Paper meets Web

How the institution of news production works on paper and online

ELENA RAVIOLA
Ai miei genitori.
To my parents.
Acknowledgements

They go, they come, sometimes they stop and when they stop they are black like the raven. It seems that they look at you with an evil eye. Sometimes they are white and run and take the shape of the heron or of the sheep or of some other animal. But this, the children see it better, as they run behind them for many meters. Sometimes they warn you with noise before coming and the earth shakes itself and the animals are silent. Sometimes they warn you with noise. They come, they go and maybe they stop many days, so that you cannot see the sun nor the stars and you feel like you don’t recognize your own place any longer. They go they come for a real one thousands are fake and they put themselves there between us and the sky to leave you only the with the crave for rain.

(Fabrizio De André, The Clouds, 1990. My translation from Le Nuvole)

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Torino, 5 April 2010

Elena Raviola
Abstract

The dissertation investigates the institution of news production at work, on paper and online, through an ethnographic study at the largest Italian financial newspaper Il Sole-24 Ore. Building on institutional theory and taking inspiration from Bourdieu’s theoretical apparatus describing how cultural capital works, the dissertation presents a framework for the way institutions work, a framework that echoes Mary Douglas’ How Institutions Think (1987). In the space created by the relationships between objects, practices and labels, institutions are at work in the alignments, disarrangements, re-alignments and new alignments among objects, practices and labels. This study examines the encounter between old and new to aid in the understanding of the workings of institutions, because the workings of institutions are made more visible in this encounter between aliens.

Empirically, the occasion is the encounter between the newspaper and the website in the framework of the newspaper-website integration project at Il Sole-24 Ore. The main story line develops as follows: An old alignment around the newspaper (old object), to which old practices called journalistic (label) were aligned, is disarranged by the encounter with the website (new object), which is alien to the newspaper and carries new practices for making news. As a consequence of this encounter, the newspaper and the website vacillate between old and new practices and new alignments and realignments are formed: In these movements the institution of news production can be seen at work.

This study offers a new perspective on the way institutions work, with serious consideration for the material, practical, and linguistic dimensions of institutions. It opens the black box of institutions, unpacking their workings in an attempt to clarify how stability of institutions results from the work of practices, objects and labels, which are products of institutions and at the same time produce them. Regarding news production in practice, this study aims at inspiring a reflection around what a newspaper is, a question at the very core of the industry transformation at the turn of the 21st century. By focusing on a highly debated topic, the study also offers reflections on the broader societal implications of new media for politics, business, knowledge, and professions.
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PART I: Introduction to the study

Part I introduces the study on which this dissertation is based.

In Chapter 1, I set the stage for the development of the dissertation, presenting the empirical problem at hand: the encounter between paper and web in newspapers. I then define the purpose of the study, its approach, and the rationale for choosing this focus for a doctoral dissertation in business administration.

In Chapter 2, I describe the present setting of the newspaper industry in Italy, where the newspaper under study, Il Sole-24 Ore, operates. In addition to providing a brief introduction to the Italian newspaper industry, I describe the peculiar organization of Italy’s journalistic profession.

The first part of the dissertation is designed to give the reader an idea of the problem under study, and an appreciation for its relevance, both empirically and theoretically. The remaining parts of the dissertation develop the theoretical arguments and the empirical grounding of the study.
1. Dangerous encounters?

That's the press, baby, the press, and there's nothing you can do about it. Nothing.

(Humphrey Bogart in Deadline USA – 1952)

In August 2006 The Economist reported the disappearance of “the most useful bit of media”. A murder, it was said. The main suspect: a serial killer called Internet: “Of all the ‘old’ media, newspapers have the most to lose from the Internet.” “A cause for concern, but not for panic” was added, to calm the worried reader (The Economist, 26 August 2006: 9).

Newspapers and the Internet are the protagonists in this story. One is disappearing, and the other is gaining space on the front pages – ironically, the front pages of print media like newspapers. One is four centuries old, the other a couple of decades. One is a static temple replete with sacred cows; the other is a dynamic marketplace for any and all opinion.

Inside the victim’s rooms – newsrooms – threats of the serial killer have been discussed seriously, but experienced with varying degrees of intensity. At the 2006 Annual Meeting of the International Newspaper Marketing Association (INMA) in Paris, the imperative was CHANGE OR DIE. In 2007, the World Association of Newspapers (WAN) organized a conference on organizational matters emerging in the present era of multimedia growth. The 2008 Annual Congress of WAN in Gothenburg was focused on the transformation of newspapers in multimedia companies; in the same venue, the World Editors’ Forum (WEF) discussed issues related to integrated newsrooms, in which print and online newsrooms are organized as a cooperative effort. Editors and managers from some of the leading newspapers (The New York Times, The Daily Telegraph, The Wall Street Journal, Le Monde, El Pais, and La Gazzetta dello Sport) were invited onto the stage to inspire the assembled audience of peers and illuminate the opportunities that the future will bring.

Suddenly, a few months later, the global financial crisis exploded. When it rains, it pours. And in 2009 it poured heavily. The global financial crisis hit an industry that was already suffering from steadily decreasing revenues and from predictions of its disappearance (Meyer, 2004; Sabadin, 2007). Five newspaper companies in the USA have filed for bankruptcy. All the big players in Europe are in crisis. Even free-of-charge newspapers are suffering.

Thus, for newspapers in crisis, their encounter with the Internet has appeared to be a dangerous and increasingly intimate encounter. As The Economist reported:
Even the most confident of newspaper bosses now agree that they will survive in the long term only if (…) they can reinvent themselves on the Internet and on other new-media platforms such as mobile phones and portable electronic devices. Most have been slow to grasp the changes affecting their industry (…) but now they are making a big push to catch up. (…) In many developed countries their owners have for decades enjoyed near monopolies, fat profit margins, and returns on capital above those of other industries. In the past, newspaper companies saw little need to experiment or to change and spent little or nothing on research and development. (The Economist, 26 August 2006: 52)

This is not news. The Internet has been around and in newspaper rooms for at least 10 to 15 years in most media companies in the western world. And newspaper employees have worked in those rooms before, during and after the dot.com bubble burst. So, the suspected murderer and its victim have come to know each other rather well, and step by step new ways of dealing with the aggressive, dynamic new medium have been developed in the old temple of sacred cows.

At first, newspaper editors made efforts to keep the doors of their rooms closed to the Internet, as the fear of cannibalisation was a real concern.

From the late 1990s until around 2002, newspaper companies simply replicated their print editions online. Yet the internet offers so many specialised sources of information and entertainment that readers can pick exactly what they want from different websites. As a result, people visited newspaper sites infrequently, looked at a few pages and then vanished off to someone else's website. (The Economist, 26 August 2006: 53)

The contacts between newspaper people and website people were kept as limited as possible in order to save their best journalists for the printed page – a mistake, according to The Economist, as “this meant that the quality of new online editions was often poor. Websites hired younger, cheaper staff. The brand's prestige stayed with the old medium, which encouraged print journalists to defend their turf” (The Economist, 26 August 2006: 53).

In the first years of the third millennium, the fanatic enthusiasm for new media had lost its edge, as the new economy bubble exploded and many companies and investors were hurt. The old brick-and-paper business reinforced its solid position. But a few years after overcoming the new economy bubble burst, by the end of the first decade of the 21st century, a new wave of Internet developments has emerged, and this time it seems that they have gained their space in the newspaper newsrooms – perhaps small and
Dangerous encounters?

marginal space, but it is a start. “After ignoring the reality for many years, newspapers are finally doing something” (The Economist, 26 August 2006: 9).

Newsroom work now requires new tasks that range from transferring articles from the paper to online sources, through making videos and audios, to uploading documents on the web. Newspaper employees see that this new work gains space and time in the organization of their daily work and that it involves the best among them. The Internet also gains physical space in the newsroom, and this space is getting physically closer to the central desk, the core of the sacred cows’ temple. As The Economist reported: “Many companies are putting print journalists in the same room as those who work online, so that print writers are working for the website and vice versa”.

The debate continues: Is the right thing to do? Integrating or disintegrating the work for print and online activities is a dilemma that must be solved by worried-and-pushed-to-act editors. Although industry associations seem to promote integration, not everybody presently agrees about the desirability of this direction.

It is completely wrong not to separate web and paper operations,’ says Oscar Bronner, publisher of Der Standard, a daily paper in Austria. Print journalists don’t have time to reflect and analyse properly if they also have to work for the website, he argues. (The Economist, 26 August 2006: 53)

No matter which direction is to be taken, newspaper people seem to agree on one thing: The use of the Internet has introduced the newspaper newsroom to a different technology for producing and delivering news. Whether newspeople are striving to increase the reciprocal contact between the two media, or trying to build walls between them, once the doors of the newsroom have been opened to the Internet, new newswork1 needs to be done. And it must be done in a place where news is made by performing highly routinised and professionally controlled work (Tuchman, 1973).

Thus, this study focuses on…

This study focuses on the unavoidably intimate encounter between newspapers and the Internet – particularly in the form of the world wide web. More

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1 Newswork is a commonly used term in journalism literature – see, for example, the Special Issue of Journalism entitled “Newswork”, 2009, 10(5) – and refers to the work done to produce news for the news media. It has usually indicated the work of journalists, but it can also include the work of such other employees as graphic designers and photographers who contribute to the production of news. The term emphasises the fact that news is created through work, as Gaye Tuchman pointed out in 1973.
precisely, this dissertation revolves around the unfolding of the encounter between old and new objects and old and new work practices. The thesis is based upon an ethnographic study of a newspaper that has initiated a project of integration between online and offline newswork.

I have followed the work of news production in *Il Sole-24 Ore* Newsroom, the first and largest Italian business newspaper. I was able to observe journalists, technicians and managers engaging in their everyday work, and to converse with them in structured and unstructured, formal and informal, planned and unplanned ways.

The result is a detailed account of organizing work in a media organization that is intended to contribute to ongoing conversations in organization studies, particularly those focused on the study of the tasks that people perform in their work organizations (*actions*, *activities*, and *practices* are some of the recurrent words), and accounting not only for interactions among people, but also for interactions among objects and among people and objects.

**...work practices**

A number of researchers have recently linked new forms of organizing to changes in technologies, which in recent years often means digital technologies. Some researchers have suggested that new technologies are undermining old structures of the bureaucratic world (Johnson and Packer, 1987, cited by Barley and Kunda, 2001); others have related them to an opposite trend: reinforcing the old world (Aronowitz and De Fazio, 1994 cited in Barley and Kunda, 2001). Few such studies, and especially few in the tradition of science and technology (see e.g. Latour, 1991; Czarniawska and Hernes, 2005), have concentrated on what happens on the shop floor, or the technologies-in-practice in organizations, to borrow an expression from Orlikowski (2000: 408). The few that have done so have pointed out that such encounters tend to provoke less change than is commonly believed (Gallie, 1994). Barley and Kunda (2001) have concluded that “whether and how a digital technology affects the way an organization is structured depends on how the technology is designed, the way it is deployed, and how it is used and interpreted in a specific organizational context” (2001: 79).

Among newspaper people, there is a common belief that an online article is produced differently than a printed one is: Standards are different, quality criteria are different and people’s ambitions are different. The changes in newswork due to new technologies have, in fact, become a topic of debate in the journalistic profession. “Journalism is beyond technology and the Internet enhances the true mission of journalism”, says *Il Sole-24 Ore* Chief Editor. In the words of a *Nova24* headline, “Newspapers are not their paper”. The newspaper and the website headings are made differently, images are used differently, articles are structured differently, and news and newswork are
judged differently. In many newsrooms, print journalists and online journalists are kept apart; their offices are in separate areas and they report to different editorial managers. Yet, how deep is the change? To what extent does technology actually introduce different ways of working as a journalist?

Speed is the key feature for online information. The common belief is that online journalists are not allowed to investigate through personal sources, and it becomes more and more difficult for them to locate and publish unique information, other than a modified version of press agency news. Yet print journalists strive for uniqueness every day. But is physical proximity of the different technologies of no consequence? How do these different work practices, and “old” and “new” technologies relate to each other?

Answering Barley and Kunda’s (2001) call, my aim in this dissertation research has been to address these questions by studying daily work in a newspaper newsroom in order to construct a situated and detailed account. Fulfilling this aim requires an investigation of the tasks that human and nonhuman actors undergo every day in their work organizations (Brawny et al., 1991) – an investigation that attends not merely to the creation of meaning, but also to movements of things and bodies.

Observations, interviews and documents were the main ways in which I engaged with newspaper people in their newsrooms in Milan, Rome and London. The fieldwork took place over almost two years, and was documented in audio recordings, in photos and in fieldnotes, which filled 31 notebooks. These records were continuously translated and retranslated in the process of story writing, with the help of an electronic notebook.

This is (not) a story about...

One field, many studies, or one research project, many stories: Which do I want to tell here?

This could be a story of the impact that new technologies have had on the quality of journalistic products. But it is not.

It could be a story of how different and new ways of consuming media imply different ways of conceiving news by the news producers. But it is not.

It could be a story of how an item of information becomes news online and in print, and how it gains access to the front page. But it is not.

It could be a story of the struggle between competing logics, as used by journalists and managers, or in culture and commerce. But it is not.

Instead, it is a story of work practices, technologies (or objects), and organizing. It is the story of new ways of working encountering old ways of working, and of new objects encountering old objects.

It is also a story about stability and change within a certain institutional framework: same and different as nuances of the same coin, but also as simplistic categories that fail to do justice to the social world.
It is also a story of how organizational reality is inscribed into technical and nontechnical tools, in a more or less durable way.

Finally, it is the story of how the norms of newswork organizing and professional norms are inscribed into machines – editorial software, coffee machines, and space architecture – with particular emphasis on news products (newspapers and websites) and incorporated into the habits of professional journalists.

A potential contribution to what?

By studying work processes situated in the Newsroom, and by concentrating on the production of print and online news products, I investigate how newswork is organized in an Italian newspaper.

Studies of newspaper newsrooms, from Tunstall (1971) and Tuchman (1973, 1978), to Boczkowski (2005), are neither new nor uncommon in journalism and communication studies. So, why am I studying a newspaper newsroom for a doctoral dissertation in business administration?

There are several reasons for my focus. Newspapers are currently undergoing profound changes because of the Internet, which, over the last decade, has introduced change inside and outside of newspaper rooms. Inside, the changes did not run smoothly because, as some observers have claimed, printed news production works according to different logics than online news production does. Undoubtedly these changes have caused various tensions, which have been managed in various ways over time.

I wish to contribute to the understanding of the organizing of news production and, in particular, the parts of it related to the integration between online and offline news production. I studied these processes as they unrolled hourly, daily, and monthly in certain places, but I also created a frame of reference by interviewing journalists working for other newspapers and by attending major conferences in the newspaper industry.

In addition, I wish to complement media and communication perspectives on news production with management and organization perspectives. This is an interest I pursued earlier in my BA in Management and Economics for the Arts, Culture and Communication.

Finally, I would like to complement the growing body of literature in management and organization studies that builds on discourse analysis. Many such studies use articles from the newspapers as empirical material, but do not extend their interest to the way news production is organized. I believe that a better understanding of the production of news could throw light on the resulting discourses.
The structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured in five parts.

Part I comprises Chapter 1 and 2. In Chapter 2, an overview of the newspaper industry and the journalistic profession are briefly presented, providing a context for the study.

Part II presents the theoretical framework, by laying out the theoretical foundations of the thesis in Chapter 3 and 4. Chapter 3 is a review of institutional theory, and Chapter 4, which introduces my views on institutions and how they operate in work settings, introduces the framework used for the analysis.

Part III presents the empirical study, including the way the study was conducted, how the organization was chosen, and the focus of the study. The methodology of the study is described in Chapter 5, together with the specific techniques used; and Chapters 6, 7 and 8 introduce Il Sole-24 Ore, the organizational setting in which I conducted my study, documenting and analyzing its newwork organizing practices and its project of integrating the newspaper and the website.

Part IV presents the analysis of the empirical material, revolving around three main areas of professional journalistic practice: evaluating news and newwork (Chapter 9), in the public interest or the interests of the publics (Chapter 10), and in defence of the profession (Chapter 11). In each of these areas, I show how the old institutionalised alignment between the newspaper and certain journalistic practices becomes disarranged, and new practices, coming from the web, are aligned with the old ones. In Chapter 12, I summarise the analysis in a few pages, in order to prepare the reader for the Conclusion section.

Part V is the final part of the study. In Chapter 13, I draw conclusions from my analysis and state my theoretical and practical contributions.
2. Newspapers in Italy and the world

In this chapter I describe the setting of *Il Sole-24 Ore* – the newspaper I studied for this dissertation. The main Italian titles competing at the national level have been introduced according to their historical emergence and in their current market position. Following is a section dedicated to the organization of the journalistic profession in Italy, noting the specifics of this system and introducing a useful vocabulary, especially as it applies to journalistic career titles and the organizational structure of the Newsroom, to help the reader in understanding subsequent chapters.

Anthony Smith (1980) classified writing, printing and computerisation as the three revolutions in communication. In the 15th century, when manuscripts were being reproduced manually, saw the development of movable types. This printing technology made it possible to accelerate the process of copying information by significantly decreasing the marginal cost and time of reproducing the first copy. The new technology enabled the creation first of the book industry and then the newspaper industry.

Some five centuries later came the third communication revolution: computerisation. As Anthony Smith said at the beginning of his book *Goodbye Gutenberg*:

> The two previous transformations in human techniques for storing information – writing and printing – promoted a complex transformation of institutions, such as education, government, commerce, religion. Each new technique for manipulating knowledge through the use of text “also involved changing the prevailing priorities among intellectual capabilities: writing is an artificial extension of memory, but libraries and filing systems are, in a sense, replacements for memory and depend upon mental tracking systems acquired by training. Today the computer, which was developed originally as a device for calculating, has now become a device for handling text in many forms, and this interconnection between computer and text is coming to exercise so transforming an influence upon the human institutions that adapt to it that one may justifiably consider whether a third great turning point in information systems has come about. (A. Smith, 1980: 3)

This dissertation focuses on the mass medium of the newspaper, made possible by the second revolution – printing – and follows some of the changes that an
organization producing this mass medium has been undertaking on the long tail of the third revolution, computerisation.

Thus, this chapter begins with a brief history of newspapers in Italy, in order to give the reader an idea of the background of the current main newspaper titles, and continues by highlighting the major technological changes occurred to the news landscape of the 20th century, when newspapers have seen a number of new technologies for news and news production coming into their field. Beginning as the only means of mass information, newspapers became an actor in the increasingly diversified media scene, which in the course of the 20th century has seen the emergence of a number of new production technologies, from radio to the Internet.

This chapter then presents the current newspaper setting in Italy as it applies to the market aspects (readers, advertisers and profit) and the organization of journalism, as my field study concentrates on the journalists’ work. A concluding paragraph on the consequences of new technologies on journalistic work ends the chapter, and prepares the ground for the following development of the dissertation – a field study that concentrates on the encounter between old and new technologies for news production in a newspaper.

A brief history of Italian newspapers

After the French revolution and the Napoleonic domination, the winds of freedom of expression blew all over Europe and brought with them the seeds for the birth of the newspaper industry. In the not-yet-unified Italy, especially in the north of the country, many gazettes were launched, and between the last decade of the 18th century and the first thirty years of the 19th century, newspaper production saw a great many technical improvements. Although newspaper publishers remained small and artisanal in nature, the most entrepreneurial ones started having paid announcements and some form of subscriptions. By the 1820s, “the bad habit of writing and reading newspapers and magazines also in Italy is by then impossible to eradicate” (Garrone and della Perruta, 1979: 5, my translation).

During the Restoration between the 1814 and the beginning of the 1830s, freedom of expression was suppressed all over Europe. In Italy, despite some rebellions and movements for freedom, it was only with the Statuto Albertino and the following Editto sulla stampa, both from 1848, that the rebirth of the press could be seen. The press was declared as free, and freedom of expression (and of religion) was guaranteed in the Savoyard kingdom (occupying the area northwest of the present Italy and Sardinia), which would later unite the country, with Torino as its base. According to Paolo Murialdi’s (1986) Storia del
In 1858, when freedom of press existed only in the Savoyard Kingdom, 278 print papers, (with different periodicities) were issued in the whole peninsula. Among those, 117 were issued in the Savoyard Kingdom, 68 in the area of Lombardy and Veneto (northeast), 27 in Tuscany, 16 in Rome (which was governed by the Pope), and 50 in the South. Thus, in the middle of the 19th century the Italian newspaper market was still weak. The newspaper most circulated, the Turin’s *Gazetta del Popolo*, had a printing of 10,000 copies, but the average of the others was 2,000 copies per issue.

In 1861, with the unification of the country under the liberties guaranteed by the *Statuto Albertino*, the publishing industry started growing again, especially around Milan, which was the most economically active and fastest-growing city in the country. Some of the currently most important national newspaper titles were founded at that time. *Il Corriere della Sera* was launched in 1876 as a Milan evening paper. *La Gazzetta Piemontese*, based in Turin and transformed from an occasional paper into a serious daily newspaper in 1834 by King Carlo Alberto, became *La Stampa* in 1895. *Il Messaggero* was founded in Rome in 1878. *Il Secolo* appeared in Genoa in 1886. One of the most influential newspapers at that time was the now-defunct *Il Secolo*, founded in Milan in 1866 and selling 6,000 copies at its launch and 30,000 ten years later.

At the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th, the Italian economy grew significantly, due to the industrial revolution. The population reached 32 million at the beginning of the 20th century, and became more and more urbanised. The railway was developing and the postal system was improving, enabling the growth of the newspaper publishing industry. At the beginning of the 20th century, *Il Corriere* and *Il Secolo* printed about 100,000 copies per day. With the progress of industrialisation, the newspapers increased their advertising income and, consequently, the number of pages. In 1904 *Il Corriere* was printed on six pages, which two years later became eight. Different sections with the proper headlines, such as local news, judiciary news, theatre, and most recent news, appeared. Also the newsrooms grew and began to introduce a division of labour and working hours. According to Muriadİ (1986), the collective newspaper – a newspaper with big newsrooms – was born at that time. “The work organization is centralised, however, and the structure is neatly hierarchical. The chief editor is absolute king and his vice is his factotum…” (Murialdi, 1986; 84; this and all other quotes from Murialdi are my translations)

The two world wars increased the urgency for news, and newspaper circulation grew, although freedom of expression was suppressed during the Fascist dictatorship. During this period, between the beginning of the 1920s and 1943, newspapers were the privileged means of propaganda. The two most-read newspapers, *Il Corriere* and *La Stampa*, went from approximately 500,000

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2 Paolo Murialdi is an Italian historian and journalist. He published *Storia del giornalismo italiano* (History of Italian Journalism) in 1986, the latest edition of which was published in 2006. He also served as president of the journalists’ union, National Federation of the Italian Press.
and 300,000 copies per day, respectively, circulated in the period between the wars, to 781,960 and 550,000 copies per day in 1943 (Murialdi, 1986).

Slowly, after World War II, newspapers began to regain their freedom. In 1960 there were 93 daily newspapers in Italy, selling a total of less than 5 million copies per day. Only four of them sold more than 200,000 copies per day. But the 1960s were years of renewal for Italian newspapers in the country, many of which increased their services and number of pages, and renewed their formulas. The international and national political situation provided them with interesting topics to write about, such as the intense political crisis due to the authoritarian turn of the Tambroni government, and the emergence of such fascinating figures to follow as Khrushchev, Kennedy, and Pope Johan XXIII.

Despite the growth of La Stampa and Il Giorno, Il Corriere della Sera established itself as the leading national newspaper during the 1960s. After a change of the chief editor in the beginning of the 1960s and the consequent modernisation of Il Corriere's format, it maintained a safe place at the top of the newspaper circulation, at 522,365 copies in 1966. In the same year, the circulation of La Stampa was 421,316 copies and Il Giorno, 263,965 copies.

The 1970s in Italy were marked by a wave of terrorism, known to the rest of the world mainly through the actions of the Red Brigade, culminating in the murder of ex-Prime Minister Aldo Moro in 1978. During the same decade many of the major newspapers experienced a financial crisis; in 1975, for example, the publishers had a global deficit of 100 billion Lire (about € 50 million). The total sales for all the newspapers in the country was 4,646,100 copies per day in 1975, with Il Corriere as the most circulated (500,500), followed by La Stampa (361,100), L'Unità (239,400) and Il Messaggero (227,500). It has been said that the 1970s were the years of the “merry-go-round of bought and sold” for Italian newspapers (Murialdi, 1986: 212).

In the same decade, two new titles were launched that would become significant newspapers in the national landscape: la Repubblica and Il Giornale. la Repubblica, with its head office in Rome, was founded in 1976 by Eugenio Scalfari, who was already Chief Editor and a shareholder of the weekly magazine l'Espresso. Scalfari’s idea was to start a newspaper that differed from all of those circulating at the time. It was meant to cover politics, finance and culture, without local news and with little sports; the format would be that of a tabloid – a novelty in Italy at that time. During the first year of its existence, la Repubblica sold 80,000 copies, but the circulation grew quickly, particularly during the Aldo Moro kidnapping and murder case, reaching 372,940 copies in 1985.

In 1974 by Indro Montanelli, a veteran journalist from Il Corriere, founded Il Giornale, with the head office in Milan. His ambition was to create a newspaper for the “working and producing Italy”, as he wrote in the newspaper on 25 June 1974, with Milan as its central and historical basis. Although 280,000 copies were printed initially, Montanelli eventually had to settle for 135,000 to 140,000 copies.
After World War II, in the “economic miracle” for which Italy became known, business and financial information increasingly attracted reader interest (Murialdi, 1986). Most likely the Italian business newspapers, including the bestselling *Il Sole-24 Ore* and some more recent additions such as *Milano Finanza* and *Italia Oggi*, owe their existence to the “miracle”. The same circumstances led to the expansion of influence and circulation of business magazines and business sections of generalist newspapers.

In 1946 *Confindustria* (the Italian Confederation of Employers) acquired two business dailies published in Milan: *Il Sole* and *24 Ore*. As *Confindustria* also owned the third Italian business daily, *Il Globo*, published in Rome, the entire economic and financial information on paper was in the hands of *Confindustria* (*Il Globo* closed in 1983). In 1965, *Il Sole* and *24 Ore* merged, and *Il Sole-24 Ore* was launched. Since then, the newspaper has undergone an exceptional development: From 60,000 copies in 1972 and 90,371 copies in 1976, it reached 170,624 copies in 1984 and 335,000 in 2006. Even the launch of competing financial titles, like *Italia Oggi* in 1986, which started by selling about 90,000 copies (Gustafsson, 1989), did not represent a serious threat to its growing market position. There were many concomitant factors to this expansion: the economic growth of the country; the growing autonomy of the newspaper; and, last but not least, the work of its chief editors who gradually brought wider coverage to the newspaper. The model has been the London newspaper, *The Financial Times*, with which *Il Sole-24 Ore* competes for the title of Europe’s largest financial newspaper: If one counts only the European circulation, the Italian title has actually achieved this position (Gustafsson and Weibull, 2008).

**New technologies in and around newspapers**

The development of mass media started with newspapers that until the beginning of the 20th century remained the only means of mass information. In the 20th century, however, new technologies were invented and the mass media multiplied. Yet, as Dimmick (2003) has taught us, despite the cry for the imminent death of the traditional media that is raised every time a new medium enters the field, none of the old media died; rather every one of them found a new niche in the general mass media landscape.

In the 1930s, the radio appeared and became immediately popular. Although the radio reached a great many people – about 500,000 in 1934 – especially during the dramatic happenings of the war, the press maintained the priority in the Fascist propaganda plan, not least because Mussolini had worked as a journalist and Chief Editor of the a socialist newspaper, *Avanti*. Although freedom of the press was limited or nonexistent, the years of Fascism were years of modernisation, both in technology and in journalism. Newspapers grew in pages, and newsrooms grew in size, scope of distribution and circulation. It was then that the first rotogravure machines were installed,
allowing the printing of pictures on opaque paper. *Il Corriere* had a circulation of about 500,000 copies and *La Stampa*, between the evening and the morning edition, reached 300,000 copies per day (Murialdi, 1986).

The 1950s were the years of television. The first experiment with television news, called *Telegiornale*, was broadcasted on 10 September 1952, and in it “there was room for the historical boat race in Venice, Count Sforza’s funerals, curious aspects of the American election campaign, a corrida [bull fight] in Portugal and the Grand Prix in Monza” (Murialdi, 1986: 195). Current affairs, such as the inauguration of the Milan Fair House and the *urbi et orbi* blessing by Pope Pius XII, were the main occasions for television journalists to broadcast their television news. The official launch of public service television broadcasting took place 3 January 1954, on a Sunday. That day the Pope publicly expressed his hope that television was to provide citizens with good entertainment as well as education and moral elevation.

Television rapidly became the dominant source of news for the Italians. “A *Telegiornale* that broadcasts ceremonies of all kinds, that is partial and sectarian in politics, almost without current affairs news or news on judiciary affairs; (...) comes into many homes that a newspaper has never entered”, wrote Murialdi (1986: 195). In 1963 there were 4.3 million people paying the license fees required of television owners by the Italian government, and 15 million Italians watching the evening news.

The technological opportunities offered by television were extraordinary in post-war Italy. The opportunity to reach a larger portion of the population than any newspaper had been able to do, and to offer live shows – such as the arrival of the man on the moon in 1969 – had had an obvious impact on the press and its role. First radio and then television disturbed the information monopoly that the press had enjoyed for three centuries. Television in particular was able to attract millions of people rapidly, and to convey the news in moving pictures. Inevitably, the technological possibilities offered by television and its dissemination in the market constituted a competitive threat and forced the press to reflect and then modify its work practices and products.

Even as television was spreading, news agencies grew and established themselves as central partners for all the other news media, eventually becoming the main source of news for them. The growth was fostered by technological innovations: the telegraph, telephone, telex and computer. Telexes became faster and faster, and the networks connecting them grew in number and density. The first computers and satellites offered new possibilities for the gathering and circulation of data, words and images.

Internationally, the most significant news agencies were Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI) from the USA, Tass from the Soviet Union, Reuters from the UK and the Agence France Press (AFP). During the 1950s in Italy, Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata (ANSA) established itself as the leading national press agency, winning the competition against Agenzia Giornalistica Italiana (AGI) and the newly born Agenzia di Notizie (Kronos). It
Newspapers in Italy and the world

consequently grew in the 1960s, thanks to technical and commercial improvements. In 1971 ANSA had three networks of telexes, through which its 170 journalists delivered approximately 100,000 words per day to the associated newspapers, television and radio. It had 14 sites in Italy and 59 abroad, and for foreign news coverage used the services of UPI, AFP and Reuters.

During the 1970s, with the introduction of computers, newspapers were involved in significant technological changes, which continued to develop in the 1980s, and have changed the way newspapers are made and produced (see e.g. Engwall, 1978; A. Smith, 1979, 1980; Carità, 1981; Lenzi, 1981; Carter, 1984; Giovannini, 1984), as profoundly as printing had revolutionised communication in the Gutenberg era (A. Smith, 1980). In the 1970s, newspapers were deeply transformed internally, as they underwent computerisation and developed their new “cold” production system. The old system, called a caldo in Italian (“on the spot”, but literally “warm treatment” because it employed lead), was substituted by the new system of the photocomposition, based on the computer, and called a freddo in Italian (cool treatment): Newspapers said goodbye to Gutenberg and his movable types (A. Smith, 1980). The linotype writer was substituted by the Video Display Terminals (VDT) and exited the newsrooms together with typographers and other technicians, whose job became obsolete. At the same time, the facsimile (fax) transmission of the newspaper contents to the printers allowed for the timely and less costly circulation of newspapers. The revolutionary potential of the computer resides in its capacity to store and disseminate information in new ways and “the capacity to give a person only what he wants and relieve him of the necessity of paying for what he does not” (A. Smith, 1980: 15).

As Murialdi put it:

The technological factor, especially the computer, can be seen as fundamental for the survival of the press in the era of television and in face of the new media, realised by the conjunction of the informatics with the telecommunications (the “telematics”, to use the neologism created in France). This conjunction rationalised and accelerated the production of newspapers while cutting their costs; but it also radically modified the gathering, elaboration and storing of information. (1986: 235)

The introduction of computers into the Italian newsrooms met with strong opposition from journalists and from the unions of the polygraphists. The computer allowed decisions to be centralised and the number of people required to compose a newspaper to be reduced (Carter, 1984). Union fights arose around this issue. The trade unions wanted to maintain the existing situation, especially in terms of employment and of power. The polygraphists realised that their jobs, their expertise, and their skills were being threatened – even to the threat of being completely destroyed – and their unions fought to
maintain their employment situation. The journalists sympathised with the polygraphists, partly because they did not want to take over the polygraphists’ tasks and partly because they were worried that the new system would decrease their professional autonomy. The publishers, however, appreciated new technologies because of their cost reduction potential. The union battles of those years are still important for organizing the newsroom of 2010, and for the clear division between the jobs of graphic technicians and journalists, as revealed in the study on which this dissertation is based.

If the 1980s were the years dedicated to the adjustment of changing newspaper production to computerisation, the 1990s saw the birth and growth of another new technology for making and spreading news: the Internet and its world wide web. The two have fed the global expectations of growth, democratisation and globalisation from the beginning, and having passed the test of the millennium shift. They continue to flourish.

The first explosion of online communications occurred in the second half of the 1990s. In 1995, 5.8 million households in the USA had an Internet connection; by 2000 the number had increased to 72 million. Newspaper websites, some of which were launched in the first half of the 1990s, grew exponentially in the second half of the decade, and by 2000 almost every newspaper in the USA had online operations, where they practiced “shovelware”3 and “repurposing” of their paper content and, to some extent, the “recreating”4 of online content (Boczkowski, 2005). In Italy, Il Sole-24 Ore Group was the first to start online operations in 1996, followed in the same year by la Repubblica and La Stampa, and the following year by Il Corriere. Repubblica.it has rapidly established itself as the market leader of online news provided under newspaper brands. In September, 2009, it reached 1,148 million visitors with 16,885 million pageviews (audiweb.it). In the same month, corriere.it registered 1,109 million visitors and 12,543 million pageviews. The numbers for ilsole24ore.com (the website for Il Sole-24 Ore) and lastampa.it are far lower. In the same month, ilsole24ore.com reached 270.341 visitors with 1,629 million pageviews, and lastampa.it reached 213.477 visitors with 2,232 million pageviews.

Newspapers in Italy in the 21st century

This paragraph is dedicated to the presentation of the state of the art of the newspaper setting in Italy in 2010. The paragraphs are divided in two parts: The first section presents the newspaper market’s readership and the economic conditions of the publishers; the second section presents the organization of journalism as the main profession in newsmaking.

3 Shovelware is extra software dumped onto a tape to fill remaining space.
Newspapers in Italy and the world

Newspapers market

Compared to other parts of Europe, southern European countries are known for low readership of both dailies and books. In Italy, for example, only 44 per cent of the population over six years of age read at least one book in 2008; whereas in Sweden during the same period 80 to 90 per cent of the population read one book. In Italy only 45.3 per cent of the population read at least one newspaper per day in 2008; whereas in Sweden the readers of one newspaper constituted 84 per cent of the population per day.

According to the report *Press in Italy (2006-2008)* published by the Italian Federation of Newspaper Publishers (FIEG), the newspaper circulation of 64 paid newspaper titles amounted to 5,291 million in 2008. Of these, less than 9 per cent are sold through subscription; the other 91 per cent comprise single-copy sales. In comparison there are 72 dailies and 3,119,200 copies distributed every day in Sweden, for a total of 337 copies per 1000 inhabitants. In Sweden, subscriptions represent 76 per cent of the circulation, in Finland 88 per cent, in the Netherlands 90 per cent. In other Mediterranean countries – in France, for example – subscriptions comprise 31 per cent of the circulation, in Spain they are 23 per cent, and in Greece 3 per cent.

Between 2006 and 2008, newspaper circulation in Italy has been decreasing at a constant rate of two per cent per year, from 5,510 million copies per day in 2006 to 5,4 million in 2007 to 5,291 million in 2008. During the same period, readership has registered an increase of 6 per cent in 2006 and 3.5 per cent in 2007. From 2001 to 2008, According to FIEG’s figures, the proportion of newspaper readers in Italy has increased from 19.496 million in 2001 (38.9 per cent of the population) to 23,278 million in 2008 (45.3 per cent of the population).

Italy has one of the lowest ratios of newspapers per inhabitant in Europe. In 2006, there were 98 paid newspaper copies per 1000 inhabitants and 126 copies including free dailies, compared to 230 paid newspaper copies per 1000 inhabitants in the rest of Europe. Nevertheless, the national newspaper

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4 The data on readership in Italy are retrieved from the annual report on the publishing industry in Italy, published by the Italian Publishers Association and presented at the Frankfurt Book Fair in October 2009 (Rapporto sullo Stato dell’Editoria in Italia 2008, AIE). A synthesis of the report can be found on the Association’s website (www.aie.it). The data on readership in Sweden are retrieved from the annual report on the book market, published by the Sweden Publishers’ Association (Bokmarknaden 2008, Svenska Förläggareföreningen). The report can be downloaded from the Association’s website (www.forlagare.se).

5 Data on newspaper readership in Sweden are from the annual report on the Swedish daily press (Svenska Dagpress 2009), published by the Swedish Newspaper Publishers Association (www.tu.se). Data about newspaper readership in Italy are taken from the annual report on the Italian press (La stampa in Italia 2006-2008), published by the Italian Federation of the Newspaper Publishers (www.fieg.it).
circulation is not homogenous. Although television viewers are a homogenous group, printed information is significantly more diffused in the north than in the south of Italy, as readership of any print media is higher in the Northern part of the country, which is richer, has a more developed industrial economy and better transport infrastructure.

Table 2.1 shows the 20 top-selling newspaper titles. An extended version of this table is presented in Appendix 1.

Table 2.1 Top 20 newspapers in Italy in 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Average circulation</th>
<th>Variation average circulation 2007-2008</th>
<th>Subscriptions (sold + free)</th>
<th>Variation subscriptions 2007-2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CORRIERE DELLA SERA</td>
<td>620 605</td>
<td>-6.29%</td>
<td>24 508</td>
<td>-2.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA REPUBBLICA</td>
<td>556 433</td>
<td>-10.56%</td>
<td>16 280</td>
<td>-2.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E POLIS</td>
<td>482 253</td>
<td>15.51%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA GAZZETTA SPORT-LUNED</td>
<td>470 587</td>
<td>-0.63%</td>
<td>3 995</td>
<td>6.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA GAZZETTA SPORT</td>
<td>369 535</td>
<td>-1.37%</td>
<td>3 959</td>
<td>12.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL SOLE 24 ORE</td>
<td>334 697</td>
<td>-2.53%</td>
<td>132 563</td>
<td>3.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA STAMPA</td>
<td>309 150</td>
<td>-1.67%</td>
<td>36 911</td>
<td>-4.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORRIERE SPORT-STADIO LUN.</td>
<td>270 395</td>
<td>-6.07%</td>
<td>1 999</td>
<td>-1.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORRIERE SPORT-STADIO</td>
<td>226 104</td>
<td>-6.69%</td>
<td>1 944</td>
<td>-1.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL MESSAGGERO</td>
<td>210 954</td>
<td>-2.17%</td>
<td>6 370</td>
<td>-1.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL GIORNALE</td>
<td>192 720</td>
<td>-5.54%</td>
<td>3 392</td>
<td>2.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL RESTO DEL CARLINO</td>
<td>165 225</td>
<td>-1.68%</td>
<td>5 719</td>
<td>6.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA NAZIONE</td>
<td>137 118</td>
<td>-0.92%</td>
<td>3 223</td>
<td>-2.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUTTOSPORT LUNEDI</td>
<td>129 910</td>
<td>-0.71%</td>
<td>1 120</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBERO</td>
<td>125 196</td>
<td>-3.98%</td>
<td>1 073</td>
<td>-7.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUTTOSPORT</td>
<td>115 663</td>
<td>-2.75%</td>
<td>998</td>
<td>-1.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVVENIRE</td>
<td>105 874</td>
<td>0.49%</td>
<td>82 673</td>
<td>1.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL SECOLO XIX</td>
<td>103 253</td>
<td>-4.02%</td>
<td>1 448</td>
<td>-12.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL GAZZETTINO</td>
<td>86 966</td>
<td>-5.51%</td>
<td>5 222</td>
<td>-1.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITALIA OGGI</td>
<td>86 934</td>
<td>-2.70%</td>
<td>50 806</td>
<td>-8.84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Prima Comunicazione

Il Corriere della Sera and la Repubblica are general national newspapers. Il Corriere della Sera was a broadsheet until the beginning of 2007, when it has turned into a Berliner format – a rectangular format of intermediate size between the tabloid and the broadsheet. la Repubblica, on the other hand, has been a tabloid.
since its creation in 1976. Both are known as quality newspapers and the most
reliable and independent sources of news in the country. They are also
recognised as good schools of journalism.

