Doctoral Thesis

The role of organizational integrity in responses to pressures

A case study of Australian newspapers

Sara Ekberg
Acknowledgement

I don’t even know where to begin. I guess what felt like a never-ending journey is finally coming to an end. It has been rollercoaster that I am quite happy to get off. It has been a blast but also very tough, and there are some people who helped me stay (relatively) sane through this period to whom I would like to give my sincerest thank you.

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Shine on everyone!

Cheers,
Sara
Abstract

The purpose of the dissertation is to explore the role of organizational integrity in responses to pressures. Organizational integrity is a concept from old institutional theory; its definition is the fidelity to the organization’s core values, distinctive competence, guiding principles, and mission. Studying this concept empirically will answer calls in institutional theory to focus more on the internal dynamics in terms of the responses to pressures, especially how the people in the organization balance the act to conform or resist pressures while striving for legitimacy. These calls have remained largely unanswered, and the question of how organizations adapt while remaining true to core values and competences remains something of a mystery. Joining the recent resurgence of Selznick’s research, the aim of this dissertation is to contribute to the calls to focus on change and inertia together, and the role of values as the organization responds to pressures. Thus, change can be a threat to the organizational integrity and prompts members of the organization to preserve their familiar environment. However, this behavior creates a dilemma, since the maintenance of organizational integrity can be taken too far, to the point that the organization becomes rigid and unable to survive. Thus, it includes the organization finding a balance of staying true to its proclaimed mission and values without being too rigid and losing track of the changes in its environment. Therefore, by giving emphasis to the role of values, organizational integrity adds a new perspective and extends the understanding of how organizations respond to pressures.

To fulfill this aim, this dissertation followed two newspaper organizations, an industry that is marked by a state of flux and disruptive change. The two organizations are The Courier-Mail and The West Australian. By using methods such as interviews, documentation, and observations, I got a first-hand understanding of the perceived pressures the organizational members are facing, the issues that were perceived in the organization, and how the organizational members worked to resolve them. Through these cases, the organizations either conformed and/or resisted pressures, thus allowing this study to explore the role of organizational integrity in this process. The findings suggest that the organization’s values, distinctiveness, and mission were used to evaluate experiments to solve issues rather than solely guiding the strategies to overcome the pressures. Thus, the study highlights the perceived pressures, how organizational members construct issues based on these pressures, and how the organizational members work to resolve them.

This dissertation extends the understanding of organizational behavior in terms of balancing change and inertia. Organizational integrity works as a normative rationality, and to uphold legitimacy the role of organizational integrity is either to maintain, defend, or repair the character of the organization. More specifically, this adds to the scholarly discussion of the importance of values in organizational behavior, and this dissertation expands the understanding of responses to pressures by explicating the role of organizational integrity.
Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction ................................................................. 13
   1.1 Background ........................................................................... 13
   1.2 Purpose and research questions ........................................... 16
   1.3 Context ................................................................................ 18
   1.4 Significance and contributions ............................................ 20
   1.5 Clarifying the concepts ..................................................... 22
   1.6 Thesis outline ..................................................................... 24

Chapter 2: Organizational Integrity and Institutional Theory .......... 26
   2.1 Old institutional theory ....................................................... 28
      2.1.1 The organization: the duality of the technical and institutional .......................................................... 29
      2.1.2 The process of institutionalization ................................. 30
      2.1.3 The role of institutionalization: from the technical to the institutional .................................................. 31
   2.2 Organizational integrity ...................................................... 33
      2.2.1 Neighbouring concepts ................................................ 34
      2.2.2 The difference between organizational integrity and the integrity of an organization .................... 38
      2.2.3 Defending organizational integrity ................................. 38
      2.2.4 Limitations of organizational integrity ......................... 40
      2.2.5 Limitations of the old school ....................................... 40
   2.3 New institutional theory .................................................... 42
      2.3.1 The notion of the field .................................................. 43
      2.3.2 Isomorphism and the illusion of an iron cage ............... 44
      2.3.3 Institutional logics ....................................................... 46
      2.3.4 Institutional pressures ................................................ 47
      2.3.5 Limitations of the new school .................................... 47
   2.4 Responses to pressures and change in institutional theory ...... 49
      2.4.1 Responses to pressures: moving beyond change in the institutional field ........................................... 50
      2.4.2 A complementary view of new and old institutionalism .... 52
      2.4.3 Developments in institutionalism: micro-foundations and change .................................................. 53
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Organizational issues</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>The analytical framework</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.1</td>
<td>Revisiting the research question</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3:</td>
<td>Newspaper Organizations: A Field in Flux</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>An overview of technological changes in the newspaper industry</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1</td>
<td>The positive and negative views of technological change</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Logics in newspaper organizations</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1</td>
<td>Values in newspaper organizations</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2</td>
<td>The profession of journalism</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3</td>
<td>Journalistic values</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Pressures affecting newspaper organizations</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1</td>
<td>Economic pressures</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2</td>
<td>Technological pressures</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3</td>
<td>Social pressures</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Resistance and change in newspaper organizations</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.1</td>
<td>Organizational resistance</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.2</td>
<td>The unwillingness to give up control</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.3</td>
<td>Isomorphic behavior and decoupling</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.4</td>
<td>Organizational responsiveness</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>The Australian newspaper industry</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.1</td>
<td>Media ownership in Australia</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.2</td>
<td>Challenges in the Australian newspaper industry</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.3</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4:</td>
<td>Method</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>The qualitative case study</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.1</td>
<td>The case studies</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.2</td>
<td>Level of analysis</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.3</td>
<td>Studying organizational integrity and character</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.4</td>
<td>Studying the issues and responses</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Choosing the organizations</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.1</td>
<td>The Organizations</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 Data collection ........................................................................................................ 91
  4.3.1 Interviews ........................................................................................................... 91
  4.3.2 Documentation ................................................................................................... 95
  4.3.3 Observations ..................................................................................................... 96
  4.3.4 The combination of data sources ...................................................................... 97
  4.3.5 My role in the data collection .......................................................................... 104
  4.4 Approaches to analyze the data .......................................................................... 106
  4.5 Ethical considerations ......................................................................................... 109
  4.6 Methodological limitations .................................................................................. 110

Chapter 5: Findings: The Courier-Mail ......................................................................... 113
  5.1 The character of The Courier-Mail ....................................................................... 113
     5.1.1 The mission of the newspaper ......................................................................... 114
     5.1.2 A journalistic mission .................................................................................... 116
     5.1.3 The values of the organization ...................................................................... 120
     5.1.4 The distinctiveness of the organization ......................................................... 121
     5.1.5 Different views of the character .................................................................... 124
  5.2 Organizational issues and responses .................................................................... 127
     5.2.1 Metrics ........................................................................................................... 129
     5.2.2 UGC ............................................................................................................... 136
     5.2.3 Immediacy of news ....................................................................................... 142
     5.2.4 Declining revenues ...................................................................................... 149
  5.3 Chapter summary .................................................................................................. 159

Chapter 6: Findings: The West Australian ..................................................................... 161
  6.1 The character of The West .................................................................................... 161
     6.1.1 The mission of the newspaper ......................................................................... 162
     6.1.2 The journalistic mission .................................................................................. 162
     6.1.3 A dual mission: harmonizing church and state .............................................. 165
     6.1.4 The values of the organization ...................................................................... 167
     6.1.5 The distinctiveness of the organization ......................................................... 168
     6.1.6 Different views of the character .................................................................... 173
  6.2 Organizational Issues and Responses .................................................................... 176
     6.2.1 The Finkelstein Inquiry .................................................................................. 177
     6.2.2 Lack of trust ................................................................................................... 183
6.2.3 Immediacy of news .............................................................. 187
6.2.4 Declining revenues ............................................................ 199
6.3 Chapter Summary ................................................................. 214

Chapter 7: Discussion ................................................................. 216
7.1 Unpacking organizational integrity ........................................ 216
  7.1.1 The character and the tension between the technical and
the institutional ................................................................. 217
  7.1.2 Legitimacy and upholding the institutional ....................... 220
7.2 Responding to pressures ...................................................... 223
  7.2.1 Immunize, maintain, and repair: the role of organizational
integrity in responses to pressures ........................................ 226
7.3 Field-level pressures and organizational responses ............ 238
7.4 Summary ............................................................................. 244

Chapter 8: Conclusions ............................................................... 245
8.1 Summary of findings ............................................................. 245
8.2 Contributions to institutional theory and responses to
pressures .................................................................................. 246
  8.2.1 The concept of organizational integrity ......................... 247
  8.2.2 How organizational integrity shapes responses to
pressures .................................................................................. 250
8.3 Contributions to media management: embracing change in
newspaper organizations ........................................................ 254
  8.3.1 Changes in newspaper organizations ............................ 254
  8.3.2 Softening the distinction between editorial and
advertising ............................................................................. 258
8.4 Practical implications ............................................................ 259
8.5 Limitations ........................................................................... 261
8.6 Future research ..................................................................... 262

References .................................................................................. 265
Appendices .................................................................................. 295
JIBS Dissertation Series ............................................................. 303
List of Figures

Figure 1. The theoretical view of this study ....................................................... 59
Figure 2. Responses to pressures and the role of organizational integrity ...... 238

List of Tables

Table I. Summary of characteristics of the case organizations ...................... 89
Table II. Overview all data sources .................................................................. 98
Table III. Representative quotes of the character at The Courier-Mail ........... 125
Table IV. Pressure, issues, and responses at The Courier-Mail ...................... 128
Table V. Overview: metrics ............................................................................ 135
Table VI. Overview: UGC .............................................................................. 141
Table VII. Overview: immediacy of news ...................................................... 148
Table VIII. Overview: declining revenues ....................................................... 158
Table IX. Representative quotes of the character at The West ....................... 174
Table X. Pressures, issues, and responses at The West ................................... 177
Table XI. Overview: the Finkelstein Inquiry .................................................... 182
Table XII. Overview: lack of trust ................................................................. 187
Table XIII. Overview: immediacy of news ..................................................... 198
Table XIV. Overview: declining revenues ...................................................... 213
Table XV. Organizational issues, experiments, and role of organizational integrity at The Courier-Mail and The West ............................................. 224
Table XVI. Overview of responses, features, and relationship to the environment ................................................................. 226
Table XVII. Organizational integrity and immunizing the character ............... 231
Table XVIII. Organizational integrity and maintaining the character ............. 233
Table XIX. Organizational integrity and repairing the character .................... 236
This chapter outlines the overall topic of the dissertation. It starts with the background (section 1.1), where organizational integrity is introduced as a main concept in this study, argued to extend our understanding of responses to pressures. Moreover, the focus is on how this study fits into the general research using institutional theory. The following section outlines the purpose, which is to explore the role of organizational integrity in responses to pressures (1.2). Next, the focus is on the context (1.3), introducing research on newspaper organizations and how this industry is relevant for the study at hand. Section 1.4 outlines the significance and potential contributions of the research. That is, how organizational integrity captures both conformity and restraint in responses to pressures as an extension of this area of research. Section 1.5 includes clarification of the main concepts in the study, outlining my view of organizational integrity and other important concepts in institutional theory (such as legitimacy and the field). The section outlines my assumptions and definitions of the core concepts. The last section (1.6) provides a more thorough outline of the remaining chapters of the thesis.

1.1 Background

How does an organization respond to radical external change that threatens its fundamental values and norms? This is a question that organizations in numerous industries have been faced with during the last two decades when they have been challenged by the transformative forces of digitization (Allen, Brown, Karanasios, & Norman, 2013; Chatman, Caldwell, O’Reilly, & Doerr, 2014; Pacheco, York, Dean, & Sarasvathy, 2010; Porter, 2001; Shin, Taylor, & Seo, 2012). As new technologies or short-run imperatives govern decision-making in organizations, goals and standards are at risk, as these are subject to “displacement, attenuation or corruption” (Selznick, 1994, p.244). For example, the internet has a great impact on organizations, making some old rules about organizations and competition obsolete and influencing business practices and routines (Porter, 2001; Sarasvathy, 2001). As organizations are affected by disruptive changes, consistent goals and values are important (Moss, Butar, Härtel, & Hirst, 2017). However, changes in the field could contrast with the values in the organization, so “values are always at risk” (Selznick, 1994, p.244). Thus, actors work to defend their values (Wright, Zammuto, & Liesch, 2017), but at the same time cannot disregard changes in the environment (Selznick, 1957). This highlights a tension between how organizations respond to disruptions that change the rules of game while staying true to their fundamental values and norms, which is the focus of this dissertation.
Ansell, Boin, and Farjoun (2015, p.91) argue that the way organizations “adapt while remaining true to core values and competences remains somewhat of a mystery, both in theory and practice”. Ansell et al. (2015) do partly address this conundrum, but primarily focus on how organizations manage to avoid change and stay true to their values and norms despite turbulent conditions in their external environment. Moreover, there is a stream of research focusing on pressures and the strategic responses that these induce in organizations (Bertels & Lawrence, 2016; Clemens & Douglas, 2005; Dick, 2015; Goodstein, 1994). In this research, these multi-level pressures generally stem from the field (MacLean & Behnam, 2010) and interact with unstable institutional arrangements (Dacin, Goodstein, & Scott, 2002). These studies focus on responses to institutional complexity, how logics play a role in the responses, and how organizations manage competing logics (Bertels & Lawrence, 2016; Smets, Jarzabkowski, Burke & Spee, 2015) Pressures could range from national regulatory laws to normative unwritten rules of a profession (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The pressures are subjectively interpreted, as they are not always explicitly articulated (Zucker, 1983), and the people in the organization must be willing to adapt for change efforts to be embraced (Dacin et al., 2002). If a pressure is not recognized, there could be an inertia, which occurs when an organization continues to pursue the same strategies even though environmental change would appear to encourage change in the organization (Sorenson & Stuart, 2008). Moreover, scholars (e.g., Weick & Quinn, 1999) claim that change and inertia (or conformity and resistance) are interrelated and that one cannot fully understand change unless one understands inertia. However, studies have been focusing on these aspects separately and there are calls in institutional theory (e.g., Dacin et al., 2002) for a better understanding of how organizations balance conformity and resistance, or change and inertia.

Joining the recent revival of old institutionalism, a concept that includes the balancing act between conformity and resistance is organizational integrity. The concept is defined as fidelity to self-defined values and principles (Dacin et al., 2002; Paine, 1994; Selznick, 1957, 1994). Change is seen as harmful to organizational integrity and the organization attempts to preserve its familiar environment by resisting change (Selznick, 1957). However, if the organization does not change at all, it will not be able to survive: the maintenance of organizational integrity can be taken too far, to the point that it becomes rigid (Hoffman, 1997). Therefore, broad environmental changes, including institutional change, create unique challenges for the maintenance of organizational integrity (Selznick, 1994). The challenge lies in the balancing act of maintaining organizational integrity while responding to environmental forces so the organization can survive. This means that organizational integrity could be a source of both resistance and conformity. Therefore, organizational integrity captures the tension between staying true to the organization’s values and principles while responding to broad environmental changes.
Organizational integrity has received some conceptual attention (e.g., Goodstein, 2015; Paine, 1994); however, empirical studies using integrity do not embrace the definition from old institutionalism. The focus of this empirical research is argued to be on the integrity of an organization, as the research highlights morality and ethics in organizations (Cinali, 2012; Conceicao & Heitor, 2001; Engelbrekt, 2011; Rendtorff, 2011). Ethics and morals are not the main focus of the old institutionalism’s definition, and this diversion could partly explain why scholars claim that the definition is unclear (Waller, 2007). As organizational integrity stems from the old school of institutionalism from the 1950s, the developments of the new school are not considered in its conceptualization. This study aims to bring back the definition from the old institutional school and embrace some developments in institutional theory, especially the notion of pressures from the field.

There is scholarly discussion on how the old and new together can add to the understanding of organizations (Greenwood, Hinings, & Whetten, 2014; Scott, 1987; Selznick, 1996). This combination contributes to the understanding of individual organizations’ behavior by examining change and stability, as mandated by the old school, and the external pressures from the environment highlighted by new institutionalism. While the old institutional school discussed the impact of internal and external pressures (Selznick, 1957), the new school has expanded this aspect. Thus, one of the contributions of the new school to this study is its continuous work on field-level (external) pressures on the organization (e.g., DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Farashahi, Hafsi, & Molz, 2005; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991). Previous studies (e.g., Melin, 1987, 1989) have shown that there is a need to achieve a holistic understanding of an organization’s situation to grasp change, which includes pressures from both inside the organization and the external environment, and the future direction of the organization. The concept of organizational integrity and how this works as organizations face pressures provides a well-rounded view of responses and emphasizes understanding of how organizations balance stability and change.

To clarify what the organizational integrity is protecting, this study draws on research that uses organizational character (e.g., Ansell et al., 2015; King, 2015). The character is “the enduring manifestation of an organization’s informal structure, resulting from the internal process of adapting goals to fit the daily necessities of operational survival” (King, 2015, p.157, italics in original). Thus, organizational character can be understood as a roadmap for organizational members’ activities and decisions (Ansell et al., 2015). It represents a widely-shared purpose in the organization and what external stakeholders perceive the organization stands for. Moreover, the character is related to the distinctive competence of an organization, which is the organization’s ability to perform a certain task (Selznick, 1957). With this definition, character is similar to organizational identity, although some argue that the difference is that character is stable and identity is more dynamic and malleable (Gioia, Schultz, & Corley, 2000; King, 2015). The character does not change unless it is under constraint,
and when it does it is shaped by the organization’s goals and commitments (King, 2015). Thus, this study uses character as an umbrella term to include the organization’s values, mission, and distinctive competence. Thus, organizational integrity is fidelity to the character of the organization.

New institutional theory provides an understanding of the pressures and causes of change that are present within an industry or at field level. In turn, old institutional theory explores the actions and responses to such pressures within the organization. Here, the focus is on the latter, while acknowledging that field-level pressures are interpreted by organizational members and can cause issues within the organization. Several scholars have emphasized the need to focus on the internal dynamics of the organization in institutional theory (Suddaby, Elsbach, Greenwood, Meyer, & Zilber, 2010; Tilcsik, 2010). This gap has partly been addressed, with a clear trend of scholars examining identity theory and change; however, the majority of this work neglects ideas from old institutionalism in the discussion (e.g., Powell & Colyvas, 2008; Suddaby et al., 2010). There are some exceptions that draw on old institutional theory and identity, but the focus is in then on the leader (Golant, Sillince, & Harvey, 2015). Even though institutional change has received increasing attention, the call that Dacin et al. (2002) made to focus specifically on the tension between organizational integrity and responsiveness has until now only received conceptual attention (e.g., Goodstein, 2015). In addition, scholars have declared the need for studies that focus on the balance between stability and change—more specifically, on how the organization is institutionalized and adaptable at the same time (Wakefield, Plowman, & Curry, 2013). Organizational integrity embraces this tension between adaptation and stability. Thus, focusing on how organizational integrity shapes the balancing act of resistance and conformity is the scope of this dissertation.

1.2 Purpose and research questions

Following the new school, pressures are perceived from the field level and, to survive, the organization responds to pressures in order to gain legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Walls & Hoffman, 2013); these top-down influences create issues within the organization. To bridge the field-level and the organizational view, this study draws on the concept of organizational issues. Following Dutton’s view, an issue is an event that is constructed by the organizational members to have an impact on the organization: “[t]he constructing process describes individual and collective action which imbues an issue with meaning and legitimates it as an organizational issue” (Dutton, 1993, p.198). Furthermore, issues are perceived as either an opportunity or a threat, or positive or negative; however, that emphasis is on resolving the issue (Dutton & Jackson, 1987). The view here is that the concept of an organizational issue highlights the implication of the pressure, connecting the field pressure to how it is understood in the
I. Introduction

organization. Thus, it provides a way to comprehend how the organizational members perceive an issue from a pressure and how they respond to that issue. The responses include conforming and/or resisting the issue caused by the pressure, and this balancing act of resistance and change is related to organizations strive for both internal (Goodstein, Blair-Loy, & Wharton, 2009) and external (March & Olsen, 1983) legitimacy. Following Suchman’s (1995, p.574) view of legitimacy, it is possessed objectively but created subjectively: it is defined as “a generalized perception or assumption that organizational activities are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions”.

To be legitimate, the responses should be in line with the character of the organization or yield to a change in it. Organizational integrity is fidelity to the organizational character and thus aims to maintain the status quo. This means that organizational integrity represents a resistance to some extent. The resistance is a normative logic and this may constrain organizational adaptation (Oliver, 1997), though broad environmental changes create unique challenges for the maintenance of organizational integrity. The challenge is to maintain organizational integrity while responding to environmental pressures to ensure the survival of the organization (Selznick, 1994).

The profound impact of technological change on an industry sector combined with the significance of the context has prompted scholarly interest in the impact of the internet on traditional media organizations such as radio, television, and newspapers (Kagermann, 2015). The newspaper industry in particular is strongly affected by the internet and the resulting changes have led to many concerns in the organization and for the journalists who work there (Franklin, 2008; Lewis, 2012). The changes caused by digitization are challenging newspaper organizations to live up to their journalistic standards. Previous research has outlined that newspaper organizations are tightly coupled with professional values of journalism. As the newspaper industry is today marked by a state of flux (Spyridou, Matsiola, Veglis, Kalliris, & Dimoulas, 2013), there is a question of how all the changes are affecting its professional values. Researchers argue that journalists and newspaper organizations let cautiousness, existing norms, and professional practices guide changes (Chung, 2007; Lasorsa, Lewis, & Holton, 2012). On an organizational level, not much has changed (Lowrey, 2011) and the core of the journalistic culture has remained unchanged (Domingo et al., 2008). Previous studies have also found that resistance to change is powerful when the organization has deep-rooted values (Del Val & Fuentes, 2003), which seems to be the case for the unchanged journalistic culture in newspaper organizations (Lasorsa et al., 2012), as previous research (e.g., Wright et al., 2017) has noted that professionally driven organizations face challenges of upholding macro-level values of the profession in their work inside organizations.

As newspaper organizations are noted to have strong professional values that guide some actions, at the same time they are experiencing disruption from the
internet, and so the newspaper organization is a fruitful context to explore organizational integrity. The study gives us more insight into how these organizations stay true to their values and principles while responding to broad environmental changes. The purpose is to explore the role of organizational integrity in responses to pressures. The purpose is operationalized as a research question:

- How does organizational integrity shape a newspaper organization’s responses to pressures that may alter its character?

As newspaper organizations are experiencing many disruptive changes, this study provides new insights into how organizations remain true to their character and balance change and resistance in a disruptive environment. To answer the research question, this study must also outline the organizational members’ descriptions of the character of the organization to understand what the organizational integrity is protecting. Moreover, to gain an understanding of the responses to pressures, this study draws on organizational issues as defined by Dutton (1993)—that is, to grasp how the pressures affect the organization and bridge aspects that are happening outside the organization, and how this is perceived in the organization. Issues are used to understand what the organizational members construct as challenging for the organization.

To be able to answer these questions, I study the people in organizations to clarify their understanding. When the nature of a study is human experience, qualitative data collection is the most adequate means of knowledge production (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005). The assumption in this study is that the organization is understood through the construction of its organizational members. In this study, I followed two newspaper organizations in Australia, The Courier-Mail and The West Australian, to get an understanding of organizational integrity. To do that, I focused on how organizational members explain the character; the pressures these organizations are facing; what issues are perceived by organizational members; and how they have responded. To understand these aspects, I used interviews, observations, and documentation to get a well-rounded view of the organizations. As organizational members explain these views and events, I can interpret the role of organizational integrity. By answering the research question, this study expects to make several contributions. The following section outlines the context of the study in more detail to provide some insights into the disruptive situation in the newspaper industry.

1.3 Context

The internet and the resulting changes have given rise to many concerns in newspaper organizations (Franklin, 2008). As an industry that touches the lives of over half of the world’s adult population daily (WAN-IFRA, 2015a), the newspaper industry is an important source of information and knowledge, and
1. Introduction

its demise would be a threat to democratic society (Starr, 2009). Therefore, it is in our societal interest to study newspaper organizations and discover ways to contribute to their survival.

The internet encompasses digital technologies and is associated with a (digital) participatory culture that has caused a collision between new and old media in the newspaper industry (Jenkins, 2006). This has brought many challenges to the newspaper industry that affect these organizations on an economic, technical, and social level (Franklin, 2008). Throughout the developed world, overall newspaper circulation and revenues are in decline (McNair, 2009). Moreover, advertisers are moving to digital outlets, which has caused a decline in the two revenue streams that newspaper organizations rely on, namely circulation and advertising revenues (Picard, 2004). In addition, news is now easily obtainable for consumers for free online (McDowell, 2011), which forces newspaper organizations to explore innovative ways to make up for the lost revenue streams to survive. However, the industry has been plagued by more than financial concerns in these past decades: there is also immense pressure to provide content with constant updates on several media platforms (such as websites, apps, mobiles, and tablets). This change includes an increased workload and pace that has been suggested to have a negative influence on the quality of news (Spyridou et al., 2013) and has resulted in a loss of trust in the newspaper as a medium and the journalists that provide the news (Skovsgaard, 2014; Örnebring & Jönsson, 2004). Digitization is changing the media landscape, everyone can share information online and the former audience want to contribute with content (Domíngo et al., 2008), thus there are new actors who take part in the production of news (Grafström & Windell, 2012). This change has impact on the way journalists work but also creates an increase in competition, readers can be selective as they have many options of news providers online, including professional news outlets, social media, and bloggers (Bruns, Highfield, & Lind, 2012).

All these concerns have caused much uncertainty in newspaper organizations (Dickinson, Matthews, & Saltzis, 2013; Franklin, 2008; O’Sullivan & Heinonen, 2008). Even though the internet has affected newspaper organizations for decades, these organizations are still struggling with these imposed digital changes. However, scholarly work on newspaper organizations shows contrasting views of how these organizations are managing the changes (Franklin, 2008; Massey & Ewart, 2009; O’Sullivan & Heinonen, 2008). The majority of work is focusing on the lack of change in the organization, where change efforts have been noted as skin-deep and fleeting (e.g., Lowrey, 2011; Lowrey & Woo, 2010; McLemore, 2014; Williams & Franklin, 2007). The focus on change is not as prevalent, although there are some studies that show that new technologies have been embraced and even celebrated by employees and managers in newspaper organizations (e.g., van Moorsel, He, Oltmans, & Huibers, 2012).
Newspaper organizations are experiencing large disruptive changes due to digitization (Spyridou et al., 2013; van Moorsel et al., 2012). As these environmental changes create unique challenges for the maintenance of journalistic standards, this is a beneficial and relevant context in which to explore the role of organizational integrity and responses to pressures. The following section highlights the significance and potential contributions of the study.

1.4 Significance and contributions

This dissertation clarifies the existing definition of organizational integrity by including character and exploring it empirically, thus positioning a concept from old institutionalism in some developments of the theory—that is, including multi-level pressures that the new institutionalism has added, and highlighting how these pressures affect the organization by exploring the resistance in change in responses. There are no empirical studies that build on Selznick’s definition of organizational integrity, although there are conceptual papers discussing the contributions of institutionalism in general and, more specifically, the gaps and importance of organizational integrity (Besharov & Khurana, 2015; Dacin et al., 2002; Goodstein, 2015). As the importance of organizational integrity has been noted conceptually, one contribution of this dissertation is to explore it empirically.

This recent discussion argues for the continued relevance of the old school and its contribution to contemporary institutional theory (Kraatz, 2015). Moreover, it considers how organizational integrity and institutionalized commitments could restrain organizational responses to the environment, and the potential negative consequences if these commitments are violated. At the same time, the organizations seek legitimacy and approval from stakeholders; thus, organizational integrity highlights conformity and resistance in relation to legitimacy. Recent studies urge scholars to explore the change-stability paradox (Müller & Kunisch, 2017). Organizational integrity captures the internal dynamics within the organization, without staying too rigid. It currently has limited empirical attention and provides a new perspective on how organizations balance the notions of conformity and resistance in their responses to pressures. It focuses the tension of staying true to character of the organization and still considering institutional pressures—balancing stability and change. By exploring organizational integrity, this study captures the tension between responsiveness and restraint—that is, how organizations respond as either giving into pressures or resisting. This study therefore adds a new perspective on responses to pressures and answers calls (e.g., Goodstein, 2015) to highlight the balancing act between conformity and resistance as organizations seek legitimacy and to maintain organizational integrity.

Moreover, this study contributes to the connection between micro-level responses and macro-pressures, since there have been several criticisms of the
1. Introduction

lack of such studies in the institutional school (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Powell & Colyvas, 2008; Suddaby et al., 2010). This prior research emphasizes the need to achieve a deeper understanding of how organizations adapt while remaining true to core values and competences (Ansell et al., 2015). Some scholars have tried to address this question by focusing on culture as organizations respond to institutional pressures (Caprar & Neville, 2012), or the consistency between employee and organizational values (Bansal & Penner, 2002). However, this present study embraces a holistic understanding of responses to pressures by considering external (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) and internal pressures (Selznick, 1949, 1957) through a focus on how fidelity to institutionalized commitments could change, but also how these can restrain organizational responses to the environment. Thus, this research provides an understanding of how organizations strive for legitimacy while staying true to their commitments in terms of organizational character, or alternatively induces a change in the character.

External pressures are well-established in institutional theory, as explained above, and internal pressures are informal structures and the vested interests of the people in the organization (Selznick, 1957). Previous research on responses to pressures focuses on relation to the rules of the field (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Goodstein, 1994; Oliver, 1991) while this present study highlights the internal dynamics by drawing on organizational integrity. Thus, this study provides a perspective on institutional theory that accounts for the balancing act between change and resistance inside the organization. Moreover, by unpacking the internal dynamics and focusing on organizational issues, this study also provides an in-depth understanding of how organizational members manage internal and external pressures.

The newspaper industry is and has been in the throes of change for decades (Lee, 2016; The Economist, 2006). This particular industry is mainly overlooked in the change management literature (Dutkiewicz & Duxbury, 2013), with a few recent exceptions (Karimi & Walter, 2016). Studying resistance and conformity caused by technological changes adds to our understanding of how newspaper organizations behave. Moreover, this study answers to calls in journalism studies about the perceptions and actions of organizational members in news organizations (Westlund, 2013). Thus, by highlighting pressures and issues, this study provides a better understanding of not only the issues that are perceived in newspaper organizations, but also the responses of these organizations.

Since newspaper organizations have struggled with the impact of the internet for over two decades (O’Sullivan & Heinonen, 2008), this study is relevant for newspaper organizations and other professionally-driven businesses that are dealing with disruptive transformations—that is, organizations that are driven by professional values and norms (e.g., Greenwood & Lachman, 1996), such as law and accounting firms (Brock, Powell, & Hinings, 1999; Pinnington & Morris, 2003; Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012). Healthcare services are another example, as this industry has been noted to struggle with digitalization and the
tension between the business and the social mission (Gonin, Besharov, Smith, & Gachet, 2013).

Consequently, using the newspaper industry as the context for this study extends the understanding of responses to pressures in professional organizations. The issue of context as a contribution has been discussed in several fields (Johns, 2006; Welter, 2011) and context is often taken for granted. Therefore, this study offers two contextually-driven contributions. Firstly, organizational integrity contributes to a better understanding of newspaper organizations; secondly, the challenges in the newspaper industry inform the theoretical development of responses to pressures in organizations with strong professional standards.

1.5 Clarifying the concepts

In this study, I draw on concepts from old and new institutional theory to study responses to pressures, and use issues to bridge the two schools. This section clarifies how I use these concepts (a more thorough discussion is presented in Chapter 2). The focus here is on legitimacy, pressures, issues (and responses), organizational integrity, and character, as these are the key concepts in this study. In the following text, I explain my understanding of these concepts and how they relate to each other in my theoretical framing.

**Legitimacy** is an important notion in institutional theory, and there are several meanings of the role of legitimacy in institutionalism. In the new school, legitimacy is about seeking social approval and by following the rules in its environment to survive (Greenwood, Oliver, Suddaby, & Sahlin-Andersson, 2008). This is also explained as abiding by appropriate behavior, and as long as the organization follows this recipe of behavior it is rational (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The rules can be from an industry, a field, or even a professional group (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), which is one of the main differences between the old and the new school. The new school sees legitimacy by following rules as a source of inertia, while the old saw it as a contribution to economic or social welfare (Selznick, 1994). In this dissertation, legitimacy is related to the ‘rules’ explained in the new school, though also including the old school view where organizations are understood by studying the people in them; thus, the rules are subjectively perceived. This study therefore follows Suchman’s (1995, p.574) definition and explanation of legitimacy, being “a generalized perception or assumption that organizational activities are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions”. It is understood to include the recipe for appropriate behavior while at the same time including the organizational actors and agency from old institutionalism.

**Pressures** can be regulative, normative, and cognitive (Scott, 2008), and are interpreted in the field. These could challenge the set code of conduct and could be a source of constraint and change (Fligstein, 1987; Jepperson, 1991). These
pressures are part of the notion of the field, which could be seen to include “collective rationality” (DiMaggio, 1995, p.395) as members of that field construct what is legitimate. However, the field is a complicated construct: it contains subgroups that all interpret and define how pressures are constructed and the appropriate responses (Hoffman, 2001). Thus, pressures generally are external (MacLean & Behnam, 2010) and interact with unstable institutional arrangements (Dacin et al., 2002), which could range from national regulatory laws to the normative unwritten rules of a profession. Thus, the rules of the field can be a source of constraint or change as organizations seek to abide by these assumptions to gain legitimacy. These pressures are subjectively interpreted (Zucker, 1983) and the people in the organization must be willing to adapt for change efforts to be embraced (Dacin et al., 2002).

The notion of pressures has been captured in several theoretical constructs, such as contextual pressures, field pressures, and institutional norms (e.g., Clemens & Douglas, 2005; Farashahi et al., 2005; Pache & Santos, 2013). The common point is that external forces have an impact on organizations. This study uses the concept of field-level pressures, as it is a renowned concept wherein members of the field interpret issues based on pressures (Hoffman, 2001). My assumption is that pressures are subjective and are interpreted by organizational members. These can be interpreted differently by members of the same field and there could be a temporal understanding of pressures as the interpretation continuously changes. Moreover, internal pressures include the self-interest of organizational actors. Thus, they are caused by organizational members, as everyone has his or her own personality, issues, and interests, which could be a problem if people are focusing on conflicting interests. It is part of the managerial practice to control such deviations through unwritten laws that are part of institutionalization, which remove and control such deviations, and the social structure remains consistent and persistent (Selznick, 1948).

Consequently, there is a strong connection between pressures and issues. Following Dutton’s (1993) view, an issue is an event that is constructed by the organizational members to have an impact on the organization: ”[t]he constructing process describes individual and collective action which imbues an issue with meaning and legitimates it as an organizational issue” (p.198). Issues are labelled by organizational members as either opportunities or threats (Jackson & Dutton, 1988; Melander, 1997). Organizational members construct issues at a certain point in time based on their background, role, and previous experience. To be an issue, it must also yield a response. Issues are perceived in the organization and are caused by field-level pressure. As the institutional field and the organization are tightly linked (Hoffman, 2001; Thomas, Meyer, Ramirez, & Boli, 1987), the construction is ongoing and depends on the organizational members. Responses include conforming and resisting an issue caused by a pressure, and this balancing act of resistance and/or change is related to the organization’s striving for both internal (Goodstein et al., 2009) and external (March & Olsen, 1983) legitimacy. Similar to the issue, the
response is influenced by the pre-existing knowledge and experience of the organizational members; for example, as Hoffman (2001, p.136) explains, members of a professional group “interpret and act on their demands”. Thus, it is important to understand the contextual boundary conditions. For example, in this study, a journalist and sales representative could interpret different issues and responses based on the same pressure; thus, it is important to get an understanding from different members of the organization.

Selznick defined organizational integrity as fidelity to self-defined values and principles (Dacin et al., 2002; Paine, 1994; Selznick, 1957, 1994). Change is seen as harmful to organizational integrity and the organization attempts to preserve its familiar environment by resisting change (Selznick, 1957). However, if the organization does not change at all, it will not be able to survive and the maintenance of organizational integrity can be taken too far to the point that it becomes rigid (Hoffman, 1997). Therefore, broad environmental changes, including institutional change, create unique challenges for the maintenance of organizational integrity. Among these, the challenge lies in the balancing act of maintaining organizational integrity while still responding to environmental forces so the organization can survive (Selznick, 1994). Based on recent scholarly developments, the definition suggested here is that organizational integrity is fidelity to the organizational character.

The organization’s character is “the enduring manifestation of an organization’s informal structure, resulting from the internal process of adapting goals to fit the daily necessities of operational survival and from adjustments to its external image as it seeks to make itself palatable to key constituencies that it depends on for resources” (King, 2015, p.157, italics in original). It is a roadmap for the organizational members and it does not change unless it is under constraint; when it does change, it is shaped by the organization’s goals and commitments (King, 2015). Thus, this concept is used to understand what the fidelity in organizational integrity is protecting. I am not interested in how and why the organizational members construct certain aspects of the character, but rather in how these are maintained (or changed) in responses to pressures. The last section in this chapter outlines the remainder of the dissertation.

1.6 Thesis outline

The sections above outline the overall theoretical and practical themes in this dissertation and the overarching purpose. The following chapter gives a more in-depth explanation and discussion on the theoretical stance of this dissertation. In Chapter 2, the focus is on institutional theory, introducing the specific framework used in this study. A more in-depth presentation and discussion of the assumptions of organizational integrity is presented, and how character is a concept that has recently received attention that can help clarify organizational integrity. Moreover, the field and pressures are discussed to show the influences from new institutional theory. Lastly, organizational issues are introduced to this
study to bridge the field level with the organizational level, which is the focus in organizational integrity. Moreover, the different schools of institutionalism and how issues fit into the framework of the thesis are discussed.

Chapter 3 explains the field of this study. It provides a review of scholarly work on journalism and newspaper organizations, looking at the current situation, and highlights why these organizations are relevant for this study. After these chapters, the focus is on the method of the dissertation (Chapter 4) and the use of a collective case study. This study followed two Australian newspaper organizations to answer the posed research question. In this study, I used interviews, observations, and documentation to gain an understanding of the organizations. Thus, the chapter outlines the data collection and the analytical approaches, and ends with a discussion on ethical considerations and some methodological limitations. The subsequent two chapters (Chapters 5 and 6) illustrate the findings from both case organizations respectively, *The Courier-Mail* and *The West Australian*. In these chapters, the character of each organization is discussed along with issues that the organizational members perceived and what the organization has done to revolve these. Chapter 7 includes a discussion on how this study answers the purpose and research question. It analyzes the role that organizational integrity has played in responses to pressures and highlights how this concept extends our understanding of organizational behavior. The final chapter, Chapter 8, presents the conclusions of this dissertation and suggests avenues for future research.
Chapter 2: Organizational Integrity and Institutional Theory

This chapter outlines the theoretical lens used in this dissertation, institutional theory, and explores the reasons for choosing it. Firstly, old institutional theory and organizational integrity are examined in-depth, as these are key aspects of the theoretical perspective for this dissertation. Then, the field and pressures are outlined, drawing on new institutional theory and how these perspectives contribute to the study at hand. To bridge these views (organizational integrity and the pressures), organizational issues are used. The assumptions of perspectives are explored in this chapter and how these are used in the framing within institutional theory. The closing section revisits the purpose and research question and summarizes the perspectives used in the dissertation.

Institutional theory is an umbrella term that describes a varied collection of approaches. Selznick is often described the father of classic institutionalism, (e.g., Scott, 2008), his work around the 1950s (e.g., 1948, 1949, 1957) was important in the foundational aspects of the theory and has subsequently evolved into several different strands of research. Selznick and his followers are now denoted ‘old’ institutional theory, while ‘new’ institutionalism dates to 1977 through the pivotal publications of Meyer (1977), Meyer and Rowan (1977), Zucker (1983) and the work of DiMaggio and Powell (1983, 1991). A prevailing idea that has remained from the ‘old’ to the ‘new’ is the notion of a ‘taken-for-grantedness’ in organizations. Unwritten rules guide how organizations should act and organizations abide by these rules to strive for legitimacy. In this line of thinking, organizations do not necessarily strive for efficiency, but rather legitimacy. Thus, legitimacy is the core concept in institutional theory and is important for the survival of the organization (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Although there is agreement on the importance of legitimacy, there are different definitions (for a discussion on legitimacy in institutional theory, see Deephouse & Suchman, 2008). For example, Scott (1994b, p.45) explains that legitimacy is not a “commodity to be possessed or exchanged but a condition reflecting cultural alignment, normative support, or consonance with relevant rules or laws”, while Suchman’s (1995, p.574) definition and explanation of legitimacy is of “a generalized perception or assumption that organizational activities are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions”. This study embraces Suchman’s definition of legitimacy, as it can be subjective, and explains that it can be understood as an anchor point that includes “normative and cognitive forces that constrain, construct, and empower organizational actors” (1995, p.571). This view of legitimacy is relevant in this study as I am interested in conformity and
Organizational Integrity and Institutional Theory

2. Organizational Integrity and Institutional Theory

resistance. Suchman explains that that organization can gain legitimacy by conforming to the environment (pressures). However, legitimacy-gaining activity is not always conformity: it can be by done by selecting one of multiple environments to support current practices of beliefs, and organizations can even manipulate the environment to gain new legitimacy.

Institutional theory is one of the prominent frameworks used to understand organizational behavior (Greenwood et al., 2008; Wetzel & Van Gorp, 2014). The new institutionalism is mainly associated with macro-pressures, persistence, and inertia (e.g., DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) and the old with micro-processes within the organization in terms of individuals’ interactions and change (Selznick, 1949, 1957). Institutional theory is thus a popular and powerful explanation for both individual and organizational action (Dacin et al., 2002) and has made “…a distinct impression on organizational research” (Suddaby et al., 2010). Institutional theory argues that taken-for-granted assumptions are at the core of social action (Zucker, 1987).

By exploring the role of organizational integrity during responses to pressures, this study focuses on the internal dynamics of organizations during change and stability. However, the choice of institutional theory as a lens could be questioned, as other theoretical frameworks could have been used instead. Without claiming to be exhaustive in the description of choices during this process, it is appropriate to mention a few examples of theoretical frameworks that arguably have similarities to institutional theory, to organizational integrity, or to the overarching theme of this dissertation. Firstly, a lens that shares some similarities with institutional theory with regard to the notions of taken-for-grantedness, change, and inertia is population ecology (PE) (Hannan & Freeman, 1977, 1984). PE focuses on the population of a set of organizations and on the persistence of inertia based on the age, size, or (structural) complexity of the organization. Thus, the focus in PE is on characteristics of populations of organizations; in contrast, the interest in this dissertation is on using the lens of organizational integrity to gain a deeper understanding of how organizations balance stability and change, and the internal logic of why organizations resist some pressures and conform to others. Organizational ecologists emphasize what kinds of organization have legitimacy and, even though there are similarities with the new institutional school, this project is rather interested in the actions and interactions of the people in the organization, which is not the emphasis in population ecology.

Secondly, contingency theory focuses on the fit in the environment and the contingencies (dependents) of the organization in relation to external and internal constraints (Tushman, 1979). In this theory, the leader is also in focus, which is similar to old institutionalism and the notion of the institutional leader (Besharov & Khurana, 2015; Selznick, 1957). However, contingency theory focuses on the best fit, design, and performance (Drazin & Van de Ven, 1985) rather than on the internal dynamics that are the focus of the old institutionalism and organizational integrity. Thus, it does not capture the micro-focus that this
project aims to fulfil. However, a theory that resembles the essence of agency and the relationship between agents and structure is structuration theory (Giddens, 1984). The theory also focuses on the people and the impact of social structure, such as traditions, institutions, and morals, and the reproduction of such structures. However, an aspect that is not as clear is the dynamic tension between stability and change, which is the differentiating aspect that organizational integrity captures and which has not yet been fully explored (Dacin et al., 2002; Wakefield et al., 2013). Moreover, this study is interested in the internal dynamics in responses to pressures, thus giving some focus to field pressures (structures) but mostly to the responses (action). This also contrasts with structuration theory, which does not give primacy to either but focuses on both structure and action, while the focus here is on the organizational level. Thus, there are several theories that could be used to gain a better understanding of organizations and responses to pressures but, for the reasons outlined above, institutional theory and organizational integrity were chosen for the present study.

2.1 Old institutional theory

The old institutionalism is mainly based on Selznick’s work (e.g., 1948, 1949, 1952, 1957). Although his central role has been underplayed in contemporary research (Besharov & Khurana, 2015), his impact on the field of organization theory was and still is wide-reaching and profound (Kraatz, 2015). In organizational research, Philip Selznick is mainly known for his two pioneering books, *TVA [Tennessee Valley Authority] and the grassroots* (1949) and *Leadership in Administration* (1957). The work on TVA expanded and criticized the (at the time) more structural view of organizations, where the prevailing view was that organizations were bureaucratic, rationally designed machines (Weber, 1947). The old institutional school contested and criticized the ‘Weberian’ view of organizations and emphasized the role of organizational ideals and values, and how these were used to navigate through the external environment.

The old perspective rather put emphasis on the internal dynamics of the organization and the actions of individuals in an organization. Therefore, the attention in Selznick’s work is on the dimension of values in organizations, including the role, promotion, and protection of values, and the leaders’ role in this process. Several scholars demonstrate that Selznick's work can inform contemporary institutional and leadership theory (e.g., Besharov & Khurana, 2015; Kraatz, 2015; Kraatz, Ventresca, & Deng, 2010). Even though institutional leadership is a prominent area within Selznick’s school of thought, it is not the focus of this dissertation. Here, the focus lies on his contribution to organizational behavior and, more specifically, organizational responses to pressures.
2.1.1 The organization: the duality of the technical and institutional

The old school builds on the mechanical view of organizations (e.g., Weber, 1947) and adds a rational aspect to the organization. Rationality is present in two ways (Selznick, 1948): firstly, in a more mechanical aspect, which is the formal structure of action systems and includes delegation and control; and secondly in the social structure, or formal system, which is open to the pressures of the institutional environment. This dual view of an organization is explained as an economic and adaptive social structure (Selznick, 1948). The idea of this duality—the mechanical versus the more adaptive organism—later develops into a discussion on the difference between the organization and the institution. The organization is described as “a lean, no-nonsense system of consciously coordinated activities—an expandable tool, a rational instrument engineered to do a job” (Selznick, 1957, p. 8). Rules and persistence run this mechanical structure. The institution, on the other hand, is more adaptive and open to pressures from the environment. The institution is differentiated from the organization as a product of social needs and pressures, being a “responsive, adaptive organism” (Selznick, 1957, p.17). An important distinction is that these states are not a difference in description but in analysis, and a formal organization has elements of both (Selznick, 1994). To avoid confusion, in the manner of Besharov and Khurana (2015), these two states will from now on be referred to as technical and institutional, and the organization includes both. The technical is a system that is based on hierarchies and routine behavior, and is emergent from the formal structure of the organization. On the other hand, the institutional is a more symbolic, adaptive state, that is “infused with value” (Selznick, 1957, p.17).

The duality of the technical and institutional being simultaneously present includes the tensions between these two states (Selznick, 1994). This tension incorporates the history of the organization, the role of change, the emphasis of values, and, at the same time, the efficient, mechanical aspects of an organization that are crucial for its survival. The technical and institutional are not by definition mutually exclusive: it could be understood as a spectrum, and an organization therefore includes some aspect of both. The old institutional school explains that an organization can be a means, a technical thing to make money, represented by the mechanical structure. However, when an organization is perceived as valuable, it becomes an end, and contributes to the community and welfare, thus gaining legitimacy (Selznick, 1948). The initial work in the school emphasizes this distinction regarding the two states that an organization can represent, the technical and the institutional. As the organization moves toward the institution, it goes through a process of institutionalization, which is an important notion in both the old school and institutional theory in general. The next section further discusses the process of institutionalization.
2.1.2 The process of institutionalization

The previous section outlined the distinction between analyzing the technical and the institutional within organizations. These two states can be present at the same time; however, at a certain point one can be more prominent than the other. This can be understood as a spectrum from technical to institutional, where moving from the former to the latter is a process of becoming institutionalized. The process of institutionalization starts when an organization attains a distinctive clientele, or a sort of stability, which is illustrated by a structure. This stability can, for example, be a secure source of support or a channel by which to communicate. As an organization becomes more stable, it also becomes less flexible (Selznick, 1957, pp.231–238). The organization should be persistent, trying to keep the structure intact. Even though organizational members attempt to keep the social structure intact, the institution does involve alteration. As an institution adapts, it actively strives to keep the social structure: this creates a tension between stability and change. The sources of change are identified mainly in the institutional environment. Pressures could be, for example, from the industry the organization is operating in, and thus are external. The environment, however, is not the only aspect that influences and potentially changes the organization: there are also pressures inside the organization.

Organizations consist of individuals within groups of people that perform the tasks. Informal structures are present, as everyone has his or her own personality, issues, and interests, which could be a problem if people are focusing on conflicting interests. It is part of the managerial practice to control such deviations. Unwritten laws that are part of institutionalization, which remove such deviations, control this and the social structure remains consistent and persistent (Selznick, 1948). To be able to understand adaptive change in these large and seemingly enduring organizations, one must focus on the social structure that has emerged over time. The organization is influenced by its history, as it learns how to respond to internal and external pressures. As these habits repeat in a cyclical pattern, social structures emerge. Selznick (1948) calls these the natural tendencies of an organization, including the development of a defense of the principles, a reliance on values, and the existence of internal conflicts expressing group interests. Even though there is a focus on maintaining the social structure in institutions, it is important to note that the old school includes the evolution of organizational forms and practices.

The institution must consider external, internal, and social pressures and adapt to these without changing too much. In this school, there is a focus on change from old to new patterns, which does not necessarily have to be a conscious choice. It allows a natural way of adapting to new situations that emerge. The old institutional lens consequently includes a focus on more routine aspects of organizations that develop from their history, at the same time balancing the history with the adapting role and character of the organization.
Institutionalization is a process. It means “to infuse with value beyond the technical requirements” (Selznick, 1957, p.17). This should reflect the organization’s history, the people in it, the interests that have emerged, and the way it adapts to its environment. The infusion with value or the embodiment of values can be misleading, however, and it has been noted that this is only to be understood in psychological terms (Selznick, 1994). Characteristics that denote the process of institutionalization could be selectively recruiting similar personnel, instituting agreements or relationships with alliances, creating a special language, and the commitment to the members by applying a defense of the accepted concerns. The embodiment of values in an organization has a central place in institutional theory (Selznick, 1994), since issues occur when some value is at stake or at risk.

2.3 The role of institutionalization: from the technical to the institutional

As mentioned previously in this chapter, institutionalization is not an exclusive state. There is rather a degree of institutionalization in an organization, from the technical to the institutional. This degree could depend on how much freedom there is for the individuals in the organization. The more specific the organization’s goals and structures, the less opportunity there will be for social pressure to affect them. No organization is completely free from institutionalization (Selznick, 1957). The closer the organization is to being instrumental and merely technical, the more easily its structure can be expended for something else. When the process of institutionalization begins—hence, the infusion of value—a resistance to change begins to take place (Selznick, 1994). The individuals in the organization then start to identify with the social structure and, if it is forced to change, there may be sense of personal loss—a violation of the group or community. This could be problematic, as it can create a path dependence, where the organization holds on to outdated values of competences that do not match the changes in the environment (Jervis, 1997). Even if reluctantly, the structures and the people supporting them should give in to technological and economical changes when needed.

The organization accordingly does not create values but embodies them, which is represented by the organization becoming more institutionalized. For an organization to survive and minimize the risk of termination, there is a need to understand and meet internal interests as well as adapt to external pressures. Selznick explains that a possible sign that leaders are defending the values that the organization embodies is when one is willing to sacrifice quick returns for the sake of stability. This can be harmful to the organization, as the leader must stipulate and alter the goals of the organization, described as the search for a mission. During the 1950s, when Selznick was constructing most of his initial work, the concept of mission was not adequately defined in his opinion.
According to Selznick (1957, p.67), when stipulating the mission, the leader should consider the following aspects:

1. The internal state of the polity; the strivings, inhibitions, and competences that exist within the organization.

2. The external expectations that determine what must be sought after or achieved if the institution is to survive.

The mission of an organization must therefore be clear and it should consider the internal pressures from the people in the organization and the external pressures that can arise, such as competition. In the old school, it is the leaders’ responsibility to ensure that external threats are considered and that the taken-for-granted aspects of the organization are included in the evolving mission (Selznick, 1957). The organization as a whole should be reflected in the mission, and there should not be any fractional views guiding it. To be able to do this, one must understand the “true conception of the nature of the firm” (Selznick, 1957, p.72), which means to understand the core of the organization and include the long-term aims and commitments. If a leader fails to understand this true conception, he or she is focusing on short-term rather than long-term goals. This is characterized as overemphasis on means while ends are neglected. Selznick (1957, 1994), refers to this short-sightedness as opportunism, which is the most powerful reason for institutional debasement. Opportunism includes giving in to short-term advantages with no consideration for the consequences. As this is a risk for the survival of the organization, giving in to this temptation is a failure in the leader.

The concept of an organization’s mission is important in the old school and is included in a broader concept—namely, the purpose. The purpose of the organization is beyond constructing a mission; it means “transforming a neutral body of men into a committed polity” (Selznick, 1957, p.90). This concept is broader than focusing on the internal and external, as represented by the notion of an organization’s mission: it is about uniting the people in the organization and ensuring that all are striving for the same goals. When an organization is moving from the technical to the institutional, which means that it is in the process of institutionalization, it takes on a character. This also includes a distinctive character that defines the organization (Selznick, 1957). When this shift occurs, the organization’s goals become values and the specific objectives that were present are now ways of thinking and deciding in the organization. During this process, the organization also establishes a corporate culture (Selznick, 1994). Thus, as the organization moves toward an institution, it establishes its character. The technical is disposable as it is not seen as valuable, whereas the institutional has meaning for both the people in the organization and the surroundings.

Social values are part of the character and are objects or desires that are used as guidance for the people in the organization. There are elites in an organization, members that are actively responsible for the protection of social values. This
protection is part of the maintaining organizational integrity. While organizational integrity is an important notion in the old school, the concept has been mostly neglected in the development of institutional theory. Its conceptualization is elaborated in the next section.

2.2 Organizational integrity

The purpose of an organization and the values it embodies cannot merely be spelled out, but must be enacted. It is the leader’s responsibility to ensure this happens, as the purpose serves as a guide to organizational action and it is crucial that the people are united and work toward the same goals. This unity of the people is a part of the organizational integrity, defined as the fidelity to self-defined values and principles (Selznick, 1957, 1994). The defense of organizational integrity is mainly a function of leadership and it includes the work of creating a united embodiment of purpose. Organizational integrity emphasizes staying the same, keeping the familiarity in the organization, and protecting values. However, circumstantial decisions can make the organization stray in the short term. Organizational integrity is related to both the technical and the institutional; it includes maintaining the social system in the organization and is crucial for the survival of the organization. Technical and institutional aspects can enhance and weaken the organizational integrity respectively.

Among [the key problems of institutional leadership] is the defense of organizational integrity—the persistence of an organization's distinctive values, competence, and role (Selznick, 1957, p. 119)

The definition of organizational integrity began with a sole focus on the underlying principles but was further developed to explicitly state values and principles (Selznick, 1994). The values of an organization are central in organizational integrity and the definition is “something which in the given organization is taken as an end in itself” (Selznick, 1957, p.57), although today a more accepted definition of values is "socially shared cognitive representations of institutional goals and demands" (Rokeach, 1979, p.50). Thus, in the development of the concept, the emphasis moved from a sole focus on values to include the mission, which then outlines the guiding principles and core commitments of the organization (Selznick, 2000). This concept also contains the strategic importance and should guide what actions are possible (Paine, 1994), as the values, mission, and guiding principles should reflect the distinctive competence of the organization (Goodstein, 2015; Kraatz, 2009).

It is important to note that Selznick did refer to this as institutional integrity, as his assumption is that an institution is on the organizational level. However, due to the developments in institutional theory and the notion of the field as the institution, I join Goodstein (2015) and refer to the concept as organizational
integrity, as this clearly signals the level and focus. Thus, the definition of organizational integrity has developed to encompass fidelity to mission, values, and distinctiveness (Dacin et al., 2002; Goodstein, 2015; Selznick, 1957). To strive for integrity, the organization should answer (Selznick, 1994, p. 322): “What is our direction? What are our unifying principles? And how do these square with the claims of morality?” Moreover, to include developments in old institutionalism, this study draws on Ansell and colleagues (2015) and King (2015) to argue that organizational integrity is the fidelity to character. These recent studies explain the character as a roadmap to include the mission, values, and distinctive competence, which resonates with the original definition by Selznick while including the developments of the theory.

Powell and DiMaggio (1991) use Selznick as a reference point for their work, however, in their development of institutional theory the concept of organizational integrity is not continued even though the concept was critical in the old school. Thus, they do not discuss organizational integrity. Moreover, in their handbook on institutional analysis, Greenwood et al. (2008) briefly introduce organizational integrity in relation to institutional pluralism or as a part of identity, but then they refer to ‘integrity’ rather than ‘organizational integrity’. Kraatz and Block (2008, p.260) claim that “integrity can only be assessed on a case-by-case basis, and that, to the extent it exists, organizational integrity is a characteristic of a dynamic organizational self, and that all selves are unique and somewhat mysterious in the final analysis”. This explanation is ambiguous. Firstly, organizational integrity is the fidelity to (what they call) the ‘organizational self’, not its definition. Rather than saying that organizational integrity is unique to each organization, this is a normative concept that can expand the understanding of organizational resistance and change.

Moreover, the organizational self would be what the fidelity is to: the organizational integrity does not define or construct the organizational self (what I call character). Thus, based on this earlier misconception that organizational integrity is like the organizational self, some discussions have emerged that organizational integrity is related to organizational identity and culture, both of which are prominent areas in organization theory. These concepts are further elaborated on below, highlighting that organizational integrity represents fidelity. Organizational integrity is unique and normative and is understood through the agency of the organizational members. Even though scholars emphasize the importance of this concept conceptually, its empirical use has been limited.

2.2.1 Neighbouring concepts

As organizational integrity is fidelity to character, there are some parallels with existing concepts in research on organizations, such as identity and culture. Both concepts are respectively established areas in organizational theory, and were already discussed in old institutionalism. Culture was explained as a “web of
person–centered meanings” (Selznick, 1994, p.8): it is a symbolic expression of shared perceptions and it “emphasizes the creation of common understandings regarding purpose” (Selznick, 1994, p.321). Recent literature presents several definitions of organizational culture. The definition according to Schein (1990, p.111) is “a pattern of basic assumptions, (b) invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, (c) as it learns how to cope with its problems of external adaption and internal integration, (d) that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore (e) is to be taught to new members as the (f) correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems”. Moreover, culture was also discussed in the old school in relation to the broader notion of character, which is the concept undertaken in this study. Thus, in that view, culture is part of the character. In addition, old institutionalism discussed distinctiveness, which is now known as the concept of organizational identity that is roughly defined as the central, enduring, and distinctive part of the organization in contemporary research (Albert, Ashforth, & Dutton, 2000; Albert & Whetten, 1985; Whetten, 2006). Thus, character shares some similarities with identity research, specifically the ‘social actor’ conceptualization (King, 2015), and so not the identity research in organizations, where actors reflect and define what an organization is (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Brunninge, 2005; Whetten, 2006). It is more similar to the research on identity of organizations, which includes institutional claims of the organization and perceives it as a social actor with responsibilities (Whetten & Mackey, 2002). Some scholars claim that character can be understood as more stable than identity (Gioia et al., 2000; King, 2015), as identity is more sensitive to fluctuations than character, although there are many different beliefs and perspectives on how changeable the identity is (Whetten, 2006). The assumption that self-reflection motivates action is similar in both concepts (for a discussion on the distinction of identity and character, see King, 2015). The goal in this dissertation is not to separate character and identity; however, for clarification, I turn to Selznick, who suggests that character also includes a sense of morality, and it is a combination of qualities that distinguishes one person, group, or thing from another (Goodstein, 2015; King, 2015; Selznick, 1994). The old school presents a relationship between these three concepts—character, culture, and identity—while the organization’s character is an umbrella term that includes shared assumptions—i.e., the organizational culture. Moreover, in this view, character includes an organization’s special competence: distinctiveness. When the organization goes through the process of institutionalization, it establishes a kind of character (Selznick, 1957, 1994), which is defined as “the combination of qualities or features that distinguishes one person, group, or thing from another” (Selznick, 1994, p. 322). Thus, character can be a roadmap for organizational members (Ansell et al., 2015), but also, as Selznick explains, it can be pathological, and perhaps it becomes a persistence that is not healthy and that even restrains the organization. Thus, character is chosen in this study as it complements the assumptions in
organizational integrity, where its maintenance can become rigid in the organization (Hoffman, 1997).

Following the normative and pragmatic view of old institutionalism, this study uses the term ‘character’ to manifest what the organization stands for. Scholars who build on Selznick’s ideas argue that an organization’s character is:

…the *enduring manifestation of an organization’s informal structure*, resulting from the internal process of adapting goals to fit the daily necessities of operational survival and from adjustments to its external image as it seeks to make itself palatable to key constituencies that it depends on for resources. (King, 2015, p.157, italics in original)

The organization takes on a character as it becomes institutionalized, and the informal structure is a representation of “an organization’s daily struggles for survival and integration, the historical commitments it makes, and a product of leadership choices” (Ansell et al., 2015, p.97). Thus, the character can be understood as a roadmap for activities and decisions (Ansell et al., 2015). It represents a widely shared purpose in the organization and what external constituents perceive that the organization stands for. Moreover, the character should reflect the distinctive competence of an organization, which is the organization’s ability to perform a certain task (Selznick, 1957). Thus, the character does not change unless it is under constraint (King, 2015). The character is the informal structures that should reflect the goals and commitments of the organization and is directly related to the maintenance of organizational integrity, although this does not necessarily mean efficiency: almost the opposite, it favors the promotion of the goals and ideals in the organization.

Organizations adapt just as much to their own internal group dynamics as they do to external environmental contingencies. Internally, leadership seeks to gain consent and cooperation from the various groups that they depend on for the daily operation of the organization, and externally, an organization adapts to the demands placed on it by its various constituencies. An organization’s informal structure is the product of an organization seeking to satisfy these, at times, conflicting internal and external needs. (King, 2015, p. 156)

As the organization institutionalizes, it becomes committed to specific values and goals. Due to these commitments, the organization becomes predictable and less flexible, since a change could mean losing key constituents (Selznick, 1957). Thus, the ‘commitments’ of the character limit the possible responses (King, Clemens, & Fry, 2011). In respect of character, previous studies have outlined that some commitments are stronger than others. The stronger commitments are perceived as irreversible and important for the continued survival of the organization, while the less important commitments could be
discontinued. This ranking of commitments exemplifies that the organization is not static and there are potential changes to the character of the organization, though with some constraints from organizational members (King, 2015; Selznick, 1957).

By focusing on the fidelity of the character and how the organization adjusts to internal and external pressures, organizational integrity adds an understanding of organizational behavior that has not yet been studied (Dacin et al., 2002). It includes pressures from the institutional environment(s) and internal pressures, maintaining as a balancing act between these points. However, with this clarification it is also important to separate organizational integrity from organizational commitment.

Organizational commitment has been noted as an antecedent and/or consequence of identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The definition of organizational commitment is the “totality of internalized normative pressures to act in a way that meets organizational goals and interests” (Wiener, 1982, p. 418), which might appear to be in line with the meaning of organizational integrity. However, studies on organizational commitment show that the focus is more on the individual level and individuals’ commitment to the organization (Gutiérrez-Broncano, Estévez, & Rubio-Andrés, 2016). Thus, organizational commitment is an organizational member’s loyalty to the organization—for example, his or her intention to stay—not fidelity to the organization’s character. Organizational commitment research focuses on the psychology of individuals in organizations and uses normative commitment as an acceptance of claims that guide the behavior. Thus, organizational commitment represents individual behavior in terms of job satisfaction and intention to stay at the organization (Gutiérrez-Broncano et al., 2016; Wiener, 1982) and is this more relevant for human resource management than organizational behavior. Thus, the normative aspects of organizational commitment and organizational integrity overlap, although the latter is arguably focused on the organizational level rather than the individual. Thus, organizational integrity is not focused on commitment to the organization but on the fidelity of the organizational members to sustain its character.

Organizational integrity has received limited empirical attention. It is a concept from the 1950s and it has limitations in its application to organizations. The next section will outline some points of difference in how Selznick defined and described organizational integrity and the perspective of organizational integrity in this dissertation. The next section reviews scholarly work on organizational integrity and discusses some suggestions for its development.
2.2.2 The difference between organizational integrity and the integrity of an organization

There is a distinction between the conceptual and empirical use of organizational integrity. Conceptual discussions of organizational integrity (e.g., Besharov & Khurana, 2015; Dacin et al., 2002; Goodstein, 2015) share Selznick’s view of organizational integrity. However, studies using organizational integrity empirically have a strong focus on ethical behavior rather than focusing on the old school conceptualization. Thus, empirically, the concept has gone somewhat astray, using a general definition of integrity. Studies that use the term organizational (or institutional) integrity focus on ethical and moral aspects of organizational behavior, such as the ethical dilemmas in health organizations (Wear, 1991), the role of diversity at universities (Conceicao & Heitor, 2001), public procurement and corruption (Engelbrekt, 2011), ethics in research (Friedman, 1996), institutional trauma (Honig & Barron, 2013), and academic and research integrity (Atkinson & Gilleland, 2007). Previous studies also claim that there is no clear definition of organizational integrity (Waller, 2007), although ethics and morals are a part of organizational integrity, as the organization should not engage in immoral actions (Selznick, 1994). This deviation may be explained by the general definition of integrity which is the “the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2014). Therefore, I argue that the studies mentioned above do not use the concept of organizational integrity but rather the integrity of organizations, as there is a clear focus on honesty and corruption in these studies.

