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Authors version of accepted chapter in *Handbook of Journalism Studies*

News organizations and Routines

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REFERENCE INFO:

Westlund, O. & Ekström, M. (2019), "News organizations and routines;" in: Wahl-Jorgensen, K. & Hanitzsch, T (Eds.) *Handbook of Journalism Studies*, Second Edition, Routledge.

Introduction

The first studies on news routines emerged in the 1950s, and since then a wealth of studies have followed that focus on routines among journalists in newsrooms. Clearly, however, much has happened in journalism since then; as a profession, with the news media industries, with digital developments and the tools, systems, and digital intermediaries that have emerged and become established. The news reporters in the 1950s were clearly embedded in a significantly different newsroom. They used quite different tools and systems to produce news, as compared to contemporary news reporters. At the same time, reporters both then and now engage in similar routines in their pursuit of information from a diverse set of reliable sources, and in turning this into something deemed credible enough to be published as news. Some routines persist, and certainly help journalists to cope with the pace of news work; yet new routines also emerge in digital and increasingly data-driven newsrooms. Digital journalism encompasses many different forms of news journalism, and discussions often focus on what is new rather than what remains essentially the same. Amid growth in perceptions about disinformation becoming more and more widespread in society, many have held that journalists and their professional and routinized practices play a key role. Shared routines are important for the collaboration and coordination of activities in the newsroom; for the way in which news journalists efficiently produce, frame, and publish their stories, approach sources, seek to verify information, and so forth.

This chapter presents a literature review focusing on routines in news organizations, and makes two distinct contributions by discussing: (1) the organizational context and routines for coordination in news organizations, and (2) routines in relation to the concrete situated practices forming epistemological news production processes. We begin, however, by turning to existing concepts and definitions of routines.

Key concepts

Organizational researchers Levitt and March have suggested routines “include the forms, rules, procedures, conventions, strategies, and technologies around which organizations are constructed and through which they operate” (1988, p. 320). In journalism studies, Becker (2004) has stressed the collective and contextual, and how organizational factors may shape routines. Journalism studies has also stressed that the systematic routines of doing news work help distinguish journalism from other forms of information production. More generally, the ways in which journalists and the news media work towards distinguishing journalism from other forms of information has been approached through analyses of boundary work. The boundaries of journalism are contested (Carlson & Lewis, 2015), and the journalistic authority is being upheld not only by routines of news work but also through different forms of meta-journalistic discourse (Carlson, 2017). Other scholars have defined routines in journalism as: “those patterned, routinized, repeated practices and forms that media workers use to do their jobs” (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 100). Ryfe (2016) argues that the latter definition is too industry-, habit-, and consensus-oriented, and it implies that routines guide practice. As an alternative, he suggests that practice theory provides a better understanding of how routines are performed and invoked as resources to justify actions. Ryfe writes: “within practice theory, routines are properly understood not as expressions of external pressures on journalists (whether understood as organizational, political, or economic pressures), but as cultural resources that bind journalists to a shared community of understanding” (2016, p. 128). Moreover, he notes that news production is more closely connected to practical knowledge than formal knowledge, what Grant (1996) calls tacit and explicit knowledge, respectively. Although routines are generally associated with patterns of action, conceptualizations differ in emphasizing routines as *either* structured by organizational contexts, managed and reproduced in actions, *or* as shaped and worked out in social

practices. The first perspective tends to understand routines as organizational features preceding concrete actions, while the second perspective suggests that routines emerge from the day-to-day activities and habitual performances of journalists (cf. Ryfe, 2016). Accordingly, the review in this chapter will be guided by a synthesis of these two key dimensions of routines: *organizational context* on the one hand, and *concrete practices* on the other. We suggest that these dimensions refer to levels of social organization with distinct explanatory power. Routines both precede and are shaped within social activities.

Organizational context here refers to the organizational rules, conventions, and procedures, including social, cultural, and structural pressures of different kinds, that condition different forms of media work. More specifically, organizations employ rules and conventions to routinize work, including but not limited to the ways in which diverse groups of social actors coordinate with each other. The chapter will thus discuss literature on how news organizations develop routines for *knowledge coordination* among social actors within the organization.

Concrete practices here refer to the routinized practices that function as mechanisms of stability and reduction of uncertainty. Routines, to some extent, guide practice; they are invoked as resources, they are negotiated in the accomplishment of concrete tasks, and they can also be used to justify concrete practices (Ryfe, 2016). News production routines help structure, stabilize, and justify the recurrent tasks of reporting about both expected (planned) and unexpected events. News production is closely associated with routinized patterns of news work, often seen as being embedded in an organizational and ideological context and performed in concrete settings. These processes of producing news are helpfully viewed as epistemological activities which result in the creation of different forms of knowledge. This chapter will therefore dedicate much attention to literature focusing on epistemology, to unpack the epistemological nature and justification of concrete practices in news production routines.

The next section offers a bird's-eye view of routines in news work, outlining the main contours of research over the past 70 years. Thereafter we turn to the main rationale of the chapter: the role of routines when it comes to *organizational context* and *concrete practices*.