Both *Il Corriere* and *la Repubblica* are subsidiaries of media groups. *Il Corriere
della Sera* belongs to RCS Group (Rizzoli – *Il Corriere della Sera*), which
publishes books, magazines and newspapers, and is based in Milan. *la Repubblica*orms part of L’Espresso group, which publishes magazines and newspapers,
and is based in Rome. These groups are publicly owned and are fierce
competitors, copying each other’s initiatives, and trying to win by being the first
mover.

*La Gazzetta dello Sport* and *Il Corriere dello Sport* are newspapers devoted only
to sports. *La Gazzetta dello Sport* is the biggest sports newspaper in Europe,
before the Spanish *Marca* and the French *L’Équipe* (Gustafsson and Weibull,
2008). *La Gazzetta dello Sport* and *Il Corriere dello Sport* are published as
broadsheets, and have a long tradition. Their diffusion reflects the Italian
passion for soccer, strong enough to overcome the national reluctance to
reading newspapers. This is especially the case on Mondays, the day after the
national league soccer matches are played. These two newspapers can not be
considered direct competitors of the first two titles in Table 2.1, as they
specialise in sports, and are usually bought and read not as substitutes, but as
complements to other newspapers.

The fifth newspaper on the list is *Il Sole-24 Ore*, where I conducted most of
my fieldwork. It is in a much position than is its direct competitor, *Italia Oggi*, as
can be seen in Table 2.1.

Publishing companies are currently in a state of financial emergency in Italy.
In 2007, newspaper income decreased by 1,4 per cent, and in 2008 it further
decreased by 4,3 per cent due to a 6 per cent drop in advertising revenues. The
overall advertising market in Italy shrunk by 2,8 per cent in 2007 and by further
18,8 per cent in 2008; circulation revenues decreased by 2 per cent and
revenues from collateral by over 40 per cent (59,4 per cent if only books sold
with the newspapers are considered).

In 2007, the EBITDA was the 7,4 per cent of the revenues (8 per cent in
2006) and this ratio has further decreased in 2008, when the EBITDA reached
the 3 per cent of the revenues. The newspaper publishing companies are
struggling with their ability to generate operating profit, which has certainly
contributed to the decrease in the newspaper publishers’ profit from € 349,9
million in 2006 to € 233,5 in 2007. The aggregate profit of the newspaper
publishers in 2008 has reached about € 100 million – less than half of their
2007 profits.

\[\text{EBITDA is the acronym for Earnings Before Interests, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortization. It is a way of expressing the operating profit of a company – how much a company is able to gain from the ongoing operations of its core business. Put another way, it is a measure of the revenues (or income) left after the production costs for products that have generated revenues have been considered.}\]
The circulation numbers offer a partial explanation of decrease in profitability. Globally, both 2007 and 2008 witnessed the circulation decrease of 2 per cent, compared to a 0,9 increase in 2006, but consistent with the trend of the last 10 years.

The situation in Italy is characterised by some structural traits that can be used as a further explanation of the poor state of affairs in the newspaper industry.

- The distribution system results in a large number of returned copies from retailers to publishers\(^7\). The largest part of the circulation comes from single copy sales through a network of 38,000 news stands in Italy in 2008 (according to the news stands industry association magazine on [www.aziendaedicola.com](http://www.aziendaedicola.com))\(^8\), whereas subscriptions to the first 20 newspapers in Table 2.1 constitute, on average, about 11 per cent of the total circulation\(^9\).

- The advertising market structure is dominated by television. In 2007, 52,7 per cent of all advertising expenditures were allocated to television, 20,2 per cent to print newspapers, 15 per cent to print magazines, 5,4 per cent to radio and 3,2 per cent to the Internet (the latter increased from 1,2 per cent to 3,2 per cent between 2003 and 2007).

- Editorial contents are not protected by copyright.

- The industrial relations among publishers, journalists, and polygraphists are tense, and journalists and polygraphists are highly unionised.

- The national contract between the journalists’ union and employers has not been renewed for three years.

The Italian Federation of Newspaper Publishers (FIEG) report on the state of industry in 2008 states that:

The decrease in the demand, together with the difficulties encountered by the companies to combine the production factors in an economically profitable way, has produced a growing imbalance between costs and incomes. The necessity of structural modifications in the productive apparatus and of the adoption of

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\(^7\) In Italy, the book and newspaper retailers do not technically buy from the publishers in order to sell to readers. Rather, they receive a number of copies and pay only for those that they actually sell. The others are returned to the publishers.

\(^8\) At the end of the 1980s, news stands were 30,000 (Gustafsson, 1989).

\(^9\) If we exclude *Il Sole-24 Ore* and *Italia Oggi* (which receive approximately 50 per cent of their revenues from subscription) and the Catholic newspaper *Avvenire* (which receives over 70 per cent of its revenues from subscriptions), subscriptions are, on average, around 3 per cent.
multimedia strategies – both urgent in order to ensure a higher competitive ability with the new media and to diminish the costs of the production – has been thwarted by financial conditions that are insufficient to sustain the costs of such transformations, and by inflexibility in the use of the work, in particular, that of the journalists. (FIEG, *The Press in Italy 2006-2008*; 20; this and all other quotes from FIEG documents are my translations)

One historical problem of the press in Italy has been the distribution system, and the new media have a great advantage in this area. The recent reform of the press planned and approved by the Sarkozy government in France which planned a significant increase in state subsidies to newspapers, particularly to subscription and delivery expenses, has distribution system changes at its core. The French example has not been followed in Italy; instead, FIEG laments, “the exact contrary has been done” with a cut of €150 million of support to the industry.

**Making news: Journalism as a profession and a guild system**

According to the journalists’ conception of their profession (as can be read on the homepage of the Association’s website), journalism is a professional intellectual activity, “characterised by that element of ‘creativity’ that makes the journalist not an employee or an executor, but precisely a professional” (homepage of the website of the Association of Journalists: www.odg.it; this and all other quotes from this website are my translations).

This definition of a journalist as a liberal professional rather than an employee is recurrent among journalists, and arose often in my conversations with them. As *Il Sole-24 Ore* Chief Editor said:

> Thus the best practice, fundamental for economic journalists, is never to forget that they’re also citizens, and therefore know how much things cost, even if those things are beyond the limits of their own field of interest. We’d end up with a large and efficient professional community of automatons if everybody perfectly covered his or her own sector without any interest in the general situation. This is what differentiates a journalist from an employee, even though they both play useful roles in society; from a journalist one can expect at least some participation, at least some passion, and not only impeccable professional qualifications. (Interview, December 2007; this and all other quotes from interviews and direct observations are my translations)

Like other professions, journalism is driven by the belief of its own social relevance (Johnson, 1972; Sarfatti Larson, 1977; Freidson, 1986; Abbott, 1988),
which is why there is a mandatory register of professional journalists in Italy, where the law establishes the conditions and the process of registration. This setting guarantees the public impartial and professional information.

Journalism seems to be conceived by its practitioners as a professional search for truth, a scrutiny of public matters for the benefit of readers or citizens, and as a guarantee that public opinion can be voiced. Journalists say that they are driven by the desire to uncover the truth and make it public, as a part of the fundamental freedom of speech and right to information, on which citizenship in western democracy is based.

It is an insuppressible right of journalists to have freedom of information and critique, limited only by the observance of the legal norms issued to protect the other persons' integrity; and it is their binding duty to respect the substantial factual truth, by always observing the duties imposed by trustworthiness and good faith. (Law 69/1963, Article 2; this and all other quotes from Law 69/1963 are my translation)

The Document of the Journalists’ Duties, signed in 1993, says:

The relationship of trust between the organs of information and citizens is at the basis of the work of every journalist. To promote and strengthen this relationship, the Italian journalists subscribe to the following Document of Duties. (Document of the Journalists’ Duties, 1993: 1; this and all other quotes from the Document of the Journalist’s Duties are my translation)

As stated in the first principle declared in the document:

The journalist must respect, cultivate and defend the right to information for all citizens; for this reason he/she searches and diffuses every news or information which he/she considers to be of public interest, in the respect of the truth and with the greatest accuracy possible. (Ibid.)

At the core of the journalistic profession is also a clear distinction between journalists and non-journalists, and in Italy even between professionals and non-professional journalists. Registration in the Association is mandatory for professionals. In the original formulation of the law in 1963, Article 45 read as follows:
45. The conduct of the profession

Nobody who is not registered in the professional register can take the title nor conduct the journalistic profession. The violation of this norm is punished according to the articles 348 and 498 of the penal code, unless the fact does not constitute a more serious offence.

Had the article remained in power, it would be a crime to exercise the profession without being registered. This can be interpreted as the sign of powerful boundary work (Gieryn, 1983) like a guild, intended to construct a well defined separate group from the rest of society. The Constitutional Court declared this article illegitimate in 1968, however.

Nevertheless, the boundaries between journalists and non-journalists are confirmed in other instances – where the portrayal of the journalist as hero is depicted, for example, in the following excerpt from the Document of the Journalists’ Duties:

The journalists search and diffuse the news of public interest despite the obstacles that can be interposed between them and their work, and make every effort to guarantee the citizens access to and inspection of public acts. (Document of the Journalists’ Duties, 1993: 1)

Yet another principle is:

The journalist's responsibility towards the citizens always takes place before any other. The journalists will never subordinate their work to others’ interest, in particular to those of the publisher, the government or other State organisms. (Ibid)

It is important for the upcoming analysis to remember that, according to the document, the publishers or owners of the publishing company for which a journalist works, top the list of parties from whom the journalist must to be independent.

The organization of the profession

Italian legislation establishes 12 professions: lawyers, engineers, architects, chemists, doctors of agricultural science, actuaries, surgeons, veterinarians, pharmacists, certified public accountants, and journalists. For the most part – except for lawyers, surgeons, and pharmacists whose associations go back to the early part of the 20th century – this heavily corporative system is a Fascist inheritance.
The Association of Journalists is the youngest association, having been established in a law promulgated on 3 January 1963, after 20 years of work by the journalists’ union. The association sees to it that the Italian laws concerning journalism and news organizations are respected within the profession. In particular, the association exercises control and judges violations of two Italian laws. One of these laws states that it is illegal to publish a newspaper or magazine or to run a broadcast news operation with nonmembers or non-apprentices of the association on the payroll as journalists or doing work that is defined as journalistic. The other law states that it is illegal to practice journalism without being a member of the association. Disobedience of these laws is punishable by a fine and a jail sentence.

The establishment of the association has been criticised, mainly because it runs contrary to freedom of speech, which is one of the principles of the Italian Republic. Such critiques gain the front line of public debate from time to time. Recently Beppe Grillo, a popular comic figure, has loudly, and in a populist manner, raised the issue and mobilised large crowds through open-air public protests and through his blog, which has been the most accessed blog in the country.

Despite the critiques and despite being an inheritance from Fascism, the association is only the most recent step in the professionalisation of journalism, which began in Italy long before World War II and before Fascism. By 1877 there was an organization called Associazione della stampa periodica italiana – Association of Italian periodical press – which established main categories of persons practising journalism: effettivi, the fulltime professionals; pubblicisti, recognised freelances; and frequentatori, “personalities of the worlds of politics and culture”.

In 1902 came the first initiative for “judicial recognition” of the profession; Prime Minister Luigi Luzzatti (1910-1911) later introduced a bill to that effect in parliament. Seven years later, legislation accomplishing that purpose was passed. Its contents were specific and practical, rather than alluding to an abstract principle. It provided for reduced railroad fares for members of the press, thus initiating a custom that continues to this day. Those who show a membership card of the Association of Journalists still receive large discounts on railway and airlines fares and travel free on the country’s superhighway system (Porter, 1983).

Although the association is to be a safeguard of journalistic practices and ethics, it is criticised for its monopolisation of the paths to journalism. Until now, however, there has been no direct political pressure through the association, as was the case under Mussolini’s dictatorship; there is still a single

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10 For this reason, I could not conduct any journalistic work in the newsroom.
The parallel organization to the Association of Journalists is the trade union, the National Federation of the Italian Press (FNSI). The two have similar structures, as both are organized in regional chapters that have a great deal of authority, and they both have a national council. Most journalists are members of both organizations, although membership in the union is voluntary, whereas membership in the association is mandatory.

The association was created by Law 69/1963, and its function is to design and organize the process of becoming a professional journalist and the adjudication of cases arising from the violation of the law. FNSI, on the other hand, organizes protests and strikes, and negotiates with publishers for national contracts and working conditions. The FNSI is older than the association, the latter being a result of the FNSI's political work.

**The career of an Italian journalist**

To practice journalism professionally in Italy, one needs to be in the association register, and it is possible to be registered only if one has followed a certain path. There are no formal education requirements, but candidates must be at least 18 years old at the time they present themselves for the first examination.

To acquire the license of a professional journalist, one must undergo two years of apprenticeship and pass a state examination. Although in the 1960s private radio stations became a popular way to apprentice as a journalist (the so-called mushrooming of private radios), it is rare today for newspapers or other media organizations to take an apprentice for two years. Thus, journalism schools have been created for people with a university degree, and new candidates for journalists can conduct their apprenticeship there.\(^{11}\)

When candidates pass the state exam, which is called a “test of professional skills”, they obtain a license. The test consists of a written essay, which must still be typed on a typewriter, and an oral exam to which are admitted only those who pass the written test. The law is specific about the material to be covered during this test. Candidates must demonstrate their knowledge of:

1. the elements of the history of journalism;
2. the elements of the sociology and psychology of public opinion;
3. techniques and practices of journalism;
4. judicial standards relating to journalism; the elements of civil rights; the legal regulation of the profession of journalism, including contractual

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\(^{11}\) A number of journalists over 50 do not have a university degree, as it is not formally required by the Association.
matters; provisions of both administrative and criminal law relating to the media; and law relating to literary rights; as well as

5. professional ethics.

Professor William E. Porter (1983), University of Michigan, who wrote a book about Italian journalists, concluded that this is a difficult test, and that no bribes are possible.

Given the cheery corruptibility of so many Italian institutions, it is almost reflexive to wonder if some fixing goes on during the tests. There seems to be none. I asked directly about it in a good many interviews, and always drew surprised denial, even from the rare few opposed to the Order in principle. The administrative officers of the Order work hard at the business of being Caesar's wife, in regard to both financial considerations and political pressure. Their control is tight, its limits clearly defined, and they operate efficiently. (Porter, 1983: 59)

Once they receive their license and find a job at a media organization, the journalists sign a contract. The general conditions of the journalist contract are stipulated at the national level and negotiated between the National Federation of the Italian Press and the Italian Federation of Newspaper Publishers (FIEG).

A journalistic career goes through specific stepping-stones in the hierarchy. Although the name of each position is the same for virtually every newspaper, there are some possible exceptions. The minimum salary level for each position is established at the national level. The positions, ranging from lowest to highest, are:

- redattore di prima nomina, newly licensed journalist;
- redattore ordinario, regular journalist;
- vice-capo servizio, vice desk editor;
- capo-servizio, desk editor;
- vice-caporedattore, vice-head editor;
- caporedattore, head editor;
- vice-direttore, vice-chief editor or associate editor;
- direttore, chief editor.

12 Porter uses the literal translation of the Italian term Ordine, which denotes a professional association.
The career of a correspondent – a journalist who does investigative reportage in the field – also exists. Correspondents are usually specialised in a particular subject area and conduct much of their work outside the newsroom.

Apart from the professionals, the law recognises yet another category of person who is allowed to journalistic work: the journalist publicist. Whereas professional journalists are “those who conduct the profession of journalism in an exclusive and continuous way” (Law 69/1963, Article 1), publicists are “those who conduct the journalistic activity in a non-occasional and remunerated way, even if they do also other professions or jobs” (ibid).

The situation at present: Making news with new technologies

Journalism was made possible by Gutenberg’s technological innovation and the consequent birth of newspapers (Pavlik, 2000), and it has always been shaped by technological innovations. Bell’s invention of the telephone, making widespread telecommunications possible, transformed the ways news was gathered and reported by journalists. After this invention, many interviews previously conducted face-to-face were conducted by telephone, and news items were sometimes distributed via telephone by reporters in the field who were dictating or simply telling their stories to the desk people in the newsroom.

Computers had a strong impact on newspapers in the 1970s and 1980s. Editorial systems, that are the electronic system for the production and storage of content, make all the elaborations necessary for the purposes of editorial and typographic composition. Lombardi (1984, cited in Murialdi, 1986: 236) described “the possibility to dialogue with the word processor from any point in space and any distance” as literally subverting “the rules that, until then, imposed a obligatory and rigid production model”. In fact, this meant that it was possible for journalists to be connected to distant newsrooms without post or telephone or telex, and to store the news from the news agencies in the computer for a later use. Telecommunication technologies have also shaped work in news agencies: Barbara Czarniawska’s ethnographic accounts of newswork in the Swedish news agency TT (Czarniawska, 2009a) and in the Italian news agency ANSA (Czarniawska, 2009b) render a vivid picture of how humans and non-humans are interconnected in the production of news.

During the last 15 years, the impact of the Internet on journalism and newspapers became an issue of intense debate within social sciences. The debate continues between those who see the diffusion of the Internet as a source of radical change (see e.g. Negroponte, 1996; Pavlik, 2000; Castells, 2001; Garrison, 2001; Singer, 1997, 2003) and those who deny any interruption between the old and the new media, and question the extent to which
processes, routines and organizational structures have been redesigned as a result of the new technologies (see e.g. Boczkowski, 2005; for a review see Raviola and Hartmann, 2009).

The Internet has offered journalists efficient tools to search for news, to reach their sources, to obtain story ideas, and to gather images and other materials in digital form (Garrison, 2001). Yet some authors (see e.g. Pavlik, 2000) and some practitioners point out that the so-called shoe-leather reporting – reporting from the field – which has traditionally been considered the best, engages a decreasing number of journalists and delivers a decreasing amount of news. Journalists spend less and less time conducting direct observations in the field, and interviews are conducted primarily via telephone and e-mail (Pavlik, 2000). Tasks like changing a tape, looking for a picture, or making an edit, that were performed in the analogue world by appropriate union members (polygraphists) under strict rules, are performed by journalists in the digital world. Thus tensions arise when news organizations attempt to integrate digital and analogue (print) news production. One of the points of major tension is the division of labour between journalists and polygraphists, as negotiated between their respective unions and regulated by union agreement: The print newswork organization, as defended by the unions, cannot be applied to digital news production.

Technological changes have often been accused of the “significant deterioration in journalism performance and output” (Ursell, 2001: 175). Among the reasons mentioned in the news industry in Italy is that technologies force journalists to be multi-skilled: “Multi-skilling contains the potential for the final fragmentation of journalism, enskilling some as ‘entrepreneurial editors’, but deskilling others to the status of machine hands and extensions of the computer. In between there may develop several levels of employment as media technicians-with-words…None, however will be journalists as such” (Tunstall, 1996, cited in Bromley, 1997: 346).

Decreased specialisation and increased workload, it is feared, will push journalists towards superficiality, enhanced by the speed of online information. Still, I agree with Ursell’s (2001) warning against the acceptance of a simple deterministic relationship between technology and quality of journalism, and would also agree with Singer (1997, 2003) that the Internet has forced journalists to reflect on their profession and professionalism. It is more likely that organizational change (underpinned by technological developments) mediates the effect of technology on the quality of journalistic work.

Recent technological changes affect the work not only in the newsroom, but in the whole structure of news organizations. The introduction of online news production is reshaping the traditional separation between editorial and business functions (Picard, 2002; Gade, 2004; Picard and Achtenhagen, 2007; Fagerling and Norbäck, 2005), which some authors compared to the separation of church and state (Pavlik, 2000: 233). The lines between advertising and editorialising are blurring, large banner advertisements are featured on the
Newspapers in Italy and the world

homepages of many online newspapers, although it is a practice frowned upon in most quality printed newspapers. Many sites link their book review sections directly to online book sellers, a feature that is convenient for online visitors, but one that sometimes raise ethical concerns among journalists about the possible influence of advertising on editorial content.

My study: Making news with new technologies at Il Sole-24 Ore

By European standards, *Il Sole-24 Ore*, the newspaper I studied, is a big player in a small newspaper market. Yet, as a newspaper, it is not alone in producing news. In this chapter, I have presented the titles of the main competitors in Italy, and have introduced the main technological changes that have occurred in the news field during the 20th century. Some of these changes have occurred outside newspaper organizations and have led to the emergence of new media like radio and television; others have occurred inside newspaper organizations, like the shift from warm to cold production. The recent advent of the Internet and the world wide web has involved changes both within and outside newspaper organizations, as many newspapers have started an online edition, and many other organizations have started news websites. The emergence of the Internet is, in a way, a continuation of the computerisation revolution, and the consequences of the introduction and development of the Internet in newspapers is the topic of this dissertation.

The Internet has meant changes in the creation of news by news professionals – the journalists. Thus, the last paragraph of this chapter creates a link to the rest of the thesis, as it discusses previous research on the effect of digital technologies on journalistic work. The focus of this dissertation is on the institution of news production, particularly through its concentration on journalistic work and on the encounter between old and new technologies.
Part II: Theoretical framework

In the next two chapters I develop the theoretical framework for this study. Although the field study has been conducted in a fashion close to grounded theory, the consequent analysis has guided a selection of reference points useful for constructing a theoretical framework of this dissertation. The analysis is framed within an institutional theory perspective, with the goal of contributing to this perspective by integrating practical and material dimensions to the study of institutions, particularly in the field of journalism. Thus Chapter 3 reviews the main concepts of institutional theory and Chapter 4 presents my theoretical frame, to which I inform my analysis: studying institutions in practice through their enactment – their incorporation in practices, their inscription in objects, and their institutionalisation by way of labels. These three concepts have been borrowed from Bourdieu's analysis of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1979), but are put to a different use in my study. It may be claimed that cultural capital is produced and reproduced via institutions, but this relationship is not in the focus of my thesis. Here, I examine the space between practices, objects and labels as the stage at which encounters between old and new objects, practices and labels occur. The outcome of such encounters can be both a reproduction of the existing institutions and an emergence of new ones.
3. Institutional theory: Some selected concepts

The world into which we are born was handed to us by our predecessors. They were shaped by its conditions, and we reshape it by organizing our daily actions and interactions (Berger and Luckman, 1967). We create the relevance of our collective past to our present and future actions by invoking elements of the past to justify present actions. Institutions emerged as “the way we do things here” and solidified into social facts are the elements maintaining a social order of relative stability over time, by objectifying social meanings. Social meanings that are human interpretations constituted in social interactions are transformed into institutional and organizational rules and procedures that may be invoked as resources to justify actions (Berger and Luckman, 1967). In such invocations, meanings may be modified, much as the meanings of words are transformed when they are applied to emerging situations.

Institutionalism connotes an approach to the study of social phenomena that emphasises the embeddedness of actors in a relatively stable institutional context. It offers a set of theoretical ideas and hypotheses concerning the relationships between institutional characteristics and individual agency (March and Olsen, 1989, 2005). As March and Olsen have said, “Institutionalism emphasizes the endogenous nature and social construction of (...) institutions. (...) They are collections of structures, rules and standard operating procedures that have partly autonomous role in (political) life” (2005: 3). Institutions are believed to have their own life, and to have the ability to outlast individual lives. Yet, they exist only in so far they are enacted by people and inscribed into objects. It is this world of human actors and material objects – and their relationships – that I would like to bring into focus in this dissertation.

It has recently been suggested that a practice perspective could offer some insights into our understanding of institutions and their dynamics of creation, maintenance and disruption (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006; Lawrence et al., 2009). It is my belief that “the practice turn” in contemporary theory (from Giddens, 1984 through Bourdieu, 1990 to Schatzki et al., 2001) can be a fruitful lens to enrich institutional theory. In particular, Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of cultural capital as embodied, objectified and institutionalised could provide inspiration for understanding institutions at work in the context of my study.

The study of work practices was at the core of my field study. In particular, they are work practices conducted within the institutional arrangements of news production, which make them possible, even while erecting boundaries to their possibilities. More specifically, I was interested in the institution of news production, with a particular focus on those work practices producing news gathered under the label of the profession of journalism. Professions have been
extensively studied by sociologists since the beginning of the 20th century (i.e. Carr-Saunders and Wilson, 1933), and have also drawn the attention of institutional theorists (Sarfatti Larsson 1977; Abbott, 1988; Leicht and Fennel, 2008).

It is my aim in this dissertation not to discuss the professional status of journalistic work – whether journalism deserves to be called profession or not – but rather to use the case of the journalistic profession as a site to study how institutions work. I chose this profession because it is claimed to be undergoing a period of change, in particular as it applies to newspapers. So, what happens when old practices, objects and labels meet the new ones? What happens when new media encounter old media in the newspapers, the traditional site of “old media”?

These are questions that I frame in my theoretical perspective and around which I structure my analysis. In this chapter, I review some key concepts in institutional theory (institutions, fields and logics) and present a brief overview of the sociological literature on professions. The next chapter is dedicated to my understanding of institutional theory, and, in particular, to my shaping of an analytical framework that informs my analysis of institutions – as working in the space between practices, objects and labels.

Historical overview

Institutionalists within organizational studies have tried to respond to “the fact that, as March and Olsen (1984: 747) put it, ‘what we observe in the world is inconsistent with the ways in which contemporary theories ask us to talk’” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991a: 3). The discrepancy between theory and practice has induced researchers to “replace rational theories of technical contingency or strategic choice with alternative models that are more consistent with the organizational reality that researchers have observed” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991a: 3).

Institutionalism as a theoretical perspective in social sciences has old roots (Parsons, 1937, 1960; Selznik, 1949, 1957; Stinchcombe, 1968). During the last 20 years of the 20th century, it was revitalised in what has been called a new institutionalism, which has been particularly influential in organization studies (Scott, 1987; Tolbert and Zucker, 1996). The beginning date of new institutionalism in organizational studies could be traced back to 1977 (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991). In 1977, John Meyer published two articles which represent milestones in the development of institutional theory in organizational studies: “The Effects of Education as an Institution” (Meyer, 1977) and “Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and

13 “Contemporary theories” are built on the rational-actor model or on the functionalist account model.
Institutional theory: Some selected concepts

Ceremony” (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). A conference organized in 1985 by Lynne Zucker confirmed this stream of organizational studies. Scholars interested in “the effects of culture, ritual, ceremony, and higher-level structures on organizations” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991a: 12) identified themselves as new institutionalists. Another significant step is represented by the edited volume, The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991), which emerged from a conference held at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University in 1987. The volume contained 15 articles in an overview of the institutional discourse from the beginning of the 1990s, divided into three sections: “Initial Formulations”, “Refining Institutional Theory”, and “Empirical Investigations.

The term *new institutionalism* evokes a renaissance (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991) of a previous old interest in institutions, beginning at the end of the 19th century with Veblen (1899) and continuing to the work of mid-20th century scholars, like Selznick (1949, 1957). On a continuous line from old to new institutionalists and across disciplines, institutionalism was presented as a reaction to the Rational Actor model (see Simon, 1957). From an institutional perspective, organizational life is deeply affected by social institutions, which limit the instrumental rationality of human actions (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991). Central in the institutional theory of organizations, therefore, are economically “irrational” actions, as well as the cultural shaping of organizational realities.

New developments of institutionalism in organizational studies are rooted in the insights of the old institutionalism (Hirsch, and Lounsbury, 1997), but they also diverge in a number of aspects. Although Selznick (1949), for instance, considered organizations principally as fields of political conflicts, the new institutionalists “downplayed conflicts of interests within and between organizations” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991a: 12), and suggested that the formal organizational structure may be a means of dealing with such conflicts. All institutionalists – old and new – agree that institutions constrain individual actions, but the sources of constraint have been identified differently. Old institutionalists emphasised political tradeoffs and alliances within organizations, whereas new institutionalists pointed to the “common understandings that are seldom explicitly articulated” (Zucker, 1983: 5). Critical to Zucker’s discourse is also the relationship between stability and legitimacy (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991).

It has been said that “perhaps the single most important contribution of [new] institutional theorists to the study of organizations is their reconceptualization of the environments of organizations” (Scott, 1991: 145). Older institutionalists, focusing on the embeddedness of organizations in local communities, therefore took the organization as the locus of institutionalisation. New institutionalists are interested in the interorganizational fields, and consider institutionalisation as occurring at the interorganizational level (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991).
DiMaggio and Powell’s scrutiny of interorganizational fields, a concept that they borrowed from Warren (1967), attracted their notice to an astonishing similarity among organizations dispersed in time and space; thus one of their main efforts was to explain the homogeneity among organizations. Moreover, building on Berger and Luckman’s contribution, new institutionalism “stresses the unreflective, routine, taken-for-granted nature of most human behaviour and views interests and actors as themselves constituted by institutions” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991a: 14).

The recently published *SAGE Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism* (edited by Greenwood et al., 2008), features some of the influential organizational scholars, presented as both a synthesis and an agenda setter for organizational research from institutional perspectives. The references to this volume will recur in the dissertation, but at present I would like to quote Lawrence, Suddaby and Leca (2009), who summarised the contributions of institutional perspectives to organization theory:

The institutional perspective has brought to organization theory a sophisticated understanding of symbols and language, of myths and ceremony, of decoupling, of the interplay of social and cognitive processes, of the impact of organizational fields, of the potential for individuals and groups to shape their environments, and of the processes through which those environments shape individual and collective behaviour and belief. (Lawrence et al., 2009: 2)

I have chosen to present in greater detail three concepts that are central to my thesis: institutions, organizational fields and institutional logic.

**A key concept: Institution**

According to March and Olsen, an institution is “a relatively enduring collection of rules and organized practices, embedded in structures of meanings (...) relatively invariant in the face of turnover of individuals and relatively resilient to the idiosyncratic preferences and expectations of individuals and changing external circumstances” (March and Olsen, 2005: 4). Institutions have also been defined as “taken-for-granted rationalized myths” (Meyer and Rowan, 1977, as cited in Greenwood et al., 2008: 4), and as types of organizations or sectors, and, in an earlier version, still much used in political and journalistic vocabulary, as “major agencies in the political economy”, such as professions, unions and state agencies (Hirsch, 1975; Greenwood et al., 2008: 4). To the advantage of the popularity of new institutional theory, strict and unanimously agreed-upon definitions are not the institutional scholars’ cup of tea; rather they prefer a tolerance for pluralism and open encounters with other theoretical
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fields (Czarniawska, 2008).

Nevertheless, there are certain shared elements that are easily recognisable. The focus is on rules and practices and in the meanings in which they are embedded (see e.g. Powell and DiMaggio, 1991; Scott, 1995). Rules and practices embedded in meanings can be transmitted over generations because they are recognised as enduring solutions to enduring problems of a certain collectivity (Berger and Luckman, 1967). They are, therefore, resilient to change, and subsist beyond the lifespan of individual actors (Berger and Luckman, 1967; Zucker, 1977, 1987; Jepperson, 1991; Powell, 1991). Institutions have also been described as characterised by a number of properties, such as:

- they are relative to a particular context and set of relationships (Jepperson, 1991);
- they are taken for granted, and therefore have a thing-like status (Berger and Luckman, 1967; Zucker, 1991);
- they self-reproduce – while enabling and constraining actors they activate social processes that guarantee their persistence (Zucker, 1977; Jepperson, 1991); and
- they involve sanctioning mechanisms (Jepperson, 1991; Phillips et al., 2004).

Institutions have been often treated as dematerialised entities, however. The world of institutions seems to be a world without bodies or objects, or at least a world where bodies and objects are irrelevant to the institutional life. Lamenting the absence of actors in institutional theory, and building on Berger and Luckman (1967), Tammar Zilber (2002, 2006, 2008) suggests that institutions emerge from three interacting elements:

- actions or behaviours that are repeated;
- meanings or definitions, which are linked to these actions and socially shared; and
- actors, who assign meanings to certain behaviours, thus turning them into actions.

One could think of institutions as nested (Holm, 1995) social units in which structures of meaning, involving identities and belonging to social relationships (March and Olsen, 2005) allow people to make sense of their behaviours repeatedly, according to certain rules. As Scott has said, “Meaning systems, monitoring processes, and actions are interwoven” (1995: 33-34). More specifically, the attribution of meaning is what differentiates behaviours from actions, as Weber explained (1922/1968). From an institutional perspective,
interpretation, which is the process of assigning meanings, happens socially and is thus inter-subjective.

Institutional theory scholars have studied institutionalisation as one of the processes through which institutions emerge. Institutionalisation can be depicted as a movement that develops from the performance of certain actions to their transformation into established practices, to be taken as objectively existing reality. The institutionalisation process involves the “reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors” (Berger and Luckman, 1967: 54).

Institutional theory has been used primarily to explain stability rather than change, homogeneity rather than differentiation, conventional rather than entrepreneurial actions. Taking the call of the recent development of the concept of institutional work as a bundle of previous ideas, I argue that if we reintroduced human and nonhuman actors with their respective bodies, we could better understand institutionalisation as a “non-irreversible” process (Berger and Luckman, 1967) and institutions as ever-changing social constructions.

A key concept: Organization field

New institutionalist scholars developed Warren’s (1967) notion of interorganizational field as the field in which organizations operate and interact in a set of relationships that define the field. By “organization fields”, they refer to “those organizations that constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services or products” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991b: 64-65; Haveman and Rao, 1997). This unit of analysis builds on the concept of sector of industry, but does not include only firms or networks of organizations directly competing, but also the “totality of relevant actors” (ibid).

Compared to the concept of the industry sector, organization field – and related concepts of interorganizational field and societal sector (Scott and Meyer, 1983) – offer some advantages to the researcher:

• a focus of attention on the larger web of relationships in which organizations operate;
• linkages among similar and dissimilar organizations;
• horizontal and vertical relationships; and
• local and nonlocal connections.

DiMaggio and Powell referred to Giddens’ (1979, 1984) structuration as the process through which organizational fields establish themselves (for further reflections on combining structuration and organizational institutionalism, see
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E.g. Barley and Tolbert, 1997; Yates and Orlikowski, 1992). Once a field has been established, powerful forces materialise, leading organizations to become more similar to one another. DiMaggio and Powell (1991a, 1991b) explicitly recognise the influence of Bourdieu in their conceptualisation of the field, although neither Bourdieu nor DiMaggio and Powell acknowledge the obvious origins of the concept in Kurt Lewin’s field theory (1951), itself borrowed from physics. Organizational scholars have used the concept of field to study journalism: Maria Grafström (2006) has, for example, investigated the raise of the business journalism field in Sweden. Journalism scholars have explicitly used the notion of field, with reference to both Lewin and Bourdieu (Benson and Neveu, 2005; Wahl-Jorgensen, and Hanitzsch, 2009).

Field is a concept that served as the basis of Bourdieu’s view of the social world as spatially organized by a certain structure of positions. The positions of actors in the field are defined by their various capitals –by their accumulated labour materialized or incorporated (Bourdieu, 2005). The fields and subfields are like microcosms or small social worlds that make up society (Bourdieu, 1966). Cultural field, academic field, economic field, sport field, and media field were some of the fields that Bourdieu studied.

Each field has a relative autonomy and hosts internal conflicts among different positions, as well as the individuals or groups of individuals occupying them on the basis of their capital (Bourdieu, 1972/1977). Within the field, the agent’s position determines his or her space for action. The structure of the field, and therefore its configuration, depend on the agents’ positions, the power relationships and the conflicts consequent to these power relationships (Bourdieu, 1980b). The field is characterised by a particular interplay among its working rules, specific interests, and objects and agents with the specific habitus of the field. In other words, fields have a dominant logic of functioning, which is the institutional doxa that is the taken-for-granted belief about how the field works.

I find the media field fascinating, because, although dominated by a professional logic, it has shown signs of contamination with the commercial logic that has always been present in the field. In Sur la télévision (1996), Bourdieu argues that television and its measurement systems are contaminating the journalistic field with commercial logics and this bending of journalistic practices to commercial imperatives is affecting other cultural fields, such as literature and history.

As the accumulation and appropriation of capital determines the field structure as a set of relationships, inherent to the life of the field is the battle to acquire different forms of capital, which are sources of power. This implies that relationships in the field take on a certain characteristic: that of dominant and dominated actors. As Bourdieu puts it, each field is “the institutionalisation of one point of view in things and in habitus” (Bourdieu, 1997: 144), which comes to constitute the doxa of the field. In the field, the agents are trapped by the specific structure of the field, in which actors’ interplays, from another point of
view, become invisible, insignificant or even illusory. The field is a dynamic
one, however. If the accumulation of labour into capital changes positions
within the field, and as a consequence of the relational structure of the field, the
whole structure changes.

Although Bourdieu claims that his field conceptualisation is dynamic, such a
concept in fact remains relatively static, especially if compared to Lewin’s field
theory (1951). For Lewin positions are temporary places in which the forces of
the field keep a given object or person. Bourdieu, on the other hand, views the
fields as arenas where ongoing fights about positions and capital are taking
place. In his words, “the fields present themselves at the synchronic
apprehension as structured spaces of positions (or stations) of which the
owners depend on the positions in these spaces and that can be analysed
independently from the characteristics of their occupants (partly determined by
them)” (Bourdieu, 1980b: 113). Those actors that have the monopoly on
specific capital, which is their power base, tend to defend the status quo
(orthodoxy) and are inclined to a strategy of conservation. Those actors that
have less capital are inclined to adopt strategies of subversion, and create
heterodoxy or heresy. It is the creation of heterodoxy that forces the dominant
actors to produce a justifying discourse to defend their orthodoxy.

According to Bourdieu, the power struggles characterising a field are
determined by the distribution of capital among the actors, and there are
different forms of capital. Two of those are crucial according to Bourdieu:
economic and cultural capital. “Inside the journalistic field, economic capital is
expressed via circulation, or advertising revenues, or audience ratings, whereas
the ‘specific’ cultural capital of the field takes the form of intelligent
commentary, in-depth reporting, and the like” (Benson and Neveu, 2005: 4).

If Bourdieu recognises in each field a dominant habitus to which all the field
actors must conform, DiMaggio and Powell (1991b) connect the homogeneity
of the organizations in a field to the isomorphism that characterises each field.
It is “a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble
other units that face the same set of environmental conditions”. As Aldrich
(1979) put it, the main factors that organizations must take into account are
other organizations, as they compete not only for resources and customers, but
also to gain institutional legitimacy, political power and social and economic
fitness. Institutional isomorphism helps in understanding the politics and
ceremony of modern organizational life and the decoupling or lose coupling of

DiMaggio and Powell (1991b) identify three isomorphic forces that act and
shape the field, whereas Scott (2001) later talked about regulative, normative
and cultural-cognitive pillars of institutions:

- coercive isomorphic forces, based on political power and legitimacy;
- mimetic isomorphic forces, based on standard responses to
  uncertainty; and
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- normative isomorphic forces, based on professionalisation.