It is argued that ethics and moral behavior are taken for granted in the organization: ethical and responsible actions are assumed, and to do anything else is unthinkable for law-abiding organizations (Oliver, 1991). Selznick (1994, pp.243–244) points out a difference between integrity and organizational integrity, where he explains that institutions are not persons with distinctive attributes of human beings, since persons have a moral and ontological primacy. We are ultimately objects of moral concern, whereas an organization is judged by its contribution to social wellbeing—it’s contribution to the community. This means that the organization as an institution should serve public needs: this includes ethical behavior, but that is not the sole focus of organizational integrity. Organizational integrity is rather the study of the fidelity to the character, and this fidelity is a guide in the resistance or conformity to pressures.

2.2.3 Defending organizational integrity

Institutionalization is a process whereby organizations establish a kind of character defined by the commitments to guiding values and principles (Selznick, 1957, 1994). As these normative commitments deepen both within the organization and among stakeholders, there is a movement from
organization to institution (Selznick, 1994, 1996). These commitments become the basis for a kind of normative rationality (Oliver, 1997), which legitimates organizational choices in reference to an organization’s mission and values and sustains organizational integrity (Paine, 1994; Selznick, 1994).

Organizational integrity represents a resistance to some extent. Broad environmental changes create unique challenges for the maintenance of organizational integrity. Organizational integrity could be a source of both resistance and conformity. Hoffman (1997) argues that the maintenance of organizational integrity could be taken too far, to the point that it becomes rigid, and this occurs when organizations fail to respond to forces in their environments. The organization should not be too rigid, but at the same time should not change too much. Therefore, there is a difference between gradually adapting to survive and relentlessly giving in to external pressures, since the organization cannot defend its organizational integrity (Selznick, 1994).

Staying too rigid and ignoring forces in the environment could be detrimental to the survival of an organization (Hoffman, 1997). On the other hand, changing too much and focusing only on short-term goals could also be harmful for the organization. This short-sightedness is a threat and is termed “opportunism” (Selznick, 1994, p.249). If the organization changes and does not defend its character through this process, it is opportunistic rather than responsive. Opportunism represents the organization’s pursuit of short-term advantages, such as financial gains or an uncontrolled reliance on technologies. It is the function of leadership to protect organizational integrity: leadership fails if it permits a retreat to the short term. Selznick (1994) claims that this notion is a warning and a voice of resistance to the culture of short-term goals, which could make an organization lose its distinctive competence. The organizational integrity is weakened, for example, when maximizing financial gain becomes the operative goal, and the organizational integrity is characteristically vulnerable when values are weak or insecure (Selznick, 1994). If this occurs, it disorients and undermines the mission of the enterprise. Integrity strategies may vary in design and scope, but the common thread is that they strive to define an “organization’s guiding values, aspirations, and patterns of thought and conduct” (Paine, 1994, p.107).

One of the key issues for the institutional leader is the defense of organizational integrity. This is important as it includes fidelity to the “organization’s distinctive values, competence and role” (Selznick, 1957, p.119). As mentioned previously, the purpose cannot simply be spoken: it must be infused in the organization. Maintenance of organizational integrity thus works to defend the character. For instance, when institutionalization progresses, the enterprise takes on a special character: this means that it becomes competent (or incompetent) to do a particular kind of work. If an organization takes pride in maintaining a certain level of quality, for example, the organization is niched to maintain that quality.
This chapter has so far focused on the conceptualization provided by Selznick. However, this initial work was carried out in the 1950s and there are several developments in institutional theory that are not considered. The following section outlines some shortcomings of organizational integrity before introducing some views from the new institutional theory that are relevant for this study.

2.2.4 Limitations of organizational integrity

It is the leaders’ responsibility to defend organizational integrity. This was one of the main emphases that Selznick (1957, 1994) made. A contrasting view has emerged more recently in organization theory, questioning the sole importance of the leader and arguing for the possibility of a bottom-up driving force for organizational change (Bercovitz & Feldman, 2008). This theoretical development suggests that individuals within the organization have autonomy, and that it is not necessarily the leader but also the employees that can drive changes (Pettigrew & Woodman, 2001; Reynaud, 2005). Thus, it seems simplistic to assume that a leader has sole responsibility for maintaining the organizational integrity, and here the assumption is that this responsibility lies with all organizational members (though some more than others).

Another aspect that is somewhat complicated in Selznick’s description is whether there is a single organizational integrity in an organization (Selznick, 1994). Perhaps there are several understandings of the character in the same organization, which would include several fidelities, or maybe there only is a holistic fidelity. The new school has pointed out and developed the multilevel pressures on an organization from several institutions (Hinings, Greenwood, Reay, & Suddaby, 2004; Seamans & Zhu, 2013)—for example, in an academic organization, where the character would be related to two different aspects: research includes specific regulative and normative pressures, but education also has rules and norms. In this example, would there be an organizational integrity, a fidelity to the ‘academic character’ and the ‘educational character’? Newspaper organizations are a further example of this, as a common metaphor to explain the complexities in newspaper organizations is the tension between the commercial and the editorial. Thus, there could be an organizational integrity protecting both these aspects of a newspaper organization. This conundrum poses the question of whether there can be fidelity to several character commitments in the organization or if the fidelity is holistic to all descriptions.

2.2.5 Limitations of the old school

The old school is a micro-focused perspective that is positioned to focus on the people in the organization and their actions. However, one of its main criticisms
is that its focus on ‘action’ is not strong enough (Hirsch & Lounsbury, 1997). Powell and DiMaggio (1991) elaborate on this critique as they outline some differences between the schools in their influential book on new institutionalism. Hirsch and Lounsbury (1997) praise and criticize Powell and DiMaggio for their stance. They argue that Powell and DiMaggio’s description of the old institutionalism is somewhat condescending since they present the comparison between the old and new as a competition, not allowing the old to show its full potential. The old and new schools, however, differ on several foundational aspects and should not be in competition. I agree with Hirsch and Lounsbury (1997) that these schools are complementary and not rivals. The new perspective takes the organizational field as a level of analysis and is further elaborated on below. The field is defined as “those organizations that, in an aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies and other organizations that produce similar services and products”, thus “a totality of relevant actors” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p.148). Scott (1994a) expanded this notion by adding that members share and contribute to a common meaning system in the field.

As these networked members of the field interact, there is a persistence of the structures and the shared meaning system creates homogeneity in organizations. Thus, the common structures result in similar actions, as organizations conform to the same external pressures from the field. The old school, on the other hand, focuses on micro-processes and emphasizes values and their role in organizational behavior. The criticism of focusing on action is relevant, but my view is that the old school is focusing on agency rather than action. Agency means the act of interpretation by the people in the organization rather than the actual action (Suddaby et al., 2010). The old school therefore focuses on the internal perspective, both agency and action, as it is interested in how the people in the organization are actively working to maintain familiarity, trying to defend the underlying values and purpose from external and internal pressures. Each school of institutionalism has its strengths and weaknesses, and neither of the perspectives is exhaustive in answering all questions about organizations. However, my view is that the use of both schools in a complimentary fashion increases the range of questions that can be answered by either school. The specific use of both schools in this dissertation is outlined in section 2.6. This chapter has so far focused on the old school and its foundational ideas but the succeeding section further outlines the new institutional school.

This section of the chapter has depicted some theoretical weaknesses of organizational integrity and old institutionalism based on some progressions in the theory. There have been several important theoretical developments in institutional theory since the ideas from the old school were presented: the next section explains some perspectives from the new school that are relevant for this dissertation.
2.3 New institutional theory

The previous sections of this chapter have shown the starting point of old institutionalism in the 1950s. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, another strand within the institutional line of thinking emerged: ‘new’ institutionalism. It dates back to the 1970s, through the influential publications of Meyer (1977), Meyer and Rowan (1977), Zucker (1983), and DiMaggio and Powell (1983). As the previous sections explained, the ‘old’ is more micro-focused, emphasizing change, dynamics, interpretations, and values. In contrast, the ‘new’ school embodies a structuralist view of the organization, emphasizing statics, continuity, and outcomes (Hirsch & Lounsbury, 1997). The foundations of the new institutional thesis that were brought up in the late 1970s and early 1980s were summarized by Greenwood et al. (2008, p.6) in five main ideas that focus on the influence of the field on the organization, persistence, and homogeneity:

1. Organizations are influenced by their institutionalized and networked context. The institutional context consists of rationalized myths of appropriate conduct.

2. Institutional pressures affect all organizations but especially those with unclear technologies and/or difficult to evaluate outputs. Organizations especially sensitive to institutional contexts are institutionalized organizations.

3. Organizations become isomorphic with their institutional context to secure social approval (legitimacy), which provides survival benefits.

4. Because conformity to institutional pressures may be contrary to the dictates of efficiency, conformity may be ceremonial, whereby symbolic structures are decoupled from an organization’s technical core.

5. Institutionalized practices are typically taken for granted, widely accepted, and resistant to change.

Some aspects in the new strand of institutionalism differ conceptually from the old school. Legitimacy is one example. In the new perspective, it is understood as adhering to the institutional context and is described on a societal or regulatory level. The old school, on the other hand, explained that legitimacy is sought when an organization improves economic or social welfare. The institution and institutionalization is another point of distinction. While the old school has a strong emphasis on the organizational level (including groups or communities), the new school develops this idea so that an institution is in the field, and includes regulations, government influence, interest groups, professions, and inter-firm relationships (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Farashahi et al., 2005; Oliver, 1997; Scott, 1987).
2. Organizational Integrity and Institutional Theory

2.3.1 The notion of the field

The field is an important notion in institutional theory. A common definition is “those organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services or product” and “a recognized area of institutional life” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p.148). The organizational field has been identified as a major source of institutional pressures in institutional theory. Thus, the field suggests that actors carry out activities that are “characterized by an orienting principle or goal” (Evans & Kay, 2008, p.973). The rules in a context that an organization should follow are social understandings, or ‘myths’: this is a pivotal aspect in the early development of new institutionalism. Rationalized myths (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) are seen as social understandings that together constitute the institutional context to which the firm responds.

The definition of the institutionalized context, however, differs, and several scholars have provided their perspectives: it could be rules, norms, and ideologies (Meyer & Rowan, 1977); common understandings of appropriate and meaningful behavior (Zucker, 1983); or a normative and cognitive belief system (Scott, 2008). Thus, the field is a source of pressures, which could stem from professional conditions or other members in the field to abide by the cultural expectations in which they function. Broadly, the conception of the field includes pressures that have effects on the organization (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The field is a pivotal concept in institutional theory (Zietsma, Groenewegen, Logue, & Hinings, 2017), and has been used as a foundation to explain isomorphism. Therefore, organizations within the same field or context may become alike, which is isomorphism, an important notion in the new school, including a tendency towards homogeneity within institutional contexts (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). If the organization conforms, it abides by the prescripts of appropriate behavior and therefore gains legitimacy, thus giving off the appearance of ‘being rational’ (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Even though researchers have taken different stances on the specific meaning, the generic disposition is that the organization conforms to shared meanings and processes. There is an assumption that these rationalized myths are a recipe for appropriate behavior. The organization conforms to these myths, which means that organizations within a similar field conform to myths that are the same, or at least similar.

Isomorphism is a significant concept within the new school and it has received much scholarly attention. It represents the foundational focus of the persistence and homogeneity with which new institutionalism is generally associated. The development of this concept is expanded in the subsequent section.
2.3.2 Isomorphism and the illusion of an iron cage

The organization conforms to rational myths within its institutional context and generally must attend to several institutional rules as multi-level pressures surround it. These could range from national regulatory laws to the more normative unwritten rules of a profession. The new school argues that organizations within a field are isomorphic, as they conform to the same institutional context (or contexts) and strive for similar legitimization, so their appropriate behavior will be similar. This proposition of isomorphism was explained by DiMaggio and Powell’s (1983) paper discussing the iron cage. Recently, however, scholars claim that this has been misinterpreted and caused the theory to get somewhat off track (Suddaby, 2010), contending that the iron cage was misinterpreted from its initial meaning as a ‘shell’ that pushes an organization toward efficiency and rationality (Weber, [1930] 1958) to mean that organizations are helpless prisoners of their institutional environment or context. According to Suddaby (2010), this was not the implication the authors intended, as the real aim of ‘revisiting the iron cage’ was to start a discussion on the ‘agentic’ and somewhat creative ways in which organizations interpret their institutional environments. The agentic process was later termed ‘institutional entrepreneurship’ (DiMaggio, 1988).

The definition of institutional entrepreneurship is that “new institutions arise when organized actors with sufficient resources see in them an opportunity to realize interests that they value highly…[Institutional entrepreneurs] create a whole new system of meaning that ties the functioning of disparate sets of institutions together” (DiMaggio, 1988, p.14). This definition has since been elaborated on by Maguire, Hardy, and Lawrence (2004, p.657) to include “activities of actors who have an interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create new institutions or to transform existing ones”. Institutional entrepreneurship, consequently, is an attempt to reintroduce agency and action into institutionalism, and it represents the way organizations within an institution can have creative responses to institutional pressures. The notion argues against complete isomorphism in that not all organizations will react the exact same way to similar pressures.

Even though there is a criticism that the analogy of the iron cage has been misinterpreted, its impact on the development of institutional theory is evident. Isomorphism is one of the main themes within the new school. Organizations follow the recipe for appropriate behavior; by doing so they try to gain legitimacy by conforming to rational myths in their context or field (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), and these myths are interpreted from external pressures from the field on the organization (MacLean & Behnam, 2010). DiMaggio and Powell (1983, pp.150–154) suggested three mechanisms leading to such conformity—that is, they identified mechanisms of how the institutionalization occurs, and how organizations find various sources of conformity to the institutional pressures. These three mechanisms are:
• **Coercive** – This notion of isomorphism includes conforming to external pressures from other organizations or the state. The typical implication is that an organization is forced to abide and has no choice, and organizations within the same field will have the same laws or regulations to follow.

• **Mimetic** – This isomorphic behavior occurs when there is uncertainty and ambiguity about new technology or other changes in the industry. Organizations mimic other organizations as a form of isomorphism.

• **Normative** – This is generally connected to a professional group which defines the ways they should work. To obtain legitimacy, ‘rules’ should be followed; hence members of that professional group abide by the same or similar rules and become homogenous.

The mechanisms described above show the sources of conformity identified by the new school, and the mechanisms are potential responses of conformity to the pressures on the organization. The conforming rules that DiMaggio and Powell (1983) present could be enforced by a regulatory agency, successful competitors, or professions in an industry that the organization abides by. This demonstrates that the new school focuses on external pressures on the organization exerted from the institutional macro-level (MacLean & Behnam, 2010). The focus of external pressures is present in old school institutionalism as well, but the new school developed this notion, indicating that the institution is not part of the organization but is an external body that has influence in the organization, and therefore the organization should conform to its pressures.

Recent work on institutional theory points to the complexity of fields and the need to clarify this concept (e.g., Zietsma et al., 2017). In their review, the authors suggest two types of field, namely exchange field and issue field. Exchange fields are related to DiMaggio and Powell’s definition, focusing on interrelated actors (such as organizations, suppliers, consumers, and regulatory agencies) which have a shared understanding of meaning systems, practices, and norms. Within this view of the field, the population is defined based on the industry, profession, or social movements. Issue fields draw more on Hoffman’s (1999) ideas, with more limited boundary conditions highlighting competing logics—more specifically, different identities and competing pressures. For this study, the notion of professional exchange fields is relevant: as newspapers have been noted to be tightly coupled with professional principles of journalism (Boczkowski, 2004; Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009), this view of the field is helpful to get an understanding of newspapers.

Professional exchange fields naturally highlight actors connected to a profession, such as workers, regulators, and educators (Zietsma et al., 2017). Thus, such fields enforce boundaries and some barriers of entry (such as education), with the professionals as gatekeepers. Within the field, it is important to adhere to the practices and rules of the profession. Moreover, there
could be a prominent logic, or a few logics within these professional exchange fields. This brings into focus another important notion in institutionalism: logics. Logics expand on the idea of how external parties influence organizational behavior. This notion is discussed below.

2.3.3 Institutional logics

Within a field, actors interpret the conditions that organizations should follow, conceptualized as institutional logics (Friedland & Alford, 1991). As the institutional environment can be plural, and even incompatible with the organizations’ internal arrangement, organizations search for external support (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Institutional logics are defined as “the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality” (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999, p.804). A logic provides principles to organize a “realm of social life” (Besharov & Smith, 2014, p.366), and actors within an organization can draw on different or multiple logics to find that support (Friedland & Alford, 1991). Thus, the logics command appropriate action within a field and, by following the rules within the logic, an actor appears to be legitimate. Furthermore, logics could be interpreted on different levels (Thornton, 2002): they generally stem from the society (higher order logics) and are interpreted within fields, organizations, or professions (lower order logics).

A common example is market and profession logics (Thornton, 2002), which are also relevant for this study of newspaper organizations. Thornton (2002) describes higher education publishing which follows editorial and market logics that stem from the society level of the professional and market. Scott (2008) explains that a field can differ—it could have one exclusive dominant logic, where there is a relatively coherent set of beliefs, while some fields contain multiple or even conflicting logics. Within a field with several or competing logics, that could be a source of change (Hinings et al., 2004). Some scholars (Besharov & Smith, 2014) have argued that depending on the centrality of the logics and the compatibility, multiple logics could create conflicts in organizations if the logics contrast, though the organization could minimize the conflicts if one logic is dominant or there is a way to align them. Market and profession logics are an example of contrasting logics that could create tensions in the organization; this is relevant for this study, as previous research (e.g., Ferrer Conill, 2016; Raviola, 2012) has noted a clash between the editorial and commercial in newspaper organizations. Thus, the new school explains that there are multi-level sources from the field and logics that influence organizations (Farashahi et al., 2005), although how the pressures are interpreted in the organization differs.
2.3.4 Institutional pressures

The notion of pressures from the field is a popular stream of research in the new school (e.g., Bertels & Lawrence, 2016; Clemens & Douglas, 2005; Julian, Ofori-Dankwa, & Justis, 2008; Pache & Santos, 2013). As an organization generally operates in dynamic, multi-level environments, it considers pressures and logics from several institutions at various levels. An example of this is academia (a common context in institutionalism—e.g., Kraatz & Moore, 2002; Kraatz et al., 2010; Powell & Colyvas, 2008), with the university as an organization. An academic organization should foster research, but it also has teaching responsibilities. Therefore, to be successful and survive, the university must follow the academic research norms and laws, educational laws, and accreditation rules to gain legitimacy, which could be both normative and regulatory. Certainly, the university as an organization could have more institutions that affect it directly or indirectly, but education and research are a simple and direct example of the complexities and multi-level pressures of such organizations.

In the early 1980s, the initial foundation of the new organizational institutionalism was described as focusing on “institutions and institutional processes at the level of the organization and the organizational field” (Greenwood et al., 2008, p.5). The initial line of inquiry therefore looked at the adoption of the bureaucratic organizational form within a given sector or field (i.e., at the process of rationalization), whereas the focus later was on the wider range of organizational forms, practices, and behaviors, and the construction of the field itself (Greenwood et al., 2008). The central focus was on the organization and its relationship with its context, this latter theme emphasizing the play of widely shared and taken-for-granted social values and ideas. As Meyer and Rowan (1977, p.346) famously put it: “institutional theories in their extreme forms define organizations as dramatic enactments of the rationalized myths pervading modern societies”. Critically, this institutional explanation is not derived from the calculated self-interest of organizational actors, which was the focus of the old school; rather, it explains that organizations seek legitimacy and survival, not efficiency. In addition, it brings attention to the role of cognition and obligation rather than maintenance of the organization’s self-interest or organizational integrity.

2.3.5 Limitations of the new school

If the promises of new institutional theory were to be realized, there was a need to show the underlying motivations of institutional effects rather than treat them as the default option. There were several ambiguities in the foundations of institutional theory (Greenwood et al., 2008)—for example, the initial papers defining the foundations of the new school ask why there is an increasing rationalization of society and use of bureaucratic organizational forms.
DiMaggio (1988) argued that institutional work risked being marginalized unless it could incorporate the reality of purposive interest-driven and conflict-related behavior. He elaborated that organizations were portrayed as caught in the constraints of institutionalized beliefs or rules, referring to the expectations of behavior or practice that is accepted within an institutional environment.

For organizations to survive, organizations should conform to institutional rules within an industry (or industries) in order to increase legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Walls & Hoffman, 2013). The focus has mainly been on explanation of the variability of responses to conflicting institutional pressures, although calls to incorporate more ‘agentic’ and political dimensions, and to explicitly look at how institutions arise, change, and with what consequences, became more common. This shift toward incorporating agency and change in a theory that mainly discussed persistence and stability was not a simple transition. Several researchers have responded to this call—for example Fligstein (1987), who offers a two-stage model of change. He shows how disruptive changes in legal frameworks enable shifts in organizational behaviors by altering patterns of incentives and opportunities. This model of change, the exogenous shock model, became dominant for the next two decades (Greenwood et al., 2008).

In terms of legitimacy, one of the main questions during the 1980s asked why there was such startling “homogeneity of organizational forms and practices” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p.147). Research in the 1990s increasingly recognized that institutional contexts were complex (Friedland & Alford, 1991), often consisting of competing institutional logics (Hinings et al., 2004). There was a growing interest in why and how organizations interpret and respond differently to their context, but even with this call for more agency and micro-level focus, the top-down assumption of external pressures from the institution on the organization remained. Two motivating questions from the mid-90s included, firstly, how do organizations acquire, manage, and use legitimacy?—then, there was a growing acceptance that neither institutional contexts nor organization are homogenous; and, secondly, how do institutional arrangements change? Oliver (1992) and Scott (2008) also noted that much of the emphasis in the institutional theory literature has been on institutional construction and convergent change processes.

The extent to which the new school is capable (or incapable) of explaining change has been discussed quite extensively. Comparisons between the two schools have been described as a “family quarrel” (Hirsch & Lounsbury, 1997) and received increasing scholarly attention (Dacin et al., 2002; Kraatz, 2015; Selznick, 1996). In the discussion of the difference between schools, the terminology of old, new, and neo is somewhat blurred. Greenwood and Hinings (1996) use neo-institutionalism to describe the combination of old and new, while other scholars, such as Powell and DiMaggio (1991), use new and neo interchangeably. The terminology ‘neo’ is not a combination of old and new in this dissertation: my view is that the schools are not to be used in a mixture but
complement each other. Thus, this dissertation includes ‘neo’ in the notion of the new school. This trend of drawing on both schools in institutional theory is seen in the development of other theories, too. As so often happens in the evolution of theoretical areas, there is a period of movement away from starting points, a process of rediscovery of those starting points, and the reincorporation of these points into existing theory (Brint & Karabel, 1991). Perhaps this is the case of institutional theory.

This chapter has now outlined the foundational aspects of both old and new institutionalism. The next section focuses specifically on change.

2.4 Responses to pressures and change in institutional theory

The old school made change a primary focus of its perspective, viewing change as a continuous process, while the new school contends that there are several distinct types and processes of institutional change. Change can happen as a consequence of external factors crashing into unstable institutional arrangements and creating indeterminacy (Dacin et al., 2002). There was criticism against the new school in respect of what it could say about change due to the focus on persistence, causing several authors from the new school to focus on institutional change to show how the theory can explain change. Jepperson (1991) distinguished between four major types of institutional change: institutional formation, institutional development, deinstitutionalization, and reinstitutionalization.

Institutional formation is an exit from non-productive behavioral patterns, or from reproductive patterns based upon “actions” (Jepperson, 1991). Institutional development represents a continuation rather than an exit (a change that occurs within an institutional form), while deinstitutionalization represents an exit from institutionalization toward reproduction through recurrent action, or non-productive patterns. Lastly, reinstitutionalization is an exit from one institutionalization to another institutional form, organized around principles or rules. In addition, Hargrave and Van de Ven (2006) showed their view of change through a collective action model. The model calls attention to a rich agenda of scholarship on conflict, power, and political behavior for understanding institutional innovation. Moreover, the model represents an important complement to existing models of institutional change. This view is characterized by its attention to struggles over the meanings of novel issues and technologies, and the purposeful enactment of both the networks of actors that compose the organizational field and the institutional arrangements governing the organizational field. According to the model, change is a field-level property that emerges from interactions among the members of the field. Institutional scholars have begun to develop and mobilize this view of institutional change, yet much theorizing remains to be done.
The top-down perspective is continued in Olsen’s (2009a, 2009b) work, which uses some similar terminology to Jepperson (1991). It explains differences between institutionalization, deinstitutionalization, and reinstitutionalization, reminiscent of Kurt Lewin’s (1951) force-field model change, which explained a process of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. Olsen (2009a) states that institutionalization is both a process and a property of organizational arrangements. Institutionalization as a process implies legitimacy. There is increasing clarity, agreement, and formalization of: (a) behavioral rules, including allocation of formal authority; (b) how rules are to be described, explained, and justified; and (c) what constitutes legitimate resources in different settings and who should control common resources. Deinstitutionalization implies that existing rules and practices, descriptions, explanations and justifications, and resources and powers are becoming contested and possibly discontinued.

There is increasing uncertainty, disorientation, and conflict, and new actors are mobilized. Outcomes are more uncertain, and it is necessary to use more incentives or coercion to make people follow prescribed rules. Reinstitutionalization implies either retrogression or a transformation from one order into another, founded on different normative principles. Even within these perspectives, the focus of change is on the macro-level and there are still unanswered calls for research focusing on agency and action in organizations. The perspective of institutional change has remained on the field level and the relationship between the organization and the field, not on the complexities of the dynamics within the organization. Recently, scholars have started to attend to this micro-level focus of institutional change, mainly regarding responses to change on an organizational level. The following section examines that research stream.

2.4.1 Responses to pressures: moving beyond change in the institutional field

Even if the emphasis of the new school has been on persistence and homogeneity within the institutional field, scholars have acknowledged the missing link to the micro-level in the new perspective. Some scholars are addressing the calls for micro-level studies to complement the field-level studies in institutionalism (e.g., Powell & Colyvas, 2008). Oliver (1991) presented a focus on organizational responses as she asserted the lack of the strategic behavior in institutionalism in her conceptual paper based on the combination of (new) institutional and resource dependence theories. She explains that organizations’ strategic responses to environmental pressures do not simply involve conformity, and puts emphasis on different coping strategies, including organizational resistance, underscoring how this is a fruitful addition to institutional theory. Her frame includes five types of strategic response or "repertoire of behavior” (Oliver, 1991, p.159): acquiescence, compromise,
avoidance, defiance, and manipulation. This spectrum starts with passive conformity and increases in active resistance by the organization at each step. Oliver argues that an organization could portray unquestioned conformity, but that is not always the case, as it could also take highly deliberate actions to both conform and actively resist the rules in the institutional environment.

Based on her combination of the theories, Oliver thoroughly describes several strategies for organizations to respond to pressures in their environment. In addition to Oliver (1991, 1997), there is a stream of research focusing on pressures and the strategic responses that these induce in organizations (Bertels & Lawrence, 2016; Clemens & Douglas, 2005; Dick, 2015; Goodstein, 1994). Similar to the description of the new school above, in this line of research, pressures generally stem from the external field level (MacLean & Behnam, 2010). The pressures could range from national regulatory laws to normative unwritten rules of a profession. Thus, the rules from the field can be a source of constraint or change (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991), as organizations seek to abide by these assumptions to achieve appropriate behavior. Moreover, the pressures are subjectively interpreted, as they are not always explicit (Zucker, 1983), and the people in the organization must acknowledge and be willing to adapt for change efforts to be embraced (Dacin et al., 2002). If pressures are not recognized, there is inertia, which occurs when an organization continues to pursue the same strategies even though environmental change would appear to encourage change in the organization (Sorenson & Stuart, 2008).

Moreover, a concept that has re-emerged is decoupling (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), which is a specific type of response to pressures that has recently been in focus in institutional research (MacLean & Behnam, 2010; Pitsakis et al., 2012; Tilcsik, 2010). Decoupling refers to creating and maintaining gaps between actual practices in the organization and what is merely a symbolic adoption of formal policies (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Decoupling therefore allows an organization to gain external legitimacy by only symbolically embracing a rule or myth so that it has little impact on the actual practices in the organization (Scott, 2008). Decoupling is a fruitful perspective that gives insight into the complexities of organizational behavior; it has been studied quite extensively, both conceptually (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) and empirically (e.g., Dick, 2015; MacLean & Behnam, 2010; Mascia et al., 2011). Scholars have explored decoupling and identity construction (Pitsakis et al., 2012), its role in the introduction of compliance programs and institutional misconduct (MacLean & Behnam, 2010), practices in government agencies (Tilcsik, 2010), and change in practice based on the introduction of clinical directorates (Mascia et al., 2011).

To progress and include a notion of change in a school that mainly denoted persistence and stability, DiMaggio (1988) argued that institutional theory should include an account of agency. A response to this call is the Scandinavian approach to institutional theory (Boxenbaum & Strandgaard Pedersen, 2009; Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996; Sahlín & Wedlin, 2008). This line of thinking denotes variation and distinctiveness rather than isomorphism, and there is a
focus on action and practices, which become institutional work when they advance institutional projects. The focus has been on actors who ‘translate’ and ‘edit’ practices or structure from one context to another (Sahlin-Andersson, 1996). Institutional work addresses ‘the permanent recursive and dialectical interaction between agency and institutions’ [including actors’] capacity to reflect upon this embeddedness, related to their own self, and develop conscious intentionality’ (Lawrence et al., 2011, p.55). Institutional work flips the previous focus of top-down effects from institution to organization and includes the individual’s influence on changes, consequently providing a bottom-up view—that is, it looks at how the actions of individuals can create, maintain, and disrupt institutions (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). As it includes the conception of agency, scholars have claimed that institutional work could overcome some limitations connected to the old, new, and entrepreneurial aspects of institutional theory (Willmott, 2010).

Institutional work involves multiple actors and their agency in day-to-day work compared to institutional entrepreneurship, which has mainly focused on the dramatic actions of the heroic entrepreneur (Lawrence et al., 2009). The calls for a better understanding of the micro-processes of organizations and discussion on how to bridge, combine, or complement the old and the new are many (Dacin et al., 2002; Greenwood & Hinings, 1996; Selznick, 1996). Change has been a critical area of discussion in comparisons between the schools. The following section presents the literature on the how the schools can inform one another and how this dissertation views this relationship.

2.4.2 A complementary view of new and old institutionalism

In institutional theory, scholars (e.g., Fligstein, 1987; Hirsch & Lounsbury, 1997) claim that change can only be studied when the old and the new schools are combined. Recently there has been a resurrection of interest in old institutionalism, and there are efforts to reconcile the two schools once and for all (Kraatz et al., 2010). These differences in approach also show how the old and new differ in terms of level of analysis.

Old institutional theory focuses on a micro-level, whereas the new school is on a macro-level. With regard to the level of analysis, Greenwood and Hinings (1996) conclude that it would be advantageous to bridge the approaches to obtain a better understanding of change. New institutional theory is fruitful to explore and understand the pressures and causes of change that are present on an industry or field level. In turn, old institutional theory explores the actions and responses to such pressures within the organization. This is one aspect of how these views complement each other: the old perspective has something to add to the new institutional theory and vice versa.

The new perspective can identify the reasons for change (or resistance), but not how the organization interprets and responds to these pressures. In addition, the
old theory falls short in attempts to identify causes of change and prove outcomes. These differences have their basis in the foundational assumptions of the schools. The old theory stems from a more normative and pragmatic philosophy wherein the aim was not to show and prove the effects, while the new approach represents a more positivistic view, especially held by DiMaggio and Powell (1983). They focus on outcomes and generalizability. The old approach based many arguments on a more subjectivist, pragmatic orientation and it struggled to generalize across a field level since that was not its aim. These differences explain the focus of scholars of the old theory on individual organizations with regard to change in their values and norms (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996). It is important to study the macro-institutional structures surrounding the organization. The understanding of radical change, however, requires more than an analysis of the institutional field or sector, and the use of both schools can increase the understanding of change.

Institutional theory has often been criticized for largely focusing on an explanation of persistence and homogeneity, although this is arguably not using the full power of institutional theory (Dacin et al., 2002). Institutions change over time and are not uniformly taken for granted: although institutions can drive change and shape the nature of change across levels and contexts, they also change themselves in character and potency over time. Thus, several studies (Dacin et al., 2002; Greenwood & Hinings, 1996) have concluded that institutional theory contributes to the understanding of organizational change.

2.4.3 Developments in institutionalism: micro-foundations and change

In their review, Dacin et al. (2002) discuss the development of institutional research. They critique the current focus of institutional theory, especially its focus on explaining persistence in organizations, and they call for a focus on change. They present gaps to expand the scope of institutional theory to areas such as: “(1) changes in relations among existing organizations, (2) changes in boundaries of existing organizations, (3) the emergence of new populations, (4) changes in field boundaries, and (5) changes in governance structures” (Dacin et al., 2002, p.50). Their suggestions initially address field-level issues, focusing on the new school of thought. The authors also focus on the old school and how it can add to contemporary institutional theory. They explain that change can harm the character and integrity of organizations, pointing to an area that is not fully explored yet—namely, the dynamic tension between organizational integrity and responsiveness. Building on ideas that Selznick and other followers of the old school outlined from the 1950s, they focus on the tension between staying true to the values and principles in the organization and responding (no matter if it is conforming or resisting) to pressures from the institutional environment.
Numerous scholars have responded to the acknowledged need for a more change-focused institutional theory (Dacin et al., 2002) and micro-level studies (e.g., Powell & Colyvas, 2008). Studies have started to combine or complement the views of old and new institutionalism, where the area of organizational (micro) responses to institutional (macro) pressures has received much attention. The identification of institutional pressures ranges from contextual pressures to field pressures (Clemens & Douglas, 2005), pressures from institutional logics (Pache & Santos, 2013), and institutional norms (Farashahi et al., 2005). The main point is that external forces have an impact on how organizations behave. The way organizations respond to their external environment differs, either by conforming (giving into pressures) or fighting against them and actively resisting them (Oliver, 1991). The micro-dynamics of macro-pressures have now been studied in several contexts—for example, in newspaper organizations and how these have conformed to regulative changes which induced isomorphic behavior (Erzikova & Lowrey, 2014); tracing change processes and rationality by studying if hospitals change based on patient feedback (Nielsen & Riiskjær, 2013); or ‘conformativity’ and ‘normativity’ in response to institutional pressure (Caprar & Neville, 2012). The latter study included how culture influences (1) how pressures are legitimized (normed) and (2) responses to pressures (conformed) in organizations.

Another clear trend within this strand of recent research on institutional theory is the use of identity and change. This increasing trend can mostly be traced back to Powell and Colyvas’ (2008, p.278) call that institutional analyses “…need a parallel effort to link micro-concepts; e.g., identity, sense making, typifications, frames, and categories with macro-processes of institutionalization, and show how these processes ratchet upwards. This linkage between levels holds promise to better explain institutional dynamics”.

Studies that answered this call look at, for example, the role of identity during change and the act of decoupling (Pitsakis et al., 2012); identity perspectives during downsizing strategies—that is, the alignment of post-downsizing activities and the organization’s mission (Day et al., 2012); the role of organizational and institutional identities during multiple competing logics (Greenwood et al., 2011); and the effects of identity movements on individuals working in organizations (Rao et al., 2003). The final example is a beautifully written piece focusing on chefs that changed from traditional French cooking to nouvelle cuisine.

Thus, several scholars have responded to the need to focus on the internal aspects of organizations in institutional theory (Suddaby et al., 2010; Tilcsik, 2010) as part of the trend in examining identity theory and change. However, in this line of research, many neglect ideas from old institutionalism in their discussion (e.g., Powell & Colyvas, 2008; Suddaby et al., 2010), with the exception of some conceptual work (Kraatz, 2015). Therefore, even though institutional change has received increasing attention, the call that Dacin et al. (2002) made to explore the tension between organizational integrity and
responsiveness has to date received only conceptual attention (e.g., Goodstein, 2015; Goodstein et al., 2009). In addition, scholars have declared the need for studies that focus on the balance between stability and change—more specifically, on how the organization is institutionalized and adaptable at the same time (Ansell et al., 2015; Wakefield et al., 2013). Organizational integrity embraces the tension between adaptation and stability in the organization by involving a balance between the two.

Thus far, this chapter has focused on different perspectives of institutional theory that are relevant to this dissertation. However, as the pressures are from the field level and organizational integrity is on the organizational level, this study uses a concept from strategic management to capture the interpretation from the field within the organizations: that is to say, I draw on organizational (or strategic) issues. The following section outlines the assumptions and views of organizational issues.

2.5 Organizational issues

To bridge the field and organizational level, this dissertation uses the concept of organizational issues (also known as strategic issues). This is an established concept in strategic management (Dutton & Duncan, 1987; Melander, 1997). In institutional theory, the use is not widespread, although some studies do draw on organizational issues to highlight the impact on the environment on the organization (Hoffman & Ventresca, 2002; Judge & Zeithaml, 1992). Issues have been an important part of strategic management for decades. Most researchers point to Ansoff (1980), who explains that strategic issues are developments that affect the organization’s ability to reach a desired outcome.

A common definition is provided by Dutton (1993), who highlights the issue as an event that is constructed by organizational members to have an impact on the organization: "[t]he constructing process describes individual and collective action which imbues an issue with meaning and legitimates it as an organizational issue” (p.198). Thus, organizational members construct issues at a certain point in time based on their background, role, and previous experience. In broad terms, issues are an individual’s attempt to categorize events or objects into meaningful groupings, such as positive or negative, or opportunity or threat (Dutton & Jackson, 1987; Sharma, 2000). This construction or categorization is ambiguous, given the risks and uncertainty in the environment the organization is in. Previous studies argue that the label on the issue has an impact on the organization’s response (Dutton & Jackson, 1987; Jackson & Dutton, 1988; Melander, 1997; Sharma, 2000). In this line of research, the assumptions are that issues exist separately from organizations and that people in the organizations interpret those issues (Bansal, 2003). In that interpretation, the members assign a label to the issue.
Drawing on categorization theory, the commonly used linguistics for issues are opportunity or threat (Jackson & Dutton, 1988). Thus, most research delineates issues as either threats or opportunities (positive or negative) and draw a clear distinction between these labels. Jackson and Dutton (1988) expand the labeling to a certain extent, where an issue can be a threat (or opportunity), discrepant from or consistent with their exploration of how managers label issues. The authors describe four categories (1988, p.377):

(1) Known issue characteristics are opportunity-distinctive, consistent with opportunity and discrepant from threat.
(2) Known issue characteristics are threat-distinctive, consistent with threat and discrepant from opportunity.
(3) Known issue characteristics are ambiguous-nondistinctive, because they are consistent with both threat and opportunity.
(4) Known issue characteristics are neutral in that they are neither clearly consistent with nor clearly discrepant from either concept.

Organizational members perceive an issue and categorize it, which yields a response. Thus, issues are collectively created rather than discovered (Dutton & Jackson, 1987). This logic is in line with old institutionalism and agency, wherein an organization is understood through the people in it and the people in the organization construct the organizational issues. Even though an issue is comprehended as either an opportunity or a threat, or positive or negative, the emphasis is on resolving the issue (Dutton & Jackson, 1987). Organizations are bombarded with issues and naturally cannot respond to all; thus the organizational members discriminate and make a judgment on which to respond to (Daft & Weick, 1984). Issues are perceived in the organization and are caused by field-level pressure. Thus, there is strong connection between pressures and issues.

As the institutional field and the organization are tightly linked (Hoffman, 2001; Thomas et al., 1987), the construction is ongoing and depends on the organizational members. Responses include conforming and resisting an issue caused by a pressure. Thus, a response could be a balancing act of resistance and/or change, which also relates to the organization’s striving for both internal (Goodstein et al., 2009) and external (March & Olsen, 1983) legitimacy. Like the issue, the pre-existing knowledge and experience of the organizational members influence the response—for example, as Hoffman (2001, p.136) explains, members of a professional group “interpret and act on their demands”. Thus, it is important to understand the contextual boundary conditions: for example, a journalist and sales representative could interpret different issues and responses based on the same pressure.

The previous sections have provided an overview of the theoretical perspectives in this thesis. The remainder of this chapter summarizes my view of the theories and concepts—that is, the analytical framework of this dissertation.
2. Organizational Integrity and Institutional Theory

2.6 The analytical framework

Institutional theory is one of the most commonly used theories to study organizational behavior today; however, it is a broad theory that includes different perspectives that are fundamentally different (Davis, 2015; Greenwood et al., 2014; Meyer & Höllerer, 2014; Wetzel & Van Gorp, 2014). Consequently, several sub-communities have developed within the institutional tent and it is crucial for authors to signal their view, interpretation, and relation to the theory (Suddaby et al., 2010). This section presents the way institutional theory is interpreted and used in this dissertation. This overview of the analytical framing starts from the field and explains the lens used from the field to the organization, how organizational issues are used, and how this fits with organizational integrity and character. The section ends by revisiting the research questions and presenting a figure based on the existing conceptual work, which illustrates how I interpret this work and the connection between these concepts.

As mentioned previously, a central focus in institutional theory is fields. Both old and new (or neo) institutionalism view institutionalization as a dependent process that makes organizations less rational by limiting the options they can pursue. The new school stresses the relationship between stability, legitimacy, and the power of common understanding of external pressures (MacLean & Behnam, 2010; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) that are not necessarily explicitly articulated (Zucker, 1983). Recent studies argue for professional exchange fields (Zietsma et al., 2017). Thus, such fields enforce boundaries and some barriers of entry (such as education), with the professionals as gatekeepers. Within the field, it is important to adhere to the practices and rules of the profession, which could also constrain the actors from change. Moreover, there could be a prominent logic, or several logics within the field. Thus, there is a shared understanding of practices and values connected to the profession, which could cause isomorphism as there are strong pressures to adhere to professional standards. In, this study, this perspective captures the ‘rules’ of journalism as strongly affecting newspaper organizations.

In this study, the focus is on internal dynamics, while acknowledging that field-level pressures have an impact on the organization. Following the new school, pressures are interpreted from the field level; to be legitimate and to survive, the organization responds to pressures in order to gain legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Walls & Hoffman, 2013) and these top-down influences are interpreted as issues within the organization.

To bridge the field and organizational level, this study uses the concept of organizational issues (also known as strategic issues). This is an established concept in strategic management (Dutton & Duncan, 1987; Melander, 1997). In institutional theory, the use is not widespread, although some studies do draw on organizational issues to highlight the impact of the environment on the organization (Hoffman & Ventresca, 2002; Judge & Zeithaml, 1992). Broadly,
issues are events or trends that potentially have an impact on organizations (Dutton & Fahey, 1983), and individuals in the organization perceive these issues and attempt to categorize or label these events in meaningful groupings, such as positive or negative, or opportunity or threat (Dutton & Jackson, 1987; Melander, 1997; Sharma, 2000). Some researchers suggest that this label has implications for the consequential response (Dutton & Jackson, 1987; Jackson & Dutton, 1988; Melander, 1997; Sharma, 2000). Moreover, Jackson and Dutton (1988) unpack the labels on issues and explain that issues can be a threat or opportunity, and discrepant from or consistent with both labels. Even though the authors explain four labels, opportunity and threat are commonly used (Jackson & Dutton, 1988).

Organizations are bombarded with issues and naturally cannot respond to all; thus, the organizational members discriminate and make a judgment on which to respond to (Daft & Weick, 1984). The understanding here is that organizational issues highlight the implications of pressures, thus interpreting the field pressure by asking how the organizational members perceive it to impact the organization. This means that organizational issues allow for a deeper understanding of pressures by highlighting the agency—that is, how organizational members perceive them and how pressures affect the organization. Moreover, research suggests that if there is a perceived link to the organization's values, it increases the issue's chances for selection (Dutton, 1997): this makes organizational issues a suitable concept, as this study is interested specifically in the fidelity to character.

Pressures from the field on the organization are interpreted by organizational members and expressed through organizational issues. Thus, the issues and organizational integrity exist in the agency of the organizational members. In this study, agency is an interpretation of people in the organization (Suddaby et al., 2010). Organizational integrity is the fidelity to the character, and it is the basis for a normative logic (Oliver, 1997) which legitimates organizational choices. The character is a roadmap of the mission, values, and distinctive competence of the organization and sustains organizational integrity (Paine, 1994; Selznick, 1994). This fidelity emerges as the organization moves from the technical to the institutional and establishes a character.

This means that organizational integrity represents a resistance to some extent. The resistance is a normative logic based on organizational integrity, and this may constrain organizational adaptation (Oliver, 1997). Broad environmental changes create unique challenges to maintain organizational integrity while still responding to environmental pressures to ensure the survival of the organization (Selznick, 1994). Thus, organizational integrity could be a source of both resistance and conformity. Hoffman (1997) argued that the maintenance of organizational integrity could be taken too far, to the point that the organization becomes rigid and the organization fails to respond to forces in its environment. Therefore, there is a difference between gradually adapting to survive and relentlessly giving in to external pressures and failing to defend the
organizational integrity (Selznick, 1994). Based on the previous scholarly work outlined above, these concepts are interpreted as being connected in the following way.

To explore the role of organizational integrity in responses to pressures, this study builds on the concepts of pressures from the field, organizational issues and responses, character, and organizational integrity. Organizations are part of a field: in this case, the field includes rules from journalism as strongly affecting newspaper organizations, which will be further explained in the following chapter. Based on the existing conceptual work on these concepts, the view here is that the organizational members construct issues from the perceived field-level pressures. Thus, issues bridge the external pressures and how organizational members construct these in the organization. The character is a reference point, as issues could potentially threaten it. The organizational integrity is part of the organization in a normative sense: it represents a protection of the organization and the character, but organizational members should consider pressures from the environment to not be too rigid. If an organization ignores changes in the field, it could threaten its survival. The next
section revisits the research question and recounts the topic, including the context used to explore organizational integrity—namely, newspaper organizations.

2.6.1 Revisiting the research question

This dissertation aims to expand the understanding of responses to pressures. By studying organizational integrity, this study can include the balancing act of resistance and change, which is related to the organization’s striving for both internal (Goodstein et al., 2009) and external (March & Olsen, 1983) legitimacy. Following Suchman’s (1995) view of legitimacy, it is possessed objectively but created subjectively: it is defined as “a generalized perception or assumption that organizational activities are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (p.574). Consequently, the response should be in line with the character and the constructed system of the professional exchange field, or generate some change. In addition, previous research argues that the organizational integrity guides organizational behavior (Paine, 1994). It is argued here that the response should be guided by character or yield a change in the character, and consequently there is a need to weaken the organizational integrity to include these changes. Thus, the purpose of this dissertation is to explore the role of organizational integrity in the responses to pressures. The purpose is operationalized in a research question:

- How does organizational integrity shape a newspaper organization’s responses to pressures that may alter its character?

To answer the research question, this study must also outline how organizational members describe the character of the organization. Furthermore, to understand the role of organizational integrity in responses, it is important to unpack the perceived organizational issues and the responses to those issues.

Organizational integrity captures the internal dynamics within the organization by focusing on the fidelity to the character of the organization, without staying too rigid. It currently has limited empirical attention and provides a new perspective on how organizations balance the notions of conformity and resistance in responses to pressures. It focuses the tension between staying true to the character of the organization and still considering institutional pressures—balancing stability and change.

To separate this study from other scholarly work that includes responses to pressures, Oliver (1991), for example, talks about the influence of the institutional environment on the organization, and then lists five responses that the organizations undertake, considering how the organization either relentlessly conforms or actively resists values, rules, norms, or changes in the institutional environment. Thus, the scholarly focus has been on the external factors (King, 2008) rather than the internal dynamics, which is the focus in this study. The
existing work on responses to pressures (e.g., Goodstein, 1994; Julian et al., 2008; Oliver, 1991, 1997) therefore made important contributions to the understanding of different responses to pressures; however, this work does not emphasize fidelity to the organization’s character and its role in responses, which is the focus here. By highlighting the role of fidelity to the character, this dissertation aims to expand the understanding of how and why certain organizational responses are made, not identifying actual responses. This distinction is in line with the differences in old and new institutional theory, as the majority of the previous work uses the new school while the old school, which is the main perspective undertaken here, to a certain extent is overlooked.

To be able to capture the organizational integrity in a study, the empirical context should have strong values and portray a reliance on existing practices and values. Previous work has argued that a strong reliance on values can reinforce resistance in organizations (Del Val & Fuentes, 2003). Such trends have been noted in newspaper organizations (Lasorsa et al., 2012), as these organizations have shown a reliance on institutional tendencies and a resistance to change (Lowrey, 2011). This resistance has been argued partly to be founded in the journalistic profession, wherein journalists consider changes a threat to their professionalism and they will resist them as long as possible (Williams & Franklin, 2007). However, an interesting aspect is that resistance does not cover the complete picture for these organizations, and research has shown that newspaper organizations are adapting to some extent to the changes in the environment. This shows that newspaper organizations are in an ongoing struggle, which could be informed by organizational integrity through its focus on the character and the pressures on the organization.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has outlined the theoretical lens in this dissertation. It started by outlining some assumptions and foundational ideas in old institutional theory. There was a focus on the meaning of organizations and institutionalization, and what this means from Selznick’s point of view. The focus then shifted to explain specifically the assumptions of organizational integrity and explore reasons for choosing this concept in this dissertation. The chapter highlighted the main ideas from Selznick with regard to organizational integrity and explored some differences and similarities with neighboring concepts in organizational theory. The chapter also presented some ideas and concepts from new institutional theory that are relevant for this study—namely, the field, logics, and pressures. The focus lies on the multiple-level pressures that affect organizations and how these organizations strive for legitimacy. Then there was a focus on change in institutional theory and previous research that deals with change and resistance. This section ends with some developments in institutional theory that are related to the scope of this dissertation. Thus, there is a focus on new and old
in institutional theory and how organizational issues are used in this study to bridge these views (organizational integrity and field pressures).

The assumptions of perspectives were explored in this chapter and how these are used in the framing within institutional theory. Moreover, organizational issues are used as a boundary condition and have a unit to interpret organizational integrity. The chapter ends with my view of these concepts and how I interpret them as complementing each other, providing a holistic framework that contributes to our understanding of responses to pressure in terms of both resistance and conformity. The closing section revisits the purpose and research question and summarizes the perspectives used in this dissertation.

Thus far, the focus has been on institutional theory and the theoretical assumptions from business administration. The context of this study is newspaper organizations: this context is argued to be suitable and relevant to explore organizational integrity, especially since the industry is going through some substantial changes. In research, there are two contrasting areas of focus concerning research on change in the industry and how that is affecting the newspaper organizations. These views represent and focus on either conformity or resistance to pressures and concerns in the industry (Franklin, 2008). The resistance perspective focuses on the negative impact of the changes—that is, the declining circulation, the losses in revenue, the growing trend of free content online, that are all threatening the newspapers’ survival. This view is focused on the journalists who do not want to change and will resist the changes that are imposed by the industry for as long as possible (Williams & Franklin, 2007). The other view is focusing on the positive impact the recent changes induce. This line of reasoning shows how the organizations have embraced the changes in their environment. Thus, this perspective advocates that changes have been made in newspaper organizations: newspaper organizations are adapting to new technologies and platforms, and are allowing users to contribute as this adds value to the product (Franklin, 2008; Spyridou et al., 2013). Previous research highlights large changes affecting newspaper organizations, and both conformity and resistance. Thus, these organizations seem to be a relevant and fruitful context to explore organizational integrity.

Previously in this dissertation, I have outlined some aspects of newspaper organizations. The next chapter further outlines the past and present situation in newspaper organizations. I argue that this provides information about the field that the organizations in this study are part of, thus describing research on journalism and newspaper organization that is relevant for this study. Chapter 3 therefore presents an overview of the research on newspaper organizations and the profession of journalism, followed by Chapter 4 which explains the methods used in this study.
Chapter 3: Newspaper Organizations: A Field in Flux

The context of this study is newspaper organizations. As the field is to some extent subjective (DiMaggio, 1983) and a complicated construct, it contains subgroups that all interpret and define what pressures are constructed and appropriate responses (Hoffman, 2001). Thus previous research has noted that it can be difficult to set the boundaries to a field (Sahlin-Andersson, 1996), as the field is constructed and not necessarily stable over time. In this study, the field for the organizations at hand is interpreted with a focus on the profession. Without being exhaustive, this chapter provides an overview of the history of newspaper organizations and some norms and values of journalism to provide contextual information on the field.

Consequently, this chapter presents previous research in newspaper organizations to provide some contextual background on the newspaper industry to set some boundaries in this field. Firstly, section 3.1 outlines the history of technological changes in the industry in general, as it has experienced several technological disruptions over a long period. Section 3.2 focuses on the duality of newspaper organizations: this type of organization has been explained as having two logics from both editorial and commercial commitments. Moreover, this section delves into journalistic responsibilities and explores values guiding the organization and profession. In newspaper organizations, previous research suggests there is tension between logics for these organizations between the interest in democracy and the market (Achtenhagen & Raviola, 2009; Andersson & Wiik, 2014). This tension is caused by a duality, where newspaper organizations have been noted as driven by ideals of journalism as a profession and financial interests (Andersson & Wiik, 2014).

The connection between journalism and business administration is what this multidisciplinary project is aiming to capture through the study of newspaper organizations, using theoretical framing from business administration. The aim is to contribute to both research areas, and is based on the notion that organizational integrity can add to the understanding of newspaper organizations, and that this examination of newspaper organizations can add to the theoretical development of organizational integrity. Next, section 3.3 presents some pressures outlined in previous research and the concerns that these pressures have arguably caused in newspapers. Section 3.4 highlights how newspaper organizations employ both resistance and conformity in response to the current challenges in the industry. As the newspapers in this study are in Australia, some specific research on the Australian newspaper industry is
presented (section 3.5), as this is the geographical context of the study. Lastly, the chapter ends with a discussion on how this study contributes to the previous research focusing on newspaper organizations.

The previous chapter presented and argued for the theoretical framing from business administration: this chapter outlines the research on journalism and newspaper organizations. This chapter presents an industry that has been marked by technological change over and over again (Conboy, 2001; Pavlik, 2000), and newspaper organizations that have repeatedly managed to overcome these challenges (Markus & Robey, 1988; Tushman & O’Reilly, 1996). As an industry that has been continuously disrupted by new technologies, newspaper organizations can add to the understanding of organizational conformity and resistance. This chapter begins with a description of the general developments in the newspaper industry, and the recurrent impact of technological change.

3.1 An overview of technological changes in the newspaper industry

Newspapers have provided news to people for centuries and are part of the daily routine for more than half of the world’s adult population (WAN-IFRA, 2015b). The newspaper is an important function of a democratic society as it provides valuable knowledge and information about events and has assisted people to make informed decisions since the seventeenth century (Conboy & Steel, 2008; Siles & Boczkowski, 2012). The newspaper is therefore the gateway for people to get informed about global and local events (Örnebring, 2013). Even though this medium of information has been challenged repeatedly, it has remained a typical way to get news. Recently there has been scholarly discussion on the impact of the internet on newspaper organizations’ commercial and journalistic facets (e.g., Bowd, 2014; Deuze, 2002; Himelboim & McCreery, 2012; Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009). However, this was not the first time a technology disrupted the newspaper.

Technological developments such as the telegraph, radio, and television have already interrupted and impacted newspaper organizations (see Winston, 1998, for a comprehensive overview of technological developments). The newspaper industry has been affected by new technologies since 1844, when the electronic telegraph was invented (Winston, 1998). In the mid-1800s, the telegraph was believed to be the death of newspapers, as it was able to deliver news from other cities quicker (The Economist, 2009). However, this new competition was not the end of the newspaper, but rather pushed for a faster distribution. The telegraph pushed the newspaper to become more attractive to consumers, which resulted in an increase in sales (Winston, 1998). In the 1920s, speculation once again began as the radio emerged as a new threat to the newspaper (Thottam, 1999, as cited in Obijiofor & Green, 2001). The radio influenced the industry of news by presenting a new way of consumption—namely, listening to the news
3. Newspaper Organizations: A Field in Flux

(Conboy & Steel, 2008). Once again, the newspaper organizations countered with a differentiation strategy, enhancing the textual quality of the product to keep their readership and cope with this new era of competition (Conboy, 2001).

The newspaper endured and soon the next technology challenged its existence, namely the television. Even though television came to the market around the 1950s, it was not until the 1960s and 70s that the television became serious competition for the newspaper, which was mainly based on the increase of state-owned television channels. This competition grew fiercer during the 1980s as commercial television channels entered this market (Boone, Van Olffen, Van Witteloostuijn, & De Brabander, 2004). Therefore, the newspaper organizations began to experiment with new content and form in the 1980s to compete with a new technology yet again, forcing newspapers to find a new place in the media ecology (Conboy & Steel, 2008). As a response to the increased competition, newspaper organizations resorted to product diversification and mergers and acquisitions (M&A) (Muehlfeld, Rao Sahib, & Van Witteloostuijn, 2012); this strategy resulted in the general trend of concentrated ownership in newspaper organizations (Boone et al., 2004).

The newspaper industry has been challenged by new technology several times (Conboy & Steel, 2008), which has forced newspaper organizations to adjust their product to keep their competitiveness. In the past couple of decades, a new technology has created yet another challenge for this field, namely the internet. This new medium is marked by interaction with the consumer and the multiplicity of platforms that have forced the newspaper as an organization, yet again, to adjust and adapt to the changes in its environment. Scholars claim that the trend of newspapers offering content online has changed both the production and distribution of news (Andersson & Wiik, 2014), and that the glory days of monopoly are over (Mathisen, 2013). To constantly tweak the content and give in to the increased power of the consumer has pushed the focus toward celebrity gossip and scandals, which has influenced the perception of news negatively (Conboy & Steel, 2008). Moreover, it has caused a decrease in trust by the consumer in the newspaper as an institution (Siles & Boczkowski, 2012). These changes can be tracked, to some extent, by technological change.

3.1.1 The positive and negative views of technological change

The presentation of news in the newspaper today is dramatically different from when it was only on paper. Today, the consumer can have custom-made, personalized content of the news that he or she wants, switching the power that was previously held by the newspaper to the audience, who can now themselves decide what news they should read (Conboy & Steel, 2008). The views of this development are both positive and negative. The positive aspect of the internet is suggested in terms of expanding the existing traditional political context. Digital technologies can be seen as providing opportunities for an increased sense of connectedness, both to the political system and to those who inhabit this
system on our behalf (Conboy & Steel, 2008, p.657). Thus, the internet increases the engagement and participation of the consumer, which is good for democracy. The opposite side shows criticism toward the internet, suggesting that the norms of journalists are changing and that there are pressures to ‘market’ the news rather than informing the people of what they should know. Therefore, the journalist is more concerned with “…packaging and marketing information than with ensuring the integrity of the data conveyed” (Brown, 1997, p.168). This trend indicates that the internet is not just a blessing, but also includes changes that could harm the quality of news, and in turn democracy (Conboy & Steel, 2008).

The changes that have happened in the newspaper industry are not only affecting the newspaper as an organization, but also the people who produce the news—the journalists. Unlike the organization, which ultimately has to focus on attracting consumers and making a profit to survive, journalism as a profession has its own challenges that have been induced by the technological changes in the industry (Nerone, 2013). The normative view of journalism as a profession is that of a truth-giver who provides high quality news, which is gathered ethically and autonomously (Deuze, 2005). Furthermore, the journalist is a gatekeeper of control, who decides what the public sees and when. Gatekeeping has a long history in media studies, and it entails a filter of what information the public should be party to (e.g., Hermida, 2011; White, 1950). In White’s (1950) study, for example, the editor is a gatekeeper of the news who disregards nine tenths of news that is provided to the public, thus deciding what people should read. Recent changes in the industry are challenging the gatekeeping role of journalists and editors (Spyridou et al., 2013). As noted earlier in this chapter, newspaper organizations are driven by two logics, from the editorial and the commercial (Andersson & Wiik, 2014); therefore, the following section outlines this dual tension.

3.2 Logics in newspaper organizations

Previous research suggests that newspaper organizations follow two logics, the commercial (business) and the editorial, which highlights the journalistic profession. The targets of both these logics may be conflicting (Raviola, 2012). The organization must be able to attract consumers to earn profits and survive, but it must also follow the ‘rules’ of the journalistic profession to gain legitimacy. The tension between the commercial and the editorial in newspaper organizations has gained scholarly focus, involving the ability to manage such duality (Achtenhagen & Raviola, 2009).

These competing views are represented in the discussion of commercialization (for the business) versus professional legitimacy (for the journalist) (Raviola, 2012). The tension stems from the trend of covering superficial news to earn money (Picard, 2006), which is not the in-depth coverage that journalism should stand for. Therefore, the criticism has emerged that the business side is
destroying the democratic role of news, since the emphasis is on profits and not on quality journalism (Raviola, 2012). Following the understanding of institutional logics, it seems the newspaper organizations are experiencing contested logics (Besharov & Smith, 2014). Where multiple logics with seemingly low compatibility (such as commercial and editorial) are perceived in the organization and no clear guidance between them, there seems to be some conflict in the organization to manage these two sides.

Until recently, this tension has been seen as a duality, but now a third party has been introduced, adding tension and complexity. Initially, it was the commercial and the editorial in opposition: now it has turned into a “trisectional management” (Nielsen, 2012; Westlund, 2011) by the addition of technology. These scholars (Nielsen, 2012; Westlund, 2011) argue that the technologist will have in increasing role in newspaper organizations and that the multiplicity of platforms and a wider integration of new technologies will have a crucial role in the future newspaper organization. In addition, it has been argued that the tension between these logics has intensified due to the recent strains on newspaper organizations: a decreasing readership, free content, and the blurred boundaries between consumption and production (Raviola, 2012).

### 3.2.1 Values in newspaper organizations

In scholarly work, reaching financial targets is one of the few values that are connected solely to the newspaper as an organization, as most values are associated with the journalists that produce the news (Boczkowski, 2004; Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009). Journalists traditionally have a role as a public service provider, represented by both loyalty and commitment to the newspaper as an organization and, most importantly, to the profession (Siles & Boczkowski, 2012); therefore, trying to abide by these conflicting targets in both institutions—the commercial side and the editorial—could create tensions. It creates a notion of “them versus us”, a clear alienation between the journalism and commercial aspects of newspaper organizations (Spyridou et al., 2013). However, these two aspects are interrelated, and are both connected to the overall mission of the organization and the products that are offered. The product has been described as two-fold: firstly, it offers news to the readers; secondly, it allows advertisers access to the readers through the sale of advertising space (Reddaway, 1963). Both facets are needed and connected to one another (Bowd, 2014): there is a need to offer quality news that the consumer wants to read to keep circulation up, if circulation decreases, the reach for advertisers decreases and its revenues also reduce (Picard, 2004). Therefore, the commercial side and the targets in newspaper organizations rely on revenue streams from both circulation (subscriptions and single-copy sales) and advertising.

Even though scholarly work exists that connects back to the values of the newspaper as an organization, the majority has the journalist in focus, either as a
resource to the organization or as a scapegoat. The majority focuses on the latter, claiming that the devotion to journalistic values limits newspaper organizations’ ability to change (Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009; Spyridou et al., 2013). Studies suggest that journalists as a social group are in a defensive state, trying to resist all changes that are presented (Spyridou et al., 2013). This is associated with ‘old’ journalism that is out of touch, both culturally and technologically (Skoler, 2009). As revenues are in decline, editorial staff are decreasing while new platforms are increasing the workload, and there is a need for professional journalists to change and arguably give up some of their gatekeeping role (Spyridou et al., 2013). This change would potentially encourage these organizations to explore new organizational agendas and economic motives (Vujnovic et al., 2010). Scholars have criticized the lack of distinction between journalism and news, suggesting that journalism is a belief system which includes the practices and routines of the production of professional news (Nerone, 2013). Thus, the following section will not focus on the newspaper as an organization, but rather the journalist and the values connected to the profession.

3.2.2 The profession of journalism

The professionalism of an occupation is connected to legitimizing criteria to evaluate the performance of defined tasks (Friedson, 2001). In the Western world, the journalist has been present for hundreds of years, and is perceived as an “…independent public-spirited verifier of factual information” (Nerone, 2013, p.451). The norm connected to the journalist is objective news, and providing a balanced view of events. The legitimizing practices and routines of being a journalist have allowed the news provided by professionals to be perceived as high quality and objective (Deuze, 2005). The journalists therefore gain a gatekeeping role, which means that journalists have control over the content that the public gets. As the provider of news, and thus in control of the information provided, values of the journalistic profession have been identified in scholarly work. The following section focuses on such work.

3.2.3 Journalistic values

Studies on journalism have suggested that the view of what constitutes a journalist is legitimized in traits (Deuze, 2005, p.447). Firstly, the journalist provides a service to the public as a provider of information. The journalist gains credibility as he or she is impartial: they take a neutral standpoint and provide a fair view of an event. This also denotes the need to be independent and autonomous in the work. Moreover, the news should be provided in a timely manner, and there is an immediacy in being a provider of news. Lastly, there are ethical considerations that the journalist must follow.
Following changes in the industry, which have been remarked on as a crisis for newspapers (e.g., Siles & Boczkowski, 2012), journalism as a profession has felt the impact of this crisis. There has been research indicating that the loss in circulation is founded in a loss of trust, both in the newspaper and in journalism (Lewis, 2011; Spyridou et al., 2013), suggesting that journalists have not been able to meet the changing expectations of their readers. Even though the view of a journalist presented here is a Westernized perspective, studies show that these common values hold in different cultures due to the reference to the rules of the profession in general (Wilkins & Brennen, 2004).

The prevailing view of the journalist as a gatekeeper for information used to solve a problem, as it was difficult for each person to gather relevant information and distribute it (Nerone, 2013). This was during a time when it was difficult to publish and disseminate news. This one-sided communication between the journalist and the consumer has now been challenged by new technology that includes more interactive features (Jenkins, 2006; Larsson, 2013). The scarcity of news and information is no longer valid, and it is now easy to share news online (Lewis, 2012). Thus, digital technologies challenge the role of the journalist as other sources of news and information have emerged. These changes include users that contribute with content (Hermida & Thurman, 2008), and sharing of news has sped up through social media (Bruns, 2012). This has caused a tension between journalists and consumers. The notion of control is so embedded in the journalistic practice it is difficult to change to the digital age, as prestige and a sense of purpose are connected to their gatekeeping capacity (Lewis, 2012). This tension arises from the notion that journalists are respected, as they decided what the people should read; they are public servants, and provide people with their news, in contrast to user-generated content, which allows amateurs to be providers of news (Olsson & Svensson, 2012). These recent changes have been noted as leaving the newspaper industry in a state of crisis (McDowell, 2011; Siles & Boczkowski, 2012). This crisis has emerged due to a loss in circulation and readership, a decrease in revenue streams, a loss of staff and resources, and new content on multiple platforms.