Routines in news production research: a bird's-eye view

Almost 70 years has passed since the publication of the first study on routines in news work. This was David White's seminal work on gatekeeping and how newspaper editors choose what news to publish, when exposed to different wire stories (White, 1950). It was soon followed by a formative study by Warren Breed on the implementation of policy to coordinate and socialize news workers (Breed, 1955). The findings from this time period essentially were, at least ideally, that the news *mirrors reality* as long as organizational pressures do not prevent the journalists from doing so. Journalists were assumed to select what news events to report on or not, based on what "is out there."

Since then, numerous articles have looked into various aspects of routines in journalism and news organizations. Among those articles reviewing the research in this area we find a contribution to the previous edition of this handbook by Lee B. Becker and Tudor Vlad titled "News Organizations and Routines." The authors reviewed literature on how journalists and news organizations have developed routines, and how news work is a form of construction of reality (as opposed to a mirror of events and reality). An important contribution of their review involves highlighting how previous scholarship has found very little heterogeneity in routines over time and among different news media organizations and journalists. With shifts in journalism in a digital age they anticipated some routines

would change, something which was emerging in research and which they argued was important (Becker & Vlad, 2009).

In his review titled “News Routines, Role Performance, and Change in Journalism,” David Ryfe (2016) applies the *practice view* and thereby makes a distinctive contribution to the literature. Practices can be translated as routine behaviors, connecting with both explicit and tacit knowledge. Prior to developing his argument on the practice view, Ryfe identifies three waves of scholarship on news production:

- 1.) **First wave:** Tuchman’s pioneering work based on in-depth research into the American newsroom witnessed the importance of routines in everyday news work, and the construction of reality based on selection of stories and sources (Tuchman, 1972; 1978). Several classic studies also found that journalists in newsrooms all developed similar routines, producing constructs of reality rather than mirroring it. Applying largely similar routines, different news media produced relatively similar types of news materials (see e.g. Becker & Vlad, 2009; Gans, 2004; Tunstall, 1971). Overall, this line of research suggested that there was consensus about routines, so that news production was marked by habitual practices and organizational constraints.
- 2.) **Second wave:** Studies in the 1980s and 1990s showed that routines were not as stable and homogenous as previously suggested, that journalists had much more room for interpretation, and that processes were marked by conflicts and contradictions. There was emphasis on heterogeneity and that organizational and economic conditions resulted in journalists adapting their routines. Routines were at the time seen as rules that guided and justified practice. While there was variation in news production routines, news coverage remained quite uniform (c.f. Ryfe, 2006).
- 3.) **Third wave:** With tremendous changes in the technological and financial conditions surrounding journalism and news production, news media and journalists have adapted as well as developed new routines. During the 2010s there has been a revival of newsroom ethnographies and research into news production. Many findings in the third wave suggested the news essentially *mirrors reality*, unless the journalists are not prevented from doing so because of organizational pressures. Journalists were assumed to act in the capacity of selecting what news events to report on or not, by selecting based on what “is out there” (see e.g. Ryfe, 2009a, 2009b; Willig, 2013). Among the studies, Usher’s in-depth ethnography from the *New York Times* in 2010 focuses on values, practices, and decisions in a news organization balancing between print and online. Her findings on routines correspond to newsrooms of varying sizes and from many other countries (Usher, 2014).

Mapping and reviewing patterns in journalism studies literature focusing on routines is important for the bird’s-eye view, and so are critical and conceptually oriented approaches like the practice view. As discussed in the introduction, this chapter gives specific attention to the epistemology of news production and the related issue of knowledge coordination. This brings us to the stages of the news production process (Domingo et al., 2008; Lewis & Westlund, 2015a), and how these correspond more specifically with different routines. This serves as the point of departure for the most recent review of routines in news work, authored by Tandoc and Duffy (2018). In brief, they find that for the first stage of news production, the *access and observation stage*, key routines are connected to sourcing as well as using a beat system. Secondly, they discuss routines for selection and deselection of news material in the *selection and filtering stage*. Third comes the *editing and processing stage*, involving routines for using direct quotes, editing, verification or fact-checking, automation of writing and editing, as well as applying the inverted pyramid format in text-based news articles. Fourth, the *distribution stage*, concerns social media and live coverage, and the fifth and final

stage focuses on the role of various forms of analytics for measuring routines in editorial decisions (Tandoc & Duffy, 2018), which falls into so-called measurable journalism (Carlson, 2018).

Contemporary research into the epistemologies of digital journalism has typically studied only specific aspects of the routines reporters and editors engage in throughout news production processes. Relatively little attention has been devoted to how a broader set of social actors get involved in news production processes (see e.g. Lewis & Westlund, 2015a). Moreover, little is known about how journalists routinely *apply* knowledge in their routine acts of *producing* knowledge. Also, the routines for organizational coordination (Grant, 1996), within and between departments, guide and justify specific practices (Ryfe, 2016). There are both consistencies and heterogeneity in the routines of news production across diverse news media and countries (see e.g. Becker & Vlad, 2009), as well as distinct stages of the news production process (Tandoc & Duffy, 2018). Additional patterns of heterogeneity in routines emerge when broadening the approach to include the routines involving other social actors in contemporary news organizations (Westlund, 2011, 2012). Ultimately, the routines for applying and producing knowledge presumably vary across different parts of news organizations.