Coercive isomorphism arises from the informal and formal pressures of other organizations, felt as force, persuasion or invitation to join in collusion, and by cultural expectations of the society in which organizations function. Meyer and Rowan (1977) noticed that rationalised states and other large rational organizations expand their dominance over more arenas of social life. So organizational structures increasingly reflect rules institutionalised and legitimated by and within the state.

Coercive isomorphism is not necessarily explicit, and dependent upon formal rules and state laws. In fact there can be more subtle forms of coercive isomorphism.

DiMaggio and Powell link mimetic isomorphism to uncertainty as a “powerful force that encourages imitation” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991b: 69). They claim that if organizational technologies are poorly understood, if goals are ambiguous or the environment creates symbolic uncertainty, organizations may model themselves on other organizations. Therefore, mimetic isomorphism has to do with modelling as a response to uncertainty. Models may be diffused unintentionally; the modelled organizations may be unaware of being copied. This process can happen through employees’ turnover or transfer. If it is intentional, it can be made real by organizations such as consulting companies or industry trade associations.

In this imitation process, innovation can happen unintentionally as an imperfect attempt to imitate others. Once innovation takes place, others will try to imitate this uniqueness and “the innovation-imitation process continues” (Alchian, 1950, cited in DiMaggio and Powell, 1991b: 69).

In the mimetic process, the adoption of innovations is also driven by the desire to gain legitimacy, to show their attempt to improve. Organizations, in fact, tend to model themselves after the organizations in their field that they perceive to be the most legitimate or successful.

Normative isomorphism arises from professionalisation. DiMaggio and Powell see professionalisation as “the collective struggle of members of an occupation to define the conditions and methods of their work, to control the production of producers, and to establish a cognitive base and legitimization for their occupational autonomy” (1991b: 70). They see the highest increase in professionalisation recently in organizational professionals, like the managers and specialised staff of large organizations. Professions are subject to the same coercive and mimetic isomorphism as organizations are. Within an organization, professions can differ as much as they can be similar across organizations within one profession. Responsible for the normative isomorphism are two aspects of professionalisation: formal education and legitimisation in a cognitive base produced by universities; and growth and elaboration of professional networks across which new models diffuse rapidly. Education and professional networks through universities and trade
associations create a pool of almost interchangeable individuals, with a similar mindset and orientation towards certain decisions, with a similar approach to the decision-making process. The professionalisation of managers leads to “homo-social reproduction”, as Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977) termed the phenomenon of managers coming to view problems in the same way and addressing them in the same way. The professionalisation of management goes in tandem with the structuration of the field. In fact the exchange of information and the transfer of people help to spread certain practices, disseminate certain information and therefore create certain patterns and institutionalising rules. Along with this process, government also recognises the central organisations through the grants or contracts that give them legitimacy and visibility. Trade associations also create arenas in which the central organisations are recognised and their personnel given relevant positions.

Isomorphism is present in the media field as in all others, if not more so. The front pages of newspapers in the same country and even around the world have similar headlines, top news and front-page pictures. In fact, the news journalism field is characterised by a number of forces producing isomorphism. Mimetic forces are evident and are recently strengthened by the opportunity for competitors to check each other’s websites; newspaper people are watching the television news and television people are reading newspapers. The models transmitted by news agencies make newspaper journalists perceive the priorities in a similar way. There are also normative forces at play: Journalism as a profession provides its practitioners with a set of common values and trained skills that make them evaluate potential news in similar ways.

The concept of “mimetic forces” as a small addition to other isomorphic forces has been criticised and developed by Czarniawska and Sevón (1996). What remains to be still poorly understood is what is imitated and how the imitation unfolds. Exploring these issues could advance the understanding of institutional change.

In the same vein, Kerstin Sahlin-Andersson (1996) offers an insightful view into the imitation process among organizations. It is assumed that organizations imitate those organizations they perceive as similar, but as different perspectives and institutional logics co-exist within each organization, concurrent models may co-exist within the same organization. The selection of one for actual imitation is therefore not a trivial issue, and it needs to be studied closely.

Furthermore, seeing imitation as the copying of a specific process presupposes that an organization knows itself and others – that it presupposes a conception of the self-identity and others’ identity (Sevón, 1996). Sevón has instead suggested that we should conceive of imitation as “a process of identity transformation that is neither solely a copy nor a totally new invention, but something between these ideal types” (1996: 52). The complexity emerges clearly if we think of organizations as places where different sub-universes and different logics interact. Organizational identity is an abstract concept filled
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with contents emerging from interactions among actors (Czarniawska and Joerges, 1996).

Thus it can be assumed that the same organization is constructed differently by different groups of people inside and outside the organization. These different groups of people perceive different types of organizations as similar or different, just as their knowledge of other organizations differs. The task of research is to explore how the actual imitation process proceeds in a situation in which different social constructions of the organization and different socialised interpretive schemes co-exist.

What is more, the institutional environments contain contradictory and competing meaning systems (Friedland and Alford, 1991), and such contradiction and competition can be seen as one of the sources for institutional change (see e.g. Lawrence, 1999; Dacin et al., 2002). Another source is the erosion of existing institutions (Greenwood and Hinings, 1996). Performance problems and crises may trigger political dissensus, for instance, and therefore permit less committed groups to promote other perspectives (Pettigrew, 1985; Tushman and Romanelli, 1985; Child and Smith, 1987; Oliver, 1992). Another source of erosion could be the continuous representation of ideas and views within the workforce, which causes “normative fragmentation” (Oliver, 1992), leading to a loss of meaning for such representation through its continuous repetition. Sevón, following Czarniawska and Joerges’ (1996) conceptualisation of change as translation, summarises these factors, noting that variation can come from many sources, including differences in actors’ learning processes and outcomes, imperfections in professionalisation, or partial or faulty imitation.

The most obvious source of institutional change is the case of a disruptive event, which questions established aspects of a certain institutional context (Silverman, 1971). Still, it is important to recognise that the equilibrium of each institutional order is threatened not only by specific circumstances such as contacts across culture, technological revolutions or rebelling marginal groups, but also by its own dynamics. As Silverman (1971) pointed out, actors, taking everyday life as nonproblematic in their “natural attitude” (a concept coined by phenomenologists), nevertheless step continually into situations creating not-yet-routinised problems. The normal attitude dictates an attempt to interpret the problematic sector of reality in terms of the unproblematic at first. This is not always possible, however, and so the unproblematic changes into the problematic.

A case of the introduction of a new technology, such as the introduction of a website in a newspaper, can be seen as an example of a disruptive event. The web may smuggle through the website a new logic of journalist actions. Its introduction into the organization may be accompanied by the entry of new people, who act as advocates of the change and its logics. These people may bring with them new discursive patterns and may question existing models and practices. Will different models co-exist, or will they battle for dominance? Can
newspapers and websites co-exist in the same organization? The notion of translation, borrowed by Czarniawska and Joerges (1996) from Bruno Latour for the purpose of reconceptualising organizational change may be of use here. Czarniawska and Joerges remind their readers that organizational change has traditionally been represented by two contrasting images: planned innovation and environmental adaptation. Their notion of change as translation may prove closer to everyday organizational life. According to this perspective, change is caused by travelling ideas, carried by consultants, researchers, experts, influential leaders and the media. This is much more than a mere linguistic translation – not only words, but also images, objects and even people change, and they move from one place to the other. The mechanisms (or vehicles, in their vocabulary) of such travelling ideas are fashion and institutionalisation.

Czarniawska and Joerges (1996) wrote that

a new technology arrives, first as a nebulous idea, something only vaguely, in some minds, related to some actions which then lands heavily on the ground, showing its nasty side, requiring still new investments and additional commitments. At worst, a new technology can break down a whole social system (Trist and Bamford, 1951). At best, in the course of the fitting process, the idea and the set of actions will get adjusted to each other in a new, unique combination. (1996: 19)

Outside and within organizations, ideas are translated and materialised – sometimes under the guidance of formal or informal leaders, at other times spontaneously, through a series of nonofficial translations. To gain legitimacy, the new idea is initially presented as derived from some (actual or invented) authority\textsuperscript{14}, even though it could have been invented by individuals just like those who will adopt it. Once the idea has gained legitimacy, those with control ambitions will try to appropriate it (Czarniawska and Joerges, 1996). A scrutiny of new ideas – leading to their approval or destruction – is conceived as a duty of organizational leaders, as they must follow modern ideas, but also need to protect the organization from passing fads. The case of new technology is no exception.

A key concept: Institutional logic

The concept of institutional logics, which has been mentioned in my discussion of organizational fields in this chapter, has been traced back to Friedland and Alford (1991). They wrote that each institutional order of western societies,

\textsuperscript{14} According to Mary Douglas (1986), the highest authority in modernity is Nature.
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such as the state, democracy, the family and religion, has a central logic that is “a set of material practices and symbolic constructions” (1991: 248). Thus, according to these authors, institutional logics are simultaneously symbolic systems and material practices – behaviours and social relationships that concretise those symbolic systems.

Not only do fields differ from one another, therefore, but each of them is a fragmented and pluralistic space (see e.g. Lounsbury, 2007; Jarzabkowski et al., 2009). Fields as well as organizations comprise contradictory and competing meaning systems (Friedland and Alford, 1991) and groups responding to different institutional logics (Thornton and Occasio, 2008).

Interest in institutional logics has increased in the recent years, along with an increased emphasis on embedded agency (Hardy and Maquire, 2008) and heterogeneity of organisation, rather than isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) and homogeneity. In fact the reference to Friedland and Alford (1991) and their call for a wider societal consideration in institutional theory is a call for acknowledging the multiplicity of logics in organizational fields. On the one hand, each institutional order has a central logic and each of these logics constrains action. On the other hand, their multiplicity offers alternative modes of acting, thus evoking some kind of agency. Removing the emphasis on the societal matters from Friedland and Alford, Thornton and Ocasio (2008: 100) define institutional logics as “means-end relationships that define the content and meaning of institutions” and, I would add, at the same time coming from the content and meaning of institutions.

Studies of institutional logics often portray two conflicting institutional logics in one field: a commercial (or market-oriented or managerial) logic and a cultural (or professional or non-commercial) logic. Examples of cultural logic in the institutional literature are the craft logic in higher educational publishing (Thornton, 2002), the general health care logics (Scott et al., 2000) and the nonprofit logic (Stone, 1996; Townley, 2002). An emphasis in these works is often in the conflict between market logic (defining the means to profit or cost-effective management) and cultural logic (the means to culturally valued goals such as better health, a higher value placed on education or some general public service value). The conceptualisation of the journalistic field by Bourdieu (1996) focuses on this conflict. The desire for economic capital, valued highly as both means and ends in the market logic, dictates actions in directions that differ from the desire for cultural capital, highly valued as both means and ends in the cultural logic, thus creating conflicts and tensions in the same field.

Different logics dictate different criteria for appropriate action. If cultural and material logics co-exist in the field, they also compete in shaping actions and in their organizing. Organizations in fragmented and pluralistic fields can not help but be fragmented and pluralistic. Both commercial and cultural desires co-exist in various forms within each organization. These elements may not have the same influence on organizing: One of them may prevail and dominate the organization, but this dominance is not permanent; it can change.
As different sub-universes co-exist within the same organization, they can be ruled by different logic: One group can select actions based on the logic of the market, whereas another follows and defends the cultural logic. The actual organizational action is therefore a result of a negotiation among logics that differ from each other, not only because some of them are market-oriented and some culture-oriented, but also because the institutions constraining different groups differ. The resulting equilibrium (or lack of equilibrium) among these different logics does not depend only on intra-organizational dynamics, as organization fields extend beyond organizational boundaries. The level of equilibrium is not static, as organizations are composed of people and their dynamic social interactions. Moreover, the actors do not have to be aware of the logics to which they comply, or that some logics are mutually exclusive.

A key concept: Profession

Professions are one of the institutions of modern society. They have been of empirical and theoretical concern, particularly for sociologists: why and how they arose, how they change over time, the societal consequences of the rise of professions and the role do serve in society (Begun, 1986; Johnson and Packer, 1987). The ample sociological literature on professions and professionalisation (see e.g. Carr-Saunders and Wilson, 1933; Becker et al., 1961; Strauss et al., 1964; Sarfatti Larsson, 1977; Freidson, 1986; Abbott, 1988; Halpern, 1992; Ackroyd, 1996; Kosmala and Herrbach, 2006; Schleef, 2006; Scott, 2008) describes the role of professional identities and ideologies in organizing everyday work, and demonstrates how identities and ideologies define fields of expertise, provide their members with ethical norms, and prescribe what to do under various conditions.

The early theoreticians of professions such as Carr-Saunders and Wilson (1933), Greenwood (1957) and Goode (1969) considered professions to be occupations requiring specific skills and dedication, and therefore call for a special recognition. This recognition should take the form of a special service orientation, higher education and commitment to professionals in society. Autonomy was also considered a key characteristic for the self-regulation of professions, however, necessary for their members to develop specialised knowledge, and to set and maintain their own professional standards.

This predominantly eulogical attitude towards professions began to change in the 1960s and the 1970s. It began with sociologists attempting to define the unique attributes of specific professions (see e.g. Greenwood, 1957; Barber, 1963; Wilensky, 1964; Goode, 1969; Moore, 1970; Freidson, 1973; Sarfatti Larson, 1977), focusing on knowledge, ethics and autonomy.

Greenwood (1957) recognised that professions have the following attributes: systematic theory, professional authority, community sanction, ethical code and professional culture. Barber (1963) defined professions as
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comprising four attributes: generalised and systematic knowledge, community interest, self-control through codes of ethics, and a system of rewards as opposed to individual self-interest. Wilensky (1964) reduced the list of criteria for professions to two: technical systematic knowledge and professional norms. Goode (1969), in turn, emphasised the ethics of professional competence, noting that the professional job is such that the client could be harmed by a professional’s unethically or incompetent work.

Freidson (1973) has contributed to a more critical definition of professions, rooted in the social organization of labour markets. He shed light on the phenomenon of knowledge monopoly and gatekeeping activities of professions as the origins of professional control. Knowledge and its acquisition through training, together with formal credentials, were the essential institutional traits of professions for Freidson. The main difference between professions and other occupations is the place where knowledge is acquired:

The contemporary professions might be regarded as an educated, middle-class variant of the occupation principle of organization already represented by the working-class crafts, the difference between the two being that the claim for autonomy and self-control among professions is usually based on formal ‘higher’ education rather than on trade school or long apprenticeship in practicing some manual skill said to require complex judgement.” (Freidson, 1973: 22)

Magali Sarfatti Larson’s (1977) work emphasised the control of access to a profession. Professionals establish a field of expertise by means of a number of mechanisms and procedures. First, there is agreement on the “cognitive base” for their existence, their work and their societal function, on which professions are grounded, and a “predominant definition of professional commodity” (Sarfatti Larson, 1977: 211). This means that the professional domain must be carefully demarcated against other professions: Their ego-ideology is always also an alter-ideology (or, one could say today, their identity is always also their alterity). Second, there is a “rise and consolidation of national systems of education” (ibid). Entry into a profession is carefully monitored, therefore, and controlled by institutions issuing credentials to individuals qualifying for entry into that profession. Last but not least, is the establishment of regulatory bodies, which monitor and control compliance to the professional codes of conduct.

Much attention has also been paid to professionalisation, and in this context to the institutionalisation (Jackson, 1970; Johnson, 1972, 1977; Freidson, 1973; Ritti et al., 1974; Sarfatti Larsson, 1977; Klegon, 1978) and deinstitutionalisation (Toren, 1975) of professions, portrayed not as an emerging process but as a strategic move of a group to acquire and maintain power, control and status over society.
The works from the 1960s and 1970s still heavily influence current writing on professions, in which definitions are constantly improved and the list of traits updated (see e.g. Leicht and Fennel, 2001; 2008). Relatively little attention has been paid to the daily work of professionals within organizations (for exceptions, see Kornhauser, 1962; Hall, 1968; Engel and Hall 1973; Sarfatti Larsson, 1993), although the recent abundant literature on communities of practice and learning in organizations has developed an insightful debate on related matters (see e.g. Lave and Wenger, 1991; Brown and Duguid, 1991; Gherardi, 2000; 2009). Kornhauser (1962) has studied professional work in organizations, and has been able to revise the assumption of absolute autonomy and independence as core values for professions, offering a more pragmatic and limited view of autonomy in exercising the profession in concrete organizations.

The early idealisation of professions began to be questioned:

Since the criteria of professionalism are seen as positive, the concern is with the ability to maintain professional status within bureaucratic organizations. For example, Kornhauser's (1962) concern is with the maintenance of professional autonomy and Wilensky's (1964) is with the service ideal that is supposed to be characteristic of professionals. Even Perucci (1971: 494), who is critical of the role of engineers in American society, assumes the inherent good of the professional model. Thus, he sees the problem of engineers working for business as being a failure to establish a service ethics and develop sufficient power to shape their own activities. (Klegon, 1978: 266)

The assumption that professions differ in some distinctive ways from other occupations has been used by professionals to explain and justify the power and prestige that enjoyed by certain professionals (Hall, 1968: 80). Thus, in the study of professions, it is necessary not to accept the professionals' concepts uncritically. As Klegon and Roth pointed out, if the ideology of professions continues to be accepted uncritically, “it will indeed be difficult to better understand the dynamic of professional claim and to alter the situation in which, as Roth (1974: 17) suggested, “Sociologists have become the dupe of established professions…and arbiter of occupations on the make” (Klegon, 1978: 267).

These observations are especially relevant at present, when work organizations are dominated more and more by a managerial ideology that imposes principles of efficiency, market-orientation and efficacy as the taken-for-granted goals of an organization, especially if profit-oriented. Professions relate to these developments in varying ways: Some espouse the market logic and make it their ally (often in medicine); other mobilise to oppose it. Journalism scholars have discussed the commercialization tendencies in
Institutional theory: Some selected concepts

journalism (see e.g. Hultén, 1999; Nygren and Alström, 2002; Ybema, Daymon and Veenswijk, 2005; for a discussion on the economic value of news and journalism, see Picard, 2006, 2010) and its deprofessionalisation (see e.g. Nygren, 2008). Whichever way the profession goes, if market logic dominates an organization, dictating the way revenues are created and sustained, profits are made and markets are reached, it will not be indifferent to the social meaning given to the work of professionals that operate in that organization.

Key concepts: Professions and organization fields

Professions can be seen as shaping organization fields that group organizations dominated by a given profession. Thus, the field of news media is constructed primarily around the profession of journalism; the field of health care has been shaped around the medical profession; the field of justice has been shaped around the legal professions. Professional logic, which to me is a type of cultural logic, must co-exist with market logic, against which professions were traditionally defined.

Whether they are critical or apologetic, researchers of the professions agree that each profession acts as the guardian of a certain body of knowledge – to which the practitioners have (in varying degrees) exclusive access and right to apply. They legitimise it by their obligation to fulfil their public service mission. Thus, it can be said that professions, in spite of their changes and differing situations, still make claim to the following three distinctive traits, the existence of which can be said to be institutionalised:

- professional knowledge, which provides practitioners with the references for evaluating a good or a bad practice;
- public service, which drives practitioners to operate in the public interest, rather than the interest of particular private interests; and
- opposition to commercial practices, which may lead practitioners to conduct bad practices that go against their professional ethics.

I have specified the contents of these three institutional traits of a profession in the case of journalism, and used them to structure the analysis of my study. Each of these institutional traits defines an area of practices that – aligned to certain objects– have been institutionalised as professional, in the case as journalistic.
4. Institutions at work

In this study, I want to convey my understanding of the way institutions work, by focusing particularly on the profession of journalism in one newspaper organization. Having presented some selected concepts in institutional theory in the previous chapter, I focus in this chapter on introducing my reasoning about institutions at work.

The expression “institutions at work” has a double meaning. On the one hand, echoing Mary Douglas’ *How institutions think* (1986), I am interested in writing about how institutions work: How do they function? On the other hand, I refer to institutions in a workplace, which is the setting where I have conducted my study.

For analyzing institutions at work, I rely on a loan from Bourdieu’s theoretical apparatus describing how cultural capital works. The French sociologist conceptualised cultural capital as taking three states – incorporated, objectified and institutionalised – and he claimed that in order to be appropriated, the three states must be combined. I am therefore borrowing these three states from Bourdieu, – omitting cultural capital itself – in order to theorise how institutions work.

Bringing work back into institutions?

Paraphrasing Barley and Kunda’s *Bringing work back in*, I would say that in recent years there has been an attempt by researchers to bring work back into institutions, particularly through the development of micro-perspectives and studies on institutions in organizations. This has been done by focusing on actors’ roles and work in creating, maintaining, changing and disrupting institutions. Sometimes this claim has been traced back to the influence of Christine Oliver’s articles on strategic responses to institutional processes (1991) and antecedents of deinstitutionalisation (1992) and to DiMaggio’s conceptualisation of the institutional entrepreneur (1988).

Because I am interested in understanding how institutions work at workplaces, I have been examining the resources offered by institutional theories to satisfy my interest. In recent years, with the aim of connecting “previous disparate ideas” (Lawrence et al., 2009: 1), Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) have developed, and Lawrence, Suddaby and Leca (2009) have expanded upon the concept of institutional work as “the purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining, and disrupting institutions” (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006: 215). Working with this concept, they wanted to overcome the hyper-muscularity of the institutional entrepreneurship concept (see e.g. Eisenstadt, 1980; Fligstein, 1997; Beckert, 1999; Leca et al., 2006;
Maguire et al., 2004; Garud et al., 2007; Hardy and Maguire, 2008) and to consider seriously the practice turn in social sciences and in business studies (see e.g. Whittington, 2003; Whittington et al., 2003; Lanzara, 2009; Miettiven, Samra-Fredericks, Yanow, 2009; Nicolini, 2009). They listed a number of points of reference shared by scholars interested in institutional work:

- a desire to overcome the dichotomy between agency and structure, stability and change with sociologists of practice (Bourdieu, 1972/1977, 1977, 1980a, 1990; Giddens, 1984; de Certeau, 2002; Schatzki et al., 2001);
- an interest in meanings and language with social constructivists (Berger and Luckman, 1967; Gergen and Gergen, 1984; Kress, 1995; Zilber, 2002);

They declare that the focus of institutional work is on the “nearly invisible and often mundane, as in the day-to-day adjustments, adaptations, and compromises of actors attempting to maintain institutional arrangements” (Lawrence et al., 2009: 1).

I espouse the idea of focusing on the mundane day-to-day actions in order to investigate institutions, and I sympathise with the idea of bringing work into institutional theory. I share with Lawrence, Suddaby and Leca (2009) the view that interests in these three perspectives – the sociology of practice, social constructivism and organizational ethnography – are a good place to start the study of institutions. I am not convinced, however by the way they have gathered insights from these streams and transformed them into the concept of institutional work. They have classified institutional work into three categories according to its aims: creation, maintenance and disruption of institutions. Therefore, they recognise some actions that can be characterised as institutional work for the creation of institutions, others as institutional work for the maintenance of institutions and still others for their disruption. This classification is consistent with the notion of institutional work as purposive action, included in Lawrence and Suddaby’s (2006: 215) definition, quoted in the previous paragraph. Thus, although they claim that the concept of institutional work is meant to overcome the heroic rationalist view of institutional entrepreneurship and to give justice to the intelligence of people and their freedom of choice, I think the concept develops with a strong rationalist assumption of intentionality. If one were to speak of purposiveness, it would probably be necessary to talk about a bounded purposiveness, in agreement with lessons from sociology of practice (Bourdieu, 1980a, 1990). Even in their most recent book on Institutional Work (Lawrence et al., 2009),
they seem to show particular attachment to purposiveness and intentionality, which are the core concepts of institutional work. They argue that

(…) intentionality is central to the determination of what constitutes institutional work: without intentionality, actions may have profound institutional effects but still not be institutional work. An alternative reading of institutional work includes all human action that has institutional effects. (Lawrence et al., 2009: 13)

It seems that in addressing institutional work, scholars get caught between the ambition to overcome the “hyper-muscular entrepreneur” – a human actor with superhero characteristics – and the desire to overcome the picture of individuals as puppets, as “cultural dopes” (Garfinkel, 1967). They therefore “view institutional work as intelligent, situated institutional action” (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006: 215). Yet, the superhero remains an ambition, whereas the dope leads them to picture actors as detached from the material world. Thus, my investigation into the concept of institutional work has left my interest in the way institutions work somewhat dissatisfied, directing me to look for inspiration outside institutional theory.

Inspiration from outside institutional theory

It has been argued that Bourdieu’s work could give particularly fruitful insights in dialogue with institutional theory (Hirsch, 1975; Mohr, 1998, 2000; Lounsbury et al., 2003; Emirbayer and Johnson, 2008). The most promising are the concepts of field, habitus and capital, which together form Bourdieu’s relational way of understanding social processes, and indicate his disdain for the established opposition between subjective and objective in “true scientific theory and practice” (Bourdieu, 1984/1988: 782).

My ambitions for this study are less ambitious, however. I borrow from Bourdieu only the metaphor for which he is best known (Emirbayer and Johnson, 2008) the notion that cultural capital takes three states. Cultural capital – can be appropriated only in the alignment of three states15: incorporation, objectification and institutionalisation. Analogously, I claim that institutions are actions that have been incorporated into people’s bodily movements objectified into things, and became institutionalised – taken for granted (the Science and Technology Studies scholars would call it “black-boxed”) – under the protection of thing-like words (labels).

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15 États has been translated to English as forms, but I prefer to use the word state.
My loan from Bourdieu

Bourdieu (1979) used the metaphor of cultural capital to emphasise the possibility of accumulation and appropriation of culture. In order for the cultural capital to be appropriated, the three states (incorporation, objectification and institutionalisation) need to go together. Thus if I buy a cultural object, for example – like a painting from the art dealer who owns it – it does not mean that I have appropriated her cultural capital, because her cultural capital lies both in her objects and in the way she uses them (her habitus), and in her title (art dealer).

By habitus I refer here to Bourdieu’s meaning of the term: For him, habitus is acquired over time and embodied in us through mimesis (Bourdieu, 1980a: 73; this and all other quotes from Bourdieu, 1980a, are my translations) as permanent dispositions. In his words, “it is a system of durable dispositions, continuously transforming themselves through their enactment, thus creating in light of their durability all sorts of hysteresis effects in social actions and reactions to unforeseen situations” (Bourdieu, 1980a: 135). Thus, through embodiment in individuals, social conditions (or in other words, institutions) are never equal to themselves. Habitus enables institutions to attain full realisation, argues Bourdieu.

I have borrowed the three states, but not the concept of cultural capital from Bourdieu. Furthermore, I claim that these three states can be seen as necessary states of an institutionalisation process, although Bourdieu reserves this term only for institutionalisation. For my purposes, I have renamed the state of incorporation (habitus) practices; that of objectification, objects, and that of institutionalisation, labels; showing how certain actions become incorporated, inscribed and labelled on their way to become institutions. These terms have been also used in organization studies together with the notion of translation (Czarniawska and Sevón 1996; Czarniawska and Sevón, 2005) to show how objects, practices and ideas travel across time and space. The contributors to those two volumes demonstrate how ideas are materialised, practices are stabilised by both technology and language, and institutions are converted into words or images, that are “embodied, inscribed, or objectified” (Czarniawska and Sevón, 2005: 9) and can therefore move in time and space. Following this line of reasoning, I am claiming here that institutions are at work in the space between the practices in which they are incorporated, the objects in which they are inscribed and the labels by which they are named. Thus, journalism, for example – a subcategory of the modern institution labelled “professions” – is at work in the space between journalists’ practices, the newspaper or the website as objects and the labels assigned to people who perform these practices, to

16 Neither do I intend to investigate the relationship between institutions and cultural capital, although I recognise that institutions can take the form of cultural capital, that the latter can be the result of the former, that they are intertwined concepts.
practices themselves and to their outcomes. It is in this space that the practices become journalistic and the newspaper becomes a journalistic product. As I discuss in Part IV, the work of those called journalists makes an object (the newspaper or a website) journalistic, whereas the object makes the journalists’ work journalistic. The institutions are at work in the alignments and disarrangements among practices, objects and labels.

**Delimiting the loan and moving on**

I think that Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of cultural capital in three states can enlighten my understanding of institutions at work in a number of aspects. Cultural capital is related to time, which is also valuable for understanding institutions at work. Habitus as embodied cultural capital is history which has been incorporated and which has forgotten itself. This is what practice is: an enactment of institutions that have been developing through time but exist and are materialised only here and now.

Viewing habitus as the collective property helps to overcome the dichotomy between rationality and nonrationality, between micro- and macro-approaches, between taken-for-grantedness of institutions and possibilities of change (Hirsch, 1997).

By focusing on the objectification, it is possible to do justice to the materiality of the social world in which both humans and nonhumans act and therefore bring things into institutional theory (Czarniawska, 2008). By taking into account the particular objectification of professional qualifications as labels, it is possible to investigate the symbolic value (efficacy) of institutions and their stability as the result of the alignment of the three states.

The three states are related to one another, and in order for a cultural capital to be transmitted and thus appropriated, they need to “go together”, to be aligned with each other. Similarly, institutions are at work, due to the alignment of practices, objects and labels, which become disarranged, however, in the encounter between old and new objects and practices. Bourdieu (1980a) pointed out that the necessities of adaptation to new and unpredictable situations (meeting new objects, for example) may impose adjustments that will transform the habitus, and other objects and labels. Similarly, I focus the story in this dissertation on the encounter between old and new objects and practices in the journalistic profession – an institution that I can observe at work.

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17 Which I do here.
A framework for the analysis

“New” and “old” are relational concepts often used to refer to a difference in the age of things. New and old assume the perception of the mutual difference: The new I am studying is alien to the old and vice versa. In the encounter and the appreciation of difference in the alien, the previous alignment between practices, objects and labels may be questioned, may break up into disarrangements and may open a way for new alignments.

An old object (newspaper) encounters a new object (website). How does the encounter unfold? The encounter of the alien – in the form of a new object, new practices, and new labels – is the triggering incidents in the story narrated in this dissertation, which is the story of how institutions work.

The institution I am focusing on is “news production” – the way of producing news that is established and legitimate in western countries during the last two centuries. I am particularly concentrating on the profession that is central for this news production: the journalists’ work as newsmakers. The profession of journalism is central but not solitary within the institution of news production, and is not limited to it; because news production is not only journalistic work, and not all journalistic work is directed towards news production. I am interested in the intersection of news production and journalism – in the institution of news production with a particular focus on the work of journalists. Thus, when I talk about profession in this dissertation, I mean journalism.

It is around the encounters between old and new objects, practices and labels that I structured the analysis of my field material, as Table 4.1 illustrates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objects/Practices</th>
<th>Old Practices</th>
<th>New Practices</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old Objects</td>
<td>Old journalism practices for Newspapers (old object)</td>
<td>Journalism practices for Newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Objects</td>
<td>Old journalism practices for Website (new object)</td>
<td>New Journalism practices for Website</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The encounters of the differences of the alien focus on practices and objects in the context of this study as the main institutional labels: Journalism, journalists and journalistic are unchanged. In fact, the project of integration between newspaper and website that I study in the field is taking place under the label “journalism/journalist”. As discussed in Chapters 9, 10 and 11, it is often reinforced in documents and conversations that everybody is a journalist in the newsroom and doing journalistic work, whether for the online news or the newspaper or both. New labels coming with the web, such as bloggers, are kept disassociated from journalistic practices and objects. This is compelling in itself,
as the stability or change of the labels could represent a way of controlling the change (Czarniawska and Joerges, 1988).

Although technological stability makes the alignment between objects, practices and labels durable (Latour, 1991) and thus contributes to institutional stability, the introduction of a new technology may trigger a disarrangement of the existing alignment. When a new technology is introduced into an organization, the encounter between the new object and the old object can have crucial institutional consequences. The new object comes in with a package of new practices. Old and new objects and practices co-exist in the organizational setting, and space is thus created for new alignments between the old and the new. On the one hand, the new object is aligned to old practices; people attempt to reproduce their old way of working onto a new object by loading it with old norms and practices. Nevertheless, by doing so, such old practices are translated into a new form onto the new object. On the other hand, the old object, more or less disarranged from the old alignment with old practices, is realigned to new practices; people import new ways of working from the new object and apply them onto the old object.

Such movements of alignment, disarrangements and new alignments and realignments constitute the framework of my analysis, which attempts to unfold the micro-processes of institutions at work in the context of a technological change. I investigate the consequences of the encounter between the old object, (news)paper, and the new object, web(site) on three areas of professional journalistic practices: practices for evaluating news and newswork, in the public interest or in the interests of the publics and in defence of the profession. Consequently, the analysis is divided in three main steps:

1. identification of the old alignment – how newspaper is aligned with its practices, which constitute standard professional work;
2. encounter with the new object – how the newspaper has encountered the web and how the casting of web(site) as alien unfolds; and
3. vacillation between old and new – stories of the newspaper and the website vacillating between old and new practices.
PART III: Empirical study

Part III presents the empirical study of this dissertation.

In Chapter 5, I describe how the study was conducted and discuss methodological issues related to the generation of empirical material and to its analysis. The aim of this chapter is threefold: to disclose my rationale for choosing an organizational ethnography, to allow me to reflect on the craft of doing empirical research, and to describe my role as a researcher in and out of the field – in empirical material generation and analysis.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 present Il Sole-24 Ore Group as the newspaper organization at the centre of this study. In Chapter 6, I describe the newspaper company, its products, its organizational structure and its premises. In Chapter 7, the organizing of everyday newswork is presented, based on my daily observations of work in the Newsroom. In Chapter 8, the history of the Internet in the newspaper is discussed from the early days in 1996 to the project of integrating the newspaper and the website in 2007.

This goal for this part of the dissertation is to provide the reader with a first-hand account of the empirical study and with the information required to appreciate the analysis that follows in Part IV.
5. Methodology

In this chapter I tell my confessional tale: a story of research project that led me to this dissertation, showing how my life as a fieldworker “was lived upriver among the natives”, and how “the fieldwork odyssey was accomplished” (Van Maanen, 1988: 75). The story will also make explicit my view of social sciences and fieldwork in social sciences. Yet, as in the case of any narrative, this account does not represent the practice of research it refers to, but that which constitutes it (Barthes, 1957). Of necessity, however, it forces the language of practice (of research) into the language of theory (Bourdieu, 1990). Such a translation is unavoidable for achieving distance from my own work in the field.

The case for ethnography

This is an ethnographic study of newspaper producers. The time-honoured standards of scientific research reporting would require a justification of my choice by demonstrating that it was the best possible way to achieve my goals. In this way, the reader would be convinced of the goodness of this study and of my skills as a researcher.

To persuade the reader of the quality of my research, I would certainly quote some authors who have published in highly ranked journals and highly influential books, and who share (at least to my understanding) my view of research and the world. They would give me a methodological hand in legitimatising my choices, as Van Maanen has done, in order to allow my confessions here. I would, for example, quote Zilber (2002: 237), who has written that institutionalism “goes hand in hand with organizational ethnography as a broad research paradigm”, as the two approaches have common phenomenological roots. I could quote Powell and DiMaggio’s (1991) call for constructing micro-foundations to institutional theory. I could claim that my study contributes to an understanding of the way institutions work in practice, by giving institutions a much-needed material dimension (by including bodies and things, Czarniawska, 2007). I could go on maintaining that a careful analysis of a thick descriptive empirical material derived from getting close to people and their everyday organizational life can “reveal much of the machinery for the workings of social structure” (McDermott and Roth, 1978: 323), as their daily routines express their social system (Giddens, 1984: 36), and that this was precisely my intent with this study.

But was it really? Did I really know all these things before I started? Was my purpose that clear? To be honest, I am not sure that my approach, which was broad and vague – especially at the beginning – was the best possible for the
purpose of my study. I did not really know what the purpose of my study was before embarking upon it, at least not more precisely than a wish to learn more about how newspapers and websites are produced in the same organization. I made sense of what I did retrospectively in the course of the fieldwork and the writing, in line with the old wisdom cited by Weick: “How can I know what I think until I see what I say?” (Weick, 1995: 189). Thus my study is probably the best possible approach to meet my purpose – according to my latest formulation of that purpose. The field story has come to match the theoretical story and be emplotted by it in the interaction between texts of different origins and times, texts of theories and fieldnotes, in the writing and rewriting processes.

The choice of ethnography, therefore, did not rise from the desire to fill a theoretical gap in the best way possible and thus to enlighten the world’s social science community with a missing piece of the social puzzle. Rather, the reasons for the choice are to be sought in my personal history, which shaped my preferences and my curiosity about things I don’t know, for seeing it, listening to it, smelling it, touching it. There is no doubt, however, that my fieldwork has had a strong influence on my path as a researcher, helping me to understand the contrast between the “before” and the “after” in my research process.

**Ethnographically inspired studies**

Ethnography has been traditionally used by anthropologists to report their studies of exotic cultures. They used to live for months, if not years, within local communities, trying to understand the natives’ points of view, to see with their eyes. As Laura Nader (1969: 289) put it, anthropologists have traditionally been more interested in “why peasants don’t change than why the auto industry doesn’t innovate, or why the Pentagon or universities can not be more organizationally creative? The conservatism of such major institutions and bureaucratic organizations probably has wider implications for the species and for theories of change than does the conservatism of peasantry”. Until the 1970s, in fact, anthropologists neglected the study of organizations and organizational scholars neglected ethnography as a method for organizational studies (Schwartzman, 1993).

Since the 1970s, however, organizational ethnographers have studied many aspects of organizations, such as work (routines of complex jobs, complexity of routine jobs), culture, organizing processes (events, routines, gatherings), relationships internal (power, control and inequality) and external to the organization (Schwartzman, 1993; Atkinson et al., 2001; V. Smith, 2001). Studying organizing processes appears to be coherent with a sense-making approach (Weick, 1976, 1979, 1988, 1995), as in these processes “a sense of organization unfolds and is enacted, instead of continuing to examine
Methodology

organizations as objective, concrete, material, and unproblematic entities” (Schwartzman, 1993: 36)

The close access is said to help in the investigation of both behavioural patterns and subjective experiences of organizational reality (Zilber, 2002), which also contributes to an uncovering of the ongoing negotiations between members and subgroups over the interpretations and understandings of this changing reality (Zilber, 2002; Johnson et al., 2003). It is helpful when one can, as I did, share sociolinguistic meanings and practices with the people I studied (Berger and Luckman, 1967).

Two of the most-cited ethnographic studies on newspapers are *Journalists At Work: Specialist Correspondents, Their News Organizations, News Sources, and Competitor-Colleague* by Jeremy Tunstall (1971) and *Making News. A Study in the Construction of Reality* by Gaye Tuchman (1978). These studies shed light on the way newspaper producers work, with the newsrooms as their site. Tuchman’s study, in particular, concentrated on the routinised aspects of journalistic work, conventionally considered to be dealing mainly with the unexpected. She conducted studies of different news organizations for both newspapers and television stations:

I observed work in the newsrooms, accompanied newsmen to the news events, and then followed the course of their stories through the news process. I also conducted semiformal interviews on a regular basis. (…) I asked newsmen for definitions of the terms they were using. (Tuchman, 1973: 113)

For a number of reasons, both Tuchman and Tunstall's works have provided me with great inspiration. They took me inside the newsroom before I went there myself; they have encouraged me to follow their steps to the newsroom and to the other side of the wall — to the management room. Furthermore, Tuchman's theoretical standpoint has been inspiring: She considered the process of making news to be a key process in the social construction of reality. She saw news as being embedded and entangled in the social organization of newswork. Tuchman considered newspapers and news production in general to be an institution, representing “an institutional method of making information available to consumers” (Tuchman, 1978: 4). Information is transformed into news by newspapers, so that it supports legitimate institutions; and news is produced by professionals in organizations, and thus on the basis of institutional processes and practices and according to institutional standards (Tuchman, 1978). Therefore I have read her work as being particularly close to my viewpoint.

