and limiting work hours.

After September 24th Uber stopped tweeting, and never discussed the Transport for London-conflict again. Looking at the day of the announcement by Transport for London, and the days immediately after it, it is clear that topics discussed in tweets by Uber are resonating in the media. On the 22nd, Uber only called for its users to sign their petition in support of the company and its 40.000 drivers. The following day all papers discuss the petition and even inform readers of the number of signatures collected at the time of publication. All papers also refer to the 40.000 drivers mentioned by Uber. Interestingly, even several politicians used this exact figure provided by Uber a day earlier. However, the reversal seems true as well as Greg Hands' mentioning of the 3.5 million people who may lose their transport option published on the 23rd is echoed in a tweet by Uber later the same day. Additionally, while at first Uber doesn't discuss their safety benefits and/or problems, it only starts discussing the topic after the newspapers have put a clear focus on the topic, mostly in a negative sense. Uber shifts focus from their safety problems towards their safety

benefits, which is picked up by the media a day later. Interestingly, Uber chose not to focus on pricing at all. While every single paper mentioned Uber's lower prices as a clear benefit of the service, the company did not discuss this aspect at all, seemingly focusing on gathering signatures for their petition, attempting to direct focus to the drivers who will lose their jobs, and to how their apps provides a more safe travelling experience.

All papers maintain their almost daily coverage for about four to five days after the announcement, where after the number of articles decreases. As Uber is no longer tweeting in this period it is not possible to compare the two outlets and determine if one sets the agenda for the other. However, as another example of Uber's messages resonating after the initial announcement, on September 30th several papers reported that even Prime Minister Theresa May had stated that the decision not to renew Uber's operating license in London had put 40.000 jobs at risk and even "damaged lives". Again, clearly echoing Uber's messaging and stating the exact number of jobs at risk provided by Uber.

4.5.3 November 22nd to February 22nd, 2017

On November 22nd both the Daily Mirror and The Daily Telegraph report on a hack wherein the personal details of 57 million Uber customers and drivers has been stolen a year earlier. This data breach is reported on by all papers in the following days, including London Mayor Sadiq Khan calling for Uber to more fully inform their customers. This incident explains the steep increase in articles discussing Uber as seen in graph 6. All articles discussing the hack have been assigned, amongst others, the 'safety' label as they regard the safety and security of the personal information of Uber's drivers and passengers. Uber finally tweeted about the incident on November 29th, informing their followers about, amongst others, a webpage containing information regarding the incident. The following day The Daily Mirror, The Daily Mail, The Daily Telegraph and The Sun all further discussed the data breach, without repeating any information that Uber tweeted a day earlier.

On December 19th Uber tweeted again regarding a promotion for NHS staff, which was not discussed in any paper. On February 9th, 2018 Uber tweeted about their driver advisory groups, which wasn't discussed in the papers either. The last tweet sent by Uber in this dataset was sent out on February 16th and discusses an initiative to improve safety for drivers and riders. This announcement by Uber was discussed in The Sun a day later. The paper discusses how Uber announced new safety measures including actively reporting

serious complaints to police and providing riders with more information on their driver. In this context the decision by Transport for London to not renew their license is briefly mentioned but not further discussed.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Answering the research question

To answer the research question, we must first answer the several sub-questions formulated in the introduction. Therefore, the first question that needs to be answered is: *Did Uber's use of Twitter substantially increase in response to the Transport for London-conflict?* Earlier we found that Uber tweeted a total of 23 times during our research period. As discussed in paragraph 4.1 it is very telling that in the two months prior to the Transport for London announcement @UberUK tweeted four times in total. On the day of the announcement itself and the following period, namely the 22nd of September to the 21st of October, @UberUK tweeted 15 times, as can be seen in graph 3. If this month-over-month increase of 650% would not be telling enough, the fact that 65% of tweets sent by Uber in the entire 7-month period were sent in the 30 days after the announcement by Transport for London confirms that Uber was communicating significantly more with its followers after September 22nd compared to any other period. Therefore, the answer to the first sub-question is yes, Uber's Twitter use did substantially increase in response to the announcement by Transport for London.