The basic components of journalistic knowledge, involving *explicitly articulated* knowledge in distinct subject areas, and *tacit* knowledge in producing news (c.f. Grant, 1996), are changing. The evolving digital mediascape has resulted in the need for new expertise and skills, in areas such as big data (Lewis & Westlund, 2015b), audience analytics and metrics (Ferrer-Conill & Tandoc, 2018; Zamith, 2018) and mobile journalism (Borum & Quinn, 2015). Essentially, news organizations have difficulties simply maintaining well-established routines, and they must also innovate, developing new kinds of routines that involve a more diverse set of social actors (including also different kinds of technologists). The news media develop and maintain an organizational context through which social actors with specialized knowledge can coordinate, developing routines for their concrete news production practices.

Ultimately, this chapter considers literature focusing on the two dimensions discussed in the introduction; *organizational context* vis-à-vis *concrete practices*. From an organizational standpoint, routines in news organizations cannot be reduced only to the newsroom and journalists. The chapter will therefore devote one section to reviewing routines in the news organization more holistically (Lewis & Westlund, 2015a), discussing how a news organization conditions routines for *knowledge coordination* among its social actors (Grant, 1996). Thereafter follows a section focusing on routines in concrete practices. This relates to the *epistemic news production processes* (Ekström, 2002; c.f. Carlson, 2017) in different stages of the news production process (Domingo et al., 2008; Tandoc & Duffy, 2018), which journalists as well as other social actors such as technologists and businesspeople in news organizations may engage in. Social actors are all working under certain organizational constraints, and their competencies and professional aspirations influence how they work (Lewis & Westlund, 2015a).

Organizational Context and Coordination in the News Media

This section focuses on news organizations and their *organizational context*, that is, how they establish and maintain rules, conventions, procedures, and ways of coordination that condition different forms of media work, and the routines associated with these. Seminal studies of newspapers identified three functional interests: advertising, audience, and news (Tuchman, 1978), and also that news production has a double market (Picard, 1989). News is produced for paying readers/audiences, which in turn are 'produced' to yield advertising

revenue (with the support of increasingly advanced digital footprint data). A distinct feature of news organizations is that alongside serving business purposes and financial gains (as typical firms), they are also cultural and social institutions. Journalism and news has long since been assumed to play a significant role for informed citizenry and democracy (Nielsen, 2017).

Knowledge is one, if not the, most important resource of any organization. It plays a dual role: knowledge generation and knowledge application. Coordination in the pursuit of knowledge application is often a main goal of organizations (Grant, 1996), but in news organizations this may extend also to knowledge creation. Journalism and news production, the labor of “making news” (Tuchman, 1978), clearly represents a knowledge-creating activity (Ekström, 2002). News organizations’ primary resource is de facto the knowledge of its media professionals; not only journalists, but the diverse set of media workers.

The ways in which organizations acquire, apply, and *routinely* coordinate knowledge are thus important activities. The overall capability and competitive advantage of the organization is the outcome of how knowledge is being used and integrated by its diverse sets of individual specialists (i.e. social actors). Coordination and integration of knowledge is important, and thus offers an understanding of the dynamics involved in the creation and application of organizational knowledge (Grant, 1996). Organizations need different kinds of expertise, and thus employ different professionals to routinely perform distinct tasks, by themselves or in coordination with each other. Cestino and Matthews (2016, p. 26) write: “as a result of the efficiency gains of specialization, the central exercise of organizations is to coordinate the work of different specialists.” Contemporary news organizations include journalists, technologists, and businesspeople (Lewis & Westlund, 2015a), all of whom possess specialist knowledge. Organizational learning research, for example, has shown how varied forms of experiential and vicarious learning may become part of organizational knowledge (see e.g. March, 1991). “May” because a prerequisite for organizational knowledge involves staff members developing routines for communicating with each other. However, many news organizations have traditionally been structured for separation rather than collaboration (Drew & Thomas, 2017).

In other words, the *organizational context* has established rules, conventions, and procedures in which certain social actors in the news organization have been kept apart. A key reason has been that cross-departmental coordination, particularly between editorial and commercial functions, has been anticipated to hamper the professional autonomy of journalists, which is seen as important for establishing trustworthy journalism. The rationale for separation rather than coordination, is linked to both journalism and business. It is linked to the professionalization of journalism and its aspirations to act independently of commercial influences on the one hand, and ambitions to give greater value to journalism in order to achieve greater value for advertisers on the other hand.