### 3.3 Pressures affecting newspaper organizations

To show the present state of the newspaper industry in various countries, researchers have turned to three main sets of changes that are pressuring newspaper organizations, namely economic, technological, and social (Franklin, 2008; Siles & Boczkowski, 2012). Thus, some changes in the field or macro-environment are affecting the organization and forcing them to address these pressures. Even though these pressures are presented as isolated, they are interrelated: for example, economic pressures are connected to technological pressures, as the internet has had an impact on the economic situation in
newspaper organizations. However, for clarity, these are presented individually in the following sections.

3.3.1 Economic pressures

The concerns regarding monetary issues are many, especially how the loss in circulation and advertising revenue impacts the quality of news. Therefore, the focus of discussion has been on the how to make profits from print and online. Mitchelstein and Boczkowski (2009) describe how the conditions for newspaper organizations have changed over time, and Boczkowski (2004) explores how organizational structures work in the new era of journalism.

The shift to online news has created contrasting views on the relationship between print and online media (Herbert & Thurman, 2007). Firstly, the ‘cannibalistic’ view suggests that online news will ‘eat’ the profits of print media. The opposite view is ‘complementary’, where the online medium draws attention to the print medium, though the views are not mutually exclusive: while online editions can attract new readers, they may simultaneously distract some print users. Even though online editions are attracting increasing revenues through advertising and reader offers, previous studies claim that the traditional printed newspaper remains the core offering for now (Graham & Smart, 2010). Herbert and Thurman (2007) reinforce this point as they argue that one print reader is more economically valuable than several online readers. Nevertheless, Thurman and Myllylahti (2009) examined the occurrence of eliminating paper editions, keeping the paper online only: the online users stayed the same, no increase or decrease. However, due to the big losses of the paper edition, the change was considered beneficial.

The financial challenges that news organizations face today are given different explanations, from the lack of working business models to inherent properties of the internet (Krumsvik, 2012). Thus, alternative business models have emerged to attain new revenue streams (Macnamara, 2010). As mentioned previously, the revenue model in the newspaper is based on both circulation (subscriptions and single-copy sales) and revenues from advertisers (Picard, 2004). The changes in the industry have resulted in a decrease in both circulation and advertising revenues (Siles & Boczkowski, 2012; van Moorsel, He, Oltmans, & Huibers, 2012; Vine, 2012). Because of this decline, Herbert and Thurman (2007) present two alternative models: the first is to create a ‘payment for news’ based on a niche focus, with free general interest news to attract visitors to the website while charging for the brand-specific content (e.g., The Financial Times charging for business news and analysis). However, several studies (e.g., Thurman, 2008) have questioned if subscription charges for online content will ever be successful. The second alternative is a ‘free-content advertising model’, where all content is free and attains revenues only from advertising. Studies in the UK and the US have shown the use of such revenue models (e.g., Chyi & Sylvie, 2000; Thurman, 2008).
Research shows that the concern related to economic challenges for newspaper organizations is due to a lack of up-to-date business models for the present dynamic context that they are in. The changes have pushed these organizations to a reliance on advertising revenues. Even though it has been claimed that the internet did not cause this crisis (Nichols & McChesney, 2010), it did make the crisis more evident and forced organizations to explore new revenue streams. These financial struggles have resulted in massive cuts in newspaper organizations throughout the developed world. For example, Swedish media group Hallpressen announced in early 2014 that it would let over 80 people go to save up to 50 million SEK (approximately 7.8 million AUD) (MediaVärlden, 2014). CEO Christina Björklund stated that declining advertising revenues and loss in circulation were the reasons for this upheaval. Also, scholars argue that the excessive focus on finances has had a negative impact on the quality of the journalism. Large media organizations are exploring new revenue streams: for example, the CEO of Fairfax Media in Australia claimed to use their real estate business to fund their journalistic aspirations (Hywood, 2014), implying that there still is no solution to the financial problems in newspaper organizations.

3.3.2 Technological pressures

The internet has eliminated the previous one-sided communication between news producers and news consumers. Digital technologies allow a new two-way communication, which has transformed the formerly passive audience into active users and caused a collision between new and old media (Jenkins, 2006). Previous research has shown how newspaper organizations struggle to cope with the consequences of digitization. In addition to the financial issues outlined above, these struggles include a new participatory relationship with the audiences and a search for structural reform of the organization (e.g., Jenkins, 2006; Lewis, Kaufhold, & Lasorsa, 2010; Lowrey, 2009, 2011; Macnamara, 2010). Little has changed on an organizational level, and scholarly work shows that many change efforts by newspapers have merely been “skin-deep and fleeting” (Lowrey, 2011, p.67). Himelboim and McCreery (2012) confirm this notion that news media are slow to adapt their traditional norms and practices to the internet era. One reason for the slow adaptation could be that the changes include an increase in workload for the newspaper organizations. The participatory trend, where users want to contribute with content to the newspaper (also known as user-generated content), is one example of the increase in workload (Lewis et al., 2010). Professionals claim that users who contribute content cannot match the quality of content produced by journalists (Lewis, 2012), which is seen as harmful to the quality of news.

User-generated content (UGC) is operationalized by the inclusion of users in the news production, including access and observation, selection/filtering, processing/editing, distribution and interpretation (Domingo et al., 2008). It also includes a loss of gatekeeping from the journalist’s perspective, which has not
been enthusiastically received by the producers of news. They see journalism as “the business of professionals only” (Lewis et al., 2010, p.169). However, this negative view is not showing the full perspective. Studies have shown that there are editors with contrasting views, who perceive the participation from users as value-adding (Deuze, 2006; Harrison, 2010). Whether it is seen as value-adding or not, UGC requires both professional control and coordination to work, and to keep this control is both time and resource consuming (Paulussen & Ugille, 2008).

That users now want to contribute with content is not the only change concerning the audience. There is also a change in how they consume news induced by the new technology: new formats, new platforms, and social media (Siles & Boczkowski, 2012; Westlund, 2013) all contribute to a change in consumption. These outlets not only have an impact on the relationship with the consumer, as they give more choice and freedom to consume, but also change the practices connected to producing the news. The internet has introduced several new practices for the professionals, including a faster production process. A day no longer measures the deadline (Thurman & Myllylahti, 2009). This faster production is connected to the use of smartphones, which has amplified the production speed and opportunity and need for instant news (Westlund, 2013). Several scholars (Deuze, 2002; Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009; Ottosen & Krumsvik, 2012; Thurman & Myllylahti, 2009) discuss how the high-speed production process imposed by the internet affects the journalistic quality. The focus on quality brings emphasis to another concern in newspaper organizations, namely social. This concern includes a loss of trust in the quality of the news, which is the focus of the next section.

### 3.3.3 Social pressures

Media professionals struggle to adapt to the underlying interactivity that characterizes the internet (Larsson, 2013). This shift enables and encourages end-user participation and it challenges the sociocultural rationale for professional control over the content creation, filtering, and distribution. The internet and the loss of finances have been emphasized as the causes of the changes in newspaper organization; however, from a social perspective, there is a claim that the loss of trust in newspapers and journalists also has an impact on the turbulence in the industry (Lewis, 2011). The cause of the downturn in trust is rooted in the consumers’ ability to access several sources of news and compare news stories (Gillmor, 2004). This could be a serious concern for a society in general, as the providers of news have been seen as public servants, spreading information about political agendas so the public is aware of the political decisions in their surroundings (Nichols & McChesney, 2010). The reduced number of newspapers, as these organizations struggle to survive with regard to the changes in the industry, could be harmful to a democratic society.
Scholars (e.g., Meyer, 2009) claim that this decline is occurring as fewer people are willing to pay for their news and contribute to the survival of newspapers.

Another issue regarding the decline in quality of newspapers is the increase in tabloid newspapers and journalism. Even though the tabloid started as a characterization of a new format that was small, being convenient and half the size of the traditional broadsheet newspaper, the tabloid has been seen as synonymous to ‘bad journalism’ (Örnebring & Jönsson, 2004). It does not uphold the general journalistic standards and focuses on what is called soft news, which mainly includes gossip and scandals (Esser, 1999). The opposite would be the ‘serious’ broadsheet newspaper, which represents the ‘quality’ journalism that follows the professional values as described above in sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 (Carlson & Berkowitz, 2014). However, there are contrasting views concerning tabloid newspapers. Some view them as a threat to democracy and the public debate (Currah, 2009), while others claim that this style makes news more accessible and easier to understand (Macdonald, 1998; Örnebring & Jönsson, 2004). There is no clear definition of what tabloid journalism is (Skovsgaard, 2014). However, the general characteristics are that it focuses on sensationalism and scandals, and has an emphasis on the private lives of people (both celebrities and ‘ordinary’ people), and such news is superficial and includes limited analysis (Bird, 2000; Sparks, 2000). Moreover, there could be a geographic difference in this description, as Bird (1992) suggests that the tabloid in Europe is not the same as in the US. In the US, a tabloid is generally a weekly publication, presenting gossip and rumors that are bizarre and perhaps even untrue, while in Europe and Australia it generally refers to the initial meaning regarding a specific format or a specific type of journalism that is more entertainment-oriented but still news-focused. The relevance to this study of tabloid versus broadsheet journalism is that previous studies indicate that there are differences in professional values and organizational pressures between the two types (Skovsgaard, 2014), and this could have an impact on the resistance to or justification of change.

The sections above have outlined the history of newspapers and introduced some potential conflicting logics that can affect how newspapers respond to pressures. Moreover, the chapter has outlined the values in terms of both the organization and the journalist to highlight important aspects of newspaper organizations. Lastly, some changes in the industry, or pressures, that have and still are affecting these organizations have been discussed. The following section reviews the literature on newspaper organizations and presents some aspects that have changed and some that have not. The following section therefore provides some indication of how newspaper organizations are managing the turbulence in their environment.
3.4 Resistance and change in newspaper organizations

There are two contrasting areas of focus concerning research on change in the industry and how that is affecting the newspaper organizations. These views represent and focus on either a conformity or resistance to pressures and concerns in the industry (Franklin, 2008). The resistance perspective focuses on the negative impact of the changes—that is, the declining circulation, the losses in revenue, the growing trend of free content online, and the emergence of free newspapers (e.g., Metro) that are threatening newspapers’ survival. This view makes predictions about when the paper version of the newspaper will end once and for all, contending that journalists do not want to change and will resist the changes that are imposed by the industry as long as possible (Williams & Franklin, 2007).

The other end of the spectrum focuses on the positive impact the recent changes induce. This line of reasoning shows how the organizations have embraced the changes in their environment. This perspective therefore supports the changes that have been made in newspaper organizations. That newspaper organizations are adapting to new technologies and platforms, and are allowing users to contribute as this adds value to the product. These studies connect back to the previous technological changes in the industry, such as the radio and television, claiming that the newspaper has a survival strategy that works since the organizations have made it this far. Also, there is an optimistic vision of the future, that new technologies are opportunities that should be explored together by journalists, readers, and citizen journalists who produce UGC. Thus, the newspaper becomes a hub and opens up for interactive discussions and a new kind of journalism (referred to as journalism 2.0: e.g., Spyridou et al., 2013). This new logic is different from the top-down control of gatekeeping and opens up the two-way communication that is participation (Franklin, 2008; Spyridou et al., 2013). The following sections explore what has been seen as the resistance view, followed by the conforming view, focusing on organizational responses to changes in the industry.

3.4.1 Organizational resistance

Professionals in newspaper organizations have questioned the changes imposed by digitization, especially since the changes are increasing the workload and there is a need to act as gatekeepers of the content. As mentioned previously, it is time consuming to keep control, and several scholars discuss how the high-speed production process affects journalistic quality (Deuze, 2002; Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009; Ottosen & Krumsvik, 2012; Thurman & Myllylahti, 2009). Even though much of this scholarly work emphasizes the internet as a
major factor in the decline of the newspaper, some scholars also criticize this view and contend that the impact of the internet has been overstated.

This line of criticism is generally supported by the impact of the increasing presence for free newspapers and it suggests that these freebies are degenerating the situation for the traditional for-profit newspaper organization, where the free newspapers “…cannibalize the content, circulation and advertising revenues of existing paid titles in the same newspaper group” (Franklin, 2008, p.632). Furthermore, scholars (e.g., O’Sullivan & Heinonen, 2008) claim that the impact of these freebies has been more influential than previously noted, but it has been mostly overlooked in scholarly work so far. Even though there may be an impact of the Metro-style newspapers, and perhaps the impact of the internet has been excessive, there is no doubt of the impact of new technology on legacy newspapers. The internet is one of the main forces shaping the future development of newspapers and newspaper organizations. Both journalists and users are still figuring out the implications of the changes that are happening in the industry.

3.4.2 The unwillingness to give up control

Journalists and newspaper organizations let cautiousness and existing norms guide professional practice as new platforms are implemented (Chung, 2007; Lasorsa et al., 2012). The internet is primarily used to gather background information (Paulussen & Ugille, 2008) and every new technological feature is connected to organizational practices being challenged, such as the concern for quality (Ottosen & Krumsvik, 2012). Journalists’ gatekeeping role is among the major traits through which professionals distinguish themselves from amateur journalists (Lewis, 2012). Journalism practice follow its routines, situating credibility in a few institutional sources. During high workload, relying on routines is more convenient than testing new modes of operation (Lowrey, 2011). Thus, previous research implies that intense change in the working environment is in turmoil with the professional tradition.

Inherent in the news context and digital technologies is a de-institutional emphasis that puts power and control in the hands of the end user (Lewis, 2012). This has generated a need to balance the hope for lower costs in the actual collection of content with concern over risks that could harm the organization and even result in legal and financial consequences. For example, the Norwegian Agderposten was sentenced for publishing a rumor (Ottosen & Krumsvik, 2012) and Lord Robertson sued The Sunday Herald for defamation, which ended in a court settlement of £25,000 and an apology in Lord Robertson’s favor (Thurman, 2008, p.150). The risk of being afflicted by similar events obstructs the will to implement participatory features (Lewis et al., 2010). The underlying question is rarely stated but certainly implied: how much control over content should news organizations give up, and why? What does appear certain is that structural distinctions between journalists and audiences, between
professionals and amateurs, between ‘us’ and ‘them’, are no longer sustainable in the news dissemination and discussion spaces of social media where we are all sharing what we know (Bruns, 2012). However, Paulussen and Ugille (2008) found that collaboration is not fostered by the present newsroom structure, which still represents a strong hierarchy and distinction between professional journalists and users.

As journalists have to work under high pressure, there is a tendency to rely heavily on well-known routines and hold on to their core task, which they still define in terms of gatekeeping. Himelboim and McCreery (2012) confirm this conception with findings that news media are slow to adapt their traditional norms and practices to the internet era. This implies that newspaper organizations rarely take full advantage of their major online outlets (their websites) to establish new relationships with their audiences by giving them the space to engage in discussions about their topics of interest. The prevailing tension between perceived uncertainty and product innovation in the newsroom may be attributed to a retreat by news managers to institutionalist tendencies (to follow familiar paths, mimic the rest of the industry to buffer external change) (Lowrey, 2011). With limited resources and a tendency toward institutional behavior, news managers are rearranging deck chairs: restructuring the newsrooms and advocating online monitoring of audiences, but doing relatively little to transform the product.

3.4.3 Isomorphic behavior and decoupling

A steady loss of broadcast audiences and advertising revenue illustrates the need for structural reform in newspaper organizations (Macnamara, 2010). Even though there are pressures on newspaper organizations to incorporate a more interactive environment, previous studies have shown that consumers are provided with little or no opportunity to generate actual news content (e.g., Örnebring, 2008). On an organizational level, not much has changed (Lowrey, 2011). Research shows isomorphism in the newspaper industry, where there is mimetic behavior to follow the pattern of elites rather than try something new (McLemore, 2014). Other scholars (e.g., Lowrey & Woo, 2010) argue for a trend of decoupling in newspaper organizations. Moreover, in the midst of all these changes, there is a need for a better understanding of the consumer, which has led newspaper organizations to monitor their audiences. This endeavor, however, shows the tendency of decoupling as it has not resulted in change with regard to the content or features of the actual product.

The findings of studies using decoupling and isomorphism show that newspaper organizations are experimenting with innovation projects but the industry has adhered to institutionalized routines that traditionally have served news professionals and their organizations (Lowrey, 2011). This contributes to change efforts that are minimal and unpopular with staff. Thus, the core of the
journalistic culture is unchanged (Domingo et al., 2008), implying that there is a resistance to change.

Resistance is a phenomenon that affects the change process, by delaying or slowing down its beginning, or even obstructing the implementation, which could increase costs (Ansoff & McDonnell, 1990). The actual behavior of resistance is explained as a conduct to keep the status quo, and resistance is equal to inertia. Inertia is “the tendency to persist in the same strategies and courses of action even in the face of environmental changes that would appear to warrant changes in firm behavior” (Sorenson & Stuart, 2008, p.531). Previous studies have also found that resistance to change will be powerful when concerning deep-rooted values (Del Val & Fuentes, 2003), which seems to be the case in newspaper organizations (Lasorsa et al., 2012). Although the need for newspaper organizations to change is explicitly stated and researched, it seems to be easier said than done. Studies showing the actual results of change initiatives of organizations are few. Previously, scholars have stated that change can happen as a consequence of external factors crashing into unstable institutional arrangements and creating indeterminacy (Scott, 1987), and media firms buffer against such external forces to resist change (Lowrey, 2011). This prevailing struggle shows that newspaper organizations find it difficult to adapt to the changes digitization has imposed.

As existing rules and practices are challenged, there is need to transform from one order to another, and establish new normative or organizational principles. This situation raises the question of how newspaper organizations are deciding between the new paths that digitization have presented. Also, as previous studies claim that professional tradition is holding the change process back, will (or can) these organizations change at all? Some studies (e.g., van Moorsel et al., 2012) show change initiatives related to digitization in newspaper organizations that have had a sustainable impact. The following section outlines the changes that have transpired in newspaper organizations.

3.4.4 Organizational responsiveness

The resistance view of the impact of the internet shows an increase in workload as newspaper organizations now must publish on several platforms, a prerequisite being to publish faster and be open for interaction with the readers. However, the focus has been, and still is, on the challenges the organization should overcome. Generally, an organization does not see the opportunities related to radical change until it is crucial and they are seen as a threat (Gilbert, 2006). Research has shown that change efforts have been successful in newspaper organizations, and there are studies that show journalists who ascribe value to the internet (Franklin, 2008). The internet is, in this view, seen as valuable in their everyday practice, in the activities of newsgathering and their reporting routines. A European study showed that journalists would miss the internet and would find it difficult to keep up with news and the verification of
news if they were no longer to have this medium (O’Sullivan & Heinonen, 2008). Even though studies claim that changes in newspaper organizations are few (Lowrey, 2011), they emphasize the importance of the commitment of the journalists for the change effort to be successful (Massey & Ewart, 2009). Perhaps the lack in change is rooted in weak commitment.

Changes in newspaper organizations that have developed over the past decades have been focused on financial endeavors (van Moorsel et al., 2012), such as experimentation with different business models in the online environment: the range is from sole reliance on advertising, partially charging for content, to the full adoption of paywalls. Even though experimentation is present, it has not resulted in a one-solution business model that fixes the decreasing revenues and circulation (Siles & Boczkowski, 2012). One trend that has emerged to stop this decline in the newspaper industry is hyper-local news (Kurpius, Metzgar, & Rowley, 2010). To meet the expectations of their users, newspaper organizations micro-focus the content to their close surroundings: this local focus has been noted with the potential of a sustainable business model.

Another example of change is in Denmark, which now has subsidized revenues from online news to help newspaper organizations with the transition to earning money online (Hjarvard & Kammer, 2015). In addition, Meyer (2009) suggests that success in newspapers organizations’ survival is the ability to decrease costs and use the saving in, for example, production and transportation to fund quality journalism. This view is reinforced in scholarly work focusing on downsizing (e.g., Siles & Boczkowski, 2012). In addition, large media groups are showing trends of strategic investment to strengthen their balance sheets (Hatch, 2014). For example, the Australian media group Fairfax Media announced positive figures in 2014. The management team gave tribute to the new online subscription models and investments in digital ventures and real estate. These investments and changes contributed to an improved balance sheet that allowed more funding for its ‘quality journalism’ (Hywood, 2014). The trend of acquiring and investing in digital ventures to expand revenue streams has also been seen in other countries, but has not yet been portrayed in research.

3.5 The Australian newspaper industry

This chapter has until now focused on the newspaper industry in general. Before explaining the method used in this study, this section provides a contextual understanding of the newspaper industry in Australia, as this is the geographic location of the newspapers in this study. However, the research outlined above is also relevant as it predominantly presents a Westernized view of journalism, which coincides with Australia as it is argued to be a good reference point for journalism and media in a Western context (e.g., Hanusch, 2016).

To get an understanding of newspapers in Australia, I turn to the common framework to understand media systems proposed in Hallin and Mancini’s
(2004) *Comparing Media Systems*. Hallin and Mancini (2004) do not include Australia in their work, even though they mention its similarities to Western Europe and claim that it could have been included in the model. Even though the use of the media system model in Australia is limited, some scholars have attempted to position Australia within this popular framework between the polarized pluralist and the liberal model (Jones & Pusey, 2010). The authors build on Hallin and Mancini’s claim that not all media systems fit perfectly in a model and that outliers exist; these outliers do not fulfill all the characteristics of one model and can share some similarities with two models. The Australian media system diverges from the liberal model as it has a low self-regulatory professionalism. Moreover, the media system in Australia has some resemblance to the polarized pluralist model, and especially the ‘clientelism’, portrayed by a polarized social system in terms of the balance between public and commercial organizations (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). However, it deviates from the model as it does not have an institution like the European Union to control the norms for such clientelism; also, its political parallelism is more similar to the liberal model (Jones & Pusey, 2010).

The aim here is not to contribute to media systems. The choice of Australia as a geographical context was based on its reference points for journalism in a Western context (Hanusch, 2016; Vine, 2012). Thus, by studying newspapers in Australia, this study extends our understanding of newspapers, since the majority of studies focusing on newspaper organizations have been in the US and the UK (Flew & Waisbord, 2015) and scholars have pointed to the need for studies in other regions and contexts (Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009). Moreover, previous research suggests that Australian newspapers are experiencing similar challenges caused by digitization to those seen in the UK and the US, such as a strong decline in circulation and revenues (Vine, 2012). Thus, Australia is a relevant context to extend the research on newspapers.

### 3.5.1 Media ownership in Australia

The ownership of newspapers and media in Australia is among the most concentrated in the developed world (The Finkelstein Inquiry, 2012). In Australia, there are four large media corporations that own the majority of newspapers in Australia: News Corp, Fairfax Media, APN News, and Seven West Media. These four media moguls now own all major newspapers in Australia (Young, 2010). This makes Australia a country with the highest concentration of ownership in the Western world (Tiffen, 2010). Even though the ownership is concentrated, there is not much direct geographic competition between these large firms, as Sydney and Melbourne are the only cities where two of the corporations publish a competing daily newspaper (Australian Press Council, 2008). This means that, in Australia, a few large players control the clear majority of the market.
3.5.2 Challenges in the Australian newspaper industry

Similar to other countries in the developed world, newspapers in Australia are suffering the consequences of a decrease in circulation (Vine, 2012). The circulation has been decreasing for years and the trend is not slowing down (WAN-IFRA, 2015b; World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers, 2015). This is an imminent threat for newspapers in Australia, and CEOs of the major media groups are expressing their concern about survival and giving notice of termination. At the 2014 annual general meeting of Australian Fairfax Media, CEO Hywood (2014) said that the media industry is unrecognizable compared to ten or even five years ago. This reinforces that challenges noted in previous research regarding newspaper organizations in the last decades also hold for newspapers in Australia.

Another concerning trend connected to the internet is the loss of trust in newspapers (Lewis, 2011), which has several components. Firstly, as the consumer now has the ability to compare sources of information online, this has caused them to question the objectivity of the news (Gillmor, 2004). Moreover, it is argued that consumers filter information sources and use selective exposure, which has also influenced the loss of trust in newspapers. People only seek out information that reinforces their existing views and such polarization could be harmful for a functioning democracy, as people with a particular political stance would only seek out information that supports their own view and thus not trust information that includes contradictions (Burns Melican & Dixon, 2008).

Lastly, studies have indicated a loss of trust in the journalists who produce the news (Rowe, 2011, citing Roy Morgan Research, 2004). Some scholars suggest that there are economic reasons for the loss of trust (van der Wurff, Bakker, & Picard, 2008). The commercialization of news and the increasing importance of finding new revenue streams has led to a loss in trust in the newspaper and the journalist (Picard, 2006). The commercialization of news is related to the transition to publishing ‘soft news’, which means going away from the broadsheet, quality news to a tabloid style to make money. Australian newspapers are perceived as tabloids, although not as extreme as the newspapers in the UK (Lancaster, Hughes, & Spicer, 2012). However, leaders of media companies in Australia are expressing their concern about the falling levels of trust in journalism and news (speech, Rupert Murdoch, 2006).

3.5.3 Summary

This chapter has outlined general research on journalism and newspaper organizations. It has highlighted the history of the industry and the challenges these organizations have been facing. Moreover, it positions the geographical context of the Australian newspaper industry to show that these organizations are experiencing similar challenges to those noted in research about newspapers.
3. Newspaper Organizations: A Field in Flux

in general. The final section positions this present study in the general research on newspaper organizations and outlines some potential contributions.

Newspapers are an important function in a democratic society, but as fewer people are willing to pay for high quality news, the survival of these organizations is questioned (Grönvall, 2014; Siles & Boczkowski, 2012). This could be a harmful development for the welfare of a democratic society, as a loss of an important source of information could have an impact on the integrity of the society (Starr, 2009). Therefore, it is in all our best interests to study these organizations and contribute to their development to ensure that access to high quality news is part of a democratic society.

The newspaper industry is in the throes of change due to structural changes and new technologies; however, this particular industry is mostly overlooked in the change management literature (Dutkiewicz & Duxbury, 2013). In the Western world, newspaper organizations are experiencing disruption from technological and structural changes. Even though some newspaper organizations are beginning to attain revenues from the digital outlets, the traditional print product is still the main revenue source (WAN-IFRA, 2015a). It is an industry that is currently balanced between the old (print) and the new (digital), and newspaper organizations are diversifying to keep up with the changes and to finance the journalism that is expected from them (Boone et al., 2004). This shows a complex and interesting context to explore how organizations respond to pressures. Even though research on these organizations is plentiful within journalism and media management, this study aims to introduce a new concept to these studies, namely organizational integrity. The aim is to expand our understanding of the current condition of newspaper organizations. Organizational integrity highlights the fidelity to the character. As previous research has outlined, in a turbulent environment there is a strong reliance on professional values: this suggests that newspaper organizations are an intriguing context to explore the role of organizational integrity in responses to pressures.

Moreover, newspaper organizations have shown efforts in both resistance and responsiveness (Franklin, 2008; Massey & Ewart, 2009; O'Sullivan & Heinonen, 2008), which indicates a fruitful context to expand the understanding of the balancing act of conformity and resistance, which organizational integrity includes.

This dissertation has thus far outlined the research questions, the theoretical framing, and the field in which this study is interested. The following chapter delves deeper into the method used to study the two newspaper organizations in this study.
Chapter 4: Method

This chapter describes the design of this research, the methodology used to fulfill the purpose and answer the research question of this dissertation. To show the underlying assumptions of the researcher and set the boundaries of the study, the researcher answers ontological, epistemological, and methodological questions (Guba, 1994): this chapter is my discussion on such questions. The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the role of the organizational integrity in the responses to pressures. The purpose is operationalized as a research question: How does organizational integrity shape a newspaper organization’s responses to pressures that may alter its character? To answer the research questions, the focus is on how organizational members describes the organization’s character, the constructed organizational issues, and the responses to those issues to understand how organizational integrity works. Thus, this chapter portrays how I researched this topic and interpreted the data.

In this chapter, section 4.1 discusses the methodology used in the study—the qualitative case study. It begins with the research approach and outlines the rationale and procedure of the case studies and level of analysis. Moreover, I elaborate on how I capture organizational integrity, character, and issues and responses in the two Australian newspaper organizations through interviews, observations, and documentation. Section 4.2 outlines how I chose these organizations and some similarities and differences between the cases. Section 4.3 presents each data source and explains the use of each source, I also introduce a short discussion on my role in the data collection process. Section 4.4 explains how the data were analyzed and outlines some approaches I used during this study; finally, sections 4.5 and 4.6 discuss the ethical considerations and some methodological limitations of this dissertation.

4.1 The qualitative case study

Old institutionalism argues that one studies an organization through the interactions of the people in it. In this study, I aim to explain the concept of organizational integrity by studying the people in organizations to gain their understanding. When the nature of a study is human experience, qualitative data collection is the most adequate means of knowledge production (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005). The assumption in this study is that the organization is understood through the construction of its organizational members. A qualitative method was chosen as it is flexible, it uses naturally occurring data to find sequences (how) in which participants’ meaning (what) is deployed, and thereby establishes the character of a phenomenon (Silverman, 2013).
4. Method

To observe and discuss incidents with organizational members was a crucial part of this study as it allowed me to grasp their understanding. There are several criticisms against the qualitative approach, mainly focusing on the reliability, validity, and consistency of findings in qualitative research (Silverman, 2011). The criticism highlights issues concerning how representative the answers are, or if the researcher only extracts the answers that he or she wants. Due to these criticisms, or misunderstandings (Flyvbjerg, 2006), it is important to be transparent in qualitative research, to allow readers to interpret and be aware of the potential uses, contributions, and limitations (Brennen, 2012). In this study, I showcase contrasting views of issues and explanations to portray the complexities organizational members are facing. This shows the difficulties in organizations (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009), and that I did not extract answers that fed into my own interests but provided a well-rounded view of what the organizational members explained and what I observed and interpreted myself. This was a highly iterative process of reviewing the data several times to be sure that I was depicting a multifaceted view of the answers and perspectives. I discussed these aspects with my supervising team to get input on how to handle such issues and to explain as much as possible the perceptions of the organizational members.

One the most common qualitative methodologies is the case study, which was also used in this study. There are several views of what case studies are (e.g., Dyer & Wilkins, 1991; Eisenhardt, 1989; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Noor, 2008; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Thus, there are several different definitions, which consequently have divergent views of what a ‘good’ case study is. Even though these different views are somewhat contrasting, the common denominators are that it is in the real-life context or setting, and that one can gain an in-depth understanding from case studies (Stake, 1983; Yin, 2009). As these different views exist, it is important to clarify the perspective undertaken when using this methodology. Here, the in-depth understanding that case studies offer is one of the main reasons why it is suitable for this study. This dissertation explores a normative concept that has not been studied empirically: thus the in-depth understanding is vital. It is crucial to get an understanding of what the organizational members perceive, which is in line with the strength of the case study as it focuses on research in organizations (Dubois & Gadde, 2002) that “has a distinct advantage over research on organizations… because it has access to a broader set of data” (Rouse & Daellenbach, 2002, p.964, emphasis added). Therefore, the definition of a case study that is used in this study is:

 [...] a research method that involves investigating one or a small number of social entities or situations about which data are collected using multiple sources of data and developing a holistic description through an iterative research process (Easton, 2010, p.119)

This definition captures the in-depth understanding that is the essence of case studies (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991). In addition, it includes the notion of
triangulation and multiple sources, which is a trademark of case studies (e.g., Silverman, 2013) and something that was used in this study. Thus, this study used interviews, observations, and documentation to get an understanding of the case organizations and organizational members’ perceptions. Moreover, the iterative research process is something I identify with qualitative research. In addition, by including two case organizations, I have the possibility for some comparison without sacrificing in-depth knowledge (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991). The comparison between cases as part of a multiple case study has been noted as an important contribution to theoretical development in qualitative research (Ragin, 1987). A more in-depth explanation of the structure and design of the case study is provided in the next section.

4.1.1 The case studies

In this study, I investigated two organizations: I use a collective (Stake, 1995) or a multiple case study (Yin, 2009), with an embedded design. According to Miles and Huberman (1994, p.25), the case is “a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context”, which means that the case is, “in effect, your unit of analysis”. I call the organizations ‘cases’. However, within those cases I am interested in the organizational integrity, which is constructed on the organizational level by the organizational members. Thus, outlining how organizational members explain the character to understand the fidelity to those descriptions is one part of the embedded case study.

Moreover, the theoretical lens presented in this dissertation includes pressures from the field on the organization. The implications from the pressures are interpreted by organizational members as ‘issues’. The issues bridge the field level and the understanding of it within the organization. As pressures affect organizations and organizational members construct issues and then respond in some way, so the constructed issue is also a unit of analysis. Consequently, in each case organization, I was interested in understanding the role of organizational integrity in response to pressures. Therefore, in each organization I investigated two aspects i: (1) the character, to establish what the organizational integrity is protecting; and (2) the issues organizational members constructed as a result of pressures and the consequential responses. By having this focus in the data collection, it allowed me to interpret responses to pressures and provide a better understanding of a specific phenomenon: organizational integrity.

4.1.2 Level of analysis

As there is a distinction in the level of analysis between new and old institutional theory, there is also a need to distinguish the level of analysis in this study. This study focuses on organizational integrity, which is on the
organizational level. The study investigates the role of the organizational integrity as organizations respond to pressures. However, there is a connection between the organization and the field level. Macro changes and field-level pressures influence the organization in different ways as people in the organization interpret them. Consequently, these large, field-level pressures are interpreted by organizational members and cause issues within the organization. Here, the interest lies in how these pressures render issues on the organizational level (as perceived by the people in the organization).

To avoid confusion about the level of analysis in this study, the perceptions of the people (employees and managers) are perceptions of the organization or organizational members, as my assumption is that the organization is understood through the people in it (e.g., Weick, 1995). The focus is on the issues within the organizations that are constructed by organizational members, not identifying the larger field-level pressures. However, to get a deeper understanding of the pressures organizational members perceive, I use triangulation (Silverman, 2013), where I use information from interviews and documentation from the industry along with findings from previous research. For example, user-generated content is an expressed concern for newspapers in general, but was also discussed by organizational members in this study. Thus, I can use findings from previous research and industry reports to explain how this change in the field is impacting newspapers and the information from the participant to ascertain how this is interpreted in the organization at hand. Rather than separating the levels of analysis, I believe the macro (field) and micro (organization) are connected, especially in the way they are interpreted here, where changes in the field are interpreted in the organization and have some effect on the behavior.

Similar to several concepts in institutional theory, organizational integrity bridges different levels. Another example is logics, as the focus in on how actors in organizations interpret principles of behavior from societal levels or even fields. Thus, the notion of logics captures several levels. Organizational integrity is an organizational level concept, and it aims to focus on the vested interests of the organization, although organizational members cannot disregard changes or pressures from outside the organization. Thus, organizational integrity also captures changes that are interpreted by actors in the organization but, rather than only considering external legitimacy, it also includes important goals and values of the organization and how these are continued or altered for the survival of the organization—that is, how organizations balance pressures from the field, appropriate behavior from logics, and sustain (or alter) the commitments of the character.

Thus, there are changes in the field level that affect the organization and its members. This study is interested in how the organization perceives and handles issues stemming from such pressures. Different organizations may perceive different issues from similar pressures: thus the aim is not to generalize that all newspaper organizations perceive the same issues and consequently respond in
the same way, as it depends on the people who interpret them. The study focuses on the organizational level and the unit of analysis is the character, along with the issues and responses in the organization to be able to interpret the role of organizational integrity. The character, organizational integrity, and the issues/responses are embedded in the organization and understood through the individuals in the organization. To ensure that these are not one-time occurrences, several issues are chosen in each organization. Accordingly, there are several cases embedded in each organization. By outlining how organizational members explain the character, construct issues, and respond to these issues, this study can contribute with an understanding of the role of organizational integrity.

4.1.3 Studying organizational integrity and character

The definition of organizational integrity that Selznick introduced began with a sole focus on underlying principles but was further developed to explicitly state values and principles (Selznick, 1994). Drawing on the old definition and developments in institutional theory, the term ‘character’ includes the mission, values, and distinctive competences—it explains what the organization is about (King, 2015; Selznick, 1994, 2000). Thus, this concept also contains strategic importance (Goodstein, 2015; Kraatz, 2009; Paine, 1994). Therefore, it was crucial to get an understanding of how the organizational members described the character to explore the role of organizational integrity. Outlining these descriptions and how these potentially have changed helps me to understand organizational integrity; thus the focus is not on the reflection or construction of the character, but rather on the fidelity to these explanations.

During the interviews, I asked questions about the purpose, mission, and values of the organization to get an understanding of the commitments of the character. Moreover, I asked the respondents to explain the distinctive competence of the organization, and how it is different compared to its competition. This gave me an initial understanding of what the organization is about. For example, to get an understanding of the values, I asked respondents for official corporate values and reviewed documentation to acknowledge written values at the newspaper or in the group. After the respondent outlined these descriptions, I asked organizational members if they believed that these have changed as a consequence of changes in the organization or in the industry. Moreover, when specific issues emerged that the respondent discussed, I questioned if they believed that specific issues yielded any change in what I interpret as character or for their work in general. Through this questioning, I got an understanding of the ‘roadmap’ that character represents (Ansell et al., 2015) and of some aspects that changed and persisted in the organization, which is an important tension in organizational integrity (Selznick, 1957). It gave me the opportunity to interpret what commitments of the character were particularly strong, that the organizational integrity would protect.
4. Method

4.1.4 Studying the issues and responses

To explore the role of organizational integrity in responses to pressures, this study draws on the concept of organizational issues (Dutton, 1993; Dutton & Jackson, 1987). Organizational members construct issues: as they scan the environment, they construct events or issues that potentially impact on the organization. Thus, the organizational members scan and selectively perceive certain aspects as a threat or an opportunity, and so issues are collectively created and are external from the organization but perceived by the members of the organization (Dutton & Jackson, 1987). The focus here is on issues that all or the majority of organizational members perceive. As organizations are bombarded with issues, they can only respond to a few (Daft & Weick 1984) and if there is a perceived link to the organization's values, it increases the issue's chances for selection (Dutton, 1997), which is one of the reasons this concept was introduced in this study.

In this study, the respondents were asked about changes in the newspaper industry and how they perceived these to have influenced the organization, and then what they had done to resolve this. Throughout the interviews, I noticed certain themes that kept occurring in discussions with respondents, which I interpreted as issues. Moreover, these issues were explained as threatening the journalistic standards or the overall survival of the organization, or they could offer an opportunity to be more efficient that could help the organization survive. Thus, the issues were interpreted through the data collection through discussions with the respondents.

To be able to search for potential similarities and differences in and between the organizations, I chose to focus on four issues in each organization. These were the issues that were commonly discussed by all or by the clear majority of respondents and had been at least partially resolved. To explain this process, I highlight an issue that I did not choose. An issue that was interesting at The West that was not chosen to study further was related to keeping up with new technology. The pressure was explained as the speed of new technology, and the issue was constructed that the newspaper in general must play catch up to new technology rather than coming up with new ideas. At The West, as a response, three of the organizational members have invented a new app to help them find stories and make their work more efficient. Thus, it was explained as an opportunity to save resources and time. The three employees won a competition with this app. However, the development is still in its early stages (at the time of data collection, the app was in a beta or trial version) and the organization has yet to start using it. Since the response is still in an early stage, this issue was not chosen, even though it would be interesting to see if this app can help minimize costs and make the work more efficient. Thus, I discriminated against issues where the organizational members could not outline a response. The issues I chose to study further have a clear connection to the character or the overall
survival of the respective organization and are at least partly resolved (e.g., Dutton, 1997).

4.2 Choosing the organizations

In this study, the two case organizations inherently have both similar and contrasting characteristics. This section outlines the logic in the sampling choices made in this study. The selection of the sample is a crucial aspect of case study research (Stake, 1995) and naturally this was a careful process. Firstly, theoretical sampling was considered, as the cases were selected since they can highlight a certain phenomenon that is studied. Here, this was considered in the choice of context of newspaper organizations. A similar type of sampling is purposive, which “has a logic and power—and provides rich information” (Patton, 1990, p.169), and resembles theoretical sampling as the aim is to choose cases that are assumed to be informative to the study at hand. In previous research, the newspaper industry is seen as turbulent and to have a strong connection to professional values. Thus, as I am interested in responses to pressures and the fidelity to the character, the newspaper industry is relevant and suitable to explore organizational integrity empirically.

When choosing newspapers as case organizations, there are several characteristics that should be considered. Traditionally, there have been distinctions between types of newspaper (Bergström, Wadbring, & Weibull, 2005): if it is local, regional, state-wide, or national; if it is broadsheet or tabloid; and if it is online and/or offline. With regard to these characteristics, the case organizations in this study are legacy newspaper organizations—that is, that they should have had the print newspaper established when the internet affected their organization to capture the changes in the industry. This is the first criterion for cases to be included in this study. However, there were several other characteristics that affected the sampling in this study—for example, is it a tabloid or a broadsheet newspaper? What is the scope of the newspaper? What is the ownership structure? Where is the organization geographically?

With regard to selecting cases, Yin (2009) explains that a multiple case study with few cases should have a sampling that is based on literal or theoretical replication: literal includes assuming similarities in the cases, while theoretical suggests some points of difference between cases. In this study, the case organizations were chosen based on literal replication. Firstly, both cases are legacy newspapers in the same industry (and country) and so could be facing some similar field-level pressures, even though these may be interpreted differently. In addition, the rationale was to find newspaper organizations with similar characteristics, in terms of both position in the market and ownership. The cases are in Australia, which has been noted as a good reference points for journalism and media in a Western context (e.g., Hanusch, 2016). The two newspapers are part of the same national culture and are owned by two of the largest media groups in the country; thus they have a similar ownership
structure. In addition, the newspapers have a similar role in their state: they are state-wide and represent the masthead of their respective group in that state. The organizations are *The Courier-Mail* (from now on *The Courier*) in Queensland and *The West Australian* (from now on *The West*) in West Australia (WA). As mentioned previously, there is no clear definition of what tabloid journalism is (Skovsgaard, 2014), but as both organizations include entertainment, or ‘soft news’, as part of their offering, the newspapers are seen here as tabloid (although not the extreme tabloid seen in the UK, as discussed previously). Thus, there are many similarities between the two organizations.

### 4.2.1 The Organizations

An initial screening process was conducted to identify candidates that fulfill the criteria outlined above. The two case organizations are state-wide, legacy newspapers that are also online, and thus affected by digitization. Moreover, the organizations have a similar position in the respective market and are both owned by a larger media group. This sampling allows for some comparison and replication over the cases. However, there are some differences as well. The organizations are located in different states with a different level of competition. In WA, *The West* has fewer direct competitors, while *The Courier* has *Brisbane Times* (owned by Fairfax) as a well-established newspaper in Queensland and especially Brisbane. Moreover, *The Courier* has a paywall on the online content while *The West* offers the online content for free. To summarize the characteristics of both case organizations, a table illustrating some facts about the organizations is presented below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Employees (group)</th>
<th>Monthly reach</th>
<th>Outlets</th>
<th>Online payment model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Courier</strong></td>
<td>1846</td>
<td>Tabloid</td>
<td>News Corp Australia</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>3.1 million</td>
<td>Print, desktop, mobile, tablet</td>
<td>Paywall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The West</strong></td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>Tabloid</td>
<td>Seven West Media</td>
<td>5,041</td>
<td>1.7 million</td>
<td>Print, desktop, mobile, tablet</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sections above have outlined the selection characteristics of the case organizations. Even though there are more similarities, there are some points of difference between the organizations. The following sections provides some more specific background to each organization.
The Courier-Mail

The Courier is a daily metropolitan newspaper based in Brisbane, Queensland, and owned by Murdoch’s News Corp. It began as a weekly newspaper called The Moreton Bay Courier in 1846 and, after several name changes, was settled to be The Courier-Mail in 1933 (News Corp, 2016a). Even though it is based in Brisbane, it serves the state of Queensland, which has a population of approximately 4.8 million (Queensland Treasury, 2016). The newspaper is published six days a week, with a Sunday version named The Sunday Mail. The newspaper provides news about the state, nation, and world, and ranges from detailed analysis to gossip (The Courier-Mail, 2016), which is in line with the description of the European style tabloid newspaper (e.g., Bird, 2000). Readers can access some stories free online, but must pay a fee for membership to gain unrestricted access to stories (five Australian dollars per week, according to the website). The newspaper provides stories from “Australia's best journalists that you know” on multiple devices (News Corp, 2016b). The readership of The Courier-Mail is on average 712,000 with a circulation of 168,000 (News Media Works, 2015). The figures covering a yearly basis show that readership on their print version dropped from 406,000 to 392,000 between 2015 and 2016, while the total cross-platform audience increased (Roy Morgan Research, 2017).

The West Australian

The West Australian was founded in 1833, and was previously known as the Perth Gazette and the Western Australian Journal. Since the early 1900s, the newspaper has been part of West Australian Newspapers Ltd. In 2011, West Australian Newspapers acquired the Seven Network and created Seven West Media, which now owns The West (The West, 2013). Seven West Media is one of largest media groups in Australia. The group has a presence in television, magazines, radio, newspaper, and online services (Seven West Media, 2016). The West is the most widely read newspaper in Western Australia (WA), reaching approximately seven out of ten people in Western Australia each month, either in print or online, which makes it the market leader in the state. The newspaper is based in Perth, which has a population of just under 2 million people and is the capital in the largest state in Australia, WA (Lookatwa.com, 2016): the state has a population of 2.6 million (Commonwealth of Australia, 2016). The West has an average of about 576,000 daily readers and is noted as one of the best performing newspapers in Australia (The West, 2016). As noted in their annual reports, The West is experiencing a decline in circulation and revenues, much like other newspapers in Australia.

The group has received attention over a strategic move that was executed in February 2015 as the group merged the newsroom of The West and the television broadcaster Seven Perth. This initiative was undertaken after inspiration from regional and local newsrooms in Europe, and is a unique case in Australia. It has been noted as “one of the biggest shake-ups of a media
company in Australian history” (News Media Works, 2014). This is an attempt to make up for declining revenues, making it an interesting and relevant case for this dissertation.

4.3 Data collection

A common characteristic of case studies is that this method relies on multiple sources of evidence, combining data collection techniques such as archival data, interviews, questionnaires, and observations (Silverman, 2013; Yin, 2009). Even though it is common that case studies can draw on either qualitative or quantitative data (Bourgeois & Eisenhardt, 1988), this study used only qualitative data to answer the research question at hand. This study used a combination of sources, or triangulation, to increase the consistency and robustness of the findings (Denzin, 1970). All methods have potential biases and limitations, and triangulation is a seen to increase validity through the multiplicity of findings (Symonds & Gorard, 2008). This study used three sources of data—interviews, observations, and documentation—which is a common combination in case studies (Silverman, 2013).

Each data source is explained further below, followed by a summary of what each data source contributed to this study. The choice of including several data sources was made both to increase the validity of the findings and due to its ability to capture change. Several scholars propose that the combination of multiple sources of data is fruitful to capture institutional change (Dacin et al., 2002; Townley, 2002; Zilber, 2002). Furthermore, Zilber (2002, p.250) argues that the combination of several sources of data—namely interviews, observations, and documentation—reveals information that "would have gone unnoticed with analysis by approaches that focus on the macro level and on structures and practices alone". As this dissertation is focusing on the behavior in organizations, a combination of sources allowed this study to obtain an in-depth understanding of each case organization.

4.3.1 Interviews

Interviews were the main data collection method used to gain an understanding of the perceptions of organizational members (e.g., Kvale, 2006; Silverman, 2013). Some scholars prefer to use the term ‘conversations’, as it implies that it is not simply the researcher that is in charge of what is taking place, but the two parties—the interviewer and interviewee—are equally involved (e.g., Brundin, 2007). An interview is an efficient way to gather rich data about a participant’s experiences, knowledge, ideas, and impressions (Alvesson, 2003). As the aim in this study is to explore organizational integrity in responses to pressures, interviews were crucial in the data collection to gain an understanding of how the people in the organization perceive the situation.
In the context of this study, previous research suggests there is a tension in newspapers between the commercial and journalistic aims; therefore it was also important to include informants with different backgrounds in the same case organization to get various viewpoints of the phenomenon in question (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The selection of respondents in this study was a careful process to cover different departments and levels of the newspaper organizations. Generally, there is a division in a newspaper organization between the editorial and advertising segments and there is a two-tier leadership, where the CEO is in charge of the commercial side and the editor-in-chief manages the editorial decisions (Ohlsson, 2012). To capture this duality, the interviews included respondents from different levels of the organization—top-management, editors, journalists, and sales and advertising. Moreover, the study includes current and former employees.

There was no preconception of how many interviews were needed in each organization: I stopped conducting interviews when I was largely given information I already knew. Thus, I was using data saturation as the guide to determine the number of interviews in each case (e.g., Bowen, 2008) which then resulted in different numbers of interviews in the case organizations. At The Courier, twelve current and former employees and managers (from both editorial and commercial departments) were interviewed. At The West, 26 interviews with 22 people were conducted. An overview of all data sources is presented in Table II at the end of this section. The difference in number of respondents was partly based on access. Even though I experienced little new information in the interviews at The Courier, there were two specific employees that I was not able to interview due difficulty reaching them and time limitations. Additionally, access was easier at The West, which made it easier to recruit respondents. However, another reason why there are more respondents from The West is because it is a larger newsroom, as the organization recently merged the newsroom with Channel Seven. Thus, to gain an understanding of these changes, there was a need to approach people from Seven as well. Therefore, both access and the characteristics of the cases influenced how many interviews were conducted in the organizations. In total, 36 interviews were conducted in this study to obtain different viewpoints on the project topics.

Interviews were one of the most important data sources in this study, as they allowed me to ask specific questions that related to the research project (e.g., Alvesson, 2003). Even though the interview is a popular and important method to collect data in case studies and in qualitative research in general, there are criticisms of this data source. One such criticism is the researcher’s role in the interview, including his or her preconceptions and how the researcher affects the participant. In addition, a researcher may question the level of trust he or she has in the participant and their story—that is, if he or she wants to tell a story and give a good impression of the organization (or themselves) rather than giving the story they know. This was a consideration in the interviews in this study. There will always be different views and perceptions of an issue, so I continuously
4. Method

I asked several respondents about specific examples to increase the reliability of the answers and to give me a better understanding of their perception of the question at hand. Nevertheless, an interview is socially and linguistically a complex situation and there is a possibility that the respondents provided some biased information (Alvesson, 2003).

I drew inspiration from Alvesson’s (2003) reflexive approach to interviews to address some of these limitations. Alvesson suggests that people generally want to uphold a positive view of themselves, and so researchers should be reflexive and consider the context of the information from the interview. Therefore, the interview should be read in different ways and with critical reflection. In this project, the respondents (regardless of their background) were asked similar questions to allow for potentially conflicting answers and to gain a multifaceted view of the topics at hand. Moreover, I tried to interview both current and former employees when possible, to see if they had similar views. Since interviews are complex and it could be problematic to take an answer at face value, I tried to ask follow-up questions for specific examples when generic answers were given during the interviews. This was an approach that evolved during the interviews: when respondents gave almost identical answers, I tried to probe further and ask for examples.

Moreover, I tried to formulate the question to emphasize the person’s own perceptions about the organization—for example “how would you describe the purpose” or “do you believe that the purpose has changed”. Thus, the discussions in the interviews focused on the organization and changes, and how the respondents believed these affected their work and the organization in general (see Appendix A for an overview of the interview guide). Additionally, interviewing is not the only source of data that the study relies on. Thus, this study considers triangulation with other sources of data (such as observations and different types of documentation) to be able to compare what the respondents say and do (Silverman, 2011). The combination of data sources allows me to reflect on the interview data in a constructive manner.

The interview guide

Generally in qualitative research, one is studying complex, personal matters and it is often difficult to issue clear formal questions that each interviewee will understand (Alvesson, 2003). The reflexive approach introduced above includes an understanding that the interview is a complex interaction between two people; thus, it is not always suitable to follow a strict protocol. In this study, I used semi-structured interviews, which allowed a flexibility and the ability to approach some respondents differently while covering the main topics (Noor, 2008). To ensure that the topics were covered, an interview guide with suggested questions was constructed (see Appendix A for an example of the interview guide). In general, an interview followed the following structure: I would introduce myself, provide a short introduction to the project, and ask if they had any questions. As a first question, I asked the respondent to tell me
about their journey—what they did before they worked at the organization and what they do now. Then I asked questions about the mission, values, and distinctiveness—the character of the organization, also asking follow-up questions if they believed that any of these outlined commitments had changed. This was followed by a discussion of changes in the industry, and then I would ask follow-up questions about how they perceived that these changes had affected the organization. When the respondent mentioned a specific issue or event, I would ask how this had affected the organization, their own work, and what they had done to resolve it. This was an iterative process covering several of the topics outlined in previous research about newspapers in general. In most instances, the respondents discussed several changes and how they had affected the organization and their work. The interview would end with a discussion of where the respondent saw the organization in the next five to ten years.

The interview guide was tested during an informal pilot interview with a newspaper professional to ensure that the questions were formulated in an understandable way. Although there were changes throughout the interviews, questions were adapted to the findings from other respondents, especially about issues. For example, at The Courier, one of the first interviewees described metrics as an issue for the organization: after that, most respondents discussed the same issue, but if they did not, I would ask them specifically how they used metrics and how they believed this technological change had affected them. All interviews were recorded, then transcribed and sent back to each participant for respondent validation (e.g., Silverman, 2011).

Interpreting the interviews

An interview is influenced by the researcher’s own preconceptions and what the respondent wants to emphasize (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). Both during the interviews and when interpreting the data, I drew inspiration from Alvesson (2003), using an iterative process to reflect further on the provided information to explore potential meanings. During this process, some of the metaphors that Alvesson (2003, p. 15) explains were helpful, such as “cultural scripts” that include stories or guidelines on how organizational members should talk; “political action”, which means that the respondent could have a political motivation to tell their (partial) “truth” to favor themselves or the organization; or “local accomplishment”, which is seen as an outcome of the scene. This means that the demographics (such as age, gender, background, appearances, ethnicity, etc.) of the interviewee and interviewer affect the interview situation.

These metaphors were helpful to reflect not only on the content but also on the situation of the interview—that is, the interviewees’ impression of me, a young, female foreigner who was open about not having a background in journalism, which arguably had some pros and cons. I elaborate on this later in this section (see section 4.3.5). During the interviews, I noticed a generic description of the purpose of the organization: the answers in both organizations were close to professional standards of journalism. Thus, there was a need for me to probe
4. Method

Further to get information beyond what could be interpreted as what Alvesson calls “cultural scripts”. In these situations, I would ask follow-up questions that this answer could be about any newspaper, and what do they believe makes their organization stand out. An additional example was at The West, where all the respondents gave the same example of two journalists (one from Seven and one from The West) who together wrote a story to highlight the success of the integrated newsroom. Thus, I wondered if this was the only example of collaboration between the newspaper and television station to highlight how successful the integration is, much like a cultural script. To explore this suspicion further, I would ask for other examples to see if this was a one-off instance or if there were other incidents that would reinforce the positive view of the integration. Moreover, in this study I highlight answers from interviews where respondents gave contradictory or divergent answers to similar questions to show that not all respondents had the same view of some issues. With regard to respondents as political actors, the answers could be partial (selective) “truths” to highlight aspects that made themselves (or the organization) look better (Alvesson, 2003).

This approach also included reflections on the interviews in hindsight, especially the respondents as political actors. Based on some responses I got from some respondents when they read their own transcripts word by word, it made them reflect on the information as well. Some asked to change “imprudent remarks” since they do not want to “pick a fight with anyone”. Thus, the interviews are used a lot when I describe the findings in this study, since such data provide a rich understanding of the respondents’ experiences, impressions, and perceptions. To overcome the potential issues with interviews, I juxtaposed answers and reflected on potential alternative meanings to overcome some naiveté regarding the face value of interview information. The interviews were crucial to this study as they allowed me to target specific topics, to ask for clarification, and to obtain first-hand experience of the respondents’ perceptions. Moreover, I used other sources of data to compare and highlight what the respondents said and did.

4.3.2 Documentation

Scrutiny of documents is another common technique to collect data in case studies (Yin, 2009). The type of documentation can vary between letters, memoranda, agendas, study reports, media coverage, internal or external reports, etc. The list of documentation types is long; thus, it is of value to consider the validity of the documentation that is included, as it is a second-hand data source. In this study, three types of documentation were used: internal, external, and biographies. Internal documentation includes pamphlets, memos, and any other written information that the respondents provided or which was published by the organization. This included instructions and strategies from managers, transcribed speeches from bosses, and other documentation I would not be able
to attain without an employee or manager giving it to me. Thus, this type of documentation was highly relevant and helpful during the study. Some of this information was confidential and respondents specifically asked not to say who gave me this information if I was ever asked (for the record, no one has asked). These types of document were incredibly useful to gain a deeper understanding of the issues and challenges the organizations faced at that time and allowed me to understand decisions and strategies. Thus, internal documentation was important in my quest to answer the research question.

Moreover, I used documentation in terms of industry reports and general research and information available free online about *The Courier, The West*, and the industry in general. This information was helpful to understand the industry and each organization’s position in it. Although providing less information about the internal dynamics of the organization, it was used to get a contextual understanding. Lastly, biographies were used for contextual information in this dissertation. Biographies are a growing research method in organizational studies (Mathias & Smith, 2016). The books used in this study were suggested by the respondents: during the interviews, several people mentioned that these books were relevant and gave a good overview of the changes that they were experiencing, and to a certain extent what had happened in the organization; or organizational members would recommend the books so I would get more information about a certain topic. The suggested books were a documentary-style book about the newspaper industry in Australia (*Killing Fairfax*), *Making Headlines*, an autobiography by a former editor-in-chief at News Corp and a former editor at *The Courier*; and a book about the newspaper industry in the US (*Making News at The New York Times*). These books were mainly used to understand the field-level pressures and the general changes in the industry.

### 4.3.3 Observations

Observations are also a common part of case studies. Their strength lies in the ability to provide insights and better understandings of the organization and the context in real-time, which is difficult to get from other methods (Noor, 2008; Silverman, 2013). The basic premise of the observation is that the researcher makes a field visit to the case in question and observes either formal or casual activities (Silverman, 2013). The advantage of this source of data is that it provides the opportunity to observe the behavior in the usual environment (Silverman, 2013). Formal observations could be sitting in on meetings or joining activities in the organization, while casual observations could be informally observing some behaviors while collecting other data such as interviews (Yin, 2009). Such observations provide insights into the climate and milieu of the workplace. In this study, I used both formal and casual observations, and generally they were used to exemplify and triangulate information from documentation and interviews.
More specifically, I carried out observations in the newsroom, during meetings, and at industry events. Thus, formal observations involved attending meetings and sitting in on activities in the organization. I attended several meetings to learn more about the organization and, for example, what articles get chosen to be in the newspaper and just general information about the day. Secondly, casual observations helped to get contextual information about the organization—get a deeper understanding of the atmosphere, get to know the people in the organization. This was mostly the case at *The West* but also at *The Courier* to a certain extent. At *The Courier*, I was shown around the newsroom to explain some details from the interviews or to show me layout. These observations were regarding interviews, and I took pictures and field notes to remember details. At *The West*, I had a desk in the newsroom: thus, I had the opportunity to sit and observe different people and engage in casual discussions with employees. I learned a lot about the atmosphere and the culture of the newsroom through these observations, and people also came up and asked me questions. It was incredibly helpful to observe the daily activities, as I got to know the working day of the people. Lastly, I attended industry events focusing on digital journalism or changes in journalism throughout the project. These meetings included presentations and discussion about the changes in the Australian industry that also gave me many insights into the field-level changes and the situation in Australia (see Table II below for a detailed overview of all data sources).

Scholars who have used observations in case studies emphasize the importance of this method, and I agree that it adds meaning and interpretation to events in the organization, and it can be an insight into the subjective experiences and interactions in the organizational reality (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Zilber, 2002). Thus, observations added a better understanding of the atmosphere and of interactions in the organization. They also allowed some opportunistic data collection (Hartley, 1994) as I identified interesting respondents to interview during some observations.

### 4.3.4 The combination of data sources

In the sections above, there are separate descriptions of each data source. This section clarifies the combination of data sources and their connection to the research question to ensure the use and benefit of each data source in this study. An overview of the data collected for this study is summarized in the table below.
Table II. Overview all data sources

**Interviews**
- Former Manager, A1
- Manager, B1
- Former Manager, C1
- Journalist, D1
- Journalist, E1
- Journalist, F1
- Journalist, G1
- Former Manager, H1
- Manager, I1
- Journalist, J1
- Manager, K1
- Middle Manager, L1
- Middle Manager, A2
- Manager, B2
- Manager, C2
- Manager, D2
- Middle Manager, E2
- Middle Manager, F2
- Middle Manager, G2
- Middle Manager, H2
- Manager, I2
- Middle Manager, J2
- Journalist, K2
- Journalist, L2
- Journalist, M2
- Journalist, N2
- Journalist, O2
- Sales and Advertising, P2
- Sales and Advertising, Q2
- Manager, R2
- Manager, S2
- Journalist, T2
- Journalist, U2
- Sales and Advertising, V2

In total, there were 36 interviews with 34 people throughout both case organizations. The interviews from *The Courier* are marked with a “1” and interviews from *The West* are marked with a “2”. At *The Courier*, twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted with both current and former employees, each lasting between 40 and 90 minutes. At *The West*, 24 interviews were conducted with current employees, which lasted between 20 and 120 minutes. Two of the respondents were asked questions on three occasions: together at arrival, one individual interview, and together again on the final day. All interviews were transcribed and returned to respondents for validation except two, which were impromptu talks that turned into interviews: I took intensive notes during the talk and then revised the notes directly after the talk to ensure important points were recorded. The interviews covered general changes in the industry; how these had affected the organization and themselves; what issues they thought the organization was facing; the responses or experiments it had tried as a result of the changes; and the purpose, values, and distinctiveness of the organization (see Appendix for draft).

**Observations**
- Observations in newsrooms
- Observations in meetings
- Observations at industry events

*Industry events are meetings or symposiums around Queensland which address challenges and opportunities in digital journalism and democracy*

At *The Courier*, there were six occasions of observations in the newsroom, each for about 15–30 minutes. At *The West*, I spent two weeks in the newsroom from approximately 9am to 6pm, where I observed different meetings, sat with journalists and editors observing different tasks, and just worked from a desk where I could see the whole newsroom and the interactions of people. During this time, several people approached me.
4. Method

for informal talks. I had informal talks about the organization with approximately 10–15 people on top of the formal interviews mentioned above. Directly after these talks, I would take detailed notes to ensure important aspects were noted. In addition, I attended seven industry meetings about digital journalism, which in total amounted to approximately 20 hours. During the observations, notes and pictures were used for documentation. In combination, I have over 150 pages of hand-written field notes.

