

Theoretical perspectives on crisis, resilience, and innovation

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ABSTRACT

This chapter describes how the concepts of crisis, resilience, and innovation are well-suited for capturing how Norwegian news media dealt with the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic posed threats to public health, leading to increased urgency for accurate information dissemination. As such, the crisis served as a catalyst, accelerating changes in news production, distribution, consumption, and business models. Persistence reflects resilience as the ability to regain stability and get back to “business as usual”, adaptability as resilience refers to large adjustments in professional practices in response, while transformability brings radical long-lasting renewal of the whole organisation. Presenting a normative view of innovation in journalism, this chapter focuses on value creation, improvement, and novelty. Innovation involves adjusting existing products or services and introducing new ideas perceived as novel by audiences. This coincides with the transformation of journalism from physical news products to digitalised services. Summarising insights from different strands of innovation literature, we identify a set of internal factors, or building blocks, of journalism innovation: resources, technology, organisation, management, culture, and business model.

KEYWORDS: crisis, innovation, resilience, journalism, news media

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Introduction

The underlying premise of this book is the conventional business advice that a crisis is not only a threat but also an opportunity for change and learning (e.g., Jacobides & Reeves, 2020; Sutton, 2007). In other words, a crisis could destroy an organisation, like a news publisher, but it could also stimulate innovation and encourage adaptation to new realities. We apply the concept of resilience to analyse and understand the organisational sensitivity of reaction to an external shock – in the case of this book, the Covid-19 pandemic – and the ability to respond and recover, sometimes by renewing growth (Faggian et al., 2018).

We take the normative view that to be resilient, news media organisations must rely on innovation. Furthermore, we perceive resilience as a prerequisite for news media sustainability over time. As such, there is a link between innovation and the preservation of news media as key knowledge-producing institutions in society, as noted in the Introduction of this book. This chapter elaborates on this position inspired by the understanding of journalism as a service to stakeholders while also connecting the changes that journalism is undergoing – as a profession, institution, practice, product, process, and business – to a broader service orientation observed across many socioeconomic sectors. In other words, we regard the ongoing changes in journalism and news media organisations as part of a general service transformation in society, whereby the news industry like many other industries is turning into digital service providers rather than manufacturers of physical goods (Cestino & Berndt, 2017; Sullivan, 2006).

Furthermore, we consider value creation to be central to journalism innovation. Innovation in our view is about providing new journalistic services that create value for key stakeholders, such as audiences, society, and the news organisation itself. In other words, value – be it social, economic, or any other kind – is the overall objective of journalism innovation. By taking this normative position, we focus on journalism innovation as something more than the introduction of new technology. Information and communication technology is important for service innovation, as a technological tool, a transformative market development, and an essential resource (Barrett et al., 2015), but it is not an end in and of itself. Value creation is.

In the next sections, we unpack the concepts of crisis, resilience, and innovation in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. These concepts are central to our empirical investigation of how news media in Norway responded to the Covid-19 crisis, which is presented in the following chapters of this book.

Crisis: Perception and responses from news media

The organisational theorist Karl E. Weick (1993) defined a crisis as a cosmology episode that occurs when people suddenly feel that the universe is no longer a rational, orderly system. A cosmology episode feels like *vu jàdé*, (i.e., the opposite of *déjà vu*): “I’ve never been here before, I have no idea where I am, and I have no idea who can help me” (Weick, 1993: 633–634). This description succinctly captures the sense of bewilderment, shock, and fear that spread across the globe in March 2020 when the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus a pandemic (WHO, 2023). Such an event-centred perspective views crises as sudden, unexpected, and unpredictable episodes. A crisis is generally understood as a concrete time- and space-specific event with a clear beginning and a clear end (Frandsen & Johansen, 2016). However, crises are often overlapping, with blurred boundaries, and encompassing several aspects, and it could be difficult to discern where one crisis begins and another ends. Some researchers are therefore critical of the event-centred approach to crises and suggest that crises should be studied as ongoing processes that span from before and after a triggering event (Roux-Dufort, 2007). This process-oriented understanding of crises is well-fitted to capture how the Covid-19 crisis interlaced with the ongoing media crisis in many countries around the world. The media crisis represents a multifaceted process which is economic, political, social, and technological in nature, and it concerns news media’s business model and profitability as well as their relationship with key stakeholders and their legitimacy as knowledge-producing institutions in democratic societies (Curran, 2019). As observed by De Mateo, Bergés, and Garnatxe (2010), the media crisis is a business crisis, initiated by redistribution of advertising expenditure and audience; a crisis of journalism, where products and services are optimised to achieve maximum profits in both advertising and audience markets; and finally, a crisis concerning the role of journalism in democratic societies, putting news media and their journalistic work under considerable pressure long before the outbreak of Covid-19. The pandemic was woven into this complex crisis process, serving as an amplification of uncertainty in the news media.