Now that we know that Uber's Twitter communication increased substantially after September 22nd, we need to determine if this increase can be attributed to the Transport for London-conflict. The second sub-question was therefore formulated as: *Did Uber's tweets published surrounding the Transport for London-decision actively discuss this topic?* To answer this sub-question, we need to look at paragraph 4.2 wherein the coding of the tweets is discussed. The four codes established in this study were 'safety', 'drivers', 'pricing/promotions' and 'Transport for London-conflict'. As recalled in the previous paragraph, in the month after September 22nd Uber sent out a total of 15 tweets. When observing graph 5 we can determine that the 'Transport for London-conflict'-label has been assigned to all 15 tweets sent in this period. Even more telling is that this label has not been assigned to any other tweet in any other period. With this we can conclude that the answer to the second sub-question is also yes, Uber was certainly actively discussing the Transport for London-conflict in the immediate aftermath of the announcement by the transport authority as 100% of the tweets sent by @UberUK in that period featured the topic in them.

Now it is clear that Uber was extensively communicating about the Transport for London-conflict we need to determine if this communication was in any way effective. Therefore, we first look at the Twittersphere and ask the question: *Did the tweets sent by Uber in response to the Transport for London-conflict generate substantially more reactions and interactions?* To answer this question, we look at graph 4. As can be seen in this graph, in most periods the amount of times people interact with the tweets sent by Uber barely register. As discussed previously, in the entire 7-month period, 14,248 interactions occurred with tweets sent by @UberUK. 10,760 hereof, over 75%, took place between September 22nd and October 21st. As we just established, around 65% of tweets sent by Uber were sent during this period. Therefore, we can determine that not only did people interact significantly more with the tweets sent by Uber during this period, but that this increase cannot simply be attributed by the increase in tweets. We can therefore again conclude that yes, the tweets sent by Uber in response to the Transport for London-conflict generated substantially more reactions and interactions.

To determine if this established increase in interest in Uber's communications was not only limited to their followers we need to determine: *Was there a substantial increase of coverage of Uber by major news publication surrounding the Transport for London-decision?* As discussed in paragraph 4.3, the total amount of news articles included in the dataset, excluding those labeled a noisy topic, is 148. When we look at graph 6, we can see that exactly 70 of them, almost half, were published in the period after September 22nd. When we then look at graph 7, we can see that 65 out of these 70 discussed the Transport for London-conflict. When comparing this to all other periods none of them come close to these numbers. The only other period that stands out is November 22nd to December 21st. The reason for this was explained in paragraph 4.5.3 wherein a data breach related to Uber is discussed. Even when considering this second spike in articles, it only consists of 36 articles compared to the 70 articles published between September 22nd and October 21st. We can therefore still conclude that yes, there was a substantial increase of coverage of Uber by major news publication surrounding the Transport for London-decision, even being able to state that a vast majority of this coverage, 65 out of 70 articles, specifically pertained to the license-conflict.

The final sub question is perhaps the most important one as it regards the chronological causation between the information tweeted by Uber and the topics discussed

by the selected newspapers. We now know that both the tweets posted by @UberUK and the news articles regarding Uber published right after September 22nd specifically discussed conflict between Transport for London and Uber, and that this topic instigated a significant increase in posts and published articles that can be (mostly) attributed to the Transport for London-conflict. The next step is to determine if the press coverage specifically contained positions taken by- or information shared by Uber via tweets previous to the information appearing in the press. Therefore, the final sub-question is: *Was new information regarding the Transport for London-conflict first sent by Uber via tweets and only thereafter repeated in major news publications?* To answer this question, we look at the qualitative comparison between the tweets sent by Uber and the news articles. As discussed in paragraph 4.5.1, in the period prior to September 22nd four tweets were sent by Uber. Three out of these four tweets were discussed in the media a day later. None of these three tweets, sent on August 14th, September 8th and September 15th, discuss the upcoming decision by Transport for London in any way, even though this upcoming decision is sporadically mentioned in the press. Then on September 22nd, after it is announced that Transport for London is not willing to renew Uber's license, Uber sends out two tweets asking their followers to demonstrate their support of the company by signing a petition on change.org. The tweet also reminds @UberUK's followers that the jobs of 40.000 Uber drivers may be at risk. As newspapers only publish once a day, the first articles discussing the result of the decision are published on the 23rd. On this day the petition promoted by Uber is discussed in the Daily Mirror, the Daily Mail and the Daily Telegraph. Several papers even mention the specific number of 40.000 drivers' jobs who may be at risk. Another interesting example is how Uber starts discussing the topic of safety on September 23rd, only after the papers have discussed Uber's safety record in a very negative sense. On the 23rd Uber provides examples of how using Uber actually has safety benefits. This new positive perspective then also appears in the papers a day later. Only one example has been uncovered of specific information appearing in the media first and on Uber's Twitter account second. On the 24th Uber mentions that they claim to have 3.5 million users in London, a figure that was brought up on the 23rd by several papers. It is however likely that a figure like this, which only Uber could have been able to produce, must have been released into the public domain by Uber in some other way. The fact that this single example is the only potential instance of the media setting the agenda for Uber, and that many examples of Uber setting the agenda in