Both Tuchman and Tunstall started their works by presenting a view of newspapers as loci of tensions, resolved, at least temporarily, by various coalitions. In Tunstall's view, coalitions in newspapers are created around three main goals (Tunstall, 1971):
Revenue goals are as important as nonrevenue goals; it is actually a dynamic equilibrium constantly renegotiated by different coalitions that govern the organization (Turnstall, 1971). Norms, values and mindsets are reflected in everyday activities, and their differences create internal tensions. Even inside the newsrooms, different types of journalistic work must co-exist: News-processing routines have to constrain the news-gathering nonroutine work into a daily finished product (Turnstall, 1971; Tuchman, 1978).

News organizations have been characterised by a fundamental tension. On the one hand, journalism is about reporting the occurrence of events, which can be claimed to be idiosyncratic by definition; on the other hand this reporting takes place in an organization based on routines and structures. The peculiarity of the newspeople’s work is that they process in a routinised way unexpected events that emerge in some disruptive and exceptional manner (Tuchman, 1973).

This tension is obviously manifested by the commonly existing “wall” that exists between journalists and managers in newspaper organizations. It is noticeable even inside a newsroom, however, as the newswork presents a fundamental challenge to routine organizing. As Tuchman (1978) claims, all events must be classified in a known system of categories, which then dictate appropriate routines. Newsworthiness is a result of this reduction, not of an application of independently derived objective criteria to events. Typifications, such as the classification of news into hard, soft, spot, developing and continuing – are what newsworkers use to transform the idiosyncratic occurrences of the everyday world into raw material to be subjected to routine processing and dissemination (Tuchman, 1978). In other words, typifications, which the professionalisation of journalism has rendered similar across organizations, are necessary for organizing the production of news, and they are relatively stable yet continuously changing.

Tuchman (1973) made another observation about typifications in the newsroom that is particularly relevant here. Typifications express – and are expressed by – the organizational processes within which stories are constructed. Thus one could say the news is a product of specific ways of organizing the newswork. This observation has significant consequences in terms of methodology. By looking at the published newspaper, I can learn something about the organization of production, and, as it is a product of specific organizing practices, rules and norms, a change in the newspaper product can be a sign of a change in the newspaper organization.

Tuchman also addressed the issue of professionalisation as a critical process in shaping the institution of newspaper. The present professional standards require journalists to be impartial, objective, independent and concerned with...
the facts. Journalists’ credibility depends on their ability to demonstrate their impartiality, objectivity and independence. Although professional journalism emerged in the 1890s, it was not until the 1920s that facticity connoted professional neutrality and objectivity, and that newworkers demonstrated their impartiality by explicitly eschewing distortion and personal bias. Then, recognising that reporters necessarily expressed subjective opinions and that these subjective opinions needed to be separated from the “objective” facts, newspapers introduced signed political columns, but strived to separate the chronicles from journalists’ personal opinions.

“Facts” usually denote information gathered by professionally validated methods specifying the relationship between what is known and how it is known. It is therefore how something is known and made sense of that gives an event the status of fact, and the way something happens that decides the classification of news in different categories (Tuchman, 1973).

Tuchman’s (1978) view on facticity and impartiality as bases for professional credibility in journalism questions the very possibility of objectivity and takes objectivity as a construction and a strategic ritual rather than an external criterion to judge journalists’ work. As objectivity is a construction strictly related to journalistic professionalism, it is obvious that the very notion of professionalism changes over time. The criteria to assess the quality of journalism may have remained the same in the sense of the words used, but the meanings have changed, as some external elements – such as technology, competition or market changes – have changed journalistic practices.

Technological changes have a great impact on the sources of information for journalists. As professional status is based partially upon knowledge of sources, changes in technology have an impact on the profession as well. Take the news agencies, for example. They diffuse news to every subscriber of their service. Since the introduction of the Internet, their reach and coverage have increased a great deal. This is both an advantage and a disadvantage for journalists. In fact, news agencies provide them with large amounts of information, considered reliable, updated and time-sensitive, but they provide the same information to everyone. Technological advancements have therefore reinforced some tensions between professional standards of being up-to-date and exclusive.

The impact of technology on the profession and therefore on the organization of professional work can be particularly relevant to newspapers, and certainly to my study, as the Internet, free press, and changes in readers’ habits have created a situation in which newsrooms and their management practices are being rethought within the newspaper industry.

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18 In Tuchman’s dichotomy between construction and external criterion, this view can be traced to the fact that she is an idealist constructivist, opposing the construction of a concept to an ideal concept (mirroring nature) or social construction of objectivity to an ideal “independent” objectivity.
My fieldwork: The choice of the organization

My field study was conducted at Il Sole-24 Ore, an Italian newspaper organization. I chose Italy as my geographic setting, because the language and culture are important aspects in qualitative studies in general and ethnographic studies in particular. Although I was able to distance myself from the people I was studying during my writing, sharing the language of origin with them allowed me to join the practice of the fieldworkers.

My research design has been driven by my curiosity: I wanted to “sit inside, or in any event within listening range to the garbage can19, in order to follow how the actors try to put together ideas and actions that come to them, in their never ending activity of sense making.” (Czarniawska and Joerges, 1996: 15)

Although it is difficult to distinguish the field material generation from its analysis and collection from data analysis, in the following account I try to distinguish between them, relying mainly on the time schedule:

- May 2007: I contacted Newsroom Secretary at the newspaper.
- July 2007: The first meeting was held with Newsroom Secretary; some weeks later the study was approved.
- 3 September 2007 – 28 February 2008: I was at the newspaper 3 to 5 days a week for six months. This period was divided in three periods of two months each, with two one-week intermissions when I stayed away from the field to summarise what I had done and seen in the two previous months.
- March-June 2008: I reread my fieldnotes and made notes on what I had done and precisely what I would study – what would be the purpose of my study.
- July 2008-July 2009: I coded all my fieldnotes by hand and constructed a database for coding. At the same time I searched for relevant theoretical clues to analyze my field material.
- December 2008: I returned to the newspaper and conducted 10 interviews.
- End of March 2009: I sent a set of “stories” to one of the newspaper’s vice-chief editors, asking for permission to use the name of the newspaper and to publish the stories.
- August 2009: I received acceptance.

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19 Garbage can is Cohen, March and Olsen’s (1972) metaphor for organizational decision making. Instead of supporting the rational decision-making model, they argued that decision making in organizations can be understood as the process of matching solutions with problems, both of which exist in the organization like in a garbage can.
Methodology

Field material generation

There is no strict definition of what ethnography is and what it is not, as organizational scholars have designed their studies in various organizational spaces, routines and events in many different and ingenious ways (V. Smith, 2001). But ethnographers commonly collect their data through direct observations, participant observations, interviews, historical analyses or the collection of documents (Schwartzman, 1993). Different mixes of these techniques have been employed by organizational ethnographers, some have based their research on sustained immersion and participant observation; others have collected data through observations, interviews and experiences by conducting intermittent, partial and disrupted fieldwork (V. Smith, 2001).

In my study I primarily used three techniques: direct observations, interviews, and document collection, each of which I elaborate upon in the next three sections.

Observations

... observations – establishing a place in some natural setting on a relatively long-term basis in order to investigate, experience and represent the social life and social processes that occur in that setting – comprises one core activity in ethnographic fieldwork. (Emerson et al., 2001: 352)

What journalists do when they go to work, where they sit, how they are dressed, who they talk to, when and with whom they go for lunch, coffee and breaks – their informal and formal interactions – is what I mainly observed during my fieldwork and recorded in my fieldnotes. But I also watched what they did to the objects and what the objects did to them.

I spent 110 days in the Newsroom, 104 of which were during the six months of the fulltime ethnography. During this period I moved through the different sections of the Newsroom, and spent from one to four weeks in each of the Il Sole-24 Ore Newsroom sections.

My days soon became routinised, mirroring the fieldworkers’ routines. A typical day in the Newsroom unfolded in the following way:

- Morning: I arrived at one of the Newsroom sections (the time depended on the time of arrival of the journalists). At 11:00 I joined the editorial meeting. At about 12:00, at the end of the editorial meeting, I followed the head editor of the section back to the Newsroom.
- About 14:00 I joined the journalists for lunch in the canteen.
About 14:45, after coffee, I returned to the Newsroom.

Afternoon: I followed the work in the section selected for the given week, in particular the design and development of the section pages, participating in meetings among journalists and between journalists and graphic assistants.

Evening: I left the Newsroom at a time that depended on my starting time that day and on the time the section “closed” the pages and therefore finished work for the day. As my focus was on the project of integration between online and print newswork and the online section closed at 20:00, I often left some time between 21:00 and 22:00.

The editorial meetings generated a rich source of material. Thus, some comments about them are necessary here.

During six months of intense fieldwork, I observed 42 regular editorial meetings and several informal and spontaneous ones. As much as I agree with Schwartzman (1993) that meetings are a key source of organizational communication because individual persons use them to generate interaction and to interpret what those interactions mean, I must also admit that meetings are one of the biggest challenges for a researcher. On the one hand, they occur at certain place at a certain time, and therefore observation can be planned: I knew that at 11:00 I should go to the meeting room to follow the morning editorial meeting. On the other hand, there were often over 25 people interacting with each other at the meetings, sometimes in one group, other times in small groups, and often referring to things that had happened outside the meeting. Thus, it was a challenge for me to take notes.

Rather than observing meetings as vehicles for task allocation, and assuming that they were expressions of the tight connections among intentions, decisions and actions, I observed them as communication events that were constructed by and within the organizational setting, while reconstructing the organization itself: meetings “as a constitutive social form” (Schwartzman, 1993: 39). During meetings, actors and observers construct both themselves and the meetings they are attending.

From an institutional theory perspective, meetings can be revelatory: They can help researchers to understand the organizational routines, cultures and social structures in which individual actors move, and which they simultaneously shape. In fact, I think that it is possible to discern, at least sometimes, the enactment of institutions and attempts at institution-free acting, especially during critical incidents when the spaces for idiosyncratic action and institutional pressures may be openly negotiated. Schwartzman suggested that “meetings are responsible for the construction of both order and disorder in social systems, and so they must be conceptualised as occasions with both
conservative (as sense-makers and social and cultural validators) and transformative capacities” (Schwartzman, 1993: 40).

**Traces of observations: Fieldnotes**

Observations usually materialise in the form of fieldnotes, although Van Maanen claims that the memory of the ethnographer goes beyond fieldnotes (Van Maanen, 1988). After all, fieldwork consists not only in “gaining access to and immersing oneself in new social worlds, but also producing written accounts and descriptions that bring versions of these worlds to others” (Emerson et al., 2001: 352). In order to produce these accounts and descriptions, ethnographers take fieldnotes. There is an extensive literature on fieldnotes (Van Maanen, 1988; Sanjek, 1990; Atkinson, 1990; Loflands, 1995; Loflands and Loflands, 1995; Emerson et al., 1995; Atkinson et al., 2001; Emerson et al., 2001): Taking fieldnotes is a key process in ethnography, as it involves “a double process of textual production and reproduction. Although culminating in an integrated, coherent ethnographic account, this process begins with the day-by-day writing up of fieldnotes 'observations and reflections concerning the field’” (Atkinson, 1992: 5). Fieldnotes are usually written in close proximity to the field, more or less contemporaneously to the events, experiences, interactions to which they refer. They provide descriptions of people, scenes, places, and dialogues, and they often account for personal emotions, reactions and reflections of the researcher as well. In other words, they are the first representation of observations, and as such they are inevitably selective (Emerson et al., 2001).

Different ethnographers take different positions on the appropriate content of fieldnotes. Some researchers believe that fieldnotes should record their own reactions and the actions and interactions of others. Others think it is necessary to keep the accounts of others’ actions (proper fieldnotes) distinct from the researcher’s thoughts and reflections (personal journals or diaries).

Ethnographers also disagree on the time that one should write fieldnotes. Some write fieldnotes only at the end of the day. Others try to write them in as much detail as possible as soon after the “event” as possible. Others make short notes after each event and then elaborate upon them in greater detail after leaving the field.

I consider fieldnotes to be the key to reliable ethnography. I made mine in paper notebooks that I always carried with me. In fact the notebook became the symbol of me as a researcher and triggered a number of playful and curious-about-the-content comments by people in the field. The notebooks have also provided psychological support to me in uncomfortable moments in the field.

I divided my fieldnotes into three columns:

- time of the recorded event;
- events, actions, interactions;
personal reflections.

At the end of each day I reread the daily notes and fleshed them out with comments and complementary notes. At the end of each week I added a memo about my impressions in the field, about how it was going and about the ways I could interpret what I had seen.

Interviews

During my months in the field, I conducted 60 interviews, half of which were recorded. Interviews are the most common technique used in qualitative research, and often the most visible in ethnographic accounts. Although interviews are not the only method for conducting ethnographic studies, I notice in many dissertations based on ethnographic studies or on ethnographically inspired studies, interviews are the only means of data collection.

Although Atkinson and Silverman (1997) argue that we are living in an interview society, my experience is that interviews create unnatural situations, in which both the researcher and the interlocutor may be feeling discomfort. It has been argued that interviews are characterised by asymmetry of power in favour of the researcher, who has the right of interrogation (Czarniawska, 2004). Yet I have never felt particularly powerful in that situation. Even when I had set the time of the interview and decided upon the questions, my position as the ethnographer was relatively weak. At any moment my field research could decline into a negotiation for access and for a change in my access conditions. Thus, my freedom in asking questions was by necessity limited by the rules of the house. I also felt at a disadvantage in the power balance, because I always felt and still feel a sense of gratitude towards all the people who have spared me some of their time. If this study is of any value, it is thanks to them, to their openness and their involvement.

Following Kvale's (1996) recommendations, I tried to develop a relationship with the people I studied, and to the extent that I succeeded, my success enhanced my sense of confidence and a feeling of being at home in the Newsroom. Thus I tried to turn interviews into relatively normal conversations, exchanging and eliciting views. Sherman Heyl, following Spradley’s footsteps (1979), wrote about ethnographic interviewing, defining it as:

those projects in which researchers have established respectful, on-going relationships with their interviewees, including enough rapport for there to be a genuine exchange of views and enough time and openness in the interviews for the interviewees to explore purposefully with the researcher the meanings they place on events in their worlds. (Sherman Heyl, 2001: 369)
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The focus of ethnographic interviews is on people’s “meanings of actions and events” (Spradley, 1979: 5). The researcher, rather than being an expert and asking questions decided a priori, is engaged in a dialogue with the interviewee. Interviews nevertheless differ from casual conversation in their degree of formality and in the planning required. I therefore call interviews those conversations that I have planned and booked, and which have taken place in a dedicated space and time. For each of these interviews I had prepared a list of questions I wanted to ask and issues I wanted to discuss, and I decided in advance about the order in which I would ask those questions or discuss those issues. I have never been able to follow the plan, however. Fortunately, because the quality of the interviews depended not merely on my plans, but also on the relationship between my interlocutor and me, the interviews took an unexpected path and unexpected order. It makes me wonder about the usefulness of having detailed interview guides other than allowing the researcher to exercise power and force the conversation (I should say the interrogation) into an a priori scheme defined by the researcher. And, of course, detailed interview guides function as tranquillisers for the researcher, as all plans do.

As suggested by many researchers (see e.g. De Vault, 1990; Opie, 1992; Poland and Pederson, 1998; Holstein and Gubrium, 2002), it is necessary to make a full transcription of taped interviews. Although it is obvious, it is perhaps necessary to add in this context that language is a critical factor in creating, maintaining and changing institutions. When an institution emerges, language can help to “naturalise” a certain view of reality, and thus to objectify and spread it among actors. Later, when institutions are maintained over generations, legitimating stories are told and certain linguistic expressions become attached to established patterns of action. Language is critical in a change of institutions as well. New ideas are most often introduced and materialised through language. Established and dominant institutions can be challenged to discourses and vocabularies, de-legitimating the old institutions and/or legitimatising new ones. Language is essential to my research, as it is the dominant material from which the products are made, and paramount to the way production is managed.

Whether in a planned order or not, I tried in my interviews to solicit narrative accounts on the following topics:

- the interviewees’ working experience in the news world and in the newspaper under study – how its organization works and how (if) it has changed;
- identification of the main recent changes in the newspaper world and the organizational effects of those changes;
- a forecast about the future of newspapers.
Collection of documents

I consider documents to be important in any organizational ethnographic study, because they leave tangible traces and last longer than the incumbents of the organization or their memories. They can therefore be a rich source of information about the organizational past. Apart from the contents, the form of documents also has a great deal to say about an organization.

Newspapers and the websites are also documents, of course, as they are inscriptions of organizational routines and practices (Joerges and Czarniawska, 1998). Traces of the organization are left in the very product marketed every day – the newspaper as well as the website. Changes in the newspaper signals changes inside the organization. Formats, colour supplements, new websites – they all provide significant information about the organization.

I also conducted interviews and collected documents from Il Sole-24 Ore’s main national competitors and other European newspapers, such as Financial Times and de Volkskrant. Between 2005 and 2009, I attended five trade conferences and industry meetings on the topic of integrating Internet and print products, organized by the World Association of Newspapers, the World Editors’ Forum and the International Newspaper Marketing Association. I have used primary and secondary material on the focal organization, other organizations and trade association meetings for the purpose of triangulation (Jick, 1979; Flick, 1992).

The challenges, or all about my mistakes

Fieldwork has not been easy. The feeling of discomfort and unease has accompanied it all the way up to the completion of this dissertation. Many of the challenges I have encountered during my work in the field can be interpreted as being related to my “otherness”, around which my access was continuously negotiated (Czarniawska, 2007).

One major challenge in my study has been to maintain a balance between pushing boundaries of learning and respecting the rules of the house, which would require me to sit in a corner dictated by the newspaper’s hierarchy. I pushed as much as I could, but I also adapted to the organizational hierarchy and followed the appropriate procedures. As the top editors are inaccessible to most of the journalists, I, too, had difficulty in accessing them. Despite my efforts, they seemed quite uninterested in my research.

It was also a challenge to justify the practice and time of research in comparison to the practice and time of journalists, beyond the similarities of conducting interviews and writing them up. Because journalists usually investigate an event or a topic for several days, or several weeks at the longest, and write their pieces in a few hours, they wondered why I did not understand everything after a couple of weeks in the field, and why it would take a couple...
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of years to write and defend my thesis. They could understand that I was curious to see the launch of the new website, but at the end of my ethnography – in January and February – they marvelled at my presence in their workplace, when “nothing” was happening.

As a young female researcher in a male-dominated news organization, another challenge was having to submit myself to the ruling male logics, without being able to react, despite my desire to do so.

A guest in the house

Derrida (2000) has pointed out the inherent violence of hospitality; guests, although invited by the hosts, violate their space by entering it and placing themselves into it with their habits. In my experience, fieldwork has much of the same violent character in the relationship between the researcher and the field. In Chief Editor’s words, “there are rules of the house that ought to be respected by everyone” who enters Il Sole-24 Ore. In his view, “it is the house that make the journalists (and, I could add, the researcher – myself) important, not vice versa”.

The first restriction I experienced was related to managerial activities. I would have liked to observe people working in those rooms, as well as their encounter with people working in the Newsroom. Whereas the newsmaking is conducted with a daily time horizon to produce a newspaper every day, and a news site must be updated continuously, management acts within different time constraints. Marketers plan marketing activities months, if not years, in advance. Advertising people sell advertising months in advance. Human resource managers recruit people on a regular basis – or rather, more recently, do not recruit them on a regular basis – and construct the incentive plans in a several-year time horizon. Administrators are concerned about results on an annual basis, if not longer.

Unfortunately, I was not allowed to study managerial activities. Still, I have formed some insights concerning the relationships between the Newsroom and the Company, and they are among the most significant for this thesis. This is one of the directions for future study that appeals to me.

Even in the rooms where I was relatively welcome, however, I could not do all that I would have liked to do. Before beginning the study, I had considered the possibility of conducting participant observation, by working on some projects on the integration of different media newsrooms, for example. I was not allowed to do so, partially because of the high unionisation of graphic assistants and journalists (who, apart from the trade unions, have an Association that grants licenses to conduct professional journalism). Thus, in order to do journalistic work in the Newsroom one needs a journalist’s licence.

The difficulty of being a “proper guest in the house” during my fieldwork could be exemplified by several episodes, but I chose two of them that I found particularly significant.
The first episode took place when I was two months into the six that had been agreed upon as my fulltime stay in the field. It was Wednesday, 31 October, just before the All Saints long weekend, and I was about to walk into the editorial meeting shortly before 11:00. I was almost at the door of the meeting room, crossing the space between Chief Editor and his vice-chief editors’ secretaries, following all the section head editors that were going to the editorial meeting, when I heard one of the editors calling me. I turned around, and he asked me to follow him for a coffee. As we walked down the stairs, he started mumbling and saying, in effect, that it was very difficult to say what he had to say and he did not like to say it, but then he finally blurted out: “You can not go to the meetings any longer, because Chief Editor wants to exclude a certain person, but in order not to exclude only that person, he has decided that you can not participate, either.”

Then, evidently feeling compelled to give me some comfort and guidance, but also to change the topic, the editor asked me if I had an outline for my thesis in mind and if I liked going to the meetings. I answered yes, I did like going to the meetings, because I could see how the head editors “performed” their pages and that yes, I had some interpretative lenses in mind and an outline of the thesis. He told me to show it to him together with the questions I wanted to ask Chief Editor before meeting him.

Then, while walking up the stairs to the Newsroom, he told me how he thought I should structure the thesis. In his opinion, I should centre it around interactivity. “Interactivity before the Internet could be the slogan”, he said. “Internet has changed it and has forced us to change”. I told him that I would like to learn more about how the website was designed, and the relationship between the designers and the Newsroom, and he answered: “But you would not talk about this in your thesis, would you now?”

This episode made me feel uncomfortable and out of place for a couple of days. Then I moved on, and tried to renegotiate my space and my routines – according to my newly assigned guest space, out of the editorial meeting. Although this was a difficult episode for me, it did not seem to affect my relationships with most of the interlocutors, who did not realise what had happened.

Later, talking about my exclusion from the editorial meeting with several editors, I was told that nothing changed about how it was conducted after I left. “Things remained the same, and you already have an idea of what happens and how it is done”, was their comment. One editor reassured me that it was because of Chief Editor’s desire to face his front lines, as he called the section head editors. “Nothing personal” – he added – “only a need for privacy”.

The second episode that established the limits of my space of action concerned my access to observation of the central office. I had rotated in all the major sections of the newspaper, and at the end of my study I wanted to spend some time in the central office, to see how the work was being done there. I had, of course, to talk to editors and graphic designers sitting in the central
office, and I had been there quite often to visit Newspaper-Website Coordinator, the editor who co-ordinates the newspaper and the website. Yet, I wanted to take notes on the daily routines of the central office. In order to sit there, I had asked two people for permission, and they had both agreed that I could sit there in two weeks.

On a Saturday, I was sitting in the central office at the desk of an absent person. Sometime after lunch, I heard Chief Editor’s voice as he approached the central office. He came in, saw me and said: “Good morning”. I wrote in my notes: “He looks surprised at seeing me here”. I asked him if he was looking for the editor in charge of the central office today; and he said “yes” and then left. I stayed at my place during the rest of the day and left in the late afternoon.

I thought about this episode over the weekend. On the following Monday, one of the editors told me again that he needed to talk to me. I was a little worried. When he found time – the central office was quiet in the middle of the afternoon editorial meeting – he called me to a meeting room and told me that Chief Editor saw me in the central office on Saturday and wondered why I was there; actually, why I was still at the newspaper. Consequently, I could not sit in the central office any longer, and it would be good if I tried to make myself invisible during the last weeks of my study, so that Chief Editor would see me as little as possible.

I started laughing nervously and told him that I did notice that Chief Editor was a bit surprised at seeing me in the central office on Saturday, so that what he was telling me did not surprise me at all. Still, I did not understand why Chief Editor was so suspicious and what was he worried about. The editor replied that Chief Editor was worried about someone (me) repeating outside the newspaper office the internal comments made about well known people at the newspaper. I answered that it would certainly not be me, as I certainly had no interest in doing that.

Although less shocking than the first episode, this conversation made me uncomfortable, and reminded me that access to the field is not granted once and for all, but that it is a continuous negotiation, with uneven distribution of power between the researcher and the interlocutors. Episodes such as these illustrated how easy was to keep my otherness in the field; had I wanted to “go native”, there would be plenty of reminders that it was impossible for me to do so.

Having said that, I must also add that, during the course of my fieldwork, I established good relationships with many persons, and that I stay in touch with some of them even now. During the last day of my fulltime ethnography, I received a bouquet of flowers from the Online Newsroom. Some of the journalists told me that they would miss me. One of them said something that I cherish: “Never give up your curiosity.”
A researcher among journalists

One way of reminding me of my otherness was through nicknames, all of which were related to the fact that I was a researcher and not a journalist.

The most popular one was Big Sister. This nickname, evoking the successful television format “Big Brother”, can be revelatory of a number of meanings attached to my role in the field. It can be seen as a sign of a “televised society” and of the role of television programmes in everyday narrative emplotment, in making sense of reality. Or it can be seen as an expression of anxiety provoked by my presence – anxiety caused by role reversal – those who observe and comment upon will be observed and commented upon. This reflection has raised some ethical doubts in my mind concerning my role as a researcher in the field. Among my hopes in doing ethnography was the ability to portray a multi-voiced reality, and to give voice to those who rarely have a voice in management studies. Although my access was granted by people in power – people who made further efforts to limit my access – my fieldwork was primarily an engagement with people working on the floor. They certainly had not been asked about my presence, and they did not choose to have me there, yet, in believing I would do some good by giving them a voice in my research, I forced them to speak and to have a voice. This has created deep concern for me, and I have discussed it with some journalists. Their claimed not to share this concern. A typical comment was: “This is the way things work in a workplace. We don’t decide things, so it’s no problem to have you around without having decided it”. “You’re sensitive enough to understand when you can and can’t be here” – added one journalist.

My nickname could also be seen as an emphasis on my “otherness” and on the strangeness of my activities. I was often asked what was it that I wrote down and why I wrote it down, as if they never did the same thing themselves. Sometimes I felt like somebody who appeared with a notebook and a pen in the midst of an oral community, which relies predominantly on collective memory. In fact there were few documents about the organization and about the way the organization works – few anywhere at the Il Sole-24 Ore Group, and even less in the Newsroom. I had problems establishing the exact number of journalists working in the Newsroom; the union agreement that was negotiated for about a year between the journalists and the managers was only 1.5 document pages long, and the only Il Sole-24 Ore Group presentation was a pamphlet made for the roadshow preceding the public offering of the group. Even when investigating and interviewing people, the journalists took few notes; some of them took none, and wrote their piece shortly after the interviews, relying only on their memory. My practice of taking notes as extensively as I could and as close to the field as possible appeared exotic to them.
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A woman in a male world

The advantages of being a young female researcher has been previously noted (Czarniawska and Sevón, 2008), and I can see that it may have played a role in my admission to the field and in the openness with which the interlocutors spoke to me. A young woman could not be threatening (more appropriately, I should probably say a girl), and my interlocutors could teach her so much and introduce her – inexperienced student – into the field.

My presence as a young woman in a male-dominated organization was not completely without its complications, however. My physical otherness in the field created an object of observation, and reversed the role of the observer from me observing them to (some of) them observing me.

My experience is that, for an ethnographer, physical differences can have double significance. On the one hand, whereas differences and a rejection of the symbolism associated with one’s body can create psychological discomfort, they also help the researcher to maintain distance in the field. On the other hand, as differences and a rejection of symbolism also maintain the distance of the people to the researcher, they can put the researcher in emotionally difficult situations.

I can say without fear of opposition that Il Sole-24 Ore is predominantly male, situated in a country with a traditionally strong patriarchal culture. Looking at the Newsroom, Chief Editor is a man, the vice-chief editors are men, the editors in the central office are men, and Finance Head Editor, Foreign Affairs Head Editor, Italian Economy Head Editor, Tax and Law Head Editor, Commentaries and Reportage Head Editor, Sunday Head Editor, Plus24 Head Editor, Nora24 Head Editor, and Online Head Editor are men. The secretaries are women, and World and Market (weekly pages) Head Editor, Lucary24 (lifestyle magazine) Head Editor, and Rapporti (thematic weekly supplements) Head Editor are women.

I remember my official first day in the Newsroom: 3 September 2007 at 10:00. I was wearing a straight black skirt below the knee, a black sleeveless vest with a dark red-wine three-quarter sleeved linen jacket, and black wedge-heel sandals. My hair was partly pulled up, so that it would not come onto my face, and the rest was left hanging on my shoulder.

I walked into the Newsroom and went to Newsroom Secretary’s desk. He told me to sit at someone else’s desk, before he could take me for a tour of the Newsroom. The tour began ten minutes later. We went to Chief Editor and then we went around the Newsroom and to my desk. There were not many people around, but everybody we came across looked me over from head to head.

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20 Newsroom Secretary is a male journalist. In this position, he is in charge of the everyday organizing of the newsroom and of managing the relationship between Company and Newsroom on the everyday issues. There are also other secretaries in the Newsroom who do the type of work that is usually expected of secretaries. These are women.
toe without saying a word. Fortunately, when we came to my desk, my neighbour started talking to me. Talking to him, I experienced for the first time what I then discovered would be the reaction of many of the people in the Newsroom – men and women\textsuperscript{21} – the so-called “B look”, with eyes reposing at the height of my breasts. I felt uncomfortable, and this feeling of discomfort, and always-present experience of physical difference did not go away.

These physical differences would also create situations that ranged from funny to embarrassing to frustrating while revealing of my “womanly” experience in the organization. Sometimes, after having had lunch in the canteen, and after an impossible-to-pay-if-you-are-with-a-man coffee at the coffee shop, I would take the elevator to the second or third floor. Three or four men would be in the elevator with me. They would let me enter to the elevator first, as I am a woman, and then they would follow me. At the stop of the elevator and the opening of the doors, they would again let me out of the elevator first. I would therefore have to slip through them from the furthest corner and they would wait for me, looking at me, sometimes inviting me with a hand gesture, so I would better understand the social conventions.

Cases in which the looks were accompanied by direct remarks about my body were not rare. Once I was about to be introduced by a journalist with whom I had spent some time to another journalist whom I wanted to meet. “Let me see your cleavage first”, my journalist friend said when he came to accompany me to the meeting. The comment was obviously meant as a joke, together with accompanying laughter. I felt embarrassed, almost paralysed by the comment. Yet I managed to produce the expected small laughter and move on.

Another day I was wearing a black and white striped turtleneck sweater that went halfway down my thighs. At the end of the day I went to a section of the Newsroom to chat about the day with the people still on duty. I was standing in front of two male journalists, holding onto a desk. One of them told me: “Nice sweater”. I thanked him, not being surprised because I was used to him making positive remarks about the “elegant” way I dressed. I added that a woman journalist had also expressed her appreciation for my sweater. “Yes…but we say it for very different reasons”, the other male journalist replied, laughing. A short nervous laughter was all that came of my mouth. I managed to stay a couple of minutes more in the room and then left speedily.

\textsuperscript{21} As the Swedish-Italian director and journalist Erik Gandini argued in his documentary \textit{Videocracy} (2009) and the Italian journalist Lorella Zanardo pointed out in her documentary \textit{Women's body} (2009), male domination is so well rooted in Italy that men’s reasoning is internalised by women and thus normalised as THE natural worldview. “We are so used to seeing ourselves through the eyes of men that we can no longer decide what we want and what makes us happy. (…) I mean that we look at each other with men’s eyes. We look at our breast, lips, wrinkles, as if we were men…” – says Lorella Zanardo.
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These episodes raise two questions concerning fieldwork practices. Who is observing whom? And how does the answer to this question affect research process? Researchers think that they are observing fieldworkers, yet as more or less different “others” the researchers are observed by fieldworkers.

As Czarniawska (2007) said in her book, *Shadowing and other techniques for doing fieldwork in modern societies*, Bakhtin has reflected on the issue of otherness and its relationship to understanding. To him, otherness, or being “located outside the object of his or her creative understanding – in time, in space, in culture” (Kelly, 1993: 61, cited in Czarniawska, 2007: 21) is a condition that grounds our understanding through the recognition of differences. We can try to understand other people because they are others, which means that they are located outside us. Similarly, our own exterior becomes knowable and meaningful to us through the reactions of other people.

My body has become a technology that has simultaneously allowed and constrained what I have come to know – both in the field and behind my desk. I could learn only what people I was watching were doing, and what people I was listening to were telling me. I could not see what people were doing in places where my body was not allowed to be. Another person in the field would have known different things and reconstructed a different story, not because my material and my analysis are not rigorous or systematic, but simply because he or she does not have the same research technology and thus practices would be mediated differently.

It is through my body, moreover, that I discovered that I have been an other during my study. Although I am Italian and speak the same language as my interlocutors, remarks about my body and limitations to my physical access reminded me constantly that I was not one of them. I have never felt native in the course of my study, although I have been developing an understanding of the natives; it has been my physical presence that has simultaneously brought me closer to the natives and kept my otherness from them, while confronting them with it. My access in the field was continually negotiated through my physical appearance and disappearance, by my oscillating between my physical presence and my e-mail contacts with my informants.

The analysis of the material

I concluded the main part of my data collection at the end of March 2008. I had filled 31 notebooks with fieldnotes, conducted 60 interviews and amassed documents for a total weight of over 130 kg. Part of the analysis had already begun when I was in the field. My notebooks were divided into three columns: one for time, one for the notes and one for my immediate comments. Once a week I reread my fieldnotes and wrote my comments on a white page beside them. A more systematic analysis was performed after I finished my fieldwork.
I first read all my notes in chronological order, so I could recall what I saw, step by step. Two complementary approaches – and two doctoral courses – were particular influential in informing my analysis: Grounded Theory and Narrative Analysis. I used grounded theory instructions to classify my material and elements of narrative analysis to organize the material and to deconstruct and reconstruct it into this dissertation.

I have used a “jetlagged” version of grounded theory. In particular, I was inspired by two critical analytical processes in grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1994; Charmaz, 2006): coding and memoing. In the spring of 2008, left with a huge amount of material, I started trying to make sense of it by using software to order my material and do the coding. I started using NVivo, with which I transcribed two interviews and a week of fieldnotes. I coded this material closely to the material in a detailed way, then tried to make sense of the coding and wrote a paper with my reflections on the material. This process took almost two months.

Although I believed that I had gone into the material in great depth and analyzed it deeply, I thought that the text became too fragmented. When I recalled the codes, the sentences coded under them no longer made much sense out of context. I also felt that the NVivo interface disturbed me, as it was too different from my fieldnotes and homogenised every day into the same appearance, so that I could not recognise the different days by merely looking at the fieldnotes, as I could and did on paper. When the extracts popped up from the codes, they were completely out of context and it took too much effort to go back into the context again. Putting them together required a too much speculation. Moreover, this analysis took me too long, given the amount of material I had.

I decided to drop NVivo and to go back to my paper. As my notes were primarily on paper, I also coded them on paper, starting from an open coding and then focusing, as the analysis progressed, on the most recurrent codes. Yet, having dropped NVivo, I needed a system for cataloguing the material and the analysis process, so I could find what I wanted in the material. Thus, I created a database called Data Sources in an Excel file. This file is my empirical material database that has guided me in storing and using the material. The database serves two purposes: It serves as a database of my various materials and as a database of the analysis. It can therefore be considered as divided into two parts: The first part includes sheets listing the sources of data and their storage location, and the second part includes sheets listing the codes, the main stories, and the ordinary and extraordinary events and their storage location.

I owe this expression to Professor Patricia Y. Martin, with whom I took a doctoral course on grounded theory. She suggested that I follow myself in the field through my fieldnotes, as if I were conducting the study again. In this way, I could take time to analyze the notes, progressively coding them in a more focused way, and write memos about this process and about what happened in the field.
Methodology

The first part is organized in the following into eight sections:

- Il Sole-24 Ore products, listing copies of the products of Il Sole-24 Ore Newsroom, such as the daily, the magazine, weekly supplements, their dates and where I have stored them;
- secondary data, listing the sources of secondary data on Il Sole-24 Ore, excluding the products;
- industry conferences, listing the note sets and the secondary data, both written and audio material, regarding the industry conferences I have attended;
- notebooks at Il Sole 24 Ore, listed by number, dates of field work, note set numbers, pages, interviews and their pages, foliations23, and their page, online reports and their page, and other comments;
- foliations, listing the date, the notebook and the page of the foliation;
- online report, listing the date, the notebook and the page of the online report;
- interview audios, listing the interviewee, the interview number, the related interview transcript file name and the interview notes pages; and
- interview transcript, listing the interviewee, the interview transcript file name, the related interview audio number and interview notes pages.

The second part comprises six sections:

- note sets, listing note set number, date, summary of the daily fieldwork (where I was in the field, interviews, meetings), notebook number, page, related file audio, and other comments;
- interview notes, listing the interviewee, the interview number, the interview audio and transcript file numbers, the notebook number and pages, content of the interview in summary, codes and their pages;
- editorial meetings, listing the dates, whether morning or afternoon, people present at the meeting, content of the meeting (episodes or events), codes and their pages;
- days in the Newsroom, listing the dates, note-set number, fieldwork summary (Newsroom section, meetings, interviews), content of the day (episodes or events), codes and their pages;

23 In Chapter 7, I describe the foliation and how it is used. In brief, it is a sheet where the allocation of advertisements in every page of the newspaper is reported.
Grounded theory has coding at the centre of the analysis process as “the process of defining what the data are about” (Charmaz, 2006: 43). Coding is a way of analyzing the material, inasmuch as it gives structure to the material. Coding is the process through which the material is fragmented into labelled pieces, the common label implying a common storage location of the material. The different extracts labelled under the same code are then compared. My coding was done on different levels of the text. Sometimes I coded line by line; other times I coded entire incidents.

There were many codes attached to the material. Their labels came from the field and accounted for the material in many ways: events, contexts, viewpoints, and theoretical concepts. Here are some examples of codes and of some material I labelled under those codes:

- Integration
- Designing pages – the new version of the newspaper
- Public, Online, Clicks
- Union agreement
- Goofing – about missing news.
- Company vs. Newsroom.
- News – what is news?

All these codes were gathered under five main colours – the colour of the highlighters and the colours of Post-its. Each colour corresponded to a macro-code or macro-category under which many micro-codes were included:

- Yellow: Profession (meaning professional standards, norms and ethics)
- Orange/Blue: Designing pages
- Green: Public
- Pink: Interviews
- Purple: Others

Coding is the first analytic step. By labelling pieces of the material, I categorised, summarised and accounted for it in a way that allowed me to play with the material. Thus, coding was followed and accompanied by placing
different material and different codes side by side in order to try to construct the main story of this dissertation.

Because the size of the unit of data being coded is relevant (Charmaz, 2006), the different levels of coding helped me to structure my analysis in a “centrifugal” way. The three analysis chapters corresponded to the yellow, orange/blue, and green Post-its, below which there were many codes. By looking at the material labelled under each macro- and micro-code, I was able to identify the stories, incidents and events that were of greatest interest to me. Then, I have written beside them other small pieces of material coded line by line under a similar or related code, so that for each macro-code I could have a few triggering stories or vignettes or more complete pieces of narratives, and gather around them other pieces of material to develop and enrich my reasoning.