The Covid-19 crisis could thus be studied both as an event in and of itself and as part of a larger crisis process that has been going on in the news media for several years. Crises represent threat, urgency, and uncertainty (Bakken & Brinkmann, 2022), catalysing a need for problem-solving, important decision-making, and change. These characteristics are central when analysing the Covid-19 crisis and news media’s responses in terms of resilience strategies and innovation, as exemplified in the following sections.

Crisis as threat

In terms of threat, the Covid-19 pandemic was primarily a health and humanitarian threat, but as previously noted, the pandemic had a massive impact on businesses as well. According to a report by the European University Institute (Carlini & Bleyer-Simon, 2021), the pandemic was particularly harmful to business models predominantly based on advertising revenues, like commercial radio, television, and newspapers. For print newspapers, the reduction in sales of print products added to the negative effect of the advertising decline (Olsen et al., 2020)

The pandemic also represented a major threat to the general information ecosystem. Around the world, false information regarding the origin of Covid-19 and how to cure the disease spread on social media accounts and websites, making it difficult for people to understand and implement scientifically grounded preventive measures to keep themselves and their communities safe (Posetti & Bontcheva, 2021). Adding insult to injury, far-right extremist groups spread fear and conspiracy theories on social media with the aim of destabilising the social order. For example, Boberg and colleagues (2020) found that alternative news media in Germany used Covid-19–related information to foster their long-term anti-establishment narratives, critical of public institutions and political actions of the administration.

Crisis as urgency

News media has a vital role to play as an information source in times of crisis, and news consumption sky-rocketed during the Covid-19 crisis, even among groups that normally would not turn to legacy media for news (e.g., Casero-Ripolles, 2020). However, meeting the public's urgent information needs and responding to the new social realities put newsrooms under severe pressure (Finneman & Thomas, 2022). Both crisis journalism and health journalism represent narrow fields within most news organisations, and journalists had to develop skills and knowledge to provide accurate reports as the crisis escalated. As demonstrated in Konow-Lund and Olsson's (2016) study of newsrooms' responses to a terror crisis, news desks' ability to cope with "disaster marathon modes" of reporting relies on everyday organisational structures and previous experiences, which represent a certain type of resilience. Still, routines and stabilising mechanisms alone are not enough for journalists to cope and perform during a crisis (Konow-Lund & Olsson, 2016). A crisis provides a sudden and real sense of urgency to respond, an example of which is the quick shift to remote working practices in news organisations during the Covid-19 pandemic. In Norway, the implementation of remote work was done at an extreme pace – almost overnight – following the strict social distancing measures and full lockdowns

in March 2020. The sense of urgency and need for quick decisions amid the crisis could enable news media to reprioritise activities and focus on key challenges while reallocating and mobilising resources towards the most pressing issues facing the organisations.

Crisis as a catalyst for change

A crisis such as the Covid-19 pandemic can also serve as an acceleration of innovations (McKinsey, 2020). Quandt and Wahl-Jorgensen (2021) noted that for the news media sector, the Covid-19 crisis created a sudden disruption in behaviour, which amplified or accelerated processes that had started well before the pandemic, such as staff reduction, increased focus on online subscribers, or planned launches of new products or services. In a similar vein, Olsen, Pickard, and Westlund (2020) argued that Covid-19 and its economic effects accelerated changes in news production, distribution, consumption, and business models. Studies from all over the world have suggested that the Covid-19 pandemic changed the way newsrooms function, such as the composition of teams (Appelgren, 2021), as they set up trans-organisational networks that allowed employees to exchange ideas and learn from each other during the pandemic (Túñez-López et al., 2020). Some of these accelerating processes included a turn towards process innovation and servitisation, as journalists tested and developed new formulas for co-creating content and establishing direct and effective conversations with audiences (Olsen & Furseth, 2023). Moreover, the news media diversified their content on more platforms than before the pandemic to reach as many people as possible with information about the virus (Túñez-López et al., 2020).

Resilience: Coping with and recovering from the Covid-19 crisis

In economic theories, the term resilience refers to a system's capacity to respond to, handle, and recover from exogenous shocks (e.g., the Covid-19 pandemic) that disturb its economy, structure, and activities (Martin, 2012; Mayor & Ramos, 2020). The Latin root, *resilire*, means “to leap back” or “to rebound”, which suggests that a system has a certain elasticity and adaptive capacity that enables it to rearrange itself and adapt following a disturbance or disruption. Keck and Sakdapolrak (2013) suggested that the underlying principles that constitute the resilience concept are persistence, adaptability, and transformability, which involve different types of innovation.