Documentation from each organization

- The Digital Playbook (2003). A document with guidelines to online behavior and how to attract readers in the digital space. One of the respondents provided this document. (68 pages)
- Speech by Rupert Murdoch (2005) at the American Society of Newspaper Editors. A literal transcript of Rupert Murdoch’s speech in 2005. One of the respondents provided this document. (9 pages)
- Employee writing on paid content (unpublished). An opinion paper about how the newspaper can charge for content online. It was published but is no longer available. One of the respondents provided this document. (2 pages)
- Annual Report News Corp (2014) for the period ending 06/30/14. News Corp website (226 pages)
- Annual Report News Corp (2015) for the period ending 06/30/15. News Corp website (176 pages)
- Annual Report News Corp (2016) for the period ending 06/30/16. News Corp website (228 pages)
- About The Courier-Mail (2016). News Corp website (1 page)
- Vision and Values (2016). News Corp website (3 pages)
- Third Quarter Fiscal Numbers (2016). News Corp website (21 pages)
- About us (2016). The Courier-Mail website (3 pages)
- Code of conduct (2016). The Courier-Mail

These data include any documentation from the organization, written by a person at the organization, or representing the organization. Thus, the documentation ranges from public information such as website sections (e.g., ‘About Us’) and annual reports to internal documents that respondents provided, such as speeches by Rupert Murdoch and guidelines of work. From The Courier, 742 pages were reviewed and from The West, 805 pages. In total, around 1,500 pages of documentation from the organizations were reviewed.
• Annual Report (2011). Seven West Media (106 pages)
• Independent Inquiry into Media and Media Regulation: Freedom of Speech. The Case against Government and Bureaucratic Regulation of, and Forced Access to, the Press (2011). Submission report to the regulatory body. One of the respondents provided this document. (33 pages)
• Opening to the hearing of Finkelstein (2011). Transcription of speech. One of the respondents provided this document. (5 pages)
• Annual Report (2012). Seven West Media (118 pages)
• Annual Report (2013). Seven West Media (118 pages)
• Annual Report (2014). Seven West Media (122 pages)
• Pledge for Nate—won the Best Multimedia Campaign category at the Asian Digital Media Awards (2014). Seven West Media website (1 page)
• Annual Report (2015). Seven West Media (142 pages)
• Annual Report (2016). Seven West Media (142 pages)
• About us (2016). The West website (1 page)
• Seven West Media Unveils 7Travel (2016). Seven West Media website (1 page)
• Media release: The West Australian is your one-stop-shop to engage WA’s most sought after consumers (2016). Seven West Media website (1 page)
• Seven West Media confirms investment in Starts at 60 (2016). Seven West Media website (2 pages)
• Seven West Media and Yahoo7 sign partnership with Google (2016). Seven West Media website (3 pages)
• Statement from Tim Worner, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Seven West Media (2016). Seven West Media website (1 page)
• Group Editorial Policy (Unknown, accessed 2016). Seven West Media website (2 pages)
• Editorial Policy: West Australian Newspapers (Unknown, accessed 2016). The West website (2 pages)
• Frequently asked questions WA (Unknown, accessed 2016). Yahoo.com.au (3 pages)
• Our brands (2016). Inside Seven website (5
4. Method

- Australia’s best performing metro daily newspaper—weekly readership is up 6.5% year on year (2016). Seven West Media website (1 page)
- Seven West gets nod for The Sunday Times acquisition (2016). Yahoo.com.au (5 pages)

External documentation

- Media inquiry misses the point, as the news crisis worsens (2011). The Conversation (4 pages)
- The West goes one-out on self-regulation—more to follow? (2012). Crikey.com (2 pages)
- Finkelstein’s one-stop shop (2012). Inside Story (4 pages)
- Finkelstein report: Media's great divide (2012). The Australian (5 pages)
- The Finkelstein Inquiry into media regulation: Experts respond (2012). The Conversation (5 pages)
- Self-regulation and a media we can trust? (2012). The Conversation (3 pages)
- The Finkelstein Inquiry: you wouldn't read about it (2012). ABC (5 pages)
- About The Independent Media Council (2012). The Independent Media Council website (4 pages)
- Regulating journalists? The Finkelstein Review, the Convergence Review, and News Media Regulation in Australia (2013). Academic article (34 pages)
- Clarke announces change at News (2013). News Media Works (3 pages)
- The Finkelstein Inquiry: miscarried media regulation moves miss golden reform opportunity (2013). Academic article (39 pages)
- Point and Pay (2013). News Media Works (2 pages)
- New structure for Seven West (2013). News Media Works (3 pages)
- Seven West reports $149m net profit (2014). News Media Works (2 pages)
- WAN, Seven Perth combine for integrated

These data consist of reports or articles about both case organizations that are published by a third party. The publisher includes other news sources; most reports are from an industry body that publishes research (News Media Works) and regulation reforms regarding the Australian newspaper industry by the Australian government. The Conversation is an independent source of news from the academic community. Some reports are about one organization while some include both. In total, 915 pages were reviewed. The documents are presented chronologically.
newsroom (2014). News Media Works (4 pages)
• News Corp Australia leaked accounts show 1,000 jobs cut across mastheads (2014). The Guardian (2 pages)
• Digital newspaper readership jumps 20 per cent (2014). News Media Works (3 pages)
• WAN, Seven Perth combine for integrated newsroom (2014). News Media Works (4 pages)
• Advertiser journalist takes out Murdoch award (2014). News Media Works (3 pages)
• Lachlan Heywood appointed editor of The Courier-Mail (2015). News Media Works (1 page)
• WAN, Seven Perth newsroom up and running (2015). News Media Works (3 pages)
• Champions of change to share how it is done (2015). News Media Works (2 pages)
• Write-downs hit Seven West Media bottom line (2015). News Media Works (3 pages)
• News partnership adds to external platform push (2015). News Media Works (3 pages)
• Reports (2015). The Independent Media Council website (1 page)
• Newspaper publishers launch new industry positioning with biggest ever marketing campaign (2016). APN (1 page)
• Global internet giants crushing Australian media (2016). ABC Online (3 pages)

• News Corp’s revenues falls for the fourth quarter in a row, company flags cuts in Australia and UK (2016). ABC Online (1 page)
• Meth City (unknown, accessed in 2016). Website
• After the flames (Unknown, accessed 2016). Website
• Pledge for Nate (unknown, accessed in 2016). Website
• Ruling delayed on Perth Sunday Times takeover (2016). News Media Works (2 pages)
• Print, camera, action (Unknown, accessed in 2016). News Media Works (23 pages with several video interviews)
• WA takeover gets green light (2016). News Media Works (3 pages)
• The West in global app development final
(2016). News Media Works (2 pages)
- The West Australian to cut jobs as acquisition of The Sunday Times looms (2016). WAToday.com (5 pages)
- The West Australian staff told their business model is broken, needs urgent fix (2016). WAToday.com (4 pages)
- Media reforms face a difficult passage (2016). News Media Works (3 pages)
- Dataviz tool BEAT wins Australia's first Editors Lab (2016). Global Editors Network (5 pages)
- ACCC invites further submissions on sale of The Sunday Times and PerthNow to Seven West Media (2016). Perthnow.com (3 pages)
- ACCC reviewing sale of The Sunday Times and PerthNow to Seven West Media (2016) Perthnow.com (3 pages)
- ACCC invites feedback on Seven West Media’s proposed acquisition of The Sunday Times and PerthNow (2016). ACCC (2 pages)
- ACCC delays decision on sale of Sunday Times to Seven West Media (2016). The Australian (3 pages)

Books

These books are used to get a deeper understanding of the industry and specifically the Australian newspaper industry. Respondents continuously mentioned these books, suggesting that these provide an almost perfect description of what has been, and is, going on in the industry. The first two books (Killing Fairfax and Making Headlines) are specifically about media organizations in Australia and include the groups that own the cases followed in this thesis, while the last book is about the American newspaper industry.
The combination of sources outlined and described in the table above (interviews, observations, and documentation) provided a multifaceted view of the behavior of the case organizations (Pettigrew, 1990). In this study, interviews were incredibly important and were used to provide input for areas of interest in this dissertation. Moreover, the documents from the organization were also used extensively: the internal documentation explained the reasons for some decisions and clarified some incidents in the organization. On the other hand, the industry reports, articles, and books highlighted the field-level pressures. The observations from industry events contributed to my knowledge of the industry, while the observations in the newsroom and meetings helped me to get a general understanding of the organization and see in practice some incidents that were discussed in the interviews. Thus, information from the observations was also used to back up some findings from the interviews. The combination of sources was comprehensive and provided specific information about my interests. Furthermore, as the findings are backed up by several respondents and data sources increases the external and internal validity of this study. As a last point in this section, I provide some personal reflections on my role in the data collection.

4.3.5 My role in the data collection

No matter if it is a quantitative or a qualitative study, it is impossible to be completely objective and not affect the participants in any way (Alvesson, 2003; Miller, Birch, Mauthner, & Jessop, 2012). As a researcher, you interact with the respondents; they have their impression of you and vice versa, thus it is important to reflect on these interactions (Silverman, 2011). During the observations in this thesis, my impression is that people were curious about me in the beginning, but this slowly decreased the more time I was present in the organization. The initial glares turned into curiosity; several people stopped by and talked to me while I was in the newsroom, or would stop by my desk to have a chat about the project. It was clear that people were observing me, too, as they were making comments on who I was talking to and when.

One thing that was difficult for me was the slang and lingo used in the meetings. I did not understand several of the abbreviations. I tried to write them all down and ask people later on. The employees and managers noticed this: after one meeting, one of the attendees approached me and asked if I got an answer as he saw that I wrote down an abbreviation and a question mark. Clearly, I was observing them but they were also observing me. This could have affected the way they behaved, but through the weeks I was there, this decreased and slowly no one reacted when I was in a meeting since they had all seen me there before. This is one reason why it was fruitful to observe several meetings rather than just one or two: I became less of a stranger (e.g., Czarniawska & Sevón, 2008). Therefore, even though I felt like my presence affected them in the beginning, this was less noticeable after a few days.
During the interviews, I also had a variety of experiences in terms of interacting with the respondents. I got along with most people from the beginning: the conversation was smooth and it was easy to ask questions and follow up on certain themes, which is the preferred situation. I also felt that some people wanted to chat with me to vent. There were instances where I got few chances to ask questions: they just asked about my project in general, and then they would start talking and spoke uninterruptedly for an hour. Since they knew the general theme of my project, these talks were informative and on topic and most of my questions were indirectly covered. In these instances, I would let them talk and would just try to steer the topic with small clarification questions rather than interrupting them. In these talks, I sensed a lot of frustration from the participants. Although these situations were different, they still helped me to fulfill the aim of the interview.

I did have some (thankfully, not many) interviews where the participant was either not trusting of me, stressed, or simply did not want to be there. They seemed to be uncomfortable. Some seemed stressed and would answer with one word to how or why questions, and were unwilling to elaborate, while others would give general answers that did not really say anything. Alternatively, they would just be extremely positive about everything that I asked and they would emphasize how much they loved their job. I got a slight confirmation of why at least the last behavior appeared. During the observations, one employee came up to me and started asking questions about who I was and where I was from, and then jokingly asked if I was sent by the management to “suss out what is really going on here…and maybe fire someone?!” I do believe some participants were a bit nervous about me asking about challenges and changes in the organization. Luckily, there were only a couple of instances where this happened. In most cases, I felt as if the participants were happy to share their view and were comfortable with me asking them questions.

As I spent more time in the newsroom and talked to people informally, I felt like they understood that management did not send me and that I was a researcher who was not there to figure out whom to fire but was genuinely interested in them. This then turned to my advantage, and people started approaching me in a more relaxed way and asked me to join them for lunches and beers. This was a nice development, as I felt included and I got to know the culture there (or at least a part of it). I felt like I became a part of the group to a certain extent. One employee did prank me: it was nothing serious, just as a joke which made me feel like I was accepted at the organization a bit more. I did not really have an issue talking to people prior to the prank but after people saw that I laughed, I felt like it made them more relaxed towards me. Thus, I felt more like an ‘insider’ rather than an ‘outsider’ (e.g., Brewer, 2000).

I believe that I had an advantage being from Sweden. Several researchers have addressed the potential advantages and disadvantages of being foreign and a woman in a predominantly male context (Czarniawska & Sevón, 2008). For me, I perceived my nationality as an advantage: people were intrigued, and they
wanted to tell me about their Swedish relatives, experiences with ABBA, IKEA furniture, or (of course) talk about Eurovision. We did have some fantastic talks about Eurovision. This was a great icebreaker and a way for people to approach me. Several of my informal talks (where people just approached my desk and talked to me) generally started with something about Sweden—they wanted recommendations of where to travel, talk about annoying IKEA furniture, or to discuss Sweden’s chances of winning Eurovision, and then told me about their experiences of the integrated newsroom, or a change that was affecting them. Therefore, for me, this aspect worked in my favor.

To some extent, I also think being a younger woman was helpful, although I did experience some obvious power play of making me wait and some condescending comments. As a former colleague at JIBS said in her thesis with regard to her observations, that she took the role as a “harmless idiot” (Wigren, 2003, p. 59), I believe my experience was somewhat similar. As I openly said I did not have a background in journalism, I was acceptably incompetent and non-threatening (e.g., Fielding, 1993). When they got to know me, I perceived that they saw me as harmless and the respondents felt like they needed to explain a lot in depth to me since I did not have a background in journalism. I told almost everyone that my background was in management and they would go on to describe how the industry works and what they believe to be the important aspects, which was helpful. I got a lot of background information about them and the company/industry. I did know some of the general workings of the company and the industry, but it is always interesting to hear their version.

One aspect that happened at the end of the visit at one of the cases made me feel like I had a good understanding of the organization. I had a wrap-up meeting with my two contact persons there, and they were both surprised by some of my findings. I just gave them some general impressions of the organization. They were not surprised by the content per se, but rather that I knew the company so well. This was reassuring, at least to some extent: it made me feel like I had a good understanding of the organization. This was important as I was trying to understand the character of the organization and thus it is important to understand how the organizational members perceive it.

### 4.4 Approaches to analyze the data

The data were collected at *The Courier* from December 2015 to March 2016. Data were collected through interviews, documentation, observations at industry meetings, and sporadic newsroom observations. At *The West*, it was a more intense period where I spent two weeks at the organization in April 2016. I was there for about eight hours every day, using the same methods but in a more concentrated period. Thus, data from each organization were collected separately: there was no overlap. Since the data collection at *The Courier* was spread over a longer period, I had time to transcribe and review all data and to do some initial analysis before commencing the data collection at *The West*. The
4. Method

The same rule applied to writing up the findings and partly to the analysis. All data from *The Courier* were reviewed, coded, thematized, and written up before transcribing the data from *The West*. I believe this helped me to get a deep understanding of each case separately. After the findings from each organization respectively were written up and some initial analysis was conducted, I started comparing the findings from each organization. This was a fruitful approach to embrace and take advantage of the in-depth knowledge of case studies.

Similar to the multitude of definitions of case studies, several scholars have given their perspective on how to analyze case study data (Bourgeois & Eisenhardt, 1988; Eisenhardt, 1989; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2009). One of the most common techniques for qualitative analysis is from the work of Miles and Huberman (1994). The authors discuss three crucial elements of qualitative analysis: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. This approach was helpful in the initial stages of describing the data and the analysis. It helped me sort through the data to find themes and interpret topics. Through the analysis, I also drew inspiration from Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton (2012), to iterate the findings with literature and further analysis. Firstly, the data were coded based on the theoretical framing: (1) how the organization described its character; (2) pressures and general changes in the field that were perceived; (3) issues that were perceived in the organization as a result of the field-level changes; and (4) how the organization responded to those issues—some specific activities that the organization tried. This helped to structure and reduce the data, as all data were coded and I could focus on one topic at a time. It is important to note that data from each organization were collected, coded, and analyzed separately (Yin, 2009), firstly *The Courier* and then *The West*.

Each theoretical framing described above was coded in NVivo\(^1\) to reduce the data and to be able to focus on one theme at a time: this involved coding for character, pressures, issues, and responses. From there, the data were grouped and organized in tables to provide an overview of different grouped descriptions of the same pressure or issue—sometimes conflicting descriptions—which also enables and simplifies the conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For example, all data focusing on one issue were grouped together to interpret one issue at a time. From the table, the data were grouped and analyzed in first order categories (Gioia et al., 2012). This process initially focused only on the data

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\(^1\) Computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) such as NVivo is a commonly used database to store and manage data (Welsh, 2002). It has been argued that CAQDAS facilitates transparent data analysis (Morison & Moir, 1998). Even though it does not add any analytical tool beyond counting who said what and how many times, it assists the researcher in his/her organization of the data. The software is mainly designed to do administrative tasks, but it allows the researcher to organize the data more efficiently, and should therefore be exploited to its fullest use (Welsh, 2002). Even though such tools can be a constraint as they can be costly to access, as a doctoral student at Queensland University of Technology I have free access to NVivo: thus it was used as an administrative tool for the data in this study.
and then became an iterative process with the data and the literature to inform second order themes and aggregate dimensions. After the data were collected and had been analyzed, the focus was on the theoretical development, which in this case was on organizational integrity to explore its role in these issues in responses. As mentioned before, each case was written up separately before I searched for any potential similarities and differences. The following section outlines each coded theme to provide a transparent process of the how the data were coded and analyzed.

To understand the character, data from internal documentation, interviews, and observations were used. Here, all the documentation and interview statements about mission, aims, values, and distinctiveness in the organization were coded. This was done to explore the descriptions of the commitments on the organization—its character. I focused on statements such as “we are”, “we do”, and “our aim is” to get an understanding of how organizational members reveal the character. Based on my theoretical framing, I specifically included descriptions including purpose, mission, aim, and values as these descriptions contribute to an understanding of the character. Thus, the information includes both official statements from websites and annual reports, and specific explanations from organizational members. Moreover, based on Selznick’s description of what the organizational integrity is protecting, I also coded for distinctive competence—that is, answers to the question of how the organization is different from other newspapers and competitors. Additionally, I included answers where respondents elaborated on changes in purpose, mission, or values. This information afforded me an overview of what the organization was about, and aspects that had changed. I also had the opportunity to compare official statements with answers from respondents in interviews to see whether these aligned or if the respondents had a different view compared to official statements.

To understand the perceived pressures, I mainly used data from documentation and interviews. Again, the initial broader coding was then inductively grouped together to create categories, an iterative process with existing literature on newspapers and the pressures these organizations are facing. These were grouped together into four main pressures that the respondents and documentation outlined: new technologies; financial constraints (mostly that there is a general decline in circulation and advertising revenue in the industry as a whole); new pressures from the audience to engage newsmakers and contribute to the news; and market changes (including new regulations and a changing competitive landscape). These pressures are elaborated on in the findings chapters. Even though these pressures are presented separately, they do overlap and have some connection to new technologies. From there, the focus shifted to the perceived issues in the organization, and the connections to the overarching pressures.

Organizational issues are related to the context but are subjective to the individual in the organization (Dutton & Jackson, 1987). Thus, the issues
emerged inductively through the discussion with the respondents (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991)—in this case, the issues are those that challenge the character or the overall survival of the organization, and consequently the organizational integrity. This analytical process was iterative between my own interpretation and the data, and over twenty organizational issues were interpreted from both organizations (see Appendices B and C for an overview of all issues). Then, four issues were chosen in each organization, where the organization had some response (or several responses). The issues could be interpreted as an opportunity or a threat: a threat could be some imposed change where organizational members perceived the pressures as something that contrasted with the character, or the change could be perceived as an opportunity for more efficient work to potentially save resources. Thus, I discriminated against issues that were not resolved, as explained earlier with the app at The West. The process was iterative and I reviewed the data several times to ensure I captured as much information as possible about the issues and the responses.

The data used to understand responses to the perceived pressures were mainly generated from interviews and internal documents. Observational data were used to further highlight these findings. The responses were analyzed together with the issues to understand the reasoning of the organizational members. Again following Gioia and colleagues (2012), the data were organized into categories, which were then analyzed in relation to existing literature to understand the theoretical meaning of the responses (see Tables V–VIII and XI–XVI in the findings). Thus, the analysis was an iterative process covering many loops between data, theory, and back to data again.

The procedure and research design has been outlined above. The final section of this chapter focuses on ethical considerations and then some methodological limitations.

4.5 Ethical considerations

The following section outlines some of the ethical considerations related to this project and to qualitative research in organizations in general, and some general codes of conduct in research. It is suggested that qualitative research is ethically good in itself, or at least ethically superior to the “uncaring” quantitative approaches (Kvale, 2006). However, I do not believe that this is necessarily the case, as the human interaction in qualitative inquiry affects interviewees and informants, and the knowledge produced through qualitative research affects our understanding of the human condition (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005; Kvale, 1996). This means that there are several ethical considerations to include in this complex method, which I considered before and during this process. Qualitative research generally involves complications in terms of ethics, since it includes interactions with people (Miller et al., 2012). The perspective here, which is line with Selznick’s view of organizations, is that organizations are constituted of people, and by studying organizations, you study the people in them. Therefore,
several of the issues connected to qualitative research in general also affect this study.

Within organizational research, there are several implicit and explicit ethical considerations (Clegg, Hardy, Lawrence, & Nord, 2006). The explicit connection to ethics is the researcher’s responsibility not to falsify data, to avoid plagiarism, and to give a representative voice of the participants in the study (Wray-Bliss, 2002), which are perceived as general codes of conduct in research. To follow this conduct is an academic convention and generally is not explicit in the research process. Bryman and Bell (2003) and Bell and Bryman (2007) suggest codes of conduct for ethical issues concerning the subject, which also should be considered by organizational researchers. One should avoid or minimize harm and risk of harm to the participants (both physical and psychological); the subjects should be fully informed about the project; the subjects should give their consent to participate; privacy of the participants should be assured, which also includes confidentiality and anonymity when needed. These steps are to ensure that there is no deception in the research process. These ethical implications of conducting a project with honesty and high research integrity were taken seriously in this project.

Moreover, it is also a concern to respect the people and organizations that invest their time in the project. To ensure that people knew the aims and time commitments, all potential respondents received an information sheet attached in the approach email, outlining the objectives. I also repeated this information at the beginning of the interview and asked the respondents to sign a consent sheet which explained the aim of this study so all parties were informed about the purpose. The participants gave consent via either email or hard copy. They were informed that the name of the organization would be used whilst guaranteeing individual anonymity. Furthermore, the full transcripts from the interviews were sent back to the participants for respondent validation to ensure that they were comfortable with the information they provided. Five of the respondents decided to change some of the transcripts that specifically named another person. These changes were cross-checked by me with the original transcripts, and the changes did not alter important information for this specific project but rather names and very detailed circumstances that pointed to a specific person. This was done to minimize the risk of harm to participants. Based on these considerations, I am confident in the ethical standards of the project.

4.6 Methodological limitations

All methodologies include some limitations, which of course also includes case studies (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Some limitations have already been discussed above, such as the shortcomings of qualitative data, and the use of single case versus multiple case studies. To avoid repetition, these issues will not be covered here as the aim of the study is not to claim statistical
generalizations, but rather to explore how organizational integrity can help inform our understanding of responses to pressures. Theoretically, organizational integrity also includes limitations. It was developed in the 1950s and has received limited empirical testing, which makes the concept interesting to apply to an empirical context, but also inherently difficult since there are no other empirical studies to assist in constructing the research question or even the interview guide, although, the assumed advantages of exploring this ‘new’ empirical concept are believed to outweigh the potential shortcomings.

A personal shortcoming is that English is not my native language. I have spent years in Australia but I did not grow up there. Even though all my under- and post-graduate studies have been in English, there are some slang terms and cultural differences that I simply do not understand. During my doctoral studies, I have spent over two years in Australia: thus I do believe I am overcoming some of these misunderstandings. To assist me with interviews, I hired an Australian transcriber to make sure that slang and specific names and places were noted correctly, and this was also sent back to each respondent for validation. However, during the observations I did run into some obstacles. During a meeting, the group was discussing the Eagles: I did not think much of it and thought that the band was having a gig. Soon I began to realize that the discussion did not fit my interpretation. I got confused and then learned that there is an AFL (Australian Football League) team in WA called the West Coast Eagles. However, after meetings and in the newsroom, people would just come up and ask if I knew a certain abbreviation (perhaps I looked terribly confused), so I do believe that I got answers to most questions or confusions I had at that time. Nevertheless, there were times where I felt like a foreigner, which is of course a limitation in interpreting the environment. As I mentioned previously, I do believe I also gained some advantages from this confusion. People wanted to help me and explained more thoroughly as I was not a journalist and not Australian. Thus, I believe that these aspects balanced each other out to a certain extent; clearly there were some disadvantages of being a Swede studying Australian newspapers, but there were also some advantages as people were intrigued and (I at least felt like) people wanted to talk to me.

One arguable methodological disadvantage is the difference in the access between the case organizations. Even though I tried using a similar logic when collecting the data, there are some differences in the study. Firstly, the observations differ in type and length between the cases. I did not get the same access at The Courier as I did at The West. At the latter, I spent weeks in the newsroom and talked to over twenty people, while at the former I conducted twelve interviews and observations were mostly at industry meetings and some in the newsroom. Even though this is a weakness of the dissertation, I believe that I got sufficient information from both organizations to answer the research questions. Qualitative research is time consuming and complicated, and it is difficult to get an exact replication of a study, as you generally must negotiate access and you have time and resource limitations.
A similar situation is prompted by the interviews, as I have almost double the number of interviews at *The West* in comparison to *The Courier*. However, at *The Courier* I interviewed former employees who were very helpful in gaining an understanding of the organization and specific issues, which I did not get the opportunity to do at *The West*. Thus, I feel like there are strengths and weaknesses in both cases and, even though there are differences, I did not end the data collection until I received recurrent information. This holds for both organizations. *The West* recently went through such a large change that many organizational members wanted to vent about this massive change. Thus, I struggled sometimes to keep the focus of the interviews. However, these are also general weaknesses in qualitative research. I am not aiming to generalize to all newspapers, but rather offer a theoretical generalization (Hartley, 1994). I explore how organizational integrity helps us understand responses to pressures, especially in professional organizations. Both organizations in this study are going through some substantial pressures and changes, which I believe makes the findings here valuable even though there are some limitations in the research design.

This chapter has outlined the methodology used in this study. The following chapters unravel the findings in this dissertation, focusing on the findings from *The Courier* and *The West* respectively. The dissertation ends with a discussion chapter and conclusions.
Chapter 5: Findings: The Courier-Mail

This chapter outlines the findings at The Courier. To be able to interpret the role of organizational integrity, it is crucial to understand how The Courier explains its character. Thus, this chapter focuses on three aspects: (1) explanations of the commitments of the character; (2) perceived pressures and organizational issues; and (3) responses to the issues. The first sections provide a holistic understanding of the organization’s character based on the organizational members’ descriptions and documentation published by the organization. Secondly, this chapter reviews the constructed organizational issues. In total, the respondents at The Courier constructed twelve issues (see Appendix B), perceiving four issues as particularly challenging. These four issues are metrics, user-generated content (UGC), immediacy of news, and declining revenues, which are explained in depth respectively along with the response (or responses) to each of the four issues.

5.1 The character of The Courier-Mail

This section outlines how The Courier explains its mission, distinctiveness, and values, hence the character. That is what the organizational integrity is protecting. Some scholars claim that this fidelity should guide the aspirations of the organization (Paine, 1994). The respondents use different ways to describe the organization: they relate the mission to the history of the newspaper, its reach and relevance, or journalism in general. Overall, there is a strong focus on journalistic standards and the importance of newspapers in a democratic society—that is, the importance of its function in society and the responsibilities of journalists. The following section presents the official values of the organization, both from the group level and the values discussed in the interviews. Lastly, the description of the distinctive competence of the organization is focused on distancing itself from direct competitors and other media: thus the organization defines itself in terms of what it is not.

The following section describes these different perspectives to explain the character of The Courier. In the first perspective, the focus is more on functional aspects of the organization as a newspaper and its core offerings. Secondly, the respondents concentrate on the aims of journalism and relate the mission of The Courier to the general values of the profession. The sections below illustrate both perspectives.
5.1.1 The mission of the newspaper

As the oldest legacy newspaper in Queensland, *The Courier* points to its history in its presentation. In 2015, Lachlan Heywood was appointed as the new editor. In an interview, he said that *The Courier* is “Queensland's most enduring and influential media voice” (News Media Works, 2015), which accentuates the history of the newspaper in Queensland and its relevance to Queenslanders. Participants in this study reinforced Heywood’s view:

> We’re the only state-based newspaper and we’ve got a pretty long history going back well over 100 years. [...] I know we’ve had a few issues with different things, but we have got a pretty good standing in the community and people probably trust us— I guess in terms as far as people trust journalists and media outlets. (Journalist, G1)

The quote above refers to the newspaper’s history in Queensland and that *The Courier* is part of the community. In terms of the content, even though entertainment and frivolous content are present on the website and in the documentation, the focus of the respondents was predominantly on investigative content. Furthermore, respondents stressed the need to be local and to listen to what the people in Queensland want. Respondents said *The Courier* delivers ‘hard-hitting news’ (Manager, B1) and cater to a ‘broad audience with a local focus’ (Manager, I1):

> It’s being the experts in our area…. we as *The Courier-Mail*, from sport to business and all the sections that we do, we’re really uber-local now, in terms of what we do. (Manager, I1)

The quote above explains that *The Courier* provides its readers with the best, expert information about what is going on in the state and in Brisbane, where the newspaper is located. The localness is a strong point in the descriptions. The organization knows its audience and delivers local news, and to be relevant the organization balances investigative analysis with more frivolous content. No matter if it is ‘harder’ or ‘softer’ news, the main point is to provide validated, reliable information. One of the respondents emphasizes the importance of reliable information, that it is one of the ‘promises’ of the newspaper:

> …it’s about delivering on your promise and actually giving something to people that is really functional and actually works and is reliable. And if you lose focus of that, you’re doomed… (Manager, I1)

This respondent points to the significance of reliability and relevance: the information should be validated and readers should want to read it. To reach this balance between relevance and reliability, several respondents say that there must be a balance between the hard-hitting content and the more frivolous
5. Findings: The Courier-Mail

stories (e.g., Former Manager, A1). However, this balance is not easy and some respondents say that The Courier has received its share of criticism:

…we’ve never been complacent with what we do—we’ve always tried to find new ways of keeping readers engaged and interested, whether that’s through some pretty bold attention-grabbing presentation of news. Now, that’s attracted some criticism, because when I first started at The Courier-Mail it was a broadsheet newspaper and it switched to a tabloid newspaper and [a previous manager who was there during the change], said that [The Courier] went from editing the country’s raciest broadsheet to the country’s dullest tabloid. (Journalist, F1)

This statement of the ‘dullest tabloid’ is in relation to the softer news. However, some respondents defend this content by saying it is there to stay relevant. People do not only want hard-hitting, investigate content: readers also want softer news that is more relatable to their own lives. A former manager says there is a need to:

Make sure that the product has a good combination of thought-provoking, some hard-hitting stories, and maybe some not so hard-hitting, and things to look at—nice pictures, some engaging, and has an easy way to read it. So, it all comes together in the newspaper, but beneath it all is we’re in the truth business. (Former Manager, A1)

Thus, as seen in the quote above, the emphasis is offering a balance in terms of content. Furthermore, as seen in several of the previous quotes, the focus of The Courier is mostly on the editorial. However, that is not the only aim of the organization. To survive, it also must attract advertisers and revenues to fund the production of the content. Some respondents say that these departments intertwine at The Courier.

…what it comes down to is what is underpinning our business, content and audience. And connecting our customers with our audience, which we believe are highly engaged since we set the agenda in terms of the content, the rich content we have. This is the mandate of our business, but connecting that rich audience with offerings from the market place. So that’s for our sales team to have the passion to justify this to the market place and to link our audiences to the customers. (Manager, B1)

This statement emphasizes the duality of the newspaper as an organization in terms of the editorial and the advertising. The respondent argues that if the organization has enough readers, it can convince advertisers to commit to spending money at the organization. It needs the advertising revenue to be able to fund the journalistic content. Consequently, it is a circle: to fund the
journalism, it needs the revenues from the marketing side, and to obtain revenues from advertising, it needs to live up to its editorial commitments, although it is emphasized that the commercial side of the organization should not inform editorial decisions (Former Manager, A1). However, some argue that the advertising aim is no different from the editorial, being a trusted news source.

The value of the marketing activity and the marketing function isn’t all about likes, clicks, or shares… it is about trust, engagement. (Manager, B1)

Therefore, the purposes of the two departments at The Courier do not seem to be as conflicting as presented in previous research (e.g., Raviola, 2012). The departments are building each other up and need both sides to function. Without the editorial content, the organization cannot convince advertisers that it can reach the intended audience. However, without the revenues from the advertising and sales, it does not have the resources to fund the creation of editorial content. Some respondents say that the need for both sides is not necessarily a change resulting from digitization.

The core of what we do is still the same—finding the best story and telling the best story—and we’ve got a whole lot of new ways to do that. (Manager, I1)

As seen in the quote above, the character of the organization is argued not to have changed, The Courier produces validated, reliable content but it is rather the delivery of the content that has changed.

To sum up, this section outlines part of the character, namely the mission of The Courier. These descriptions mainly relate to the history of the newspaper, the content, and its relevance to its audience’s lives. It also addresses the clash between church and state in newspapers (Ferrer Conill, 2016), which refers to the supposedly opposing aims between the commercial and editorial. However, in The Courier, the aims of the two sides were not opposing but rather part of the same mission—providing relevant, reliable content to its audience, which is similar to general standards of the profession (Deuze, 2005). To explain the mission of The Courier in relation to its history as a newspaper was one approach the respondents took; another perspective is focusing on the journalistic values and responsibilities. The following section examines the journalistic aims of The Courier.

5.1.2 A journalistic mission

The respondents in this study used two different perspectives to explain the mission of The Courier, one focused on the newspaper and the other on journalism. The previous section reviews the mission of the newspaper, while this section showcases the mission of The Courier by relating it to the profession.
of journalism. This was a common way of describing the mission: no matter if the respondent was a journalist, an editor or in advertising and sales, the mission was frequently defined in relation to journalism. This was reinforced in a document that was circulated to employees in the mid-2000s. This document was written by several managers of News Corp and was distributed to each of the newspapers in the group to help with some online issues and strategies. The document includes guidelines about online behavior and how to attract readers in the digital space. Moreover, the document outlines values that the newspaper should live up to and these values are highly connected to the professional values of journalism:

We are judged by the integrity, quality and relevance of our content and the trust consumers place in us. This underpins the masthead's reputation. (The Digital Playbook, 2003)

Thus, as demonstrated in the document, the mission of The Courier is similar to journalism in general. Words such as ‘relevant’, ‘validated’, and ‘quality content’ are notions that frequently appear both in documentation and in discussions with employees.

Another aspect that feeds into this perspective and is a common way for the respondents to explain the mission is truth. The newspaper informs people of news that is true. This is a description that often occurred about the purpose of The Courier, again relating it to journalism.

We are in the truth business here. And that is at the core of journalistic integrity. We are there to find and tell the truth. We want to find information and share it. It means batting off spin and rubbish and finding out things that perhaps people don’t want to know. It means also having empathy or a feeling for the life of your readers, or viewers, and what are the things that are on their minds, making sure that you deliver that. (Former Manager, A1)

This statement highlights the importance of living up to the journalistic standards as a newspaper. The newspaper should find and tell the truth—although some respondents do not agree, suggesting that political influences are affecting the scope of the newspaper. Perhaps the constant devotion to truth-telling is ingrained in the professional values, which could explain why most respondents almost repeat each other. Thus, the focus on professional values in journalism is constantly mentioned: journalists should investigate an issue and they should inform the audience about what is going in in the community. To do so, the organization must know its audience well and know what it is interested in, as the content should be relevant to readers’ lives. One journalist highlights this aspect:

To inform the public. Yeah, inform the public, encourage debate, yeah definitely...People might, sometimes you get
comments saying, you know, “I don’t want to read this stuff, this is too negative, this is too sad”. But really, it’s important that people are informed about things that might pose them a danger or things that need changing. People need to be informed when there’s a spate of a particular sort of behavior or crime so that it’s addressed at a higher government level, you know? (Journalist, J1)

Here, the explanation enforces journalists’ role of informing people on important topics in their community. This is what the organization represents and what it does, again highlighting the journalistic values of the newspaper. Moreover, to explain the mission, the respondents also emphasize the importance of news in a democratic society. The respondents are almost defensive about reinforcing the newspaper’s role. The emphasis is on quality news as it is an important part of the society, and when the newspaper lives up to its promises, it serves the public. Some respondents argued that this was and still is the main purpose—to inform the public. However, the participants expressed some apprehension about the changes in the industry and the struggles the organization has encountered and that The Courier actually has changed.

The Courier-Mail always used to do that. It was her majesty’s loyal opposition in Queensland (Former Manager, H1)

The participants expressed concerns about the implications if there is no solution to the diminishing revenues. After all, The Courier is a business and it needs revenues to survive. If there is no solution soon, it could be a threat to the democratic society. A journalist and former manager said:

But, of course everyone is aware of those views—those conflicting views, competitive views—and it affects us because that’s our livelihood. You would hope that they’ll, that there will always be a role for good journalism and thorough investigative journalism and just decent storytelling. (Journalist, E1)

So, there has to be another bottom line, there has to be a way of funding journalism. Otherwise the country’s in trouble, you know? Democracy’s in trouble. (Former Manager, H1)

As the respondent indicates above, newspapers have a role in the society and contribute to the greater good. Consequently, finding a solution to the monetary issues is a must, since it is part of a functioning society. In addition, there is a pride in serving the ‘public good’ and it seems to be a driving force for the journalist and employees at The Courier. To fulfil this part of the profession, they must follow the ethical codes of conduct and live up to the standards of the profession.
5. Findings: The Courier-Mail

The view of some respondents was that even though there are changes in the industry that are challenging the newspaper, this journalistic function will prevail if they follow the standards of the profession. Thus, the participants do consider the changes in the industry as they discuss the role of journalism. Social media is one example that is changing the rules for journalists and newspapers. It challenges their role as professionals, as anyone can publish content and news online. The participants stressed the fact that *The Courier* should do what it does best: it should focus on the bottom line of the newspaper and not get distracted by all the changes in the industry:

> Look, I think with all the changes in the way that news is reported and the increase of social media presence and all that, I think it has made us probably need to take a stock take of who we are and what we are. I think for our industry, and this is very general, but also targeted to, in terms of our masthead—we need to really focus on what we do well and what we mean to our consumers. (Manager, I1)

As the quote above demonstrates, the manager perceived a need for *The Courier* to focus on what it does well and what makes it important to its audience. In that way, it can justify resisting some of the changes in the industry, specifically in relation to emergent substitutes such as citizen journalism and social media. The respondents argue that people cannot produce the same professional, validated content as journalists, as this is difficult and time consuming. Consequently, no matter how many changes are going on in the industry, the underpinnings of the business are still the same: writing good content that people want to read.

> You have to keep trying to do the best you can as far as coming up with the good stories because I think content … they’re never going to be able to produce a machine that’s going to be able to produce content so if you can keep producing content—good content that people want to read—I think that’s really all you can basically do. (Journalist, G1)

Thus, as the respondent above declares, *The Courier* aims to live up to those standards—that is, to focus on and emphasize the professional stories of good validated content that is relevant to their audiences. Such strong emphasis on the audience is not something that has generally been a focus in the professional values of journalism (e.g., Deuze, 2005). However, as described in the following section, it is one of the main values that *The Courier* declares.

The previous sections have outlined the mission of the organization. The following section outlines the proclaimed values at *The Courier*. 
5.1.3 The values of the organization

In the old school of institutionalism, values are “something which in the given organization is taken as an end” (Selznick, 1957, p.57). Together with the mission and distinctive competence, the values construct part of the commitment of the character. As mentioned previously, this fidelity to these commitments could restrain change. Thus, this section shows the values at The Courier.

Since The Courier is owned by a larger media organization, News Corp, this section explores values from both the group level and the organization itself. Firstly, the values of News Corp are retrieved from its website (News Corp, 2016c), and these values were also portrayed on roll-ups in the newsroom at The Courier (observations in newsroom, 2016). The understanding of the values at the organization is also based on information from the interviews: thus all transcripts were analyzed in NVivo to search for the most common words. The values at The Courier provided from News Corp Australia (2016c) are (1) customer centric, specifying that the customer is the central focus in every interaction; (2) boldly creative, being forward thinking and innovative; (3) accountable, stressing the integrity of the work and that the company is responsible for its work; (4) collaborative and (5) diverse, being focused on the environment for the employees and that they get support in an environment where employees feel valued and included. Lastly, News Corp emphasizes (6) community, and active participation in improving the local Australian communities. News Corp states that these values ensure that the audience it at the center of what the group does and help them achieve their vision of becoming Australia’s number one media company. These core values were also present on roll-ups and posters throughout the newsroom (observations in newsroom, 2016).

The values that emerged through discussions with respondents relate to journalism, and two areas were thematized as the most common words were analyzed: the ‘audience’ and ‘content’. With regard to the ‘audience’, there is an emphasis on the ‘community’ and the ‘local’, and there is a focus on ‘relevance’ in the lives of the audience. In addition, there should be an ‘engagement’ with the audience: this also bridges the way to the second theme, ‘content’. As the respondents explained, engagement with the audience occurs through the content. Furthermore, the content must be ‘important’ and ‘interesting’ for the people that read it. Also, the role to ‘inform’ is common, which is line with the general values of the journalistic profession. In addition, common journalistic values regarding content are present and there is an emphasis on the ‘quality’ of content, being ‘reliable’, ‘telling the truth’, ‘investigating issues’, and ‘entertaining’ the audience. Lastly, there is a prominence of ‘immediacy’, the need to be first. Thus, The Courier embraces some of the values from News Corp, especially the customer focus, being accountable, and engaging in the community. The Courier unpacks these values and strongly relates them to the general professional values of journalism, thus reinforcing the view that the
newspaper relates its values to the profession of journalism. However, due to the strong intertwinement with the journalistic profession, these values are quite similar to any newspaper, which seems to be the case here. This does not specify the distinctiveness of \textit{The Courier} in relation to other news outlets and newspapers. As the distinctive competence of the organization is also part of its character, the following section presents the respondents’ view of the distinguishing aspects of \textit{The Courier}.

5.1.4 The distinctiveness of the organization

The explanations of the character of \textit{The Courier} are so far highly correlated with professional values of journalism. Besides the local focus, the organization does not present itself in a way that is distinctive from other newspapers. When asked specifically about what makes it special or makes it stand out from local competitors, the respondents either refer to the advantages of belonging to a large media group or take a distancing approach. This distancing approach means rather than emphasizing the newspaper’s own strengths, the focus is on the weaknesses of the competition. Thus, it separates itself from other newspapers and from other news outlets in terms of what \textit{The Courier} is not. A strong focus of this criticism is on the competition in Queensland and especially locally in Brisbane. An online newspaper that has challenged \textit{The Courier} for its spot as the number one newspaper is \textit{The Brisbane Times}. Even though its owner, Fairfax, is one of the largest media groups in Australia, the respondents suggest that \textit{The Brisbane Times} does not have similar resources.

...if you stand up and look across our newsroom, it is huge, it is vast, it is a very, very big newsroom... Well go into \textit{Brisbane Times} and look at the size of their newsroom, and you’ll see it is very, very tiny. And everyone else’s newsrooms are very tiny. Ours isn’t, and that allows us to dedicate people to six-month long investigations. (Journalist, D1)

The respondent says that \textit{The Brisbane Times} does not perform as well as \textit{The Courier} as it does not have access to the same resources. Thus, by referring to the advantages of being part of a large media group, \textit{The Courier} has access to resources that smaller players might not have. Although \textit{The Brisbane Times} is part of one of the largest media groups in Australia, Fairfax Media Limited, it arguably has a tenth of the workforce that \textit{The Courier} has. Several respondents reinforce this notion:

So, if you compare \textit{The Courier-Mail} say with \textit{The Brisbane Times}, quite often they’ve got a much, much smaller staff and are much more limited on what they can do...Where I think \textit{The Courier} does probe, turn over, analyses a lot more than anyone else. (Journalist, E1)
I think where we have an advantage is that no one can compete with the number of journalists or the number of resources that we have. That’s come through tradition, as this has always been our area so we use that size to our advantage, whereas start-up internet companies, and even Fairfax, who have a digital website in our town or our area, they have a tenth of the workforce that we do. (Manager, I1)

As the quotes above show, it is implied that The Courier has strength in numbers and it has the resources to create quality content that perhaps other newspapers or news outlets do not have. That is a distinct aspect of The Courier.

However, it is not only newspapers from other media groups that do not have the same resources as The Courier. As one of the masthead newspapers at News Corp, some participants also separated The Courier from other members of the group:

AAP [Australian Associated Press] for example, and News Corp is part owner of AAP, but they do a great job in covering the court, breaking crime stories, police stories, state parliament, terrific. But they go there and they just report what has happened. But we go beyond that. We tell you the story behind the story, which is why people are still willing to pay money for our stories. (Journalist, D1)

In this example, the respondent says that The Courier is different from AAP, and almost downplays its role as a news source, again relating the distinctiveness to the professional values of journalism to show how other outlets do something worse than The Courier. The rationale seems to be that The Courier has more resources than others by saying that other newspapers are smaller and cannot create the same level of quality content.

Another aspect stressed as important is providing independent content, where external stakeholders or shareholders should not influence editorial content, and this is something The Courier and its journalists hold close to their hearts. Even though other newspapers, such as The Brisbane Times, do not have the same resources, it is argued that they still follow the journalistic values. Some respondents even claimed that the competition pushed The Courier to be better (Manager, I1). However, the lack of others’ journalistic standards is how The Courier separates itself from other news outlets—that is, television, radio, or social media. The Courier is not for sale, in contrast with other news outlets:

And that gives us a dilemma, because a lot of our competitors don’t give a shit. If you want Alan Jones [radio host] to endorse your product on 2GB [radio station], no problem—if you got the right money, you got him. John Laws [radio host] was the guy for integrated marketing. If you wanna hear why Toyota is so good? John Laws will tell you. (Manager, B1)
Here, the respondent implies that radio reporters do not necessarily answer to the same journalistic standards as newspaper journalists. They are not following the same code of conduct and this is a separating factor of newspapers and other mediums. Some respondents also used a similar logic to separate newspapers from online content and ‘citizen journalism’, wherein the ‘average Joe’ does not have to answer to journalistic standards.

…it if you want to write something that’s controversial or potentially controversial […] writing about someone is still a really high standard [and] it has to be completely within the law. I don’t think those kind of standards apply to a lot of internet reporting and citizen journalism. It is just […] we have the ramifications of a big organization: if you get it wrong, if you defame someone, if you’re in contempt of a court case, then we will face the consequences. So, we’re still following those standards. I don’t think everyone is. (Journalist, E1)

As the respondent says above, this separation helps them to distance the newspaper from its competition. Furthermore, this is argued to help The Courier: if the employees live up to the journalistic standards, the organization will survive. The sheer amount of content on social media makes it difficult to know if it is validated or not. Thus, some respondents believe that news on social media can be good but also warn against the presence of invalidated content. Thus, the respondents argue that if the audience is reading content in the newspaper, they know it is true.

I think, in a lot of ways, the doomsayers, when things started to turn quite quickly, said “look, newspapers won’t exist in five years” and the websites are doomed. I think what we have seen is that we are still a trusted source. There are so many sources out there. As soon as anything happens, Twitter’s alive with it and all of that kind of stuff, and that’s fine, but people still need a way to sift through what’s real and what’s not real and I think that’s where things like our brand are still really important. (Manager, I1)

The respondent stresses that the newspaper is still a trusted news source and even though social media is a challenge, it does not provide the same level of quality. With this logic, The Courier separates itself from direct competition in the region, from newspapers within its own group, and from other news outlets by saying what it is that the others do worse. The Courier explains its distinctive competence by distancing itself from what it is not. Therefore, the distinctiveness of The Courier is its resources and being part of a larger group, which allows it to provide better content than other newspapers. In terms of other news outlets, newspapers in general and The Courier follow the professional code of conduct, which also feeds in to providing an improved quality of content.
5.1.5 Different views of the character

Newspaper organizations have been seen to have a division between departments—that is, between the commercial and editorial (Ohlsson, 2012). This section aims to explore some potential similarities and differences between these groups in their view of the organizational character. All groups share the view that the organization provides information, which is connected to journalism. Thus, the groups seem to have a fairly similar view of the overall purpose of the newspaper.

One would assume from previous research that the commercial department would emphasize the need for profits. However, here it is a journalist that highlights the business side: this individual mentions that they need profits to fund the journalism. One aspect that the editorial department highlighted that the commercial did not is the local focus and reach—that is, in terms of content, the newspaper aims to inform the local community, which was highlighted by the managers and journalists. Thus, there seem to be some small differences in the perception of the character between the groups, although both sides highlight some journalistic qualities, as a manager from sales and advertising advocates that the newspaper is not for sale in comparison to other media outlets. Thus, the newspaper must have profits and revenues, but it should not interfere with the journalistic standards of being independent, which was also highlighted by a journalist.

There seem to be some differences in terms of the emphasis of the character, but all relate to some general aspects of the profession. Even though a manager in sales and advertising focuses on the marketing part, this person still highlights trust and engagement as driving forces. Some representative quotes are presented in the table below.
Table III. Representative quotes of the character at *The Courier-Mail*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Managers</th>
<th>Mission and purpose</th>
<th>The <em>Courier-Mail</em> always used to do that. It was Her Majesty’s loyal opposition in Queensland. (Former Manager, H1)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tell people what is happening in their community—tell it thoroughly and tell it first. (Former Manager, C1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The core of what we do is still the same—finding the best story and telling the best story, and we’ve got a whole lot of new ways to do that. (Manager, I1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distinctive competence</td>
<td>Part of the strength of the product is their local footprint. (Former Manager, A1)</td>
<td>I think where we have an advantage is that no one can compete with the number of journalists or the number of resources that we have. That’s come through tradition, as this has always been our area so we use that size to our advantage, whereas start-up internet companies, and even Fairfax, who have a digital website in our town or our area, they have a tenth of the workforce that we do. (Manager, I1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalists</td>
<td>Mission and purpose</td>
<td>I think the core purpose is to deliver news and it’s not just to deliver news, it is to break news and it’s to inform the public and give them the news that’s going to make their lives better. (Journalist, D1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>As journalists, you write stories that people, you know, it’s stories that people will want to read […] again there’s a real emphasis on exclusive content, stories that you, information that you know that you are unearthing. (Journalist, E1)</td>
<td>To inform the public. Yeah, inform the public, encourage debate, yeah definitely. (Journalist, J1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>But that’s always, it is a business, you can’t get around that and I think, sometimes people’s expectations are way too high for a business. It has to also be a profitable business, otherwise it won’t exist at all. I’m not sure what the solution to that is, but without a profitable business, we can’t do our job at all. (Journalist, E1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distinctive competence</td>
<td>I just think local’s a big thing as far as keeping in touch with your audience. (Journalist, G1)</td>
<td>I think that emphasis on breaking stories is stronger here than you’ll find anywhere else. So, if you compare <em>The Courier-Mail</em> say with <em>The Brisbane Times</em>, quite often they’ve got a much, much smaller staff and are much more limited in what they can do. They will cover the press releases, the things that are put in front of them that they can quickly turn around, that’s put online, but it really doesn’t often, doesn’t go much deeper than the kind of the events that are happening in the public, covering kind of what they see in front of them. Whereas I think <em>The Courier</em> does probe, turn over, analyses a lot more than anyone else. (Journalist, E1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>AAP [Australian Associated Press] for example, and News Corp is part owner of AAP, but they do a great job in covering the court, breaking crime stories, police stories, state parliament, terrific. But they go there and they just report what has happened. But we go beyond that. We tell you the story behind the story, which is why people are still willing</td>
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to pay money for our stories. (Journalist, D1)

It’s a challenge and you have to try to create a point of difference and I think that point of difference is unearthing the big stories […] The TV, radio, and particularly social media don’t have the time or the inclination to dig down and come up with stories that are going to be interesting and also informative—you know, the big stories, I guess. Scandals, political scandals, corruption scandals, they take time to research and a lot of those, particularly TV and social media, they don’t have investigative journalists that can go out and know where to look and dig for stuff. (Journalist, G1)

Sales and Advertising

Mission and values

The value of the marketing activity and the marketing function isn’t all about likes, clicks, or shares… it is about trust, engagement. (Manager, B1)

We deliver the hard-hitting news of the day, which is dependent on what happens around the world and around the state and the country. (Middle Manager, L1)

Distinctive competence

And that gives us a dilemma, because a lot of our competitors don’t give a shit. If you want Allen James to endorse your product on 2GB, no problem—if you got the right money, you got him. John Laws was the guy for integrated marketing. If you wanna hear why Toyota is so good? John Laws will tell you. (Manager, B1)

The content is not for sale. This makes us unique as a medium. That’s something that we hold very close to our heart. So that is the thing that makes us unique…the thing about newspapers… is for the most part consumers consume this because it provides a certain amount of legitimacy that they can’t get elsewhere. (Manager, B1)

These sections provide a holistic explanation of what the fidelity to the organizational integrity of The Courier is centered on—namely, the character. In short, the overarching fidelity of the organizational integrity is to professional values of journalism—how the organization follows the professional values, but also how the organization makes money, since it cannot deliver its journalistic standards without revenues. Furthermore, the organization defines its distinctive competence in terms of what direct and indirect competitors do worse journalistically: thus it defines its uniqueness in terms of what the organization is not. These descriptions of the character are the commitments inspiring fidelity, that could restrain action. To understand the role of organizational integrity in practice, we must understand what issues are perceived as a result of field-level pressures and what responses these yielded. This is the focus of the remainder of the chapter.
5.2 Organizational issues and responses

The previous sections have defined the sources of the fidelity of the organizational integrity at The Courier— the character. However, the aim of this thesis is to explore the role of organizational integrity during responses to pressures. As mentioned in the theoretical framing, the focus in this thesis is on the internal dynamics of the organization. To bridge the field and organizational levels, the concept of organizational issues is used (Dutton & Jackson, 1987). Thus, field-level pressures create organizational issues. The issues are constructed by the people in the organization and are either comprehended as an opportunity (positive) or a threat (negative) (Dutton & Jackson, 1987). These issues are a result of one or a combination of field-level pressures, although most issues stem from technological change. These are issues that were inferred from discussions with respondents. In total, twelve issues are discussed, including topics that refer to the revenue model, the lack of trust from the audience, new threats from substitutes, and the increased workload, to mention a few (see Appendix B for an overview).

As organizational members are bombarded with issues, they discriminate which issues should be resolved (Daft & Weick, 1984). The focus here is on the issues that are explained as being directly connected to the character of the organization and at least partly resolved (e.g., Dutton, 1997). Consequently, the issues further highlighted here are described as threatening the professional standards or the overall survival of the organization, thus contrasting with the character and challenging the fidelity of the organizational integrity. The four issues chosen to study further are: (1) metrics; (2) UGC; (3) immediacy of news; and (4) declining revenues. As the character of the organization is predominantly explained in relation to the profession of journalism, these issues are perceived as a threat to the role of the journalistic commitments of the character, or the overall survival of the organization. These issues are further explained below, including the pressures, issues, and responses. The issue of declining revenues has induced two separate responses at The Courier, as seen in Table 2 below, while the other three issues have seen one response each. A summary is presented in Table IV.
Table IV. Pressure, issues, and responses at *The Courier-Mail*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pressure</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New technology</td>
<td>Metrics—friend or enemy: Threatening the journalistic character of the organization</td>
<td>Creating an online presence—Clickbait → Listen more to the audience → Focus on quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New relationship with the audience</td>
<td>User-generated content: Threatening the journalistic character of the organization</td>
<td>Pressure to contribute from consumers → Lack of control → Gatekeeping → Acquiring control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New technology</td>
<td>Immediacy of news: Threatening the journalistic character of the organization</td>
<td>Managing the faster and increased workload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New relationship with the audience</td>
<td>Declining revenues: Threatening the overall survival of the organization and the ability to provide its journalistic character</td>
<td>Experimentation with digital payment models and online content to increase revenues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial constraints</td>
<td></td>
<td>Synergies to minimize costs within the organization; within the group; with competitors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These issues were chosen as they were commonly discussed by the respondents. To clarify Table IV above, the pressure or large changes that are causing the issues are presented in the left column. The middle column relates to the issues and briefly how these were construed by the organizational members. Among these, immediacy of news, metrics, and UGC are all threatening the journalistic character and standards of the organization. For each issue, there is a single progressive response, a course of events. Thus, the response evolves as the organization learns more about the issue and the response is more of a back and forth experimentation, trying something new and, if it does not work, retracting and adjusting or stopping altogether. The issue of declining revenues is an overall threat to the survival of the organization and its journalistic character, and to resolve this issue the organization has two separate responses. Thus, *The Courier* is trying to find a new payment model to increase revenues, which is one response, but at the same time it also minimizes costs through synergies. Below, each issue and response is explained respectively.
5. Findings: The Courier-Mail

5.2.1 Metrics

*Pressure and perceived issue*

Due to technological changes, data are more readily available for newspapers. These technological developments allow newspapers to see what the audience is reading and, consequently, not reading. However, this is a two-edged sword: as one of the participants asked, “Is data your friend or enemy?” (Former Manager, A1).

Metrics is a combination of new technology and also to some extent to a new relationship with the audience. There are positive sides to this challenge: the news providers now know what people want to read and when, and can adjust accordingly. However, if the editorial decision relies too much on the audience’s desires, it could damage the quality of news and undermine their journalistic role. Thus, there needs to be a balance where the editorial decisions are not only based on what the audience wants, whereby the newspaper loses its function as an objective news source, but stay relevant so there is no disconnection between the content and the audience’s lives. The question comes down to the positive and negative aspects of metrics and the available data.

The use of metrics is something that *The Courier* is embracing, according to the respondents. The positive side is that *The Courier* knows its audience better and which articles are trending, even down to the second of how long someone spends reading an article.

> [Metrics] are giving you signals every second of every day about what they love or hate and ultimately care about, through their activity on our digital properties. To be the best, you need to pay close attention to them and understand how they interact with us. Be driven by the data. (The Digital Playbook, 2003)

The documentation that is provided by News Corp suggests that the organization should be ‘driven by data’. However, a negative side is when the metrics cloud the editorial judgments, which could mean that *The Courier* is not living up to its proclaimed journalistic values and principles, such as independent and objective content. One respondent said the period between 2003 and 2006 included much experimentation and innovation with regard to metrics and technological change (Former Manager, A1). One of those experiments was clickbait, which means to use sensationalism and catchy headlines to intrigue readers and drive up traffic and ratings. The issue is that the organizational members have to develop an online presence and they are even pressured from the group level to pay more attention to metrics.
Response: creating an online presence

As the organization wanted to increase its online presence, it started experimenting with clickbait to gain traffic to the website. A former manager says that this experiment came from a lack of knowledge of how to deal with this issue:

We had to think about how we could develop an online presence. And we didn’t really have the skills or the technology. And you know, we folded. There were a few years of experimenting. We went down the road of what you call clickbait and for a while, any time we could we would run girls in bikinis. And it was crap. It was not what our brand was, what our masthead was, or our integrity was. And after a while everyone realized that and we stopped doing it. (Former Manager, A1)

Even though it now is perceived as a ‘cop out’, at the time clickbait and to be ‘driven by the data’ was working. It did drive up the readership online (Former Manager, A1). However, not everyone in the organization was convinced of this strategy, as seen in the quote above. Some respondents indicated that they were entering new territory and not sure if this was the right route.

Even though it was popular among many newspapers in Australia, the strategy of clickbait was rather damaging to the way the audience perceived The Courier, as it used half-naked girls to sell papers. However, sex does sell and showing girls in bikinis and using catchy headlines did increase the traffic to the website (Former Manager, H1). However, some stakeholders were not impressed by this change: for example, educators contacted the newspaper, urging them to stop.

It came to a point where teachers said they wouldn’t use our website in class. Imagine trying to control teenage boys when pictures of girls in bikinis popped up. They get a bit distracted. So, once everyone started to understand that… The Courier wasn’t alone. Fairfax was the same: everyone was in the same boat—around the world, everyone was doing this. (Former Manager, A1)

As the quote above says, many newspapers in Australia were experimenting. The clickbait route stemmed from a lack of knowledge, as mentioned previously, and The Courier was not alone. At this point, The Courier realized it was not living up to its reputation as it received complaints from stakeholders. This spurred the organizational members to rethink this approach and, in hindsight, this was not a successful strategy. Several respondents reinforced that clickbait is not a sustainable strategy. For example:

…the problem with clickbait is that it wears out very quickly. So, if you know a website that has a lot of clickbait, eventually you’re not going to go to that website because you’ve been
teased so many times by a headline and then you open the story and the story doesn’t live up to the headline. There’s only so many times you can put up with that. (Former Manager, H1)

The respondent emphasizes that the audience does not put up with this false advertising of clickbait. Several respondents reinforced that leaving out vital information to make people click to find out the answer was a “complete con” and not sustainable (Former Manager, H1). These experiments happened over about seven or eight years, and a clear turning point for The Courier with regard to the use of metrics and data was around 2010–2011. The complaints were one aspect of this realization. However, the organizational members also took a step back, remembering what The Courier stands for as an organization and what its character is: to inform the people.

And I think it we started thinking about getting back to our brand promise and what is the right story on the right platform. And that is when it started to just tighten up and get a bit better and went back to what works in digital and what works in print … so we very deliberately started think of how we can serve our readers with what they want to know about but also delivering on what the promise of The Courier is. That is, to tell people what is happening in their community—tell it thoroughly and tell it first. (Former Manager, A1)

The focus shifted from getting clicks and likes to remembering what the mission is, and putting emphasis on fulfilling the commitments of the character, or the brand promise, as the respondent above explains. The turning point for The Courier was a terrible event—the 2011 floods in Brisbane. The data had predominantly been perceived as an enemy until this point, but now the organization noticed that people wanted to read about weather and people engaged with this content without catchy headlines and clickbait. Thus, The Courier started to consider what people read and put up a monitor in the newsroom so everyone in the organization could see what was trending.

So, at The Courier, when we started to put up the screen to show story ratings or whatever, the ones that were always at the top were breaking news, weather, the stories you expect The Courier to provide. Whereas the perception we often had was, ah we need to do a bit of wacky stuff to suit the web; but it was actually the core things of The Courier that the readers would buy. (Former Manager, A1)

The screen that shows ratings, as the respondent above describes, was a good way to get to know the audience better. This spurred a change, not just focusing on traffic and numbers on the website, but also considering what people do once they are there. Furthermore, considering how these data could be used to deliver information could work in their favor. The information was used to refocus what was done on the website, and certain topics emerged that drew particularly high
numbers in traffic. *The Courier* soon noticed that weather was a topic that yielded high ratings:

Yeah, and remarkable, you know? It’s like, because weather is shared on a lot of social media platforms and the weather bureau has a website and you can get all that information for free. But because we do such a great job covering it and getting it all in one place, it drives a tremendous amount of traffic for us. Just goes berserk. (Journalist, D1)

Even though there are free sites specifically focusing on weather in Brisbane and Queensland, as the respondents say in the quote, the ratings were off the charts. *The Courier* noticed that there can be a balance. It can have interesting headlines that people do want to read without using clickbait. This shifted the focus to what the best platform is for the story and how the different platforms and social media can help the organization.

So, we try and make our headlines as interesting and as enticing as they can be, but there’s no point going down the clickbait path because it just won’t work. You know, you’re better off working out the stories you think will interest a reader and then working out which social media platform they should go on… I think clickbait has a very short lifespan, you know? […] you know, there are some stories though, where they’re so outlandish but they’re true. You’re going, “Well, I can’t do anything but put an outrageous headline on this”. (Journalist, D1)

The focus on the vanity metrics (The Digital Playbook, 2003), such as clicks and likes, was diminishing and, as the respondent states, clickbait did not stay for long. Thus, to get to know the audience better, the focus shifted to what readers do once they are on the website. This allows *The Courier* to use the data to its advantage. In addition, this helped the organization to deliver relevant content. A current manager said “…the content here is king. It is absolutely king. It’s what drives our business” (Journalist, D1). However, relevant content is not only that hard-hitting, investigative news: the audience wants a bit of everything, including softer content and gossip. If people want to read about it, *The Courier* should inform them:

Different people like to read different things and we have to cater for a broad audience. That’s what we do, that’s our job, that’s the point of running a business, is catering for a broad audience…So sometimes we get people upset with us because we are putting stuff on our website which they think is a bit lowbrow or not real news or whatever. But on the other hand, there’s 10,000 people who clicked on that story, you know, about a reality TV contestant or whatever. So, you know, if
5. Findings: The Courier-Mail

people want to read it, then it’s our job to find out about it.
(Journalist, J1)

As seen in the quote above, including more frivolous content is not always appreciated amongst the employees and sometimes the audience revolts against this ‘softer’ content. However, as the organization is catering to a broad audience, not everyone will like everything, but the newspaper must listen to what they all want to read. Previously, it was the journalist deciding what the audience should read, highlighted by their gatekeeping function (Harrison, 2010; White, 1950) and now there seems to be a shift where journalists and editors need to listen and include content that the audience wants. This seems to be a realization from the screen that was put up in the newsroom. One respondent gave an example of disappointment: this journalist felt the public should have been interested in a specific investigative article they had been working on, but when it was published a celebrity story was rated higher.

Sometimes I think as a journalist it can be a little bit depressing if you’ve spent a lot of time investigating something that you feel is really important and you know, a story about Britney Spears’ new handbag is leading the website, because that’s what people are interested in, and then you get phone call five minutes later from someone complaining, “Why don’t we focus on the real news?” because who cares about what such and such is doing on Survivor. And you feel like saying to them, “Do you know who cares? People do, and that upsets me too”.
(Journalist, J1)

This example shows that there is a desire from some of the audience to know about Britney Spears’ handbag, the more frivolous content. Even though it is not what The Courier initially thought people were interested in, through metrics they now know that people do want this information as well as investigative content. The character of the organization has a clear relationship to the professional standards of journalism: as explained above, it includes informing the public, providing relevant, validated content, and gatekeeping. One aspect that seems to have changed as a result of the metrics is a stronger focus on the audience. Previously, the principles guiding the organization were strongly connected to the professional gatekeepers providing readers with information they should be informed about. However, currently the shift is emphasizing the audience and the need to listen to the consumer.

Now, it’s far more of a conversation where we listen to what they want. So that I think that’s been a really quite seismic shift in the way newspapers do their business because we can actually see now, we can directly see when we put a story online, we can see what people are interested in. So we’re far more driven by what consumers tell us that they’re interested in
and for us, we quickly realized, what people come to us for most is Queensland news. (Manager, I1)

The change that is discussed in the quote above suggests a change in the character. Previously, the character was concentrated internally in the journalists and the values of the gatekeeping aspects of the profession, which did not emphasize the readers to the extent it does now. Now the focus is on the strengths of providing information that people want to read rather than focusing on ‘vanity metrics’ that drives in traffic in the short term. The difference is not to misrepresent the content, which is what clickbait is about: now The Courier would rather present it in a way that is catchy but not misleading. Thus, the clickbait strategy was discontinued and the experiment adjusted to focus on relevance and engagement, which fits in with the existing values. However, changing the previous gatekeeping role to include the audience’s wants involves some content decision, which is a change from the previous professional values of journalism, indicating a change in the character.

**Summary**

A pressure is perceived as stemming from new technology, where the organization now has analytics about detailed audience behavior online. This has created a perceived issue in the organization, although the issue is somewhat ambiguous as it is helpful to gain more information about the reader but, due to a lack of skills, the organization has limited knowledge on how to utilize it. Moreover, an over-reliance on metrics could harm the journalistic role of the organization as editorial decisions should not be made based on what the readers want. Thus, the issue is constructed as both an opportunity and a threat. The organization experimented with clickbait and put up a screen in the newsroom to keep track of reader habits. Soon, stakeholders reacted negatively to these changes and thus the organizational members began to reflect and a back and forth process began of evaluating and adjusting the experiment. Through the evaluation and adjustments, there was a shift in the way the organizational members work: they began to listen more to the consumer. Thus the organizational members could resolve the issue. A summarizing table of the findings is presented below.
### 5. Findings: The Courier-Mail

**Table V. Overview: metrics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction of pressure and issue</th>
<th>Pressure</th>
<th>Issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In the battle for eyeballs, it's imperative to continuously be connected to consumers, to know when, where and how they access content.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What the digital upheaval has brought, the one good thing about it, is giving permission for the consumers, the readers, to tell us what they like and don’t like, and what they are reading for one minute, two minutes or one second. And how do we know this? Because it’s all in the digital media: it gives you analytics which are unarguable.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is data your friend or enemy? We had to think about how we could develop an online presence. And we didn’t really have the skills or the technology.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiment</th>
<th>Evaluate: Stakeholder reactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Clickbait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Screen in newsroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Digital publishing is a very harsh judge. You can see how you are doing directly and, if the readers fickle, you can see the minute they left you. There are lots of analytics now in newsrooms where you can see where in the story people are leaving, and we brought it into the newsroom, a TV screen where you can see how stories are rating, and what story was rated highest at that time.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• It came to a point where teachers said they wouldn’t use our website in class… And it was crap. It was not what our brand was, what our masthead was, or our integrity was. And after a while everyone realized that and we stopped doing it.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Adjust /resolve</th>
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<tr>
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<td>• Now, it’s far more of a conversation where we listen to what they want. So that I think that’s been a really quite seismic shift in the way newspapers do their business because we can actually see now, we can directly see, when we put a story online, we can see what people are interested in. So we’re far more driven by what consumers tell us that they’re interested in and for us, we quickly realized, what people come to us for most is Queensland news.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The next issue at *The Courier* is also related to the audience and the two-way communication that the technological changes include. In this issue, it is not only the topics that the audience wishes to influence, but also the creation of that content. Thus, the next section outlines the second issue, user-generated content.