Comparison within the empirical material is a key process in making sense of field material. I have used the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Turner, 1981; Martin and Turner, 1986; Charmaz, 2006). The latter helped me to improve my analytical understanding of the material – in particular in understanding how stories were constructed in documents and interviews and how certain narratives could be deconstructed. I regularly wrote memos in order to keep track of my analysis process and my analytical insights during the coding process.

Yet, I believe that coding is a way of classifying the material; it is does not provide results. Rather, I used narrative devices in making sense of the coded material.

I used the Hernadi’s hermeneutic triad24 (Czarniawska, 2004) as a device for textual analysis: explication, explanation, and exploration. Explication is rendering what the text says “in the reader’s vocabulary” (Czarniawska, 2004: 60). The process of translation from Italian to English has been my way of explicating what the text says, as it meant putting my field text not only in my readers’ idiom, but also in a language that they could understand without having been in the field.

Explanation and exploration have followed the explication (presented primarily through translation here) in the analysis. Most of my explanation efforts can be considered constructivist, because I pay attention to the creation of the meaning of the text in the interactions among the author, the researcher as a reader, other readers and the text. In order to explain why the text says what it says and how it says it, I have used also elements of deconstruction. For example, I identified and tried to contextualise/question dichotomies. In particular, the whole dissertation is based on the old/new dichotomy, which I try to ground in the material and question simultaneously. Another key dichotomy that I discuss is the journalistic/non-journalistic classification of the dissertation.

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24 Paul Hernadi (1987) formulated a triad of processes (explication, explanation, exploration) for textual analysis.
Yet another dichotomy that I discuss in this dissertation, especially in Chapter 11, is journalistic/business-like practices, parallel to the opposition Newsroom vs. Company. I have also pointed out some discontinuities that were not in the text, reconstructing the *intentio auctoris*25, as the analysis in Chapters 9, 10 and 11 demonstrates.

The following excerpt from Chapter 9 can exemplify this analysis device. First, the translated piece of text:

**Dear Editors,**

I report a protest from all my colleagues. Without notice, we have found ourselves with open comments as the default function at the end of our pieces.

Our unanimous demand, (...) is to insert [the option of open comments from readers] only on request, not by default.

*As the recent sports happenings have demonstrated, and this is only the latest example, a filter is absolutely necessary to avoid the propagation of vulgarities.*

(...)

Then, I proceeded to explicate it further through summary:

*The letter expressed a protest against the comments as a default function and contained the suggestion of leaving the single journalist who wrote the article free to decide whether she or he wants to present the opportunity for the readers to express their opinion and comment.*

After this, I went on by explaining why the text says what it says:

*The letter was disconnecting the website from new practices with which it had been aligned when a newly designed website was launched. The journalistic practice kicked in as a habitus does, making the new practice unacceptable. Thus, the letter was an attempt to realign the new website with old practices, by deciding if a given content is worth publishing. But the technical feature of commenting on the article belongs to the new website and cannot be ignored. The solution was to align the new website to a new practice with the help of an old way – a filter is absolutely necessary. Comments can be made, but the journalist’s discretion must be kept in tune with old journalistic habitus, in order to avoid the propagation of vulgarities.*

And in the conclusion of the analysis, several pieces of material were connected to what I have called *episode*. I explored possible theoretical consequences:

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25 Intentio auctoris is a Latin phrase that means “the intention of the author”.
Methodology

This vignette illustrates the encounter between the new object, namely the website, and the old practice of public as passive and attentive to journalists’ words, and public interest as the interest of society where journalists but not the members of the audience are professionals. The old practice is the traditional professional practice embodied by the newspaper online journalists, none of whom is a “digital native” and all of whom have been trained as professional journalists. The result is a resistance by those embodying the old practice to the new possibilities of interaction created by the new technologies, in an attempt to safeguard the mass media and their journalistic profession, which were, as Luhmann put it, defined by the impossibility of interaction.

As I was transcribing and then translating stories of episodes and fragments of notes that I then filed under certain codes, I was reducing many initial codes through the introduction of theoretical concepts – a procedure intended to lift the initial, grounded codes to a more abstract level (Burawoy, 1998).

In summary, analyzing the material requires constant comparative analysis: doing comparisons, classifications and abstractions within and outside the material. The description of the analysis is identifying cognitive operations that are not specific and exclusive steps in empirical research in social science, as every learning process involves them. Although they are not specific to the research practice (Czarniawska, 2007), they are central to it, and it is necessary for me to identify and label them so I can reflect on them.

Analytical challenges, or more about my mistakes

The analysis of my field material, which relied primarily on narrative tools (Czarniawska, 2004) and a narrative understanding of reality and science (Scholes, 1980; White, 1987; Czarniawska, 1997), did not proceed without difficulties. The amount of material I had generated presented the biggest challenge. As much as I was dedicated to the rules of grounded theory, I was simply unable to combine the requirement of immediate analysis with the time limits imposed on me by the shaky access conditions. Six months of fulltime ethnography, further interviews at the main newspaper and others, and five industry conferences were the sources of a great deal of material, which I felt was at times was more, at other times less than I needed. But this massive amount of field material also provided an advantage for an inexperienced researcher, as I was able to compensate for bad days with good days, poor interviews with good interviews, unasked questions with the next occasion to ask questions.

The material is, in fact, so rich that this thesis can not do full justice to it. Thus I have acquired a serious debt towards Il Sole-24 Ore, as it has offered me
an opportunity to collect so many stories that I have plenty of work to do after this dissertation has been defended.

A second challenge, related also to the amount of material generated, was the difficulty in selecting a storyline that could be told in the space of a dissertation without trying the patience of the readers too much. This also meant that I had to discipline myself by limiting the number of stories – not because they were directly related to the main theoretically emplotted story, but because they were funny, or for some reasons particularly dear to me.

I have attempted to do my best in constructing a theoretical emplotment of this thesis. Still, as Hayden White put it,

Every narrative, however seemingly “full”, is constructed on the basis of a set of events that might have been included but were left out; this is as true of imaginary narratives as it is of realistic ones. And this consideration permits us to ask what kind of notion of reality authorized construction of a narrative account of reality in which continuity rather than discontinuity governs the articulation of the discourse. (White, 1987: 10)

I realise that in this attempt to balance the need of efficiency in crafting the manuscript and its main storyline with the desire to tell appealing, amusing and lively stories from the field that would account for the fragmentation of reality and research, I may have leaned towards the convention of fullness and allowed efficiency and continuity to win over mess and disruption. Therefore, I owe apologies both to Il Sole-24 Ore Group and to my readers: apologies to Il Sole-24 Ore Group for including so few of the many stories from the multitude offered by the field and to my readers for including many stories outside the main storyline.

I have kept all my interlocutors anonymous, except for references to such public information as public lectures. If I am quoting someone who occupies a unique position in the organization, I refer to that person in general terms. Thus Editor I in one dialogue is not necessarily the same person as Editor I in another dialogue, and vice-chief editors are simply called Vice-Chief Editor in my vignettes, in order to avoid identification.

Having said this, I now proceed to present Il Sole-24 Ore Group.
6. Il Sole-24 Ore Group

Il Sole-24 Ore Group is an authoritative point of reference for the worlds of finance, economics, and government and provides an integrated publishing system by taking advantage of the strengths of the various available media. (www.gruppo.ilsole24ore.com)

Il Sole-24 Ore Group is a multimedia publishing company based in Milan, Italy, active mainly in the domestic market. It produces business news and information intended for professionals through its various media: newspaper, news agency, radio, Internet and professional publishing (magazines and books).

The flagship product, Il Sole-24 Ore, a salmon-coloured broadsheet business newspaper, has a circulation of 334,000 copies per day. The radio station, Radio24, which was founded in 1999, reached an audience record of 2 million listeners during 2008. The main news website, ilsole24ore.com, was launched in 1996, reaching over 3 million viewers in January 2008. Professional information is delivered through specialised professional magazines for lawyers and accountants, books, databases and other online services. The group also organizes training courses and produces software packages for various management purposes.

According to the official presentation of the group on the website, which is consistent with the managers' accounts in my interviews, the group is organized into business units in charge of different products. During the time of my study, the organizational structure of Il Sole-24 Ore Group consisted of the following units: Publisher, responsible for newspaper, magazine and collaterals; Radio24, responsible for the radio and its website; Professionals, responsible for specialised publishing and training; Multimedia, responsible for online content and services; and System, responsible for advertising sales for the whole group.

Overall, as reported in the pamphlet distributed during the roadshow before the Initial Public Offering (IPO), which took place on 6 December 2007, the group’s organization can be described in following figures.

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26 Data from 2008, from www.primacomunicazione.it
27 Commercialisti is one of the Italian professions: accountants who specialise in a sector or sectors. Il Sole-24 Ore Group publishes different magazines for these different groups of commercialisti.
28 Collaterals are add-ons to the newspaper such as books and CDs sold together with the newspaper.
History

Il Sole-24 Ore was created on 9 November 1965 as the result of a merger between two Milan newspapers – Il Sole and 24 Ore. Il Sole was founded in 1865 and was first published on 1 August 1865 as a liberal newspaper for the bourgeoisie of the newly constituted Italian state. Thus the subheading of Il Sole-24 Ore appears as Political economic financial daily. Founded in 1865. Given these old roots, Il Sole-24 Ore can be considered “the oldest newspaper in Milan still in circulation and one of the leading financial dailies in Europe” (Il Sole-24 Ore Group Profile, 2007: 11; this and all other quotes from Il Sole-24 Ore Group Profile are my translations).

29 It is noteworthy that they specify "journalistic products", as if they wanted to distinguish them from the non-journalistic products that they also publish. The journalistic products are those published by journalists. Journalism in Italy is a nationally regulated profession, as described in previous chapters.

30 As some of the journalists pointed out to me, "the ratio of journalists to administrators is lower than one to four". This is considered too low by many journalists, as in their eyes the administrators (i.e. everybody who is not working in the newsroom) represent bureaucracy, as opposed to the journalistic work on the content of the products.

31 EBITDA = earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation have been subtracted.

After the difficult times of the first half of the 20th century (two wars and a dictatorship), the original liberal orientation re-emerged. In 1945 the newspaper was sold to the National Institute of Insurance (INA), which resold it in 1952, to the national Confederation of Employers, which still holds the majority of its shares.

On its hundredth anniversary in 1965, Il Sole merged with 24 Ore, a competitive newspaper created in 1946 with a similar liberal political and economic point of view, creating Il Sole-24 Ore.

Since the 1970s, when circulation was approximately 60,000 copies, Il Sole-24 Ore has grown significantly in circulation, reputation and content. It has become “an indispensable work instrument for companies, professionals and readers” (Il Sole-24 Ore Group Profile, 2007: 11). By the mid-1980s, the newspaper was selling 150,000 copies, which gave it the highest circulation of any financial and economic newspaper in the country. In 2006 it reached the European record of 346,000 copies per day.

Over the past 20 years, the publishing company, Il Sole-24 Ore Group, has diversified its business, creating its own advertising unit and purchasing two printing plants. In the mid-1990s, it acquired a news agency, Radiocor. In 1996, a company website was launched. At the end of the 1990s the radio station was created. In 2006, a free daily was launched – the latest addition to the group.

Il Sole-24 Ore Group has grown, not only in organizational size, economic results and audience reach, but also in the prestige and relevance of its journalism. In the official presentation of the company, there is a talk of a journalism model – Il Sole-24 Ore model, – “of competence, depth and balance which has become over time a great asset of credibility and authority” (Il Sole-24 Ore Group Profile, 2007: 8). This model is based on an integrated and multimedia editorial system, which aims at “daily delivering facts and comments as an
economic, financial and political compass” (*Il Sole-24 Ore Group Profile*, 2007: 8).

The group official presentation positions *Il Sole-24 Ore Group* as an active and responsible actor within the larger Italian context, as it says that the group’s growth has both preceded and followed the development of the Italian economy over the years. Currently the group aims at playing a similar role in emerging markets in which Italian companies are growing.

The motto of the group is *La cultura dei fatti*33 (The culture of the facts), implying a strong anchor to “the real dynamics of society and companies" as a distinctive identity trait in today’s globally competitive information system.

Until the beginning of December 2007, the publishing group was owned by the Italian Confederation of Employers at 91,6 per cent of its shares. During that month, the group went public and offered its shares on Piazza Affari, the Milan Stock Exchange. Since the initial public offering, the ownership has been structured as follows: 67,5 per cent of the shares owned by the Italian Confederation of Employers; 5,1 per cent by company managers and employees; and 27,3 per cent on the market.

The headquarters

During my fieldwork, I learned that the building in which a newspaper resides has implications for the prestige and symbolic power of a newspaper.

The current building of *Il Sole-24 Ore Group* is located in an area of Milan that used to be in the periphery. It is currently not really in the centre of town; nor is it the suburban area. Adjacent the building is a metro station of the Red Line, Line Number One, which goes straight to the Milan Dome.

*Il Sole-24 Ore Group* moved its headquarters from Via Tiziano to Via Monte Rosa in 2004. The new building was designed by the famous architect Renzo Piano. Glass is a dominant material in the building, which makes it easily recognisable among the surrounding buildings. This material is supposed to have a symbolic function.

33 There is a joke in the newsroom about this motto, as *fatti* has the colloquial meaning of “drug users”. One could see in this joke a trace of the mythologized journalistic identity: living life on the edge, working irregular hours, entering extreme situations, and fighting against institutions from which they declare total independence.
Il Sole-24 Ore Group

for the newspaper, as a journalist wrote in the monthly newspaper magazine when the building was inaugurated:

The glass windows and walls are symbols of the editorial group, which delivers the image of a moving light above the stone and still city. The electric light passing through the glass symbolizes an architecture that lives day and night. (Maugeri, 2003: 30)

The official Il Sole-24 Ore Group Profile, which has a section dedicated to the headquarters, also focuses on the new building as a symbol of the group's communication tools:

Neat glass facades configure a sort of multifaceted crystal of urban size, a “mineral block” which brings into the modern sensibility something of the historical memory of the past century avant-gardes. This new “lighthouse” aims at reflecting the new nature of the digital empire, which concentrates itself around the central court, marking a visual filter between the mechanic world of the street and the naturalistic allusion of the hill park inside the court. (...)

Therefore, it does not establish itself as an island of rationality, as opposed to the complexity of the urban structure, but it interiorizes it, by reproducing its stratification of public and private functions, in an artificial landscape in which the naturalistic element is the particular declination of that unitary notion of environment that has structured the first, decisive choices of the project. (Renzo Piano Building Workshop, Il Sole-24 Ore New Building, 2004: 37; this and all other quotes from Renzo Piano Building Workshop, Il Sole-24 Ore New Building, are my translations.)

The building is impressive indeed. “It is a good building for official meetings, and represents the greatness of the newspaper, especially compared to the previous location”, Newsroom Secretary told me.

According to Renzo Piano, his idea was to design a building that entered into dialogue with its surroundings – a building that could contribute to the improvement of quality of life in the area. Piano believes that it is still possible to live and work decently in a city, and he calls those who glorify the telecommunication revolution ‘foolish’ for thinking that one could live and work in the countryside, “except if they wanted to commit suicide” (Renzo Piano Building Workshop, Il Sole-24 Ore New Building, 2004: 23).

Thus this project was a part of the plan to transform the city into a new liveable place. In the grey Milan semi-periphery, Piano undertook the transformation of an old industrial site, removing its metallic cover, but keeping its basic structural elements. The new head office covers about 45,000 square meters. Before the war, this area was a site for car and airplane motor
construction by Isotta Fraschini and then by Sit Siemens, which became Italtel in 1979. It was such a dark and obscure place that it was chosen as the site of the Milan cell of the Red Brigades in the 1970s. Piano wanted to introduce light, warmth, transparency and a great deal of green.

Historically, newspaper buildings do not have a good reputation. Great architects have a tendency to build self-celebrating spaces that are difficult to live or work in; the design of the newspaper offices quite often mirrors the misbelief that chaos and high density are necessary for journalist work. According to Piano, such buildings ironically carry the image of a group close to the external world “as media as a means of communication should never be” (Renzo Piano Building Workshop, Il Sole-24 Ore New Building, 2004: 24). So, for Il Sole-24 Ore, Piano designed a U-shaped architectural complex with a green hill at the centre, a small city park, a 250-seat auditorium, a media library and a bookstore. He had a clear image of the view that people should have from the inside: a double perception of the street on the one hand and the garden on the other.

Thus, Piano imagined the media house as a ship lightening the surrounding environment in the night. As Anna Detheridge wrote in the Renzo Piano Building Workshop pamphlet:

He even talks about it by using the female gender as “an evanescent thing which has to live always because she never stops, lightened from inside because she possesses her own light. There no outside lighthouse lightening her, it is herself giving light.” (2004: 25)

The general approach to the building design was allegedly based on a harmonious fusion of many different disciplines. The goal was for the various technological components to be indistinguishable from the different architectonic inputs.

Fluvio Irace, reporting on the news factory in the same pamphlet, wrote that it was difficult not to interpret Piano’s project as a symbolic tribute to the ethereal nature of information, and his building transparency on Via Monte Rosa’s side as a realisation of the literary metaphor of journalism as street art.

Piano designed an “open factory” for Il Sole-24 Ore. He built on his idea of a collective space open to the street and to the surrounding context. As Renzo Piano explained it:

... A soil wave substitutes the traditional type of an introvert court and project the project onto the adjacent streets, thus avoiding the effect of an isolated happy land in the city. (Renzo Piano Building Workshop, Il Sole-24 Ore New Bulding, 2004: 36)

The Il Sole-24 Ore project can be viewed as an anticipation of the New York Times building, which he also designed. Apart from the size difference, the internal landscape distribution and external transparency onto the street were the same, as was the aim of making “the arcane life of a newspaper journalist less hermetic to the metropolitan audience” (2004: 36). In his interview to one Il Sole35 journalist, Piano recognised that he designed The New York Times building following the pattern of Il Sole-24 Ore.

Undoubtedly the first focalisation of a newsroom, I have done it with Il Sole-24 Ore. The NYT project was born afterwards. And it carries its imprint somehow. (Maugeri, 2003: 32)

Piano’s concept of transparency and the effect of a light presence are to suggest “the concatenation of new spaces [mirroring] the complexity of the views typical of the metropolitan condition” (Renzo Piano Building Workshop, Il Sole-24 Ore New Building, 2004: 36). In Piano’s words:

Instead of an imposing building, we have tried to develop a complexity of overlapping views, right from the first impact from the street. From Via Monte Rosa one begins to perceive a big glass entrance door, then, a bit further, the reception with a big staircase going down; through the big transparent walls, it is possible to see also, from 150 meters, the green of the hill which we have realised in the place where earlier there was a closed courtyard. There exists not only one perception level, but an enormous depth of the visual camp, made of fluctuant levels, as it

35 Il Sole is a short name for Il Sole-24 Ore.
is typical of the stratified space of the city in general and of Milan in particular: Milan is historically characterised by apparently close buildings, but in reality, it is rich in surprising gardens and protected spaces that allow communication between the public dimension of the street and the private and domestic one of halls and courts. (Piano Building Workshop, 2004: 36)

The green hill is now surrounded by fences, and can not be accessed by anyone but the gardeners. Neither trolleys nor locals can walk in the garden, as Renzo Piano had imagined they would, but it is a grandiose building that the journalists enter every day to do their job. The building is shared between Il Sole-24 Ore Group and Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC), so there are two reception areas at the entrance: one to the right for Il Sole-24 Ore Group and one to the left for PWC.

When Il Sole-24 Ore Group moved to the new building, one of the main goals was to gather all the different parts of the organization together. And it has happened that way, except for the Professionals unit, which is located elsewhere. Il Sole-24 Ore, Radio24 and Radiocor Newsrooms each occupy one of the first three floors of the building. On the same floors, on the other side of the elevators, sit the business people of Publisher, Radio, System, and Multimedia. The top managers and the CEO occupy the fourth floor.

![Figure 6.7. Il Sole-24 Ore Group Entrance Sign.](Image)


## The 24s

Many of the journalistic products are branded under the *Il Sole-24 Ore* umbrella. The products created internally (not resulting from the acquisition of another organization, as in the case of the news agency, Radiocor) have 24 in their name to identify them with *Il Sole-24 Ore*. Thus the various units can be thought of as
comprising a family: the 24s. The radio station is called Radio24, for example, and the free sheet is called 24’ or VentiquattroMinuti (24 Minutes).

For the purpose of this study, I concentrated on organizing processes in the largest newsroom, which produces the flagship broadsheet newspaper, Il Sole-24 Ore. It produces three main products: the newspaper, Il Sole-24 Ore, with all its supplements; the main website, ilsole24ore.com, and other related websites; and the monthly magazine, Ventiquattro.

As Il Sole-24 Ore and ilsole24ore.com with their supplements and related websites have been the focus of my study, I now briefly present these products.

The newspaper

Il Sole-24 Ore first appeared as the running heading of the newspaper in 1965.

At the time of the study, the newspaper was published as a salmon-coloured broadsheet, with up to 64 pages and three supplements. Its structure and design varied according to the day of the week, but the structure of the main spine is as follows:

- Front page
- Close-up (Primo piano, 2, 4 or 6 pages)
- World (3-5 pages)
- Commentaries and Reportages (pages)
- Politics (2 pages usually; most of the politics are in the Close-up)
- Economy and Enterprises37 (6-7 pages)
- Tax and Law (4-6 pages)
- Finance and Markets (6-7 pages).

On Monday there is a 15- to 20-page spine is part of the journalistic jargon, and it indicates each of the physically separate parts of the newspaper – each part of the newspaper bound together. Il Sole-24 Ore newspaper is made of different spine: a main spine, to indicate the part of the newspaper containing the front page; a Finance and Markets spine; and possibly another spine for a weekly supplement. Here I call the first one main spine and the others supplements.

This section is commonly called Italian Economy, although its official name appearing on top of the pages is Economy and Enterprises.

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36 Spine is part of the journalistic jargon, and it indicates each of the physically separate parts of the newspaper – each part of the newspaper bound together. Il Sole-24 Ore newspaper is made of different spine: a main spine, to indicate the part of the newspaper containing the front page; a Finance and Markets spine; and possibly another spine for a weekly supplement. Here I call the first one main spine and the others supplements.

37 This section is commonly called Italian Economy, although its official name appearing on top of the pages is Economy and Enterprises.
supplement, Tax and Law, including 6 to 8 pages of articles and a section called “The Expert’s Answers”, containing answers to readers’ questions on specific technical legal issues. This is a special and unique service of Il Sole-24 Ore.

From Tuesday to Saturday, there is a supplement of approximately 10 pages, Finance and Markets, 5 to 6 of which contain articles, and the others report the stock prices. Thus the newspaper is divided in two physically separate parts: the main dorso (spine) and the Finance supplement.

The Monday edition is a weekly edition, as the Newsroom is closed on Sunday. So the newspaper to be distributed on Monday is finished on Saturday afternoon. The Monday edition has its own structure in both content and organization, although it mirrors the basic structure of the newspaper as described here.

From Tuesday to Sunday, the basic structure of the newspaper, comprising a main dorso and the Market and Finance supplement, is complemented with some weekly supplements or sections.

On Tuesday, there is a 4-page section called World and Markets produced by a separate section of the Newsroom comprising three people, and this section is included in the main dorso of the newspaper. A Rapporto38 (a special supplement on specific topics) provides an added supplement that day.

On Wednesday, a section entitled Job24 follows the Economy and Enterprises section in the main dorso.

On Thursday, Nova24, the research, science and innovation supplement is published.

On Saturday, Plus24 is published as a financial analysis supplement in a tabloid format. During the course of my study, Plus24 was the only supplement in tabloid format, but by the summer of 2009, Nova24 had also been redesigned as a tabloid.

On Sunday, Domenica is published as a cultural supplement in broadsheet.

Apart from Rapporto, which has only an editor and no newsroom, all the other supplements are produced by a separate section of the Newsroom, with section head editors working on a weekly production cycle.

The website

ilsole24ore.it was launched in 1996 as a corporate website and turned into a news website with journalistic content in 1997. In 1999 it became www.ilsole24ore.com.

Since its origin, the website structure has mirrored that of the newspaper: There is a main website, structured like the daily newspaper, and vertical portals on specific themes, like the weekly supplements and newspaper inserts.

38 The plural of Rapporto is Rapporti. Thus, the head editor responsible for these special supplements is called Rapporti Head Editor.
On 30 October 2007, a new design of the website was launched, together with some new thematic portals. The redesign involved all the online products branded under ilsole24ore.com, including a number of vertical portals that I briefly present below. The redesign project was conducted by Cases i Associats, a Spanish newspaper and website design consulting company, which is well established in the industry and had redesigned one of the main national newspaper websites, corriere.it – another national competitor, lastampa.it, as well as the print La Stampa, La Gazzetta dello Sport and a number of local and national newspapers across Europe. About a year before launching the new website, a newly designed Il Sole-24 Ore broadsheet was also launched.

The current structure of the main website, which is conceptually quite similar to the previous one, gives an idea of what the homepage of the main website looks like. It is structured in the following sections:

- Homepage
- Tax and Law
- Finance and Markets
- Economy and Work
- Italy
- World
- Technology and Business
- Culture and Leisure
- Current Affairs
- Sport
- Dossier

Some of these sections carry traces of the old structure of the print newspaper. Technology and Business, for example, is similar to but not exactly like the weekly supplement Nova24. Before Nova24 was launched, the newspaper published a weekly supplement on information technology and enterprises (after the computerisation of organizations). This weekly began to be perceived as old-
fashioned, and it was decided to stop it and start a supplement on innovation, research and creativity. A new head editor was brought in from the outside, and a new supplement was launched. The section on technology had neither a name nor a referent change in the Online Newsroom.

The main website news is produced primarily by the Online Newsroom, although the integration project is precisely about involving people other than the online journalists to contribute to the online news production.

Besides the main website, the following vertical portals are active and accessible from the homepage, as can be seen from the picture of ilsole24ore.com from November 2009:

- House24 – related to a weekly insert in the newspaper on the real estate market;
- Job24 – related to the newspaper weekly insert on job;
- Shopping24 – the shopping channel mainly for Il Sole-24 Ore products;
- Luxury24.it – related to monthly tabloid, Luxury24, which was published only from May to December 2007;
- Travel24 – not produced in the Newsroom;
- Arteconomy24 – related to a monthly insert in Plus24 (the supplement published on Saturday) on the contemporary art markets;
- Databanks – which are the online products for professionals working in the financial sector;
- The Expert Answers – related to the Monday insert in the Tax and Lay supplement, called The Expert Answers;
- Training and Education – the webpage of the education division of the group.
During my study, a number of new online initiatives were launched; among them was 
Luxury24.it, Job24 with a new design, including a webpage. Arteconomy24 was launched a month before my arrival.

The next chapter focuses on the newswork organizing in the Newsroom, which produces Il Sole-24 Ore, ilsole24ore.com and their related products.

Figure 6.11. ilsole24ore.com homepage as of November 2007: Snapshot from www.ilsole24ore.com
7. Organizing newwork

He says that the morning editorial meeting is the best time to see integration because all are present: website, radio, weekly, perhaps Radiocor. (Fieldnotes, Day 1)

The aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with background for the analysis that I develop in Chapters 9, 10 and 11 – the context for the stories I tell in the next chapters. Thus, this chapter may contain elements that do not directly contribute to my theorised story, but that form its background.

The chapter is structured as follows: First, the Newsroom is presented as a physical space that is a vital element for organizing work. Then the organizational structure of the Newsroom is described. Finally, a typical day in the Newsroom is presented, following the phases of the day in the newspaper and website rooms.

The Newsroom space

The Il Sole-24 Ore Newsroom, which architect Renzo Piano had imagined as a big open space, is located on the second and third floor of the headquarters building in Via Monterosa, Milan. This idea of openness and transparency was not fully embraced by the commissioner. As the journalist reporting on the new building wrote in Ventiquattres: “Reasons of opportunity, as they say in these cases. Or of security.” (Maugeri, 2003: 30). In the interview, however, Piano reinstated his position:

Believe me, this is the philosophy that the New York Times has also adopted with great enthusiasm: the common spaces have to be open to the citizens. If someone has doubts, I am ready to discuss it. (Maugeri, 2003: 30)

The open space was converted to closed rooms for each section, with some open areas in the middle for the assistants. The rest of the second and third floor is organized in rooms for the various sections of the newspaper and a separate large room for the news agency. Between the rooms are islands, as they are called in the newspaper – the areas where the graphic assistants sit and design the pages, search for the pictures and draw tables and graphs.

On the third floor, in the right-hand corner, is a central office room, and next to it the direction rooms. Chief Editor’s office is three doors and one floor away from what Piano called the heart of the Newsroom. He spends most of
his time in his office; he goes rarely to the central office room and goes to the
meeting room only for meetings.

The organization of work in the Newsroom revolves around two main
editorial meetings: The morning meeting at 11:00 and the afternoon meeting at
17:00. Other editorial meetings can take a smaller and more informal form at
the leading team level and at the section level.

The Newsroom’s organizational structure

Between 250 and 300 journalists and about 60 to 80 graphic assistants\(^{39}\) work in
the newspaper Newsroom. About 200 journalists and all the graphic people are
located on the third floor of the company’s main premises in Via Monterosa,
Milan. About 50 journalists work in Rome, but no graphic designer works
there. The \(Il\ Sole-24\ Ore\) Newsroom is under the direction of Chief Editor, who
is responsible for every product coming out of the Newsroom and for the
contents of all these products.

The Newsroom organization is structured as a pyramid:

- Chief Editor is at the top of the hierarchy.
- Under him are three vice-chief editors.
- Then, there is a central office with editors (5 journalists) and
  Newsroom Secretary.

The rest of the Newsroom is divided into sections – called \textit{newsrooms (redazioni)}
– according to different criteria.

Some of the newsrooms are set apart by topics, and correspond to the
different parts of the daily newspaper. I have listed them here, followed by the
name I use in this dissertation:

- Finance and Markets, called Finance Newsroom (about 20 journalists);
- Tax and Law, called Law Newsroom (about 20 journalists);
- World, called Foreign Affairs Newsroom (about 8 journalists);
- Economy and Enterprise, called Italian Economy Newsroom (about
  20 journalists);
- Commentaries and Reportage, called Commentaries Newsroom (about
  5 journalists);

\(^{39}\) These are polygraphists and graphic designers. Some of them, called graphic
journalists, are responsible for the overall layout of the products and of some special
graphic features. I call them all graphic assistants.
Organizing newswork

- World and Markets, called World and Markets Newsroom (3 journalists).

Other sections are set apart according to the weekly supplements of the newspaper:
- *Plus24*, called *Plus24* Newsroom (about 20 people);
- *Nova24*, called *Nova24* Newsroom (about 5 people);
- *Domenica*, called *Sunday* Newsroom (about 6 people);
- *Regional Supplements*, called *Supplements* Newsroom (about 15 people).

There is also a newsroom of the monthly magazine *Ventiquattro* (about 10 journalists). One section is set apart by its medium, namely the Internet, and it is called Online (about 12 journalists). Some of the sections are distinguished by their geographic location. Apart from Milan, where the majority of the journalists sit and where all these sections are located, there are newsroom facilities in Turin, Florence, Rome, Naples, and Palermo. Only in Rome, however, are there a significant number of people (about 50 journalists) who form a separate newsroom at the same hierarchical level as the thematic sections in Milan. It is also the only city newsroom with a name determined by its location: the Roman Newsroom. It covers mainly political and internal affairs, and has its own head editor who takes part in the morning and afternoon editorial meetings. The offices located in the other Italian cities have direct contact with the vice-chief editors, and are called upon by Italian Economy Head Editor in case there is a need for local reporting. Foreign correspondents do not form newsrooms or sections, but are subject to the direction of Foreign Affairs Head Editor.

In each of these sections, the structure is as following:
- Head Editor (*caporedattore*) – Online Head Editor, Law Head Editor, for example;
- Vice-Head Editor (*vice caporedattore*) – Finance Vice-Head Editor, Italian Economy Vice-Head Editor, for example;
- Two or three desk editors (*capiservizio*);
- Two or three vice desk editors (*vice capiservizio*);
- Journalists (*redattori ordinarii*).

These hierarchical levels correspond to the most frequent journalistic career path. They are mainly in charge of “desk activities” as the journalists call them.
Here is the description of the organization of work online by the Online Vice-Head Editor:

There is an editor responsible for the section. And then there’s me. I’m in charge of the desk and the co-ordination of colleagues’ work, together with two colleagues who support me. Three of us deal with the daily cooking in the Newsroom. Of these three, two are engaged fulltime at this task: another colleague and me. The third colleague supports us, but is also in charge of one of the pages of the site – the one dedicated to Technology and Business. Thus he has also another assignment.

Thus besides Online Vice-Head Editor in the Online Newsroom there are two other journalists in the hierarchy with the title of desk editor who support him in the daily deskwork of pagination, editing and formatting the work of journalists.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, a career path alternative to deskwork is that of “writing”, as journalists call it. At any point in their careers (usually at quite a high level, even when they are section head editors) some journalists decide not to do desk activities, and devote their time instead to reporting news and writing articles. These journalists are officially called correspondents. The decision to be a correspondent keeps the journalist out of the section’s hierarchy and creates a direct reporting relationship with Chief Editor. Correspondents are usually highly specialised; their signatures are highly valued and prestigious. They are considered to be in a privileged position, as they do not need to attend the bureaucratic procedure of producing a daily newspaper. Most of them – there are 10 to 15 – sit together in a separate Newsroom section, which does not have the same hierarchical structure as the other sections. Some of them sit in the Newsroom section dealing with their thematic specialty.

A journalist who has attained a given title maintains it even when moving to a different position in a different newsroom. Thus there are some journalists who have the title of head editor but do not have a Newsroom section under their direction; they work with journalists from different sections. Rapporti, for example, are produced under the direction of a head editor who decides for each issue which journalists and collaborators to involve. Luxury24.it has its Head Editor who works with two journalists recruited for the Online Newsroom and has a desk editor under her direction.

Among all the 24 top editors (section head editors and central office editors, vice-chief editors and Chief Editor), four are women. Of those, none is in charge of a daily section of the newspaper, one is in charge of the monthly magazine and one is in charge of luxury24.it.

Because a given salary level corresponds to a certain title by virtue of the national contract, as specified in Chapter 2, maintaining the title means also maintaining the corresponding financial compensation.
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There are also technicians and graphic assistants in the Newsroom. Although they are subordinated to Chief Editor, they have their own hierarchical structure analogous to and interacting with that of the journalists. At the top of this structure is Art Director, to whom graphic designers and graphic assistants report. Some of the graphic designers sit in the central office with Art Director; others sit in different parts of the Newsroom next to the section with which they work most closely. Graphic designers depend directly on Art Director. Graphic assistants are more numerous than graphic designers and take care of all the nonverbal elements of the newspaper, from tables and figures to charts, photographs and page designs. They are grouped according to the elements they deal with, and the division of tasks, which, due to union agreements, is highly refined, and outside the realm of this study. Graphic assistants answer to Graphic Manager, who answers to Art Director.

There are 10 graphic assistants on the technical side of the Online Newsroom, and they are organized in the same shifts as the journalists are. They may have different seniority, but they all do the same job, which consists of providing the journalists with technical support by taking care of the nontextual elements of the newwork. They insert the headings, search for pictures available for online publications in the databanks to which the newspaper subscribes and prepare them for publications. They also prepare articles, videos and webpages for publication, which requires that they insert summaries, headings, and texts in the right places in the content management system. They are responsible for the homepage on the website, as well as the single thematic pages; among all the journalists, only the desk journalists and the editor have access to these functions.

Union accords demand that the division of labour between journalists and graphic assistants is strict. Even if the journalists could technically write a heading or insert a picture, they do not do it, because it is the job of the graphic assistants. This division of labour between journalists and graphic assistants is sediment from the computerisation of newspaper production.

As presented in Chapter 2, the introduction of the electronic editorial system in the 1980s was accompanied by significant organizational changes (Engwall, 1978; A. Smith, 1980). Many of the graphic technicians’ tasks became obsolete,
their job descriptions had to be changed, and the journalists had to learn to work with computers and an electronic content management system.

The Newsroom’s organizational structure is clearly inscribed in the products that are published daily. The division of the newspaper into sections objectifies the Newsroom structure and a change in the Newsroom structure can be traced from a change in the structure of the product. When a new supplement is created, for example, a new Newsroom section is likely to have been created, dedicated to the production of the new product. Furthermore, in the middle of the newspaper, in the first Commentaries and Reportage page, a table called the drum (tamburo) is published daily with the names of the top editors working in Il Sole-24 Ore Newsroom, including those whose products are not published on that day. Figure 7.1 shows a drum from October 2007. This table is updated as often as changes are made in the Newsroom organizational chart. Moreover, the signature of the articles leaves a visible trace of who has performed the task of writing it. The by lines by which the journalists sign their articles often give additional information about their location, their affiliation and their title.

The organizing of newspaper newswork

In this section, I describe a typical day in the Newsroom, developed from the fieldnotes of 110 days I spent there. This account is obviously brief and necessarily synthetic, omitting many details. Its purpose is to provide the reader with a picture of everyday routines and activities, in order to build the analysis that I develop in Chapters 9, 10 and 11, and contextualise the episodes that are reported there.

The account is structured chronologically, around the two critical moments marked by the morning and afternoon editorial meetings. Here is the timetable:

- 08:00-11:00: morning, before the morning editorial meeting;
- 11:00-12:00: morning editorial meeting;
- 12:00-14:00: late morning, between the morning editorial meeting and lunch;
- 14:30-15:00: early afternoon, before the afternoon editorial meeting;
- 17:00-17:30: afternoon editorial meeting;
- 17:30-20:00: later afternoon, after the editorial meeting; and
- 20:00-23:00: evening, until the closure of the newspaper pages.
Organizing newswork

Morning

There is hardly anyone in the Newsroom before 10:00. Some meetings in some Newsroom sections are planned for 09:00 or 09:30, but they are usually dedicated to specific issues, such as the realisation of special sections or special pages or reportages, before starting the newswork for the day. Otherwise, the leading team of a section — its head editor, vice-head editor and one or two of the desk editors, comes to the Newsroom around 10:00.

By then, the caretakers have brought copies of Il Sole-24 Ore and other newspapers of the day. The selection of the newspapers delivered to each section is different, depending on the order made by the head editor for his or her section. The newspaper copies come to the Newsroom with a paper on top indicating how many copies of which newspapers have been delivered. All journalists take their own copies of the newspapers as they enter the room — usually Il Sole, la Repubblica and Il Corriere.

Sitting at their desks, the journalists switch on their computers, check their e-mails, and check the newswires from the news agencies. They also check the websites of their main competitors, particularly la Repubblica and Il Corriere; Il Sole-24 Ore is often not checked. They flip through the newspapers and check the news from the other newspapers, how they have been fitted onto the page and how they have been treated. They compare Il Sole-24 Ore, particularly their own section, with the other newspapers. In this way, they can find out if they have missed something. They often comment loudly about the other newspapers, thus making their evaluations public.

Before the editorial meeting, each head editor must prepare a list of the news items that will be worked on that day and appear in the next day's newspaper. Some of these items come from checking the newswires, which give the journalists, particularly the head editors, an idea of the top news of the day. Other items are pieces or packages of several articles in the archives of the section to be used. There are also weekly thematic pages, the contents of which have been planned for the whole week. To prepare the list of news of the day, each head editor or vice-head editor also calls the correspondents — in Italy or abroad, depending on the section — to check if they have some urgent item.

Before the editorial meeting, the leading section team starts distributing tasks to correspondents and freelancers in order to alert them to follow a certain issue and to write a certain number of lines.