Resilience as persistence – business as usual

This type of resilience is mostly concerned with incremental innovations along prevailing paths, which often lead to the continuity of an organisation's operations. The capacity to persist may be found deeply embedded in organisational culture and history. This can be observed as a type of organisational inertia (Gilbert, 2005). While such inertia could serve as an obstacle to change, it could also enable an organisation to withstand an external shock which would otherwise threaten to destroy the organisation (Feldman & Pentland, 2003; Giddens, 1984). Relying on learned routine responses is an example of persistence, and this notion of routines is central in research on journalism practice. Olsson (2009: 448) has suggested that an organisation's pre-crisis structure and experience will determine how they respond to a crisis. When journalists are accustomed to periods of crisis (Konow-Lund & Olsson, 2016), their responses may often follow the approach of "business as usual" (García-Avilés, 2021). Along with norms, routines may help journalists negotiate uncertainty, maximise resources, and avoid conflict (Bunce, 2019). For example, García-Avilés (2021) observed how managers in Spanish digital-only media outlets built on well-rooted practices rather than developing an entirely different approach to work in virtual newsrooms when responding to the Covid-19 crisis.

Resilience as adaptability – a turning point

Adaptability describes resilience as a way of moving forward for an organisation, and not returning to the pre-shock state. Within this type of resilience, adapting to evolving technology and user needs and preferences are the focus of media innovation. At the same time, structures ensure stability, preventing the organisation from collapsing (Giddens, 1984; Hess & Waller, 2021).

This type of resilience can take place if an organisation is deeply affected by a crisis and the disturbance is pushing the organisation beyond its "elasticity threshold" (Martin, 2012). A crisis can be a turning point or a defined breaking point, "where some processes and developments come to a halt, and some essential aspects, issues, practices, actors and interactions become observable, including ones that may have been previously overlooked" (Quandt & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2021: 1201). As such, a crisis can trigger adaptability and the capacity to adjust (Finneman & Thomas, 2022).

A breakdown of newsroom procedures, organisational structure, and hierarchy can create a vacuum which leaves room for improvisation and creativity. Although adapting to a new reality may include re-establishing normal routines and roles within a new working mode to create stability (García-Avilés, 2021; Konow-Lund & Olsson, 2016), these activities represent a turning point in digitalising professional practices and virtual workflows.

Resilience as transformability – radical renewal

Lastly, transformability means a complete restructuring of an entire system, which, in the context of news media, could be understood as a massive disruption in news practices (Alexander, 2015; García-Avilés, 2021) as well as the introduction of entirely new offerings to customers. As such, transformability includes reorientation and an innovative mindset focusing on renewal in the long run (Francis & Bessant, 2005).

We can observe this in the way the pandemic accelerated digitalisation strategies, which, according to Sarkar and Clegg (2021), were an essential survival strategy across industries and businesses during the pandemic. Day-to-day adaptation does not require major organisational restructuring (Nadler & Tushman, 1989); however, when organisations experience substantial changes within a noticeably brief period (such as the pandemic outbreak), the transformation also includes a potential for radical renewal and improvement. Whether changes such as the introduction of remote working (Applegren, 2021) and virtual management and collaborations (García-Avilés, 2021), as well as new types of services based on data journalism (Heravi et al., 2022) that took place during the pandemic, are substantial enough to be counted as transformative innovations is open for empirical investigation.

Innovation: Value creation, improvements, and novelty

While innovation plays a role in transformability, adaptability, and even persistence in an organisation amid a crisis, the type and extent of the newness of the innovation involved can vary greatly. This calls for a closer examination of the meaning of innovation. As noted by several media scholars, there is a persistent need for a deeper theoretical framework that captures how innovation is becoming a crucial asset to the survival of the media industry as well as the actors, dynamics, and factors involved in the innovation processes (Doyle, 2013; Küng, 2013).

Considering newsroom innovation as “an organizational process characterized by different dynamics, mechanisms, and negotiations” (Paulussen, 2016: 194), the research presented in this book explores how journalism innovation plays out at various organisational levels, particularly in relation to changing business models and the development of digital strategies among news media, as well as new journalistic services and practices. By focusing specifically on key components of the news production process, we address the value-creation logic of news media and how this is realised through innovation.

Although news media operate in dual, or sometimes multiple, markets of advertisers and audiences, the market for digital subscriptions has been

growing since before the pandemic, while the Internet advertising market is shrinking (Kalim, 2022). This development suggests that for news media, maximising the journalistic value for the audience is a more sustainable strategy than depending on advertising alone (Bakke & Barland, 2022; Groves & Brown, 2020; Sullivan, 2006). As such, improving journalistic services through innovation represents essential value-creation potential for news media. This potential is based on a value-creation logic whereby creating value for audiences by offering engaging news and information is seen to create value for society by making people better informed and connected to the public. This in turn creates economic value for the news organisation (Olsen, 2021). Developing new and improved audience experiences, providing new offerings that are aligned with audiences' needs and expectations, and engaging in deeper relationships with audiences in new ways are essential elements of news media's value creation in an advanced consumer society.