### 5.2.2 UGC

*Pressure and perceived issue*

The internet has changed the way the audience reads and interacts with news and the newspaper (Lewis et al., 2010; Paulussen & Ugille, 2008). Previously, the newspaper was a gatekeeper: the professionals controlled what the audience should read and it was a one-way communication. However, through the internet, this has changed: the audience now can talk back and interact with news providers, and it is a two-way communication between the news provider and audience. Digitization seems to be the disruption that has allowed this new relationship to emerge. This has also spurred an interest from the formerly passive audience to engage, discuss, and even contribute with content. However, this is a challenge for the newspaper, as it struggles with quality control and legal implications as a result UGC, although it is a well-documented change and the newspaper organization cannot simply ignore the audience that want to engage as it could risk losing them altogether. Rupert Murdoch highlighted this change in 2005:

“…give the people control of media, they will use it. Don’t give people control of media, and you will lose them.” (Speech, Murdoch, 2005)

Readers want to be able to discuss and sometimes even contribute with content, which challenges the gatekeeping role of the journalist and the control over the content. However, there is a need to listen to the audience, since the readership and circulation are in decline and the newspaper could lose the audience all together if it does not adjust. The quote from Murdoch’s speech above pushes for a more interactive relationship with the audience. At *The Courier*, this was explained as an opportunity: as resources are scarce, someone who wants to contribute free content seemed a positive change:

…as the resources get tighter and tighter and you’ve still got, well, in print, this amount of space to fill, user-generated content becomes very attractive…. “Oh, you want to tell a story about what’s happening in your suburb? You beauty. I don’t have to pay you to do it. Good. I don’t have any money, I’ve got no budget.” (Former Manager, H1)

Thus, as the respondent shows in the quote, this was an opportunity to save money and, on top of that, it was also a chance to engage with the audience through comments, something the newspaper had been struggling with.
5. Findings: The Courier-Mail

Response: allowing comments and UGC

To engage with the audience and embrace the interactive, horizontal communication on the internet, the organization experimented with user comments and UGC. It was an answer to calls from the audience to engage with journalists and the content, which opened the former one-way up into a two-way communication, pleasing both the content producer and the consumer. Several respondents pointed to the initial success of this change:

So that was a huge success, because it was a horizontal communication and it became a communication, and it became a communication not just between paper and reader, and reader and paper, but reader and reader. So, you started to get triangular conversation happening in some cases and that was great. I would publish a story and three minutes later I’d have people talking about it, and I thought that was a great success. (Former Manager, H1)

The triangular conversation helped with the engagement issue, and even though the quote above shows a very positive perspective, this view did not prevail. Soon The Courier, much like other newspapers, realized that the comments sections could be overwhelming, and it was simply too time consuming. One of the respondents said:

Opening up reader comments was—well, depends on how you look at it, a real success or an absolute nightmare. I don’t know if you read the comments on The Courier-Mail. I don’t recommend it. At one stage I was moderating all of them on my own. So, it was soul destroying, and I ended up sharing the job out. Loading it up all on one person who was quite happy to do it. Stronger man than I […] not a job I really wanted to give to my worst enemy, because it’s just … if you think about the stuff that appears, imagine the stuff that is filtered out. (Former Manager, H1)

The initial success began to wear off, and both the number of comments but the content became an issue. Therefore, this interaction with the audience was both a success and a failure. Attempts to save time on moderation by outsourcing the task was not an option, as the possibility of someone missing slang or the local dialect was too big a risk (Manager, I1). Even though this experiment was not perfect and needed much moderation, it seemed to be working and the audience was engaging with journalists, which indicated that the experiment should continue. The Courier was getting more attention because of this change and was increasing the traffic to the website.

The ability to comment is still present, although The Courier did make one small alteration to make the moderation more manageable. Since anything on the website is The Courier’s responsibility and potential defamatory comments
could result in legal issues, users must now connect an account and their name to be able to comment, thus limiting defamatory and legal issues for the newspaper.

However, the audience’s desire to contribute does not stop with comments, as they also want to contribute with content. As the resources are scarce, free content is an attractive offer. One respondent explains the opportunity connected with UGC:

> Because there’s that space that needs to be filled, and here’s this thing that’s potentially an interesting story, and it might not have been prepared with journalistic rigor. It might not have been prepared with what we think of as journalistic ethics. But someone’s run an eye over it and made sure that, “Oh yeah, there’s nothing defamatory” Just you know, basically run a semiconscious legal check, which you can do fairly quickly. (Former Manager, H1)

This quote points to a clear benefit of saving money and resources by using UGC, but also the potential danger if content is not produced with journalistic standards, as it could be untrue. There are pros and cons of UGC and soon the downside began to outweigh the benefits at *The Courier*. Again, similar to the comments, the sheer volume of content the newspaper got became overwhelming and difficult to verify. The hazard of the content not being true, or the person who wrote it having a hidden agenda, is perceived as a massive risk. The audience does not have to answer to the same ethical and moral standards as the journalist. Thus, the journalists and editors must continuously work hard to validate UGC.

> Great story, but is it right? Welcome to the complex world of information forensics—CSI [crime scene investigators] for social media. As journalists, we've been in the business of verifying stories and their sources for centuries, but now we face unprecedented challenges: a constant stream of real-time UGC of text, images, video, and data on multiple channels, often presenting the irresistible opportunity to be fast and first with the news. What we can’t afford is to be fast and loose with the truth. (The Digital Playbook, 2003)

Even though UGC saves some resources, it is difficult and time-consuming to validate. If it is not true, this is harmful for the journalistic standards of the newspaper; however, the audience still wants to contribute with content. This creates the challenge of listening to the audience but still staying true to the character of the organization. Perhaps UGC was not the opportunity it seemed to be in the beginning and there is “no such thing as a free lunch” (Journalist, D1).

As the focus on validation is important and UGC could only be used if there is an efficient way to validate the information, so it seems like the organizational
members realized that there is a need for caution so there is no defamatory content connected to The Courier-Mail. It needed to reach a trade-off, to balance the benefits of UGC without damaging the journalistic standards of the newspaper.

We’re probably far more cautious in that space. Because we have a brand to defend, we want to be a trusted source; therefore, in terms of that user-generated content, we cross every t and dot every i before we use anything, because that’s really crucial to us. (Manager, I1)

The need to know that the information is reliable and validated is crucial, and if that is not possible, the UGC cannot be used in any way. Nevertheless, the content kept coming in and especially when there was an incident or a dramatic one-off event, the amount of content from the audience would increase dramatically. Several respondents stressed the fact that during storms, the content would also be pouring in:

For example, during like a major cyclone or something like that, we do get a lot of stuff from our readers on that: when we do we run galleries of pictures. I guess the risk if you’re going to do that for news stories is whether it’s going to be factual and you’ve got major problems with legal implications if facts are wrong. A lot of times if you’re just getting it from Joe Blow out in the public you don’t know whether it’s true or not… It’s a worry if you sort of go down that path. (Journalist, G1)

The respondent illustrates that there is a difference between written content and pictures. It was easier to use pictures from the audience for galleries than written content. Thus, The Courier-Mail reached a compromise that seem to be working, at least for now. The Courier-Mail allows UGC in terms of pictures and videos, something that can be easily verified and does not threaten the promise of the quality content. Several respondents reinforced that the videos and pictures do not threaten the character of the organization:

We do have a growing part of our business where we do take UGC which is video and pictures. We use that for our own purpose and from a journalistic perspective, because it is verified and video-based and it becomes an added part of our business. The integrity is intact, it has been authenticated. (Manager, B1)

Thus, videos or pictures are allowed, and if someone sends in content that is in text it would be considered a story tip rather than using that content (Journalist, E1). News Corp is also in line with the movement, and to minimize the time it takes to validate pictures and videos to ensure that the UGC is true, The Courier-Mail now has access to the company Storyful, a recent acquisition by News Corp.

We have the benefit now that we own Storyful, which is this company, it’s a global company that verifies UGC for, in
particular, videos, pictures, and they normally find a lot of it before us, because of their amazing algorithms [...] and they search for things. But likewise, when we’ve got some, we can give it to them and they will do the checks and verifications for us straight away, and sign, get all the release forms signed so we’re secure. (Journalist, D1)

Storyful uses an algorithm to search for a picture to ensure it has been not tampered with or stolen from someone else. In this way, The Courier could meet the demands from the audience and still include UGC and minimize the threat of defamatory content. Thus, The Courier has found a solution and allows the audience to contribute with editorial content to a certain extent. Pictures and videos are allowed, as they do not challenge the character.

**Summary**

A pressure from new technology was perceived. It was founded in the audience’s desire to interact with content producers and to contribute with content. If the newspaper does not accede to this pressure, there is a risk the reader will chose a newspaper that does. As The Courier’s resources were diminishing, the use of ‘free’ content from the consumers was attractive; thus the issue was constructed as an opportunity to save money. The organization started experimenting, allowing users to comment and send content for the newspaper. The organizational members soon realized that the potential legal consequences of user content were a substantial risk. Moreover, the sheer amount of content became overwhelming and the members did not have the resources to validate the content. Thus, through the evaluation of the experiment, the issue became a threat to the organization, both in terms of legal consequences if they published invalidated content and that they had invested already scarce resources in the initiative. Thus, there was need to adjust the experiment and gain control. To do this, the group acquired Storyful: the organization could then more easily validate the content and find a compromise with the audience’s desire to contribute while still living up to their journalistic standards. The issue of UGC was therefore resolved. The findings from UGC are summarized in the table below.
Table VI. Overview: UGC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pressure</th>
<th>Construction of issue and pressure</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| • Give the people control of media, they will use it. Don’t give people control of media, and you will lose them.  
• I think it’s important to bear in mind the changing nature of society and how we work. I think that’s vital to everything. It’s a matter of society, it’s a matter of culture, and that applies to everything, you know?  
The way we want our content, how we get our content, and not just talking newspapers here. | • …as the resources get tighter and tighter and you’ve still got, well, in print, this amount of space to fill, user-generated content becomes very attractive.  
• It is a horizontal conversation and smart journalists are doing as much listening as they are talking now. They always should have been, but now, because everyone’s a publisher and everyone has access to be able to give their opinion, and to give information as well, there’s a horizontal communication that should, it should always have been there, wasn’t, and I think it’s starting to be recognized as very, very important and an asset to a news organization.  
• One of the challenges we face every day is making sure we’re not defaming people, we’re not breaking the law, and when you have a trained journalist who reports in here, you have full control over the facts. When you’re getting user-generated content, you can’t rely on the content. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Opening for comments and UGC.</td>
<td>• There’s so much stuff out there, we just don’t have the resources to go through it and verify it all and chase it all up… Like, what are we getting out of it compared to what’s it costing in resourcing. And ultimately there’s not much we can get out of it at a cheap price and cheap enough to make it worthwhile. We get more from paying a quality reporter to go and dig out a story than we would from any UGC.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Storyful</td>
<td>• We do have a growing part of our business where we do take UGC which is video and pictures. We use that for our own purposes and from a journalistic perspective, because it is verified and video-based and it becomes an added part of our business. The integrity is intact, it has been authenticated.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th></th>
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</table>
| • Opening for comments and UGC. | • Storyful  
• We do have a growing part of our business where we do take UGC which is video and pictures. We use that for our own purposes and from a journalistic perspective, because it is verified and video-based and it becomes an added part of our business. The integrity is intact, it has been authenticated. |
UGC is one issue that is caused by changes in audience behavior and demand. The following section outlines how these changes in consumption have caused another issue, which is pushing the organization to publish faster.

5.2.3 Immediacy of news

Pressure and perceived issue

The immediacy of news stems from a change in consumption. Today, the audience wants news instantaneously. Furthermore, as the delivery of news now is on several platforms, this creates a work overload for the newspaper as it is time consuming to constantly update the website, all other platforms, and social media so the audience does not miss anything. If it fails to do so, another news source is quicker and it could lose readers: thus is it a fierce fight for ‘eyeballs online’ (The Digital Playbook, 2003). Scholars (e.g., Karlsson, 2011; Lewis, Cushion, & Thomas, 2005) argue that this immediacy and increase in workload is taking its toll on the quality of the news as there is less time to fact check and a higher workload to publish on several platforms.

Several respondents explained that an issue is to present content with the same journalistic standards as before but more and faster. One example is a respondent who said that the newspaper is now accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and it must be updated constantly, which has increased the workload (Journalist, J1). Furthermore, with the combination of limited resources and an increased workload at a faster pace, immediacy is an issue that is challenging The Courier to fulfill its journalistic role. The additional tasks and a faster process to publish are bound to influence the quality of work. Consequently, this section explores how The Courier is trying to meet the changing demand in consumption while living up to its journalistic standards as part of its character. Thus, immediacy is an important aspect of the new consumption of news. The respondents argue that it is crucial to be first with new content to attract readers to the website. This is part of the quality of news but, as a respondent pointed out, it is only quality if it is correct:

…part of the quality of news is its immediacy, and we can do that now, you know? Someone could sit in court and if the judge allows it, they can just tweet the court case and that sort of immediacy. That’s quality, as long as they get it right…
(Former Manager, H1)

The internet pushes for this faster process, which could be part of the quality, as the quote above says. However, if someone is facing an increasing workload and being pushed to work faster and faster, mistakes are bound to happen. Even though The Courier arguably has a resilient brand in the region, the immediacy of news is something it must adapt to. One respondent stressed this point, that
even though the organization is in a good position in the market, immediacy is an imminent threat to the organization:

We have seen a correction in news print, as more people take one of the other reasons why people buy newspapers, which is the immediacy of news. (Manager, B1)

As the respondent explains, the immediacy is a reason why some people buy the paper. This is not a new issue or only at The Courier, but a point that News Corp had already accentuated in 2003 when News Corp was urging its newspapers to speed up the news production process, especially on social media, to increase traffic to the website.

Speed drives acquisition. Be first with the story, seed it on social media and own it across the cycle. (The Digital Playbook, 2003)

As the quote from the Playbook suggests, the content should be quickly published and then promoted to gain traffic. Since this document is from 2003, it is not a novel trend that people want the news faster. However, the cycle is getting shorter all the time and it is a public expectation that news sources will publish an incident minutes after it happens.

Response: managing immediacy and quality—a new way of working

As readers want instant news, the analytical aspects of that story cannot be as deep, and the fast production is compromised by a more descriptive story in that short period. This was pointed out by several respondents. For example:

[News production] is getting shorter all the time, and it’s not just an expectation within your organization, it’s more a public expectation… But really it’s going way beyond that now. It’s instant analysis that’s expected as well from the public and that is, I think, where it gets tricky. Because sometimes, if there’s complicated news it does need to be turned over and digested and that’s not, you can’t always do that instantly. So really you just have to respond the best way you can by reporting the facts, reporting what your initial take on it is, developing that the more time you have. So it’s kind of a multi-step process reporting the news now. (Journalist, D1)

As the responded explains, the process of writing a story now has several steps and since the journalists must write several versions of the article, this also adds to the amount of work. Before this change, the journalists had time to digest the story and would write it for the print paper the following day. Now there is a quick, descriptive short version and then a more analytical part of that same story and, finally, several versions of that same story for all the different outlets—print, website, tablet, and mobile.
Consequently, this is changing the way journalists work as the demands on them are increasing. One participant pointed to this, that today a journalist must master multiple skills (Journalist, G1), which is a completely new way of working. The process at the newspaper must work faster and constantly update the audience. Moreover, a written story is no longer enough: now videos are common practice as well. Prior to the internet, the focus was on the print paper and that was it. Now the newspaper has several outlets to write for, must create videos for the story, and must constantly update on social media—for example, tweeting while collecting information and continuously posting this information on social media—all while writing for the website, print paper, and apps. One respondent explains this new way of working:

So, Twitter’s definitely one thing that’s completely different and new. So before I came to The Courier-Mail I didn’t have a Twitter account. So, when I first started here, they said, “You’ve got to get one”. And you’ll tweet photos from crime scenes, you’ll tweet from a press conference, all that sort of stuff, and people are really engaged in that...So you’re interviewing people, you’re talking to the police, you’re observing, you’re taking notes, you’re thinking about how you’re going to write your story. But then you’re tweeting as well, and then you’re filing for the website while you’re out at the scene... But now it’s a constant thing, so you have to stop what you’re doing, file an update, all that sort of stuff. (Journalist, J1)

Thus, as this example shows, the pressure on journalists is increasing and the changes even include how they gather information and take notes. Writing a story directly for the website shows the immediacy and this is challenging as it increases the pace of the task. Instead of taking notes, they must write something publishable right away. This a challenge for journalists to live up to the new work pace and workload, as the respondent mentions, although there are some advantages, especially the engagement with the audience through social media (Journalist, J1).

Even though the change has been difficult, many journalists are embracing this new way of working and are focusing on the advantages that it includes—that the new pace provides an adrenaline rush and pushes you to work harder:

I think the immediacy is a good thing. It sort of gives you a bit of an adrenaline rush. In the old days you sat down and you wrote your story for the paper for the next day and people picked up the paper and read the story the next day. Whereas now, you can have a story up online in 10/15 minutes so the immediacy is exciting and it does makes things more interesting—more challenging, but also more exciting. I quite enjoy it. (Journalist, G1)
Again, as the respondent points out, adaptation is of the utmost importance, embracing the new way of working and interacting with the audience rather than fighting it. *The Courier* gets constant feedback from the audience and interacts with them in a whole new way, which was not possible prior to the internet. Now a journalist can get messages from the audience on what they like to know more about:

You know, people were saying it was like I was there in the courtroom, and the engagement too is really different. So, people can tweet questions at me, and they did constantly all day, and I’d reply to them when I could. (Journalist, J1)

The feedback loop the respondent is demonstrating was not available before: therefore the influence of the audience on the content has increased. However, in relation to journalistic standards, the content should be independent, which relates to the question of what this change means for the quality of news. As mentioned previously, there has been criticism in research and media that these changes have a negative impact on the quality (Franklin, 2008). The view seems to be different at *The Courier*:

I don’t think it’s damaged the quality of news. I think what is has done is that there are less surprises in the paper the next day, or you have to work harder to have exclusive information that you haven’t already put up on the website. But I think there’s a difference between grabbing a story off of YouTube about a dog wearing a hat and filing that as news, because it’s sort of clickbait and people will click on it, which they do, and what I do, which is filing live reports from a crime scene or a courtroom. I don’t think there’s any lack of quality in that. (Journalist, J1)

The respondent says that the investigative content has not necessarily been damaged in term of quality because of immediacy. Thus, the perception is that immediacy is not reducing quality but some aspects are enhancing the quality of news, such as quickly fixing errors in the news and adding videos to enhance the news experience. Although the immediacy does not always have a positive impact on quality at *The Courier*, some respondents claim that the changes in the industry are causing a sense of desperation in newspapers:

But I think the indirect effect of the digital technology producing the bottom line of newspapers has caused a sense of desperation, which means that the organizations and the editors tend to target low, and I think *The Courier-Mail* over the past few years has been a very good example of that. Yeah, the brash tabloid thing sort of has its appeal, and in many ways, they’re right in terms of what people actually do want to read. I used to have arguments with tabloid editors. They’d say, “No, no, go with the shock horror,” and you know, you do what the
editor says because that’s what you do. And then when I started working digitally, I’d have, very quickly, information about what people actually do read. Not what they say they read, what they do read, and by and large, those seedy tabloid editors were right. (Former Manager, H1)

This quote shows the effect the immediacy and audience demands have on quality: even though the newspaper is not always happy with the change in content, the measurable human activity is undeniable, as discussed in the metrics issue above. Journalists and editors may see some content as low target and ‘crap’; however, it is what people want to read and thus is important. The measurable activity cannot be ignored any longer and the impact of immediacy and the online presence is that the notion of quality is changing—both in terms what the content is, and that it should be immediate. However, the question remains if this can be done without compromising the journalistic standards.

I don’t think any of it was about compromising journalistic standards. It certainly took a bit of thinking through, and it certainly took more people to be able to fire more quickly. And we put more resources into that. But it was not like we are doing this story in a cheap, nasty way just because of the web: to the extent we did that it was short-lived or not in our core units. It was something just to try to develop. It was terrible. (Former Manager, A1)

As the quote above shows, it is not about being complacent about the content: it is about delivering what the audience wants, and when they want it, without compromising the quality. Consequently, the focus at The Courier is now on teamwork and filing the best news as fast as possible as. Even though it is a lot of work, the journalists are getting used to this new way of working. The changes in the pace and workload did at first impact the quality negatively. However, the organizational members are now finding a balance, focusing on filing descriptive content instantly and then continuously updating it. It seems like the notion of quality is changing and focusing more on being first and what the audience wants, in comparison to the previous gatekeeper function that the old school journalism included, which indicates some changes in the character.

In this fast-paced environment, mistakes are inevitable. However, the constant feedback loop from the audience and the ability to quickly change mistakes that do occur feeds back into providing quality news. Thus, there is an adjustment in what quality means and it now includes what the audience wants to read, no matter if it is about a dog in a hat blowing out candles or a government scandal. Consequently, providing quality content in a digital space means being fast, producing investigative and frivolous content, and using the tools available, such as videos and graphics, to enhance the news experience. If there are mistakes in the content, it is about acknowledging that and correcting it as soon as possible: thus it includes a more transparent process. The organization now includes
immediacy and being first as part of its journalistic values. The push for faster news is changing the way the organizational members work and the organization now expresses the need to be first as one of its values. It seems that the organization has embraced this new reality in their everyday work, although it is important to note that this is a never-ending process and the organizational members must continuously find more new ways to keep up with the new speed of production and the demands from the audience.

Summary

Digitization has caused a change in the consumption of news: thus a pressure is perceived for the newspaper organization to publish content much faster and on several platforms. The organizational members constructed an issue of balancing the need for immediate production while maintaining the quality of the content. The challenge is to publish content immediately on several platforms, which increases the workload and allows little time for journalists to ‘digest’ the news and provide analytical content. Thus, this issue was perceived as challenging the journalistic standards, as there is a need for a balance between speed, amount, and depth of content. The organization experimented with publishing bits and pieces on social media to provide the immediate content. Through an evaluation of this experiment, they realized that the increased workload caused some mistakes and invalidated the content being published. Thus, the organizational members adjusted the experiment to a multiple-step, more transparent process and a continuous update of information to maintain the journalistic standards of the content and adapt to the faster publication. Even though this is an ongoing process, the issue is resolved. The findings of the immediacy of news are summarized in the table below.
Table VII. Overview: immediacy of news

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<tr>
<th>Construction of issue and pressure</th>
<th>Pressure</th>
<th>Issue</th>
</tr>
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</table>
|                                   | • 24-hour news on TV came about, Twitter, Facebook and other methods where people can get far quicker updates of news. Newspapers don’t deliver that.  
• Speed drives acquisition. Be first with the story, seed it on social media, and own it across the cycle. | • Most consumers are constantly online, which means we can connect with them 24/7. But that also represents our greatest challenge.  
• [Production time] is getting shorter all the time and it’s not just an expectation within your organization, it’s more a public expectation…But really, it’s going way beyond that now: it’s instant analysis that’s expected as well from the public and that is, I think, where it gets tricky. Because sometimes, if there’s complicated news, it does need to be turned over and digested and that’s not, you can’t always do that instantly. | |
|                                   | Experiment | Evaluate: Long-term consequences |
|                                   | • Faster production of news  
• Social media | • So really you just have to respond the best way you can by reporting the facts, reporting what your initial take on it is, developing that the more time you have. So it’s kind of a multi-step process reporting the news now.  
• But I think the indirect effect of the digital technology producing the bottom line of newspapers has caused a sense of desperation, which means that the organizations and the editors tend to target low and I think The Courier-Mail over the past few years has been a very good example of that. | |
|                                   | Adjust/Resolve | • Acquiring control  
• Multi-step process reporting the news |

The following section addresses the final issue at The Courier. It is an imminent issue that is directly related to the survival of the organization—namely revenues, or the lack thereof.
5. Findings: The Courier-Mail

5.2.4 Declining revenues

Pressure and perceived issue

The financial pressure includes several challenges for newspapers. Firstly, there is a declining circulation of the print paper, thus resulting in fewer profits from sales, which is one of the main revenue sources. Then there are declining revenues from the former ‘cash cow’ classified ads. People are moving online, and that includes both audience and advertisers; however, the revenues from online advertising only make up for a fraction of the losses from print. Lastly, there is no functioning online payment model—that is to say, a sustainable strategy of how to get people to pay for the formerly free online content. This is not surprising in itself, as these changes in consumption have caused pressures that have already been affecting newspaper organizations for decades (Franklin, 2008).

At The Courier, the issue was first perceived in 2003 and escalated through to 2005 when the organization had a sharp downturn in circulation and consequently also in revenues (Former Manager, A1), and this trend continues in 2016. News Corp Australia has reported that the revenues are still in decline in the first half of 2016 (ABC News, 2016). Thus, this is an issue that troubles not only individual newspapers but the media group as a whole. The revenues from circulation, single copy sales, and advertising are all declining at The Courier. However, what hit the organization hard, which many respondents discussed, was the loss of its “rivers of gold”.

You’ve probably heard the term: they call the classified advertising rivers of gold. Those good old days have gone.

(Journalist, G1)

This respondent emphasized that these revenues are gone because people no longer look for classified ads in the paper. In Australia, this service is now online on websites such as Gumtree. This is perceived as a threat for the survival of the newspaper, as it is losing two large portions of its revenue: circulation and classified ads. Thus, as this trend is continuing, the organization is experimenting to find new revenue streams. The responses to this issue are: (1) experimenting with new payment models for online advertising; and (2) minimizing costs through synergies within the company and the group altogether. These two responses are presented below.

Response: new payment models

Like many other newspapers, The Courier started its online journey by providing content for free. Initially, this drove traffic to the website and was a success, as the website has millions of unique viewers per month. The organization did not initially consider it a potential source of revenue as the
prevailing perception was (and partially still is) that the print product is the moneymaker. One respondent said:

But we still have a really strong belief in our print product: it’s still really at the core of what we do and it’s very much the huge revenue driver for us, but we also have a very strong understanding that the future is over in the digital part, and it’s very hard to make money over there, there’s no masking that. (Manager, I1)

As the quote above (and several other respondents) says, there is a need to focus more on the digital product, even though it is the print product that “keeps the lights on” (Manager, B1). Even though the audience and advertisers are moving online, the majority of revenues are still from the print paper. It seems that by providing the content for free on the website, the organization undermined its advertising revenues in this space.

They were pretty much giving away ads, too. The pricing was, here you can take over the whole home page for you know, lunch money really. Compared to the amount that you pay for a page 3 add in The Courier-Mail, you know, small businesses can’t afford it. You’ve got to be a large business to do that. Whereas, you know, for a few hundred dollars you can just do what you like [online]. (Former Manager, H1)

As the respondent explains, the online product was not valued the same way as the print. The ads were sold for a small amount compared to the price of the print product. The audience and advertisers got accustomed to free content and cheap prices, and some respondents signaled that it is difficult to change that.

The news organizations have done too little too late to make a quid out of that, which is odd, because these are companies that have been very good, historically, at making money… (Former Manager, H1)

As the respondent says, this is one of the main challenges this company is facing. Moving from print to online seems to have changed the rules: The Courier realized that something needed to change, and they must find new ways of making money—that is, to convince people who previously received a product for free to pay for it. This proved to be a difficult task and some respondents said that there are readers that will never accept this change.

It’s certainly not free to produce, so we’re slowly changing that mindset with some of our readers. There’s some that just have a block in their heads and say, “Well, I would never pay for that because I can find it elsewhere—maybe it’s not quite as good but I can live with it…” I think there will reach a tipping point where it will become far more acceptable for people to pay for digital content. (Manager, I1)
The acceptance to pay for content is yet to happen, as the respondent above mentions. *The Courier* started experimenting by locking stories, which means that a reader could access a certain number of stories and then had to pay. However, as the consumers have other options and other news outlets that are predominantly free, it was difficult to convince the audience to pay for any content. This was problematic, and the organization went back and forth trying to lock different stories in the hope of finding a model that works. This seems to be an endless process:

> On the internet, it’s a metered paywall, where you get so many free articles and then you start paying. But that’s still a work in progress and no one’s got a magic solution to it. Some of the most successful people in publishing and in news are searching for an answer to that challenge and they haven’t come up with one that works for everybody. (Journalist, E1)

This experimentation was plentiful. First, the audience could read 20 stories for free before the content was locked, and then 15 (Former Manager, A1). This number continuously changed, which meant that there was no consistency. However, soon people working at *The Courier* found the inconsistency frustrating, and they assumed the audience did as well. The focus then changed to locking certain topics:

> I also feel like we’ve also been a little bit half pregnant in that area—we’ve just experimented: we’ll lock one story one day—and for the consumer, to me, I find that extremely frustrating. I’m a firm believer in not sending mixed messages to people who come onto our site. Now they know—they come on to league [the section in the newspaper about Rugby League], they have to pay. And we’ve seen a decent uptake—it will take some time, I think, but we’re willing to give it a go and commit to it. (Manager, I1)

Instead of continuously experimenting, as the respondent says above, *The Courier* is now committing to this new model and locking certain content. With the increasing availability of metrics and analytical information about what people are reading, the focus shifted to a specific type of content—that is, locking articles the organization deemed high quality and popular, which the organization now had access to through metrics:

> But one of the interesting things that has happened is that based on, you know, this extra information we’re getting on our audience and what they’re clicking on, we’re finding that traditional articles that people would sign up for are still working. So, you know, we’ll have a front page story online which will be locked and we expect people to pay for it. (Journalist, D1)
Metrics help *The Courier* to know what content people are reading the most, and the organization can make informed decisions about what content should be behind a paywall rather than inconsistently experimenting with articles. This response feeds into the organization’s ability to fulfill both its journalistic and commercial goals, as it needs money to be able to produce editorial content:

We’re not putting a limit on it, we’re just saying, “If you want to read this article, you’re going to have to pay for it”, and you know, we’re running this giant newsroom, and a giant newsroom costs money. There’s no government funding, so to fund that, we expect people to pay for quality journalism. We can’t give it away for free. It’s a nonsense argument. (Journalist, D1)

This topic-focused strategy, as mentioned in the quote above, is rendering positive results. According to the respondents, people are subscribing and paying to access certain content. People are interested in sports, local news, business articles and health, and they are willing to pay for it (Journalist, D1; Manager, I1). Slowly, the pieces are coming together. However, in 2014 and 2015, these experiments had not yet yielded results with the online audience. In 2014, the print circulation was 177,000 and decreased to 168,000 in 2015 (News Corp, 2014, 2015). The online audience stayed the same with an average of 3.2 million unique readers per month. An initial report from News Corp (2016b) shows that the experiments are slowly yielding results, and that the digital subscriptions in Australia have increased.

Even though the initial results for 2016 indicated some positive results, the annual report shows a different story. The print circulation is down to 156,000 and the online monthly readership decreased to 3.1 million unique viewers (News Corp, 2016a). Thus, this journey is still ongoing and there is still a lot of revenue to make up for as the print circulation and the online audience continue to decrease.

The latest experiment is reaching both the print and online audience. The organization is investing in longer investigative journalism to attract readers.

So that was, I think it was about 12 chapters and it was, you know, thousands, more than 10,000 words. I think it was about 12,000 words that we wrote, and it ran over pages and pages of the newspaper, in sort of like a lift out format. It’s like a wraparound, and you could pull it out and read it like it was a mini book. (Journalist, J1)

Instead of following the trend of believing that the audience has a shorter attention span online and moving to shorter pieces, *The Courier* went in the opposite direction. It presents long stories that provide thorough information about a recent event. So far, the topics have covered a local trial that grabbed the attention of many people in Brisbane and the 2016 bombings in Indonesia.
5. Findings: The Courier-Mail

(Journalist, J1). However, these were not readily available to anyone: a teaser is available for free, but then the audience must pay to get access to the full story online or buy a copy of the print newspaper. Even though the circulation numbers are still declining, the online audience stayed the same between 2014 and 2015. The results for 2016 are not showing positive results either (News Corp, 2016a), but perhaps this new format could turn the trend around. This is a crucial point for The Courier, as it the threat of survival would remain without finding new streams of revenues. As this issue is not yet resolved, the organization has focused on other responses, one of which is cutting costs.

Response: Synergies

The experiment with the payment models is one aspect of the attempts to turn around the declining revenues. Another response to this issue is synergy, which means finding efficiencies that could help the organization cut costs and save money. These synergies exist on several levels, such as streamlining operations within the organization and encouraging different departments to work together. Also, as The Courier is part of News Corp Australia, there are attempts to save money by centralizing some operations in the group. Thus, this section outlines efforts to decrease the threat of declining revenues by cutting costs, but also considering the bottom line: the cuts cannot affect the quality of the content.

You can put your bean counter hat on and see that these guys have got to keep in with budgets, and shrinking budgets, but at the same time you want to try and keep the quality journalism going. That’s the balancing act, basically. (Journalist, G1)

The balancing act of producing a similarly worthy product with fewer resources is challenging, as the quote above indicates. The Courier is rethinking how it spends money, and how it can restructure and use its resources more efficiently with shrinking budgets and fewer resources. This is not only a threat to its survival, but also a threat to the character of the organization, since the organization explains its character in relation to journalism and needs money to be able to maintain the journalistic quality. Thus, a response to the declining revenues is focusing on minimizing costs, findings efficiencies, cutting slack, and being nimble.

This synergy started in the newsroom at The Courier, where there were two separate teams. One team was working on the Monday to Saturday editions and another team on their Sunday edition, The Sunday Mail. However, this is one of areas where there was room for improvement. The two groups merged, and instead of focusing on keeping information from each other to have unique content, journalists could get help from more people and build on what each person had (Journalist, D1).

Through this synergy, some roles changed on both a managerial level and a department level, and putting one person in charge of more people gave them the opportunity to tease out even more synergies in the newsroom. Shortly after
the week and weekend synergy, the centralization of more administrative aspects of the newsroom was organized, namely subediting, features, and publishing (Former Manager, A1; Journalist, G1; Journalist, F1).

However, as the revenues continued to decline, the synergies also had to continue beyond the newsroom at *The Courier*. The next step included collaborations between the newspapers within News Corp. One of the respondents provided the example of features, which are now syndicated in the media group:

> So, a lot of our feature sections have been nationalized—not completely, but a number of them, entertainment sections and so on, are produced on a national level and just sort of dropped into the various publications. So yeah, I mean, those sort of cost cutting things have been done all over the place. (Journalist, F1)

The tendency to syndicate and minimize costs within the group became a clear strategy, according to several of the respondents. Similar to the merger between the Sunday and weekday editions of the newspaper, the newspapers within News Corp were not working together to a large extent, but that is changing. People at *The Courier* do not work directly for another newspaper but help the regional newspapers when it is suitable. A manager explains his role and how it extends beyond the borders of *The Courier*:

> So essentially my role is, I sit across both our daily paper and our Sunday paper and our website for [the department], as well, then I also help out our regional papers. So obviously News Corp has got a large footprint in Australia, so we have papers in Townsville, Cairns, and Gold Coast, which is regional Queensland. So I sort of help those guys, because they don’t have the staffing levels that we have, to avoid duplication of resources but then also content sharing between those mastheads. (Manager, I1)

As the respondent shows in the quote above, the strategy includes making the most of the resources in the group and working together. Thus, the respondents perceive many advantages with these synergies, and that it makes practical sense to streamline and make some operations more efficient within the group as the financial imperatives are upon them. For example, it is no longer financially justifiable sending several teams from the same group to cover the same story.

> Previously we would have flown to a regional town to cover. We’ve got a newspaper there with full staff: they will now cover that story or we’ll assist from here and write, research, and find what we can from here. So that is definitely a big change… That’s obviously then in response to all the changes in the industry. (Journalist, D1)
As the respondent says above, people work for one newspaper but a story could appear in sister newspapers as well. For example, *The Courier* has some employees stationed on the Gold Coast. The employees are in the same building and newsroom as their sister newspaper *The Gold Coast Bulletin* (from now on *The Bulletin*). The journalists would not write directly for *The Bulletin*, but some stories might appear there as well as in *The Courier*. This arrangement allows the group to keep the local focus in each newspaper but also reap the advantages of having resources throughout Queensland and Australia. This is not only with regard to content: if a sister newspaper tries something new strategically, like a new payment model, *The Courier* could also try something similar. Thus, it provides more options as newspapers in the group can streamline ideas.

If someone in Adelaide has got a great idea, you know, they can share that idea, and we go, “Ok, that’s fantastic, we wouldn’t have thought of that.” That’s, let’s go with that and develop it before it’s released to the public so we can say, “Ok, we’re going to launch this thing in all our papers at once,” which is terrific. There’s a lot of power there in having that size. Doesn’t always make you as nimble as you want to be, but there are a lot of benefits to it. (Journalist, D1)

Being part of a large media group has its advantages. As one of the largest media groups in Australia (and in some rural regions the group is the only newspaper) it renders power, especially financially: as smaller newspapers that do not have the support of a large group, the groups have the upper hand. However, the collaborations and syndications to save money do not come without sacrifice and some redundancies are necessary:

Well, then they said, “Ok we’re going to centralize everything, there’s going to be a central core. We’re going to make all you lot redundant and we’re going to run a central and all the sites are going to be the same.” Same design, same style sheets, different masthead at the top, lots of shared content because it’s cheaper to do that. (Former Manager, H1)

This constant push for centralization and cheaper design, as mentioned in the quote above, could be problematic. As the organizational members position the newspaper to focus on the local market and content, if there is too much centralization in the group as a whole, *The Courier* could lose its local footprint. Thus, it is about finding a balance or reaping the benefits of the group while not losing touch with the local audience.

The key to all these newspapers is still their local reporting. *[The Courier]* would do a better job reporting on events in Brisbane than *The Daily Telegraph* [a newspaper based in Sydney] would, and vice versa. And there is no value in changing that and no value in saying “we should turn this is into a national reporting operation,” but where there is value if
we have big national stories. There is no point for everyone to send a crew to compete with each other. We might as well send two crews and combine and do one story for everyone. (Former Manager, A1)

To keep the strength of the local reporting, as the respondent shows above, and strive for centralization while keeping the independence of each newspaper, is difficult. Today, the participants differentiate the broader strategic level as the group initiatives, while the editorial decisions are local (Journalist, D1). Therefore, the synergy in the organization and between the other newspapers in the group is starting to come together. However, again, the declining revenues are not ceasing and the process cannot stop here: they must continuously find more efficiency to minimize the costs and produce the content with fewer resources. Now, the synergy is moving beyond newspapers and towards other outlets, namely television:

So, in terms of our ability to integrate what we do in print digitally into a TV environment and vice versa, you know, working together all the time to absolutely maximize and leverage those assets that we have is really crucial. And again, because of that footprint of our regional mastheads and our nationals. So we need to use that size to our collective advantage, you know, and I think that’s something that we’re doing much better than we ever have. (Manager, I1)

As the quote shows, there are discussions on how to integrate TV into the news process and how the TV team and newspaper team can help each other—especially within sports, since News Corp owns the television station Fox Sports. There are discussions on how to find ways that the print and digital can feed into television, and vice versa (Manager, I1). As the budget is limited, these synergies are part of the quest of being nimble.

In addition, this scarceness has also initiated campaigns with competitors. Together with The News Media Works, a newspaper industry body in Australia, a new campaign was launched. In this campaign, APN News & Media, Fairfax Media, News Corp Australia, and Seven West Media are all involved in a quest to reduce alcohol-fueled violence on Sydney’s streets (APN, 2016). Through this campaign, which is called “Influential by Nature”, the goal is to inform the public about the alcohol-related violence in Sydney. However, the underlying focus is to show that newspapers are still a force to be reckoned with. Since the launch of the campaign, there has been a 40 percent reduction in violent assaults (APN, 2016). In the article, the argument is that this initiative demonstrates that newspapers are relevant and are still an important source of information that people interact with. In addition, this shows that the pressures on newspapers are not only for The Courier and for News Corp, but apply throughout the industry and newspapers are collectively working to fight for their survival.
Summary

Digitization has moved the audience and advertisers online and has caused a massive decline in print revenues of newspapers; thus there is a pressure on the newspaper to make up for these lost revenues, as the revenues from online only is a fraction compared to the print revenues. Thus, organizational members constructed an issue as they struggled to find the new revenue stream which is needed to fund the production of journalistic content, but which could also threaten the overall survival of the organization. Thus, to recover some of these revenues, The Courier initiated experimentation with new payment models online and synergies to minimize costs. The continuous experiments to fund its product and to minimize costs are a new normal, and the organization is constantly trying new versions of the paywall. By evaluating this continuous experimentation, they noticed an inconsistency in payment models, which arguably causes frustration in both the audience and employees at The Courier. This has not changed how it defines its character, but it has a huge impact on how it works and runs as a business. It is a constant struggle to find the balance between providing a product that lives up to the proclaimed quality that the organization stands for and finding people who are willing to pay for the product. Consequently, the organization continuously adjusts the experiments and cuts costs and finds new revenues to turnaround this negative trend. Thus, the issue is partially resolved, although this is still an immediate issue that threatens the survival of the organization and its ability to live up to its proclaimed character. The table below summarizes the findings from this issue.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction of issue and pressure</th>
<th>Pressure</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Experiment</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The classified advertising rivers of gold. Those good old days have gone.</td>
<td>• The news organizations have done too little too late to make a quid out of that, which is odd, because these are companies that have been very good, historically, at making money.</td>
<td>• New payment model</td>
<td>• I also feel like we’ve also been a little bit half pregnant in that area—we’ve just experimented, we’ll lock one story one day—and for the consumer, to me, I find that extremely frustrating. I’m a firm believer in not sending mixed messages to people who come onto our site. Now they know—they come on to league [Rugby League], they have to pay. And we’ve seen a decent uptake. It will take some time, I think, but we’re willing to give it a go and commit to it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The news organizations have done too little too late to make a quid out of that, which is odd, because these are companies that have been very good, historically, at making money.</td>
<td>• They were pretty much giving away ads too. The pricing was, “Here you can take over the whole home page for…” you know, lunch money really.</td>
<td>• Synergies</td>
<td>• You can put your bean counter hat on and see that these guys have got to keep in with budgets, and shrinking budgets, but at the same time you want to try and keep the quality journalism going. That’s the balancing act basically.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• From a newspaper point of view, the gravitation from print to digital has obviously created a massive difference as far as circulation of newspapers. You’ve seen double digit 20% declines in newspaper circulation, but at the same time our digital readership’s growing, which is a good thing. Unfortunately, they don’t make as much money out of digital as they do out of print.</td>
<td>• But they’re losing classifieds, because classifieds are worthless now. That shook them up, and said, “Well what can we do?” I don’t know.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• We’re not putting a limit on it, we’re just saying, “If you want to read this article, you’re going to have to pay for it,” and you know, we’re running this giant newsroom, and a giant newsroom costs money. There’s no government funding, so to fund that, we expect people to pay for quality journalism. We can’t give it away for free. It’s a nonsense argument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• But they’re losing classifieds, because classifieds are worthless now. That shook them up, and said, “Well what can we do?” I don’t know.</td>
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<td>• New payment model</td>
<td>• So, we need to use that size to our collective advantage, you know, and I think that’s something that we’re doing much better than we ever have</td>
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5.3 Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined the findings from one of the case organizations, The Courier-Mail. Firstly, following the conceptual logic of this dissertation, the chapter outlines how the organizational members explain the character. At The Courier, these definitions are strongly connected to journalism and the ability to make money to fund that journalism. In terms of distinctiveness, the organization defines what it is by saying what is not and what competitors do worse. Thus, the organization shows strong fidelity to journalism and journalist values.

Secondly, the respondents perceived twelve issues, four of which were chosen to study further as they were perceived as particularly challenging. Technology was explained as a principal pressure that is changing many aspects of The Courier. Thus, the disruption of the internet has created additional pressures. In this case, the strain and the financial status of the organization, and the change in audience consumption and relationship were in focus.

Metrics, UGC, immediacy of news, and declining revenues were the issues perceived by the organizational members in connection to the pressures outlined above. These issues respectively challenge the professional standards and the character of the organization or its overall survival. Declining revenues are threatening the overall survival of the organization and the organization cannot fulfill its journalistic goals if it does not earn money; thus this is a threat to the journalistic values and the overall survival of the firm. The organization is trying to overcome this issue through two responses; a new online payment model and minimizing costs through synergies in the organization and the group. Although this issue has resulted in changes in the way the organization works, it has not changed the character. Another issue was the immediacy of news and its impact on the quality of content. Here, the former gatekeeping role is challenged and there is a stronger focus on what the audience wants, which seemed to induce a change in the character of the organization.

The issue of metrics focused on the danger of allowing audience data to influence editorial decisions, and thus it threatened the journalistic commitments of the organization. The response to this issue started with clickbait, which contrasted with the journalistic commitments of the organization. Thus, there was a need for a revision of the response to find a balance between listening to the audience while not allowing an overreliance on the metrics in editorial decisions. It seems that this issue encouraged a change to embrace a stronger emphasis on the audience than previously. Lastly, the issue of UGC was repeatedly raised, and the danger of losing the audience if the newspaper does not allow them to contribute with content. The response firstly allowed content and engagement with the audience, as this was seen as an opportunity to save money and resources. However, to live up to its proclaimed journalistic quality, this could not continue: now the organization allows UGC in the form of...
pictures and videos that are easily validated and do not contrast with the character of the organization.

This chapter has described the findings at *The Courier*. The following chapter will address a similar structure but focus on the second case organization, *The West Australian*. 
Chapter 6: Findings: The West Australian

This chapter outlines the findings from The West. The chapter follows a similar structure to the previous chapter. Firstly, the focus is on the organizational members’ explanations of its character to understand the commitments of the organization. The chapter then presents the organizational issues the respondents perceived from the changes in the industry—the field-level pressures. Digitization was perceived as one of the main pressures that disrupted the industry in general. Technology itself has caused several issues for newspapers, but has also inflicted other issues related to the revenues at the organization, its relationship with its audience, and general market changes that are affecting the organization.

Even though it is important to acknowledge these pressures, the aim of this thesis is to understand how organizations respond to pressures focusing on the internal dynamics of organizations. To make such a contribution and bridge the field and organizational level, this study uses the concept of organizational issues. The view in this thesis is that field-level pressures are disruptive and create issues that are constructed by the people in the organization (Dutton, 1993). At The West, the respondents constructed thirteen issues (see Appendix C for an overview) and, out of these, four issues were chosen and further explained as these were perceived as challenging the character of the organization or its overall survival. The following sections outline the perceived pressure, issue, and consequential responses, starting in section 6.2, which provides insights to understand the course of events in the organization.

6.1 The character of The West

This section outlines how organizational members explain the character. At The West, three themes emerged in the respondents’ explanations of the character. Firstly, there was a focus on the business and commercial side of the organization, outlining the importance of money to survive. Secondly, the focus was on the editorial and the journalistic standards of the organization. Third and last, the focus was on a combination of these logics, where there is an understanding that the organization needs the editorial content to gain readership, but it also needs the advertising to make money to fund the production of editorial content. Thus, the two sides complement one another. The following sections outline the values and distinctive competences of the organization. Similarly to The Courier, the values overlap with journalism. The
distinctiveness is explained in several ways: what the organization does well, followed by its relentless local focus and expertise regarding Perth, while some respondents compared the advantages in respect of what the competition does worse. All these explanations are what the members explained as important, and thus are interpreted as the character which the fidelity is aiming to preserve through organizational integrity.

6.1.1 The mission of the newspaper

There is an understanding that privately owned newspapers, just like public news outlets, should serve the democratic system; however, these private companies receive no funding and must make a profit to survive. In the current financially challenging environment, newspapers are more aware of this than ever. The majority of respondents from both editorial and sales said that the goal is to “make profit” (Manager, B2) and “write revenue” (Sales and Advertising, P2). Although other respondents agree that money is important, they also point to the fact that newspapers are a public utility (Manager, D2). However, the public utility cannot be fulfilled if the organization does not have money: thus, the mission is to make money and a return for shareholders.

… our purpose is to make a return for our shareholders. So that’s the main purpose as a company. (Manager, R2)

As outlined above, many members of the organization perceive making money as a main goal. However, revenues and stock prices are in decline in all large media groups in Australia (see Williams, 2013, for an extensive discussion of the Australian newspapers and media groups). Thus, it is an important mission of The West to have a healthy turnover to survive.

Naturally, a private organization needs money but it has other responsibilities as well. As mentioned above, the respondents explain the journalistic responsibilities as a public utility. It needs money to be able to fund its journalism. Even though many of the respondents did point to the importance of revenues and profits, the large majority explain the organization’s mission to be journalism. The following section gives some examples of the explained journalistic mission of The West.

6.1.2 The journalistic mission

In addition to making money, the organization’s mission is tightly coupled with its journalistic function. As described earlier in this thesis, research generally explains journalism as informing the people, providing fair and objective content that is relevant and validated (Deuze, 2005). A similar stance is present at The West:
Well, from an editorial point of view we, I certainly, and I know our Chairman the same, sees the paper as an important part of the democratic process. An important part of the justice system. And if you ask me who do I believe I'm responsible to, my answer is to the readers. And to the public….But I think in terms of The West Australian as a newspaper, we maintain those standards. We strive mightily to be right in the first instance. Balanced. Fair. (Manager, D2)

Here, the respondent emphasizes the importance of the newspaper in the justice system, that the newspaper is part of a healthy democracy. The West is not necessarily there to judge, like the justice system, but rather to provide balanced and fair information to people about their community. One respondent explained this responsibility to the public by saying that The West is a ‘watchdog’:

…we look at ourselves as not being an attack dog—like we’re not into everybody as an attack dog—more a watchdog, a guardian more than an attacker. (Manager, B2)

Thus, as the respondent said in the quote above, the newspaper is supposed to guard the community by observing and informing the public. Several respondents reinforced this, highlighting the responsibility to the public and that newspapers are part of a healthy democracy. This seems to be an important notion at The West and the changes in the industry do not affect that: the delivery of that product may change, but not the core principles.

But the purpose of the newspaper is to inform and entertain our readers. We are here to hold governments and other powerful institutions to account, particularly for the decision of spending public money. We are here to account, we are a watchdog. This sounds a bit strange to say it, but the newspaper is still part of a working democracy…We still do that kind of work, day in and day out. And it might just be delivered in different ways now, still in the traditional way but also in other ways, but that basic work still, I reckon, needs to be done in all places and in all democracies. (Manager, R2)

Again, this quote highlights the watchdog function of The West and the newspaper’s role in a healthy democracy. Even though the members of the organization perceive it as a watchdog rather than an ‘attack dog’, the journalists should question what is going on in their surroundings and hold politicians and other members of that society accountable.

The journalism hat would be to inform people, and question society, and provide a level of accountability to, you know, all different stakeholders in society. (Middle Manager, E2)

As the quotes above outline, there are several important responsibilities of The West—for example, to serve and inform the public. However, to be able to fulfill
those responsibilities, the content must be read, otherwise the newspaper has no use (Manager, S2). Thus, the newspaper must attract readers. To reach and attract the audience, the newspaper must put out quality content day in and day out that addresses relevant issues for a wide audience (Journalist, K2). To be able to attract readers in this cluttered digital age, it is also important to entertain people (Middle Manager, E2): it is not only the hard core investigative content that is part of the newspaper’s responsibility. To stay relevant means that the content also should entertain the audience.

…it’s got to be relevant. I also think we do still need to be a newspaper of record. So, I still think we still need to…be believed, you know. Just I think that’s the main part and I think that we also need to entertain people and educate people and all the usual stuff. I think that is the purpose of The West to me (Manager, I2)

Relevance is an important notion, and the judge of this is the audience. In the case of The West, this audience is mainly people in WA and Perth. There is no denying the local focus of The West and the respondents commonly mentioned the word ‘parochial’. Thus, it is important for the newspaper and its journalists to understand the local audience to be able to provide relevant content to them.

…our core business is telling stories that are important to our readers. (Journalist, M2)

As the quote above says, what is important to the readers should be in focus for the newspaper to fulfill its journalistic function. However, the notion of readers is changing and that is something the respondents are highlighting, as the content is no longer only read. The newspaper must be able to deliver different types of content that its audience can consume in any way they like, no matter if they are reading the print newspaper or watching a video online. Thus, The West must be able to deliver said content in all its forms to its audience:

It’s delivering to our readership and our audience because it’s, it’s not so much a readership, but it’s an audience. Delivering to our audience the best we can daily. (Middle Manager, J2)

The respondent reinforces the importance of understanding the audience and delivering the product in the best way they can, which also includes living up to the journalistic standards. At this point, the mission has been described as ‘either/or’ between the commercial and the editorial. Although this does not portray the full picture, as some respondents do not perceive these sides as separate, others see the two sides as complementary and highlight the need for both in a functioning newspaper organization. Thus, the following section outlines this dual view of the mission.
6.1.3 A dual mission: harmonizing church and state

It is a longstanding tradition in newspapers that the commercial and editorial should have little to do with each other: both are needed, but there should be no commercial intervention in the editorial content. As the financial situation is strained, it is crucial for the survival of the organization to attract an audience to appeal to its advertisers. Therefore this is pressuring the formerly separate entities in the organization to join forces and cooperate.

It will always be like that. I’ve been a journalist thirty-five years, the church and the state have always been at war and it will never change. But you’ve got certain times when the church and the state can work together and there are certain times when they must be apart. (Manager, C2)

Thus, as the quote shows, the two sides can work together: however, there must be a balance as it could harm its journalistic standards if the organization publishes paid content as news. Since the respondents in this study position The West as a ‘reasonably conservative’ newspaper that has a commitment to traditional journalistic values and norms, the separation of the two departments is especially important. Nevertheless, to appeal to advertisers and maintain revenues, the organization must respond to the changes in the industry to maximize readership.

…we are a reasonably conservative newspaper but we still do celebrity and stuff and put sharks on the front page since we know sharks sell newspapers for us. We do all those things to try to maximize our readership… and to get a balance between those things. The more serious stuff, the stuff that is there to hold governments to account, I think that helps us sell newspapers as well. (Manager, R2)

As the quote above suggests, it is about balance, and knowing what the audience wants to read. Since there is a high level of shark attacks on the west coast, content including sharks sells, there is no denying that. At the same time, the newspaper cannot lose track of investigative news, which also sells. This balance of content is important to gain credibility from the audience, which is one of the main selling points for The West:

…and what we sell more than anything is credibility… So, we sell credibility, so we can’t make mistakes—well, not too many—because credibility is really hard to build up but you can tear it down really easily…I think that’s kind of our chief selling point, the kind of a bond of trust we have with our readers. You know, they trust us to go and find things and do the right thing on their behalf and if we lose that trust, then we’ve got no business and the advertising business is built around that trust that the readers have with us. So, the core
mission is still to go and find things and tell stories. (Middle Manager, F2)

Credibility and trust are important aspects in keeping the readership at The West, which is, according to the respondents, achieved by finding relevant and validated content. If the organization has quality stories, it gains credibility and attract readers and, in turn, advertisers. Credibility is the harmonizing side of the dual missions; it is the cornerstone of the readership and it is important that it is maintained and nurtured. If the organization has credibility, it can show advertisers it has an adequate reach.

The content is also a selling point and the organization should not be distracted and compromise the editorial content to gain revenues. This worry about revenues was not as imminent a few decades ago when circulation and single copy sales were peaking. Some respondents share concerns about the changes in the industry and that editorial content could be compromised for a quick buck.

I mean there is the view how far back you look at it. The advertising dollar pays the editorial staff, but you cannot compromise your content for a client but you can quickly lose a client if you don’t get that… relationship managed properly so they know what they can and can’t dictate. So, we need to balance the integrity of the reader and what they want to read with the commercial viability of it. (Sales and Advertising, Q2)

Once you start saying yes to certain things, you’ve got to be careful because where do you say no? So yeah, but we got to be honest, it’s a commercial world we live in. So, we’ve got to sell ads basically or we die. (Middle Manager, E2)

As seen in the quotes above, it is about balance. If the organization starts tampering with this balance, it could mean compromising the credibility and quality of the content. The respondents emphasize that The West is focusing on editorial content and believe that this must continue, since the editorial content is needed to gain readership and monetize the business.

[T]he journalists, the content creators, they are going to become even more important to the equation because they have a unique content. That unique content will bring you the eyeballs that will allow you to monetize your business. (Manager, C2)

The views are predominantly positive that The West maintains its journalistic standards in this financially strained environment, although some respondents flag concerns that the current challenges have affected The West negatively and the purpose of the newspaper is lost (Journalist, U2). In this more critical perspective, change is needed, but the organization must remember its core mission in this process, and some respondents question if that is the case now. The core mission is then explained in relation to traditional journalistic values,
that newspapers should provide information that is important to the society and that these aspects should be highlighted for the organization to survive. Thus, concerning the changes at *The West*, some respondents are not convinced it is heading in the right direction, especially concerning the integrated newsroom, which is explained in depth later in this chapter. In short, *The West*'s newsroom was integrated with Channel Seven (a television network) in 2015. Several respondents argued that this integration could harm the credibility of the newspaper, as it could be perceived that the organization is pretending to be a TV station, newspaper, and advertising agency all at once.

The concern here seems to be that the organization is getting larger and larger and is gaining more responsibilities, which could distract it from its journalistic standards and thus harm the credibility of the organization. Although most of the respondents did not express these concerns, it is important to note the ones that did. Moreover, some respondents believe that this harmonization is not connected to a specific technological change but rather that the origination needs both parts to function.

> I think that’s always been, it’s always been a part of journalism and I don’t think that’s specifically linked to any point in time, any technology. They’re not competing forces, but they’re also not mutually exclusive. So, there’s always been pressure there and I can understand it from the journalism side. We wouldn’t survive without them; they wouldn’t survive without us. (Middle Manager, E2)

As seen in the quote above, some respondents are taking a more harmonizing standpoint, agreeing that both sides are important and needed for the survival of the organization. However, it is important to find a balance, upholding the journalistic standards while still allowing the commercial side to do its job. Thus, even though both sides are highlighted, there are concerns in relation to living up to the traditional journalistic values, which is the focus of the next section.

### 6.1.4 The values of the organization

As mentioned previously in this thesis, values should guide the organization (Selznick, 1957). The values are part of the character and this is an aspect that the organizational members are aiming to preserve. From the group level at Seven West News, there was no section devoted to specifically outlining organizational or corporate values. Thus, this section is based on documentation and responses from interviews. Similar to the representation of the values at *The Courier*, in this section all answers from respondents and internal documentation about values are grouped together and then analyzed in NVivo to search for the common descriptions. Based on documentation and discussions with
respondents, three main themes emerged: (1) what the organization provides, (2) where and to whom, and (3) journalistic values.

The first theme from these findings was the offerings of the organization—namely, that the organization provides and covers ‘stories’, ‘content’, and ‘reports’. Moreover, the focus was also on where the content is available, emphasizing ‘print’, ‘digital’, and ‘other platforms’. Secondly, The West is located in Perth, WA. The geographic location and parochial focus of the newspaper are outlined as common descriptions including the ‘public’ in general, but also a focus on ‘regional’, ‘Perth’, ‘local’, ‘community’, and ‘Australia’, which outlines the geographical scope of the newspaper.

The last theme is related to traditional values in journalism. In this perspective, the organization should provide content that is ‘fair’, ‘balanced’, ‘honest’, ‘important’, ‘critical’, and ‘accurate’, which is related to ‘quality content’ and was one of the top descriptions overall. Thus, the common explanations outlined here show that the members of the organization consider it important that it provides content (articles, information) on multiple platforms, including both print and digital. Moreover, the quality content coincides with the traditional standards of journalism that are relevant to the public, although the utmost emphasis is on the relevance to the WA community and the local coverage in the state and in Perth.

The values and guiding principles are similar to those described by The Courier, which is not surprising as previous research claimed that values in newspapers are strongly connected to the professional values of journalism (Boczkowski, 2004; Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009), which is the case in both organizations in this study. The values at The West are strongly connected to journalistic standards and a local focus. The following section outlines the uniqueness—that is, the distinctive competence of The West—to gain a better understanding of what the advantages are and how the organization stands out in relation to direct and indirect competition.

6.1.5 The distinctiveness of the organization

The distinctive competence is part of building the competitive advantage of the organization. In Selznick’s words, one of the responsibilities in the defense of organizational integrity is to ensure “the persistence of an organization's distinctive values, competence, and role” (Selznick, 1957, p.119). Thus, to understand organizational integrity at The West, we must outline how the members of the organization explain its distinctive competence, which is the aim with this section. The members were asked what makes it stand out from the competition in Perth. The responses to these questions revolved around three aspects: (1) the specific competencies that highlight the strengths of the organization; (2) the parochial focus; and (3) what the competition does worse.
6. Findings: The West Australian

The first theme emphasized the strengths at The West, which are mainly in relation to journalistic resources and competencies. Even though the newspaper is in a fortunate situation with few competitors in WA that can challenge the organization as the number one newspaper in the region, it takes pride in the level of quality it maintains.

We’re better at doing a lot of that stuff than others. We’ve got a lot of really good journalists on the staff that are able to go after to bring great stories to the people in WA. (Manager, R2)

Even though there is little competition in the WA newspaper market, the respondents emphasize that the organization is producing high quality content that it is relevant to the local community. Especially in the digital sphere, where there is an overload of information, it is not only important to have quality content, but also to provide it in a different way, which is something The West is doing:

…it’s about quality. It’s about giving people something they can’t find anywhere else. That’s easy to say, it’s a lot harder to do, but I think that’s what it is. You’ve got to give them something they can’t get elsewhere, or, give them it in a way that’s a little bit different. So maybe it’s ... yeah, if it’s not exclusive content, exclusive stories, exclusive pictures, exclusive interviews, it’s produced and told in a better way, so sharper writing, smoother editing, more in-depth analysis, better graphics—those sorts of things. (Middle Manager, E2)

To deliver content in a different way, as the quote above says, includes exclusivity or simply better writing. Several respondents reinforce that providing breaking news, unique content (Manager, S2), and ‘sharper writing’ is what sets The West apart from its competition. This is also a point in Seven West Media’s annual report, that the competitive advantage in the group is related to storytelling:

The delivery of content through powerful storytelling is our competitive advantage. It is key to our long-term success. (Annual Report, 2016)

Thus, the main strength connected to the content is the ability to find and deliver exclusive content to its audience—that is, the local audience. This brings the focus to the second perspective describing the distinctive competence, which is the parochial focus. As mentioned previously, there is no denying that The West has a very strong position in the WA and Perth market:

I mean, we are fortunate that we have no daily opposition—state-based daily opposition—but everyone is sort of a competitor obviously, but we are in a very conservative state and we are a conservative newspaper but we are unashamedly
parochial. We will always be for Western Australia and for West Australians. (Manager, B2)

The respondents use this delineation in a positive way as they are specifically focusing on the news in WA and Perth; they know the region and the audience and can provide relevant content. Some respondents suggest that this is the focus of many regional newspapers and even mention The Courier as being in a similar position in Queensland.

Well, if you live in Western Australia, then obviously you will find a lot more information of interest to you in The West Australian than you will in The Courier-Mail. I mean if you live in Brisbane the reverse applies. (Manager, D2)

Thus, The West is specifically focusing on Perth and WA and is not trying to reach the audience in Brisbane and Queensland. This discussion also includes direct and indirect competition, thus both local and global competition. Being part of the group, the organization is pushed to be even more focused on Perth as Seven West Media has several smaller newspapers that cover the more rural areas in the vast state that is WA (Middle Manager, E2). Moreover, the parochial scope of the newspaper is also defended as there is an increase in global competition: someone in Perth can access The Guardian or The New York Times to read global news, but they will not find news about Perth in those outlets:

I mean, you can read The New York Times every day and you won't find any mention of Perth... So, our advantage here is that we are Western Australian and we cover Western Australia. We have sort of scaled back on our world news coverage in favor of local news coverage. Because, as I said, if you want to know about the world and you want analysis of what's happening in the US Presidential election and all that sort of stuff, well go to The New York Times. It's all there. We can't compete with The New York Times on that sort of stuff. But conversely, they can't compete with us on what's happening in the State Parliament and on the roads of WA. So that's our advantage here. (Manager, D2)

It is about highlighting the expertise of the members of the newspaper: as the respondent above says, the members know the local community in Perth. If the audience wants to read world news, they can access other news outlets, but if they want to read about what is happening in Perth or WA, they should read The West.