At 11:00, the head editor goes to the editorial meeting.

Editorial meeting

On the second floor, in the middle of the Newsroom, there is an enormous table surrounded by glass walls. This is the new editorial meeting room in the new building. During the first two weeks of my fieldwork, the editorial meeting
was held there. Piano had imagined this area to be: “The heart of the Newsroom: There will be a big table where Chief Editor and the head editors will meet to choose the most important news of the day” (Maugeri, 2003: 30).

Renzo Piano described it as follows:

This will be a beautiful newsroom, transparent and open to participation. Journalists will have to feel at home there: Each one is at ease, discussing and sharing with others. They are all together: Chief Editor and every last one of the journalists. I have never seen The New York Times Chief Editor in his own office, but always leaning back in his char at the editorial meeting table, with the head editors. (Maugeri, 2003: 31)

Piano’s idea was clearly that the interior design, informed by a philosophy of openness and transparency, would and should shape people’s way of working. Renaissance Florence and its courts inspired the space between the second and the third floors. In the middle of the third floor there is a big hole with a balcony all around, from where it is possible to look down to the middle of the second floor. This is where Piano thought the large editorial table should be placed for editorial meetings.

There, in the middle, is a space that used to be full of furniture and archival documents, and as they told me, they had just tried to convert it into a useable meeting room when I arrived. At the time I was there, a glass room was in the middle of the Newsroom, with a table in the middle and three screens on the walls. The room was used only for meetings and only for two weeks, as the glass walls made for extremely poor acoustics people transfer the meeting to the old (and invisible) meeting room. I have learnt that the meetings were moved back to the glass room after I left, as work had been done to improve the acoustics.

The largest editorial meeting is the morning one. There are about 20 participants daily, occupying the following positions:

- Chief Editor (1)
- Vice-chief editors (3)
- The head editor of each newsroom producing daily newspaper pages (5)
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• The head editor of the newsrooms producing the next day's supplement (1 each day)
• Online Editor (1)
• Central office editors (2 or 3 each day)
• Newsroom Secretary (1)
• Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator (1)
• Reporters (2 or 3)
• Co-ordinator of Economic Analysis (1).

Around the table, the participants appear to have some fixed seats. The middle of one of the long sides of the table a seat is implicitly reserved for Chief Editor, and beside him, the vice-chief editors occupy the seats. The Newsroom organizational structure is constructed in a way that allows regular substitutes to take the place of people who are absent. Even if Chief Editor is the last person to enter the meeting room, a vacancy is left where he is supposed to sit. If Chief Editor’s deputy or, in the deputy’s absence, one of the vice-chief editors takes his place, it means that Chief Editor is absent. If one of the section head editors is missing, a vice will serve as a substitute, and if no vice is there, one of the other desk deputies will substitute. The only positions that do not have a substitute are Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator; and Newsroom Secretary, who has no voice in the meeting in any case. As the editorial meetings take place every day with the goal of presenting the daily organization of work, substitutions are common. The morning editorial meeting lasts for approximately one hour, from about 11:00 to 12:00. All participants are physically present in Milan, except for Roman Head Editor, who is in a teleconference from Rome, and whose vice participates in the meeting as well.

Before the meeting starts, the table is made ready and the day's copies of the newspaper are distributed around the table. There is one copy for each seat available around the table, no matter how many people participate in the meeting. The newspaper copies are being opened as the chair of the meeting comments upon the newspaper making the routine evaluation.

When Online Head Editor is there, he also distributes the day's online report – a sheet of paper with tables containing numbers of access to the website of the previous day and the headings of the day's main competitor's homepages. Some head editors look at it on occasion, and the chair of the meeting may make explicit comments on this report. Presenting and commenting on the online report is not part of the automatic routines of the editorial meeting, however.

Head editors come to the meeting with handwritten notes about their section news menus. They take notes about the news menus of the other sections only if they are of particular interest. Online Head Editor takes extensive notes about all the other sections, as he will consider all the news
menus when composing the website; he will also report the course of the meeting in full to his news section.

Chief Editor often comes with some Post-it notes, which he takes out of his jacket pockets.

After the editorial meeting, most of the online report copies and the newspaper copies are left on the table.

Chief Editor talks mainly to the vice-chief editors, and listens what each section head editor is saying when it is his or her turn to speak. They present today’s news menu, as if it were a shopping list – they use this expression themselves. Each head editor talks only to Chief Editor and his vice-chief editors (in the best of cases), rarely jumps in when another editor is talking. If people do interrupt, it is to say that they have also worked on that topic, that they have some investigation ready on precisely that topic. Thus nobody intervenes in anyone else’s topics unless there is overlap. It is as if each head editor has a territory on which he is sole proprietor and sole ruler. Nobody else, except Chief Editor and the vice-chief editors, are entitled to enter this territory by giving feedback.

The head editors talk only to Chief Editor and his vices, always following the same sequence and respecting each other’s turn. This all happens automatically; Chief Editor does not need to call upon each head editor to speak. The process of the editorial meeting is structured in this way (different moments):

- **Phase 1: Assessment**
  - One of the vice-chief editors evaluates the day’s newspaper.
  - Chief Editor makes comments on the website results, looking after the daily online results report. This does not happen often; nor does it have a consistent formula.

- **Phase 2: News shopping list:**
  - Politics from the Roman Newsroom
  - Finance
  - Italian Economy
  - Tax and Law
  - Foreign Affairs
  - Others (such as World and Markets, on Mondays)
  - Commentaries and Reportage

- **Phase 3: Closure**

During the editorial meetings, the sign to begin is given by Chief Editor’s arrival and “Good morning”. He often comes some minutes late, and sits between two vice-chief editors or, in the afternoon meeting, between one of
them and Art Director. If he does not come alone, he comes with one of his
vice-chief editors. Sometimes, at the beginning, Chief Editor tries to bring into
the discussion some issues that could be treated in a certain way in the
newspaper or have been treated correctly. Then he leaves the floor to one of
the vice-chief editors, who is in charge of the daily evaluation of the newspaper.
Although nobody else intervenes in this evaluation, unless called upon, Chief
Editor can interrupt. After the assessment of the day’s newspaper, each head
editor presents the list of the news of the day.

Late morning

After the morning meeting, one of the central office editors writes a report with
the main news for each section and sends it out to the head editors. Central
office editors also negotiate with the advertising department about the space to
be devoted to advertisements and then distribute among head editors a table
showing how the advertising space will be allocated on each page of the
newspaper. They have an internal system to measure the dimension of articles
and advertisements on the page; each is measured in *modules*, into which the
page is divided. The proportion of journalistic-advertising content changes
throughout the day and usually 3 or 4 different versions are sent out to the
sections from the central office, until around 20:00. Each time the space for
advertisements changes, the pages need to be redesigned.

Most of the journalists working for a daily section of the newspaper arrive
between 12:00 and 13:00, so they can listen to the debriefing about the morning
editorial meeting that their head editor delivers around that time. The head
editor of each section performs this task in a different way, but most of them
concentrate only on their own thematic area and tell their newsroom the topics
of the day that have been presented in the meeting and how they are assigned
among the journalists. After this section meeting, the head editor, together with
his vice, starts designing the pages on paper, according to the information
about advertisement received by the central office. Once a first draft of the
pages is designed and the assignment distributed in the newsroom around
14:00, it is time for lunch.

Early afternoon

When they return from lunch, coffee and cigarettes, it is time to check the
newswires and redesign the pages. Then the head editors go to the afternoon
editorial meeting, while the remaining journalists start thinking about their
pieces and go to the polygraphists to give them the hand-designed pages (on
paper), that the polygraphists redesign on the electronic content management
software. Hermes is the content management software used to design the
newspaper pages – an activity called pagination – and to store both the news
takes from the news agency and the articles from the published issues of the newspaper. Thus the polygraphists take the pages that the editors have designed on paper and reproduce them on Hermes.

All day, every day, negotiations about the positioning of advertising in the next day's newspaper continue between the Newsroom and the advertising sales department. Throughout the day, the central office (different editors in charge of the central office) sends out to the whole Newsroom personnel different versions of the so-called foliation – the scheme whereby the distribution of the advertisement in the different pages of the newspaper is reported – a scheme that is circulated both in print and via e-mail in the Newsroom. This distribution changes over time, because it is the result of an ongoing negotiation between the changing needs of the news on the one hand, and the changing needs and requests of the advertisers on the other hand. The advertising sales managers have usually sold certain positions in the newspaper to their clients already, but they can be filled only in accordance with the needs of the news. Throughout the day the initial distribution of advertising space that accorded the requests of the advertisers may change because of requests from different editors or from central office. A specialised advertising manager and one editor in the central office negotiate, primarily via e-mail and phone, and rarely by visiting the advertising person in the Newsroom's central office. All the other journalists receive only the foliation several times a day and act accordingly.

The foliation comprises five columns. The first column to the left indicates the page number, the one next to it indicates the section of the newspaper and the three remaining columns to the right indicate the dimension of the advertisement space and the advertiser.

The journalists, particularly the editors of the various sections, use the foliation to design their pages by hand. They have prestructured schemes for designing their entire section, but they rarely use them. I have seen these schemes used only in Nova. None of the other editors were designing their section with the help of such schemes, but in the finance section the head editor and his desk team design the overall structure of the finance section, which is a separate supplement 4 days a week.

Each single page is then designed on paper using the foliation. This process also begins by marking out the advertisement space. Often, but not always, the journalists use a prestructured sheet that divides the page into small squares that represent the units of measurement of the space for advertising content used in the foliation for measuring advertisements. The space for journalistic content is expressed in rows, and the editors know the approximate conversion rate between squares and rows.

The pages designed on paper are then copied into the computer. The journalists give their paper designs to the polygraphists, who are in charge of reporting them in the content management system, Hermes. The polygraphists begin by marking with a diagonal line the space needed for the advertisements,
which appear on their screens and those of the journalists. This space represents inaccessible space for the Newsroom.

Once the electronic page is designed, the journalists can access its various journalistic spaces, and can write their pieces in them. The advertising department is in charge of uploading the advertisements in the system.

From Hermes, the journalists can print the pages of the newspaper as they will appear in the final product, which they do this several times a day, at several stages of the work. When they close their pages, they print the final version and bring them to the central office, so the central office editors and one of the vice-chief editors can check the entire newspaper. This process of printing and delivering a printed copy to the central office constitutes closure.

**Afternoon editorial meeting**

The afternoon editorial meeting takes place at 17:00 in the same room as the morning editorial meeting. The editors of each section, the central office editors, Chief Editor, his vice-chief editors, and Art Director participate. This meeting, aimed at designing the front page of the newspaper, is organized in three phases:

- **Phase 1**: Led by Chief Editor, a discussion can be opened to express general comments on the news of the day by all the editors.
- **Phase 2**: Each head editor of a section presents the news that he considers to have the potential newsworthiness to allow it to be promoted on the front page.
- **Phase 3**: Chief Editor, sitting next to Art Director, proposes the design for the front page, which Art Director sketches on paper. Chief Editor discusses this with the vice-chief editors and some of the interested editors.

**Late afternoon**

In each section, the head editors debrief their journalists, in particular the rest of the leading team – their vices and the desk editors – about the design of the homepage, and thus the small pieces that will be eventually required for the front page. Then it is time for the journalists to write and for the editors to check how the pages are coming along. Between 19:00 and 21:00, the Newsroom is silent of human voices, but full of machine noise. The sound of typing becomes intense.
Evening

Around 22.30, the pages should close and be delivered to the central office, where editors check them. When the pages are delivered in print from Hermes to the central office, the central office editors of the night shift and one vice-chief editor read all the pages together, to give them a clear idea of tomorrow’s whole newspaper. They particularly check the headlines, the infographics and the use of pictures. They also revise the work of their colleagues, so there are no repetitions and the news is updated according to the latest news agency takes – a process called approving the pages. They have until midnight to close the newspaper and send it to the printing plants, where the first edition is printed. Shortly after midnight, the first edition is delivered to the Newsroom, where the vice-chief editor and one of the central office editors look at it and eventually make changes for the second edition. At 02:00, the second edition is printed. Whereas the first edition is printed and distributed to the whole national territory, the second edition is printed and distributed only in Milan and Rome. Thus the edition sold in Milan and Rome differs slightly from the edition sold outside these cities.

The organizing of online newswork

The online section workflow differs from that of the newspaper. Journals in the online section rotate in two shifts: from 08:00 to 16:00 and from 11:00 to 19:00. Their work consists of continuously checking the newswire and updating news or creating news to position on the website. The webpages can have different templates with different positions for the news, but the pagination does not need to be designed.

Morning

The first shift in the Online Newsroom starts at 08:00. When the first journalists and graphic assistants enter, nobody else is in the Newsroom. There is silence in all the other rooms. The caretakers have not yet arrived, and sometimes the newspapers of the day – Il Sole-24 Ore, Il Corriere, La Repubblica and La Stampa – have not arrived by 08:00. When this happens, the journalists go to the reception to ask if the newspapers have arrived.

There are four caretakers in the Newsroom. Three of them sit on the third floor behind their three desks, which are right in front of one of the sides of the balcony. The fourth sits on the second floor, where, as one of the journalists

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41 From November 2008, the working hours of the online newsroom have been extended to 07:00 to 22:00 during weekdays and 09:00 to 20:00 during weekends. Thus the first shift starts at 07:00.
tells me, he has his kingdom, with a desk, pictures and little religious icons around his corner. One of their tasks is to distribute the mail and the newspaper copies in each of the Newsroom sections according to their needs. Sometimes, the Online Newsroom receives the newspaper at 09:00.

At 08:00, the online active room is the Online Newsroom. There are 12 or 13 people, as half of the online journalists and graphic assistants are in the first shift: 5 to 7 of each.

In front of the head editor sits his vice, an old-time newspaper journalist who has worked as a journalist for 34 years, and for the website for 10 years. He writes on the computer noisily, as if it were a typewriter.

In the first part of the morning, the desk journalists look at the newspaper and select the articles that will be uploaded online. The pages containing those articles are usually torn apart by the journalists, and the respective pieces of paper are given to the graphic assistants, so they can find the articles in the newspaper content management system. One of the desk journalists or the senior journalists or both select the articles, mark them with a pen, and give the newspaper to one or two graphic assistants, who proceed to enter the newspaper editorial system and copy and paste the articles in the online editorial system. They then format them properly, usually change the title according to the journalist’s suggestion and publish them by clicking the “publish” option in the content management system.

Not only articles are republished online, but also tables and graphs. In the case of tables and graphs, one of the journalists helps the graphic assistants to transfer them from the newspaper system to the online system. It is not always possible to transfer them directly, so the graphic assistants sometimes need to take the table from the newspaper and redesign it in the online system.

One of the journalists in charge of the desk is in charge of organizing the news of the day around main topics and sending e-mails to the rest of the online section, specifying what they should follow and what pieces they should prepare. “So that everybody does something; and by nine o’clock we have some things to put in”, as one journalist told me.
The opening \(^{42}\) of the website often replicates the opening of the newspaper, but not necessarily. As the following short conversation illustrates, the website editorial team may also choose a leading piece of news divergent from the newspaper. The online editorial team can thus disagree with the news hierarchy that has shaped the newspaper front page and opt for another piece of news for the homepage opening.

At other times, the opening is the same as the newspaper, as in this case:

Senior journalist: OK. So [Journalist I], let's open with the derivatives.

Journalist I: Yes, like the newspaper.

Senior journalist: We'll also link it to the Asian markets.

In his last line, the senior journalist refers to the insertion of links to related articles under each main headline of the homepage of the website.

Besides selecting the paper articles that need to be uploaded online, the journalists continuously check the news agency wire, in order to stay updated on the development of the news.

The multimedia material, such as videos and photo galleries, take time to be prepared. Thus, besides the real-time news update, the assistants are also occupied with preparing videos, photo galleries, and special pages for publication over the course of several days. In fact, the publication of news does not always occur immediately after it is ready. News is, as Tuchman (1973, 1978) has said, the unexpected routinised, and thus made expected.

Among new web tools, there are polls to test the opinions of the online audience that the Online Newsroom prepares and publishes on the website under current news. They are promoted in the newspaper in special small frames called boxes, and their results are sometimes published in the newspaper.

At the launch of the new website, there are weekly forums organized on specific topics on the basis of the questions that the online audience sends to an appositely created e-mail address. Thus, the graphic assistants also need to prepare such videos for publication.

Just as the priority of a news item changes during the course of the morning, the journalists change their opening and the position of the news on the homepage. Thus an opening can become a second or third headline, a new piece of news can be entered, or a second or third headline can attain a higher position on the homepage. This operation of changing the homepage is called turning. Following is an example of turning the homepage:

\(^{42}\) As explained later, the opening is the biggest headline of the page, which appears as the first headline on the homepage of the website or on the front page of the newspaper.
Organizing newswork

Senior Journalist: It’s the second title for now, that is on the Asian markets. Let’s intervene on that title and write about the European markets. Now I’m preparing the thing about the 5 x 1000.

Journalist I to the technicians: Prepare a picture for current affairs. Then, (name of a judge over whom there has been debate for awhile) needs to be moved. As soon as we have the new titles, we publish them. Agnelli and Mastella stay.

The journalists often communicate with each other while sitting at their desks, and necessarily raise their voices. They also shout to the graphic assistants, although it is more frequent that they go to the assistants’ desks because they need to explain things in detail. Their raised voices make their conversations and their organizing work public. They spend the majority of their time in front of the computer, however, checking the news agency wires, the Internet and e-mail, or writing their pieces. They always look busy; they often answer each other or me while looking at the computer screen, for example, and are not inclined to take time off for a conversation, even for a coffee at the bar.

The online journalists collaborate systematically with the foreign correspondents for quick pieces to be published online and sometimes with newspaper journalists, with help of Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator, who goes to talk to the expert journalists.

The work continues in an uninterrupted flow: checking the wires, updating the website and preparing special pages for the rest of the morning. When Online Head Editor comes back from the editorial meeting, the work continues as usual and he puts himself in the flow. When he has time, usually half an hour after the end of the editorial meeting, he gathers the other journalists around his desk and debriefs them about the editorial meeting. This is a good moment to plan collaboration with newspaper journalists and co-ordination within the Online Newsroom.

Afternoon

After lunch, the work in the Online Newsroom goes on as usual. The journalists go to lunch in shifts, so the website is never uncovered, as they say. Online Head Editor goes to the afternoon editorial meeting, and when he returns he puts himself back into the flow again. The afternoon editorial meeting does not bring crucial insights to the online work, because it is mainly about the front page.

Later in the afternoon, some of the desk editors write the online news promotions that are placed in the newspaper on the second or fourth page.

At 20:00, the Online Newsroom closes. Journalists and graphic assistants leave. Often, however, due to the development of news, some of the journalists and graphic assistants stay later, in order to keep the website updated.
8. *illosle24ore.com: From pioneering to integrating*

Before starting my field study, I formulated my goal: to understand how the production of a print newspaper and a website was organized within the same organization. I assumed that the newspaper and the website were co-existing products of the same newsroom.

When I presented my interest to the journalists, I got an immediate reaction: “The Internet came and messed it all up!” one newspaper journalist, an old-timer, told me, while smoking a cigarette outside Il Sole-24 Ore Group building in Milan. Soon after I started talking to journalists, I realised that their association to the Internet was “integration”. There seemed to be some kind of integration project going on, which was a particularly hot topic at *Il Sole-24 Ore*. Thus I successively reframed the topic of my study as a study of the integration of online and offline newswork. Still, looking at my fieldnotes, I can see that there is much more than the integration project, although it does occupy a large part of my notes. All things considered, my research seems to be a study of news production in a newspaper newsroom that is organizing the integration between its online and offline news production.

I soon learnt to differentiate between the “pre-integration” and “integration” phases. I therefore devote some space to narrate briefly the story of the website from pre-integration to integration, and then move to integration itself.

**Pre-integration history**

*Il Sole-24 Ore* launched its first website in 1996 as a corporate website, which became a news website in 1997. It was a pioneer experience in Italy, as it was the first newspaper to have a news website. After some years, the Online Newsroom was integrated in *Il Sole-24 Ore* Newsroom in terms of location and contractual arrangements, but it was managed in a manner different from that of the newspaper. In the remainder of this section, I tell the story of the pioneer experience, followed by the story of the separation, as told me by my interlocutors.

**The pioneer experience**

In 1997, first among the national newspapers, *Il Sole-24 Ore* launched a journalist website. IDEA was the name of the project team dedicated to
exploring a multimedia approach. The group was led by one of the vice-chief editors of the newspaper, and co-ordinated by one of its head editors\textsuperscript{43}. The group comprised both managers and journalists. The journalists came from a periodical that had been recently closed for economic reasons.

This inter-unit group gathered for seminars and work meetings to try to understand the Internet and its potential for \textit{Il Sole-24 Ore}. The initial thought was to use the Internet as a vehicle for \textit{Il Sole-24 Ore} products, not only to create a new distribution channel, but also to improve the distinctive profile of \textit{Il Sole-24 Ore} as a company able to produce high-quality information on current affairs and professional information of excellence, and to create an interactive relationship with readers.

Through the Internet, the products could be sold as professional software, market analyses, and professional guides. New products such as “the observatory of the national economy” could be developed (it still exists today, in fact). In short, the initial idea was not far from the current ideas about the uses of the Internet. What was not known then was how to make this initial idea concrete. Perhaps even now, despite the diffusion and development of the web, uncertainties remain about ways to exploit the potential of the technology fully and how to equip the organization with the means to exploit these potentialities.

Through the Internet, the information could be given and developed with greater depth than it could through the newspaper, for reasons of time and space. Not only could the longer documents be made available to the public without occupying pages in the newspaper, but the topics could also be addressed in a different and complementary ways compared to the newspaper.

Through the Internet, the interaction opportunities increased, as did the possibility of learning more about the readers. Receiving e-mails from and sending e-mails to the readers improved the relationship between the newspaper and the readership. I have seen some e-mails from the first year of operations of the website that a journalist has proudly shown me as a testimony of the power of the Internet and of the boost she received when these e-mails arrive from far away. Many interlocutors also added that a close relationship with readers was nothing new for \textit{Il Sole-24 Ore}, as the newspaper had been communicating with its readers before the arrival of the new technologies. And from the beginning, the website offered the opportunity to organize fora with experts who answered questions on tax issues presented by readers.

\textit{IDEA} was a sort of experimental laboratory to help understand what and how journalism could be done on the web. The models were \textit{Wall Street Journal} and \textit{Financial Times}. This project team was enthusiastic about the opportunities offered by the Internet, according to the head editor who ran the project. The

\textsuperscript{43} This is how the head editor who was co-ordinating the project explained to me. She clearly saw a difference between the role of the vice-chief editor who was leading the project, not getting involved in the everyday operations of \textit{IDEA}, and her role as co-ordinator of the everyday operations of the group working for \textit{IDEA}.
journalists in the team felt frustrated, however, by not knowing what to do and where the project was going, according to some of the journalists and graphic assistants who still work for the website. Thus, on the one hand, there was enthusiasm and a feeling of doing something of historical significance; on the other hand was the uncertainty and anxiety of those who experienced the shift to the Internet in a less-than-happy way.

This experience ended at the beginning of the 21st century, when the project came to an end, because an online section had been created inside the main *Il Sole-24 Ore* Newsroom, which included some of the journalists coming from IDEA. Others went back to the newspaper. In the meantime, Radio24 started, and much of the energy from both the Newsroom and the Company was put into that project.

**The disintegration times**

After closing IDEA, the website experienced a development curve similar to that of the new economy: big investments across the millennium, many people in the Newsroom – and then a drastic break after a couple of years when the bubble burst. Distrust in the Internet accompanied this phase.

The Online Newsroom was led by a journalist who still works for the group, although no longer in *Il Sole-24 Ore* Newsroom. Snubbed by the rest of the newspaper, the Newsroom and Chief Editor, the website was treated like a separate newspaper from the daily, and Online Head Editor considered himself to be a chief editor of the website.

**Integration history**

In 2005, *Il Sole-24 Ore*’s new Chief Editor introduced changes in the organizational chart of the Newsroom and new organizational issues were addressed. One of these issues was the role of the website and its relationship to the newspaper.

After an internal discussion around two alternatives – creating a spinoff for the website or integrating the online and offline newswork – the integration option was chosen. From Spring 2007, and in parallel with preparations for a public offering of the Group (IPO), the integration project was undertaken.

The two things to be integrated were given different names on different occasions. Integration was seen as being:

- between the website and the newspaper
- between online and offline
- between Internet and newspaper
- between online and printed news production.
However, most of the time, integration was just called *integrazione* – integration.

At the time of my study, the Group was divided into divisions, one of which was the print publishing and one multimedia. The whole Newsroom was and is under the direction of Chief Editor. The costs, however, are shared among the print publishing division (which absorbs most costs) and multimedia (to which costs related to the production of content for the web are allocated). Since 2007, the multimedia division on the Company side is in charge of production and marketing and the development of web operations. The Online Newsroom has been in charge of producing content for the main website since 2000 (before that it was a separate team of journalists who did not formally belong to *Il Sole-24 Ore* Newsroom).

The multimedia business unit’s Managing Director, director of the multimedia division, said that there was the will – and thus the project – to integrate website and newspaper. He connected the decision to integrate to a general move in the industry. According to him, there are two models that newspapers can assume in dealing with the Internet: total separation and total integration. He argued for integration, claiming that separation is more expensive, fosters internal competition and increases the risk of editorial inconsistency. Thus both business and journalistic motives pushed for integration.

Four steps were taken in the integration project towards the final goal. An agreement between the Newsroom’s union committee and Company management was signed, establishing the guiding principles of the integration. New people were recruited and new positions created on the Newsroom’s organizational chart. Some of the everyday organizing practices, such as the editorial meetings, were modified. Some new products were launched: the new main website and few other thematic portals. The following sections of this chapter are dedicated to each of these steps.

**Union agreement**

The Newsroom journalist’s union committee signed an agreement with the website called the *multimedia agreement* on the floor: a document containing guidelines for the collaboration between print and online journalists that should be followed when moving towards an integrated organization of the news production. The agreement was discussed for several months (almost a year) and was signed 16 October 2007. I received this document, entitled *Web – agreement protocol* via e-mail from two online journalists and as a paper copy from a print journalist. The opening paragraph reads:

> The Newsroom’s top management and *Il Sole-24 Ore* Newsroom agree that a process of integration between the paper newspaper and the online one is necessary. This move implies a higher involvement of the
Newsroom, which, as of today, works only on the newspaper, in the production of multimedia content for the website.

A number of assumptions are implied here:

- The integration is between two newspapers: print and online. So, initially the agreement is not about a website but about an online newspaper.
- The integration is necessary. Note the wording: It is not appropriate, but necessary.
- The Newsroom now works only for the newspaper. This seems to suggest that the Online Newsroom is not a newsroom.
- The content produced for the website are multimedia; the texts are not mentioned. It seems that the content immediately becomes multimedia when a print journalist for the web produces it.

After the initial paragraph come guidelines for the integration project, suggesting that the integration process quickly became the integration project. All the new editorial projects were to see involvement and co-ordination by the Newsroom, meaning that content production was to be led by some of the journalists working in the Newsroom and not by marketing managers or external content providers, as had been the case. The thematic newsrooms were to contribute their professional skills to the newspaper-website integration. The autonomy of each thematic section was to be guaranteed and the development of the single professional competences to be promoted both in the paper and on the web.

The head editors responsible for the single newsrooms were to guarantee a distribution of the daily work, so that each eventual intervention on the online side of the operation would not negatively influence the workload and quality of the newspaper. The head editors would do their best to facilitate communication between their respective newsroom and the Online Newsroom, in order to achieve the best distribution of work, including collaboration with the website.

The professional contribution that the newspaper colleagues would give to the website will constitute value added for the website: synthetic news articles as well as analyses, commentaries, video and voice interventions. Documents, texts and forms that could be useful for the website would be shared. In other cases, a colleague with a news item would be able to forward it in real time to the online section, which would be in charge of editing it if the journalist following the event for the newspaper could not write it.

"The single journalist’s involvement will happen on a voluntary basis,” read the guidelines. According to the journalists, this was the most debated sentence in the agreement, and “voluntary basis” was often mentioned when they were talking about the integration. For some, like Chief Editor, the sentence is a
result of the confidence in the far-sightedness of the journalists, who were expected to understand the importance of the Internet for the future. It was considered a matter of professionalism and professional identity: journalists are professionals, so they should be able to decide what to do. For others, this sentence represented a way for the print journalists not to engage themselves and protect the status quo, while showing a benevolent attitude towards the website.

Chief Editor and the union representative committee committed themselves to investigating which work organization would be more functional for the project of multimedia integration. In particular, it was considered useful to renew work organization after the model of the most advanced international experiences: showing recognition for content competencies along with recognition of desk competencies.

It was to be recognised within the project that cross-sectional competencies exist in the two newsroom sections (for example, the Weekly Newsroom working on similar issues or single journalists, who, over the years, have developed certain competencies in other newsrooms). Collaboration with the Online Newsroom was to take these competencies into account.

The online presence of the Il Sole-24 Ore Group is expected to increase with new projects that will call for the direct participation of the journalists on the information side. All the vertical portals on the web – the website specialising in a certain topic such as Luxury24, House24, Arteconomy24 – are to have adequate journalistic content, the realisation of which will always be negotiated with top management. The new portals (Job24 or House24, for example) with information content are to always have a journalist as a reference point/contact/person responsible.

An extension of the daily hour coverage (from 07:00 to 24:00) and the weekly coverage (including Saturdays and Sundays) of the website is consequently planned with an adequate increase of the Online Newsroom personnel staff.

New people for the integration

The most important (or at least the most often mentioned during my study) change in the organizational chart of the Newsroom relating to the integration was the appointment of an editor in charge of co-ordination between newspaper and website, the Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator, whom I have mentioned earlier. In the Newsroom and in the Company, when talking about integration, the Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator was the person that was recalled by everybody as the person in charge of everyday practices of the integration.

One of the head editors was appointed to the central office in June 2007 to hold the special mandate of co-ordinating website and newspaper. He had been
working at the newspaper for almost 20 years for the print edition and for various supplements. Now he had been asked by the Chief Editor and the vice-chief editors to lead the project integration.

He said that the integration project started with him, “a figure of co-ordination between online and offline – a position that was created with me in mind three months ago”\textsuperscript{44}. The position was offered to him, he believed, because he had been working in this organization for long time and was well known. He is leading an innovation project because he is an insider in the organization and, by always having worked on the print side, he managed to gain a good deal of respect and trust from everyone in the Newsroom. This opinion was confirmed by Multimedia Managing Director, who said that Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator was well known and appreciated, and that “he is apt to create a positive relationship with the online section.”

Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator acknowledged that the involvement of Chief Editor, who strongly believes in this project, is key to the integration project. Multimedia Managing Director, who portrayed him as a “cultural indoctrinator”, also acknowledged the positive role of Chief Editor.

Both managers and editors also mentioned that “all the journalists” were called to write for both media. The journalists working for \textit{Luxury24}, \textit{Arteconomy24} and \textit{Nova24}, which are often mentioned as examples of integration, were particularly involved.

All the head editors of the Newsroom are involved in the project, as they are encouraged to co-operate with the Online Newsroom. The relationship among head editors resembles the relationship among proprietors of different territories and fields of competences, as evidenced in their actions and speeches in the editorial meetings. One of the head editors, in particular, talked about “giving in to the online”, and about “we and them”: “We have the piece ready if it is decided to publish it online, too”.

On the Company side, Multimedia Managing Director was involved in strategic decisions about integration. The multimedia marketing people are involved directly, as a link between the Newsroom and other parties, a link making the ideas doable, according to Multimedia Marketing Director.

All these people come from inside the organization, but some new recruits were also involved. One journalist who came from a news agency and had experience in online companies was hired to sit in the central office and take care of practical aspects of improving the website. She was hired in March 2007, before the position of Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator was created. Starting in June, she reported to Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator. Her job is to operationalise what he decides about integration initiatives. The Online Head Editor also came from an online company, and was hired to head up the new online section in June 2007 and to assume responsibility for the design and launch of the new website. His position as Online Head Editor is not new; the

\textsuperscript{44} I interviewed him in September 2007.
position of Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator is. Furthermore, two junior journalists, who presented the original idea of the *Luxury24* project, were hired in June 2007 in the online section and are in charge of the luxury portal under the supervision of a head editor. Thus the most important new position, that of Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator for the website and newspaper was occupied by an old insider in the organization, whereas old positions, such as those of the junior journalists and the Online Head Editor, were occupied by new people.

**Integration practices in everyday organizing**

One of the multimedia managers described advancements in the integration process in this way:

Manager: I have to say that the difference is the Newsroom’s increased awareness of a multimedia way of working. Now it’s still at the beginning, but if we compare the situation to how it was two years ago, we’ve made big steps.

Elena: In what sense?

Manager: There’s greater involvement, it’s easier to interact; before there were 10 people from the Online Newsroom who did everything and published online some articles that had already been published. Now a new way of thinking is being born: There’s the newspaper article, let’s make a serious job of it online; or the online comes first with a flash, and then the newspaper picks it up, and then the online again. There is a sort of integrated use at the editorial level as well; Chief Editor is more and more dedicated to this message, saying that we need collaboration, saying that it’s a new frontier – not the more blocked approach that we had earlier. The interaction level with the new release [referring to a new version of the website] will increase also. There’ll be an opportunity to comment on articles, vote on them, interact in a stricter manner, something that for us – with the exception of some small sections – has always been a bit difficult. Or take the list of most-read articles. Now they’re visible, but separated, and somewhat difficult to see. In the new release of the website they’re on the homepage.

Between the lines of Chief Editor and explicitly in the narratives of many of my interlocutors, the current situation is portrayed as being characterised by the separate production of news for different media. Such a situation is undesirable
and needs to be changed. Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator claims that for
now the news on the website is written only by the online section. He adds that
nowadays they suffer from having inherited a mental attitude from the past
towards the web as a separate product: “We suffer from a mindset problem”.

If there is a mindset issue, there is a need to convince journalists to change
it. In fact, Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator argued, it is no coincidence that
chief editors around the world (he is referring to the colleagues he met in an
IFRA\textsuperscript{45} summer school) choose people like him to lead an integration project:
“A person like me has more experience and has a privileged [starting] point to
convince journalists to change”. What they need to change is not specified, but
certainly it is a matter of convincing them that the change is for the good.

A reporter told me that the current situation requires a mental change. He
explained it with different time spans of producing news for the newspaper and
for the website, and Online Head Editor shared this opinion. Online Head
Editor told me that the newspaper journalists tend to write their articles in the
evening, but that it is necessary to work in real time for the website.

Multimedia Managing Director characterised the current situation as
“culturally problematic”. The journalistic culture, according to him, puts “paper
on the top”, and this needs to be changed.

In general, the picture of the current situation is coherent. Everyone seem to
agree that there is currently no integration, that there is a need to change
towards integration, and that the change is primarily cultural – although it is not
quite clear what cultural change needs to be undertaken or what the integration
should look like. One of the multimedia managers clearly identified a number
of mechanisms, as he called them, towards integration.

\begin{itemize}
\item the editorial meeting starting with a discussion of online issues,
\item an online person taking part in all editorial meetings,
\item a new Online Head Editor hired from the online industry,
\item two people not socialised in the journalistic culture hired to the online
\item the installation of two screens in the meeting room showing the most-
read articles, in order to stress the importance of numbers.
\end{itemize}

Online matters are sometimes discussed during the editorial meetings. People
who introduce issues about the website are Chief Editor, one of the vice-chief
eaders, Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator, and one of the section heads.
During the meeting, Online Head Editor distributes a report about the results
of the website, but most participants do not look at it. Sometimes Chief Editor

\textsuperscript{45} IFRA is a newspaper industry organization, which recently merged with the World
Association of Newspapers (WAN). Originally IFRA was created as the research and
service organization for the news publishing industry.
looks at it and comments on it, using it to decide one time, for example, on a commentary he wanted to make. He looked at the report and saw that the article about the situation of grandparents was widely read, and decided to publish a short comment on this issue in the Commentaries and Reportage pages of the newspaper.

What emerges in the editorial meetings, and was evident on various occasions, is a sense of *them and us* between newspaper and website – between the newspaper unit and the website. It is fascinating that the online news section is often referred to as *the online* or *the Internet* or *the website*, meaning that there are no people – only technology. There is also a clear sense of ownership – of people and issues – on the part of the head editors of each newsroom. This feeling of ownership can be violated only by Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator, who, as the owner of everything related to the relationship between online and offline, dares to talk when other thematic head editors talk, and even interrupt them – as only Chief Editor and vice-chief editors can.

For Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator, the meeting seems to play an informative role; he informs the other head editors and top management what is present on the website, although the Online Head Editor is also present at the meeting. Yet according to the logic of the head editors’ role in the meeting, the Online Head Editor should be the one to say what is happening in his territory. It could be that he is new and unaccustomed to this system, which leaves more room for Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator’s initiative. Still, Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator’s behaviour constructs his role as head of the online section.

Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator said that he would like the journalists, who in this newspaper are specialised in their subjects, to come to him to point out the key news items that he should suggest as items to report on the website. His description of an ideal future integration is based on the contrast to the current situation “Now the news on the website is written only by the Online Newsroom, but we should move towards a solution in which the Online Newsroom takes care of breaking news only, and the individual newsrooms would do the investigative reportages”. Thus integration is about a change in the division of labour: breaking news for the online, reportage for the newspaper. It is also about a different distribution of responsibilities among people, which is still structured by the medium: online versus newspaper journalists.

Multimedia Managing Director saw integration as the state of affairs in which the same journalists produce content for both the website and the newspaper. This image corresponds to the one described by Co-ordination Editor as far as immediate actions for integration are concerned (same journalists for different media), but Co-ordination Editor also mentioned an ideal organization of work that Multimedia Managing Director did not.

Integration also requires communication among people with different expectations and speaking different languages. Co-ordination Editor stated that one of the reasons he was given the leadership of the project was that people
trust him. In the light of these utterances, it can be said that the leader of this project is the official translator of the integration idea – in the Newsroom and outside of it – and therefore needs a good deal of trust from a large range of people.

One of the multimedia marketing people believes that the integration is moving forward, thanks to increasing contacts between the marketing department and the editorial department, as guaranteed by Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator, and Online Head Editor.

There is no real agreement about the time required for this project. One of the multimedia marketing people claimed that the change was already visible, another said that it would take some months, and one of the head editors warned me that it would take at least six months for the change to be visible.

Launching the new website

The main news website was redesigned in the summer of 2007 and launched 30 October 2007. The idea behind this new release was to foster the interactive possibilities of the website, and to modernise the graphic style of the webpages. At its launch, the website was accompanied by a video that featured Chief Editor presenting the underlying philosophy of the new website and a guide presenting the main novelties. This video is extremely informative and a help in understanding what the new website is about. Chief Editor, holding the newspaper, says:

Il Sole-24 Ore website is renewed. More real time news, more updates, more services. A series of channels dedicated to the companies, to the world of professions and to the financial markets.
At this point, the website appears behind him in gigantic dimensions.

A new graphic appearance with the interactive possibility of a continuous and constant relationship with readers and surfers. Yet, it will be you, with your critiques and your suggestions, who will make our online information better – information that is a tool for work, useful for companies, for professionals, but also for families and consumers. And now our guide will show us the main novelties of the new Il Sole-24 Ore website.

The guide is a woman, dressed in a trouser suit, in high heels. The website appears behind her immediately.
Welcome. My assignment is to help you discover the new Il Sole-24 Ore portal. A new graphic appearance, a new structure, radically transformed. A better organization of contents. And the possibility of customising the surfing by creating your own homepage.

The homepage has been reorganized in four main areas: News24, Money24, Professionals24, BtoB24.