This understanding of value creation and innovation motivates our investigation of how news media responded to the Covid-19 crisis and encourages us to explore factors that stimulate or impede innovation among news media in this specific context. Before outlining such enabling and constraining forces, we need to expand on our understanding of the concept of innovation in terms of value creation, improvements, and novelty. Moreover, we outline different types of innovation that are helpful in the categorisation of innovations amid the Covid-19 crisis.

Innovation as value creation

Treating news media as any other commercial manufacturing industry, and news and information as any other kind of commodity, would ignore journalism as a knowledge-producing institution committed to journalistic ethics and to serving the interests of society. According to such ideals, news media provide services of a worth that exceeds their exchange value (i.e., the price that customers are willing to pay in the marketplace). On the societal level, journalism ideally contributes to an informed and educated public, to social interaction, engagement, and participation in public life, as well as the correction of errors and the resolution of conflicts in society. On the individual level of media users, journalism's value creation concerns functional benefits, such as information and helping to understand the world and events; emotional benefits, such as stimulating feelings of involvement, belonging, and community; and self-expressive benefits, such as providing opportunities for participation through various forms of interactivity (Picard, 2010). Taking this normative view, we argue that innovation in journalism is essentially about enhancing the value of news and information

services to audiences and to society at large so that the new service better meets audiences' needs and expectations as well as the broader needs of a well-functioning democracy.

On the other hand, news media operating in a commercial environment also need to generate revenue. Indeed, a sound financial basis for news operations plays a key role in securing high-quality journalism (e.g., Sjøvaag, 2022). Therefore, economic value creation cannot be ignored when analysing journalism through an innovation lens that emphasises value creation, nor can the competitive environment in which news media operate. As described by García-Avilés and colleagues (2018), journalism innovation is the introduction of something new that *adds value* to customers while simultaneously allowing the media organisation to capture a share of the value generated. Therefore, an essential aspect of media innovation lies in its transformative value, which modifies and improves the organisation's performance (García-Avilés et al., 2018).

Building a more robust and competitive business of journalism is an important reason why news media are encouraged to move from a product-centric to a service-centric operation. By developing a value proposition which differentiates news organisations from other information businesses, by becoming more focused on understanding audiences' problems, addressing their needs directly, and thus increasing trust and credibility, news media are likely to generate more revenue (Picard, 2010; Sullivan, 2006).

When audiences pay for content, it generates exchange value for the news organisations. As such, the commercialisation of the service is a central part of value creation. This view aligns with a substantial body of media innovation research which emphasises how sustainable innovation in journalism is also about business model innovation, and that finding new ways to generate revenue is a key challenge for news media (see, e.g., García-Avilés et al., 2019; Paulussen, 2016; Posetti, 2018). This duality in news media's value creation is captured in the definition of journalism innovation as

the ability of media professionals to creatively solve the needs of their audiences, conditioned by the professionals' talent and predisposition and by the available resources to test and create new journalistic processes, products, and services, thus providing value to their news organization and its audience. (Zaragoza Fuster & García Avilés, 2022: 2)

In the Covid-19 context, this definition captures how news media used available resources to provide new service offerings that created value for audiences while simultaneously generating revenue for their own organisations.

Innovation as improvements

Innovation is closely related to change, but in our view, the two should still be treated as distinct concepts. Change is temporal and concerns the difference in the state of something from one time to another (Westlund et al., 2021); it does not necessarily have a purpose and is often incidental. Furthermore, change is not related to an invention or something that is necessarily characterised by novelty or value creation. The purpose-driven nature of innovation – to achieve certain goals or to solve problems, which in turn creates value – helps distinguish innovations from the more general notion of change.

Innovation is not understood as shifts at various times but as the advent of novel, different, or modified ideas, processes, products, or services. As noted by Luecke (2003), innovation is the embodiment, combination, or synthesis of knowledge in original, relevant, and valued new products, processes, or services. Similarly, Huberman (1973) emphasised innovation as a creative process of selecting, organising, and utilising resources in new or unique ways that will result in the higher achievement of predetermined goals and objectives. In other words, innovation concerns improvement. It has a direction and purpose. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, journalism innovations typically encompassed new solutions to emerging problems created by the crisis.

Innovation encompasses both small adjustments and major shifts in offerings and operations, including entirely new ideas which could have disruptive effects on established players in an industry. This kind of disruptive innovation (see Christensen, 1997, for an elaboration of the concept) typically takes place when incumbents focusing on improving product performance and serving the high end of a mature market are overturned by new entrants offering cheaper, simpler, and often more convenient products that are “good enough” for a large share of the market. Disruptive innovation thus creates new markets that incumbents have overlooked (Christensen, 1997). This would be the case if the Covid-19 crisis opened opportunities for new service providers to create cheaper news and information services than those of news media and these new services were perceived by audiences as sufficient to meet their information needs. Sustaining innovation, on the other hand, are typically improvements of an existing product or service, informed by customer needs (Christensen, 1997). Similarly, incremental innovation is defined as gradual alternations which make an existing product or service slightly better or different. Most innovations taking place in news media are described as incremental, gradual, and continuous improvements of existing concepts, products, or services in existing markets (Storsul & Krumsvik, 2013). Such incremental innovation, which “requires existing capabilities to be expanded or adapted” (Küng, 2013: 10), may not create new markets or use radically new technologies, but if the adjustments fulfil customers’ needs,

they can attract customers who are willing to pay more. In times of crisis, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, sustaining and incremental innovations would typically include new services that build on and enhance already existing services which yielded new opportunities to generate revenue.