We are a WA newspaper, we are very concentrated on local stuff, so that’s what drives us day in and day out. We are much more about what is happening here in our state than in the world or the rest of the country. All those things are part of
6. Findings: The West Australian

what we produce as well, yeah, and big world events make it onto our first page: we’re not so into it that we are just about the local. (Manager, R2)

The narrow scope is perceived as an advantage. It allows the newspaper to focus on what it knows best, and can thus provide its readers with quality information. However, there are other local news outlets in WA and Perth, and part of describing the distinctiveness included separating The West from its local competition that shares its local scope, which is the final perspective describing the distinctive competence of The West. Firstly, as there are other news outlets in WA, without naming specific competition some respondents simply claim that The West is better:

I think we do that better than most people: people can’t get what they get from The West from other papers in our area… (Manager, R2)

And covering the stories that competitors cover better than they do. Telling a story with better pictures, better graphics, whatever it might be, doing it better than they can. (Manager, S2)

The quotes above state that The West is better than the competition without referring to a specific competitor. However, some respondents do compare the newspaper to other news media, and suggest that radio and TV do not provide similar quality to the newspaper:

TV and radio don't quite delve as deep as we do in a lot of those sorts of stories, so I think that's an absolutely vital role that we play and that's how I see it. (Middle Manager, A2)

In this case, the respondent is relating back to the newspaper’s role in society and the need for investigative content. Furthermore, the respondent separates the newspaper from other news outlets, such as radio and TV, as the latter do not live up to the same journalistic standards, which also includes online newspapers. In an informal discussion with an employee in the newsroom, this person suggested that online news does not live up to the same standards as legacy newspapers. This person gave a specific example of a child that had cancer, and the parents did not believe the chemo was the right choice and in turn, the doctor filed charges against them. Apparently, a journalist from an online newspaper tweeted that the parents were unethical by refusing treatment. This behavior was not perceived well by the newsroom at The West, arguing that it is not the journalists’ job to judge the parents. They should provide facts, not interpret and make a judgment based on their personal views (Observations in newsroom, 2016).

Thus, meeting journalistic standards is a clear rule of thumb to separate the newspaper from its competitors. Part of the reason why respondents believe that
The West is doing this better than its competition is its ability to retain quality employees. Seven West Media has had some redundancies, but it argues that it tries to keep as many people on board as possible: everyone is needed to be able to produce its content. However, comparing itself to other media groups, some respondents criticize how other groups have managed this complicated situation.

So, the quality producers, that’s where you get quality journalists by employing the best people. Fairfax has just thrown everybody overboard willy-nilly; they’ve just put out redundancies and so the best people will take the redundancy so they can pocket $100,000–$50,000 and know that they are good enough to get a job somewhere else. It’s always the ones that aren’t good enough to get a job somewhere else who don’t put their hand up for redundancy. They are hanging on by their fingernails: they are the ones that stay. They need to be the ones that go, but unfortunately that is not the way it is. So, we just go for quality people. (Manager, B2)

Here, the respondent criticizes Fairfax and argues that the group’s fierce cuts in employees have harmed the organization. In contrast, Seven West News, including The West, is argued to be in a better position to fight all the changes in the industry as the group is trying to keep its competitive advantage by investing in human resources and trying to minimize redundancies. Thus, being part of a larger media group is perceived as an advantage at The West, especially since it allows the organization to cover the vast size of WA. This aspect is also a way for the members of the organization to separate it from competitors:

And as a group that gives us a big advantage because if there's a bushfire in Katanning I've got a reporter there. I can just get him to go out and shoot a little bit of video on his iPhone and email it to Channel Seven and they can put that on their 6 o'clock news. Now if Channel 9, Channel 10, or even the ABC want to compete with that, they're going to have to scramble a helicopter. And by the time they get there, the fire will probably be out. (Manager, D2)

Thus, being part of Seven West Media is perceived as an advantage, especially due to synergies in the access to reporters and footage in rural WA, which is something other Australian media groups do not have access to. However, being part of this group has recently yielded a drastic change at The West. Due to a recent acquisition, the group decided to integrate the newsroom at the newspaper with the television station Channel Seven Perth. This integration is further elaborated on later in this chapter as it is presented as one of the responses. However, it is important to mention the integrated newsroom here, as some respondents see this move as providing the organization with unique possibilities, consequently adding to the distinctiveness of the organization. This integration included massive investments in new technology and it is argued that
6. Findings: The West Australian

this allows the organization to provide content to a wider audience. It is also important to note that all respondents were asked if the mission, aims, goals, or values had changed due to the integration, and the clear majority of respondents denied this. However, the way the organization is delivering news has changed, and the organization now has possibilities that other media groups cannot match, thus again using the integration as a separating point from the competition.

6.1.6 Different views of the character

This section aims to explore some potential differences in the view of the character at The West. Newspaper organizations have been noted to have a division between departments—that is, the commercial and the editorial (Ohlsson, 2012).

In terms of the mission of the organization, there is a focus on both the commercial and editorial aspects of the business. It seems that managers, journalists, and sales and advertising representatives acknowledge the need for both. All groups highlight the duality and need for both, a commercial news service. Thus, the organization needs to make money to survive but cannot overshadow the journalistic responsibilities in the search for revenues. This view seems to be prevalent throughout the organization.

In terms of describing the distinctive competence of the organization, the groups to a certain extent seem to emphasize different aspects. The editorial representatives (both managers and journalists) focus on the parochial focus of the newspaper and its local relevance and expertise, while the management further defends the newspaper as a medium: it seems the employees (journalists and sales and advertising) focus on the integrated newsroom. These representatives highlight the opportunities of the integration and that the organization can now provide services that other organizations arguably cannot.
Table IX. Representative quotes of the character at *The West*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Managers</th>
<th>Mission and purpose</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Now if you ask the Directors on the board they will say their responsibility is to the shareholders. And they're probably right. But a newspaper in a private enterprise society—essentially it's a public utility that's in private hands. And so, the investors are entitled to make a profit out of it, but the newspaper fundamentally must remain as a public utility. (Manager, D2)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To make profit. (Manager, B2)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>My main role with the company has been about the journalism side of it, so that’s about informing, asking, and entertaining. Because I think, fundamentally, those are the same goals of the newspaper. (Middle Manager, E2)</td>
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<td>The purpose is to inform and entertain our audiences and to provide satisfactory return to our shareholders. (Manager, C2)</td>
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<td>Provide readers of <em>The West</em> with an understanding of what's going on in their state and be the voice for Western Australian people and expose and investigate and get into the sort of things that are going on that they wouldn't otherwise hear about, and I often think that without us there would be a massive void in the sense that people perhaps wouldn't get a view of things that are going on. (Middle Manager, A2)</td>
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<td>The main purpose of this room is to produce high quality journalism that is watched, read, and viewed—whatever you want to call it—across the platforms...But the main job is to produce the highest quality of journalism that we can, every single day. (Manager, S2)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Well, it’s still back to the main purpose of newspapers really… it’s still the readers, informing readers, telling them what they don’t know… you know, uncovering things. We’ve still got this… our core sort of mission is still to go and find stories, find stories that people want to read, tell stories but also uncover things that people don’t want us to uncover and fight for what we think is right to a point. (Middle Manager, F2)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>It’s delivering to our readership and our audience because it’s not so much…it is a readership but it’s an audience. Delivering to our audience the best we can daily differently. (Middle Manager, J2)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>It’s got to be relevant. I also think we do still need to be a newspaper of record. So, I still think we still need to carry a lot of that stuff and be believed, you know. Just I think that’s the main part and I think that we also need to entertain people and educate people and all the usual stuff. I think that’s the purpose of <em>The West</em> to me. (Manager, I2)</td>
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| Distinctive competence | Well, if you live in Western Australia then obviously you will find a lot more information of interest to you in *The West Australian* than you will in *The Courier-Mail*. I mean if you live in Brisbane, the reverse applies. (Manager, D2) |
| Distinctive competence | There would be no other avenue for them to learn of those things … TV and radio don't quite delve as deep as we do in a lot of those sorts of stories so I think that's an absolutely vital role that we play and that's how I see it. (Middle Manager, A2) |
| Distinctive competence | What sets us apart from competitors is breaking unique content. And covering the stories that competitors cover better than they do. Telling a story with better pictures, better graphics, whatever it might be, doing it better than they can. That would be why. (Manager, S2) |
## 6. Findings: The West Australian

| **Journalists** | I think the main purpose of The West … I always say to people the biggest clue is in the masthead. So, The Western Australian, it states who we are and what we’re about. It’s a newspaper that has to serve a very large and geographically diverse area, which obviously has a concentration of population in Perth, but a lot of our readers are outside Perth and it’s the issues that they suffer or that they deal with which are very different in, you know, say the south west of Western Australia to the far north of Western Australia. (Journalist, M2). Well, the main purpose has probably not changed at all. It’s probably one of the things that hasn’t changed. It’s a commercial news service. It’s been operating, you know, to the same formula, you know, to the same successful formula since its inception. Obviously, it’s changed because technology has changed and the way we deliver our news has changed, but I think the fundamentals of journalism have always been the same. So yeah, delivering a good quality commercial television news service which is entertaining and informative. (Journalist, L2) I think it’s still, certainly from a staff perspective, is to put out a quality newspaper, day in, day out, that serves up relevant news and issues to our widest audience. (Journalist, K2) |
| **Mission and purpose** |
| **Distinctive competence** I think The West has always been pretty good at understanding what its audience is. I think the paper knows its readership reasonably well. I wouldn’t say it panders, necessarily, to the specific prejudices of a certain class of people, but I think they are very parochial: the issues in the paper, in the forward pages of the paper, tend to be specifically local issues. We do a broad range of issues in the paper to try and provide, you know, as wide a subject range for people as possible, to attract as many readers as possible. I think we do a pretty good job of keeping Western Australians informed about Western Australian issues. As you’ve probably noticed, there’s not a lot of world news in our paper, and not a great deal of necessarily eastern states news, either. We’re a very parochial newspaper that is here to tell stories about what happens here in Perth and Western Australia. (Journalist, K2) So, it cost a lot of money to move Seven in here but equally the site that they’ve left behind can now be redeveloped for housing, which I’m sure will make someone money. But in terms of the actual merger, what we have now is a pretty unique kind of opportunity that doesn’t really exist anywhere else in Australia and, from what I can gather, very few places around the world. (Journalist, M2) |
| **Sales and Advertising** | I mean there is the view how far back you look at it. The advertising dollar pays the editorial staff but you cannot compromise your content for a client, but you can quickly use a client if you don’t get that… relationship managed properly so they know what they can and can’t dictate….we need to balance the integrity of the reader and what they want to read with the commercial viability of it. (Sales and Advertising, Q2) I mean we’re in sales so we’re here to write revenue. (Sales and Advertising, P2) |
| **Mission and values** |
| **Distinctive competence** We can tap into across the organization to maximize that partnership. I guess it truly is integration. Just trying to pull everything together like that and to think of everything. Is that …Because that's … like the benefits that I see in this, what makes Seven and The West special and unique. (Sales and Advertising, V2) |
So far, this chapter has shown how the organizational members explain the character of *The West*. These explanations give insights into the commitments of the character. At *The West*, character is described in relation to both the commercial and the editorial and there is a need to have both parts for the organization to survive. The values in the organization are tightly coupled with traditional journalistic values. Lastly, to explain the distinctiveness of the organization, the focus is again on journalism and the ability to produce quality content. Moreover, the newspaper is parochial and provides expert content for WA. Returning to the journalistic standards, the respondents’ rationale for the competitive advantage of *The West* was by explaining what local and national competition does worse. The focus now shifts to the organizational issues—that is, the issues constructed by the members of the organization as a result of field-level pressures, and how they responded to resolve them.

### 6.2 Organizational Issues and Responses

The previous sections outlined the character of the organization. Pressures challenge these commitments and the organizational members try to keep the character intact. As mentioned previously in this dissertation, the influence of the pressures is understood through constructed organizational issues (Dutton & Jackson, 1987). Thus, field-level pressures create organizational issues, which are constructed by the people in the organization and are comprehended as an opportunity (positive) or threat (negative) (Dutton & Jackson, 1987). In discussion with respondents, thirteen issues were interpreted, which were explained as stemming from one or several pressures (see Appendix C for an overview). All issues to some extent relate to technological change but could be connected to issues that are financial or related to the relationship with audiences: thus the cause is generally perceived to be connected to digitization.

Even though thirteen issues were discussed, some had not yet been dealt with while some issues were highlighted and explained as urgent or particularly challenging to the character. As organizational members are bombarded with issues, they choose to focus on certain ones (Daft & Weick, 1984). Here, the focus is on the issues that were explained as being directly connected to the character of the organization, the overall survival of the organization, and were at least partly resolved (e.g., Dutton, 1997). The four issues to study further at *The West* are (1) regulatory change—the Finkelstein Inquiry; (2) lack of trust; (3) immediacy of news; and (4) declining revenues. As the organizational members generally explained the character in relation to journalism and making money to fund the journalistic content, these issues are perceived to threaten the journalistic commitments to the character. However, declining revenues are perceived not only to threaten the journalistic standards, but the overall survival of the organization. Thus, the organization has initiated several responses to this...
issue, as seen in the table below, while the other issues generated a single response. An overview is presented in Table X below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pressure</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New technology</td>
<td>Regulatory change: the Finkelstein Inquiry</td>
<td>Leaving the Press Council and starting own council of accountability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Market changes</td>
<td>Threatening the journalistic character of the organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>New technology</td>
<td>Lack of trust</td>
<td>Engaging in the community</td>
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<td>New relationship with the audience</td>
<td>Threatening the journalistic character of the organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>New technology</td>
<td>Immediacy</td>
<td>Managing immediacy and quality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change in the consumption of news</td>
<td>Threatening the journalistic character of the organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>New technology</td>
<td>Declining revenues</td>
<td>The integrated newsroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial constraints</td>
<td>Threatening the overall survival and journalistic character of the organization</td>
<td>The video strategy</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Thus, all issues have a connection to new technology, alone or in combination with another perceived pressure. All, or the clear majority of, respondents discussed the four issues in the table above. The issues were explained as a challenge, which is why these four issues were chosen to study further in this dissertation. In the following sections, each issue starts with an overview of how the respondents constructed it and then how they are working to resolve it.

6.2.1 The Finkelstein Inquiry

Pressure and perceived issue

In 2012, the Minister for Communication requested an inquiry into the Australian media industry. It was argued that the Australian media industry was too “culpable of transgressions” (Fernandez, 2013). Thus, the Australian government initiated the Finkelstein Inquiry, a regulatory reform about the online accountability of Australian media. Its official name is the Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Media and Media Regulation, although it is often referred to as the Finkelstein Inquiry (named after the main author, former
Federal Court Judge, The Honorary Ray Finkelstein QC), which is the name used in this dissertation.

The basis of the Finkelstein Inquiry was that there was little consensus on how news organizations are held accountable, especially the digital media, as online news was not specifically included in current regulations. The purpose of the inquiry was to “…set journalistic standards for the news media in consultation with the industry, and handle complaints from the public when those standards are breached” (The Finkelstein Inquiry, 2012, p.8).

Since 1976, the Australian Press Council (APC) has held the Australian media accountable but, due to digitization and the move to online outlets, the Finkelstein Inquiry suggested that this council was no longer sufficient. One factor that is argued to have ignited this inquiry is the phone hacking scandal in the UK² (Fernandez, 2013). The inquiry concluded that the current APC is not enough:

I have come to the conclusion that these mechanisms are not sufficient to achieve the degree of accountability desirable in a democracy: of the existing self-regulation measures, only one or two newspapers have appointed an ombudsman or readers’ representative. Online news publications are not covered. (The Finkelstein Inquiry, 2012, p.8)

As the current regulations were argued not to be enough, the inquiry suggested a new, stronger council that should hold Australian newspapers and media accountable and uphold journalistic standards. This new body was a partly government-funded “super regulator” (Fernandez, 2013, p.23) called the News Media Council (NMC) (The Finkelstein Inquiry, 2012).

The NMC, just like the existing council, would consist of community, industry, and professional representatives. However, this new council was criticized and opposed by Australian media organizations. The opposition suggested that there was no need to strengthen the council or its means of accountability. Thus, the new council received much attention, and one of the main issues was that it partly included government funding. Media headlines included “Labor plan to control the media” in Australian Financial Review (Inside Story, 2012), and in The Conversation, “Media inquiry misses the point, as the news crisis worsens” (Hirst, 2011). Hence, the new council was a publicized event, but for several reasons it never became a reality. Nevertheless, the inquiry and its aftermath had an impact on The West and several respondents highlighted an issue related to this inquiry.

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² In 2005, it was revealed that journalists at British newspapers are accused of making payments to the police and hacking celebrities’, law makers’, royalty, murder victims’ and other figures’ phones (CNN, 2017).
6. Findings: The West Australian

Above, a brief general background and the reasoning behind the inquiry have been outlined. In the following section, the perceptions of the inquiry and its implications within The West are in focus.

At The West, the fundamental issue of the NMC and the suggestions of the inquiry was the government funding and what this would mean in practice. The respondents referred to the problems associated with government influence and that it is not in line with journalistic values and norms. To have any sort of government control is contrasting the freedom of the press:

Any form of government control of the media is simply irreconcilable with our system of democracy. I would have hoped that argument had long been put to bed in Australia. But apparently not. (Documentation from respondents, 2012)

The free press is a cornerstone of a democratic society, and the press has a responsibility to be fair and accurate in its reporting of the news, which is also outlined in the reform (The Finkelstein Inquiry, 2012). Even though the reform outlined that the role of government would only be financial, the inquiry also suggested that the free press needed to be regulated since it can cause harm. Therefore, the press needed the NMC to hold it accountable to its code of ethics—that accuracy, fairness, impartiality, integrity, and independence should guide journalists and news organizations (The Finkelstein Inquiry, 2012).

Even though The West outlined the freedom of the press as a problem with the inquiry, some respondents pointed to a division between academics and practitioners. As mentioned above, Australian media organizations strongly opposed the suggestions from the inquiry, while some academics announced their support (The Conversation, 2012). The view at The West was that the inquiry was the government’s attempt to interfere with the media (Documentation from respondents, 2012). This argumentation was highlighted by the fact that the inquiry named specific newspapers that arguably criticized the political Green Party in Australia. The newspapers named in the inquiry are The Australian and The Daily Telegraph (The Finkelstein Inquiry, 2012, p.16). Some respondents expressed this direct criticism of specific newspapers as a concern. Even though it was not directed at The West, it sparked a question of whether the council was fulfilling its purpose of accountability or rather trying to control the media.

In addition to the government funding, the NMC (similar to the APC) would get money from the newspapers that were part of it. The fee for the APC was about $100,000; in the NMC, it would be about $240,000 (Manager, D2). Thus, the organizational members were concerned about the potential interference of the government and that the organization would have to pay over twice as much to be part of this new regulator.

In a document sent to Finkelstein as a response to the inquiry (Documentation from respondents, 2012), the representatives of The West believed the changes
would not include the accountability but rather a punishment of the press. Organizational members argue that they found it confusing that the council with “the freedom of the press as one of its fundamental objectives appears driven in the opposite direction” (Documentation from respondents, 2012). In this document, the representatives argued that they found it counterintuitive that an organization that has a published editorial policy that includes “The press shall not be subject to government license and government authorities should not interfere with the content of news nor restrict access to any news source” would include government funding (Documentation from respondents, 2012). Thus, The West stated that this change is not something the organization supports:

> Our company, on behalf of all our publications, subscribes to the principles of the Press Council and, again, this is spelt out in the board’s published editorial policy. But we do not support the concept of a “super regulator” with government funding to become a huge unwieldy bureaucracy. (Documentation from respondents, 2012)

The organization clearly outlined its opposition to the changes and, in the end, the suggestion of the NMC did not go through. Some scholarly work argues that the Finkelstein Inquiry was “too flawed, and needs too much fixing to trigger real reform” (Fernandez, 2013). However, at The West, the organizational members said that their trust in the council was damaged: thus, they perceived that the council no longer fulfilled its purpose and they could no longer recognize a value in belonging to the council. In 2012, Seven West Media announced it was leaving the APC.

**Response: leaving press council and starting its own council of accountability**

The suggested government control and increased funding were important reasons for leaving the council, but the organizational members at The West also mentioned a lack of trust in APC’s Chairman at that time. There was a specific example from one of the respondents, where an article in one of Seven West Media’s rural newspapers resulted in a complaint to the APC.

It was a drunken disorderly incident, and the story named the workplace and commented on the hairstyle of the person in question. The story was reported to the APC, arguing that the workplace and hairstyle were irrelevant. To defend the story, the representatives at Seven West Media said that the journalist had the right to report everything that person hears or sees in the court, as it is in line with journalistic standards—thus, it is relevant:

> [It was said] that his place of work had nothing to do with the charge. And also that it was offensive to comment on his hair. So, I thought, "This is rubbish. This complaint is just garbage". And I said, "Well you know if you read Lord Denning’s book on the press, where he talks on the Justice System and about the
6. Findings: The West Australian

role of the Court Reporter...He said the role of the Court Reporter is to report everything that he hears or sees in the court. So that a person reading his report would have the same knowledge as if they were in the court. Disney [former Chairman of the APC] said, "That's irrelevant. That's got nothing to do with it. It's a matter of whether it's breached the Press Council's principles". At which point I said, "If the Press Council's principles are at odds with the principles of open justice then I'm sorry, but I don't support the Press Council's principles". (Manager, D2)

Organizational members at The West suggested that the principles of the APC were not in line with general journalistic norms and thus they no longer perceived the APC to be fulfilling its purpose. Consequently, Seven West Media, which includes The West, announced it was leaving the APC in 2012 and founding an independent council. The new council is called the Independent Media Council (IMC): Seven West Media is the only member and was the only group that left the APC. One of the respondents explained who the members of the IMC are—that is, who is holding them accountable:

Well it's not our own, its independent, so it's a bit hard to say it's our own. But it's chaired by a retired Supreme Court judge. And there are only two other members of it and they are, one of them is the former Attorney General in the Labor government and the other is the former Attorney General in the Liberal government. And then the judge is the Chairman. So that's our complaints body. (Manager, D2)

The organization started its own Independent Media Council, which it claimed had no government or organization interference. However, the three members of the inaugural Council were chosen by the funding body, Seven West Media. The IMC’s guidelines showed that if any Council members were to retire, their replacements would be similarly hand-picked by the funders (The Independent Media Council, 2012).

Not all external bodies were convinced that Seven West Media had made the correct decision. In mass media, the organization did receive its share of criticism. There was some hesitation about whether it would be an independent council, and as this new body would handle complaints from the public, one article even said, “Good luck, readers!” (Crikey, 2012). The criticism questioned whether the new council would be on the organization’s side and not hold it accountable to the readers or the ethical standards of journalism. On the website, the last report is from the end of 2015: since then no updates of complaints have been announced (The Independent Media Council, 2015).

Even though the media reported that this incident was a drastic event in the Australian newspaper industry and that it signaled some major changes, the media did criticize Seven West Media (Crikey, 2012). This was a highly
publicized event, although the organizational members at *The West* argued that they had little backlash from readers, and some respondents saw no backlash at all.

**Summary**

In the face of potential regulatory reform, the organization questioned the council that was created to hold them accountable to the public and to the ethical standards of journalism. Thus, the pressure stems from a regulatory reform. The members of *The West* put forward the contention that these changes were contrasting with the purpose of the APC and especially the notion of the free press. This issue was constructed from a regulatory reform that eventually was not approved. On that basis, they claimed that they no longer saw value in being part of the council. Due to the suggested government involvement in the reform and disagreement with the existing regulatory association, Seven West Media left the APC. Thus, even though this was a clear stance, this is interpreted as an experiment to resolve the issue: as it was the only group that left the council, it could have had dire consequences for the organization. Among the organizational members, there was an active stance against the reform from the beginning of the response, even though the organization received some backlash from mass media. The organization evaluated that there was no decrease in readership and thus did not change, and the issue was resolved. The organization therefore argued that it stayed true to its proclaimed character by leaving the council when it purportedly conflicted with the rules of freedom of the press. The findings are summarized in the table below.

Table XI. Overview: the Finkelstein Inquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction of issue and pressure</th>
<th>Pressure</th>
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<td>I have come to the conclusion that these mechanisms are not sufficient to achieve the degree of accountability desirable in a democracy: of the existing self-regulation measures, only one or two newspapers have appointed an ombudsman or readers’ representative. Online news publications are not covered.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>A new body, a News Media Council, should be established to set journalistic standards for the news media in consultation with the industry, and handle complaints from the public when those standards are breached.</td>
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<th>Issue</th>
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<tr>
<td>Any form of government control of the media is simply irreconcilable with our system of democracy. I would have hoped that argument had long been put to bed in Australia. But apparently not.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Response</th>
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<tr>
<td>Leaving the APC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creating their own press council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluate: Stakeholder reactions /Resolve</td>
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<tr>
<td>Backlash from media</td>
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<tr>
<td>No decrease in readership</td>
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6. Findings: The West Australian

The next issue that was perceived at The West is related to the audience and a prominent theme in previous research, namely that the audience trust in newspapers as a medium is questioned.

6.2.2 Lack of trust

*Pressure and perceived issue*

As pointed out in previous research, there seems to be a loss of trust between news producer and consumer (Lewis, 2011). It is a worrying trend and news providers are blatantly aware of the dwindling levels of trust. The view that “we as news providers know better” could be harmful in this changing environment, especially when the reader has many choices of where to access the news industry. Thus, the cause of the downturn of trust has been rooted in consumers’ ability to access several sources of news and compare news stories (Gillmor, 2004). With the constant pressure to be first and having very limited time, mistakes are bound to happen. If a story contains any mistake, the audience instantly makes the newspaper aware of it.

As one of the respondents mentioned above, “what we sell more than anything is credibility” (Middle Manager, F2), which means that the dwindling level of trust is a threat when it comes to living up to the journalistic aim of providing the public with information. Therefore, it is important for The West, and many other newspapers, to turn this trend around and recover trust from the audience to fulfill its journalistic role. If a news outlet publishes incorrect content, the audience instantly confronts the newspaper through comment sections and on social media. Moreover, as the circulation is declining, some newspapers are taking on sensational journalism and clickbait to gain online readership. This has led to the audience becoming more skeptical towards mainstream media and starting to question the accuracy and relevance of the content.

People say, and it’s always a cliché now, they’ll say “you guys always lie—how can we believe what we see in the mainstream media”, and sometimes they’re right: sometimes we do get it wrong and make mistakes, we’re not perfect. And you get people like me, who sit in newsrooms like this who take it very seriously, who hate getting things wrong, who badger journalists to be fair and balanced and to make sure what we’re providing is correct and right. So, we’ve got processes and structures in place and trained journalists to minimize getting things wrong—we still do, I’ll admit that, everyone does, but we minimize that. (Manager, S2)

People think the media lies, as the respondent above said. As the workload and work pace is increasing, there are mistakes: there is no denying that. However, the organization is working hard to minimize those mistakes by having control.
processes. The challenge is to rebuild the damaged trust. As one respondent said, credibility is hard to gain but easy to tear down. Moreover, the respondents suggested that the audience is taking the media outlets for granted: they do not appreciate the newspaper, but would miss it if it is gone.

... [there are] a lot of people out there who don’t know how good it is until it’s gone. A lot of people who don’t really care about journalists and don’t care about journalism would not like it if there wasn’t journalism... So, in some countries—I think Australia is an example—Australia is known as being a pretty laid-back society, where no one gets too animated, no one gets too excited—there’s not a lot of protest action. It’s kind of like, no worries mate, it’s all pretty cool. So, no one gets too animated about the death of journalism either. We’ve never had to fight for it, like the Americans did, you know; the right to free speech is in their constitution. That’s pretty heavy talk for what’s happening, but I think we probably aren’t doing a great job of telling the story of our own story very well. (Manager, S2)

The respondent is questioning if the people in Australia actually understand the influence of traditional media and the consequences if it were to disappear, relating to the importance of the role of journalism in a democratic society. In contrast to other countries, Australia did not have to fight for free speech. To counter this trend, respondents in this study argued that journalists should speak up and tell their story for people to realize the difference between ‘lies’ and quality content. Newspapers have control processes and ethical standards to follow, but the challenge is to convince the audience that the newspaper is following these processes. To tell the story at The West, the organization is engaging further in the community: this is done to highlight its influence and engagement with the local public.

**Response: engaging with the community**

The response to the lack of trust is to engage with the community and shed light on important matters that are affecting the local public. These community features are generally about a specific story to highlight a larger issue: one if the first initiatives was regarding drunk driving. The initiative, called Pledge for Nate, was instigated after a tragic accident where a drunk driver killed an eight month old boy. The boy was sleeping in his crib in the house when a car smashed into the house. The boy did not survive.

Nate Dunbar was asleep in his cot when a drunk driver crashed through the wall of his house, killing him. He was eight months old. The West Australian and Channel Seven Perth have joined
Nate’s parents Stacy and Justin to make our roads safer. (Pledge for Nate website, 2013³)

Even though the newspaper’s name is connected to the website, it is separate from The West’s website and there is no advertising connected to this site. On the website, there is an emotional video of the mother telling the story about her son, who should have been safe in his crib but his life was ended because one person chose to drink then get behind the wheel of a car. The mother is urging people not to drink and drive, as this choice could have detrimental consequences.

On the website, you can sign up and pledge for Nate that you will not drink and drive. People sign up with their full name and address and can share it online: the website has over 8,000 signatures and over 1,000,000 views (Journalist, T2). This gripping story did get a lot of attention and the organization used this attention for some crossover in terms of media.

The website is separate, but the newspaper wrote stories about it and shared them on the website to increase awareness. Members of the organization argue that this is part of their responsibility: they should report on the community and highlight matters that are relevant for the people.

…there’s a blurred line in a sense we’re not just reporting on the community, were actually involved in the community. (Middle Manager, E2)

Pledge for Nate was the first initiative and the organization is constantly searching for the next big thing. At this point, they have highlighted two more community matters in the initiative: drug use and bush fires. The drug related issue is called Meth City, which shows that WA is in the grip of a methamphetamine epidemic. The website investigates addiction to meth, family trauma, crimes, and health consequences (Meth City website, 2016⁴). Another initiative is a follow-up on the damage caused by the Perth Hills bushfire in 2011, and is called After the Flames. The introduction explains, “…this special report is a tribute to the community forged in the flames” (After the Flames website, 2016⁵).

The respondents involved in this initiative explain that there is no list of topics that they are trying to get to the public. Instead, they are emphasizing quality rather than quantity. It needs to be a major story that people care about and that is important for the community. Moreover, there is no aim to connect advertising and try to make money directly out of these initiatives, as that would defeat the purpose (Journalist, T2).

⁵ http://wan-info.anittel.net/aftertheflames/intro.php
We actually do believe it and we genuinely invest in the community, sometimes, often at our expense. When business sense says don’t do it, we often will. So, I think there is a genuineness. I think a lot of companies, not just media companies, they have sort of seen companies like ours and have said they do well because they are involved in the community, we should be involved in the community but that’s a marketing strategy, and ours is an ethos and a philosophy. (Manager, B2)

Thus, the members of the organization are clearly separating this from a marketing strategy: it is rather an attempt to live up to the ethos and philosophy of the organization. However, besides money, there are other benefits of these features for *The West* and Seven West Media. With over 1,000,000 views on one of the websites, the features are gaining public attention. Moreover, the organization is also gaining professional recognition, as Pledge for Nate won the Best Multimedia Campaign category at the Asian Digital Media Awards in 2014 (press release, Seven West Media, 2014).

**Summary**

Trust in newspapers as a medium is challenged, arguably due to the audience’s ability to compare content online and the move towards more ‘soft’ content. Thus, there is a pressure on the newspaper organization to restore the trust. The issue is constructed as harming the credibility of the organization; thus, the organization is trying to highlight its engagement with the community. The organization experiments by reinforcing its journalistic standards and creating separate features about issues in the local community. Thus, organizational members highlight that this initiative is in line with the philosophy of the organization, so it seems that organization is reinforcing the character.

It seems that the organization is taking a stance to highlight its editorial capacity and does not include any commercial aspects in the features. Through an evaluation from the organizational members, they believe that this needs to be separate and not include advertising to regain credibility. This means that the organization is reminding the audience of the standards and ethos of the organization to recover some trust that seems to have been lost. Thus, the issue is partly resolved, even though this is an ongoing initiative. A summary of the findings is presented in the table below.
6. Findings: The West Australian

Table XII. Overview: lack of trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction of issue and pressure</th>
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|                                   | • “We as news providers know better” could be harmful in this changing environment, especially when the reader has many choices of where to access news.  
• With the constant pressure to be first and having very limited time, mistakes are bound to happen. If a story contains any mistake, the audience instantly makes the newspaper aware of it. |

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|       | • “What we sell more than anything is credibility”, which means that the dwindling level of trust is a threat when it comes to living up to the journalistic aim of providing the public with information.  
• People say, and it’s always a cliché now, they’ll say “you guys always lie—how can we believe what we see in the mainstream media”, and sometimes they’re right; sometimes we do get it wrong and make mistakes, we’re not perfect. |

<table>
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<th>Experiment</th>
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<td>Community engagement</td>
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<th>Response</th>
<th>Evaluate: Stakeholder reactions/Resolve</th>
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|          | • Realizing an interest and increased attention from the experiment.  
• We actually do believe it and we genuinely invest in the community, sometimes, often at our expense. When business sense says don’t do it, we often will. So, I think there is a genuineness. I think a lot of companies, not just media companies, they have sort of seen companies like ours and have said they do well because they are involved in the community, we should be involved in the community, but that’s a marketing strategy, and ours is an ethos and a philosophy. |

The next issue is also connected to the relationship with the audience and new technology, namely keeping up with the immediacy of news.

6.2.3 Immediacy of news

*Pressure and perceived issue*

The third issue is immediacy, which stems from the pressure that the production of news online is much faster than print, which potentially is harming the quality of the content. Moreover, as the technology lifecycle is moving faster, there are constantly new platforms and gadgets that newspapers should be using, which affords opportunities and new ways to connect with the audience but also increases the workload. Thus, the new technologies include challenges and opportunities.
Oh, the internet’s fantastic… but it can be schizophrenic… it can be Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde. It can be fantastic or it can be terrible. (Journalist, O2)

As the quote above states, the internet is perceived to have its positive and negative influences on journalism and newspapers. One potentially negative aspect is the enforced increased speed of production, which stems from a new way of consuming news. The audience has access to social media and can constantly check news on their phone: they want to be informed minutes after something happens.

As online content is expected to be published directly, there is a discussion on the impact it has on the quality of online news. Thus, the quality issue is two-fold. One aspect is that the journalists do not have enough time to process the content, which could harm the analytical depth of the content. Secondly, journalists must publish on social media, the website, the phone app, tablet app, make a video, and then write for the paper, which means on top of immediacy there is also an increased workload. In combination, these changes are challenging the organization to maintain its journalistic standards. As mentioned above, there are several new platforms and outlets that newspapers and news providers must use in the digital environment. This includes using platforms and social media that are already available and being aware of the ones that are just being invented, while still focusing on what is important—the content:

So, the great value is the actual product you produce and actual content in itself, those stories, that’s the value… that’s what journalism is about. And that goes across all those platforms, everywhere... But I always feel that newsrooms, because of the types of places they are, and the types of people that work in them, can get quite distracted from the core. (Manager, R2)

As the respondent suggests in the quote above, the value is the content. It is important to keep up with the new platforms and find an efficient way to provide the news throughout these outlets, which could be distracting and steal focus from the content. To add to this complexity, the technological changes also include an increase in the workload for journalists.

We work harder. We work harder and adapt: you have to file copy for online, you have to do a couple of stories a day, you’re juggling stories in your head. Whereas previously, you might have had a couple of days to do one, now you’re doing a couple of stories. So, it’s just forcing journalists to adapt to work harder and cope with the additional workload. The job’s changed. (Journalist, K2)

The work for the journalist is different online, as stated in the quote above, and several respondents reinforce this. Previously, the deadline was in the afternoon for the print paper the following day, but now they must write a story for each
online platform, update the social media, make a video, and still write for the paper. One respondent provides an example of the new workload:

And, you know, bang, you had your press conference at 9 o’clock, you’re live tweeting as it’s happening, at 9:30 you’re on radio, quarter to ten you’ve done that social media ‘sim-sat’\(^6\), and then by 10 o’clock, it’s on your social media web page, Twitter, whatever. Then you start trying to write the story and craft the story and all that sort of stuff. So that’s how I think the technology has changed what we do, to the point where a lot of the guys on the road now are a lot busier, a lot earlier. (Middle Manager, E2)

As the respondent above illustrates, the working day has changed completely; the tasks are increasing as the journalist should be updating social media instantly. The same respondent highlights a potential legal challenge concerning the immediacy. To be able to publish content online instantaneously, some organizations started to live stream press conferences. The issue is, if the press conference includes defamatory information, the newspaper could be in legal trouble as it is reproducing it:

With that brings a whole bunch of challenges, so you can get snookered legally, or, you know, I know a lot of news organizations just as a matter of course broadcast press conferences now. Take them live or stream them online. That’s problematic, because often some things that are said in press conferences are actually said off the record, they’re just background briefing notes, or there might be a legal issue that someone said something in a press conference. (Middle Manager, E2)

The quote above shows the legal problem if the newspaper publishes or live streams information that is offensive or incorrect. Moreover, as the work pace is faster with a greater workload, mistakes are bound to happen. The pressure to be first can cloud the judgment of assuring the accuracy of the content, which relates to the discussion on technology’s impact on the quality of news. One respondent said, “It’s not good to be first and wrong but it’s also not good being right and second…” (Interviewee D, Manager, 2016), although not everyone agrees with this view and argues for the importance of immediacy. One employee said in an informal talk in the newsroom that immediacy is better than having the best quality of everything (Observations in newsroom, 2016). However, another respondent elaborates and explains that this issue is two-fold:

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\(^6\) Sim-sat means ‘simulated satellite’, which is when a news anchor interviews and tapes a guest via satellite before the news is on air, and then asks those same questions on the live telecast while showing the video of the guest answering the question, making it seem like it is happening live.
There’s a sort of surface issue around quality, spelling mistakes and bad grammar, because everyone just does it quickly and it’s not checked properly, so that can be a quality issue that slips through, that does happen. To me that is something that is probably remediabe if you just make your process a bit more robust. The bigger issue is time to think. That’s the issue that I worry about the most, is time to think. How can I place this new, emerging fact in its proper context when I have to bang it out like five minutes ago? (Journalist, M2)

The respondent here shows that there is one issue about spelling mistakes, which happen and are a problem but are easier to fix online than in print. The bigger problem according to this respondent is the speed and the lack of time for journalists to think and analyze content when he or she must ‘bang it out five minutes ago’. This trend could harm the more in-depth content and push the newspaper to publish shallow content. Some respondents reinforce this concern and question if the newspaper is capable of surviving the digital changes, arguing that it has been 20 years since the internet disrupted the industry and there is still no solution (Journalist, U2). Several respondents show concerns about the level and type of content that is now published at the newspaper, as there is more superficial and opinion-based content:

…modern reporting … there is so much emphasis on the reporter’s opinions there is so much opinion, so much content, you know … it’s almost like there is a new story and so the political editor has to write a comment piece on it. (Manager, I2)

The luxury… what gives us that thing that is the difference between reportage and journalism—journalism being your ability to actually go out there and find exclusive stories, and luxuriate in terms of the amount of time you have to investigate, finesse, and work up a story. It tends to be more, nowadays because of the pressure, you tend to get things to print as soon as possible. You don’t always necessarily have days and days to write stories. Sometimes you still do. (Journalist, K2)

As the first quote says, opinion or commentary content is problematic if not marked properly, as journalistic content should be objective and independent and not necessarily show the journalist’s personal view. The second quote is focusing on the time restrictions which are also affecting the analytical depth of content, in that the journalists today do not necessarily have the time to investigate and work up a story. Thus, the issue of immediacy and quality is founded on a lack of time, mistakes in grammar and spelling, shallowness of content, and an overreliance on opinion content, which are all contrasting with norms of journalistic values. Although the changes were beneficial in some
respects, such as breaking news that works well online (Journalist, U2), organizational members explain that keeping up with new technology and maintaining quality is a challenge.

**Response: Balancing immediacy and quality**

The majority of the members of the organization perceive the immediacy of news as an issue. Some respondents believe that the organization performs quite well in maintaining the quality of the newspaper (Manager, D2). While some organizational members are optimistic that the organization is living up to its journalistic standards in the digital environment, others are worried. The concerns are firstly that these pressures are changing the fundamental standards of journalism:

…it’s now more about reporting than journalism…I find that personally hard to come to terms with. I think that you can get the superficial stuff in all your social media and television and online, all that stuff. I don’t believe that’s the right thing for our newspaper, but that’s the way we’re going. (Manager, I2)

As the quote above explains, the superficial level of online news is a concern and some respondents argue that people are so worried about the quality that they get distracted from actual work tasks. The respondents emphasize that this is not just an issue for *The West*, but is something the industry as a whole is experiencing. Moreover, some respondents claim that this is a new normal, and journalists and newspapers as an organization simply must learn how to deal with it and not get distracted:

The industry as a whole got distracted at times and probably didn’t do the core as well as it could while the change was happening…. what we’re going through and what I think will continue to happen, there’ll never be a business as normal sort of time; it’ll be more and more of these distractions and trying to keep that out of the thinking and think more about the core. (Manager, R2)

Perhaps, as the quote above says, this is a new normal. Some respondents believe this is normal now: some state that there was a period that affected the organization negatively, while others believe it is a fad to criticize journalism. The latter suggestion includes the belief that ‘yellow journalism’7 (sensational journalism) has been around for a long time, just like investigative journalism, but there is a trend to say that journalism has ‘dumbed down’:

Well, you know, yellow journalism has been around ever since the Gutenberg Press. You know it’s in the eye of the beholder. I

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7 Yellow journalism refers to a type of journalism that is superficial and uses eye-catching headlines.
don’t believe there has been a diminishing in the quality of the journalism: you’ll still see the journalists will hold public officials to account. You will see that they exercise their power carefully and judicially to keep the public informed. You can see that our leaders, our politicians and our leading business people, they know that we’re serious. Absolutely. I think, it’s fashionable to say that journalism is dumbed down. I don’t see evidence of that when you see, for example, the Panama papers. To me, the global impact of that has been much more intense and immense than it otherwise would have been without the digital revolution. (Manager, C2)

The respondent is acknowledging that there is ‘yellow journalism’ in print and online, but there is also investigative content and the digital revolution makes it easier to see both. As the reader is overwhelmed with content online, The West is trying to uphold the traditional journalistic standards, and “counter the rubbish” (Middle Manager, E2). Even though, as the quote above presents, there is low class journalism online, there are also several aspects where the respondents suggest that the opportunities connected to the online are helping them uphold its quality content. Thus, the focus is on making use of those opportunities rather than focusing on the challenges. Moreover, the newspaper is still held accountable.

Quality is in the eye of the beholder. Ok? One man’s trash is another man’s treasure...You tell me, is it a negative impact in quality to have the technology that allows you to go live immediately to the scene of a news event within minutes? How much faster we get to know things? You have to be accountable for everything that you do. (Manager, C2)

Here, the respondent is suggesting that in terms of journalistic quality, the immediacy is helping the newspaper and its journalists to fulfill its function of informing the people. As a counter-argument to the declining quality of the content, the respondents argue that online is pushing the journalists to fact-check the content thoroughly, since if there are any mistakes the online audience will point it out immediately. This new horizontal relationship with the consumer is a change for the newspaper: before, the newspaper had control over what the audience should read, but now the audience can talk back and call out the newspaper if there are any errors.

To maintain this new relationship, The West has a readers’ editor to handle complaints and hopefully resolve these before they go to the Independent Media Council. Thus, there needs to be a balance to maintain that relationship while not giving in to irrelevant complaints. One of the functions of news is to be critical and hold people accountable; thus there will be content some people do not want in the newspaper. Furthermore, in the digital world where the audience
can fact-check and hold the newspaper itself accountable, it is also about admitting if you are wrong.

It was Hugh Cudlipp, I think, who said, "News is something that someone somewhere doesn't want published. Everything else is advertising." And so you get a lot of people who just don't like it. Well, we just tell them, "Sorry, princess, you have to suck it up". But if we're wrong we correct it. That's the policy. (Manager, D2)

The policy at The West is to listen to all complaints and make an informed decision if there are any potential discrepancies in the publications, online or in print. This also includes holding strong if they do believe that it is correct and not just take complaints as a given to change a story. If the person who is complaining disagrees with the decision, they can report The West to the Independent Media Council. This means there are several policies in place to control for mistakes at The West and several respondents state that the newspaper is held accountable to a greater extent in the digital world and that is also part of the quality of news.

Thus, the accountability is not the perceived problem per se; however, several respondents discussed the notion of quality and what that means in the digital world. Some respondents questioned the notion of quality by asking “quality in what”? One respondent both asked and answered this question:

Quality in pictures—I mean, we put to air a lot of stuff now, but it comes from the internet... You know vision is king now, so we’ll take it from anywhere. In the old days, if you sent some stuff back … especially in the ABC and they’d go well, no, you can’t broadcast that, it’s not broadcast quality. Yeah, but it’s vision. You know now it’s sort of shit that we show is marginal but we’ll show it because we’ve got to get it to air and we’ve got to get it first and if the others have got it… it’s just that’s what we do. (Journalist, L2)

Thus, in terms of the visual, the quality is in being first and having exclusive content rather than having the most high definition picture. Another respondent reinforces this:

So, the immediacy has become more important. Which is why they gave all journos iPhones so they could shoot videos and such on the go. Because people want immediacy: it is not the most important thing that the quality of the video is the best there can be or that it is professionally made per se. Just to have a glance and see what is going on in your community and around you is more important. I suppose there is a tradeoff there. (Journalist, T2)
The respondent argues that the decreasing quality of the pictures that are taken with cellphones is not the issue: this is rather helping the organization get the information to the audience faster. Some respondents argue that news is changing, and especially the way the newspaper delivers news. This is reinforced by several of the respondents.

Now I don’t think that reflects on the journalism. It’s not ideal, but you know it is what it is, you know… the news is changing. I don’t think our standards are any less. (Journalist, L2)

The quote above proposes that news is changing, not necessarily the standards of journalism but the way they work. Thus, the response by the organization is to get its employees (including journalists, photographers, and editors) into this new way of thinking, focusing on the importance of the visual and getting news up faster.

…it's obviously a lot more about the now and it's a habit that you need to try and always remind yourself to get into and early on there were some major problems …problems is probably a bit strong—but just learning the new regime and the way things work. Reporters need to go out at things and they need to file instantly and get it back as quickly as possible, whereas before they'd go out to a crime scene and they'd have several hours to be able to pull that together. (Middle Manager, A2)

Thus, the response is about using the resources they have to publish the news faster and on different outlets and thus different visualizations. To be able to take advantage of these changes, the roles of the employees are changing as well. Today, journalists are taking pictures and photographers are producing content.

It’s all part of it. I mean, we’ve got photographers that are putting together their own packages, you know, with voiceovers and the whole lot. And it’s purely picture-based and then they voice over and they tell this story through their pictures, but they do it in a different way. And that’s all it is—it’s giving different arms to their… what they produce, and they’re very passionate about it and will always be useful across all our mediums and all our audience base. (Middle Manager, J2)

As shown in the quote above, the focus is on using the resources in-house as efficiently as possible to meet the requirements from the audience. As the news and roles are changing, the tasks are also expanding. Several journalists illustrate the complexities of these new tasks and the expansion of the role of the journalist, especially now that the newsroom includes the newspaper and television:
6. Findings: The West Australian

And while there I was filing for online, doing reports for Seven, and also then writing stories for the newspaper. And because we took a cameraman instead of a photographer, I was also taking photographs. So, the day was starting at about 3am, having to get up and do Sunrise commitments for Channel Seven...And then going to court, taking photographs, doing interviews, doing updates for the website as the day went on, meeting the 4:30pm and 6:00pm deadlines for Channel Seven, and then also trying to throw together a print story, quite a long one, that was somehow going to be fresh and different for the newspaper the next day. (Journalist, K2)

Here, the respondent was doing stories for the morning news, being a photographer, reading the bulletin for the television news, updating social media and the website, while also providing something new for the print paper in the morning. This quote illustrates that it is not only about meeting all the different deadlines, but is also about providing a fresh perspective for each outlet. In addition, the journalist must be absolutely sure that all the information is accurate. At The West, the organizational members argue that the norm is to sacrifice being first over accuracy—to a certain extent. The members believe maintaining their journalistic standards is more important, even though it is a balancing act:

I recognize that and it's a delicate balancing act between pumping something up online just to be first and ensuring that it's one hundred percent correct. And you know, people who aren't actively involved in that story, and speaking from experience here, will sometimes come out and say, well why haven't we got that story up now that someone else might already have up? Well, we're still going through the process of ensuring that it's a hundred percent accurate and I think it's far better to be a hundred percent accurate than necessarily be first by ten minutes or whatever that may be. (Middle Manager, A2)

Some respondents claim that the credibility of the newspaper is partly based on being first, while others suggest that it is not the audience that is pressuring the organization to be first but that it is more important for journalists to say they were first:

I think journalists probably overthink the importance of the whole exclusive tag. I think the public don’t care and don’t really understand what it’s all about. Yes, it’s great to be able to say that [The West] broke the story... because you’ll hear it there first and all of those sorts of things, but I think it’s something only journalists really care about, to be honest. Journalists need to become a little more in tune to the fact that I think, that the businesses have to survive and our jobs depend
on our ability to adapt and support and encourage the process, to make sure that it actually, that somewhere in the middle of all that, that bit of journalism still survives. (Journalist, K2)

At the end of the quote above, the respondent highlights the importance of changing but still upholding the journalism, which is the focus of the response to this issue: how can the organization change while still upholding its journalistic standards? Here, the focus is on traditional journalistic values, which include providing relevant accurate, balanced, and fair information.

An editor at the organization says that they encourage the journalists by pressuring them to be right and get that balanced and fair story. The use of loaded words is one example that the newspaper is minimizing. A manager said, “I constantly go through copy here knocking out the adjectives” (Manager, D2). The respondent continued that if a suggested headline is "The controversial police minister", the questions would be: who says the police minister is controversial? Is it only controversial because the headline is suggesting it? Is there a need to say it at all? Thus, the focus should be on reporting the facts and then the reader can decide if the police minister is controversial or not. The news should be news, not inflicted with the writers’ opinion. One respondent explained that this process is about maintaining standards, no matter what other outlets are doing:

We allow our political reporters to write columns. They can say what they like. But in the news, the news is the news. And it shouldn't be tainted by someone's opinion and chucking adjectives in there all the time. So, we try to maintain those sort of standards...People come to me and say, "The ABC ran it". I go, "Well listen. The ABC's not the benchmark for this newspaper. They can run what they like but we need to have our own standards and stick to them". But it becomes increasingly difficult. (Manager, D2)

Thus, the respondent suggests that the editorial team at The West constantly questions the content. This is done to ensure that the content is balanced and fair, which are not necessarily the same thing (Manager, D2). During observations in the newsroom, there was an incident where someone had changed a story without informing an editorial decision-maker, which resulted in yelling and profanity throughout the newsroom. The details were not discussed, but someone had changed a story so it became biased and the editorial team did not approve this change. It seems that it was a person from sales, marketing, or advertising that had been part of making this change, which resulted in a clash between the editorial and commercial. The newsroom is on the top floor, while sales, marketing, and advertising is downstairs, and there was “an idiot downstairs” who “fucked up” (Observations in newsroom, 2016).

This example shows that the organization is trying to live up to its journalistic standards and organizational members do get upset when this is not the case.
Relating back to the policies mentioned above that should control the quality, these are perhaps not perfect, but this example at least shows that the organizational members are taking the journalistic standards seriously and attempt to uphold the quality they broadcast.

It is important for the newspaper to provide a balanced and fair view, which means to give both sides of a story and provide an actual record of that event without imposing personal views. It is a never-ending process of questioning and evaluating the stories. Moreover, organizational members argue that the newspaper is now held accountable as the audience can instantly evaluate and point out potential discrepancies. Thus, the response is embracing immediacy and working to ensure faster publication of the stories on all platforms, but not at the expense of the journalistic standards. *The West* does not measure its own journalistic quality by comparing what other newspaper or outlets are doing, but only in relation to its own journalistic commitments, as outlined in the character in the beginning of this chapter.

**Summary**

A pressure stems from new technology that is increasing the workload and work pace, as the newspaper must publish content immediately on different platforms. The issue is constructed as a balancing act of giving in to the faster work pace but still upholding the quality of the content and thus the journalistic standards. It is changing the way organizational members work at *The West*, as they should publish content instantly, which could impact the analytical depth of the content. Thus, the organization is experimenting to find a balancing act of publishing fast and maintaining its journalistic standards of the content. The organization is evaluating this faster publication by constantly questioning the content to be sure that it is living up to the journalistic standards, but this is still an ongoing process. Thus, there is a continuous loop between adjusting and evaluating the experiment. However, there seem to be a change in what the quality of the content is, as some respondents say ‘visual is king’ and it seems the focus is on visual aspects to increase the quality. To cope with this change, the roles in the organization are changing to use the resources more efficiently. Thus, journalists are also photographers and sometimes photographers are publishing stories. Thus, even though this seems to be an ongoing process, the issue is interpreted as being partly resolved. The findings of this issue are summarized in the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction of issue and pressure</th>
<th>Pressure</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Experiment</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Oh, the internet’s fantastic…but it can be schizophrenic…it can be Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde. It can be fantastic or it can be terrible.</td>
<td>• Online content is expected to be published directly: there is a discussion on the impact it has on the quality of online news.</td>
<td>• We work harder. We work harder and adapt—you have to file copy for online, you have to do a couple of stories a day, you’re juggling stories in your head. Whereas previously, you might have had a couple of days to do one, now you’re doing a couple of stories. So, it’s just forcing journalists to adapt to work harder and cope with the additional workload. The job’s changed.</td>
<td>• Finding a balance of being first and being right</td>
<td>• A new notion of quality. • Quality in pictures—I mean, we put to air a lot of stuff now but it comes from the internet... You know, vision is king now, so we’ll take it from anywhere. • I mean, we’ve got photographers that are putting together their own packages, you know, with voiceovers and the whole lot. And it’s purely picture based, and then they voice over and they tell this story through their pictures, but they do it in a different way. And that’s all: it is, it’s giving different arms to their…what they produce, and they’re very passionate about it and will always be useful across all our mediums and all our audience base.</td>
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The final issue at *The West* is related to the one of most researched problems in newspaper organizations, namely money and the lack of a functioning business model. The following section shows how the organizational members perceive that *The West* is struggling financially.
6. Findings: The West Australian

6.2.4 Declining revenues

The constant decline in print circulation is resulting in fewer revenues, which is a struggle for many other newspapers globally. Research shows that the concern related to economic challenges for newspaper organizations is due to a lack of up-to-date business models for the present dynamic context that they are in. The changes have pushed these organizations toward a reliance on advertising revenues. Even though it has been claimed that the internet did not cause this crisis (Nichols & McChesney, 2010), it did make the crisis more evident and forced organizations to explore new revenue streams. Thus, newspapers are struggling to find a new revenue model that works, and the same situation is valid at The West. The move to online is stealing some revenues from the print circulation and from advertising. Thus, it is crucial to replace these losses and find alternative ways to make or save money if the organization is going to survive in this harsh online environment.

At The West, the issue is not about finding a payment model for the online content per se, as the organization has already decided not to charge for the content on the website. There is no intention to change that, as competitors in the area have tried to charge for content and it was unsuccessful and readership dropped immensely (Manager, B2). Thus, the focus at The West concerns finding other streams of income in the digital sphere. Consequently, the focus is on finding new ways to monetize digital content and increasing advertising revenues rather than experimenting with online paywalls. One of the respondents explained that today the organization lives and dies on advertising revenues, without which the organization is heading to a certain death (Journalist, U2). Thus, it is crucial for the organization to keep investing in sales and marketing to be able to survive. Furthermore, without money, the organization cannot fund its journalism. Thus this issue is explained as threatening not only the ability to provide content, but also its overall survival.

They’re trying to monetize digital internet. I don’t know, I’m glad it’s not me but they… they’re struggling with it…

(Journalist, L2)

The issue seems to be well understood; however, the problem is to solve it. The solutions are pointing to online where you get little return on investment, as the financial returns are only a fraction in comparison to print (Journalist, U2). Some respondents are afraid that the “industry got seduced by technology”, and that everyone “jumped on the new flashy thing and it screwed them over in the long-run” (Journalist, U2). Although The West is struggling, it is still performing better than some other Australian newspapers. This is mostly attributed to the fact that The West held on to the classified ads longer than other newspapers in Australia:
We are probably the most profitable newspaper in the world in terms of per capita of our profit margins... We’ve held on to classified a lot longer than most, albeit that that is diminishing more in the specific categories like jobs and maybe real estate, for sale...kind of private for sale stuff went years ago, but we had a paper there, *The Quokka*, which was the private for sale kind of stuff...that’s gone online a lot more and we have an online version of *The Quokka*. (Manager, B2)

The quote above shows that through assets in the group, Seven West Media, the organization managed to move some classified ads online and thus has not seen as harsh a decline as other Australian media groups (see Williams, 2013, for a detailed discussion of the impact of the loss of classified ads on the major media groups in Australia). Even though the decline in the classified ads has not been as harsh as for other groups, both the ads and circulation are declining, which naturally affects the budgets in the organization:

…we’re still 2.5 billion dollars’ worth of revenue so dying isn’t necessarily dying...but dying is going. You might have someone who says ‘my budget is going from one hundred thousand dollars to 80 and you’re getting 60 because I’m moving some money into digital…’ (Sales and Advertising, Q2)

As the respondent says above, the budgets in the organization are decreasing and the fight for money is getting fiercer as more and more funds are allocated online. This is creating a division in the organization, especially between the editorial and commercial sides.

…they want to protect their patch. I mean the people in this business from editorial need to understand the market dynamic and the leaders of this business need to tell them that effectively and be more confrontational and not be non-confrontational, which some of them are. So, you’ve all got to start to think more commercial, you’ve got to commercialize the business. (Sales and Advertising, P2)

As the quote above shows, there are some divisions in the organizations on how these new streams of revenue should be attained. The division between church and state is historically sensitive in newspapers and several respondents highlighted that the organization does not want to come across as compromising its journalistic standards for money. As seen above, there are members of the organization that are very concerned about the financial future of the organization, while at the same time there are members who are concerned that the changes in the business model could have a negative impact on the journalistic standards of the organization:
I guess that the thing that worries me is the business model, which is less about journalism and more about revenue... but that’s what the crisis in the media is about: it’s about the business model and the revenue model and I don’t know what’s going to replace it. Like our argument as media can’t just be ‘oh you’ll miss us when we’re gone’. That’s not going to cut it, so I’m hopeful that someone eventually cracks this issue of how to actually pay for the journalism. We think it’s important, but ultimately the market will decide that... (Journalist, M2)

Even if they do not have a solution, many of the respondents know that this is a crucial issue and something must change. It is simply not enough to sit and wait out whatever will happen in the market: the members are urging a proactive approach and a solution that does not compromise the journalistic standards. Furthermore, some respondents believe there are some small changes that could help in the long run. One example is if editorial is doing a product review, they could contact sales so there could be an ad of the same product line that is being reviewed:

You’ve got people in editorial, they’re going to write editorial about a special on perfume and makeup. Now they won’t go down and ring someone in sales and say ‘running editorial on perfume and makeup so you can run some ads: we’ll ring up Myer and David Jones and whoever it is and say, look, we’re running an editorial here, let’s put an ad on about your makeup department or your perfume department’; they say no, it’s too commercial. I mean it’s... they don’t understand that if they don’t pull their finger out and commercialize the model more effectively... because there’s ways and means of doing it bespoke that’s not going to make it look so, you know, commercial... they won’t have a job, simple as that. (Sales and Advertising, P2)

As seen in the quote above, there is a sense of frustration. Some respondents are urging the organization to make some changes before the situation turns from bad to worse, because people will not have a job. One respondent said money is bleeding out of this business and shows a steady decline in income, which is confirmed in the annual reports (Annual Report, 2014, 2015, 2016).

This is the reality of the business and this is what they’ve all got to understand is if they don’t pull their finger out and understand that that’s the reality of the situation...and it’s going to keep happening and the audience is going to keep going back... the business is fucked. (Sales and Advertising, P2)

Several respondents explained the urgency of finding a solution to the declining revenue, as this is an imminent threat to the survival of the organization. The West is addressing the issue with several responses. Firstly, a substantial
investment and change, which is an integrated newsroom with Channel Seven, and a second response is a fairly new strategy that includes videos. Each response is explained in the following sections.

Response: the integrated newsroom

In 2013, West Australian Newspapers (WAN) acquired Channel Seven, creating Seven West Media. In the group there are several digital news outlets and legacy media, including newspapers, television station, magazines, and radio. The merger led to a highly publicized event in the media industry where the organization merged the newsrooms of The West and Channel Seven Perth in early 2015. Industry bodies reported this as creating the first fully integrated television and print newsroom in Australia (News Media Works, 2014). The integration was perceived as a huge success, with reports saying “champions of change to share how it is done” (News Media Works, 2015).

Some respondents say that this move was forced upon the organization due to economic circumstances (Manager, D2) and that Channel Seven Perth had planned to move into the same building as The West because the old building was in dire need of an update. Thus, that Channel Seven would move was decided, though the actual placement of Channel Seven Perth was not. The initial idea was to keep the newsrooms separate and on different floors. However, this changed when an organization in Scandinavia that uses that same editorial system provided some inspiration for an integrated newsroom (Manager, B2).

A few organizational members from The West and Channel Seven went to Finland, Denmark, England, and Germany and took bits and pieces from each place with the intention to make what they thought would work best for the new newsroom in Perth. From this experience, it was decided that The West and Channel Seven Perth would share a newsroom to streamline resources and costs. Even though the official move occurred in early 2015, there was some collaboration prior to the actual integration of the newsroom. Moreover, some journalists have previously worked in both newsrooms. Even though many respondents pointed to the financial reasons to integrate, some also highlighted the opportunities with this move, that it would help to keep up with the technological changes in the media industry:

Efficiency: reduction in costs and to maximize opportunities.
It’s obvious that media companies, specialist media companies, traditional specialist media companies can’t stand alone. You need to be ‘multi-platformed’. (Manager, C2)

The plan was outlined, but now the management also needed to convince the members of both organizations that this was a good strategy. One of the managers said: “…as so often happens with change, before it happens, when it's first mooted, people are very apprehensive” (Manager, D2). This was reinforced through informal talks with several employees in the newsroom, as many
6. Findings: The West Australian

mentioned that they were positive but apprehensive (Observations newsroom, 2016). Another manager also said that most people were okay with the integration, though there were small segments that were either very excited or actively against the change.

To make the transition easier, two of the leading figures in the integration, the editor and news director, argue that transparency was an important aspect and that members of both organizations must be allowed to express concerns and get answers (News Media Works, 2015). Several respondents explained that there were two specific initiatives before the actual move began. Firstly, the management organized a ‘Super Saturday’, which included a big meeting and a lot of time for people from both organizations to meet and get to know each other, ending with a night at the pub. Secondly, a working group was created with people from different departments and from both newsrooms. Any member of the organization could approach the working group anonymously to raise concerns and issues, and then the group would discuss and come up with solutions and present them to the management. It was an active choice not to have top management involved in this group, as they wanted all members from different levels to feel included to make the integration easier, since the solutions would come from the people who would do the work.

Surprisingly, a clear majority of the respondents in this study explained that the emphasis was on the potential lack of parking and fridge space. However, it was later clarified that it started with more crucial issues, such as job cuts and ethical behavior—namely, if people would steal exclusive information (Journalist, T2)

So, our concern was, say we're both chasing the same story but *The West* finds out some really incredible element that we only find out at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and that actually really changes the story, but it's something unique that we've got. Are we obliged to hand over that piece of information to Channel Seven so that they can run it on their 6 o'clock news and therefore beat us to the punch by several hours...But those concerns have really come to nothing, I think. There's been occasions where Seven have had an exclusive story and said, actually, we think this is better going in the paper first and pointing to us that night on the same day, and vice versa. (Middle Manager, A2)

The concern about stealing stories was widespread, but as soon as the integration was in place, the members realized that this was not a problem. On the contrary, there have been journalists from both sides working on the same story and together breaking exclusive content. Thus, rather than undermining the content, the integration seems to have added opportunities and value to a certain extent. However, some concerns and perhaps prejudices still prevail. Based on observations in the newsroom, these concerns were mainly from the newspaper side, that the journalists in TV would not live up to the same standards as
journalists at the newspaper. Several respondents raised the issue that TV is ‘flashier’ (Journalist, U2) and not focused on investigative content:

So, you know, we do a lot of cross-promotion with Channel Seven always… perception with the public is, you know, there you go, you’re just selling each other. [There are concerns] that we’ve lost a bit of respect in some people’s eyes. So, we’re just seen as an arm of Seven. (Manager, I2)

As seen in the quote above, there was a fear that the integration would harm the credibility of the newspaper by association with a TV station. However, like the issue with stealing content, once the integration happened these concerns minimized, and one respondent said: “I think that the merger with Seven has actually broadened our news gathering ability” (Manager, I2). Several respondents emphasized the advantages of cross-promotion, where they would have a little teaser on TV the night before a segment or story in the newspaper the following day. This is a clear advantage according to some employees, and cross-promotion is a clear objective when following the news cycle at Seven West News: the 4.30 bulletin points to the 6pm, which in turn gives a teaser for the newspaper the next day (Observations in newsroom, 2016).

Nevertheless, some people are not fully convinced that the integration is the right strategy. These critics suggest that the TV and newspapers are just too different and wonder if this integration will actually bring any value to either company. By observing meetings, there seem to be differences between the TV and the newspaper and the way they work. For example, the focus at news meeting with the television crew was on the timing of the stories and to include stories that people care about, what sells, and to get a reaction. The discussion was also about social media and finding cute, affectionate stories and the emphasis was to stay away from ‘boring’. Even though there ware harsh words such as “I’d rather chew my own arm off” … “I couldn’t care less about that” when a story was pitched, the atmosphere was light and positive. It also shows how well the decision-makers know the audience and what works, since a decision was made in seconds.

During news meetings at The West, there was also a focus on what sells but instead of pitching the story briefly, there were pictures, sources, and a presentation of each story. There seemed to be a stronger focus on sources. For example, one attendee suggested a follow-up interview for a story: a decision-maker said no, and “we can’t talk to her, she is biased”. Thus, there was a strong focus on being right and providing a fair and balanced view. Perhaps some differences are due to the layout differences (TV has a few minutes while newspapers must fill up all pages in print every day). In the meeting with the newspaper, there was a focus on smaller stories, but every little story was questioned by a decision-maker about the method of investigation and, if there was any uncertainty, it was scrapped at once. Moreover, at the meeting with the TV crew, it was bang, move on, next, and the decisions mainly came from one
6. Findings: The West Australian

person. At the newspaper meeting, every story was discussed; everyone (or at least several people) had their say and then the decision-maker had the final say. Thus, the newspaper meetings were much calmer and slower in comparison to TV. One last point—perhaps a unique incident that one day—the newspaper meeting had a legal representative to give insights on the use of pictures; this person did not attend the TV meeting. Consequently, there are some differences in selecting stories, but the common focus is to include stories that people care about (Observations in meetings, 2016).