the press have been presented in paragraph 4.5, we can conclude that new information regarding the Transport for London-conflict was virtually always first tweeted by Uber and only thereafter repeated in major news publications, with the reversal possibly only occurring once.

Now that all sub-questions have been answered, we can focus on the main research question: *Was Uber's Twitter communication during their London license-crisis effective in setting the agenda to its benefit in major British news publications?* In this chapter we have established that both Uber's Twitter use, and the news articles discussing Uber increased significantly surrounding the Transport for London-announcing. We also found that this increase in both the tweets and the news articles can specifically be attributed to the active discussion of the conflict between Uber and the transport authority. The fact that the interactions with @UberUK's tweets also increased dramatically clearly indicates that this topic was very relevant to Uber's followers. Finally, we identified several examples of where specific information that first appeared in Uber's tweets would be repeated by newspapers a day later, while only finding one potential example of the opposite. As mentioned in paragraph 2.1, Karell (2018) discusses how Agenda Setting is a very difficult phenomenon to measure. However, based on the benchmarks we have set, and data that has been analyzed, we have found that Uber was able to introduce new topics in the media, and attune existing discussions in such a manner so that Uber was discussed in a more positive light. Therefore, we can conclude that yes, Uber was effective in setting the agenda in British news publications to its benefit during their London license-crisis.

5.2 Limitations and recommendations

Even though it was possible to draw a conclusion based on consistent data, Karell (2018) is certainly correct when suggesting that Agenda Setting is a concept that is difficult to measure. One reason given for this is that audiences are influenced by a wide array of news sources. This could certainly be true in the study we have just conducted. It could very well be possible that the motivations news editors had for discussing a certain topic in a certain manner could have originated from a source other than the @UberUK Twitter account. However, as so many instances have been uncovered where specific information, even specific figures, was shared by @UberUK and repeated in the press a day later, this provides enough support to draw a concrete conclusion for this study.

As discussed in paragraph 4.1, during the entire research period Uber sent out a total of 23 tweets. Without further context of how other companies and institutions use their Twitter accounts it is difficult to indicate if this is low, normal, or excessive use of Twitter. The fact is that Uber tweeted only four times in the two months prior to the Transport for London announcement, and only 4 times in the four months after October 21st. Even without further context, an average of little over 1 tweet per month hardly seems active. However, the steep increase just after September 22nd to 15 tweets in a single month only demonstrates the eagerness of Uber to suddenly be very active on Twitter, thereby providing the answer to the first sub-question. For future studies it could be very interesting to focus on an entity that is generally more active in the digital domain. This could show how the contents of their communication changed, rather than just demonstrating a transition from virtually not communicating to suddenly communicating a lot.

As discussed in the methodology chapter, the reason for only focusing on Twitter was extensively discussed. Feasibility was the reason that other communications like press releases, other corporate communications, television statements, Facebook posts, and other possible form of communications were excluded. Even though the choice for Twitter was well reasoned, one example discussed in the conclusion eludes to other forms of communication being relevant as well. The figure of 3.5 million users was first observed in several papers, and only thereafter tweeted about by Uber. As discussed in paragraph 5.1, a figure such as this must have almost certainly been communicated by Uber as they are effectively the only party who have insight in data such as this. In future studies it could prove interesting to conduct a similar study as has been conducted for this thesis, wherein other means of communication used by a company would also be included. This may not only provide a more complete picture of what a company is communicating but could possibly also demonstrate which of these means of communication could be considered (most) effective for agenda setting in news publications. This would be relevant for any company in their use of the communication tools at their disposal and could provide insights for the most effective combination of communication instruments.