Innovation as novelty

Whereas some scholars have reserved the term innovation for describing the *outcome* of an innovation process, others maintain that the *process* of developing new services and products cannot be separated from the implementation and value creation of a new service (Witell et al., 2016). The latter view of innovation covers both the emergence of a new idea and the implementation of the idea in an existing social system, as well as the further elaboration of the idea. Moreover, the process perspective includes an organisational ongoing, evolving, and cumulative change (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002), sometimes referred to as organisational innovation (García-Avilés, 2021: 1254). News media, like any organisation, are continuously modified, altered, and extended, and even presumably static organisational structures, such as routines, are modified on an ongoing basis (Hernes, 2007; Langley et al., 2013).

Generally, novelty is perceived as a common characteristic of innovation – either in the form of new ideas or a new combination of old ideas that are experienced as new in a certain context. As described by Rogers (1995), innovation is an idea, practice, or object that is considered new by an individual or group of individuals, meaning that “innovation must involve something more than the repetitive cycle of everyday news production” (García-Avilés et al., 2019).

The experiences of both the audiences outside the media organisation, and of news workers inside – such as reporters, editors, programmers, and others involved in delivering the news – determine the novelty of innovation as well as its value. As such, newness refers to something that has not previously been understood, accepted, or implemented by the recipient of the innovation. Radical innovation often refers to innovations that are new to the world, and incremental innovation to those that are new to the market (Sundbo, 1997). In our view, it makes sense to interpret the “new to market” factor liberally in the context of innovation, so that a new service introduced, for example, in a local market by a local news provider could represent an innovation even though a similar service has already been introduced by another media organisation operating in another market. What matters in this respect is that the service is experienced as new to relevant customers, that is, to audiences that the media organisation aims to serve in new ways.

This interpretation of innovation as small and incremental changes in existing products and practices, as well as radically new operation modes and services offered, is supported by the fact that over time, small adjustments may represent a major long-term transformation of news media in general.

As described by Paulussen (2016: 192), “while news organizations seem to adapt slowly on the short term, their incremental evolution over several years is significant and fundamental”, and the changes in the news industry are radical and disruptive when assessed in retrospect. When exploring innovation among news media during the pandemic, it is important to bear in mind that small adjustments to operations and news services that took place during the crisis could represent significant steps in a broader transformation that may only become apparent over time.

Types of innovation

Though the basic understanding of innovation guiding our research in this book is that innovation is something new that creates value for stakeholders, the conceptual characteristics that enable us as researchers to capture and assess innovation among news media in the context of Covid-19 need some further clarification. In the next sections, we approach this by distinguishing different types of innovation as areas where innovation takes place. García-Avilés and colleagues (2018) have suggested a structured indexation of media innovation, measuring the area, degree, and technological base of innovation. Furthermore, García-Avilés and colleagues (2019) provided a model for diffusing innovation in media organisations that integrates the different areas and types of innovation and its players, obstacles, and boosters, as well as its outcomes. In this book, we rely mostly on Krumsvik, Milan, Bhroin, and Storsul’s (2019) categorisation, which builds on the work of Francis and Bessant (2005). Here, media innovations are distinguished as product, process, position, paradigm, genre, and social innovations (see also Krumsvik & Francis, Chapter 7). Both product and genre innovation refer to innovations of what news media offer, while process innovation concerns how these products are created and delivered. Position innovation captures how media organisations redefine their products in the market, whereas paradigm innovation concerns change in the mindset, values, and business model of news media. Social innovation involves the use of news media to meet social needs and improve people’s lives.

While both journalistic products and production are part of a process of innovation in our interpretation, journalistic products and production could undergo distinct and separate innovation processes. An example is when newsrooms had to move their entire news production online due to Covid-19 restrictions, as it was a process of innovating the journalistic production which did not automatically change the journalism offered to audiences. Indeed, in this situation, innovating production processes was necessary to maintain the status quo of journalistic production and secure the provision of news and information, rather than changing the nature of the journalistic output (García-Avilés, 2021; Olsen & Furseth, 2023).

On the other hand, the Covid-19 pandemic also encouraged media organisations to experiment with new ways of communicating, collaborating, and interacting with audiences, as newsrooms were replaced by home offices and physical meetings were moved to digital platforms (Appelgren, 2021; Olsen & Furseth, 2023). In this case, the journalistic product and process innovation were symbiotic. The main purpose of process innovation is to improve the organisation's performance, that is, its ability to create value "through variations in strategy and workflow" (García-Avilés, 2021: 1254) and to maintain "a commitment to quality and high ethical standards" (Pavlik, 2013: 183).