Even though there are some differences in the work, most members of both organizations appear to be happy and appreciate the strategic intent of the integration:

It’s been really good, really good, because I think it’s just added a whole other layer of vibrancy and interest to this floor. So, if you think newspapers… they’re contracting; slowly readers were going; readership’s going down; staff is getting less. So, they were just slowly, not imploding, getting smaller and smaller… people were worrying where it would go. And suddenly all these other people sort of turned up. So, we expanded, while everyone else is contracting, we expanded and you put them together and it’s…and then the TV people, different personalities, much bigger personalities. (Middle Manager, F2)

Even though there may be internal issues resulting from the integration, many members of the organization appreciate that the newsroom is expanding while many other newspapers and media organizations are getting smaller. Moreover, there are opportunities for synergies and people can learn new skills:

…we have TV reporters writing print stories, we have still photographers taking video on their phone, we have print reporters filming on their phone so they’re not just journos filming—they’re print journos filming. And on the other side, we’ve got print journos sitting down on the set hosting things and doing podcasts. (Middle Manager, E2)

The tasks of employees have changed dramatically as there are now more opportunities and responsibilities. Thus, even though the future seems to be in the digital, at this point it is important to focus on the legacy outlets as well to maximize the value of the content produced in the newsroom:

…you know, we’re tied to a 6pm nightly bulletin and a daily release cycle of newspaper, and so they’re hard deadlines, whereas digital lives forever. So that’s where I guess the idea is to maximize the value you’ve got from that staff whilst, you know, also ensuring that your core products that actually make all the money—that is, the TV bulletin and the newspaper—
remain as strong as possible in an obviously very rapidly changing environment in terms of consumer behavior. (Journalist, M2)

The integration included the print paper, the television news, but also a focus on digital that ties the two sides together. A manager pointed to the fact that this triad will change over time, that people working predominantly for print or television will decrease and more people will be moved to the middle, focusing on digital. This move has already started, where some people that used to be only newspaper or TV are now ‘digital’, although sometimes this move means not actually producing editorial content but rather reviewing content that potentially will go online (Observations in newsroom, 2016).

At the time of data collection, it was just over a year since the integration, and the impression was that there are still two camps in the newsroom (Observations in newsroom, 2016): Seven and The West. This was confirmed in discussions with members of the organization.

I find that if I actually find a good story, I will endeavor to keep control of it from Channel Seven. I’ll let them know that there’s a story with picture opportunities in it, we’re going to break it in the newspaper, you know, page one on a Saturday, but what I will do is interview people on camera, so I’ll take a cameraman along, go out and interview people, get pictures where we can, and then hopefully some exclusive TV content, which can then run that night on Channel Seven. (Journalist, K2)

There are journalists who, prior to the integration, had worked at both newsrooms, and for them it was an easier transition to work for ‘the other side’; however, there still seem to be some tensions. Nevertheless, there are definitely some successes in this integration, although management is under no illusion that the merger is perfect or complete. The emphasis is on the ongoing process and that the integration is only in its early days; thus, there are still many aspects to improve and opportunities to discover. To bridge the two sides, at all editorial meetings (that are still separate newspaper and TV meetings due to the differences in deadlines) there is at least one person from the “other side” (Observations in meetings, 2016). This increases the awareness of content and the potential for overlap between journalists and stories. However, the respondents indicated several areas that could benefit from some improvement.

Some employees pointed out that the integration is not working as well as some people might suggest. One person suggested comparing the output of the bulletin and the print paper. When I asked respondents about these synergies, all respondents gave the same two examples: a drunk driving politician that a journalist from Seven and a journalist from The West solved together, and a journalist who had worked at both Seven and The West before the integration and can easily move between the platforms. This made me wonder: does the synergy stop with these two great examples?
During this comparison, I would watch the bulletin at 6pm, then read the print paper in the morning, and check the website for overlaps in terms of topics and authors (reporters/journalists). During the time of data collection, April 2016, the suggestion of few overlaps between the camps was accurate. There were not more than two or three stories that overlapped (Observations in newsroom, 2016), and thus there are still inefficiencies that could be improved. The organizational members had some suggestions on how to begin to solve this. One suggestion was to allow more members of the organization to work across outlets: they need to learn the skills from the ‘other side’. Some are learning these skills, but it is still one aspect that could be improved, according to some respondents. When that happens, there will be more crossovers and blurring the lines between the two sides:

And I think we’ll see more crossover from the journos so, as confidence improves, as skills levels improve—and with that comes training—I think we’ll see more grounded journalists who can do more. And that’s already happening. (Middle Manager, E2)

As mentioned above, the integration is not finished. As one respondent said, “it has got its teething problems” (Journalist, N2). However, the discussion above is mostly about the editorial side of the organization: one part of the organization that was not included in the integration was sales and advertising which, in hindsight, according to a manager, was a mistake:

Part of the problem—and I suppose it's always easier to be wise in retrospect—is they didn't integrate it in the beginning. They've cleared an area and put Channel Seven there. Wrong. Big mistake. I mean we've now got, we are now cranking up the digital side of our business quite rapidly. And we have deliberately brought people like the programmers, the nerds who build websites and stuff like that onto this floor and integrated them. (Manager, D2)

The current situation is that the sales members for each side are working on different systems and are not collaborating. Thus, if you want to advertise on several platforms—which is argued to be an opportunity with the integration—you would have to work with several employees. This contradicts the goal that Seven West Media suggests:

‘Traditional Media’ is an obsolete term at The West—One Stop Shop is the new currency (Annual Report 2016)

The new structure of the group that is outlined in the annual report does not seem to be working yet. Several respondents reinforce that it is not currently the case and there are still separations in the newsroom and other departments. A respondent demonstrates this below:
Imagine][yourself who has a boutique and you’ve got a million dollars to spend and you want to come to Seven West Media to execute a campaign. You have to talk to someone from TV, online, and then probably just talk to four or five people from the print side of business because they rate each section of the paper separately. (Sales and Advertising, P2)

As the quote above illustrates, this separation, where you have to talk to several members from different parts of the organization if you want to advertise on several platforms, would be one aspect that the members of the organization would want to integrate further rather than working against each other. Several respondents reinforce this view:

So, I think integration, like, we need to be selling it as one whole overall package if we're truly integrating. (Sales and Advertising, U2)

Thus, the issue here is not only to integrate journalists between The West and Channel Seven but also the rest of the departments. This is related to the final aspect of improvement, which is communication. This includes communication throughout the organization, not only between the different camps in the newsroom, which was suggested by several respondents and reinforced by my own observations. There also seemed to be a lack of communication between the levels and the departments. During interviews and informal talks in the newsroom, several people asked me what other departments or groups were doing—for example, journalists asking about the top management, marketing asking what advertising is doing, advertising asking what sales is doing, etc. Thus, there seems to be a need for transparency and better communication throughout the organization (Observations in newsroom, 2016).

Recently, one employee heard about an acquisition by Seven West Media from the news rather than internally:

...communication is the thing, like, even new acquisitions that the business makes and things like that, like, we don't necessarily find out... about those. So, I don't know, I guess, a little more transparency with communication and ... I feel like that will come. (Sales and Advertising, U2)

Even though the respondent in the quote above believes that this will improve, it illustrates that there are some communication challenges to overcome in the integration. One of the respondents believes that this is on a day-to-day basis—that some days the communication is working well and other days not at all.

We still have communication issues. Some days we communicate really well and it all goes well and other days we don’t. That’s human nature; that’s no one’s fault directly, it’s just not thinking. So we can improve the communication. And
6. Findings: The West Australian

we can improve cross training: there is still a lot of that that needs to happen, in my opinion. (Manager, S2)

Thus, there are several ‘teething problems’ in this integration as several additional challenges are emerging as it progresses. The focus is on continuously resolving these challenges and teasing out opportunities to save money, using the combined knowledge in Seven West Media. This could give the organization a stronger position in the market, which is the hope for this initiative:

[To] be able as a collective group [to] get better at doing stuff and serve our readers, viewers, online audience better because we are as one. And we got more journalists, more fire power in this room than others have got so we can be better at doing what we do. That’s the sort of long-term aim. (Manager, R2)

The integrated newsroom is a response to cut costs and to create synergies between the formerly separate newspaper and television station. Thus, the organization is making changes so it can focus more on digital; however, the majority of the respondents state that this big change is not altering the character of the organization.

Well, the main purpose has probably not changed at all. It’s probably one of the things that hasn’t changed. It’s a commercial news service. It’s been operating, you know, to the same formula, you know, to the same successful formula since its inception. Obviously, it’s changed because technology has changed and the way we deliver our news has changed, but I think the fundamentals of journalism have always been the same. (Journalist, L2)

Again, the respondents relate the purpose to journalistic standards no matter if they were previously part of Channel Seven or The West. Most respondents claim that the response is a great opportunity and that it is not changing the journalistic standards in any way but rather opening doors technologically for the organization as a whole:

And we can do it very quickly using that technology. So, our purpose remains the same. The integration has created a vast opportunity, a vast range of opportunities, and we have only just begun. (Manager, C2)

This means that in the response to the declining revenues, Seven West Media decided to merge the newsrooms of The West and Channel Seven Perth to save money and to strengthen the technological expertise. Even though the response included changes in how members work, it is argued not to have altered the character of the organization. As mentioned previously in this chapter, the declining revenues are a crucial issue threatening the overall survival of the organization. Thus, the organization has several responses in place. The integration was focused on saving costs and combining skills and resources in
the group. The next response to this issue is the attempt to gain a new stream of revenues online through videos.

**Response: video strategy**

As the print circulation and revenues are continuously declining, it is crucial for *The West* to find new streams of income in the digital sphere. The challenge is to find sustainable revenues from online content, as the majority of income is still from the print product. However, some respondents argue that to search for new revenues that only make up for a fraction of the print revenues could be demotivating. Nonetheless, one of the suggested new streams of revenue is through videos with ads, which is a straightforward business model according to some respondents:

…you watch the ad before it, you make money, so it was quite a simple business model. (Middle Manager, F2)

Due to the integration with Channel Seven Perth, videos were a natural fit (Middle Manager, F2), as *The West* has access to the Channel Seven studio. Thus, one of the opportunities that emerged from the integrated newsroom was the access to gadgets and equipment, and the skills and competencies of people who have been producing videos for years.

You’re looking at an okay digital video and I’m trying to learn from it and then after a while we realize, hang on… we are surrounded by video people. Yes, it’s TV video, but … they understand emotion, they understand what people want to watch, they understand how to edit, to be emotional, they understand they type of stories that work. So, they’ve got all this natural video knowledge: it’s never really been geared for digital, it’s been geared for 6pm bulletins. So, we’ve learned a lot from them. Technically they’re very good…So we piggy backed off them… (Middle Manager, F2)

As the quote above outlines, there are several opportunities to learn new skills—for example, how to use the broadcasting studio to produce videos and efficiencies in how people work. The newsroom has highly skilled people with regard to video, and on top of that, there is also a technically advanced studio that is not used 24/7. Thus, the opportunity to learn from the people from Channel Seven and use the free time in the studio was an important opportunity. The revenues would come from potential advertising that the videos would include, as the audience now prefer to listen and watch the news on their phones (News Media Works, 2015).

We do know that, after looking at it, we can make money out of video if we do it really well and we ramp up the volume and really use social media well to bring more people to that video content, so that’s where all our efforts are focused at the
moment. We have a very defined strategy around video online, and it’s kind of two-fold video and social. Social to drive more and more traffic to us and drive out video, mostly Facebook; we will be dipping into the others…we already use Twitter quite extensively. (Manager, R2)

The strategy is explained as including videos on every post on the newspaper’s website. Moreover, it is about marketing the content and getting the audience to go from social media to the website, which is predominantly from Facebook as it is the more mainstream social media platform in Australia (Manager, R2). The strategy could include reporters and journalists reading a news story and posting it with the written content, but it also includes exclusive commentary and opinion content. Thus, the newspaper is utilizing the studio when the television crew is not using it, and creating podcasts about certain topics:

The one thing we are doing now with our integration is we are utilizing our television facilities and creating a lot of video content for digital online. We have a dedicated green screen studio set up for production using a variety of virtual sets...so that’s definitely changed. Before we never had to worry about that platform. But now sections of the newspaper, like the entertainment, business, health, and travel can produce video content for digital platforms. (Middle Manager, G2)

This initiative has created short videos on Eurovision and more comedy related videos such as ‘Two Pommie Sheilas’, where two journalists from England elaborate on the cultural clashes living in Australia. The video strategy consequently is a way to attract a broader audience while addressing the changes in consumption of news that are enforced by digitization:

Just having words and pictures doesn’t cut it anymore. They want video content and the good thing about it is (a) that we know that the readership wants it or our consumers/viewers, whatever we call them now. And number two is that it is one of the few ways online where you can make a fairly good return. You know, you’re asking about online compared to print and it’s dollars versus dimes. But video is still making some decent money online. (Manager, R2)

As the respondent says in the quote above, it is about responding to audience demands but also making money. To display ads with videos on the website is working better for The West than having a paywall (Manager, R2), but the strategy is still developing:

To focus on video and to do that online...it's still playing out, absolutely. There's been so much talk about it and yet it still is something that you have to constantly remind yourself of, because it's not second nature yet. (Middle Manager, A2)
The focus is on getting journalists to constantly think video on top of the written story. Thus, it is a challenge to implement this new way of working, getting everyone, from journalists to photographers, to think video on top of the pictures and written content (Middle Manager, J2). At a meeting, one attendee showed a video of airplanes. This person had shot the video, and then added text and “quickly tightened up the sounds and graphics” and it was done, “no extra work for anyone” (Observations in meetings, 2016). My interpretation is that this is what they want with the video strategy, that this is how everyone should be thinking and working. Even though most people at this meeting got very excited about different videos, a manager issued a warning and said, ‘we’re not trying to be a Hollywood production here”. The same person explained that that they can use video when it is suitable but it is not to get clicks and likes; thus it is about quality videos, not just having heaps of videos. The person related back to the balance of providing relevant information and not just putting anything online. Moreover, it is a question of resources, since they emphasized that someone has to go through all the videos (Observations in meetings, 2016).

Thus, there seems to be a need for balance in this strategy and there is some skepticism, specifically if there is money to cover at all. I overheard a journalist in the newsroom speaking about this issue skeptically and another person said this strategy is to “piss money against the wall with digital”. Another critic of this initiative (Journalist, U2) provided an example: in a weekly paper where the organization also sells ads, the paper can charge thousands of dollars for the print version, while a video makes six cents per view; thus, the video strategy is not enough. Even though it is positive to get some new revenue streams, some respondents are not convinced this is the strategy will make up for the losses in print (Observations in newsroom, 2016). These respondents highlight the importance of advertising and making the commercial side a more prominent part of the business. However, this skeptical view is not the majority in the organization, but it is an important aspect in relation to the more positive views of this strategy.

Similar to the integration, this response does include some changes but, at the same time, it is argued that it does not explicitly challenge the character. Thus, The West is responding to the pressure of declining revenues by focusing more on videos to gain revenue, although it is important to note the skeptical views on this strategy, that videos are perhaps not enough as a response: this is an ongoing process and The West must continue to find new sources of revenue.

Summary

New technology is argued to have reduced the print circulation and revenues, causing a pressure on the organization to find new revenue streams. At The West, the issue is explained as a purported threat as they need revenue to fund the production of journalistic content, and in the long run the survival of the organization could be at stake. The organization has decided that it will not charge for content online and thus is experimenting to find alternative sources of
income and decreasing costs in the organization. To do this, the organization has synergized in the group and integrated the newspaper newsroom with Channel Seven News. Moreover, the organization has initiated a video strategy to restore some of the lost revenues. The evaluation was mostly in terms of the efficiency of these experiments and whether the integrated newsroom is working, and if the video strategy is enough to make up for the losses in print. Thus, the organization is continuously evaluating and adjusting the experiment to resolve the issue, while upholding it is not changing its character. The findings are summarized in the table below.

Table XIV. Overview: declining revenues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction of issue and pressure</th>
<th>Pressure</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• This is the reality of the business and what they’ve all got to understand is if they don’t pull their finger out and understand that that’s the reality of the situation…and it’s going to keep happening and the audience is going to keep going back…the business is fucked.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Not charging for news online, and decrease in print circulation and advertising revenues.</td>
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<th>Issue</th>
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<td>• Not able to charge for content on the website as it was unsuccessful and readership dropped immensely for competitors in the region that did that.</td>
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<td>• They’re trying to monetize digital internet. I don’t know, I’m glad it’s not me, but they…they’re struggling with it.</td>
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<td>• The organization lives and dies on advertising revenue: without it, this organization is heading to a certain death.</td>
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<th>Experiment</th>
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<tr>
<td>• The integrated newsroom</td>
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<td>• Videos</td>
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<th>Response</th>
<th>Evaluate: Long-term implications</th>
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<td>• I think it’s just added a whole other layer of vibrancy and interest to this floor. So, if you think newspapers, so they’re contracting; slowly readers were going; readership’s going down; staff is getting less. So, they were just slowly, not imploding, getting smaller and smaller…people were worrying where it would go. And suddenly all these other people sort of turned up. So, we expanded, while everyone else is contracting, we expanded and you put them together and it’s…and then the TV people, different personalities, much bigger personalities.</td>
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<td>• Part of the problem—and I suppose it's always easier to be wise in retrospect—they didn't integrate it in the beginning. They've cleared an area and put Channel Seven there. Wrong. Big mistake. I mean we've now got, we are now cranking up the digital side of our business quite rapidly. And we have deliberately brought people like the programmers, the nerds who build websites and stuff like that onto this floor and integrated them.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Just having words and pictures doesn’t cut it anymore.</td>
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They want video content and the good thing about it is (a) that we know that the readership wants it or our consumers/viewers, whatever we call them now. And number two is that it is one of the few ways online where you can make a fairly good return. You know, you’re asking about online compared to print and it’s dollars versus dimes. But video is still making some decent money online.
- And we can improve cross training. There is still a lot of that that needs to happen, in my opinion.

Resolve/Adjust

- So I think integration, like, we need to be selling it as one whole overall package if we're truly integrating.
- …communication is the thing, like, even new acquisitions that the business makes and things like that, like, we don't necessarily find out... about those. So, I don't know, I guess, a little more transparency with communication and … I feel like that will come.
- To focus on video and to do that online...It's still playing out, absolutely. There's been so much talk about it and yet it still is something that you have to constantly remind yourself of, because it's not second nature yet.

6.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter described the findings from the second case organization, The West. Firstly, the chapter outlined the organization’s character, which has a clear emphasis on the journalistic responsibilities but also that the organization must make money. There is also an emphasis on the interplay of these two missions and the need for both in the organization. Secondly, the chapter outlined the values of the organization that are also tightly coupled with traditional values of journalism. This is not surprising, as it is in line with previous research that values in newspapers are connected to the profession of journalism (Deuze, 2005). After the values, the distinctive competencies of the organization were described. This section included three themes: firstly, the strengths of the organization, relating to the journalistic quality the organization provides; secondly, its parochial focus and expertise in the local community; and lastly, the members argue what the competition is doing worse and how The West is excelling in comparison to its direct and indirect competitors. In combination, these sections outline character, which the organizational members are reluctant to change.

The second section of the chapter focused on organizational issues and responses, where four issues were chosen as particularly challenging to fidelity to the organization’s character. Similar to The Courier, technology is explained as a main pressure, causing issues by itself and also initiating other pressures that are affecting the organization—for example, a decline in print circulation and advertising revenues, which has forced the organization to search for new
6. Findings: The West Australian

revenue streams. The relationship with the audience has also changed, as the readers are more critical as they can compare news sources online and, with an increasing work pace and workload, the organization is making some mistakes and the audience is picking up on this. Lastly, the internet has instigated regulatory reforms and changes in the market. In this case, the reform did not go through but it still had an impact on The West. These pressures caused several issues at the organization—for example, how declining revenues are threatening the organization’s ability to deliver its journalistic product and the overall survival of the organization. The response to this issue is two-fold. The first response is that Seven West Media decided to merge the newsrooms of The West and Channel Seven Perth to save money and to intensify the use of technology; the second response focused on videos to gain revenues.

Another issue was the audience’s lack of trust in newspapers: the response was engaging in the community. The response seems to be a focus on reinforcing its journalistic standards by creating separate features about issues in the local community. The organization is emphasizing that the features are not directly on the website and do not include any advertising. Through the initiative, the organization is reminding the audience of the standards and ethos of The West to recover some trust that has been lost. Another issue was immediacy and how these changes are affecting the quality of news. This issue is a never-ending process and is far from over. At this point, the members suggested that there is constant questioning of the content that falls on the editorial team to maintain the standards of journalism at The West. This is done to ensure that the content is balanced and fair. Moreover, the newspaper is held accountable to a larger extent now, as the audience can instantly evaluate and point out potential discrepancies. Thus, the organization is working to ensure a faster publication of the stories on all platforms, but not at the cost of its journalistic standards.

Another issue outlined above was the Finkelstein Inquiry. The organization was facing regulatory reform, where organizational members questioned the council that is supposed to hold them accountable to the public and to the ethical standards of journalism. The reform included suggested government funding and increased financial requirement. The members of The West suggested that these changes were contrasting with the purpose of the APC and especially the notion of the free press; thus it no longer saw a value in being part of the council. As a response to the reform, Seven West Media left the APC. Thus, the organization argued that it stayed true to its proclaimed character by leaving the council when it was perceived to conflict with freedom of press.

This is the final chapter of the findings. The following section is the discussion, where the findings in and between the cases are juxtaposed with one another and previous research, and the role of organizational integrity is explored.
Chapter 7: Discussion

This chapter outlines the discussion of this dissertation and highlights how the findings from the study answer the research question. The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the role of organizational integrity in responses to pressures and the posed research question is: How does organizational integrity shape a newspaper organization’s responses to pressures that may alter its character?

To answer the research question, this study first outlined the organizational members’ explanations of the character to understand what the organizational integrity is protecting. This chapter begins with a discussion on organizational integrity—that is, the fidelity to the commitments, which are infused with value, or institutionalized. Drawing on old institutionalism, section 7.1 uses the notions of the technical and the institutional to explain different levels of organizational integrity.

The second part of this chapter focuses on the role of organizational integrity in responses to pressures. The discussion focuses on similarities and differences between the organizations in this study in terms of both the actual responses and how they referred to their respective characters during different responses. This analysis highlights the balancing act between conformity and resistance in the responses and the role of the organizational integrity. The first part (7.2) specifically focuses on the internal dynamics of the organization, outlining the phases of responses and explores the role organizational integrity played in these phases. The second part (7.3) focuses on how this behavior is related to the field level and draws on both new and old institutionalism. At the end of the chapter, a figure is introduced to illustrate a holistic view of responses to pressures, organizational integrity, and how this relates to the notion of the field.

7.1 Unpacking organizational integrity

As shown in this study, the respondents were reluctant to accept changes to their character, which in these cases were strongly connected to journalistic standards. This behavior highlights the fidelity that the organizational members have to those commitments. To unpack this behavior, I turn to the meaning of the word ‘fidelity’. Fidelity stems from the Latin word ‘fidelitatem’, meaning a devotion, adherence, and to be faithful (The Online Etymology Dictionary, 2016a). Thus, the sources of fidelity should be longstanding aspects that the organization sincerely represents. The history of the word ‘fidelity’ helps explain the strong reliance on it, as its specific meaning denotes faithfulness. It also explains why the organizational members are reluctant to change and fear losing track of its
7. Discussion

‘promises’. It is a promise to uphold certain standards; thus, fidelity explains the resistance, the unwillingness to change. Selznick (1957; 1994) chose to explain fidelity as organizational integrity.

The word integrity is generally referred to as moral integrity, which has received scholarly attention focusing on corruption and ethical issues (e.g., Engelbrekt, 2011; Wear, 1991). This trend is not surprising, as integrity is defined as innocence and chastity, although the word stems from the Latin work ‘integritatem’, meaning soundness or wholeness (The Online Etymology Dictionary, 2016b). Moreover, the figurative meaning of integrity is “whole” or in perfect condition and stems from the word “integer”, which denotes being intact, or wholeness. Integrity also has positive connotations, as it refers figuratively to something that is untainted and upright. Thus, organizational integrity focuses on the fidelity of the organizational members to sustain its character. Moreover, the organizational integrity does not attempt to outline or decide what the character is: it represents fidelity to it. The organizational integrity could be interpreted as a barrier against pressures, a rationale for the organizational members to maintain its character, or to a certain extent accept changes. However, the fidelity seems to be stronger to some commitments outlined in the character than others. Thus, some commitments seem to be more important to maintain than others. To elaborate on these differences and the level of fidelity, I turn to the notions of the institutional and the technical. Thus, the following section elaborates on the differences in the fidelity, and draws on the technical and institutional to help understand potential changes.

7.1.1 The character and the tension between the technical and the institutional

As the organization establishes a character and becomes institutionalized (Selznick, 1957, 1994), it moves from the technical to the institutional. Thus, it can be understood as a spectrum from technical to institutional, where moving from the former to the latter is a process of becoming institutionalized. These two states are present to varying degrees, although at a certain point one is more prominent than the other (Besharov & Khurana, 2015). Institutionalization is a process: it means “to infuse with value beyond the technical requirements” (Selznick, 1957, p.17). This means that the technical is more easily replaceable, but the institutional has a value and should be kept. This value should reflect the organization’s history, the people in it, the interests that have emerged, and the way it adapts to its environment. In this study, the organizations continually referred to journalistic values and norms as important and longstanding, hence institutional. However, a danger is path dependence, when the members in the organization keep outdated commitments that are not evolving with environmental changes (Jervis, 1997). As the process of institutionalization starts, the organization becomes more stable and less flexible (Selznick, 1957). The organization is at this point persistent, trying to keep the structure intact.
Mechanisms that support the process of institutionalization could be, for instance, selectively recruiting similar personnel, instituting agreements or relationships with alliances, creating a special language, and the commitment by the members to accepted concerns.

In this study, both organizations are interpreted as having institutional commitments, mainly in relation to journalism and to fund the journalistic role. The organizational members at both organizations strongly identified the organization’s character with the professional values and norms of journalism and these commitments are important to the organization. The identification with professionalism in newspapers is not surprising, as it is in line with previous research on organizational values in newspapers (Deuze, 2005). Scholarly work suggests that except for reaching financial targets, the values in newspaper organizations are associated with the professional traits of the journalist who produce the news (Boczkowski, 2004; Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009). It was reinforced in this study that organizational members from different levels and departments explained the need for financial returns in addition to the traditional journalistic values and norms, such as providing a service of informing people, with validated, balanced, and fair content which is relevant and objective. Thus, in these cases, it seems that the fidelity is strong to uphold the general professional rules of journalism—arguably to legitimize itself as a newspaper. Several respondents argued that numerous aspects of their organization have changed but the journalistic values and norms have not.

Thus, there was a denial that the character of their organization had changed due to disruptions in the industry. They pointed to the history of journalism and newspapers to express that this was an enduring aspect of the organization. One example is from a respondent at The West who explained that the purpose is still to inform—they still have that same core mission (Middle Manager, F2, emphasis added). Respondents specifically denied any change: “the main purpose has probably not changed at all—it’s probably one of the things that hasn’t changed” (Journalist, L2). This suggests a strong fidelity. The purpose is the same, as it has meaning, a value for the organization. Thus, it is argued that these aspects are institutionalized and “beyond the technical requirement” (Selznick, 1957, p.17). The journalistic standards are highly integrated in the organization’s history; the organization has a fidelity to the professional values and norms and there is a reluctance to change. Moreover, this could also be connected to the strive for legitimacy (e.g., Suchman, 1995). These organizations connect the proper or appropriate activities to the norms, values, and beliefs in the rules of the profession of journalism. By highlighting that the organization is following and committed to journalism, the organization is legitimizing itself.

This strong fidelity to certain commitments is also highlighted in the history of newspapers, as technological changes have influenced newspapers in the past, from the telegraph, radio, and TV, to the internet (Winston, 1998). Even though the newspaper organization has been through all these technological challenges,
the character, as outlined here, has arguably suffered very little change, at least according to the respondents. This indicates that it is important for the organization to maintain and uphold journalistic norms and values, which also includes making financial returns to fund journalism and survive, which several respondents pointed to, again reinforcing previous studies about values and norms in newspaper organizations (e.g., Deuze, 2005).

To ensure that these institutional commitments are continued and highlighted, the organization recruit a specific type of people (Selznick, 1994). Both current and potential employees must live up to and portray the traditional journalistic standards, which was explained in both organizations. The organizational members argue that they secure a specific type of person by selective hiring and training of new graduates. There is a fidelity to uphold the editorial quality, and that is what the organizational members are working to preserve. Some of the respondents referred to “the promises of the organization” (e.g., Former Manager, A1), again suggesting that there is a strong fidelity to these commitments in the organization.

As the organizations generally described the purpose of the organization as the general role of journalism—for instance, to inform people and find and tell stories—the distinctive competence was not always in focus. Although when organizational members were asked to delineate the distinctive competence of the organization, the focus is on the parochial focus. This trend of hyper-local news has been noted in previous research (e.g., Kurpius et al., 2010). Organizational members at both The Courier and The West argued that their organization micro-focuses the content to its respective close surroundings to meet the expectations of its audience. This seems to be the separating aspect for the organizations: there is a need to describe the general journalistic norms and values to legitimize the newspaper and the distinctive competence lies in the local expertise. This could be explained by the organizational members strive for legitimacy, that they perceive different groups that they must address and highlight different aspects of the character to remain legitimate. For example, they need outline the journalistic values and norms in the strive for professional legitimacy. With digitization, they have access to a very broad audience and need to separate themselves from local and international competition, thus they try to narrow down the audience to the local community where they can show their expertise, highlight their distinctive competence, and uphold legitimacy in the narrower audience. Thus, it seems that the organizational members highlight different aspects of their character to different groups to gain legitimacy.

However, there are aspects that are interpreted as more technical, as the organizational members pointed to changeable facets, where arguably the fidelity is weaker. The organizational members explained an indirect awareness of the difference between what is interpreted as institutional or technical—for example, that the organizations deliver news is important, but not how they deliver it. The organizational members explained how they have to publish the content on several outlets and make increased use of social media to market
content; thus there is a new way of delivery. It is therefore not important how it is delivered as long as the news get delivered. This suggests that the delivery is more technical and could change, but not the news itself. In Selznick’s view the technical was related to the mechanical aspects of an organization. However, in this study, the organizational members described some of the traditional professional claims, such as delivery news, as a technical. Thus, arguing that delivery of news is not infused with value. It seems that the organizational members excused some changes in the organization as more technical and thus changeable. This suggests that the distinction between technical and institutional is socially constructed, and malleable.

To deliver reliable, quality content is key to the organizations. One respondent said that the organization is “doomed” if it loses track of this foundational aspect (Manager, I1). Thus, it can be interpreted that the delivery is a technical aspect of the organization; it is replaceable, as it is not infused with value. The respondents clearly highlighted the journalistic standards and the ability to make money to be able to live up to those standards as the ‘promises’. Thus, organizations include both the technical and the institutional, which is related to the normative rationale of organizational integrity: it helps establish in what aspects the fidelity is stronger. This distinction helps organizational members as they decide how to respond to pressures. Although, the construction of institutional and technical seems to change depending on the situation.

7.1.2 Legitimacy and upholding the institutional

Even though organizational members in both organizations emphasized that journalism is key to the character of the organization, there were contrasting views as to whether the organizational members live up to those promises in their activities. The findings here are in line with the old school assumption that an organization includes both technical and institutional aspects, with one being more dominant. In this study, the organizations are leaning more toward the institutional, as the members have a strong fidelity to the journalistic standards, at least in the way they describe the organization. Although, when highlighting the discussion new technologies and the challenges the organization is facing, there were some contrasting views on how these pressures have changed the organization—for example, with the issue of immediacy, which was perceived in both organizations and was challenging journalistic standards and the quality of the content. Some respondents perceived that the organization performs quite well in upholding the quality of the newspaper, but some also question whether opinion content, faster publications, and a lack of time to analyze the news is harming the quality of the content.

When respondents were asked about the quality of the content, they would outline common journalistic standards but then say it is in the eye of the beholder, suggesting that there is a subjective interpretation. These incidents
could be interpreted as a decoupling (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), firstly outlining
the norms of the profession—the rules they should follow, what they stand for—
but then suggesting that they could step out of these rules since quality is
subjective. This distinction of the institutional and the technical is helpful to
understand what the organizational integrity is protecting, but there seems to be
a reluctance to include change in some parts of the character of the organization.
It seems that that the rules of the profession are intertwined in the description
of the organization. The organizational members at times struggled to outline the
distinctive competence of the organization, and generally focused on the local
focus to highlight the specifics of the organization in question. Thus,
organizational members refer the professional logic to explain the organization.
It seems that organizational integrity connects to strive for legitimacy and
highlight how the organization follows the rules of the field, while also protect
the more narrow distinctive competencies of the organization. Some rules of the
profession must be outlined and the respondents almost become defensive and
feel a need to reinforce the importance of newspapers in general rather than the
organization. For example, the respondents argue that the newspaper is an
important part of a healthy democratic society, and the country would be in
trouble without journalism: both were recurrent discussions related to the
description of the character of the organizations. Thus, it seems that
organizational integrity is not only focusing on the core of the organization but
also focuses intertwines the field-values to legitimize the organization and the
field in general. Surprisingly, the descriptions, of organization-specific norms
and values were surprisingly few, there was a stronger focus on arguing for
professional norms and values. However, at times there were some disconnect of
how organizations described the character and the activities. The activities were
more connected to the organization itself and its local community. For example,
the community engagement at The West, which they say is part of the ethos and
philosophy of the organization, and referred to a reinforcement of the
journalistic role and function. The actual active related to the community
engagement seem to reinforce The West in its local community and not
journalism in general. Thus, organizational integrity seems to focus on the
organization, but an important part is to connect and legitimate the organization
in its field.

The organizational members seem to draw on the editorial logic to highlight
their journalistic legitimacy—that is, they highlight not only journalistic values
and norms in the organization, but also the importance of the newspaper as a
news outlet. They commonly discuss the freedom of the press, and how harmful
it would be to a democratic society if the newspaper no longer existed. Thus,
during a disruptive time, the organizations seems to reference prevailing values
and norms in the profession to highlight their legitimacy. This tendency has
been noted in previous research in professional organizations, where change
could present challenges but the organizational members justify the change in
normative terms as being consistent with providing a high-quality service
This seems to be the case in these organizations also: as a prevailing value in journalism is to provide content in a timely manner (Deuze, 2005). However, the organizational members also used the professional values to accept some changes, arguing that the change infuse existing values. For instance, organizational members now highlight immediacy as a new aspect of quality. They can now provide content instantaneously, so what is more timely than that? Thus, the members of the organizations seem to use the editorial logic to justify the change. They argue that digitization helps them provide news faster and justifies the change by reinforcing the prevailing values. This is similar to what Greenwood et al. (2002) found, that legitimation in professional settings is not solely focused on economic performance but on professional appropriateness. Thus, if an organization is changing, it should show how the traditional values are embedded in the change.

With all the changes in the industry that are challenging the organizations to fulfill their role, there seems to be some tension between keeping the journalistic standards and evolving with the environmental changes. This lack of acceptance could be a path dependency (Jervis, 1997), and organizational members are perceiving change in the institution as a personal loss. Thus, if a pressure is affecting the institutional, there seems to be lack of willingness to accept it. Moreover, the organizational members maintain that it is not changing even if they later indirectly explain some potential changes in the character. Some respondents discussed the organization in a normative way, using terminology such as “we should” be the opposition to politicians and call them out on decisions. It seems that these respondents want to uphold the institutional—that is, the journalistic commitments of the character. As they have been taught these general rules of the profession, they are unwilling to accept that these rules are perhaps also changing. This decoupling or unwillingness to change could be a reason why the respondents discuss journalistic standards and the importance of the newspaper in general, as they want to appear to be legitimate and upholding the general rules of the profession.

As previous research has argued that newspaper organizations are driven by professional values, the fidelity to journalistic standards and the ability to fund the journalism is strong. When there are changes in the environment that question these commitments, the organizational members are reluctant to accept changes. When the organizational members perceive issues in the organization, the organizational integrity is a rationale to protect their commitments. The character could be interpreted as a roadmap of what the organization is about—the organization’s informal structure (Ansell et al., 2015; King, 2015), which is shaped by goals and commitments and does not change unless it is under constraint. However, this could also harm the survival of the organization as it is not keeping up with the changes in its field. It seems the fidelity is strong to the editorial logic, although it is interesting that this was not solely a source of
7. Discussion

constraint but organizational members used professional norms and values to accept and justify some changes in the organization.

By highlighting the fidelity to the character, this study shows how fidelity works in organizations that are experiencing pressures. Thus, this perspective provides a deeper understanding of resistance and change although, as outlined here, the organizational integrity can be stronger or weaker depending on the issue and response at hand. Also, even though the respondents were discussing the organization, they constantly argued for values and norms of the profession. The following section highlights the role of organizational integrity in specific responses, in terms of both conformity and resistance. This study suggests that organizational integrity is manifested in responses in three separate ways, all of which include a stronger or weaker fidelity. These roles are explained in the following section.

7.2 Responding to pressures

This dissertation followed two newspaper organizations to get an understanding of the role of organizational integrity during responses to pressures. The study employed the concept of organizational issues to bridge the field-level pressure to understand how the pressures are perceived inside the organization. In each organization, I interpreted over ten issues in each organization in discussions with organizational members (see Appendices B and C). Some issues were discussed as challenging to the overall survival of the organization or its character. Thus, four issues in each organization were chosen to explore the role of organizational integrity in responses to pressures.

Issues are perceived based on how these align or contrast with the character. Then, a response is initiated. During the response, the organizational integrity is highlighted as a rationale for the organizational members, either to resist or to conform. Thus, the organizational integrity is constructed and manifests itself as organizational members perceive and respond to issues; it works to protect the character of the organization from issues, and to highlight the legitimacy of the organizational in the field. The fidelity is strong to institutional commitments, while the organizational members also perceive technical commitments in the character where the fidelity is weaker and thus more easily changed. Pressures can disrupt fields (Jepperson, 1991) and create issues in the organization to which the organization must respond. Such changes can have an impact on the socially constructed system of the field (Suchman, 1995) that organizations abide by for legitimacy (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). If these pressures challenge commitments to the character—which in these cases are strongly connected to journalism—the organizational integrity is strong and works as a barrier. Thus, the organizational integrity could be too strong. When the organizational members resist disruptive changes that affect the external legitimacy, it is rigid (Hoffman, 1997), while toward more technical commitments, the fidelity is
interpreted as weaker and it would be easier for organizational members to accept changes.

Based on this study, the organizational integrity has different roles, which include different levels of resistance and change. This study proposes three roles to highlight organizational integrity: immunize, maintain, and repair. An overview of organizations’ perceived issues and the experiments undertaken are shown in the table below, separated by the three roles of organizational integrity. In this view, the perceived issues are the events that organizational members perceived to affect the organizations. In this study, the experiments are not calculated activates based on the issue, but rather a trial and error, or trial experiments (e.g. Rerup & Feldman, 2011). Thus, here, experiment represent the attempts of the organizational members to solve the issue, and depending on the situation, the experiment could include much uncertainty and potentially the need to go back and forth to revise and change the experiment.

Table XV. Organizational issues, experiments, and role of organizational integrity at *The Courier-Mail* and *The West*
7. Discussion

The Courier:
Declining revenues
Threatening the overall survival of the organization and the ability to provide its journalistic standards
Experimentation with digital payment models/synergies to minimize costs
Maintain

The West:
Declining revenues
Threatening the overall survival and journalistic standards of the organization
The integrated newsroom/videos
Maintain

The Courier:
User-generated content
Threatening the journalistic values of the organization
Pressure to contribute from consumers → lack of control → gatekeeping → acquiring control
Maintain

The Courier:
Metrics: friend or enemy
Threatening the journalistic values of the organization
Clickbait → listen more to the audience → focus on quality
Repair

The West:
Immediacy
Threatening the journalistic values of the organization
Managing the quality and the faster and increased workload
Repair

The Courier:
Immediacy
Threatening the journalistic values of the organization
Managing the quality and the faster and increased workload
Repair

Thus, the issues presented above all create unique challenges for the organizational integrity. As presented in the table above, starting from the top, in two of the issues, the role of organizational integrity is to immunize the character, which includes a strong resistance. In the second tier, where organizational integrity maintained the character, the organizations defended against pressures that did not yield a change in the character but a change in the technical. Lastly, three issues yielded a response that includes some change in the character; thus, there is a disruptive change that the character reluctantly must adjust to and the role of organizational integrity is to repair the character. The responses are further explained respectively below.
7.2.1 Immunize, maintain, and repair: the role of organizational integrity in responses to pressures

The three responses explained here illustrate the internal course of events for the organizations in this study. By highlighting the role of organizational integrity, the study shows different responses by each organization to disruptions in their industry and how these affected its character. A fair share of research addresses responses to pressures (Clemens & Douglas, 2005; Goodstein, 1994; Julian et al., 2008; Oliver, 1991). In this work, the response is positioned in relation to the rules of the field rather than the internal dynamics. The table below summarizes the response and its characteristics: the right-hand column highlights the overall response and the field-level justifications for the response in previous research.

Table XVI. Overview of responses, features, and relationship to the environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role of organizational integrity</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Field-level justifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Immunize</strong></td>
<td>Change is seen as harmful to the character (Selznick, 1957).</td>
<td>Defy or manipulate (Oliver, 1991).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holding on to core ideologies (Goodstein et al., 2009).</td>
<td>Threat-rigidity hypothesis (George, Chattopadhyay, &amp; Sitkin, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Issue is perceived as a threat (Jackson &amp; Dutton, 1988).</td>
<td>Organizational inertia (Sorenson &amp; Stuart, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Resistance from a normative embeddedness in the institutional context (Scott, 1987).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maintain</strong></td>
<td>Fear of rigid fidelity: a balancing act between stability and change</td>
<td>Compromise (Oliver, 1991).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To defend the character, change is focused on the technical. Issue is</td>
<td>Ambivalence in responses to change (Piderit, 2000).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>perceived as threat, opportunity, or both (Jackson &amp; Dutton, 1988).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Repair</strong></td>
<td>Co-optation (Selznick, 1949).</td>
<td>Isomorphism; coercive, mimetic, normative (DiMaggio &amp; Powell, 1983).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responding to environmental forces so the organization can survive</td>
<td>Acquiescence (Oliver, 1991).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Issue is perceived as threat, opportunity, or both (Jackson &amp; Dutton,</td>
<td>Abides by the prescripts of appropriate behavior to gain legitimacy (Meyer &amp; Rowan, 1977).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Drawing inspiration from Goodstein with colleagues (2009), immunizing is a means of protecting the organization from pressures. In this study, it is a resistance when the organizational members perceive an issue as a threat as it contrasts with the character. The fidelity of the organizational integrity to the character is strong and works as a barrier against change to ensure there is no change in the character. Relating this role to previous research, it is associated with research on resistance, although, in previous research, the emphasis was on following the rules in the environment, not the internal commitments. This includes research on organizational behavior and resistance of the institutional environment (Scott, 1987) or organizational inertia (Sorenson & Stuart, 2008). Moreover, part of Oliver’s (1991, p.152) “repertoire of behaviors” is also relevant. In her study, defiance is a dismissal of institutional rules, while challenge is explained with the metaphor of rights activists: thus, the organization contests the rationalized norms or collective rules of the institutional environment. Here, though, the organization is reinforcing its character by immunizing it, and thus resisting the pressure.

In this study, the Finkelstein Inquiry is an example of immunizing. The organizational members instantly interpreted the reform as a threat to their journalistic commitments, and they actively worked against this reform. The West invited government officials to see how the organization works and that the reform would not be a fruitful form of accountability in their opinion; they also presented at events where they argued how the reform would be harmful. Thus, immunizing is when organizational members instantaneously perceive an issue as a threat and harmful to the character; consequently, the organizational members actively resist the pressure, and the role of organizational integrity is to immunize to keep the character intact.

The second role is maintaining, which also includes a sense of resistance. However, the difference is it includes some adaptation. Here, the organizational members construct an issue as either an opportunity, a threat, or both, which means it could be ambiguous or nondistinctive (Jackson & Dutton, 1988). The pressure that caused the issue is disruptive: thus, there is an enforced change. The organization has reached a point where it is required to make a change—if not, the organization may not follow the appropriate behavior or rules of the constructed system of the field (e.g., Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Here, the organization searches for changes in the technical, not the institutional, and finds responses that are related to technical activities or the structure of the organization. In the organizations in this study, the technical is exemplified by the lack of a functioning revenue model.

The organizations used trial and error to search for experiments to make money, though not including experiments that would challenge their journalistic commitments to the character. Thus, the organizations defended against the pressure by implementing changes in technical aspects of the organization, which they rationalize as not being crucial to character. The respondents argue
that they need a healthy profit to fund the journalistic function; thus it is important – the change is actually upholding the character. However, as long as the activity to make money is not undermining the editorial logic, it can be altered. This response could also include a lack of acceptance of change. The organizational members say that the experiment is not affecting institutional aspects of the character, which may or may not be the case in practice. For example, in relation to the video strategy at *The West*, the members argued it did not affect the journalistic content, but when they used this strategy, there was little focus on traditional journalistic values in the content and they preferred to have better visuals. Thus, it could be contradictory to a certain extent.

Maintaining is thus an adaptation to enforced change while keeping the organization’s institutional commitments to the character intact. This response addresses the motivations for the organization partly resisting and partly conforming, which are related to previous research that argues for a more positive view of resistance (e.g., Piderit, 2000). In such research, the good intentions of resistance and the variety in depth of resistance is discussed. Thus, an organization can defend its character while still making changes in the technical. Moreover, Oliver’s (1991) notion of compromise is also relevant here, where organizations are more active in promoting their own interests. However, in Oliver’s work (1991), the explanation of this behavior is in relation to competing standards (or logics) that the organization should balance. Thus, previous research again focuses on the field and responses in relation to the environment and not the rationale in the organization, which is the focus of maintaining.

Some research has addressed partial change directly or indirectly—for example, Orlikowski’s (1996) notion of improvisation, which discusses incremental and subtle change. In this view, change takes place in “ongoing practices of organizational actors” which emerge from “their accommodations to and experiments with the everyday contingencies, breakdowns, exceptions, opportunities, and unintended consequences that they encounter” (p.65). Similarly, Tsoukas and Chia (2002) discuss a middle ground between change and resistance, referring to microscopic change which “takes place by adaptation, variations, restless expansion, and opportunistic conquests” (p.580). Thus, changes in such scholarly works are mainly discussed as variations, and mostly in routines and practices, which is relevant in this response.

Maintaining is partly in line with the aforementioned research, as it may be subtle: the alterations in the payment model were many and quite small, which is in line with Orlikowski’s (1996) improvisation and Tsoukas and Chia’s (2002) microscopic change. However, the changes here can also be fairly large—for example, the integrated newsroom. The integration was a major change for all parties involved; however, managers, journalists, and sales representatives all suggest that there was no change in the character, although this was perhaps a sort of decoupling (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) or sensemaking in the organizations (Weick, 1995). The organizational members excuse the changes by arguing that
nothing is changing in what the organization stands for. Perhaps it is easier to accept change by arguing it did not include a change in what the organization stands for. Thus, the changes in the technical can be minor or major and could eventually include a change in the institutional, but there is a lack of acceptance of that change: for example, at *The West*, the argument was that the integration allowed for more competences in videos and that this was simply a new way of providing content and not changing the bottom line of the quality.

However, during the interviews, I got some contrasting statements, where some said, “content is king”, while others said, “visual is king”. This tension seems so be ongoing and perhaps this change will have an impact on what the organization stands for in the future; maintaining could be the first, small step before the organizational members accept a more substantial change. Thus, the rationale for organizational members is to defend the changes by upholding that the character is not changing and that a new way of visualizing content is not a change in the journalistic content. This means that when organizational integrity is used to maintain the character, it could show an uncertainty or ambiguity in the organization. Although the organizational members uphold that the response does not implicate the character in the short term, it could be a starting point for a larger change and the acceptance of that is not widely shared. A concept that is also relevant to further explain this response is dynamic conservatism (Ansell et al., 2015), where the organization changes to stay the same, although here it is perhaps an excuse to maintain the character, where members become defensive and reinforce that they are staying true to the promises of the organization. Thus, maintaining includes the organization aiming to preserve the institutional commitments to character to reinforce that it is not breaking any promises.

Lastly, if the changes are substantial, the response could include a change in the character, which is here referred to as repair. Through trial and error, the organizational members have unsuccessfully attempted to solve the issue while keeping the character intact. Thus, it is an enforced change. In the cases presented, the pressures were perceived as disruptive. Thus, repair includes conformity, and the findings here suggest that the organization expands its character: thus it does not erase any of its existing promises, but rather adds something new.

To absorb new elements to advert threats is referred to as co-optation (Hinings & Greenwood, 2015; Selznick, 1949). As co-optation is to absorb new elements, here it represents adding elements to the character of the organization. The organization responds to a pressure or an institutional development (Olsen, 2009a), which means there is a change in the rules of the field and the organization must change its character to fit the development. Thus, the role of the organizational integrity is weaker, so the organization can repair the character to include these changes. Goodstein (2015) describes a focus in Selznick’s work as restoring integrity, where organizations have damaged legitimacy from a scandal or a violation of values. Here, it is described to repair the character. Restoring denotes going back to how it was before, but repairing
includes a change to new aspects, absorbing new elements. There is a change in appropriate behavior and the organization should repair its character according to these new rules. To repair is therefore a type of conformity, which draws attention to previous research in institutionalism where the organization abides by the new prescripts of appropriate behavior to gain legitimacy (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). It could also be related to isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), as it is changing the rules of the field by which the organization abides, which could render homogeneity. For example, in this study, both organizations faced the issue of immediacy and conformed in a similar way, trying to highlight the positive aspects of immediacy and that it is now a part of the character. Again, this is related to Oliver’s (1991) behaviors and especially acquiescence, which means compliance and conforming to pressures. Thus, the organization repairs the character by responsiveness to include the changes that are enforced on it.

With these three responses, the aim is to expand the understanding of resistance and conformity, as these have been suggested as insufficient (Müller & Kunisch, 2017; Piderit, 2000). Thus, the findings in this study suggest a gradual understanding of how organizations respond to pressures. This is an effort to deconstruct and expand the understanding of responses to pressures, where immunizing is closest to absolute resistance, as the organizational integrity actively works to preserve and even reinforce the character. However, it is not absolute resistance: the organization cannot disregard the issue as it still induces a response, and absolute resistance would not render an acknowledgement of an issue. Maintaining is closer to the middle, while still being slightly closer to resistance than conformity as it includes changes in the technical but resistance in the institutional. Repair is closer to conformity, but it is important to note that this is not relentless conformity; it is enforced change that includes an expansion in the character. In each response, the role of the organizational integrity differed depending on the issue and response.

Thus, to illustrate and further deconstruct the role of organizational integrity, a conceptualization of four phases in each response is presented: perceive, experiment, evaluate, and resolve (see Tables XVII–XIX below). These phases were interpreted from the findings by reconstructing the issues and responses the organizational members explained. Through the grouping of the data in each issue, several themes emerged, as seen in the summarizing tables in the findings. From the findings, four phases were interpreted as highlighting the internal dynamics of the response. Firstly, the organizational members perceive an issue based on a pressure (Phase 1); then they initiate experiments (Phase 2) and evaluate the experiment (Phase 3), and, through some adjustment, resolve the issue (Phase 4). No matter if the response was immunize, maintain, or repair, the organizations went through similar phases. The course of events and the phases are described in each response below, starting with immunize.
In two issues, the role of organizational integrity to immunize the character was strong. At The West, the Finkelstein Inquiry and lack of trust are examples of this role of organizational integrity. In the early stages of these issues, the respondents perceived that they contrasted with the organization’s character. As mentioned previously in this dissertation, both organizations explained the character in connection with the professional values and norms of journalism, a healthy profit, and the parochial focus. These two issues particularly contrasted with some aspect of journalistic values and norms. The Finkelstein Inquiry challenged the notion of freedom of the press, while in the lack of trust the audience questioned whether the media were portraying facts and validated information. Thus, lack of trust questioned the credibility of the newspaper as a news outlet. Here, the organization took an active stance against the issues. Directly from the perception of the issue until it was resolved, it was perceived as a threat to The West’s journalistic role. As mentioned above, the organization went through four phases as it responded to the pressure. An overview of the phases, including the characteristics of each phase, the temporal focus, and the role of organizational integrity, is illustrated in the table below.

Table XVII. Organizational integrity and immunizing the character

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1 Perceive</th>
<th>Phase 2 Experiment</th>
<th>Phase 3 Evaluate</th>
<th>Phase 4 Resolve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of the phase</td>
<td>Characteristics of the phase</td>
<td>Characteristics of the phase</td>
<td>Characteristics of the phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Acknowledge pressure from the field</td>
<td>• Trial and error</td>
<td>• Consider stakeholder reactions</td>
<td>Reinforce the character and argue that the pressure contrasts with the constructed system of legitimacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Construct issue as a threat to the character</td>
<td>• Find arguments and rationale to dispute and counterattack</td>
<td>• Consider the long-term implications of the experiment</td>
<td>Resolving strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term focus</td>
<td>Long-term focus</td>
<td>Ensure the experiment is in line with the character</td>
<td>Resist the pressure and immunize the character to keep it intact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Adjust experiment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organizational integrity: strong

In Phase 1, the organization perceives the issue as a threat (Dutton & Jackson, 1987). It was perceived as contrasting with the character, which in this case is in strong association with journalistic standards. According to the respondents, the Finkelstein Inquiry was threatening the freedom of the press, while the issue of lack of trust challenged the organization’s journalistic credibility. Thus, the
people in the organization acknowledged the pressure and the influence it had on the organization by perceiving an issue. The organizational members quickly noticed a contrast with one of the institutional promises of its character and focused on the long-term implication if the pressure were to enforce change. The organizational integrity is strong and works as a barrier to keep the character intact.

In Phase 2, the organization initiates the response by experimenting. In both the Finkelstein Inquiry and the lack of trust, the organization wanted to prove the issue wrong. Thus, the focus of the experiments is to counterattack the issues. In the trust issue, the organization is using community engagement to reinforce and remind the public that it is telling the truth and has influence, thus reinforcing the journalistic standards. The focus is on finding arguments to legitimize that the issue is contrasting with the character of the organization. For example, in the Finkelstein Inquiry, the organizational members referred to the history of the freedom of the press and journalism to find a rationale to contrast the reform with its character. The organizational members even sent a written document to the advocates of the reform: thus they actively took a stance against the reform and argued against it. In this phase, the focus is to find reasons to resist. The organizational integrity is strong to the character.

After or during the experimentation, the organization moves to Phase 3, the evaluation. Here, the organization assesses the experiment by questioning (1) the alignment of the response with the organization’s character; (2) stakeholder impressions; and (3) the long-term implications of the experiment. Moreover, the role of the organizational integrity helps to underscore that the response is in line with the organization’s character. Then the organization moves to Phase 4, which is resolving the issue.

In this type of response, the focus is on keeping the character intact, arguing that the issue contrasts with the character and the constructed system of legitimacy in the field (Suchman, 1995). In this study, the organizations resist a pressure because it had a strong fidelity to the character, and the pressure and issue contrasted with that character. The character is strongly rooted in the organization; thus organizational members perceive that the organization cannot fulfill its promises if it changes.

Previous research suggests that an organization is unlikely to resist “institutional demands and expectations when it is highly dependent on the constituent exerting pressures” (Oliver, 1991, p.175). It could be argued that Seven West Media was dependent on the national press council, as it was holding it accountable for over three decades, as all large media groups were part of the council. The organizational members argued the council’s changes clashed with the journalistic standards, which were explained as an important aspect of *The West*’s character. Thus, the reason for leaving was argued to be a
dissonance between the purpose of the council and the organization’s own character.

This suggests that when issues can be perceived as contrasting with the character, organizations counterattack to resist, as organizational members believe it undermines their character. Thus, one reason for resisting a pressure—even when it is founded in elements on which the organization is dependent—is when it contrasts with the organization’s character; thus the organizational integrity is strong and works as a barrier to immunize the character. In the trust issue, the character of the organization is perceived to be undermined as it is accused of not living up to the general journalistic standards. Thus, the organizational members chose to counterattack this accusation by engaging in the community and reinforcing its role. The members used the organizational integrity as a normative rationality to immunize the character. In the other two responses found in this study, the organizations experienced similar phases, although the role of the organizational integrity differs. The following section illustrates maintain.

Organizational integrity as maintaining the character

This type of response includes some aspects of resistance and conformity, as it includes a change in the way the members work or in the organizational structure but arguably does not result in a change in the institution. At least not in the short-term, perhaps it is perceived more as a microscopic change (e.g. Tsoukas & Chia, 2002) of the technical at the time but it could yield more substantial change in the long-term. This means that the role of organizational integrity is to maintain the institutional commitments of the character. Similar to the previous response, each of the phases is illustrated below.

Table XVIII. Organizational integrity and maintaining the character

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1 Perceive</th>
<th>Phase 2 Experiment</th>
<th>Phase 3 Evaluate</th>
<th>Phase 4 Resolve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of the phase</td>
<td>Characteristics of the phase</td>
<td>Characteristics of the phase</td>
<td>Characteristics of the phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledge pressure from the field</td>
<td>Uncertainty</td>
<td>Consider stakeholder reactions</td>
<td>Defend the character and change technical aspects of the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct issue as a threat, opportunity, or both</td>
<td>Trial and error/lack of skills and knowledge to solve issue</td>
<td>Relate the experiment to the character of the organization</td>
<td>Resolving strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on technical responses, in structure and activities</td>
<td>Long-term focus</td>
<td>Adjust experiment</td>
<td>Conform to the pressure and maintain the character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term focus</td>
<td>Long-term focus</td>
<td>Long-term focus</td>
<td>Long-term focus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organizational integrity: neglected

Organizational integrity: strong
In **Phase 1**, the organization perceives the issue, which is perceived as either an opportunity, a threat, or both (Jackson & Dutton, 1988) and there is an uncertainty about the implications of the issue. An issue in both organizations in this study was the lack of a functioning revenue model, which challenged the ability to fund journalism and the overall survival of the firm. The role of the organizational integrity was not highlighted in this phase, but the focus was rather to understand how the issue aligned or contrasted with the character. Thus, there was uncertainty, as organizational members could not infer the implications of the issue, which is different from immunize, where organizational members can argue for the issue as a threat.

In **Phase 2**, the organization initiate experiments to solve the issue. The experiments are generally uncertain, trial and error, especially due to the lack of skills and knowledge. For example, the issue of UGC was perceived as an opportunity to save money and the organization had little knowledge of the issue but the organization still began to experiment. The experiments were interpreted as being based on the available resources rather than on specific initiatives in relation to the issue. As the experiment progressed, the focus was on finding a response that did not contrast with the character; thus it tried to change the technical. Organizational integrity is used to reflect on potential responses to find a resolution that does not involve a change in the character; thus the focus is still on the long term. As there is uncertainty of the implications of the issue, the lines seem to be blurred between Phase 2 and **Phase 3**, which is evaluation, although in this case, the course of events seems to be a loop of experimenting and evaluation. Here, the organization assesses the response by questioning (1) the alignment of the response with the organization’s character; (2) stakeholder impressions; and (3) the long-term implications of the experiment. The experiment could be adjusted and evaluated again. The role of the organizational integrity is to maintain the institutional commitments to the character.

Moreover, during the continuous experimentation, evaluation, and adjustment, the issue can change and become a threat. One example is the UGC issue, which was perceived as an opportunity but, as the experimenting began, the organizational members realized that this experiment converted the issue into a purported threat to the journalistic standards. Thus, this phase generally involves an adjustment of the experiment. It was interpreted that organizational members became defensive of the character when the experiments turned the issue into a threat. The organizational members then turned to the journalistic standards to justify the change, and to ensure that these professional standards were upheld. Thus, through the experimentation and evaluation, organizational integrity was stronger than when the organization perceived the issue as the organizational members began to work to protect and maintain certain aspects of the character. As the adjustment and evaluation continues and organizational member perceive that they have found a compromise, the organization resolves the issue, which is **Phase 4**. The focus is on maintaining the institutional commitments to the character and to divert changes to the technical aspects of the organization. The
result therefore maintains the fidelity to the character while changing some technical aspects of the organization. For example, in the UGC issue, the organization adjusted the experiment to include only pictures and videos that could be validated; thus it was deemed to no longer threaten the journalistic standards. The organization conformed to the pressure of audience members contributing with content, but argued that the journalistic values were upheld as they could now validate the content.

The role of organizational integrity is similar to that of a barrier, as it works to maintain the character but, rather than immunizing it, diverts changes to the technical. In this situation, even though the organization conforms, the response does not render a change in the character. Maintaining shares some similarities with dynamic conservatism (Ansell et al., 2015), which means to change to stay the same. In this study, it signifies the organization’s ability to adjust the response so the character of the organization can stay the same. Although Ansell and colleagues (2015) argue that dynamic conservatism is not enforced change, which is the case here, thus, there are some differences between their conceptualization and notion of maintain. Maintaining includes an enforced change where the organization manages to resolve it by changing the technical aspects of the organization. It means that the experiment corresponds with the character so the organization can stay the same. The organization managed to include some conformity but still resist to some extent; thus the role of organizational integrity is interpreted to maintain the character. In the next section, in contrast with the earlier responses, repair includes a change in the character.

**Organizational integrity as repairing the character**

Repairing includes a change in the character of the organization. Thus, the organization is using responsiveness (Selznick, 2000) to fix the dissonance between the old and new character. An overview of repairing, the characteristics of each phase, the temporal focus, and the role of organizational integrity are presented in the table below. In the following section, each phase is explained in detail.
In Phase 1, the organization perceives the issue as an opportunity, a threat, or both (Dutton & Jackson, 1987). In the issues in this study, there was a high level of uncertainty, so it was difficult to construct the implications on the character. Thus, the focus is on the short term: the organizational integrity is neglected and the impact on the character is unclear at this point. However, there is a need to respond to the pressures: it is urgent and enforces a change, which intensifies the uncertainty. In Phase 2, the organization starts one or several experiments to resolve the issue. Similar to maintaining, the experiments are generally uncertain, especially due to the lack of skills and knowledge, and it is a matter of trial and error. Since there is such high uncertainty, it contrasts to the earlier responses, as the focus is on the short term. As the organization begins to experiment the character is not considered, which differs from immunizing and maintaining. For example, in the metrics issue at *The Courier*, the organizational members had few skills and little knowledge of how it would affect the organization and so gave into clickbait. Even though they assumed some opportunities and some threats with the issue, they excused the experiment with the rationale that everyone was doing it.

After the experimentation is initiated, the organization moves to Phase 3, which is to evaluate the issue. Similar to the previous responses, the organization evaluates the experiment by questioning (1) the alignment of the experiment with the organization’s character; (2) stakeholder impressions; and (3) the long-term implications of the experiment. Thus, the focus shifts from the short to the long term. Much like maintaining, there seems to be a loop between experimenting, evaluating and adjusting. Previous research building on stakeholder theory reinforces the organization’s urge to give in to pressures from special interest groups (Julian et al., 2008), which is in line with findings in this study. Thus, if the experiment received negative reactions from stakeholders, it
was discontinued and if it received positive reactions, it was continued. Moreover, if the evaluation of an experiment included negative reactions from stakeholders or perceived negative long-term consequences, it could indicate opportunism. This means that short-term gains cloud strategic judgment (Selznick, 1957) and the experiment should be adjusted. In this phase, the role of organizational integrity represents a reflection on the match between the experiment and the character, as the uncertainty decreases through the evaluation, mainly through the reactions of key constituents.

After the evaluation, the organization focuses on resolving the issue (Phase 4). In contrast with maintaining, the organization cannot conform to stay the same: the pressure is disruptive and it is necessary for the organization to conform to stay legitimate. If not, the organizational integrity is too rigid (Hoffman, 1997) and the character will be outdated as it is not corresponding to the changes in the environment. Thus, there is a new aspect that the pressure includes that was not part of the character. For example, in the metrics issue, the organization had to adjust to include the audience demands in some editorial decisions. This was not part of traditional journalistic standards but, due to technological changes and a more participatory and interactive relationship in online news, it enforced a change.

The organizational members now include audience involvement in editorial decisions and so the organization expanded its character. The gatekeeping role has therefore been softened. This can be explained by co-optation, which is related to the displacement of goals and means as an organization absorbs new elements (Selznick, 1949). Consequently, the character is expanded and the old character must be broken and updated to include the new elements. In this study, I suggest that this is called repairing by responsiveness, as the character is changed: it is not restored to what it was, but rather repaired into a somewhat new character. Thus, the organizational integrity is weaker to allow a repair in the character. Therefore, repairing by responsiveness is a change in the character of the organization. This is a necessity when pressures in the field are enforcing change on the organization. In the cases in this study, the organizational members positioned the change as a new part of the character rather than erasing an existing commitment. Thus, the response was conforming in a sense, as the organization changed or accepted a new element. Consequently, in this response, the role of organizational integrity is to weaken the fidelity to the old character and repair by responsiveness to include the new, expanded character.

These responses and phases represent the internal dynamics of the organization and explain the different roles of the organizational integrity. These include a reinforcement or even a change in the character. However, the focus until this point has predominantly been inside the organization and the course of events explained by organizational members. The next section explains a perspective that includes the internal dynamics outlined above while still taking account of...
the field. Thus, the following section presents a view that includes both the field and the organization.