The methodology selected for this research, a thematic analysis, has proved useful in identifying the overarching themes discussed by Uber on its Twitter page. It has truly allowed for a thorough analysis and deeper understanding of both the tweets and the news articles. A quantitative method could have quickly and easily compared keywords and

measured how often news articles and tweets were posted. This would however have not allowed for interpretation of the way Uber, the Transport for London-conflict, and other subjects were discussed. As we have found in regard to, for example, the topic of safety, the manner of the discussion of this topic changed after Uber had tweeted about it. This naturally speaks in favor of a manual, qualitative analysis. A downside to this method, as discussed in chapter 3, is that interpretation of data always includes some kind of bias of the researcher who conducted it. Some assumptions or connection may be made by one researcher while another may have made a different decision. As this thesis was conducted by a single researcher, future studies could benefit from several researches conducting the coding process separately, and thereafter discussing any differentiations in codes or themes. Another downside of manually conducting an analysis is that larger datasets, like the one this study is based on, takes an extensive amount of time to process. As researchers are generally limited in both time and other resources this prevents manual analysis of large datasets. This could again be addressed by a team of researchers who analyze sections of the dataset. However, it is still recommended that all of these sections are analyzed by multiple researchers as this allows for the comparison and discussion of results just discussed. Artificial intelligence, for example, should certainly not be discounted as alternative or supplement to manual qualitative analysis. The rapid developments in this field demonstrates that this technology could scrape and analyze qualitative data quickly and on a large scale and would be a great instrument to assist researchers.

As this study focusses on a specific company, in a specific city, surrounding a specific occurrence, it would be very interesting to conduct this study again with very different parameters. In essence, this study could be conducted for any corporation or entity which is communicating on social media. It would however be required that the specific occurrence would be newsworthy enough to be extensively discussed in the media. This certainly applies to the conflict between Uber and Transport for London as it played out very publicly with many stakeholders either communicating via the media or getting their information from it. It could be argued that for a topic to be covered by the media there needs to be a large enough, and varied group of people whom either directly or indirectly are a stakeholder in a company and therefore have interest in following developments. An interesting example in this regard could be Airbnb. As discussed in paragraph 1.3, this company is also a disruptor which has faced legal challenges in several cities. A study of one

or more of these cases could include stakeholders like tourists, property owners, governments and others. Such a study may prove useful in validating the findings presented in this study.

5.3 Reflection

In an era of rapid technological changes, the need for modernization and innovation is not only felt by companies and regulators like those who are the focus of this study, but this sentiment certainly also applies to the academic field. Researchers are playing catchup when researching new innovations that are continuously updated, and when studying the continuously evolving manner in which we use these innovations. The rate in which research is becoming outdated has vastly increased, especially when focusing on areas like social media or tech companies.

When McCombs and Shaw introduced the concept of agenda setting in 1972, they could have never imagined the wide array of platforms that we can now use for agenda setting. By setting clear benchmarks and studying a specific topic on a specific Twitter account and comparing it to a limited amount of newspapers, this study was able to somewhat mimic the original study by McCombs and Shaw, while operating in a much more diverse media landscape. The challenge with this theory, as discussed by Karell (2018), is that previous research on agenda setting has not been successful in establishing causal relationships. This study has not only found that Uber was able to introduce new topics in the media, but chapter 4 exhibits many examples of how specific information and figures were first tweeted by Uber and only thereafter discussed in the wider media. Even though this does not provide a conclusive counterargument for Karell's criticisms, it does provide further support for the concept of agenda setting in general.

The management of Uber's corporate reputation has certainly proved a very relevant topic as well. The definition provided by Barnett, Jermier and Lafferty (2006), "*Observers' collective judgments of a corporation based on assessments of the financial, social, and environmental impacts attributed to the corporation over time.*", does not only describe the components Uber needed to address, it effectively covers the reasoning behind why Transport for London decided to not renew Uber's license in the first place. Of the three clusters put forth by Barnett, Jermier and Lafferty (2006), the third cluster regards corporate reputation as an *asset*. As discussed previously, the authors questioned if this

third category should be considered a result of a positive reputation, rather than a description of the term itself. As this study has shown, a very negative corporate image may have very negative consequences. In Uber's case, it may have caused Transport for London to not extend their license in the first place. However, Uber proved able to provide effective counter arguments and thereby influenced the public's opinion of the company. As we have found, Uber promoted itself as a source of employment for 40,000 satisfied drivers, addressing both financial and social arguments, and it portrayed itself as a safe and low-cost transport option, framing itself as an asset to any environment in which it operates. By focusing on a limited number of arguments which addressed all three aspects that affect corporate reputation, Uber was able to motivate a substantial number of people to sign their petition, as well as seemingly providing talking points for politicians supporting them in the press. This demonstrates that corporate reputation can only be regarded as an asset when it can be utilized to achieve, or indeed prevent something.