Building blocks of journalism innovation

A key objective for innovation research, in news media and elsewhere, is to understand dynamics and factors that drive or impede innovation. This is also key to our investigation of innovation in journalism amid the Covid-19 crisis. Previous research has explored many factors that impact innovation in news media, for instance, technology, market opportunities and user behaviour, the behaviour of competitors, regulation, industry norms, company strategy, leadership and vision, organisational structure, capacity and resources, and culture and creativity (Krumsvik et al., 2019). In our research, we are primarily interested in internal dynamics in news organisations that either stimulated or slowed down innovation in response to one key external factor – the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the field of media innovation, a growing body of research has identified internal factors shaping innovation processes in the newsroom, both on the structural and individual levels (Paulussen, 2016; Steensen, 2009). A variety of structural conditions – ranging from organisational hierarchy and lines of command in the newsroom to resource reallocation, technological infrastructure, recruitment, and training – have been identified as crucial to newsroom innovation (García-Avilés et al., 2019, Hendrickx & Picone, 2020). Another innovation model, presented by Posetti (2018) and the Journalism Innovation Project at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, suggests presenting sustainable innovation in journalism as a wheel with different spokes, where each spoke captures an innovation area: storytelling & reporting; audience engagement; technology & products; distribution; business; leadership & management; organisation & structure; and people & culture. Innovation – radical, disruptive, and transformative – could manifest in each of these areas or spokes of the innovation wheel. Others, like Dogruel (2015), have introduced a multi-level innovation model to account for the processual nature of innovations, from development to implementation and economic and societal impact, as well as the parameters shaping media innovations at the micro-level

of the individual news worker, the meso-level of the media organisation, and the macro-level of the wider media and innovation system where a media organisation operates.

An implicit premise in much of this research is that innovations can succeed if structural constraints are properly addressed, which in turn suggests that innovation is controlled, determined, and imposed by management in a top-down manner (Hendrickx & Picone, 2020). However, there is also substantial research describing how factors like established culture, norms, habits, and role perceptions in legacy news organisations could stand in the way of innovation (Belair-Gagnon & Steinke, 2020; Goyanes & Rodríguez-Castro, 2019; Paulussen, 2016; Porcu, 2020). These structural forces play a stabilising function within journalistic practice and are inherently difficult to change. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, there was arguably a crisis-driven push to alter, adjust, and modify operations and service offerings among news media, combined with a natural drive towards stabilisation and normalisation. This makes the crisis a particularly interesting case for investigations of factors that stimulate or hinder innovation. Summarising insights from different strands of innovation literature (Dogruel, 2015; Furseth & Cuthbertson, 2016; García-Avilés et al., 2018; 2019; Hendrickx & Picone, 2020; Krumsvik et al., 2019; Paulussen, 2016; Posetti, 2018; Steensen, 2009), we identify a set of internal factors that have been found to influence innovation, particularly relevant for investigations of news media's ability to innovate amid the pandemic. These factors have been constructed to bridge structural and individual perspectives of processes of innovation within a multi-level perspective of an organisation. As such, they serve as a framework which guides our empirical investigation in the following chapters of this book. Our framework includes six such factors, or building blocks, of journalism innovation: resources, technology, organisation, management, culture, and business model.

Resources

In a media company, resources include both tangible and intangible assets in addition to financial assets. Intangible assets refer to a wide variety of resources including cultural property rights (e.g., the right to stream a sporting event), as well as brand value and reputation.

Tangible assets typically include the physical newsroom and other production facilities. Research on media innovation has been concerned with the impact that the physical newsroom has on innovation, specifically the integration of print and online operations in newsrooms and how this could stimulate creativity as well as synergies in news production. The role of the physical newsroom gained renewed attention during the Covid-19 pandemic, as it became unavailable to news workers and was replaced by remote working practices due to social distancing regulations (García-Avilés, 2021). The

report *Changing Newsrooms 2020* (Cherubini et al., 2020) predicts that hybrid newsrooms will soon be the norm for most news organisations.

Financial assets include all forms of cash or credit that can be invested in innovation. Spending on research and development is often presumed to be connected to increased innovation and sustained financial performance (Furseth & Cuthbertson, 2016). Several media innovation studies have identified lack of resources as a major constraint to the adoption of innovations in the newsroom (Paulussen, 2016), and the news industry's comparatively low investments in people, competency, and technology are considered restrictive to innovation among news media (Nielsen, 2021). However, the relationship between financial assets and innovation is not straightforward, as observed in organisations that are both big and resourceful but still lagging in the digital transformation of their industry (Furseth & Cuthbertson, 2016).