Beside these four sections, the portal is enriched with new contents. Apart from the economic, legal and financial information, you’ll find the thematic vertical channels and the utility services.

Portal House24 is shown, and gives way to Luxury24.

The in-depth reportage in the vertical channels deal with specific topics with dedicated contents and services. From House24 to Luxury24.

Let’s enter in the editorial area now. Everything is organized in key thematic sections. You will find the best signatures of Il Sole-24 Ore. [An article by Stefano Folli appears on the screen].

She slides the screen aside and a new page appears about financial law in 2008. It is one of the special pages.
And the hot themes of the world and the Italian economy and politics are also dealt with, thanks to the multimedia tools.

Audio contributions. Shot services. [She touches the screen as if to press play for a video, and a video begins]. Video interviews, images that accompany the big current affairs and the events of Il Sole-24 Ore. The valorisation of the media centre is, in fact, one of the main and distinctive features of the new portal. For this reason, we have improved the useability of contents and have focused on the strong presence of interactive elements, like the Agora, which is the square of the blogs, Nova100, Polls and Your Comments.

And the novelties are not over yet. We still have a surprise, and it’s all for you. [The screen behind her goes blank].

It is My24. [My24 appears on the screen behind her, while she opens her arms.]

In this section you’ll be able to create a customised homepage on the basis of your interests. Feed RSS, search engines, stock trends, news. And then you’ll be able to choose the contents and the services of Il Sole-24 Ore for a website designed completely for your needs.

The new portal of Il Sole-24 Ore. Entirely renewed, even simpler and faster, rich in-depth news, customisable and strongly integrated with the paper edition.

She touches the screen in front of her as if she were touching a camera. The URL appears. Behind her is the homepage screen.

www.ilsole24ore.com

Surfing Il Sole-24 Ore has never been so easy.

This video has given rise to a great deal of interest in the Newsroom among editors and journalists, although, despite Chief Editor’s announcement, not everybody has realised that there was a new version of the website.
Launch of integrated thematic portals

When talking about integration, several interlocutors gave examples of “good” integration. Thus Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator mentioned portals like Nova24 and Luxury24, because they are not managed by the Online Newsroom, but directly by journalists specialising in the topic, in the case of Luxury24 or working on the homonym supplement, in the case of Nova24. Another such case is Arteconomy24: This is a website dedicated to the art markets, while being a monthly page on Plus24 dedicated to the trends in the art markets and related issues. Arteconomy24 is managed by a newspaper journalist who takes care of both the website and of the Plus24 monthly page.

In this case, integration means that the journalists working for the print takes over online content production.

One of the multimedia marketing people mentioned the luxury portal as an example of increasing integration, because it is managed entirely by the Newsroom. She pointed out that its content is produced not by marketing, but by the journalists – and it is therefore editorial. Thus, integration is content production by journalists and not by marketing. She also mentioned Nova100, a network of bloggers, one of which is Nova24, the blog of the weekly supplement on innovation, research and creativity. According to her, it was Nova24 Head Editor who came up with the idea, and, together with the rest of the news section, chose the blogs on the basis of their editorial content. So, integration is also exhibited by the fact that journalists who have responsibilities for print products take initiatives on the web. This is connected to the previous statement, as the trend of having more editorial content as the value added of the newspaper means that the content on the web is written or dealt with by journalists.

Loading up for the analysis

In this chapter I have presented the history of the Il Sole-24 Ore website, from the pioneer experience, through disintegration, to the current integration process.

This background information is needed to contextualise the analytical considerations developed in the next three chapters. The launch of the new website and of new thematic portals constituted important events that are often referred to in this dissertation. The “new people” and the “old-timers” involved in integration will be protagonists of the episodes around which the analysis is structured. The basis of the analysis is the description of the integrative efforts visible in the everyday organizing practices.
Part IV presents the analysis of the empirical material.

My story is about the transformation of news production within three areas of professional journalistic practices – evaluating news and newswork, in the public interest or the interests of the publics, and in defence of the journalistic profession – areas of professionally recognised journalistic practice, after the encounter between newspaper and website. News production and journalistic professional work are being transformed for many reasons that are beyond the scope of this study, although general trends towards an increasing managerialisation and marketisation of society could be mentioned in this context. The encounter between the website and the newspaper is a good occasion for investigating the transformations that some news production practices are undertaking in journalistic work, as some challenges become more explicit and are explicitly voiced by people in the field. The transformation is visible in the encounter between old and new objects and practices, in the meetings between the new technology and the old technology.

The three institutional areas have been identified on the basis of the empirical material and theoretical insights, as presented at the end of Chapter 3. Thus, Chapter 9 is dedicated to practices for evaluating news and newswork, Chapter 10 to practices in the public interest or the interests of the publics, and Chapter 11 to practices in defence of the profession of journalism.

My field material was generated in a study of one organization, which gave me an opportunity to observe closely the work of journalists while providing me with a window through which I could examine news production by focusing specifically on journalistic work in Italy, as this organization is considered to be an extremely influential one in that country.

(…) equo ne credite, Teucr.
Quidquid id est, timeo Danaos et dona ferentis⁴⁶.
(Vergilius, Aeneis II: 48-49)

⁴⁶ In Aeneis II, lines 48-49, when the famous Trojan horse is brought inside the Trojan walls, Laocoön, a Trojan priest of Nectune, warns his people against the Greeks: “Don’t trust the horse. Whatever it is, I fear the Greeks, even when they are bringing gifts.” (My translation)
9. Evaluating news and newswork

The focus of this chapter is the ensemble of those journalistic practices through which the newswork and the news objects – old and new, newspaper and website – are evaluated. First, I present the way these practices are aligned with the newspaper and then I tell stories of the disarrangement and new realignments between the website and old and new practices.

These journalistic professional practices are inscribed or objectified (see Czarniawska and Sevón, 2005) into the newspaper as an object, and there is a stable alignment between the assessment or evaluation practices of the newswork and the object of the newspaper. I call this alignment between “old” newswork assessment practices and the newspaper old alignment; this alignment makes it possible to say newspaper and mean its newswork practices and vice versa. This is what I mean by old alignment.

The encounter between the old and the new – object and practices – challenges this old alignment and makes it possible to create new alignments between old practices and the new object and new practices and the old object. This chapter focuses on such challenging and realigning of the old and the new objects.

This chapter is structured as follows: First, the old alignment is described, then the website is presented as “the new cast as alien,” and, finally, episodes featuring a new alignment between old and new objects and practices are presented.

The old alignment

News is continuously assessed in the newsroom – both implicitly and explicitly. Commentaries about what’s news and what’s not news, what’s good news reporting and what’s not good news reporting are abundant throughout the day. There are three kinds of assessment of newswork that appear to be particularly important for analysing their alignment or misalignment with objects such as newspaper and website. These three practices emerged from my empirical material:

- prioritising news;
- contextualising news;
- justifying the product through the process.
Prioritising news

Prioritising consists of constructing what is called *the hierarchy of news* at *Il Sole-24 Ore*. It is the practice of evaluating the news in terms of its significance and giving it a position on the page according to its significance.

Within the newspaper, this practice implies a prediction of the development of the news landscape from the moment the pages are closed and sent to print to the moment the newspaper is issued. As the design of the page and its realisation in print make a certain scheme of news priorities durable, to paraphrase Latour (1991), prioritising news implies a bet on the near future development of the news. Most days of the year the main newspapers in the country, and often in the world, open with the same news, as if to prove that there are strong isomorphic forces among news organizations, from news agencies to television to newspapers. On the few occasions in which a newspaper front page has an opening that differs from that of its competitors, this issue needs to be thought through, and is usually aimed at an active setting of the news agenda. Newspaper editors need to predict and account for the big and small news items of the day that the competitors have accounted for, so they can be sure that they haven’t missed some important pieces of the news landscape.

The present acceleration of the news cycle (Boczkowski, 2009a) makes it simultaneously easier and more difficult to predict the evolution of the news. It is more difficult because the Internet and its real time culture can bring an event to the world’s attention in the middle of the night. Thus, prioritising the news involves a greater degree of risk than in the past. It is easier because the Internet provides journalists with much more information and more accessible information than they were able to obtain in the past.

The very design of the newspaper pages requires the practice of prioritising the news and inscribing the hierarchy of news onto the page. Each position on the page has meaning in terms of the type of article placed there.

**Prioritising: Designing the front page**

The editorial meeting is a public occasion for prioritising the news. This exercise is undertaken and expressed in terms of the newspaper’s physical possibilities. “Keeping the news low” refers to its placement in the lower part of the page, because it is judged to be of little importance. News is also judged on the basis of the type of article that can be written about it. If it is a reading piece, it will be placed in the lower part of the page as a cut or a feature. It can also be placed as a shoulder, if it is relevant but not heavy enough to hold the opening. And then there is the day of the week to which the prioritising of news is related. Weekdays and weekends require different judgement of the type of news.
Prioritising the news becomes critical when designing the front page and in the discussion that occurs during the afternoon editorial meeting. The front page of the newspaper offers the most visible space in the newsstands, and it is believed to influence both purchase and reading, particularly with single-copy sales.

Having a by line on the front page means high prestige for a journalist. One way this can be achieved is through the newspaper’s practice of *richiamare* – “recalling” – inserting a brief front-page summary of an article that appears on an inside page and providing the page number and the name of the journalist. This practice provides the journalist with some measure of recognition. Editors often express satisfaction at having some of their section articles “recalled” on the front page with phrases such as: “We have brought something home”.

The afternoon editorial meeting, during which the design of the front page is discussed, provides an occasion for investigating traces of the alignment between the newspaper as object and prioritising the news as a journalistic practice. In this meeting, the editors bring key news items in their sections to the table – those that are worthy of being recalled on the front page.

Chief Editor decides upon or proposes a so-called opening – which is the biggest and most visible title on the front page, and positions the other news items or articles on the front page, according to the reputation of the journalist, the type of article required in each position and the significance of the subject. The front page can be divided into the following positions, shown in the picture below:

- **editoriale** (editorial): the long column to the left
- **apertura** (opening): the largest title on top of the page, usually 5 columns wide, but sometimes taking the whole range of 8 columns, in which case it is called palchetton (pedestal)
- **spalla** (shoulder): the double columns on the top right
- **taglio o fogliettone** (cut or feature): the piece at the bottom of the page on several (usually 5) columns
- **panorama** (overview): the short pieces on two columns below the shoulder
- **front-page photo**: the photo news below the opening title
- **manchettes** (cuffs): the four small spaces for visual promotion of news inside the newspaper

In sum, the design of the front page, the different positions represented in Figure 9.1, is, par excellence, a work of prioritising and inscribing such work onto the front page of the newspaper.

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47 Some articles are about news; others are commentaries or other types of stories, which cannot be defined as news *sensu stricto*. 

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After the video connection with Roman Head Editor is established, the meeting starts. The order in which the editors speak is fixed, and they automatically follow each other in the usual order. During the morning meeting they presented the news menu of the day in the same order; in the afternoon they present the items of news or articles from their section that they consider worthy of being placed on the front page. Sometimes they mention their position in the inside pages and their author. Yet the editors offer no further explanation for why some item should be on the front page, nor are they requested to do so – probably because these articles are often associated with features of the page on which they will appear. The editors often refer to the author of the articles that will be published in their section, as a kind of guarantee of the worthiness of the item to take a certain position on the front page. To certain authors or for certain articles, a certain position on the front page is automatically ascribed. An editor can present a piece by a well known
reporter, saying: “We also have a Roberto Rossi”\textsuperscript{48}. Then, Chief Editor would respond by giving it/him a position on the front page: “Let’s have it\textsuperscript{49} as opening” or “This is a feature” or at least “Let’s recall it\textsuperscript{50}”.

The content of the news is not in focus in this dissertation; the focus is on the alignment between the practice of prioritising the news and the newspaper as an object, and the traces that this alignment leaves in the discourse. The phrase “A Roberto Rossi” is a metonymy, a figure of speech in which a word is substituted by another one in the same semantic field. In this case the author’s name, Roberto Rossi, substitutes his work – the article. The use of this metonymy is not restricted to a newsroom, as it often happens for the most prestigious names appearing under\textit{Il Sole-24 Ore} brands.

The immediate reaction of Chief Editor to this metonymy is to give Roberto Rossi the opening on the front page, and thus of the newspaper. Or, if not the opening, his piece can be “recalled” on the front page.

Thus, the metonymy makes possible, while simultaneously leaving traces of a number of alignments:

• between the reporter and the subject of the piece;
• between the reporter’s work and its assessment, and therefore its position in the hierarchy of news;
• between the reporter’s work (and the reporter – see the first point in this list) and the position due it in the newspaper.

What is implied in the metonymy and Chief Editor’s response in its condensed version could be expressed as “Roberto Rossi is one of our most prestigious old-timers. He has always dealt with issues that are at the core of our newspaper’s identity and editorial policy, and he is identified with the newspaper brand. Thus, his piece could be placed as the most important news of the day, and take the place of an opening headline on the front page. If that place is already taken, it could at least be recalled on the front page, so that people see in one way or the other that today inside the newspaper there is a piece by Roberto Rossi.” In other words, the metonymy uttered by the head editor and accepted by Chief Editor can be read as indicating an alignment between the practice of prioritising the news and the newspaper’s physical features, among other alignments.

Another example of the alignment between object features and the practice of prioritising the news occurs when during the presentation of worthy-of-the-

\textsuperscript{48} Roberto Rossi is a fictional name.
\textsuperscript{49} In Italian, the same pronoun would be used for a thing or a man in this position. This makes the name of the author and the article interchangeable in referring to the position on the front page.
\textsuperscript{50} Recall something on the front page in the newspaper jargon means writing a small summary of an article that will appear inside and referring to the author and page number.
front-page news items the editors also present the infographics that will appear on their pages. The infographics are tables, graphs and visual elements used to illustrate certain items. They are often used on the first pages, where the most important issues of the day are placed. The weight of infographics increased over time, and in the last redesign of the newspaper layout the pages were conceived so that the infographics were possible to be aesthetically improved and expanded. As one editor said, “At that point, beyond the aesthetics, there was a deep cultural operation”. Part of this cultural operation consisted of using infographics to signal the priority of the news items, and not only to be included in the traditional page layout.

Editors briefly mention the news, and then describe how it will appear in the page, with a sentence like “This is a feature” or “This is a shoulder” or “This is our cover opening” or “We have a package51 [of news items] in this issue”. Otherwise Chief Editor may assign positions to items. The alignment between position and type of stories suitable for that position makes it possible to pass judgement on a news item directly, according to its position on the page.

After all the editors have listed their recallable news and the pages devoted to Commentaries and Reportage have been discussed, the design of the front pages becomes the centre of attention. It is Chief Editor who leads the discussion, which leads to the placing of various articles in their positions on the front page. One of the graphic designers responsible for the front page, often Art Director, sits next to Chief Editor and designs the front page. This design represents the pinnacle of the practice of prioritising news. After the news hierarchy in each section of the newspaper has been made clear and the editors have publicly presented their priorities, Chief Editor and the vice-chief editors place the news on the front page. The editorial column is on the left, which is one of the most prestigious positions, if not the most prestigious, expressing the editorial line of the newspaper. There is the feature or cut in the lower part of the page. There is the photo news, which refers to an article inside the newspaper. The area called panorama – “overview” - is positioned to the right – a list of short news, coming from different sections. And on top of the front page, there are the four cuffs with their small pictures. Each section has a space in the front page, in which the delicate practice of prioritising takes a material form.

Contextualising news

News needs to be contextualised into a coherent page. Designing the page means contextualising news in the frame of a page. Each page is designed

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51 A package (montaggio in Italian) is a group of articles of different types on the same issue placed together on a page.
Evaluating news and newswork

around a main piece of news and related to other news and articles, which fit in
the frame of a page. In a kind of relational understanding of the news,
individual news items are gathered on a page according to criteria that vary
from one section of the newspaper to another. Putting the news together in a
certain design on the page is part of the so-called deskwork, done by a team of
journalists in each section, led by their head editor.

Articles on the same page must be related to each other according to chosen
criteria or criteria assigned by the position on the page in a section of the
newspaper. Sometimes, the page is designed around a geographical criterion,
with every piece related to the same (usually foreign) country; at other times it is
designed around issues, with every piece related to the same political or
economic issue. Whatever the criterion, it is important that it be visible to the
reader and justifiable to Chief Editor and the vice-chief editors. Many of the
pages of the newspaper are topical – dedicated to a specific political issue of the
day such as the primary elections of the Democratic Party; to a specific
legislative project, such as the financial law; or to a specific sector, such as
media or tourism. Some of these pages, especially those that do not appear in
the first section of the newspaper and are dedicated to specific sectors are
weekly pages. In the section on the Italian economy52, there is a page devoted
to fashion every week, another page on media, another on tourism. The regular
presence of a page dedicated to a certain topic necessarily implies a conception
of the newspaper as having been constructed of pages, and a conception of the
articles as grouped within a page.

Thus the newspaper is divided into sections (Close-Up, World,
Commentaries and Reportage, Politics, Economy and Enterprises, Finance and
Markets, and Tax and Law) and supplements (Nova24, Sunday, and Rapporti, 24),
as well as various regional supplements. This very division in which the
organizational structure of the Newsroom is inscribed carries with it the criteria
according to which news is contextualised and the selection criteria of the news.
The presence of a weekly page on Media or a daily supplement on Finance and
Markets has two implications. In the first place, it means that the editors expect
and make it possible to have enough news items and articles for the weekly
page on Media and the daily supplement on Finance and Markets. It also means
that each article will be contextualised in those pages as a piece about media or
about finance. Many possible extracts from editorial meetings could illustrate
the fact that editors present their news menu for the day with the page structure
in mind. The illustration I report here is but one possible illustration, and refers
to the presentation of the weekly World and Markets section in the morning
editorial meeting.

52 The proper name of this section is Italian Enterprises, but everybody calls it with the
old name of Italian Economy.
After all the other editors have presented their news menu for the day, it is the turn of the editor of a weekly section of the newspaper, Editor I.

Editor I: The focus of the first page, if you agree, will be on the country system, because both the Prime Minister and the Confederation of Employers, which is in Kazakhstan and [the governing political coalition] in Vietnam, raise the issue. [Journalist X] covers it. I would then make the issues on the Asian side.

Editor II: The Nobel Prize in Medicine to an Italian.

Editor III: No, to America.

Editor I: Ireland both North and South, it focuses a lot on biotech to limit investments in Asia; 40 per cent of the Irish export is pharmaceutical. Foreign investments in these sectors.

The third page is the globalisation in the emerging sectors.

Business education for the UK is the third item for export. English and foreign students in England.

Vice-Chief Editor: Is it [London Correspondent X]?

Editor I: No, it is [London Journalist Y]. It has been for two years. [London Correspondent X] knows, because he told me.

Vice-chief Editor: A lot of professors from [Country A] in [English University B].

Editor I: It’s very good as a theme. Below, a piece on four poles of the aerospace industry in Mexico. Last page, a piece by [German Correspondent X]. I’ve decided to be nice and host it/him.

This episode illustrates the conception of the newspaper, specifically a weekly section of the newspaper, comprising pages around certain topics. Thus, a piece of information becomes news when it finds its fit in the context of a page, and will make it to the published issue with an entire page or a page section designed around it. In other words, the page of the newspaper is one of the parameters that editors have in mind in the selection and articulation of the news. The selection of news and its contextualisation is made by editors, who have both the sectional structure of the newspaper and its regular thematic pages in mind, as well as the possibilities offered by Hermes, the content management system used to the design of the pages. Contextualising the news
Evaluating news and newswork

is practiced in alignment with the possibilities offered by the newspaper page, with the composition of newspaper by pages.

Niklas Luhmann wrote:

The programme strand of news and in-depth reporting is most clearly recognizable as involving the production/processing of information. In this strand the mass media disseminate ignorance in the form of facts which must continually be renewed so that no one notices. We are used to daily news, but we should be aware nonetheless of the evolutionary improbability of such an assumption. If it is the idea of surprise, of something new, interesting and newsworthy which we associate with news, then it would seem much more sensible not to report it in the same format every day, but to wait for something to happen and then to publicize it. (Luhmann, 1996: 25)

This “pagination” of the newspaper, which implies the contextualising of each news item within the context of related news in the same page can be traced back to the so-called weeklisation (settimanalizzazione) of the dailies. According to both Eco (2001) and Papuzzi (1998), in order to survive, the daily newspapers necessarily showed themselves to be richer and more appealing than the television news of the previous day.

In order to do so, the dailies have increased the pages; in order to increase them, they have fought to acquire advertising; in order to have more advertising, they have further increased the number of pages and they have invented the supplements; in order to occupy all those pages, they had to say something; in order to say something, they have been obliged to go beyond the dry news (already given on television), and thus have become more and more similar to a weekly. (Eco, 2001: 130, my translation)

The regular weekly supplements, the special thematic pages, and the expansion of the newspaper, together with the habit of expanding current affairs space through monographic pages, in-depth reports and dossier, have contributed to the intensification and amplification of information offered by the Italian press. Papuzzi (1998) claimed that the first step towards the weeklisation of the dailies has been competition from television; but certainly the crisis of the circulation in the mid-1970s, when advertising became a primary source of income: the launch of la Repubblica in the 1980s, with its new concept; and the isomorphic behaviour that characterises the newspaper field has greatly contributed to the spreading of the phenomenon.

Papuzzi (1998) further argued that the weeklisation of the dailies has resulted in the weeklisation of the news – the treatment of the news à la weekly
magazine. I claim that both have contributed to the establishment of contextualising in pages as a journalistic practice that goes hand in hand with the newspapers today. My claim is based on the fact that previously there was fewer thematic pages published weekly – the pages on media, tourism or agriculture, for instance. These pages were the answer to the problem that after television, newspapers could no longer be first with the news. In earlier times, newspapers, the providers of current news, had to fit all they could onto their pages, even if all the articles were not consistent. Even the technology has contributed to contextualising in pages. In the 1970s, and even the 1980s, before the electronic systems, a journalist could not see each page as a whole before it was printed. Some of the more senior journalists and the typographists were literally composing the page (cutting and pasting pieces of articles printed on a plastic sheet) before making the page plumb in order to print all the other copies.

Contextualising in pages and prioritising are related practices. The form that prioritising takes in the newspaper is related to the fact that it is associated to the contextualisation of each news item on a page. Similarly, Papuzzi argues that

the weeklisation of the news is no longer the consequence of a relevant event; rather it is the technique employed to make the event relevant. It is useful to create the event of the day, in the same way as the weeklies dedicate their covers to the story of the week: The weeklisation of the news has the power of making the exceptionality daily, underlining with emphasis the character of the news as extraordinary fact (Papuzzi, 1998: 93; this and all other quotes by Papuzzi are my translations).

Thus, rather than events controlling the planning of the news coverage, it is the construction of the newspaper in sections, pages and different page positions that leads the construction of happenings as news events. I agree with Luhmann (1996) that the daily issue of a newspaper is based on the improbable assumption that there is a regular (daily) happening of something new, interesting and newsworthy. It is the time of the daily newspaper production that creates daily news, therefore, rather than the opposite. In other words, the daily news demands the production of a newspaper. Weeklisation or not, the newspaper is published every day and thus the guiding principles in the assessment of newwork seem not to be based primarily on the “the idea of surprise, of something new, interesting and newsworthy which we associate with news” (Luhmann, 1996: 25), but rather on the physical characteristics of the newspaper and on the organizing processes aligned to them.
Justifying the product through the process

In the process of evaluating today’s newspaper, yesterday’s organizing processes are reflected upon and publicly assessed. Saying that a certain section or article or picture is good means publicly acknowledging that, for example, a certain head editor did a good job of supervising graphic assistants in the picture search or in paginating a section. It also means giving a public account of the practices that are accepted and those that are not. The criteria for assessing news also become criteria for assessing the organization of news production. Evaluation of the organization is made through an evaluation of its products. The way the newwork is evaluated is aligned to the way the newspaper is evaluated, as newwork organizing is inscribed into the newspaper. In other words, the process justifies the product: The newwork of today will dictate terms of evaluation of the newspaper of tomorrow.

Following is an episode that occurred during the assessment of the newspaper in a morning editorial meeting. I use this episode to illustrate the alignment between the practices of justifying the product through the process.

Chief Editor is not present, but the three vice-chief editors are. Two of the editors are a bit late. We wait for them to start the meeting. When they arrive, one of the vice-chief editors begins:

Vice-Chief Editor: There’s nothing in particular. The closing process was different. We had some difficulties with the picture on the front page. We were looking for a good picture of the boat fair. When it was 11:00 without anything publishable, we had to fall back on the photo of Musharraf. It was the only feasible thing to do.

An error in a title in Finance slipped through. It shouldn't be EADT but ETT. It slipped through. Today we’ll correct it in one of the short news items in the finance section. In today’s newspaper, the local fiscal pressure issue is important current affairs news, which is related to these interviews about ICI.

Editor I: Two things. One is the matter of the photos. We should be clearer here. I spent an hour searching for a picture that goes on an inside page and designing the page around the picture. I think it makes sense. We don’t need to discuss the decision about whether or not the use of the front-page picture excludes the possibility of using the same picture inside. Because the fact is that

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53 I am adding this information because I believe that the absence of Chief Editor made for the liveliness and openness of the discussion here presented.

54 A finance acronym
nobody gives a damn about cropping a photo on an inside page\textsuperscript{55}. It seems like a strange rule to me because no other newspaper in the world has it. Is it a fixed or a variable rule?

Vice-Chief Editor: Invariable or not, I don’t know. It was Saturday, with no other solution, despite the fact that we’d requested a picture in the afternoon. Only Musharraf was available for the front page. At that point we asked ourselves about the problem on the world news page. We could give priority to only one element [and we decided to move the internal picture onto the front page]. Also, this picture was going to be wasted by printing it in black and white.\textsuperscript{56}

Editor I: I’m not unaware of that.

Vice-Chief Editor: Thus what you present practically as a robbery was not that dramatic.

Editor I: Oh well, all I want to know is why it is sometimes so complicated to repeat front-page things on the inside pages. Is it a general rule or not?

Editor II: Like the titles and the small summaries.

Vice-Chief Editor: I told to you that in this specific case it was a compromise.

[Editor I says something. A central office editor says that the picture came out better on the front page because it was in colour. They discuss.]

Editor I: He [the other editor] is always like this. It has been decided in this way and therefore it is right. Let’s try to reason about it.

Vice-Chief Editor: I’m more worried about…

Editor I: I’ve been pushing for months…

\textsuperscript{55} Sometimes a photo needs to be cropped in order to fit the desired dimension on the page or to emphasise certain elements in the photos.

\textsuperscript{56} Whereas the front page is always printed in colour, some of the other pages are printed in black and white. The page where the photo of Musharraf should have been printed was going to be printed in black and white.
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Editor II: I don’t know.

Vice-Chief Editor: Let’s not put Saturday on trial. There are no inflexible rules, because it is like the offside. The newspaper needs to be seen in its unity and complexity. Everything is open to discussion and subjective.

Editor II: The other thing is this news story. I’d worry about the fact that no other newspaper in the country had this story. Is that true? Is it true that it’s important? The newspapers in this country suffer from homologation. I’d like to reflect on the problem of why it is so, what this means.

Vice-Chief Editor: Let’s not forget that we compare ourselves to them…the only thing that can be done on Saturday is to ask someone to reflect on this news.

Editor I: I wonder what we should do today…

Vice-Chief Editor: It needs to be referred to.

To reflect on this episode, starting with the moment when Editor I brings up the issue of the picture, Vice-Chief Editor had just assessed today’s newspaper and has pointed out that the front-page picture has been substituted at the last moment because the one that was planned to be placed there – a picture of the boat fair – was of poor quality. Once the assessment is closed, the editor says that he wants to talk about the picture – he starts by saying “Two things”.

Editor I is starting from the assessment of the newspaper made by Vice-Chief Editor in order to associate it to the evaluation of the newwork. By aligning the evaluation of the newspaper with the evaluation of the production processes, Editor I is abstracting what he calls a “fixed rule” for newwork, which is: “Because the front picture differs from any inside-page picture and an

57 Offside refers to one of the rules in soccer. It is Law XI in the Laws of the Game, written by the International Football Association Board (IFA) and published by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). “A player is in an offside position if he is in his opponents’ half of the field and is nearer to his opponents’ goal line than both the ball and the next to last opponent. (...) A player in an offside position at the moment the ball is touched or played by a team-mate is only committing an offside offence if, in the opinion of the referee, he becomes actively involved in play by interfering with play (…), interfering with an opponent (…), gaining an advantage by being in an offside position (…).” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Offside_(association_football)) Soccer metaphors abounded in the everyday talk at Il Sole 24 Ore.
inside-page picture has been modified because it was needed for the front page, the decision about the front-page picture excludes the use of the same picture inside.” Carrying the proofs of the final decisions made the day before on the composition of the newspaper, the pages of that day’s newspaper trigger an evaluation of the newswork processes. The assessment of the quality of the newspaper is associated with an assessment of the production processes.

Raising this issue triggers a discussion around the processual “rule” of whether repetition of front-page pictures in inside pages is possible or not, and thus whether the “robbery” of inside-page pictures for the front page is a generally accepted practice to be expected. The confrontation of two work processes – that of Editor I and that of Vice-Chief Editor – leads the latter to defend his position using the argument of “the best possible for the newspaper as a whole”.

Another episode similarly illustrates the alignment between the evaluation of the product and the evaluation of the newswork processes, as well as the use of the newswork processes as a justification for the outcome. It is another morning editorial meeting. One of the vice-chief editors is evaluating today’s newspaper.

Vice-Chief Editor I: When there are thematic packages side by side, there is a risk of not understanding what the top left article refers to.

Editor I: Yes, you’re right. We’ll try to find a compromise. We need to talk about this a little bit. Compared to other newspapers, we have an obsession with repetition. Perhaps it is better to repeat and have a clearer heading.

Editor II: Sometimes they send headings back to me twice because the word “profit” appears twice. [He seems upset]. Articles are sent back at the eleventh hour because “profit” appears three times.

Vice-Chief Editor II: Yes, but there’s the matter that the articles around are about China, and the one in the middle is about USA. The reader doesn’t understand anything any more.

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58 Sent back to the section editors. In fact during the course of the evening after 20:00, each completed page is printed and brought to the central office, where editors can check it and make changes on their screens, as they retrieve it from the content management system.
Editor I: My vice told me that last week it was decided not to use quotation marks. So, we sent the EU title without quotation marks and then it was changed.

Vice-Chief Editor III [calmly]: It depends on the situation. If the EU says something, the quotation marks need to be there, but the point is not to exaggerate. For example, if you have to write Wall Street... why the quotation marks?

Editor II: There were no quotation marks there!

Vice-Chief Editor II: Well, it was only an example.

Vice-Chief Editor I continues, saying that the problem is that “we” do not understand how fundamental is the heading. Instead of doing it during the last ten minutes, as it often happens, it should be thought through much earlier. The problem is also repetition, but the solution is to apply common sense. For example, he reads out a headline: “Bank X works'. What does it mean?”

As in the previous episode, here, too, the evaluation of the newspaper is an occasion to discuss the production process that is partly inscribed in it. The issues of headings and repetitions seem to be connected (“Perhaps it is better to repeat and have a clearer heading”). Editor II is upset by other (central office or vice-chief) editors’ last-minute demands that repeated titles be eliminated, leaving no time to think. In other words, the evaluation of the newspaper cannot exist irrespective of the evaluation of the practices that produced it and that are inscribed in it.

The same alignment between the evaluation of headings and a newswork practice was made regarding the quotation marks. Editor I brought up the case: His people followed the new rule about not using the quotation marks, and then it was sent back as incorrect. Thus the rule is misaligned and must not be obeyed. Vice-Chief Editor I responds by bringing another processual element into the discussion. After specifying that “the point is not to exaggerate” (rather than blindly following a rule without using common sense and measure), he reproaches the editors for not realising the importance of the heading, and leaving it until the last minute. Again, the evaluation of the product – the importance of the headings – is aligned with the practice of producing it: writing it in long or short time.

These two episodes demonstrate that the evaluation of the newspaper is an occasion for the evaluation of the newwork that has led to it. The processes are scrutinised and are introduced by the editors in the discussion as a justification of the resulting newspaper. Following common sense in those processes is preferred over any strict rule by the editors in the highest positions.

59 He refers to the title on page 4, which reads “[country] will not decelerate” in the final edition.”
of the Newsroom hierarchy, but the common sense that they exhort the others to follow is not uncontested. Other editors, who believe that they have been penalised by such common sense, invoke the need to have a clear rule. Together with the evaluation of the product, the news production practices such as avoiding repetition or choosing the front-page picture and prioritising it as most important are publicly assessed during the editorial meeting. Justifying the product through the process is possible because there are established practices, because there is a public space – the editorial meetings – to do so, and because the timing of newwork allows for reflection on processes extending beyond the specific product. The timeline of newspaper newwork does not imply an immediate sanction for those responsible for bad features of the product nor allow for immediate adjustments of those features, whether a photo or an article or the composition of a page, at the same time as the newspaper comes out.

From old alignment to new encounters

Evaluating newwork related to the newspaper takes place within the old alignment of newwork practices and the newspaper in which such newwork practices are inscribed. There are three activities in which newwork evaluation occurs: prioritising news, contextualising news and justifying the product through the process. Table 9.1 summarises this old alignment.

Table 9.1. Old alignment in the area of evaluating news and newwork

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journalistic practices</th>
<th>Objectified into</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prioritising news</td>
<td>Positions of the articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Layout of the front page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextualising</td>
<td>Page as unity of measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justifying the product through the</td>
<td>Newwork organizing practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>process</td>
<td>inscribed into the pages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A new object, namely the web (and the websites in particular), with different technical characteristics from those of the newspaper, is aligned to different newwork practices. Evaluating news websites is therefore aligned with practices of newwork different from prioritising, contextualising and justifying the product through the process. Journalism practices related to the website are consciously cast as different from those related to the newspaper. The “alienness” of journalism on the web is a delicate issue to discuss, because the explicit declaration of difference would open up a class-stratification of the profession, which is politically incorrect. Although formally one profession, some differences are recognised. Here are some extracts from my conversation with one of the editors.
Evaluating news and newwork

Elena: Do you think there is a difference between being a journalist for the paper and being a journalist for the website?

Editor: No, I don’t think so. I’ve never thought that the medium was…I’ve always thought that journalism is basically a method, a method to satisfy your curiosity about things. Certainly it’s a method: First you must have a professional screen on which you practice. Once you have practiced, it must become part of a personal life mission, which must be present in this job. Once you have this, the rest is a matter of sensibly organizing what you find around, of establishing a hierarchy of the information units that you find, of comprehending priorities. It’s a matter of good relationships with your sources, of evaluating the degree of fitness, of giving news, of verifying it – and it’s the same whether you do it online or on paper. It is the same thing.

To this editor, journalism is one profession, despite the different media in which it is practiced. He explicitly mentions contextualising and the hierarchy of news items as core journalistic practices that hold in the professionalism of journalists regardless of the medium. Thus, it seems that the old alignment is in place. However, he continues by saying:

Let’s say that you can differentiate among the various media by the way one writes. It’s clear that online is about the five lines in real time; therefore the flow is managed with much less stress; there’s always a little bit less of the news hierarchy problem. The priorities are given by time. You change your roll and that’s it. It’s difficult to do the wrong opening, let’s say it this way. It changes every 20 minutes. Well, it depends, but every half hour you have three or four big news items. You need to choose among those three to four. They stand out by themselves.

In the paper there will be more analysis, reasoning, longer articles, with many analyses, many ways of seeing reality, a greater sense of belonging. It needs to be an emotional product. These are very emotional products. Take Libero as an example. They do a modern journalism, centred on an identification process between the public and the newspaper, and by doing so, meet a great need.

Thus, after having established the similarity between paper and online journalism, he mentions differences in those activities that he has cited as the

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60 “Roll” is a reference to the old technology of a roll with the characters of the newspaper pages that serve as a master copy for printing the newspaper copies.

61 A national newspaper with a right wing, pro-Berlusconi orientation.
core of journalism as a profession – prioritising news, for example. The conclusion is that the way of writing for the newspaper is different from that of the website. In sum, he casts the new medium (the web) as alien in relation to the newspaper. Asked if there is a difference between paper and online journalism, the editor first says that it is the same profession, but then recognises that priorities attributed to different practices are different. Thus, he acknowledges the fact that, as a real-time medium, the web assigns less importance to the practice of prioritising, because, as he argues, this happens almost by itself. A difference is cast between journalistic practices aligned to the newspaper and to the website. In the next section, I investigate the spaces in which the old alignment breaks and the old and new objects find themselves vacillating between old and new practices.

The encounter between old and new objects, old and new practices, may lead to either a new alignment between the old object and new practices, or a new alignment between old practices and the new object. These two cases are the topics of the next two sessions.

New objects between old and new practices.

If new trends influence the newspaper practices and the newspaper, the new object – the website – requires practices other than the old practices of prioritising, contextualising and justifying the product through the process.

Prioritising or temporalising

Prioritising the news and thus constructing the hierarchy is less critical in the case of the website. The opportunity to change the opening as often as desired and the frequent updating of the homepage makes the news on the homepage (which is conceived as being similar to the front page of the newspaper) rotates continuously. This morning’s opening news is not this afternoon’s opening news, and not tonight’s. Thus website journalists usually have the opportunity to correct the opening without the cost of reprinting, as the news of the day develops. This continuous updating and the real-time speed that guides the newswork for the website are believed by many of the online journalists to produce a strong adrenaline kick and engage them. Some of them consider this to be the peak of journalistic work. At the same time, this speed and continuous updating makes the opening of a homepage less influential than seeing the front page of a newspaper. So, as one of the online journalists lamented during a union meeting, the headlines of the homepage of the website are never commented upon by the top editorial team.

The lesser attention paid to prioritising the online news is partly due to the speed that characterises online work. There is little time for discussion about
the news in the Online Newsroom; whether or not it is to be covered by ilsole24ore.com and how it needs to be done is often left to the judgement of the most senior journalist present. Thus, in the newspaper, the construction of the hierarchy of news is related to the identity and editorial policy. On the website, the specialisation of information is less marked than it is in the newspaper, because the website is considered more generalist. This questions the prioritising of news made for the newspaper. In fact, the extension of working hours to include Sundays, as envisaged in the union agreement, implies an opening towards generalist news, as on Sundays the dominant subject is sport.

Contextualising or fragmenting

The practice of contextualising pages is challenged by the fragmentation of the single articles that the web favours, mainly by accessing through search engines. I have observed tension between the contextualising practice coming from the newspaper and the fragmenting wave that is typical of the web.

This contextualising practice is clearly shown in the numerous specials (thematic pages) that the Online Newsroom creates for special occasions or special themes, similar to the thematic pages that can be found weekly in the newspaper. During the time of my study, for example, the Online Newsroom created a special on financial law, another one on the primary elections in the USA, another on the movie awards, and yet others on the Italian primary elections and the national elections. Some of these specials are about current affairs events and will therefore be updated by the time of the event; others are thematic, such as the one on the environment and the one on cars. Like newspaper thematic pages, they are containers to be filled – consistently.

In contrast, there exists another practice aligned with the website: Fragmenting articles into single pieces so they can be accessed from the search engines. The need to adjust the website to the requirements of Google violates certain rules of how the articles need to be written, how the titles need to be made and the picture captioned. Repetition becomes a virtue, which is the opposite for the newspaper. Simplicity becomes a value, as opposed to the complexity that must be found in the newspaper. The Google search requirement forces each item to be searchable as a single entity – out of the context of a more complex page.