7.3 Field-level pressures and organizational responses

This dissertation studies the internal dynamics of the organization by focusing on the responses to pressures. The responses and phases above have illustrated the internal dynamics—that is, the steps the organizations in this study have undertaken in their responses to pressures, which include different roles for organizational integrity. A stronger or weaker role of the organizational integrity is exemplified in the immunize, maintain, or repair responses. The phases above show sequential steps with a clear beginning and an end; however, this is a simplified explanation of the responses. In the organizations, there seemed to be a back-and-forth process between these steps. Moreover, the organization continuously perceives issues and responds, more like a cyclical process. It is a never-ending process, and once an issue is resolved, the organization re-evaluates to search for new issues. Thus, there is continuous assessment and the organization continuously scans for changes and disruptions from the field, as seen in Figure 2 below.

![Figure 2. Responses to pressures and the role of organizational integrity](image-url)
Based on the assumptions from the new school of institutionalism, organizations are following the recipe for appropriate behavior, and by doing so they are aiming to gain legitimacy by conforming to rational myths in their context or field (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). These myths are external pressures on the organization from the field (MacLean & Behnam, 2010). The legitimacy is based on the organization’s ability to follow the proper rules and conduct of the socially constructed system (Suchman, 1995). These rules or recipe for appropriate behavior can also be disrupted or challenged as a result of political, technological, economic, and social changes (D’Aveni, 1994; Duncan, 1972). Thus, macro changes can have an impact on the meso-level, or the field. In this study, these macro changes stem from several of these changes, such as the internet, which is a new technology that has disrupted several aspects for the field of newspapers and journalism. In media and journalism, several studies have focused on identifying large disruptive changes in the industry (e.g., Franklin, 2008; Siles & Boczkowski, 2012). This section focuses on the perception of pressures by the case organizations. The aim here is not to generalize the pressure but rather to show that the case organizations are facing similar pressures to those noted in previous research, which is relevant in this study.

Firstly, technology involves how technological changes have either enabled or limited the work of journalists and other employees at the newspaper. Thus, the pressure relates to the effect of technology on how newspapers present content. It has started a discussion of whether the internet will kill the newspaper once and for all, or if this is just another episode in the continuous change that has been present in the newspaper industry for centuries. Moreover, technology has created several new platforms for the newspaper to work on, which have consequently added complexity and increased the workload. Lastly, technology allows the employees and managers to engage with and understand the audience better, as they have access to metrics and data about what the audience is reading. However, an overreliance on what people want to read could influence the editorial decisions negatively, as it affects the autonomous and independent voice.

Secondly, there are financial changes that create several pressures on newspapers to fund their operation. Firstly, there is a declining circulation of the print paper, thus resulting in lower profits from sales, which is one of the main revenue sources. Then there are declining revenues from the former ‘cash cow’ or ‘rivers of gold’ - classified ads. People are moving online, and that includes both audience and advertisers; however, the revenues from online are not making up for the losses from print. Lastly, there is no functioning online payment model—namely, coming up with a sustainable strategy of how to get people to pay for the formerly free online content. This is not surprising per se, as these pressures have been affecting newspaper organizations for over a decade already. However, the surprising aspect is the fact that these issues have been around for over a decade and are still relevant. It is something that
newspaper organizations are currently facing and the pure longevity of the pressure is emphasizing the impact on newspaper organizations.

Moreover, these organizations perceived social changes induced by new technologies that affected their relationship with the audience, which was also prevalent in previous research and it is unsurprising that it was discussed by the case organizations. This pressure focuses on challenges related to changes in how the audience is consuming news, especially the immediacy the internet is imposing on news production. There is now an expectation that newspapers provide content on several platforms, which has increased the workload. Secondly, there is a loss of trust between news producer and consumer. This is a worrying trend and news providers are starkly aware of the dwindling levels of trust. However, this destructive trend is two-fold. Firstly, the readers can now find news sources more easily and compare news outlets against each other. With the constant pressure to be first and having very limited time, mistakes are bound to happen. If the website happens to include any mistake, the readers will call them out on it. However, there is also a lack of trust in the reader by the newspaper: a view that ‘we as news providers know better’ could be harmful in this changing environment, especially when the reader has many choices of where to access news. Lastly, this pressure includes a change in control. Previously, the newspaper was a gatekeeper, telling the audience what they should read. It was not a two-way communication between the news provider and audience. Digitization has disrupted the relationship. Consumers want to engage, discuss, and even contribute with content, and newspaper organizations need to address this pressure from the audience.

Lastly, the political changes refer to the reform, where the Australian Federal Government argued that the media industry was too “culpable of transgressions” (Fernandez, 2013, p.25) and was in need of reform and thus the Independent Media Inquiry (the Finkelstein Inquiry) was launched and released in 2011. This was a change that affected the organizations in the Australian newspaper industry.

In the case organizations in this study, there seems to be a connection between pressures, as most are connected to broad technological changes and the internet. However, this new technology has also changed the way the newspaper organizations make money. Moreover, the changes caused by the internet are also related to the audience and changes in consumption, in terms of both readers and advertisers. The readers want news instantly (and the majority want it for free) and more and more people are reading their news online. Consequently, the advertisers want to be online as well and the advertising revenues from the online do not measure up to the print revenues, which creates a problem for the newspaper. Again, this is explained as a result of technological changes and the rise of online publishing.
The organizations and organizational members are part of the field, in this case, there is a strong focus on the professional values and norms that are constructed and upheld by the members of the field. As has already been established by the new school of institutional theory, there are top-down influences from the field on the organization. Thus, there are multi-level pressures that are interpreted in the organization, which here are interpreted in the organization as issues. Thus, the macro-changes induce pressures in the field of newspaper organization and journalism—that is, pressures that are challenging well established practices, norms, and beliefs. It is argued here that these are interpreted as issues (Dutton, 1993; Dutton & Duncan, 1987; Melander, 1997) by organizational members. The perceived issues stemmed from the disruptions caused in the field, as seen in the figure above. Organizations are bombarded by numerous issues but, because of cognitive, normative, and managerial resource constraints, respond to only a few (Daft & Weick, 1984). Thus, organizational members filter the issues that they perceive. The issues are constructed and labeled as either threat, opportunity, or both (Dutton & Duncan, 1987; Melander, 1997).

For example, the Finkelstein Inquiry was instigated due to technological and political changes, and a new reform was on the horizon. At The West, this issue was perceived as a threat: the organizational members argued that the reform was contrasting with the proclaimed journalistic standards of the organization as it challenged the freedom of the press. Thus, organizational members used the editorial logic and the norms and values of the journalistic profession to construct the issue. However, an issue is not necessarily a threat. At The Courier, the issue of UGC was perceived as an opportunity. The issue also stems from technological developments; however, the employees perceived it as an opportunity to save money and resources. Thus, issues can be threats, opportunities, or both. Once the issue is constructed, the focus is on experimenting to resolve it, which was uncertain and a trial and error process regardless of whether it was an opportunity or a threat (or both). For example, to boost the online ratings and to solve the metrics issue, which was an ambiguous issue and perceived as a threat and an opportunity, The Courier recognized an increase in numbers when using sensationalist journalism and clickbait. In this case, the experiment included much uncertainty and a lack of skills and knowledge. The threat was not realized until after the experiment was started and the evaluation was begun, considering how the response corresponds with the organization’s character.

However, for some issues, the reflection began earlier, such as the lack of trust issue at The West. In this process, the organization actively reflected on the correspondence of the experiment and the character. It highlighted that the initiatives of community engagement were started to reinforce the ethos and philosophy of the organization. Thus, it could reinforce its specific journalistic values, which were clearly challenged by the lack of trust; thus, there was less
uncertainty in this issue. This suggests that the level of uncertainty influenced the role of organizational integrity in responses to pressures.

After the experiments are started, there is an evaluation, which includes a reflection on whether it is in line with the organization’s character, the reactions of the stakeholders, and the long-term implications if the experiment is continued. The respondents generally referred to this as going back to the “promises of the organization”. The promises of the organization were explained as the aims, values, and overarching purpose of the organization and are interpreted here as the character of the organization.

Moreover, that the organizational members argued that it “goes back to the promises of the organization” suggests a fidelity to what the organizational integrity represents. When there is less uncertainty, such as the issues of lack of trust and the Finkelstein Inquiry at The West, the organization relied less on external evaluation and more on internal reflection on how to keep the character intact, or, as I call it here, immunize the character. On the other hand, when there is more uncertainty, such as the issue of metrics at The Courier, the evaluation focused on the external and the reactions of stakeholders, which encouraged the organization to question how the experiment fitted in with its character.

In the evaluation, the organization also focuses on the long term, and the responses can change from an opportunity to a threat. For example, in relation to UGC at The Courier, the issue was an opportunity and initially a success as it saved money and resources; however, soon the sheer amount of content from the audience became overwhelming and the organization could not validate it. Thus, this experiment was not sustainable as it was perceived to challenge the journalistic role. It seemed that an evaluation by The Courier spurred a realization of the potential long-term negative implications of this experiment rather than the short-term savings. This is similar to Selznick’s notion of opportunism (Selznick, 1957), where short-term gains cloud strategic judgment. The monetary situation at the newspaper was already strained and the possibility of saving money made the people inclined to conform to the pressure. However, in several instances in this study, the evaluation is conducted after the experiment was launched, and not used to guide future actions, as previous research is suggesting (e.g., King, 2015; Paine, 1994).

During the evaluation, the organizational members adjust the experiment to resolve the issue. The result will be either to immunize, to maintain, or to repair the character. If the organization resists the pressure, the role of the organizational integrity is to immunize the character, which was the case with, for example, the lack of trust and the Finkelstein Inquiry at The West. Or, if there is an enforced change, the organizational integrity aims to maintain the character and organizational members work to adapt an experiment so it no longer challenges the character. For example, both organizations illustrated this response in the issues concerning declining revenues. Both organizations made
7. Discussion

significant changes, such as *The Courier’s* synergies with the group and *The West’s* integrated newsroom; nevertheless, the organizational members argue that these changes did not induce an alteration in the character of either organization. This means that the organization partially conformed and resisted by making some changes to the structure or practices in the organization but still upholding the professional standards. The organizational members excused, or perhaps decoupled, these changes from the institutional commitments of the character. They argued that it did not matter how they made money as long as they did make money to fund the journalism, which is at the core of their character. The role of the organizational integrity was to maintain the character, even though it perhaps was a normative rationality for the organizational members to accept the changes.

However, if the change is disruptive, the organization cannot necessarily stay the same, which was the case with the issues of metrics and the immediacy of news. In both organizations, immediacy induced a change in the character of the organizations, as they expanded the journalistic values. Moreover, in the issue of metrics at *The Courier*, the focus on the audience and emphasizing the need to provide content that the audience want was not one of the proclaimed aims of journalism, as the professional journalist should be independent and a gatekeeper of information (Deuze, 2005; Hermida, 2011). As one of the respondents said, the old school view of journalism, which includes the journalist as a gatekeeper, does not hold anymore. Therefore, *The Courier* now includes values such as relevance to the audience’s lives, and includes some editorial decisions based on what the audience wants rather than the previous view of what they should read. Thus, the long-term implications of not responding to this pressure could be detrimental, as the organizational integrity would be too rigid (Hoffman, 1997). Consequently, the organization uses responsiveness to expand its character to include the new elements. Consequently, there is a need to break and repair the character, as the old character and is no longer valid. To repair the character could be a necessity to stay legitimate when pressures in the field are imposing change on the organization. As the organizations repair its character, this could also reflect a change in the constructed system these organization are part of. As organizations are members of a field, a change it what these members perceive as appropriate or related to their strive to legitimacy, could gradually ‘push back’ and also change the constructed rules of the field.

The cyclical format of the response at the micro-level represents the ongoing perception and construction of issues. In the organizations in this study, there seemed to be several ongoing issues and a constant scanning for new potential issues.
7.4 Summary

By focusing on the role of organizational integrity, this study highlights the internal dynamics of organizational responses to pressures. It shows a rationale of why and how certain responses were made. Firstly, the chapter focuses on the character and the differences between technical and institutional commitments. It shows the strong connection to professional norms and values in these newspaper organizations and the importance for organizational members to uphold the journalistic values in the organization. Based on the findings in this study, the role of organizational integrity in responses to pressures differs. Thus, the organizational integrity either guides resistance or is used as an evaluation during the response.

The findings in this dissertation contradict some previous research that claims that organizational integrity is a guide for potential strategic responses (Paine, 1994). The role of the organizational integrity seems to be connected to the disruptiveness of the pressure and the uncertainty organizational members associate with the issue. When there was a high level of uncertainty in the issue, the organizational members struggled to perceive the implications some experiments would have for the character. However, if the members could directly perceive a clear contrast to the character, it was easier to define an experiment that was in line with the character. In this study, the role of organizational integrity differed depending on the issue. Especially when the organization perceives a lot of uncertainty and a lack of knowledge of the issue at hand, the organizational integrity is used to evaluate strategies rather than to set the agenda for future action. Lastly, this study suggests notions that expand the meaning of resistance and conformity by explaining how organizations immunize, maintain, and repair the character, which is highlighted by the focus on organizational integrity.

The following chapter outlines the conclusions of the dissertation, focusing on the theoretical and empirical contributions, limitations, and suggestions for future research.
Chapter 8: Conclusions

This chapter outlines the conclusions of this dissertation. Section 8.1 presents a brief summary of the findings. This section is followed by discussions on the theoretical contributions to institutional theory (8.2) and media management (8.3), as well as a presentation of the implications for practice (8.4). The chapter then identifies a number of limitations (8.5) and points out opportunities for future research (8.6), before making some concluding remarks (8.7).

8.1 Summary of findings

By investigating two newspaper organizations and combining methods such as interviews, observations, and a wide variety of documentation, this study contributes to a further understanding of the micro-dynamics in newspaper organizations and organizational behavior in general. Joining the increasing interest in and use of Selznick’s work, this study draws on the concept of organizational integrity. By exploring this concept from old institutional theory empirically, this study adds a new perspective to responses to pressures and highlights the tension between conformity and resistance. As organizations respond to pressures, the role of organizational integrity is either to immunize, to maintain, or to repair the character. Through these distinctions, a new definition and expanded roles of the organizational integrity is suggested. Thus, this study revives the concept of organizational integrity in institutional theory to help us understand how organizations balance the tension between conformity and resistance.

This dissertation sheds new light on how organizations respond to pressures by exploring the concept of organizational integrity. The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the role of organizational integrity in responses to pressures. The purpose is operationalized with the following research question:

• How does organizational integrity shape a newspaper organization’s responses to pressures that may alter its character?

To answer this question, the study investigated two Australian newspaper organizations, the newspaper industry having been marked by disruption and change for more than two decades. This study focuses on how the organizational members understand the character of their respective organizations, and how they constructed issues and responses to those issues. Thus, an embedded case study design was used to investigate The Courier-Mail and The West Australian.

The study follows the assumption of institutional theory, that field-level pressures and logics constrain organizations as they strive to follow proper rules.
and norms in the field to gain legitimacy. To build an understanding of how and why organizations conform and/or resist a pressure, this dissertation uses the concept of organizational integrity and explores its role in responses to pressures. To bridge the field-level pressures and the organizational members’ understanding of them, the study draws on the theoretical concept of organizational issues. Thus, field-level pressures create organizational issues; in this study, four issues were interpreted through discussions with respondents in the two newspaper organizations. The four issues were perceived as particularly challenging for the organizational character, and consequently the organizational integrity.

To understand the role of organizational integrity in responses to pressures, the findings outlined how the organizational members explained the character of their organization. This allowed me to understand how the organizational members explain the mission, values, guiding principles, and distinctive competence of their organization, which represents the character in this study. In these organizations, the character was strongly connected to the professional values and norms of journalism and the organization’s ability to make revenues to fund its journalistic content. Moreover, the distinctive competence was commonly described as parochial expertise. After these commitments were outlined, four issues and responses were highlighted to understand the course of event in each issue. Through the analysis of these issues, the organizational integrity was interpreted as playing different roles in the responses—namely, to immunize, to maintain, or to repair the character. Thus, these roles represent various levels of change.

As this is the concluding chapter of this dissertation, it focuses on the contributions of this study, firstly outlining the theoretical contributions to institutional theory and responses to pressures. This section highlights the answer to the posed research question, and what existing theory this study extends and confirms. Secondly, contributions to media management are outlined, as this is an interdisciplinary thesis. This section focuses on research in media management and journalism and how this study extends our understanding of newspaper organizations. Thirdly, practical implications are discussed before some limitations are outlined. The final section outlines some opportunities for future research, which marks the end of this dissertation.

8.2 Contributions to institutional theory and responses to pressures

This study makes the following contributions to institutional theory and responses to pressures.
8. Conclusions

- A first contribution is to explore organizational integrity empirically, thus reviving one of Selznick’s key concepts and positioning it within some developments in the theory.
- Organizational integrity represents a normative rationale for organizational members to uphold the character in the socially constructed system. Thus, organizational integrity is a legitimating process for organizational members to ensure that the organization is following the rules of the field or professional logic.
- This study answers calls for a more nuanced understanding of resistance and conformity and suggests three responses by highlighting the role of organizational integrity: to immunize, to maintain, and to repair.
- The study contributes to our understanding of how organizations adapt while staying true to core values and competences. Thus, immunizing and maintaining would be responses that answer this question, while repairing highlights a situation wherein the organization adapts its character to gain legitimacy or remain legitimate.
- By introducing the phases and the notions of immunizing, maintaining, and repairing, this dissertation extends the understanding of organizational behavior in terms of balancing change and inertia. Organizational integrity works as a normative rationality; it can be either a defense mechanism to resist change, or a means of evaluating the experiment and upholding legitimacy.
- This study reinforces the concept of dynamic conservatism but contrasts with previous views that the character guides action.
- This study contributes to the positive view of resistance. The organization does not necessarily resist a pressure due to a lack of skills or resources, but due to the organizational members’ perception that the change contrasted with their constructed system of legitimacy.

These contributions will now be discussed in somewhat more detail below, focusing on the concept of organizational integrity and what it adds to the contemporary view of institutional theory, and highlighting aspects of this study that extend or reinforce previous research.

8.2.1 The concept of organizational integrity

As recent studies have pushed for an understanding of how organizations adapt while remaining true to core values and competences (Ansell et al., 2015), organizational integrity is a concept that highlights this conundrum. It is important to outline what the organizational integrity is protecting. As the concept represents fidelity, it specifically focuses on the importance of the persistence of the character. The organizations in this study highlighted the importance of upholding their professional standards as they faced pressures. As
I draw on Selznick’s theory of organizations, this section highlights how organizations become “infused with value” (1957, p.17)—that is, they develop a character that arguably guides the trajectory of an organization’s actions and future activities (King, 2015). Thus, in the organizations in this study, the character was tightly coupled with the professional standards of journalism. General strategic management suggests that every organization has a unique purpose and reason for being (David, 1989), but in this study both organizations explained the character in relation to professional standards of journalism.

As newspaper organizations have been seen to embrace the professional values and norms of journalism, this could be a reason that the descriptions of journalism became generic. This is in line with previous research on organizations with strong professional values: the focus is not on presenting a unique mission but rather on following the rules of the profession (Bucher & Stelling, 1969). Thus, in this study, the respondents discussed the traditional values of the profession and the importance of the newspaper in general rather than outlining how the organization itself is unique—for example, referring to newspapers’ role in a healthy democratic society and the fear of what would happen if newspapers did not hold governments accountable. This is in line with a theoretical suggestion from old institutionalism that the organization uses its history and contribution to social welfare to build up its character and internal legitimacy (Selznick, 1994). Thus, the organizations showed a strong fidelity to the professional norms of journalism and demonstrated that these commitments are important aspects of the organization that the organizational integrity aims to protect.

Moreover, Selznick (1957) argues that the organizational integrity should protect the distinctive competence of the organization. The organizational members in this study articulated the distinctive competence of each organization as its local expertise. Again, it seemed that the organizations relied heavily on the professional editorial logic to explain the distinctive competence of the organization and rather differentiated the organizations geographically. Thus, the organizations inform the public, although, due to the changes in the industry, the public is now narrower than before. The organizations justify this local focus by arguing that they know the area better than other newspapers and can thus better fulfill the journalistic role. Thus, the field that the organizations describe here did not necessarily consist of only newspapers, but rather of local news providers, including radio and television. Thus, the organizational members argued to separate the organization from other newspapers but also other news outlets in the local area.

There was agreement about relying on editorial standards to explain what the newspaper organization is—that is, the ‘institutional’ in the organization. The rationale that the institutional is infused with value and thus fidelity to the character is present: the organizational integrity is especially strong in relation to institutional commitments. Thus, as there is unity in what the organization stands for—the character—it becomes a normative rationality for the
8. Conclusions

organizational members to protect it and it is used as a buffer against change. This study highlights the importance for organizational members to stay true to the organization’s character, as the cases in this study used the professional values as an internal rationale to resist some imposed changes. Moreover, this study argues that some commitments to the character are stronger than others—hence the delineation between technical and institutional commitments. Organizational members try to divert imposed changes from institutional to technical commitments: thus, the organizational integrity is stronger to some commitments than others. When an issue or pressure challenges the institutional commitments, the organizational members turn to professional norms to resist the change. Alternatively, the members attempt to divert changes to technical commitments.

Striving for organizational integrity is also related to legitimacy. This means that the organization claims legitimacy by contributing to the social or economic welfare. In this study, as the newspaper organization contributes to a healthy democracy, it has a value. The view of legitimacy in this study is of “a generalized perception or assumption that organizational activities are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (Suchman, 1995, p.574). However, the striving for legitimacy seems to be two-fold. It is related to a more external legitimacy, as these organizations connected legitimacy to the rules of the profession. Thus, the constructed system for these organizations is strongly related to journalism, as the organizations showed reliance on journalistic standards to define the organization, not focusing on creating uniqueness but rather repeating journalistic principles. Moreover, that members accepted changes as they could still live up to professional norms also seemed to legitimize actions in the organization. Organizational integrity thus seems to span across the micro-level and connect to the organizational members’ construction of the field, especially in this type of organization that shows a reliance on the professional logic of journalism. Consequently, organizational integrity spans different levels: it represents how organizational members relate the character of the organization to the field it is in. It is a legitimating process for organizational members to be sure that the organization is following the rules of the field or professional logic.

The foundation of the institutional is in the history of the organization, the professional standards, and what organizations consider important within their socially constructed field. The organizational members’ attempt to maintain the familiar environment—the character—and the fidelity to these claims becomes a rationale for rejecting changes. Thus, organizational integrity is normative and exists only in the perceptions of organizational members, but it can be used as a barrier when organizations encounter pressures and issues. This study provides an original approach and perspective to understand why organizations resist or conform to pressures and thus extends previous research by adding a new dimension to this discussion by highlighting organizational integrity. By exploring organizational integrity empirically, this dissertation adds a new
perspective and expands the understanding of the micro-foundations in institutional theory by presenting different roles of organizational integrity in responses to pressures.

8.2.2 How organizational integrity shapes responses to pressures

By highlighting the fidelity to the organizational character, we can further unpack the internal dynamics of responses to pressures. Thus, with this perspective, we gain a better understanding of the motivations for resistance and/or conformity. The following section summarizes the implications of researching organizational integrity as the organization responds to pressures, in terms of both conformity and resistance. With regard to responses to pressures, this study makes two contributions. Firstly, it feeds into previous research that suggests there is a need for a more nuanced understanding of resistance and conformity (e.g., Müller & Kunisch, 2017; Piderit, 2000). This study suggests three responses by highlighting the role of organizational integrity: immunize, maintain, and repair. These findings also contribute to Ansell and colleagues’ (2015) conundrum of how organizations adapt while staying true to core values and competences. Thus, immunize and maintain are responses that specifically answer this question, while repair highlights a situation when the organization adapts its character to gain legitimacy.

Immunizing is a notion close to resistance, but it includes a pressure that is perceived as a threat to the character and the organizational members counterattack the issue to immunize the character. Thus, immunizing is a positive aspect of resistance, as the organization is actively reinforcing its character. The interesting aspect of immunizing is that organizational members turn to professional norms of journalism to rationalize the resistance. Thus, it seems that immunizing is a reinforcement of the character. The organizational members are using professional norms and drawing on the professional editorial logic to justify their resistance. It is a counterattack where the organizational integrity is strong.

Maintaining includes some aspects of both resistance and conformity. Organizational members work to protect the institutional and change the technical. The institutional is what is infused with value (e.g., Besharov & Khurana, 2015), which is founded in the history of the organization, its professional rules, and its societal importance. Thus, the organizational members are maintaining the institutional by diverting change to the technical, which is perceived to be more easily replaceable. Again, the organizational members are drawing on professional norms to justify not changing, at the same time excusing the change in what is interpreted as technical so as not to affect their professional norms. Thus, some aspects of the character are untouchable and
8. Conclusions

cannot be changed, while other aspects are excused as more technical and thus changeable.

Repairing includes conformity. It is not relentless conformity, but is rather a response that includes much uncertainty and enforced change, as the pressure challenges the character and organizational members do not appear to have the skills or knowledge to solve it without changing. It forces an alteration in the character: the organization cannot change to stay the same. The organization repairs by responsiveness as the organization changes the character. Thus, the organizational integrity is weaker and not too rigid (e.g., Hoffman, 1997). It seems that these changes are fairly disruptive and are accepted in the organization. This indicates a change in the rules of the field: a new practice or value is now generally accepted even though it initially did not align well with the professional norms. Thus, it seems that this top-down change was reluctant, but there is a point where the organization cannot disregard the change as it would not keep up with the general changes in the field.

Concerning the role of organizational integrity, it varied depending on the response and the phase. For example, when the role was to immunize, the organization could quickly perceive that an issue contrasted with its character. The organizational integrity was strong and was used as a barrier against change. Previous research (e.g., Paine, 1994) argues that integrity should guide action or a strategy. This current study does not fully support this. Here, I argue that organizational integrity is a normative rationality which could be present from the initial stages of a response when there is less uncertainty concerning an issue. In these situations, the organizational integrity can guide action. Moreover, organizational integrity could also work as a defense mechanism and a buffer against change. On the other hand, when the organization perceives an issue with much uncertainty, it is difficult for the organizational members to fully comprehend the potential implications for the character. In this study, organizational members described uncertainty, mainly that there was a lack of skills or knowledge to construct an issue. This uncertainty created difficulties in understanding how the issue potentially could contrast with character. Consequently, the organization used trial and error to try different experiments and then evaluated the experiments in hindsight. Thus, organizational integrity is not a defense mechanism nor guiding action; rather, it normatively helps organizational members to evaluate the response in relation to the organization’s character. Thus, the organization could divert changes to more technical aspects of the organization or reach a realization that it should change the character to uphold legitimacy.

Moreover, there were changes that could include a change in the character, which is here referred to as repair. Repair includes a conformity, and the findings here suggest that the organization expands its character; thus the organizational members uphold the previous commitments but include something new. To absorb new elements to avert threats is referred to as co-optation (Hinings & Greenwood, 2015; Selznick, 1949). As co-optation is to
absorb new elements, here it represents adding elements to the character of the organization as a response to an institutional development (Olsen, 2009a), which means there is a change in the rules of the field and the organization must change its character to fit the development. Thus, the role of the organizational integrity is weaker so the organization can repair the character to include these changes. Goodstein (2015) describes a focus in Selznick’s work as restoring integrity, where organizations may have damaged their legitimacy through a scandal or violation of values, rather than restore here it is argued to repair the character. In the issues, there seems to be a change to something new. Thus, a change in the constructed system of legitimacy and the organization should repair its character to fit these new rules, not restoring the integrity to what it was before but repairing it to fit the development.

By explaining the responses, this study extends the understanding of responses to pressures by highlighting the role of organizational integrity as an addition to the previous work on responses to pressures. Moreover, this study also unpacks the responses by presenting four phases of the responses, namely: (1) perceiving the issue, (2) experimenting, (3) evaluating the experiment, and (4) resolving the issue. Thus, by highlighting the four phases, this study unpacks the internal dynamics of the responses to get a deeper understanding of what the organization goes through in response to pressures.

By introducing the phases and the notions of immunize, maintain, and repair, this dissertation extends the understanding of organizational behavior in terms of balancing change and inertia. Organizational integrity works as a normative rationality to evaluate the experiment and to uphold legitimacy. More specifically, this adds to the scholarly discussion of the importance of values in organizational behavior (e.g., Moss et al., 2017) and this dissertation shows the significance of responses to pressures by explicating the fidelity to the character of the organization. Thus, in immunizing and maintaining, the organizational integrity was used as a barrier to resist the issue at hand, either to keep the character intact or to reinforce the character during the evaluation of experiments. Thus, the balancing act that organizational integrity represents (Dacin et al., 2002) is exemplified in these responses both in terms of resistance (immunize), conformity (repair), or a middle ground (maintain).

Moreover, this dissertation reinforces the notion of dynamic conservatism (Ansell et al., 2015), where the organization changes to stay the same. Dynamic conservatism was useful to explain resistance, or immunizing. However, this does not hold in the scenario of disruptive pressures on the organization which result in a change in the assumptions, values, and norms in the field. In this enforced, disruptive change, there is a need to change the character and consequently repair it to fit with the new rules of the game.

Previous research outlines that the fidelity to the character should guide the agenda of future action (King, 2015; Paine, 1994; Selznick, 1994), aim to keep the familiar environment. When organizations experience less uncertainty, this
is reinforced in this study. However, as these organizations experienced disruptive changes over a long time, the change is forced on these organizations to a point where something must change or the organization may not survive. Thus, this study suggests that when organizations experience disruptive, enforced change that naturally includes a higher level of uncertainty, it was difficult for the members to understand how an issue affected the character. Thus, it did not drive the response from the beginning, instead, after experiments were initiated, organizational members evaluated the situation and reflected on the commitments of the character and the experiment, to explore if they could align. It guided the response to a certain extent but the outline of the response.

Lastly, previous research suggests that resistance has negative connotations (Piderit, 2000) and findings from this study highlight a more positive reason for resistance. By highlighting how an organization resists a pressure when it contrasts with the organization’s character, this study proposes that it is not necessarily that organizations do not have the capabilities and resources to conform and therefore resist. In this study, I argue that organizations can resist a pressure because they perceive that the pressure contrasts with the character. The values (professional or organizational) are strongly rooted in the organization; thus, if it changes, organizational members perceive that the organization cannot fulfill its commitments. Previous research suggests that organizations are unlikely to resist “institutional demands and expectations when it is highly dependent on the constituent exerting pressures” (Oliver, 1991, p.175). This is not necessarily reinforced here, as Seven West Media left the national press council that had held them accountable for over three decades. This suggests that when issues contrast with the character, organizations counterattack to resist it, as organizational members believe it undermines the character. Thus, this study expands our understanding of organizational resistance, answering recent calls for a better understanding of why organizations resist and conform (Müller & Kunisch, 2017), although more research is needed to unpack the dynamic and complex nature of responses to pressures.

As organizations respond to pressures that are perceived to challenge the character, the organizational integrity helps organizational members to rationalize change and resistance. More specifically, the fidelity is strong to the ‘institutional’ in the organization—the non-negotiable. The rationale is that the institutional is infused with value and thus there is a commitment and a strong fidelity. Thus, as there is unity in what the organization stands for, it becomes a normative rationality for the organizational members and it is a buffer against change. The foundation of the institution is in the history of the organization, the professional standards, and its contributions to the welfare of the society it is in. The organizational members attempt to maintain the familiar environment and the fidelity becomes a rationale to reject changes. Thus, organizational integrity is normative and exists only in the perceptions of organizational members, but it can be used as a justification when organizations encounter pressures and issues,
in terms of both resistance and conformity. This study reintroduces and extends an old concept, namely, organizational integrity, which contributes to our understanding of the micro-foundations in institutional theory. Especially the way we understand responses to pressures, including both resistance and conformity. Thus, this study joins the discussion on the continued importance of old institutional theory and the scholarly work contributing to research ‘inside organizations’ (e.g., Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2012, p.175). The study does so by highlighting how organizational integrity shapes a newspaper’s organizational responses to pressures that may alter its character.

8.3 Contributions to media management: embracing change in newspaper organizations

This study makes the following contributions to media management and specifically research on newspaper organizations.

- Highlighting changes in newspaper organizations, in contrast with most previous research which highlights resistance and inertia. This study demonstrates changes in the gatekeeping function, the inclusion of the audience in editorial decisions, the acceptance of the immediacy of news, and a stronger focus on hyper-local news. These contributions give a better understanding of how newspaper organizations are changing.

- A softer delineation of the former clash between the commercial and editorial logics in newspapers, thus contrasting with some of the previous research on the topic.

These contributions will be discussed in more detail below, focusing on how this study helps us understand newspaper organizations and outlining areas where this study extends research on newspaper organizations, mostly focusing on how the organizations manage change, as that is one of the gaps in previous research.

8.3.1 Changes in newspaper organizations

Even though most research manifests newspapers and journalists as resisting change, the findings in this study highlight some aspects that the organizations are embracing. There is no doubt that the newspaper industry in the western world is in a disruptive state (Franklin, 2008; Hanusch, 2015; Kenix, 2016; Siles & Boczkowski, 2012). The changes from digitization have confronted newspaper organizations with economic, technological, political, regulatory, and social pressures. As shown in this study, the organizations perceive pressures
stemming from digitization, which also has an impact on the financial health of
the organization, the relationship with the audience, and market changes, in
terms of both regulatory change and the competitive landscape. There is
increasing scholarly attention on the impact of the aforementioned pressures on
journalistic values (Hujanen, 2016; Kenix, 2016; Sherwood & O’Donnell, 2016;
Tully, Harmsen, & Singer, 2016). The general discussion stems from the fact
that few values are solely connected to the newspaper organization, as the values
are associated with the old school of journalism, where the journalist is a
gatekeeper of information (Boczkowski, 2004; Mitchelstein & Boczkowski,
2009). This study suggests that journalism and newspaper organizations are
changing, which contrasts with previous research that argues for persistence and
inertia in these organizations (Črnič & Vobič, 2013; Mitchelstein &
Boczkowski, 2009).

Even though some scholars are focusing on changes, the general perspective is
that journalists traditionally have a role as a public service (Siles & Boczkowski,
2012). Thus, there is a fidelity to journalistic norms that limits newspaper
organizations’ ability to change (Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009; Spyridou et
al., 2013) and journalists as a social group are in a defensive state, trying to
resist all changes that are presented (Spyridou et al., 2013). This is associated
with old journalism that is out of touch, both culturally and technologically
(Skoler, 2009). In this study, several aspects of journalism are suggested to have
changed: (1) the gatekeeping function; (2) the inclusion of the audience in
editorial decisions (which also includes a new focus on content); (3) the
immediacy of news (and what this means for the quality of news); and (4) a
stronger hyper-local focus of news and community engagement. These aspects
are discussed respectively below and relate to existing research on journalism,
starting with the gatekeeping role.

As revenues are in decline, the number of editorial staff is decreasing, and new
platforms are increasing the workload, there is a need to explore new
organizational agendas and economic motives (Vujnovic et al., 2010). This view
was reinforced in this study, as journalists and managers noted that there is a
need for change, at least to a certain extent. The editor and journalist are still
gatekeepers, as they set the agenda and filter the content, but there is a new
relationship between the audience and journalist as there is now a more
horizontal conversation (Former Manager, H1). Following White’s (1950)
definition, a gatekeeper is a filter of what information the public should take
partake of. This study does not reinforce previous findings that the gatekeeping
is mostly gone (Lewis, 2010): the findings here suggest that the filtering role is
still there but what has changed is the relationship between newspaper and
audience, as the communication now is reciprocal. This study suggests that there
is some change in the journalistic values, as there is a stronger focus on what the
audience wants, in comparison to the old school journalism and the one-sided
communication.
Recent research (e.g., Welbers, van Atteveldt, & Kleinnijenhuis, 2015) suggests that there is a conflict between the normative responsibilities of journalists and what they are economically encouraged to do, which is also reinforced here, especially with regard to immediacy, as publishing content first could generate more readers and money, but it could be detrimental if the fast process harms the accuracy of the content. Thus, it is a balancing act to accommodate the normative commitments and financial incentives—for example, where the traditional norms of the profession are not in line with the use of audience metrics as a guide for editorial decisions (Welbers et al., 2015), which is supposedly challenging the democratic role of the newspaper, as journalists and editors now listen to what people want, not what they need (e.g., Meyer, 2009). The characters of the organizations in this study were strongly connected to traditional journalism and the gatekeeper, and one-sided communication where the audience could not talk back. However, due to changes in the industry, the audience is now in focus and there is a spoken need to listen more to the consumer. Thus, the newspaper is no longer in control, which creates a tension with the old journalistic standards.

The tension between the changes outlined here and the old school journalism could relate to the discussion by Lewis (2012, p.852) on “mismatched ethics and expectations”. The mismatch in newspapers is that these organizations have not yet accepted the changes in values and work (Welbers et al., 2015), but the organizations in this study seem to show an acceptance of these new aspects. This suggests that the mismatch seems to be minimizing. However, research suggests that metrics are actually not a good indication of what the audience wants (Meijer & Bijleveld, 2016), which contrasts with the views of the organizational members in this study. The organizational members highlighted the opportunities and benefits related to metrics and that they now know the audience much better. Thus, in the organizations in this study, there is an acceptance of metrics from both journalists and editors. The use of metrics is beneficial to learn about the audience and readership habits: there is no shame in using that information to gain readership. The findings in this study suggest that the organizations absorbed this opportunity for interactivity and participation with the audience to a further extent than previously reported in research on newspaper organizations.

Thus, the information gained from metrics is helping organizations to know the audience better, and these analytics-driven developments (Hanusch, 2016) are helping newspapers and editors to target content to their audience. Thus, this study suggests an acceptance of a new relationship with the audience to include them in some editorial decisions; consequently it indicates a change in the standards of journalism. Moreover, metrics in the newsroom allow the ranking of stories (Widholm, 2016). Previous studies advocate that most journalists are enthusiastic to see what the audience is reading (Hanusch, 2016), which was partly reinforced here. Several journalists in this study said that they are proud when their story is at the top of ranking. On the other hand, they also expressed
8. Conclusions

a disappointment when entertainment or ‘soft content’ was ranked higher than an investigative story that they wrote. Thus, there is some enthusiasm related to rankings, but also disappointment when their own stories are not performing well.

As newspaper organizations listen more to the audience, there is a stronger focus on entertainment and more lighthearted content that is referred to as ‘good news’ (Harcup & O’Neill, 2016; Meijer & Bijleveld, 2016). This recent scholarly work outlines several changes in the actual content. It should be surprising and shareable, which was also supported in this study; organizations are pressured to write stories that attract readers by surprising them and creating a desire to share the story online. Thus, there seems to be an adjustment in what quality means and it now includes what the audience want to read. According to this study, the organizational members suggests that metrics show what people do want to read: heart-warming, lighter content, as well as the more investigative stories. One of the respondents exemplified this shift of content by saying it now does not matter if it is about a dog in a hat blowing out candles or a government scandal—they publish it since people want to read it. Consequently, providing quality content in a digital space means adjusting some content to what the audience wants and using the tools available, such as videos and graphics, to enhance the news experience. These aspects were continuously highlighted in this study.

Moreover, in this study, immediacy is also embraced. There is an acceptance that the pace is increasing and the journalists are adapting and accepting this new workflow. However, scholarly work argues that immediacy has a negative impact on the quality of news (Deuze, 2002; Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009; Ottosen & Krumsvik, 2012; Thurman & Myllylahti, 2009). The findings in the study expand this view on two levels. Firstly, there is the surface level that includes spelling mistakes and bad grammar, which is defended by the new pace of work: mistakes are inevitable in this fast-paced environment. However, the constant feedback loop from the audience and the ability to quickly change mistakes online actually helps the newspaper to provide accurate news. Hence, this surface level issue does not necessarily harm the quality. The second, bigger issue is the lack of time to produce analytical content, as the journalists must “bang it out five minutes ago” (Journalist, M2), which is acknowledged as having a negative impact on the quality of the news and is a concern for several of the participants in this study. In this “ASAP culture” (Widholm, 2016, p.37), the lack of time is pushing the journalists to produce content faster, which makes the content superficial. Thus, the immediacy is harming the quality to a certain extent, but in this study, many participants justify this change by arguing that there is also the benefit of being first. This suggests there is a compromise between the immediacy and quality. The findings from this study contribute to the existing discussion about the change in the quality of news, as it highlights different levels of concern. Consequently, this study joins the criticism that
immediacy is harming the quality while still highlighting a more nuanced view of this concern.

Previous research has suggested that news is becoming hyper-local (Harte, Williams, & Turner, 2016), which was also a clear position of the organizations in this study, as both newspapers emphasized their parochial focus. This is partly explained by the fact that these are the masthead newspaper in their respective regions, though organizational members emphasized the reason for the local focus to the globalization of news—for example, if a reader would like to learn about the US election, that person can read an American newspaper. However, these American newspapers will rarely report on Perth or Brisbane, which are the focuses of the newspapers in this study. To survive in the increasingly dense competition of newspapers and news in general, a distinguishing aspect for the newspaper to gain readership is to be parochial and produce hyper-local news. This is also related to what has been referred to as “community engagement” (Tully et al., 2016, p.2), drawing on the civic journalist to engage with the audience. This is generally associated with ‘good news’. The study also suggests that it could be hosted on separate sites, which was a response to the lack of trust in one of the organizations in this study. Thus, in a challenging environment, this study reinforces previous findings showing the trend that the news is becoming more hyper-local and there is a stronger focus on community engagement.

8.3.2 Softening the distinction between editorial and advertising

Previous research on newspaper organizations has outlined clashing or even competing duality in newspaper organizations (Achtenhagen & Raviola, 2009). The duality was embodied in the commercial and the editorial, which were in opposition. Some scholars argue that it is now a trisectional management (Nielsen, 2012; Westlund, 2011), adding the aspect of technology. However, in this study, the focus is mainly on the editorial logic. The respondents do mention the need to make money and some aspects of the ‘business’, but it is in relation to being able to produce and fund the editorial. Thus, even though it was expected to find competing or clashing logics in these newspaper organizations, the differences between departments that arguably should represent each clashing logic was not as prevalent. There were some members who described these two sides that must be kept separate, but also some respondents who discussed a more harmonizing view.

The findings in this study contribute to research focusing on the separation between the editorial and commercial. The editorial and advertising were previously separated, but now the boundaries are blurring and the two sides must work together. Previous research separates these departments as ‘them and us’, a clear alienation between the editorial and commercial aspects of newspaper organizations (Spyridou et al., 2013). However, this study suggests that these two aspects are interrelated, and both are connected to the overall
8. Conclusions

character of the organization. The organizational members clearly outlined the economic issues and that the organization needs the commercial side to fund the editorial. However, scholarly work suggests that journalists fear that advertisers’ interests will influence editorial decisions (Eberl, Wagner, & Boomgaarden, 2016). Even though a fear of advertising influence on editorial content is present in this study, the acknowledgement of the need for both is perhaps not merging them but at least harmonizing the two. Previously, this was presented as a competing duality (Achtenhagen & Raviola, 2009); however, an interesting finding in this study is that many of the respondents did not express the aims of the editorial and commercial teams as clashing. For example, in *The Courier*, the aims of the two sides were not opposing but rather building to the same purpose—providing relevant, reliable content to its audience. Although there seem to be a more united outlook, the rule that the journalistic content should not be tainted by advertising still applies.

Nevertheless, due to economic constraints, the organization must find innovative ways of making money, which could distract it from its journalistic mission and thus harm the credibility of the organization. Although most respondents did not express these concerns, it is important to note those that did.

Moreover, some respondents believe that this harmonization is not connected to a specific technological change but rather that the organization needs both parts to function. One respondent said: “We wouldn’t survive without them; they wouldn’t survive without us” (Middle Manager, E2). Thus, some respondents are taking a more harmonizing standpoint, agreeing that both sides are important and necessary for the survival of the organization. Thus, the findings in this study highlight some changing aspects of newspapers as organizations. It would be farfetched to say that these two sides are one, but there seem to be a softening in what has been noted as a clash. This means that this study contrasts with some previous research that focuses on the newspaper and journalists’ active resistance to change, as I highlight some aspects that are changing in newspaper organizations—that is, change in content, journalistic values, and the distinction between the editorial and the commercial.

8.4 Practical implications

By highlighting the organizational integrity, this study can assist organizations that are experiencing pressures. Unpacking the phases of how organizations perceive issues and respond to them in relation to their character can guide organizations with this process. Organizations can use the findings here as a reminder to consider what is institutional and what technical, and how the organization should respond to a specific issue. Moreover, as the character is familiar and the organizational members generally try to preserve it, the organizations in this study argued that they recruit people that fit into that character.
As this study investigated an industry that has and still is going through large disruptions, there are several lessons newspapers and other types of organization can learn from these cases. Here, the focus is on unpacking the internal dynamics of responses to pressures by highlighting different phases in responses and the organizational integrity—fidelity to the organizational character.

The concentration of ownership in the Australian media industry is high, and one strategy to save money in these large media groups is through synergies within them. In this study, these synergies were between departments, and between newspapers in the group, and merging the newsroom of a television station and a newspaper. The integrated newsroom took its inspiration from some European counterparts, which suggests that this trend goes beyond Australia. It seems to be one way to stay afloat in this stressful industry. This study is not suggesting that the integration is perfect or complete, but to merge two organizations with a lot of history and to find at the end of it that the main issues were lack of fridge and parking space must be a success in terms of mergers. The vibrancy and resources in that room were quite inspiring and put the organization in a position of advantage. The organizational members have the skills and resources to produce content for any platform, as TV and newspaper are combined with digital. If a media group has several legacy media, a promising response is to integrate and create synergies over media boundaries. However, it is worth noting that the leaders in the integration in Perth seemed to be greatly respected by their employees. There were no negative words towards either of the main leaders of this integration; instead, almost all participants claim that integration could not have worked without them. I am not suggesting here that this response is for all newspapers, but following Seven West Media’s example, and getting inspiration from several integrations to mix and match, what would be better for the company at hand could be a promising solution for other media groups.

The newspaper industry has been in a state of flux for over two decades and other organizations facing new technologies could be facing similar challenges (Lampel, Lant, & Shamsie, 2000). Thus, organizations that are experiencing disruptive technological change would have an interest in the findings here, suggesting that the findings reach beyond the contextual boundaries, especially for organizations with strong professional norms. Thus, there are lessons to learn from newspapers, as other organizations facing digitization could be facing similar challenges (Lampel et al., 2000). As this study is investigating organizations that have been experiencing disruptive changes for decades, the findings here are not only relevant for newspapers and other media outlets, but other industries can draw inspiration on how to manage and respond to disruptive pressures. For example, academia has recently been noted to be facing issues connected to online learning (Davis, 2016). Another example is healthcare (e.g., Scott, Rueff, Mendel, & Caronna, 2000), which is an industry that has been noted as having strong professional standards but which is also going through institutional change caused by new technologies, changes that are
affecting the whole industry, and the organizations and the professionals must adapt to the challenges and opportunities of new technologies. These are some examples, but many industries and organizations are affected by pressures and especially new technologies. Moreover, the focus on evaluating experiments could help organizations not to give in to opportunistic behavior (Selznick, 1957) and continuously to consider how the character aligns with the organizational field. The framework of organizational integrity can help employees and managers to guide resistance or to evaluate its experiments in response to perceived issues.

8.5 Limitations

This study makes several important contributions to the literature on organizational behavior by exploring the role of organizational integrity during responses to pressures; however, it also includes some limitations. Firstly, general limitations associated with qualitative studies are also relevant here, but as this was elaborated on in the method section, it will not be discussed further. As this is exploratory, it is believed that the benefits of the deep, first-hand knowledge from the respondents outweighs the shortcomings regarding generalizability. However, the aim with this study is to explore a concept that has received little empirical attention, and so to include a large number of organizations would sacrifice the in-depth knowledge (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991). In this study, it was crucial to have the first-hand understanding of organizational members, to get their understanding of both the organization and the field-level pressures.

Secondly, as the connection of values to the profession is strong in the organizations in this study, thus the findings are mainly relevant for organizations with strong professional standards. The organizations did not outline their distinctiveness in comparison to other legacy newspapers but rather explained general journalistic standards as their character. This is not in line with general strategic management (e.g., Drucker, 1973) and could limit the transferability of the findings. On the other hand, since the connection to professional values is strong, this is a beneficial context to explore the fidelity that organizational integrity represents, as the values are well defined. However, as this concept evolves, a beneficial route would be to study organizations with less emphasis on professional values. Even though some aspects of the context are unique, scholars have noted that the media industry does share similarities with several other industries, especially businesses experiencing digital disruptions, for whom the findings from this study would also be relevant (e.g., Hattke, Vogel, & Woiwode, 2016; Porter, 2001).

Lastly, the attempt here is to bridge the field and organizational level, the old and new institutionalism, although the use of field-level pressures is indirect and is not an attempt to be exhaustive in identifying pressures on newspaper organizations in general, but rather to contribute to the understanding of the
internal dynamics of organizations. However, a contribution to the bridge between new and old is the use of organizational issues (Dutton & Jackson, 1987), allowing for an approach to study further the connection between the field and responses within the organization.

8.6 Future research

The earlier sections have outlined the theoretical contributions, practical implications, and limitations that are specifically connected to the framing of this dissertation. This section outlines some future research directions and continuations of organizational integrity and responses to pressures. Secondly, this section briefly discusses some unexpected inductive findings in the study—that is, some findings that did not specifically feed into the research questions but were interesting and worth noting and elaborating on as potential streams of research.

It was clear in this study that the organizations were following the professional logic of journalism, and strongly relating the character of the organization to journalism. This was a fruitful context to explore organizational integrity empirically, as previous research has highlighted the fact that newspaper organizations do use general journalistic values to define their organization. A natural next step in organizational integrity would be to study organizations with less established professional grounding. The strong focus on professional norms and logics that were understood here would not hold in non-professional organizations; thus, it would be an interesting and important continuation of organizational integrity to see how the findings here hold in other contexts.

In terms of the concept of organizational integrity, an important continuation would be to focus on the formation of the character and the fidelity of organizational integrity. One suggestion is ethnographically inspired methodologies, where researchers can observe younger organizations over longer periods to try to capture the formation of the commitments and the fidelity. This would extend our understanding of organizations, as we get first-hand information of the process of institutionalization in how new or young firms balance their own driving forces to start the business and the rules of the field that they are entering. Alternatively, by studying mature organizations and taking snapshots of what their character is at different points in time, we can gain a long-term understanding of changes in the character and the role of organizational integrity: such research would extend the notion of repairing in this study. This would contribute theoretically to research in institutionalization and agency in organizations.

Additionally, on a group level, both organizations in this study rely heavily on acquisitions to gain untapped resources and skills in the long term. The question remains as to whether these acquisitions are separate and whether there are long-term implications for the organization. If the acquisition is integrated in the
group, what would that mean for the organizational character? Would the acquisition be altered to fit in with the old character or does the organization try to implement aspects of the new party in the existing character? How does fidelity to the character work in this process? Answers to these questions are important contributions to the research on character and organizational integrity.

Moreover, it is important to get a better understanding of how new elements become “infused with value” (Selznick, 1957, p.17), and so institutionalized. A helpful notion that emerged inductively during this study and that could be helpful in research in institutionalization is co-optation. Based on Selznick’s (1949) definition, it means that an organization absorbs new elements to avert threats. In this study, this notion was helpful to explain when organizations expanded the character. For example, the findings in this study suggest that an aspect that has been expanded because of the changes in the industry and the knowledge gained through metrics is a stronger focus on the audience. It is necessary that future research focuses on this vital area of inquiry.

There is an important distinction between changing and absorbing, as no values were deleted but some aspects were added, although it is unclear if this absorption perhaps distracts organizational members from old commitments to the character. Some research (e.g., Battilana & Casciaro, 2013; Hinings & Greenwood, 2015) suggests that co-optation is a process to manage opposition, thus neutralizing the opposition by incorporating some aspects; this can explain some behavior of newspaper organizations. Thus, an interesting focus for future research would be to specifically explore co-optation and the process of absorbing new elements. This would expand our understanding of why organizations change, and how.

Secondly, it is important to continue the phases presented here. As this is an exploratory study, these phases have much potential for development. To build on the findings of the phases of responses in a similar context and between contexts to explore how these hold up in a larger sample would be an interesting path forward. The notions of immunizing, maintaining, and repairing and the role of organizational integrity are central in the contributions of this study. These notions are introduced to explain the rationale in the organizations as they resist or conform to pressures. Thus, the process of the response is explained through the phases, but these also highlight the impact the response has on the character of the organization and the role of the organizational integrity. Thus, to expand the ideas of this study, especially focusing on immunizing, maintaining, and repairing, would be a fruitful and vital continuation of the scholarly work on organizational integrity and responses to pressures.

In terms of journalism, one claim that emerged in this study is that old journalism does not hold anymore, and that the notion of quality has changed due to digitization. However, this change is rather an expansion of absorbing new elements into the fundamental values and mission of the newspaper. The organizations still strongly relate to the general (old) standards of journalism,
although an interesting occurrence in both organizations was that not all standards were mentioned (see APC website for overview of principles; APC, 2011). As stated in these guidelines and principles, accuracy, clarity, fairness, balance, and transparency are in focus, which were all discussed by the respondents in this study. However, one aspect of the journalistic standards in Australia, privacy and avoiding harm, was not discussed by any of the respondents in this study. This suggests that some values are perhaps more important than others in this fluctuating industry, which would be an interesting stream for future research. Even though some respondents argue that the old journalism does not hold anymore, many refer to the continuous change in the newspaper industry and that these changes perhaps are not as drastic as some research suggests. Thus, interesting questions to further research newspaper organizations and journalism would be to explore if organizational members perceive some fundamental values as being more important than others.

Lastly, since the connection to professional values is strong, this is a beneficial context to explore the fidelity that organizational integrity represents, as the values are well defined. As this concept evolves, studying contexts with less emphasis on professional values would be a fruitful continuation, thus using a similar structure to this study with more organizations and other industries to increase the understanding of organizational integrity and how it contributes to our understanding of how organizations respond to pressures.


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289


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Appendices

Appendix A

Example Interview Guide

Background information and introduction.

• Introduce me and my project. Explain that I am interested in how technological changes affect the organization and the role of the underlying values that are present in the organization.

• By underlying values, I mean something that is so firmly part of the entire organization that it guides the way you work and do business. It is connected to the purpose of the organization and what makes it distinctive in comparison to competitors. I think this is especially interesting in the newspaper industry because so much has changed and still is changing. For example, material is published through several outlets, there is a more interactive relationship with the audience where users want to be more active and contribute with content and comments, and there is new behavior of both readers and advertisers that are moving to online outlets. These aspects made it more difficult for newspaper organizations to survive. Circulations have decreased and many readers are using online news sources that are free. All these, of course, are changes that newspaper organizations need to consider. I’m interested in these changes, how they affect the organization, and your perception of how the organization fits in with all these changes.

• This project is a collaboration between two schools, JIBS in Sweden and Queensland University of Technology in Australia.

• Do you have any questions regarding this project or me?

• Gain permission to record the interview, and gain permission again when the recording device is running.

• Explain the structure of the project—e.g., how many interviews I have conducted—and emphasize that it is the interviewee's personal view and opinion that is of interest and no preparation is needed. Anonymity is guaranteed.

First question to everyone.

• Could you please describe your story and background? How did you end up at [the organization] and what did you do before that?
Description of character; values, purpose, and distinctive character

What is your role at the [the organization]?

How would you describe the purpose of [the organization]?

What are the values of [the organization]?

Would you say that the purpose has changed in the last year or so?

About a year ago, you merged newspaper with Channel Seven. Do you think the purpose has changed due to that merger? [Only for respondents at The West.]

How would you say that [the organization] is distinctive in comparison with your competitors? If an outsider were to describe [the organization] today, what do you think they would say?

Changes in the industry: identifying challenges and changes

Brief explanation of past and present changes in the media industry: digitization, convergence of use and consumption (and that users want to contribute content), and fragmentation (it has become more complex to reach customers for there are many outlets; mobile, iPad, print, computer, etc.)

Do you agree with these changes? Is there anything you would like to add to that, delete from it, or change?

How do perceive that these changes have affected [the organization]?

Is there something that you are especially worried about with regard to the changes for [the organization]?

If you could pick one of the many changes that have happened in the industry, was there anything that was easier for [the organization] to adjust to?

Was there anything that was particularly challenging for [the organization]?

Ask for specific examples.

Change and organizational integrity

Are there any changes you have implemented in [the organization] in recent years that you think helped your organization to cope with the changes?

How did [the organization] come up with this idea?

Why do you think it was a good idea? / What made it successful?

What is the status of that initiative today?
Appendices

Some people might suggest that the quality of news is decreasing due to all the changes with digitization, that news stories are ‘there to sell’ rather than representing quality news.

What would you say to this discussion?

Is this something you worry about?

How do you ensure that you represent quality news and journalism?

What is quality journalism to you?

How do you and your company measure success, in that you are actually providing the quality news you say you are providing?

Where do you see [the organization] in ten years? Imagine a dream scenario. In ten years, I want [the organization] to be described / viewed in this way…

Are there any aspects of that scenario you believe to be especially difficult to achieve? Do you see any challenges that would stand in the way of this scenario becoming real?

(If they don’t really answer the question about changes or difficulties, ask on an industrial level—for example, if they get defensive and claim they do not have issues, etc., rephrase to an industrial level.)

Follow-up questions: what does it mean? Why is it important? How can this be achieved? For whom is this important?

Why do you think that will be difficult to achieve?

Final remarks

• Last question: is there anything important you feel you want to add but have not had the possibility to say earlier in the interview?

• The interview will now be transcribed and analyzed. I will send the transcript to you to make sure that I understood what we talked about today correctly.

• Also, I would like to interview a couple more journalists/editors/other members I haven't been able to identify. Here's my business card/e-mail address. I would be most appreciative if you could please provide my details to others who you think would be interested in my research and ask them to contact me.

• Thank you for your time.
## Appendix B

### Overview of all Perceived Organizational Issues at *The Courier*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technological</th>
<th>Keeping up with new technology</th>
<th>Complexities of new platforms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is a struggle to keep up with emerging technology and the sheer speed of it. The organization is always playing catch up rather than driving change on its own terms.</td>
<td>New platforms increase the way the organization can reach people, but it also increases the workload. This creates an issue of how to use each platform and the complementary use of platforms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>The immediacy of news</td>
<td>Metrics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>There is instant consumption of news today. It is speeding up the production news, and it is contributing to an increased workload. To constantly work faster and produce more content is influencing the quality of content that the organization produces. Thus, it could be harmful for the journalistic promises or the organization.</td>
<td>The availability of metrics can be fruitful to know more about the audience; however, it could also hurt the journalistic promises if the focus is on vanity metrics and use of clickbait to increase traffic. If that is the case, the organization does not live up to its journalistic promises.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decline in print circulation</td>
<td>Declining revenues</td>
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<tr>
<td>The organization is affected by a decline in circulation in print, and not making up for it online. Print is still the main revenue source and the organization has not found a way to stop this trend.</td>
<td>The revenues are in decline because of the loss in circulation. However, the revenues from classified ads are disappearing. On top of that, the organization has not found an online payment model that is working to make up for the loss of print sales. If it cannot find a solution, the organization cannot survive.</td>
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### Appendices

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>User-generated content (UGC)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>Users want to contribute with content. They want to engage with the newspaper and be included in the production process. Nevertheless, the audience does not have to answer to the same ethical and professional standards as journalists; thus, it is difficult to find validated content from the audience. It could therefore be harmful for the journalistic standards of the organization to include UGC.</td>
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| Lack of trust |
| Research is showing that the audience is trusting newspapers and media less, and the organization is struggling to regain that trust. This stems from a wider range of news outlets to compare sources and that the audience wants to be part of the content production. |

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<th>Changes in market</th>
<th>New substitutes</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Digital ventures that were initially seen as a help to reach the audience in new ways, such as Facebook, are now substitutes for the newspaper. Even though these organizations do not produce content, they control search engines and algorithms where the audience gets content. Thus, these aggregators are substitutes for the newspaper.</td>
</tr>
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| New competition |
| Through the internet, anyone, anywhere, can access online content. Thus, large international players are now competing in local markets that these organizations did not have access to before the internet. Therefore a new level of competition is emerging, which local or regional newspapers must deal with. |

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<th>Internal</th>
<th>New roles and positions</th>
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<td></td>
<td>The changes and pressures in the industry create uncertainty in the organization. People are let go and new roles and positions are created. It is unclear who is responsible for what and people take it on themselves as they are moved around under new positions that did not exist before. This creates ambiguity in roles.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

| New skills |
| There is a dissonance between what educators are teaching students and what newspapers need their new employees to know. This adds to their responsibilities to teach new employees skills that are necessary in the digital world. |
**Appendix C**

**Overview of all Perceived Organizational Issues at The West**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technological</th>
<th>Financial</th>
<th>Audience</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Immediacy and news**  
Everything is faster, increased workload at a faster pace.  
“It’s not good being first and wrong, but it’s also not good being right and second…” so balancing quality and accuracy with speed is a challenge. This is challenging the journalistic quality. | **Cutting costs**  
Cutting costs as a result of less revenue is an issue. This includes cuts both operationally and in staff. However, “cutting costs won’t save us” (Interviewee D, 2016) since if they cut costs it could harm the possibility to fund journalism. | **New relationship with the audience**  
The audience can complain directly to the newspaper much more easily, which is good but also time consuming and it generates many “nonsense” complaints. It is time consuming and distracting, thus challenging the journalistic standards. |
| **Keeping up with new technology**  
The work pace and workload are increasing and the organization is struggling to keep up with all changes and all new tasks caused by digitization while living up to its journalistic standards. | **Circulation and revenues**  
Declining circulation, not making up for the lost revenues online and losing a very important stream of revenues, the classified ads: this is threatening the overall survival and mission of the organization. | **Lack of trust**  
The audience does not trust journalism as it used to. The notion is decreased quality of news and commercialization of news. Thus, to fulfil its mission, it needs to regain the trust; otherwise it cannot live up to its journalistic mission. |
| **The complexities of platforms**  
Where to publish what, related to the increased workload and immediacy and how to make the platforms work together for synergies, is an issue. | | |


## Appendices

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<th>Changes in the market</th>
<th>New competitors</th>
<th>Concentration of ownership</th>
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<td><strong>Regulatory changes</strong>&lt;br&gt;Regulatory changes from the Finkelstein Inquiry. Regulatory changes and new rules due to digitization, which is perceived by the members of the organization to threaten the freedom of press.</td>
<td>Through the internet, anyone, anywhere, can access online content. Thus, large international players are now competing in local markets that these organizations did not have access to before the internet. Moreover, newspapers must now also compete with TV stations.</td>
<td>The concentration of ownership will affect the organization as it has been acquiring many organizations and cannot rely on this forever. Moreover, it threatens journalistic functions as it includes a lack of diverse journalistic voices in the area.</td>
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<th>Internal</th>
<th>Cultural change</th>
<th>Consolidating editorial and sales/advertising</th>
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<td><strong>New skills</strong>&lt;br&gt;Changing pace of work and differences in tasks and skills needed in the digital environment: there is a lack of time to learn all new skills, which could harm the quality of the journalist product.</td>
<td>People are stuck in their ‘old’ ways, holding change back, suggesting that journalism is changing for the worse and is actively trying to resist any changes. Thus, it is difficult for the organization to respond to pressures as some members are resisting them.</td>
<td>The formerly separate editorial and commercial departments are now forced to work together. The challenge is to consolidate these two without harming the journalistic mission and standards.</td>
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<td>Wiklund, Johan</td>
<td>“Small firm growth and performance – Entrepreneurship and beyond”, (Business Administration).</td>
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<td>Braunerhjelm, Pontus</td>
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<td>Klaesson, Johan</td>
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<td>Pettersson, Lars</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>014</td>
<td>Florin Samuelsson</td>
<td>“Accountability and Family Business Contexts - An Interpretive Approach to Accounting and Control Practices”, (Business Administration).</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Gråsjö, Urban</td>
<td>“Spatial Spillovers of Knowledge Production – An Accessibility Approach”</td>
<td>Economics</td>
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<tr>
<td>035</td>
<td>Dahlqvist, Jonas</td>
<td>“Assessing New Economic Activity – Process and Performance in New Ventures”</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>036</td>
<td>Andersson, Martin</td>
<td>“Disentangling Trade Flows – firms, geography and technology”</td>
<td>Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>037</td>
<td>Nilsson, Désirée</td>
<td>“Essays on Trade Flows, Demand Structure and Income Distribution”</td>
<td>Economics</td>
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<tr>
<td>038</td>
<td>McKelvie, Alexander</td>
<td>“Innovation in New Firms: Examining the role of knowledge and growth willingness”</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>039</td>
<td>Garvi, Miriam</td>
<td>“Venture Capital for the Future - Implications of Founding Visions in the Venture Capital Setting”</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>040</td>
<td>Rosander, Ulrika</td>
<td>“Generalklausul mot skatteflykt”</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>041</td>
<td>Hultman, Jens</td>
<td>“Rethinking adoption – Information and communications technology interaction processes within the Swedish automobile industry”</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>042</td>
<td>Hilling, Axel</td>
<td>“Income Taxation of Derivatives and other Financial Instruments – Economic Substance versus Legal Form: A study focusing on Swedish non-financial companies”</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>043</td>
<td>Sjölander, Pär</td>
<td>“Simulation-Based Approaches in Financial Econometrics”</td>
<td>Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>044</td>
<td>Hang, Min</td>
<td>“Media Business Venturing: A Study on the Choice of Organizational Mode”</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>045</td>
<td>Lövstål, Eva</td>
<td>“Management Control Systems in Entrepreneurial Organisations – A Balancing Challenge”</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>046</td>
<td>Fridriksson, Helgi-Valur</td>
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<td>047</td>
<td>Naldi, Lucia</td>
<td>“Growth through Internationalization: a Knowledge Perspective on SMEs”</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>048</td>
<td>Wiberg, Daniel</td>
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<td>Economics</td>
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<td>049</td>
<td>Eklund Johan E.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>“Gubben på kullen - Om den smärtsamma skillnaden mellan politiska intentioner och praktiska resultat”</td>
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