Technology

Technology includes a variety of platforms and tools for news production, news presentation and distribution, customer management, and more. Technology has been described both as a broad type of innovation in and of itself as well as a “transversal element, which influences all the areas where innovation is implemented” (García-Avilés et al., 2019: 5).

García-Avilés's (2021) review of media innovation research sums up a wide variety of technologies that have facilitated the implementation of innovative news media offerings and production processes, from computational journalism – which automates parts of the content creation, production, and personalisation of journalistic processes and seeks to derive value from algorithms, Big Data, and online analytics – to the emergence of drone journalism and immersive 360-degree video – which creates new genres of visual journalism and human–computer interaction, enabling the audience to interact with news content through spoken commands.

There has been an increasing interest in how technology makes it possible to connect with others to create value in a network type of innovation, as described in studies on user-generated content, audience participation, social media, multimedia, and interactive actors (Belair-Gagnon & Steinke, 2020). Others have demonstrated how technological advances, such as data and computational journalism, mobile journalism, and web analytics and metrics, represent innovations in how news media create and distribute content (Boyle & Zuegner, 2017; Karlsen & Stavelin, 2014; Posetti, 2018; Willemsen et al., 2021).

Organisation

Organisation is a broad category that includes a media organisation's employees as well as organisational structures, routines, competency, and communication practices: It relates to how the media company is organised (Krumsvik et al., 2019). From the seminal work on newsroom innovation by Boczkowski (2005) to more recent research in the field (e.g., García-Avilés et al., 2019; Hendrickx & Picone, 2020), it has been emphasised that innovation requires the integration of both people and resources in processes of change. A key point here is that innovation arises from practice within flexible organisational structures, as described by García-Avilés and colleagues (2019). Research also emphasises the importance of digital competency and training to ensure the diffusion of various technological innovations is successful (Belair-Gagnon & Steinke, 2020). However, the priority given to building such competency differs between news organisations (Krumsvik, 2015).

The organisational aspect is also central to how people communicate and cooperate within the organisation. For example, there is considerable research interest in the coordination and collaboration between various departments within the media organisation, such as the newsrooms and the information technology department, and how this dynamic affects innovation (Westlund et al., 2021). According to García-Avilés and colleagues (2019), the most innovative media outlets foster interaction between various departments and sections in the media organisation, harness the power of change agents inside and outside the newsroom, and nurture flexible workflows that encourage the spread of innovative culture and a more risk-tolerant mindset. Organisational structure, workflows, routines, and lines of command can be seen as resources that form part of the innovation process. Some news media have implemented innovation departments or labs for experimenting and developing innovative ideas and projects regarding technologies, content, audiences, and editorial formats. According to a study by Zaragoza Fuster and García Avilés (2022), the level of innovation in such projects depends on the talent and creativity of the members as well as the collaborative culture, while internal bureaucracy can slow down innovation.

Management

The upper echelons of news organisations need to establish structures and processes that harness creativity and stimulate innovation, including internal communication, coordination among organisational units, and balancing tensions, according to García-Avilés (2021). In Norway, these responsibilities could belong to a dual management model of an editor-in-chief and a managing director who plan, organise, and lead the organisation. With both reporting to a board of directors, as joint chief executives, the editor-in-chief

is then responsible for the editorial department and the managing director for sales and marketing. In many newspapers, the same person fills both roles, functioning as publisher, according to this media system.

Previous research on management in journalism has found that routines and norms can make it difficult for management to introduce new priorities (Appelgren, 2021), and that newly appointed journalists tend to support changes by management while veterans struggle to adjust (Bunce, 2019). Media managers have been found to be risk-averse and reluctant to change in their organisations (e.g., García-Avilés et al., 2019; Lowrey, 2012; Paulussen, 2016), and they are often “inclined to let others be the first to test the digital waters” (Pavlik, 2013: 184). According to Groves and Brown (2020), reflective leaders balance strategic thinking with the risk of innovation by allowing news organisations to develop new routines that fit in the context of the existing culture. Changes in journalistic practice will be less likely to become established if the news workers do not appreciate the connections between their efforts and the management’s strategies for change (Boyle & Zuegner, 2017) or if the leadership style fails to motivate journalists to keep up with change (Appelgren, 2021). The lack of strong leadership, particularly communication deficits, could create substantial tension and resistance toward newsroom innovation among the editorial staff (Hendrickx & Picone, 2020; Steensen, 2009). Similarly, the absence of a clear strategy that promotes specific goals has been described as a key obstacle faced by journalists when it comes to innovating (García-Avilés et al., 2019; Groves & Brown, 2020).

Culture

Culture encompasses norms, values, and traditions that could either stimulate or hinder innovation (Hendrickx & Picone, 2020). Porcu (2020) described a certain social climate that stimulates outside-the-box thinking among news workers. She conceptualised this as an innovative learning culture that stimulates people to work and learn together, to grow individually and as a group, to experiment, and to be creative. This is facilitated by leadership that provides people with the autonomy needed to be flexible through open communication, mutual trust, a supporting culture, shared goals, and appreciation of individual achievement, training, and development.