The organizational context has resulted in more general corporate goals of success in both journalism and business, while still keeping business and journalism apart. This, in turn, has meant that news organizations have traditionally avoided routines of coordination between journalists and businesspeople (see e.g. Achtenhagen & Raviola, 2009; Djerf-Pierre & Weibull, 2011). This lack of coordination between functions can be counterproductive to the news organization as a whole, since coordination and integration of specialists’ knowledge can be crucial (c.f. Grant, 1996). With the changing economics of the mediascape and increasing pressure to innovate in news organizations, the organizational context has changed, and more and more news organizations have reformulated their routines to encourage cross-departmental coordination. Several studies report how journalists and businesspeople, as well as technologists, coordinate diverse work tasks with each other (Drew & Thomas, 2017; Nielsen, 2012; Westlund, 2011). For example, Nielsen’s (2012) study of how journalists, managers, and technologists at two Danish newspapers

developed blogs reveals a “tension-filled and often contentious collaborative process” in coordinating with each other. Westlund’s longitudinal research into sensemaking of mobile media (2011, 2012) indicates how top management has completely changed organizational routines for coordination between departments, requiring representatives from editorial, business, and IT departments to coordinate digital development. While we here focus on intra-organizational coordination, it is important to take into account that social actors inside news organizations develop routines for coordinating and collaborating with social actors outside the news organization, such as technologists in civic tech companies (Baack, 2018; Lewis & Usher, 2014). For example, in developing a mobile news application at *Göteborgs-Posten*, the technologists were collaborating with a media tech company developing services for a number of news publishers. Ultimately, they also had to coordinate with Apple, ensuring that their mobile application got approved (Westlund, 2012).

Importantly, coordination is not equivalent to collaboration. An organization can strive towards coordinating knowledge among individuals and groups, to facilitate organizational learning, which does not necessarily require collaboration. To achieve collaboration, an organization and its members must work towards harmonizing their diverse goals in line with the larger ambitions of the company. Much research has observed that organizations struggle with conflicts and tensions in the goals and interests of diverse and specialized employees (see e.g. Westlund, 2011). Importantly, though, even when employees share common goals, an organization may struggle to coordinate their diverse sets of knowledge. Taking his departure in knowledge-based theory, Grant (1996) discusses four especially important ways in which organizations coordinate specialized staff, including routines:

1. **Rules and directives** align specialists towards shared organizational goals,
2. **Sequencing** involves coordinating the specialists’ work into a time-patterned progression (becoming routinized and institutionalized),
3. **Routines** are repetitive behavioral patterns that usually persist over time but also may evolve and change, and which are not enforced by top management,
4. **Group problem-solving** is marked by much interaction and is often used in times of uncertainty.

Organizations develop norms, rules, and procedures that enable them to accumulate and store knowledge from their members (March, 1991). Such organizational knowledge comes into the forefront as lessons from past experiences are encoded into organizational routines that guide daily activities, function as mechanisms of stability, and also justify their practices.

The organizational context of separation versus coordination results in substantially different routines. Imagine that the sports section of a news organization decides to boost their reporting on the upcoming Olympics. Six months ahead of the Olympics they contract an external provider of automated sport results reporting, to develop a news-oriented service to report across platforms. Involving the technologists is fundamental to developing digital services, although journalists do not necessarily coordinate with them in a systematic way. A traditional scenario has involved journalists proceeding in a way that does not involve the businesspeople in their coordination, but instead informs them once they set their news service in motion. The businesspeople, trained in business development, would thus not have an opportunity to engage with the journalists’ in-group problem-solving throughout the innovation process. Nor would they be able to plan their marketing campaigns ahead (which would work against sequencing). Many news organizations have struggled in convergence and cross-media news work when trying to integrate news publishing for their existing media alongside emerging digital platforms (van den Bulck &

Tambuyzer, 2013; Westlund, 2011).

Next follows sub-sections that focus on *separation* and *coordination*. Each sub-section discusses how divergent organizational contexts have fostered substantially different routines among the social actors of news organizations. The first sub-section discusses an organizational context in which social actors are expected not to coordinate—and can also justify not coordinating—whereas the second sub-section outlines a situation marked by the opposite.

Revisiting the organizational context of departmental separation

Organizations are staffed by a diverse set of experts and typically apply specific *rules and directives* to align these specialists towards shared organizational goals (Grant, 1996). Traditionally news organizations have applied specific rules and directives as well as diverging organizational goals for their editorial and business-facing activities. In parallel to the professionalization of journalism throughout the 20th century, legacy news media (especially newspapers) erected “walls” between the editorial department and the business department. In essence, this means a CEO and the business department take charge of commercial activities, while the editor-in-chief and the editorial department focus on producing journalism. Importantly, some news organizations have appointed publishers that assume charge of both the editorial and business interests. Symbolic as well as practical rules and routines keep these departments separate. They organize themselves so as not to run into each other, using offices in different floors or buildings, even different elevators. Moreover, they employ routines of separating all activities from each other, including Christmas parties, etc. (Westlund, 2011). Many news organizations have thus applied a form of “duality management” that essentially involves a functional separation of the “money” and the “words” (Achtenhagen & Raviola, 2009; Djerf-Pierre & Weibull, 2011). This has been expressed via several dichotomies that legitimize journalistic work: journalism vs. advertising; truth vs. publicity; independence vs. ownership interests (Raviola, 2010).