The number of signatures gathered via the Change.org petition is a clear indicator that Uber was successful in conducting, and instigating, online activism to its benefit. As Christensen (2011) explained, the threshold for participating in online activism is very low. While some argue that change is rarely achieved by online activism alone, Uber used the Change.org platform in a rather unorthodox manner. Instead of the petition itself being an end goal, Uber used the petition as a tool to demonstrate support for the company. In this case the petition was not the means to an end, but rather one of many tools to promote Uber's narrative and put pressure on the transport authorities in the British capital. Christensen discussed the criticism that online activists were not truly committed to a cause, but rather that the effort to join any cause was very low. This study has shown that, even though the signees of Uber's petition may not have been highly committed to the company, the context in which the petition was used was a very effective tool for Uber to demonstrate support and generate attention towards their cause. The fact that participants may not have been highly motivated therefore seems less relevant.

The concept of stakeholders has also proven to be very relevant for this study. As Freedman (1984) defined it, a stakeholder is "Any group who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives". From this definition both the negative and positive sense of the word 'affected' has proven important in this study. We have found that this conflict was far more complex than just a group who was positively-, and one that was

negatively affected. While Transport for London may have argued that Uber, amongst others, underpaid their drivers, Uber countered this by focusing on the employment they provide to 40.000 people. The implied argument seemed to be that employment through Uber would be better for both drivers and politicians than 40.000 people losing their jobs. The safety aspect was also often discussed. The original framing seemingly had Uber preventing crimes being reported by police, and Uber drivers committing crimes. To counter this, Uber focused on how their affordable taxi-service prevented drunk driving, and how features like GPS tracking and knowing the name of your drivers made people feel safe. While this manner of communication was effective, it does not highlight the complexity stakeholderism. For example, some Uber drivers may have been very happy with their employment for the company, while others may have felt underpaid or badly treated. Some passengers may have benefited from the cheap taxi-service, while others may have had an unsafe experience. Even the government had to find a balance between regulating a company while also sustaining the employment of some of its citizens. This study has shown that assigning people to stakeholder-groups can be very challenging. Some individuals may not even be aware of all the different stakes they themselves may have. This study has demonstrated the variety and extensiveness of stakeholders in a single legal matter between one company and a local government. It would almost seem that Uber was able to effectively turn all parties into stakeholders that benefitted from the company. By reminding those stakeholders they had something to lose, rather than something to gain, it was able to set the agenda in the media using online activism as a tool and thereby and positively affected its corporate reputation.

The Transport for London-conflict has proven to be an interesting background for the analysis of the tweets sent by Uber and the news articles published in the British press. This study has demonstrated that new technologies can be a powerful instrument for corporations if used effectively. As the number of active users on social media only continues to expand it has become vital for corporations to effectively communicate their narratives. This study provides an interesting lead for further studies.

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Appendix A – Coded tweets from @UberUK

Nr.	Date and time	Content	Replies	Retweets	Favorites	Hashtags	Labels			
1	14/08/2017 16:57	We're making changes based on driver feedback. See what's new at Uber: http:// t.uber.com/uk-driver-feed back pic.twitter.com/zB0Ef04ulb	16	11	23			Drivers		
2	16/08/2017 16:22	Are you a Tesco Clubcard customer? Redeem your vouchers for credits to ride with Uber today. Find out more here: http:// t.uber.com/tescoclubcard	15	8	21					Pricing/ promotions
3	08/09/2017 14:43	We're helping drivers go green with a ~£150m Clean Air Fund. Read more here http:// t.uber.com/air . pic.twitter.com/4Oj08rcXF5	20	30	46			Drivers		
4	15/09/2017 10:19	We're aware of an incident at Parsons Green. We have turned off dynamic pricing and will refund all journeys from the affected area.	54	502	1708					Pricing/ promotions
5	22/09/2017 13:41	Sign the petition to save your Uber in London and 40000 drivers' livelihoods http:// t.uber.com/SaveYourUber #SaveYourUber	485	1903	1441	#SaveYourUber	TfL conflict	Drivers		