However, the media innovation literature has shown that there is also substantial scepticism towards change among media managers, as well as journalists. As claimed by Paulussen (2016), established journalistic work cultures tend to have a braking effect on innovation processes. Several studies have confirmed that newsrooms are slow to innovate and adopt new technology (e.g., Hendrickx & Picone, 2020; Lehtisaari et al., 2018), largely due to a professional culture that resists change (Paulussen, 2016; Sacco &

Bossio, 2017). When “well-rooted practices and preferred work patterns dominate” (Villi & Picard, 2019: 128), there is a clear obstacle to innovation in news media (Karlsen & Stavelin, 2014; Cestino & Berndt, 2017).

Several studies have described how new norms of journalism challenge the boundaries and professional identity of journalism, ultimately resulting in resistance to change (Belair-Gagnon & Steinke, 2020; Goyanes & Rodríguez-Castro, 2019). Journalists have been found to resist innovations on moral grounds, as they may threaten journalistic and ethical principles (García-Avilés, 2021). For example, Usher (2014) described how journalists are confronted with moral and ethical dilemmas, as values such as immediacy, interactivity, and participation are promoted as new ideals of journalism.

Business model

The concept of a business model is not clearly defined in the research literature on media and journalism. In economic research literature, a business model represents “the money-earning logic of a firm” (Osterwalder, 2004: 47). For commercial news organisations, this means integrating resources into a marketable service that generates revenue from audiences and advertisers, while simultaneously minimising costs. A business model is thus essentially about value creation. It captures how a commercial news provider makes money from a product and service offerings by meeting new or emerging customer needs, improving customer experiences, and engaging in deeper relationships with customers. For audience customers, this encompasses qualities such as trustworthiness, exclusivity, context, and depth of reporting, as well as ease of use and speed, to mention a few. Innovation could be an improvement in such customer experiences as well as the introduction of new ones that may improve audience engagement with the news and help news publishers nurture deeper relationships with their audiences.

As described by Evens, Raats, and von Rimscha (2017), the research on media business model innovation has covered a range of different business model innovations, from the introduction of online paywalls and monetisation of audience data to crowdfunding models for journalism. Although this research shows some promising new revenue streams, the persistent issue of funding remains, and innovation alone is unlikely to remedy it (García-Avilés, 2021; Olsen, 2021).

The persistent crisis discourse surrounding news media largely revolves around this underfinancing of journalism as a service to individuals and society at large. Developing a sustainable business model that can simultaneously provide value to individuals and society, while also creating economic value for news operations, is one of the key challenges facing the news media today.

Summing up crisis, resilience, and innovation

What we have aimed to establish in this chapter is an understanding of journalism innovation that does not treat technology and the introduction of “bright, shiny things” (Posetti, 2018) as its key objective. Nor do we promote a view which reduces innovation to a matter of profits and market shares for the news business. Instead, we have aimed to describe how innovation in journalism is essentially about value creation for audiences and broader society, as well as for the media organisation itself. This approach presents a broad view of innovation by combining public service ideals of journalism, the needs and wants of audiences, and the interests of news operations, including news workers. The latter group – journalists, editors, developers, programmers, and others who are involved in creating new and improved service offerings – are, as previously noted, internal stakeholders in the innovation process, while audiences and society at large are external stakeholders. The innovation perspective we have outlined relates to multiple internal factors that either drive or impede value creation. In our perspective, value creation is the explicit purpose and direction of innovation.

However, innovation does not take place in a vacuum. Rather, it unfolds in relation to broader contextual trends, and there is a need for expanding the theorising of innovation to new fields related to change and transformation (Malmelin et al., 2021). This is especially true while operating in highly institutionalised environments encapsulating the norms, standards, and expectations of relevant stakeholders, as in the case of journalism. We explore innovation in the context of a sudden, dramatic event under high uncertainty and threats: the Covid-19 pandemic. We have outlined how a crisis such as the pandemic could act as a catalyst for change and introduced the concept of resilience as the ability to respond to an external shock, by means of innovation, either in radical shifts, incremental changes, or improvements. We have organised resilience along three dimensions: persistence refers to the ability to regain stability or get back to normal; adaptability refers to an organisation’s ability to adjust in response to the shock and change some parts of the organisation, while others remain stable; and lastly, transformability refers to a long-lasting radical renewal of the whole organisation.

In this chapter, we suggest that innovation depends on the complex interplay between factors related to structure, agency, and technology (e.g., Dogruel, 2015; Paulussen, 2016; Steensen, 2009), the internal dynamics at play in news organisations (Kueng, 2017), and external factors, such as a crisis influencing innovation to build resilience. The next empirical chapter explores various aspects of this interplay.

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