News organizations applying duality management have functionally and symbolically separated journalism from business, but this has taken place at the expense of organizational workflow. An organizational department may achieve *sequencing* (Grant, 1996), by coordinating the routine work of their staff specialists into a time-patterned progression. For example, the editorial department can sequence their work in the routines of news production, and the business department can sequence the planning and execution of a marketing campaign. Clearly, at its most basic level, diverse kinds of news publishers can achieve coordination and sequencing without different departments collaborating with each other much. A newspaper has been able to fill its pages with advertisements, and then insert news articles and pictures into the remaining gaps. Similarly, a radio or TV broadcast can schedule advertising and fill the empty slots with news. However, if there is no coordination or *group problem-solving* across the departments it will be more difficult to develop routines in which they achieve *sequencing* on an organizational level, especially when innovating new services and products.

An organizational context of coordination

Throughout the 21st century more and more news organizations have adapted their rules and directives, reducing the distance between departments. Some have started to enforce organizational rules and structures (such as project groups) that facilitate routines in which social actors in diverse departments coordinate everyday news work as well as

innovation projects (for instance through collective problem-solving). Empirical research from Denmark (Nielsen, 2012), Sweden (Westlund, 2011), and Norway (Westlund & Krumsvik, 2014) have yielded insights from Scandinavia on intra-organizational collaboration. For example, research shows how a Swedish newspaper implemented a coordination-oriented approach for all their media innovation projects in 2008. The new organizational context ruled that managers from the editorial, business, and technology departments had to establish routines for coordination; having meetings to decide on their way forward, and routinely engaging in group problem-solving (Westlund, 2011, 2012). Moreover, the global news industry association WAN-IFRA has over several years worked towards establishing more coordination and collaboration among newspapers in pursuit of editorial and business goals. Similarly, in 2014 the *New York Times* revealed (in their internal report *Innovation*) that intra-organizational planning and workflow were some of their key areas to work on. Also, other legacy news media in the United States have reoriented towards collaboration among diverse professionals in their organizations (Drew & Thomas, 2017; Gade, 2004). This practice seems to extend itself also to digital startups (Carlson & Usher, 2016).

Recent research has found that successful collaboration between editorial and business functions depends on both organizational and individual factors, which are distinct but interrelated. Four organizational factors stand out: culture; proximity; empowerment and buy-in; and right staff composition. It is important to social actors that their organization communicates clearly that they prioritize collaboration, and supports them in making it worthwhile. Individual factors include the respect and trust established in interpersonal relationships, as well as open communication. This links to the literal and/or metaphorical distance between the editorial and business functions that often results in unwanted norms for communication, such as simply not informing each other about developments that will have significant effect on the other (Drew & Thomas, 2017). This in turn connects with issues of hierarchies and power, but which are not the focus of this chapter.

Routinized concrete practices in the newsroom

Previously we discussed three waves of research into the routines of news work. This section will discuss more closely the concrete practices in such routines, drawing upon the sociological approach. Several in-depth ethnographic studies from the 1960s and 1970s focused on newsroom practices (Epstein, 1973; Fishman, 1980; Schlesinger, 1987; Tuchman, 1978), in retrospect defined as the first wave of newsroom studies (Cottle, 2000; Ryfe, 2016; Stonbely, 2015). These studies marked a shift in not only focusing on journalists' day-to-day routines, but were also important in the introduction of a sociological approach to news and news making. As Schudson (1989, p. 265) argues, the (then dominant) theory of gatekeeping tended to individualize organizational phenomena and "it leave(s) the 'information' (news) sociologically untouched." Drawing on organizational theories and social constructivism (the sociology of knowledge), the newsroom studies from this time period explained news as organizational products and analyzed news as a form of knowledge. Routines in the categorization of sources, and the processing and framing of news, were linked to organizational factors as well as professional norms of objectivity and impartiality. The roles of routinized practices in making news and justifying knowledge claims were made salient in, for example, Tuchman's (1978) *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality* and Fishman's (1980) *Manufacturing the News*.

Two aspects of knowledge in the newsroom research approach

The classic sociological newsroom studies developed research on knowledge in news journalism in two respects. First, they contributed an understanding of the professional knowledge and skills that news journalists, normatively speaking, were supposed to possess, and how they are coordinated. Second, the social constructivist approach reframed questions of truth and objectivity in news, focusing on how claims of objectivity are articulated in the news published and justified in routinized news work.

As regards the first aspect, newsroom studies explored the professional and tacit knowledge related to the performance of news values and news judgement, the selection of sources, and the construction of news stories (Fishman, 1980; Gans, 2004; Tuchman, 1978). This is knowledge applied by reporters *coordinated* with other reports and news editors. The news was mainly explained as organizational output relatively independent of individual reporters' skills. Although Tuchman (1978), for example, discussed the professional status of individual reporters based on their relationships with sources, reporters were mainly understood as replaceable, and knowledge as essentially embedded in the culture and bureaucratic organization of news production. The professional reporter was assumed to have developed tacit knowledge about routines related to the beat system, efficient ways to collect news stories, the typification of news events, the categorization of sources with respect to entitlement and authority, and the genre conventions of news discourse (e.g. Tuchman, 1973). Reporters also need a certain degree of explicit knowledge about the areas they covered, such as public affairs and finance. Such expertise, feeding into what Patterson calls knowledge-based journalism (Patterson, 2013), is substantially different from the many journalism schools and news media that prioritize journalists' tacit knowledge and their generic practical skills in producing news on almost any topic.