6	22/09/2017 18:18	Sign the petition to save your Uber in London and 40000 drivers' livelihoods http://t.uber.com/SaveYourUber #SaveYourUber pic.twitter.com/TJXcUTaICb	240	596	558	#SaveYourUber	TfL conflict	Drivers		
7	23/09/2017 14:20	Thank you to the 500,000 people who have signed the petition to #SaveYourUber in London. Your support is amazing. http://t.uber.com/saveyouruber	284	1298	2329	#SaveYourUber	TfL conflict			
8	23/09/2017 18:38	This weekend 3.5M Londoners can track their driver's arrival in-app and know their car is just round the corner. http://t.uber.com/saveyouruber pic.twitter.com/7oMpPdlmXu	16	13	39		TfL conflict		Safety	
9	23/09/2017 19:21	Safety is key, drivers in London are licensed by TfL & pass the same background checks as other private hire services http://t.uber.com/saveyouruber pic.twitter.com/jPjKDTsFAO	50	86	189		TfL conflict	Drivers	Safety	
10	23/09/2017 20:00	To our 40,000 partner-drivers in London: We're doing everything we can to keep your livelihood safe and secure. http://t.uber.com/saveyouruber pic.twitter.com/OKjd7TeEzz	48	27	73		TfL conflict	Drivers		

11	23/09/2017 22:00	With Uber, you know your driver before you ride: See their name, photo, TfL licence number and rating. http:// t.uber.com/saveyouruber pic.twitter.com/Op0gMQLkNO	35	43	80		TfL conflict	Drivers	Safety
12	24/09/2017 00:00	It's last orders but our night's just starting. Tonight, our partner-drivers will help over 200K Londoners get home. http:// t.uber.com/saveyouruber pic.twitter.com/hqkzH1RCHR	14	15	44		TfL conflict	Drivers	Safety
13	24/09/2017 11:25	3.5 million Londoners rely on Uber. We believe people should have more, not fewer, transport options. http:// t.uber.com/saveyouruber pic.twitter.com/OP6G2c7d0L	29	28	66		TfL conflict		
14	24/09/2017 23:05	Thank you so much to the 700,000 people who signed the petition. Very humbling. #SaveYourUber http:// t.uber.com/saveyouruber pic.twitter.com/AhHuvjCF2P	109	50	96	#SaveYourUber	TfL conflict		
15	24/09/2017 23:05	This weekend we explained to London how important safety is to us.	41	11	35		TfL conflict		Safety

16	24/09/2017 23:06	We explained how drivers who use the app in London are licensed by TfL & pass the same background checks as all other private hire services.	65	18	32		TfL conflict	Drivers	Safety
17	24/09/2017 23:07	We heard from riders how our app makes them feel safer, as they can always see when their driver is just around the corner.	49	14	36		TfL conflict		Safety
18	24/09/2017 23:07	We heard how Londoners want more, not fewer transport options.	24	14	40		TfL conflict		
19	24/09/2017 23:08	Thank you London. #SaveYourUber	29	16	52	#SaveYourUber	TfL conflict		
20	29/11/2017 14:00	We've updated our web page with more information about the 2016 data security incident for UK Uber users. Read more: http://t.uber.com/2016-data-incident-UK You can also read our new CEO's blog post on the incident here: http://uber.com/newsroom/2016-data-incident/	14	0	3				Safety

21	19/12/2017 19:21	Do you know any NHS staff who will be working over Christmas? We'd like to help them with their journey to and from work. They can get up to -£10 off two rides by entering their official NHS email address at http://www.uber.com/nhs . T&Cs apply. pic.twitter.com/eftJ90IrWG	28	91	68					Pricing/ promotions
22	09/02/2018 14:31	Introducing our new driver advisory groups - https://www.uber.com/en-GB/newsroom/new-driver-advisory-groups pic.twitter.com/CfWDoWBnsw	14	1	10			Drivers		
23	16/02/2018 13:42	We take safety seriously. That,Äôs why we are making a series of changes to the way we do business in the UK, to make Uber safer for drivers and riders. Check out the full announcement below. https://www.uber.com/en-GB/newsroom/changing-the-way-we-do-business-to-enhance-driver-and-rider-safety/	266	89	450			Drivers	Saftey	

Appendix B – Coded news articles from The Daily Mirror, The Daily Mail, The Daily Telegraph and the Sun

A folder with the coding of the news articles, and the news articles themselves has been provided separately as they were too extensive to include here.