As Stonbely (2015, p. 264) notes, sociological newsroom research perceived professionalism as “internalizing organizational imperatives in service of established power.” However, this is not to suggest that routines were understood simply as applied and transferred into actions. As Ryfe (2016, p. 129) notes, Tuchman argued that routines allow for significant flexibility in the reporters' work. The newsroom studies provided in-depth knowledge about the coordinating principles of sequencing and routines. Schlesinger (1987), for example, analyzed the coordination of different tasks and expertise within the daily cycles of news production at BBC news. The production is sequentially organized in a series of phases and transmission times. He introduced the concept of stop-watch culture to emphasize the structuring role of deadlines and the related “need of co-ordination and synchronization of activities” (p. 84). In broadcast news this involves people with many different roles and expertise; journalistic as well as technical.

The second—epistemic—aspect is analyzed in Gaye Tuchman's (1972) article “Objectivity as a Strategic Ritual.” Tuchman identified a problem that has since been given considerable attention: How can news journalism justify such high claims of truth and objectivity? The answer suggested by Tuchman was that journalists apply routine procedures and working notions of objectivity related to the specific conditions of news production:

He (the newsman) must make immediate decisions concerning validity, reliability, and “truth” in order to meet the problems imposed by the nature of his task – processing information called news, a depletable consumer product made every day. Processing news leaves no time for reflexive epistemological examination. Nonetheless, the newsmen need some working notions of objectivity to minimize the risk imposed by deadlines, libel suits, and superiors' reprimand. (Tuchman, 1972, p. 662)

Tuchman discusses different procedures in the making of news (forms of quoting, the separation of facts and opinions, etc.), through which objectivity is constructed. How formal objectivity or neutrality is constructed in news discourse (through constructions of out-there-ness, practices of quoting, the formal neutral voice of journalists, etc.) has since been analyzed in a number of studies (Carlson, 2017; Clayman, 1992; Ekström, 2002; Montgomery, 2007).

The sociological approach to the epistemology of journalism was further developed by Ettema and Glasser (1987, 1998). With references to several of the first wave of newsroom studies (Fishman, 1980; Gans, 2004; Tuchman, 1973), Ettema and Glasser compare the knowledge-producing practices of daily news reporting with those of investigative reporting. While Tuchman (1972) characterizes the notions of objectivity, routines, and classifications of a generalized “news work” in contrast to other professions, Ettema and Glasser open discussion on significant differences *within* journalism. They introduced “contexts of justification” as a key concept for comparative analyses, suggesting that the epistemic claims and standards of justification in journalism are not homogenous but context dependent. A significant difference in the contexts of justification concerns the selection and processing of sources, a main focus of inquiry in sociological newsroom research (Fishman, 1980; Gans, 2004). In daily news reporting, organized networks of sources provide what Ettema and Glasser (1987, p. 344) call “pre-justified facts.” In investigative reporting, presenting controversial disclosures with often far-reaching personal and/or political implications, the justification of facts and sources is a critical accomplishment of the individual reporters in their role as responsible authors. Next, we turn to subsequent waves of research into news routines.

Towards contemporary research into news routines

In recent years, the structural and organizational transformations of news journalism have inspired two additional waves of study into news routines. News work, interactions, norms, and routinized practices have been studied with a focus on the spatial reorganization of news work, media convergence, the introduction of new technologies, the integration of automated audience feedback, and increased productivity and financial pressure (Domingo & Paterson, 2011; Robinson, 2011; Tandoc, 2014; Undurraga, 2017; Usher, 2015; Willig, 2013). In this context, the theoretical and methodological approaches of the first wave of newsroom studies have also been critically evaluated (Cottle, 2000; Ryfe, 2016; Stonbely, 2015). Four aspects are particularly important to consider.

First, as Cottle (2000) argues, theories of news as organizational and bureaucratic output tended to overemphasize determining routines at the expense of agency. Cottle (2000) suggests a conceptual shift from routine to practice. Ryfe (2016) refers to recent studies on news production, arguing that routines are best understood as practices. The reconceptualization provides important accounts for the flexibility, negotiations, and contingency in news production as well as the practical and collaborative achievement of routinized news work.

Second, also discussed by Cottle, the classical orthodoxy tended to homogenize or even simplify the epistemology of news and the related routinized practices of justifications of knowledge claims. An important task for contemporary ethnographic research is to explore the diverse and shifting norms and practices within journalism and its different sub-genres and positions on the news market. For example, the emergence of social media platforms as key digital intermediaries has resulted in the news media losing control and influence over the circulation, and loose revenues. Social media platforms have also lowered the threshold for new actors to publish other means of both information and

disinformation, what some call “fake news” (Tandoc, Lim, & Ling, 2017). Transformation of news on social media has changed the practices of verification and triggered new forms of fact-checking.

Third, continuing the tradition of studying news work as situated practices, it is crucial to recognize that news work is no longer (if it ever has been) a work solely performed by a group of in-house journalists in a centralized and spatially delimited newsroom. News production not only takes place at different locations outside the newsroom, the newsroom as such has also tended to become what Deuze and Witschge (2017, p. 12) describe as “networks of loosely affiliated competitor-colleagues” when “news organizations retool an enterprising mode of production.” As discussed in the previous section, researchers also need to take into account that contemporary news work may well involve journalists coordinating different tasks with other specialized actors in their organization, including but not limited to the technologists (c.f. Lewis & Westlund, 2015a).

Finally, the social, technological, and spatial reorganizations of news work shape practices and collaborations between other professions that are far more diverse and unstable than traditional news work. It is thus not the ethnographic method that has been questioned. Quite the contrary, in what several call a golden era of ethnographic research, scholars seem to agree that it is more important than ever to develop such in-depth studies in order to provide an understanding of changing practices. How routines are performed, negotiated, and oriented to in the accomplishment of news production is a practical and mainly tacit knowledge; hard to articulate in interviews but possible to explore in ethnographic research.

Towards future research on knowledge coordination within and beyond the newsroom

A key merit of ethnographic newsroom research is that it opens up and explores “the black box of news production” (Stonbely, 2015). Although this research tradition has tended to focus on the newsroom as a relatively bounded space and the center of news production, activities outside have been studied and the complexities of doing ethnography in distributed settings have been recognized (Ekström & Kroon Lundell, 2011). However, the paradigmatic contribution of the tradition of newsroom studies is not that scholars have focused on a particular space (the newsroom), nor that they have stayed in the newsroom doing observations for a long time. Its main contribution rather is its approach to journalism as organized and situated social practices, performed to achieve certain institutional and professional tasks. Getting close to the realities of situated practices, interactions, and collaborations motivates and legitimates ethnography and related methodologies. A recent analytical review into the practice approach to study news production synthesizes different theoretical approaches. Relatively few scholars make *direct* observations of journalistic practice and how it is produced and reproduced in performance, but instead gather *indirect* data through interviews and content analysis (see review in Ryfe, 2016). A real challenge therefore concerns how to develop ethnographic approaches, getting as close as possible to the concrete situated practices in a rapidly changing, diverse, networked, spatially dispersed (Deuze & Witschge, 2017), and even dislocated news journalism (Ekström & Westlund, 2018).

The conceptualizations and objects of inquiry in classical newsroom studies are still in many respects relevant. The acceleration of news production, increased productivity related to technological innovations and the general demand for more news with less staff, raises essential questions about the organized “manufacturing of news” (Fishman, 1980) and the routinized processing of events, facts, and sources in the making of news (Gans, 2004; Tuchman, 1973). There are no reasons to assume that routinization has become less salient in how news production is practically managed (Ryfe, 2009a; Ryfe, 2009b; Ryfe,

2016; Tandoc & Duffy, 2018). However, to understand the routinized practices in knowledge coordination and justifications of knowledge claims requires a more dynamic approach to situated practices and interactions. More specifically, we suggest three complementary directions for such research, focusing on (1) sequential coordination of knowledge; (2) changing activities of daily news production; and (3) invoked, (re)shaped, and negotiated routines in situated practices of news production.

- 1) ***Sequential coordination of knowledge.*** Temporal synchronization and the related coordination of knowledge and expertise are central to news production. This has been analyzed in the context of daily news reporting, typically planned in the morning meetings and finalized in, for example, the evening broadcast (Ekström & Nohrstedt, 1996; Schlesinger, 1987). Several such practices of daily news reporting show a high degree of stability. However, in the contemporary news environment, containing forms of super “liveness,” automated processing of news, continuous processing and repackaging of news in response to audience metrics, and recycling of news on headline services and social media, etc., the sequential coordination of knowledge is changing; and this concerns both the temporality and the expertise involved.
- 2) ***Changing activities of daily news production.*** As with all social practices, news production is more or less routinized. However, much work remains in clarifying the forms of routinization related to concrete activities of contemporary news production, where a diversity of specialized (sub)activities are developed in order to achieve specific goals. Interviewing is an example. A number of specialized activities in interviewing (research interviews, ‘sync interviews’, live interviews) are applied in the production of broadcast news, involving forms of routinization (Ekström & Kroon Lundell, 2011; Montgomery, 2007). Other core activities are, for example, finding news topics, writing headlines, quoting different voices, and editing and processing news stories for different publishing contexts. Such activities are conditioned but not determined by routines. As mentioned earlier, they involve collaboration. In-depth studies of these core activities are one way to increase our understanding of how knowledge is coordinated in the changing forms of news production.
- 3) ***Invoked, (re)shaped, and negotiated routines in situated practices of news production.*** Group problem-solving in situated interaction is a central form of coordination of knowledge (Grant, 1996). Journalism scholars have, however, shown scant interest in this level of analysis. Ethnographic newsroom research has been close to concrete practices, but has most often focused on the routines as such rather than how they are invoked and negotiated; and more on journalists’ interaction with sources than the interaction between actors within the newsroom. There are, however, exceptions that prove the value of such analyses. Risberg (2014) applies an ethnomethodological and conversation analytical approach to study the collaborative accomplishing of practical and technical tasks in the newsroom. Based on recorded and transcribed interactions, the study shows how knowledge is distributed and shared and how routines are invoked in collaborative news work. The next generation of this research should go beyond the intra-professional approach and study interactions between different professional functions within and outside the newsroom.

Concluding discussion

This chapter analyzes and discusses research concerning the application and creation of knowledge in routinized news work. The chapter has reviewed key literature on routines in news work to make two key contributions. Firstly, it has looked at the *organizational context* of routines for coordination in news organizations, involving a discussion of how specialized knowledge and expertise is coordinated among diverse sets of social actors. Secondly, the chapter has analyzed and discussed the nexus of news work routines and *concrete practices*, and how this relates to literature focusing on more general inquiries of news epistemology. Both sections contain discussions of four coordination activities outlined by Grant (1996): rules and directives, sequencing, routines, and group problem-solving.

First let us attempt to synthesize our discussion on knowledge coordination among workers in contemporary news organizations. Much journalism studies literature has typically treated knowledge-creation processes (news production) as social activities taking place in newsrooms. Journalists in newsrooms increasingly (need to) coordinate knowledge and news production practices with other specialized social actors (technologists, for example). Second, contemporary news organizations need to attain more and more specialized knowledge and expertise, such as data journalists and social media editors. Paying homage to Tuchman's classic "Making the News," in their edited book "Remaking the News," Boczkowski and Anderson (2017) argue that journalism research need not only focus on human journalists and the words, but should also pay attention to the role that *things* (such as diverse technologies) play in news work.

Further, as opposed to the "generic" journalistic knowledge possessed and applied by many reporters and editors in news organizations, individuals' explicit and tacit knowledge becomes salient. Through organizational coordination different specialists apply and create knowledge, and thus engage in social processes rather than erecting boundaries that prevent them from coordinating knowledge with each other. The nexus and simultaneous interplay of organizational and individual knowledge deserves closer scrutiny. In future research scholars should study the routines for applying, creating, and coordinating knowledge among diverse social actors in diverse functions in news organizations. Ultimately, far too little is known about coordination in the knowledge-intensive processes taking place inside and beyond news organizations. Organizational knowledge coordination focuses on the intra-organizational interplay between different social actors. Knowledge is also coordinated in the situated and sequentially organized activities of news production, in their concrete practices. It will be very important for scholars to study both desired and undesired, as well as intended and unintended, consequences of altered forms of organizing in the news media. A key question concerns whether new, and existing, routines are successful in fulfilling the objective of news production (as a form of knowledge).

Beyond this, and in line with recent conceptual scholarship on the agents involved in media innovation (Westlund & Lewis, 2014) or journalism and cross-media news work (Lewis & Westlund, 2015a), it would be worthwhile to analyze how knowledge is coordinated not only among the social actors of the organization but also with *audiences* and *technological actants*. Information and data related to "audiences" (users, customers, etc.) comprise knowledge materials that are often treated as key in so-called open-, user- or distributed innovation (Gassmann, Enkel, & Chesbrough, 2010). Audiences may pass on information and knowledge to news organizations in several direct (such as participating in journalistic processes or a focus group) and indirect ways (leaving digital footprints through their use). Such forms of knowledge can become useful for the social actors in news organizations. Moreover, many news organizations turn to contemporary advanced technologies to perform their knowledge-oriented work. This includes software (such as content management systems, scripts, audience analytics, and news applications), as well as hardware (computers, mobile devices, etc.). News organizations depend on diverse

technologies (Lewis & Westlund, 2016), and their technological resources should be assessed alongside human resources (Wade & Hulland, 2004). Humans pass on knowledge into an algorithm or script in the mere act of inscribing it with rules and directives for how sequences of work should be performed. As long as humans appropriate and “tame” technology, enrolling it into their work processes, they can expect that the technology delivers what it is programmed to do on a routinized basis. Ultimately, from the perspective of managers, being “able to work with various organizational stakeholders, to see different perspectives and speak their language, is a key factor in successfully integrating into, and performing well in, creative organizations” (Saintilan & Schreiber, 2017, p. 9)

In terms of concrete situated practices, scholars must study the increasingly complex routine practices, collaboration between social actors and coordination with technological actants, inside and beyond what has traditionally been known as the newsroom. Understanding routines as performed in situated practices is not to question that routines also exist as organizational structures and mechanisms that restrict and control practices. Both levels of analysis are required to understand the routinization of news work. What is more, it is a question for empirical research to explore the degree of control, reporter discretion, and flexibility in diverse forms of news production.

Acknowledgement

We are thankful to Andrew Duffy and Edson Tandoc Jr for their thoughtful and constructive comments on an earlier version of this chapter.

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