Justifying the process through the product

As mentioned, the process in the public space of editorial meetings justifies the newspaper as a product. But the newswork practices for the website are less well established and less visible in the Newsroom, so the processes can not be used as a justification of the product. As Chief Editor said to me, he delegates more to the people on the floor in the Online Newsroom, because time
pressure makes it impossible for him to be on the front line. This means that the processes of producing the website are not publicly scrutinised as they are in the newspaper. What is reported publicly are the results of the website, whether in numbers (mostly) or in issue coverage. The function of Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator is that of a filter between *Il Sole-24 Ore* Newsroom and Online Newsroom, including its leading team. He takes care of organizational issues in the Online Newsroom, such as asking for extra working hours for emergencies, finding video reporters, and co-ordinating with the radio. What appears in public is the result. Rather than the process justifying the product, it is the product that justifies the newwork for the website.

The speed with which online information is created and delivered renders reflection on processes as being unworthy of the effort and certainly difficult to fit into the tight working schedule. Moreover, public praise of the results induces forgetfulness about the processual problems, and the online results are praised both during the editorial meeting, when records of visitors and pageviews are announced, and through the practice of prizes – usually pastries and wine accompanied by a little note of congratulations – that Chief Editor sends to the Online Newsroom to congratulate its members for a job well done.

**New object: Summary**

The website vacillates between old journalistic practices such as prioritising and contextualising news and new practices such as temporalising and fragmenting news and justifying the process through the product. Although the new medium is cast as alien to the old medium – the newspaper – because of the technical features associated with real-time updating practices and the fragmentation of the news, the old practices of prioritising and contextualising continue to be relevant for organizing online newwork. In other words, such practices work as a journalistic *habitus*, driving the journalists to try to align them to the new media. Although they know that many users access the website via Google, and that the news is updated continuously in a real-time flow, the journalists make efforts to structure the website in pages and thematic sections, and to signal priorities through different sizes of headlines and different positions on the homepage.

In other words, the practices of prioritising and contextualising news which have grown from the alignment with the newspaper and its features become disembedded from the newspaper and carry newspaper-like features to the website (Czarniawska and Joerges, 1996). Therefore, the new object vacillates between practices coming from the old alignment and practices coming from the world of the web. The result is simultaneously a translation of old practices into the new object and a translation of new practices into the new object in a context in which the old alignment still dominates.
Old object and new practices

The redesign of the newspaper is a good occasion to investigate the encounter between an old object and new practices. It is particularly significant how the report of the project to a meeting of the confederation of newspaper publishers makes clear the tensions between old and new practices and their differing priorities. As one of the editors said, the redesign of the newspaper is not simply a change of the physical features of the product, but a “cultural operation”. Explaining what the redesign has implied in terms of his work, he said:

You see how much time we spend with the infographics now. We are always the same people, but we do another job. It’s like wearing evening attire in the afternoon. Before there were some pictures here and there, and some file cards62, and that was enough!

He blames the habits of the new readers: “Part of the reading public only flips through the newspaper, and feel gratified when they’ve got anything. They that read will be around 10 per cent.” But isomorphism is also at play: “It’s part of the homogenisation of newspapers. This, we take from television and web.”

These “concessions” made to visual elements in order to make the newspaper easier to read and forced by the diffusion of television and the web have guided the redesign of the newspaper. In a report to the Italian Press Federation in October 2006, three months after the launch of the new layout of the newspaper, the editor responsible for the project explained its rationale:

A graphic style more adequate to the new communication demands that it be not only written but also visualised. And at the same time, a setting loyal to the business and finance newspaper and to a tool for professional information. The balance between the two styles – innovation and tradition, speed and in-depth reporting, opening to a young public and attending to habitual readers – is the guiding thread of the passage of Il Sole-24 Ore to full colour. An important and challenging change, developed over six months in 2006 from the start of the project to its launch at the newsstand on 13 July, has resulted in the complete graphic redesign of the newspaper and of all the weekly supplements.

The redesign of the layout of the newspaper is presented as being motivated by the desire to accommodate both tradition and innovation, old in-depth

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62 These are the small summaries made in some panels or boxes or tables in the newspaper pages.
reporting and the new speed of news. The old object, traditionally aligned with in-depth reporting and old practices (old style) comes to be aligned with new practices (new style). In the words of a slogan, the project aimed at “opening Il Sole-24 Ore to the stimuli and rhythms of visual communication, maintaining his authority intact”. It aimed at aligning the old object with new practices, while keeping traces of the old alignment.

Redesigning the newspaper cost € 80 million and involved an investment in new rotary presses and in changes to existing ones. Because of these investments, the newspaper could increase the number of its pages from 48 to 56 and the number of its coloured pages from 16 to 40. Thus the project was a significant technological advancement, but above all, as the editor pointed out on the same occasion, it meant “an important opportunity for improving the overall readability and the attractive force of the newspaper”.

In order to fulfil the aims of the project, a number of guidelines were made for the new design:

- the controlled use of the colour as an aid to reading, without falling into useless ornamentation;
- the necessity of making visible the importance and sense of hierarchy of the clues to the lecture, offered every day throughout the newspaper – from the front page to the inside sections – by the way the news was organized within Il Sole-24 Ore;
- finally, the recourse to complementary tools to facilitate reading (schematic summaries and visualisation through schemes, infographics and images).

Each of these points stresses the alignment of the newspaper to both old and new practices in the light of what is defined as a good product. Colour is used, but in a controlled way; the news must be essential, but the sense of the hierarchy must emerge; useless ornaments are banned, but complementary tools to facilitate reading should be used. The new design was explicitly justified by the need to acquire more visual appeal, and as a consequence of the changing media landscape and the changing ways of doing journalism. This was translated into a change of font, a change of spacing between paragraphs, and a change in the size of the columns and the spacing between them. The structure of the page was also modified: In the new layout design, pages are structured into “information areas”, which means that on the same page or across two side-by-side pages, articles that are closely connected to each other are delimited by a rectangular continuous line, which creates blocks of news. This strong hierarchy of “homogeneous themes”, says the editor, “together with the use of the white space as separation marks” (between articles) provides the reader with “a clear and immediate view of the news”. He continued:
Particular attention has been paid to readership codes – the formal indications that are used to identify specialised supplements and types of pages and articles. It is within this area, for example, that the choice of a dominant colour for the sections of *Il Sole-24 Ore* can be placed: light blue for the supplements to the daily, claret for Sunday’s cultural supplement, Siena soil for Monday’s “Private Business” supplement and red for the monographs of the *Rapporti*. This is similar to the reasoning behind the coloured thread marking each information area in the pages or the different colours used to mark the various types of technical tables in the Tax and Law pages. The frame of the “signalling information pieces” is complemented by the graphic formats – from small headings to changes in the width of the columns – which communicate with immediacy to the eyes of the readers the characteristics of the genre of certain texts such as analysis, interviews, reportages or features.

Due to a growing trend of using images for providing information, the new layout of *Il Sole-24 Ore* has been designed by giving particular attention to images and colours. The efforts made to improve the visual elements of the newspaper must always be counterbalanced by the need to respect the tradition of *Il Sole-24 Ore*: There are more photos, infographics, tables, “but always respecting the need of moderation, sobriety and stylistic elegance”. In a slogan, “*Il Sole-24 Ore* ‘full colour’ wants to be more friendly, but not popular”.

The front page, which, as mentioned, is the summit of the prioritising news practice, constitutes a crucial part of the newspaper and, as a window to the audience for single-copy sales, constituted a key step in the redesign project. As the editor pointed out, the front page is today the summary of all “innovations in the tradition”, suggesting that the front-page design is meant to show a balance between the old and the new:

The elements of continuity in the architecture of the page are obvious: the editorial in the first column, the overview with the key news of the day placed on the right shoulder, the reading article63 at the foot of the page, the panel with big numbers on the trends in the financial markets. It is the graphic environment that changes, in accordance with the new setting of the newspaper. Pagination is organized tidily in eight columns; the topics are distributed according to coherent information areas, each of them

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63 Reading article, or *articolo di lettura* in Italian, is an expression used to indicate those articles that contain opinions, commentaries, or curious stories. The idea is that the readers take more time to read those pieces than they do to read the chronicles. There are more reading articles on Sundays than on other days because readers supposedly have more time to read the newspaper on Sunday.
signalled by a light blue thread and delimited by white space; the fonts and the increase in line spacing offer breathing space for the reader; the graphics provide appeal to the economic-statistical information, which precedes the in-depth reporting on a topic; the coloured photographs complete the news with the force of the images.

The market justifies such an approach, as research suggests that readers have less and less time to read, although they appreciate the quality of *Il Sole-24 Ore*. The result is a newspaper that will be read in the same way as the website. As the editor says, the newspaper pages are provided with aids for surfing the newspaper, so that the search of information of particular interest comes easier to the readers – as if they are using a search engine. In summary, the project was “a significant step towards a greater ease of 'consumption' of the newspaper, without sacrificing the technical competence and the depth of the analysis always provided by *Il Sole-24 Ore*.”

Thus the new design has reinforced the prioritising and contextualising in pages as key practices for the making of the newspaper. The new graphic model allocates great importance to the hierarchy of news. A document circulated in the Newsroom clarified what the new graphic model means for the journalists:

The journalistic priority given to an information area must be communicated, through a coherent graphic setting, by all the available elements: position in the page, strength of the title, size of the illustration, and overall space (title + illustration + text) dedicated to the topic. This means that the page must be constructed starting from a leading area and that, following the reading order, the size and the titles, the other areas must be reasonably diminished little by little, while proceeding towards the right (opening shoulder) and downwards (opening-cut-foot)\(^\text{64}\).

The page thus is explicitly the basic unit of journalistic practice – the term of reference for the journalists’ newswork. And this page must be coherent. The pieces must fit in the context of the page in a clear hierarchy: On the top of the page is the biggest news item, with the largest title and on the bottom of the page are smaller news items with smaller titles. The new priorities are inscribed in the graphics of the page, as there is one main article for each page, and then come other pieces such as summary boxes, reading pieces, case histories. Titles of different sizes must show this distinction, together with the headlines placed on top of the articles to indicate what they are about – reading or current affairs, for example – and together with a continuous or interrupted line to connect or separate neighbouring pieces. Furthermore, the distinction between

\(^{64}\) Shoulder, opening and cut are positions on the newspaper page that have been referred to earlier in the text. Foot indicates the lowest position in the newspaper page, at the bottom of the page.
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a current affairs piece and a reading piece is made visible with a big first letter, the inter-column threads and the little reading headlines, together with a light blue thread above and below.

The concession to the new visual trend is also visible in the weight given to the photos in the new design of the newspaper. This concession is not towards a multiplicity of pictures, however, as happens online, but, coherently, with the page as the basic unit; and with the hierarchy of news, every page must be organized around one picture as the pivotal point of the page.

Discussion

In this chapter, I have analyzed the encounter between newspaper and website as old and new objects, in the area of practices for evaluating news and newswork. Following the work of other scholars (see Boczkowski, 2009b), I have emphasized how technology shapes journalistic practices.

First, I have described the old alignment between the newswork evaluating practices called journalistic and the newspaper as an object. Prioritising news, contextualising it and justifying the product through the process are inscribed in the newspaper and derive from its physical features, such as the division of the newspaper in sections and pages, the composition of the page in different article positions and the results of the newswork decisions made the day before in each day’s newspaper.

I then presented the encounter between newspaper and website as an encounter between aliens. In such an encounter, the old alignment loosens up and a space is opened for new alignments between old and new objects and old and new practices.

As a consequence of the encounter, the website is made less alien, and more familiar to news production – as it is enacted in the newspaper – through new alignments with old and new practices. Thus, the website as a new object vacillates between the flow of the real time and the fragmentation of the news, and the structure in section and pages and the construction of the different positions of articles on those pages and in those sections. At the same time, the newspaper as old object vacillates between its traditional authority (translated in graphic austerity and textual richness) and the need to make concessions to an effortless graphic style and more visual elements. These vacillations occur within the definition of journalism – that is, under the same institutional label.

Newspaper production is based on the expectation that tomorrow there will be enough news for a printable edition of the newspaper. Such an expectation is evident in certain practices that are objectified into the newspaper: Contextualising the news in pages that appear in the newspaper weekly is perhaps the clearest illustration of such practices.

In theory, the website and its possibility of real-time updates is not based on the same expectation. The practices of prioritising news and contextualising it
into pages, expressing the typical newspaper expectation regarding the future of
news, become aligned with the website as well, in a newspaper context. Yet, this
new object begins to vacillate between the old and new practices. The result is
uncertain, but I could observe that the intersection of real-time possibilities
with an environment, taking for granted the expectations that tomorrow there
will be enough news to fill the newspaper, produces a continuous update of the
website – which would not be necessary, in the light of the real-time potential.

The new practices aligned with the website and claimed to be derived from
the web are actually translations of the technical possibilities of the web into a
context dominated by the old alignment. The web offers the possibility of
publishing something when it happens, without imposing either predetermined
deadlines or the necessity of publishing something every day. In other words,
the web could offer the opportunity to break down the news programme and its
characteristics, as described by Luhmann (1996). When the web comes into a
context dominated by such a programme, however – in my terms, “the old
alignment” – such a possibility becomes translated in terms of old practices. As
a consequence, the habitus of journalists to publish every day forces them to
interpret the possibility offered by the web as necessity to publish every
moment. The field of media in general is built on prescheduled containers that
need to be filled with news; therefore the website, too, is being equipped with
that kind of schedule. The result is the vacillation of the web between old and
new practices, which sometimes end into a real-time obsession.

At the same time, the newspaper as the old object is not insensitive to the
new practices aligned with the website. The new ways of communicating made
possible by new media, from television to the web, influence the old alignment
and loosen it. Thus, the old object starts vacillating between the desire to keep
its authority and the simultaneous will to use new graphic elements.

In this process of alignment and disarrangements between the old and the
new of objects and practices, institutions are continuously refined. It can be
claimed that it is precisely in such aligning and disarranging moves that
institutions are at work; the vacillating of objects between old and new practices
can happen only because there are institutionalised relationships among objects,
practices and labels.
10. In the public interest or the interests of the public(s)

The journalist must respect, cultivate and defend the information rights of all citizens; for this reason he/she searches for and diffuses every piece of news or information that he/she considers to be of public interest, always respecting truth and the highest possible accuracy.” (Charter of the Journalist’s Duties, 1993: 1)

This paragraph opens the Principles section of the Italian Charter of the Journalist’s Duties, signed in 1993 by the Association of Italian Journalists and the Federation of the Italian Press. Being the journalist’s criterion for searching and diffusing news and information, public interest is a core concept in the journalistic profession, as it guides journalists and makes it possible for them to fulfil the journalistic mandate to respect, cultivate and defend the information rights of all citizens. The very notion of public interest, therefore, is related to the notion of citizens. Both concepts, rather than being universal, are historically, materially and technologically situated. It is not a coincidence that the declaration of human rights, the foundation of the concept of citizenship, and the birth of the modern press can be traced back to the French revolution. As Habermas (1991) has argued, the very idea of a public as a whole organism and public interest being debated in the public sphere has emerged in association with the nation state and capitalism. The public sphere exists between the state on the one hand and cultural organizations and practices on the other (Habermas, 1991). Newspapers, the mandate of which is to distribute information to the people, are among these cultural organizations, and reading newspapers is among these cultural practices.

Public interest is a notion constructed around a conception of three ideas: ‘public’, ‘interest’ and the relationship between these two ideas – the interest of public nature, a ‘public interest’. This concept is objectified in and made durable by the newspaper as an object. The existence of the public and the public interest is made possible due to the material form that newspapers take, and by the alignment between the object “newspaper” and the practices conducted to produce it.

In his lecture about mass media, Luhmann (1996) argued that mass media are defined on the basis of the mass audience that they are supposed to reach. In identifying the difference between mass media and other types of communication operations, “the crucial point at any rate is that no interaction among those co-presents can take place between sender and receivers” (Luhmann, 1996: 2). Public interest is constructed around this impossibility, made possible by the interposition of technology. Although the interaction between sender and
receivers of messages is basically impossible, Luhmann admits that “exceptions are possible (though never with all participants)”, but these exceptions “do not alter in the slightest the technologically conditioned necessity for interruption of contact” (Luhmann, 1996: 2).

Does the web alter such a technologically conditioned necessity? The web is an object alien to newspapers. Its features – interactivity, fragmentation, and real time – challenge the idea of public interest as inscribed in the newspaper. The web is not for a public, but for many publics that choose what they want and only what they want, and it offers information to satisfy many different interests precisely to those people who hold these interests, and only for them. Thus, ilsole24.com and its website family – the websites created under the umbrella brand ilsole24ore.com – challenge the conception of public interest that drives the newswork practices aligned with the newspaper. Yet, ilsole24ore.com is produced in the context of Il Sole-24 Ore Newsroom, and during the time of my study, they were both involved in the integration project. As a result, ilsole24ore.com and its family of websites are pulled between old (newspaper) and new (web) newswork practices.

The website is situated between the mass society and “the society of links”, to use Nova24’s expression (Pagliaro et al., Nova24, 14 February 2008), thus the respectively related practices. As an online advertising manager puts it:

> Journalism is an art that is spreading and is performed not only by the journalists. Yes, sure, the expert journalist knows how to approach the news. But the figure of the journalist needs to be de-mythologised; that person does not have to be someone that has something extra.

This de-mythologising of journalists may happen via the technological possibilities of personalising, fragmenting the information for niches as small as one person, and interactions between senders and receivers. All these practices associated with the technological possibilities of the web imply a redefinition of the journalistic work for news production, concerning, in particular, the journalists’ work and the associated ideas of the public and the public interest. Web technology carries the inscription of a different idea of the public and its interest is enacted via different practices.

This chapter deals with the newswork practices that enact ideas of the public and public interest, and with their alignment with various objects. On the one hand, the old alignment between public interest and the newspaper is inscribed and made durable by the newspaper. On the other hand, the encounter between the old and new objects – the newspaper and website – triggers a disarrangement and new alignment between old objects and new practices, whereby the new object swings between the old and new practices to which it is aligned. In this chapter, I present the old alignment between practices (enacting the idea) of public and public interest and the newspaper.
Then, I introduce the encounter with the new object, cast as the alien, in order to set the stage for the next two sections, in which I discuss swinging alignment between the new object and old and new practices, and the alignment between the old object and new practices. I conclude the chapter with a summary of these analyses.

The old alignment

The newspaper is produced for the reader, and its journalists work for the public interest. The daily newwork practices of newspaper journalists are designed around a newspaper that objectifies in its technical features the idea of the intended reader – the idealised reader – and the public interest to which the professional work of journalists is dedicated. At the same time, these practices reinforce these ideas by constantly reinscribing them. This is what I call the old alignment between the newspaper and the practices enacting public and public interest.

The newspaper public and its interest are fictive constructs, which work as a rhetoric resource that journalists use in their everyday formal and informal Newsroom talks to evaluate news and to justify the inclusion or exclusion of certain news from the newspaper pages. One of the formal moments in which the evaluation of the news and newspaper newwork takes place is the morning editorial meeting, particularly during the first part of the meeting, which is led by one of the vice-chief editors. At this meeting the newspaper of the day becomes object of assessment.

As mentioned in Chapter 9, the newspaper is conceived of as a unit that has a beginning and an end. The conventional wisdom is that journalists should strive for the newspaper to be coherent and consistent, and when they fail, they are reproached. Therefore, repetition should be avoided and consistency and coherence should be guiding principles. The idea, therefore, is that of an idealised reader who sequentially reads the whole newspaper and is annoyed by repetitions.

Time is an important term of assessment for the newspaper, and the considerations around time reveal how the public is constructed. The newspaper is evaluated in terms of the completeness of news coverage: If the other major national newspapers or television news programmes offer news concerning political and economic affairs that Il Sole-24 Ore does not cover, Il Sole-24 Ore has “goofed”. The beginning of the assessment often concerns the presence or absence of such goof-ups or misses – misreporting a situation or failing to report on a significant situation. The newspaper is also evaluated in terms of continuity and the development of topics during the week. Topics are developed differently during weekdays than on weekends. The weekday newspaper features more and shorter news items than on weekend days, when there are longer stories and “reading articles”, as they call them at Il Sole-24 Ore.
The newspaper is also evaluated on the core issues that have long characterised its editorial policy: Reference is made to past issued articles about topics that have hit the news again, depending on the memory of editors and their ability to find the specific past issue. This reference is made explicit by a picture of the old issue, which is called a tear at Il Sole-24 Ore, because it looks like a torn newspaper page.

But is there a public that reads the whole newspaper and perceives repetitions as disturbing and consistency as pleasing? The notion of a public disturbed by misses is that of a public that knows all the news of the day, and can be concerned that something is missing in Il Sole-24 Ore on that day. This may be close to true for journalists and few other people who read several newspapers a day and have an accurate knowledge about their content. But it certainly can not be true for the majority of readers, except when the newspaper misses a news item that became a television priority. Even these big misses, though, will be recuperated in the following days.

This imagined public reads the newspaper every day of the week, in a different mood, as during weekdays it needs the news for work, while on weekend it wants to read the newspaper merely for pleasure and leisure. It follows the same pattern every day of the week and every week of the year, so that it can recognise the old editorial battles of Il Sole-24 Ore. Such readership continuity may exist for subscribers, who constitute almost half of the readers of Il Sole-24 Ore, but the newspaper’s subscriptions are delivered primarily to businesses on weekdays. The other half of the readership comprises single-copy purchases by people who are discontinuous in their purchase and are unlikely to be in-depth readers of multiple copies.

As the relevant public comprises different members, depending on the issue, people are actors or spectators in turns, like actors in different scenes of a play. Yet, the idea of the public as a whole, with a common public interest, is decisive for the production of mass media (who actually produce the public interest), and is consistent with the idealised reader as enacted upon at Il Sole-24 Ore.

The mass media are admired by some and criticised by others for the construction of a public debate in the interest of the public, which sometimes consists of presenting private and personal interests as public interests. This process of building arguments for a public debate in the public interest goes on in the newspaper every day.

In the 1920s, Walter Lippmann (1922, 1927) suggested that democracy is built on the unattainable ideal of a competent citizen who is always sensitive to issues that are in the best interest of the public. In reality, citizens are disenchanted, and have long ago given up the illusion that they actually participate in determining the direction of public affairs.

My sympathies are with him [the citizen], for I believe that he has been saddled with an impossible task and that he is asked to
practice the unattainable ideal. I find it so myself for, although public business is my main interest and I give most of my time watching it, I can not find time to do what is expected of me in the theory of democracy; that is, to know what is going on and to have an opinion worth expressing on every question which confronts a self-governing community. And I have not happened to meet anybody, from a President of the United States to a professor of political science, who came anywhere near to embodying the accepted ideal of the sovereign and omnicompetent citizen. (Lippmann, 1927: 20-21)

Lippmann stated that the ideal of limitlessly competent citizens who direct public affairs is a false one.

I do not mean an undesirable ideal. I mean an unattainable ideal…

(1927: 39)

The theory rests upon the belief that there is a public which directs the course of events. I hold that this public is a mere phantom. It is an abstraction. (…) The public is not, as I see it, a fixed body of individuals. It is it only a merely those persons who are interested in an affair and can affect it by supporting or opposing the actors. (1927: 77)

It is the ideal of a public in which a train mechanic is interested and actively participates in decisions that concern not only the railroad company that employs him, but also the railroad policies in the whole country. It is a public built on the idea that citizens participate in debate about issues that address their self-interests and about issues that are in the interest of society as a whole. Specific and general interests and opinions are merged in this traditional idea of the public.

Lippmann did not explicitly theorise the role of mass media in the construction of and reliance on this idea of public as the omnicompetent citizen (Lemert, 1981), but I argue that the public that Lippmann had in mind corresponds to the idealised reader of Il Sole-24 Ore. He said, among other things:

It is bad enough today – with morning newspapers published in the evening and evening newspapers in the morning, with October magazines in September, with the movies and the radio – to be condemned to live under a barrage of eclectic information, to have one’s mind made the receptacle for a hullabaloo of speeches, arguments and unrelated episodes. General information for the informing of public opinion is altogether too general for intellectual decency. And life is too short for the pursuit of
omniscience by the counting in a state of nervous excitement of all the leaves on all the trees. (Lippmann, 1927: 44)

In Lippmann’s argument, specific interests were not bad at all. He was happy that people had specific personal interests and opinions, because it is on the basis of those interests and opinions – not on the basis of the fictional public opinion – that people, not the phantom of the public as a whole, act in life.

Thus, along with Lippmann (1927), I can say that public interest is a phantom. And the public (personified by the idealised reader) is a phantom as well. But this phantom is a fundament (as far as phantoms can be fundaments) of the traditional press, at least in the form that it has reached in the 20th century and in which traditional journalism expresses itself. Around the phantom of public interest, newspaper journalists have built the idea of their public as comprising readers, not interacting, not measurable nor traceable, but reading the whole newspaper. Readership has a meaning beyond sales. Public interest is related to the readership, to the act of reading, rather than the act of buying the newspaper, which can be counted.

From old alignment to new encounters

The public and the public interest are enacted by journalistic practices objectified into the material newspaper. Different aspects of these practices are inscribed into different features of the newspaper, thus creating the alignment between the old object and the old practices – the old alignment. I have summarised the most significant elements of this alignment in Table 10.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public and Public interest</th>
<th>Journalistic practices</th>
<th>Objectified into</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idealised Reader</td>
<td>Lack of interactivity</td>
<td>One-way product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common interest</td>
<td>Counting the readers – not measuring the readership of single articles</td>
<td>Whole package together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyal</td>
<td>Recalling old issues of the newspaper Using design standards</td>
<td>Images of old newspapers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested in societal issues</td>
<td>Constructing the hierarchy of news without looking at numbers</td>
<td>Hierarchy of news on a page</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As I have shown in the case of practices for evaluating newswork, the website is cast as alien by the newspaper with regard to practices enacting the idea of the public and public interest, inasmuch the two portray different notions of the public. That “the audience of the website is different from that of the
newspaper” in all its variations of “readers, surfers, visitors, public” is a mantra on Il Sole-24 Ore floor, on both the Company and the Newsroom side. The differences in coverage and treatment of certain events are often attributed to the “different audience”.

One of my interlocutors on the Company side of the Il Sole-24 Ore Group expressed the implications of the web for journalism precisely in terms of interactivity and dialogue with an intelligent public, made possible by the new medium.

In any case, I think that we need to learn to question ourselves on the Internet, to dialogue within a medium that is not passive, but active. It’s so active that it allows comments, and this is a great step forward.

I see that the contributions [of the public] are often intelligent and complementary to the articles.

He aligned new practices to the new medium in relation to the public. This great step forward allowed by the Internet produces a different relationship between journalists and non-journalists – the public – and a change in the boundaries between experts and nonexperts that are shaped by objects. The practices that used to be uniquely aligned with the production of the newspaper are being disembedded, and start travelling (Czarniawska and Sevón, 2005) outside the borders of the newspaper.

The idea of a different audience is enacted by different journalistic practices. The idea of an audience comprising many publics objectified on the web makes and is made by new journalistic work practices concerning the relationship between journalists and their publics, a different function of journalists and a different function of the publics. As Chief Editor told me:

We need to invent a language that is not similar to the offline language; we need to have more humility in our reporting approach, which is lacking right now; we need to realise that the webworld is not made by journalists, it’s made by other contributors, in particular by the surfers, the virtual communities, but not by journalists. To be exact, much of the information is not made by journalists, and either we’ll be able to find a model for making the information that travels on the web more credible, and especially for imposing the brands of the old journalism on the web, or we will lose the game.

The project of online-offline integration constitutes a framework in which the newspaper audience and the website audience are cast as different publics, a framework in which the journalistic practices enacting them encounter each
other in vacillating alignments with the newspaper and the website. The integration of the website and the newspaper ultimately results in a clash of values. The value system of the journalist, to always bear the public interest in mind, is compromised through the website. The relevant measure in the Online Newsroom becomes the number of times an article is clicked – a measure not of the public interest, but a measure of the interests of the various website publics.

The new website presentation video can serve as an illustration of the “alienness” of the new object – the website – and the vacillating alignments between old and new. The beginning of this video, which appeared in a pop-up window with a new layout when opening ilsole24ore.com during the first week, shows Chief Editor introducing the launch of the newly designed ilsole24ore.com, as it was presented in detail in Chapter 8. According to Chief Editor, real time and interaction were key features of the new website. The public was pictured as an active group of readers and surfers, giving critiques and suggestions that would make online information better, with readers distinguished from surfers. The website will improve the interaction with both categories, but the improved information will benefit only the online area. Such a website public, different from the newspaper and constituted by surfers, requires new journalistic practices, which are able to enact such ideas. Thus, interactions with the audience are introduced in the new version of the website. A number of devices are used to interact with the users, such as the possibility of polls, voting on articles and journalists’ blogs.

The vacillation of the website between old and new ideas of the public and related to old and new journalistic practices has been recognised by Chief Editor. He reinforced the overlapping of the target publics between the newspaper and the website by saying:

For the moment, we have adopted a mixed system, which should lead to 24/7 coverage and the continuous creation of services, both video and audio. Thanks to a multimedia agreement that we’ve reached with the journalists, this system could define a totally original path, particular to the Il Sole-24 Ore Group. We offer online-offline integration that addresses our main target, comprising companies, professionals and the financial community. We can also offer them online the specificity and the specialisation of Il Sole information, together with a series of information services that we would like to see customised. In fact – and then I close – one of the main novelties of the last version of the website is the possibility of doing a totally personalised homepage on the basis of the work needs of each surfer.

The idea of a public objectified in the newspaper is possible, thanks to, even as it calls for, certain journalistic work practices that enact a certain relationship
between journalists and their public, a certain function of journalists and a certain function of the public. Public interest is what journalism exists for, but also what it creates.

Also those working in the Online Newsroom are caught in these vacillating alignments between the website and old and new practices. One online journalist, who has had a long career in print before joining the Online Newsroom more than ten years ago, told me:

For example, we gain many of our contacts through the search engines – people who do not enter our website directly, but search on Google and then stay on the item they found. It is in this way that the readers arrive and stay.

In his opinion, the website’s public differs from the newspaper’s public. One of the differences is the path to the Il Sole-24 Ore Group: Readers buy the newspaper, whereas many of the online contacts go through search engines. But, after acknowledging this very difference, he merges the two audiences: The readers arrive and stay.

The encounter between old and new practices triggers a reflection around its consequences. From my experience on the floor of Il Sole-24 Ore, it seems to me that such an encounter has produced a heated discussion, culminating with the signing of the union agreement, but with many traces left in everyday conversations. A newspaper journalist, whom I asked why the union agreement had been signed, expressed the idea behind it in terms of newspaper and website encountering and mixing practices:

The idea is, first of all, that the paper will lose, in favour of the website, and that our younger readers go online instead of buying the newspaper. The journalists of Il Sole-24 Ore have to work for the online section, therefore, whereas the reader will find the same by lines, the same contents, the same quality online as well – well, more or less, even if naturally the website is more sparkling, and more for a younger public. But the idea is that we have to work for the online section, partly to save our future, in the sense that especially those among us who are younger, who will retire in 20 years, must be ready. Nobody wants to become obsolete, and we thought, therefore, that we should move towards integration – for us, for our profession, for our future, and for the newspaper.

And we needed to face competition and launch a website where there would be all the services of Il Sole-24 Ore, so that we would not lose our specialised public – the hard core of the readers of
the newspaper – the readers of Tax and Law and the readers of Finance.

Another old-timer thus explained the relationship between the two objects:

The public of the *Il Sole-24 Ore* website is not the public of the paper *Il Sole-24 Ore* and therefore I deny that the increase in contacts within the website necessarily means a cannibalisation of the newspaper, and this is corroborated by my experience and the data that we have collected over these years. (...) There is no connection, precisely because of the ways in which the web public surfs and arrives at the website. And there are data showing that the web public is generally younger – those who may not read the paper *Il Sole-24 Ore*, who may never have read it.

Thus, the newspaper audience and the website audience are cast as strangers to one another. The specialised public of the newspaper, representing the hard core of *Il Sole-24 Ore*, comprises readers who are primarily interested in *Tax and Law* and *Finance*. The website audience is younger and searches for a more sparkling style. The website does not mean a cannibalisation of the newspaper. Yet, there is the idea that despite the differences in audience, there should be uniformity in the journalists signing the pieces, in type and quality of content.

In summary, the website public is alien to the newspaper public and its interests are different. The website public is active and interactive, engaged in relationships and conversations, in this growing and disordered enterprise of freedom and democracy which is the web. It is important to note here that whereas the newspaper (and television) is for the mass society, the new media, particularly in the forms allowed by web 2.0 – the new wave of the webworld characterised by interactive services, such as blogs, forums, and YouTube are for individuals who engage in social relationships. The web is inscribed with the individualisation of society, as well as its socialisation.

This chapter centres around the encounter between the newspaper as the carrier of old practices and the website as the carrier of new practices of the public and public interest. The new media, namely the web, represented here in the form of newspaper websites, offers new technical possibilities for the relationship between those producing the website and those for whom the website is produced – usually called publics. Comparing web 1.0 to web 2.0, these new possibilities can be summarised in the following features:

- interactivity,
- videos and pictures,
- tracking and
- infinite space.
Together with these new possibilities come new ideas of the public and the public interest, particularly in alignment with the following practices:

- interacting with the audience;
- visualising in order to facilitate the readership – not for accuracy;
- determining the public interest by looking at the numbers, which show fragmented interests of varied publics;
- producing content outside the specialisation, in order to please the varied and general publics.

The encounter between the newspaper and the website triggers dissolution of the old alignment and creates the space for new alignments between new and old objects and practices. Old and new meet in different ways, with different outcomes. In the next two sections, I present vignettes, pieces of conversations and extracts from interviews related to the encounter between old and new objects and practices concerning the public and the public interest. I have organized them on the basis of the objects around which they revolve: the old newspaper and the new website. The first section illustrates encounters between the new object and old practices: vignettes, conversations, interviews concerning situations when the website and traditionally newspaper-aligned idea of the public and the public interest are aligned. The second section narrates encounters between the old object and new practices: episodes from my fieldwork when the newspaper and the new web-associated idea of the publics and their interests are aligned.

New object and old practices

In this section, the narration is organized around three episodes, illustrating various attempts to align newspaper practices of the public and the public interest and the website, whereas new practices of web publics are pulling the website towards them. In each of these movements, the new object, which is supposed to be aligned to new practices, vacillates away from them to be aligned with old practices in several occasions shown here in my vignettes, conversations and interviews.

The first episode demonstrates the resistance towards the new web practices demonstrated by the journalists working for the website. The second episode is an episode revealing conflicts between old and new ideas of the public, particularly related to the judgement of the relevance of a certain piece of news. The third episode addresses the aligning of the website to new web practices. Journalists openly question such alignment in the light of the journalistic idea of the public and the public interest.
Episode 1. Reclaiming the old in practicing the new: Readers’ comments on journalists’ articles.

This episode concerns the opportunity for readers to comment on articles on the new website, in web 2.0 fashion. The main characters in this short vignette are journalists working in the Online Newsroom. Other characters are mentioned, but physically absent. The episode takes place after the launch of the new website in the Online Newsroom.

The new website allows “readers and surfers” to express their opinions. At its launch, each article on the web could be commented on by default, and journalists who did not want to invite comments would have to click on an icon that eliminated the comments option. This feature, a step in the direction of interactivity, has been flagged by Chief Editor, the multimedia marketing team, Online Head Editor and Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator as one of the key novelties of the website, and a necessary passport into the age of the web 2.0. For journalists working in the Online Newsroom, it has been a source of several floor discussions, especially when it was first introduced at the launch of the new website.

A couple of weeks after the launch, following the suggestion of one of the senior editors, the online journalists decided to write a letter about readers’ comments to the management of the Newsroom. A senior online journalist took the lead, and started writing the letter, to be sent from his e-mail box and copied to all the online journalists.

The issue, said a senior journalist to open the discussion, was that “with the new system, the comments come automatically out”. Some of the journalists expressed their discontent with this technical feature: In the previous version, it had not been possible for readers to comment on articles. One journalist said, without elaboration, that she did not want comments, and the senior journalist expressed more explicitly some of the worries that made the readers’ open comments an issue: “If something like this goes out – Il Sole, they disgrace themselves”. It was hard for me to say who they were, but it was obvious that “they” were insensitive to the potential dangers of the Internet, because they did not know how it worked. Another journalist chimed in:

Yesterday they bought Blogosfere [a blog company] and they want to imitate them now. Also the automatic system of selection of the articles. We need to write an official letter to the company.
They play with Internet, but the blogosphere is other stuff.

In his opinion, fashionable technological features such as the comments and the automatic selection of correlated articles did not have to be accepted, and their consequences needed to be considered in terms of both Il Sole-24 Ore’s name – as the senior journalist had argued – and journalists’ work.
In the public interest or the interests of the public(s)

The conversation continued, and other issues were introduced, such as that of the so-called correlates (the links to related articles) that the software automatically chooses and shows below the picture in each web article. They also discussed the advertising formats allowed by the new design of the website and the number of clicks that the website visitors do with their mouse when they access a webpage.

When the discussion became too chaotic, the senior journalist called everybody to order by reminding them about the main issue: the letter about the problem of the comments. As to the other problems, the journalists should not protest to him, but to their own editors, as required by the traditional journalistic hierarchy. The senior editor has been thus reclaiming the editors' right to decide what is worth publishing and what is not; the old journalistic practice of deciding what is of public interest and thus what should be “given” to the public must be restored. In other words, the old practice must be realigned with the new website, the technological features of which had made it impracticable.

A young online journalist expressed another worry: “But what if people read the comments instead of the article?” Clearly, the journalist worried that the boundaries between journalists and the public would disappear. The loss of exclusivity in producing and publishing content, which the web implies, as it allows for interactivity, has to do with a shift in boundaries between expert and nonexpert, on which the construct of public interest is built.

While the discussion continued, journalists repeated the phrase, “us journalists”, and introduced the issues of marketing and advertising. It seemed to me that the sense of “us and them” was growing as the discussion proceeded. But it was time to go back to work; the discussion slowed down and everybody started doing other things, such as updating certain news items, publishing articles on the website and checking e-mails. In the meantime, the senior journalist concentrated on formulating the letter. When it was ready, he read it aloud.

Dear Editors,

I am reporting on a protest from all my colleagues. Without notice, we have found ourselves with open comments as the default function at the end of our pieces.

Our unanimous demand, (...) is to insert them only on request, not by default.

As the recent sports happenings have demonstrated, and this is only the latest example, that a filter is absolutely necessary to avoid the propagation of vulgarities. (...)
The letter also contained the suggestion of leaving it up to individual journalists to decide if they wanted to provide readers with the opportunity to express their opinions and comments. The letter was disconnecting the website from new practices with which it had been aligned when the newly designed web was launched. The journalistic practice kicked in as a habitus does, making the new practice unacceptable. Thus, the letter was an attempt to realign the new website with old practices by deciding if a given content was worth publishing. But the technical feature of commenting on the article belongs to the new website and can not be ignored. The solution was to align the new website to a new practice with the help of an old way – a filter is absolutely necessary. Comments can be made, but the journalist’s discretion must be kept in tune with old journalistic habitus, in order to avoid the propagation of vulgari ties.

The other issue that a journalist urged his colleague to include in the letter was the issue of correlates. The new website system, in fact, has an automatic feature that, according to prefixed search criteria, selects articles that are supposed to be related to a focal article. The links to these articles appear in a box next to the text of the focal article. The journalists thought that the selection of the related articles was sometimes odd, as the search feature automatically selected them on the basis of key words that may not lead to the most relevant articles.

The issue of the correlates can be read as an alignment between the old practice of contextualising and the new object: the website. Journalists wished to express their discontent with the new way of contextualising and to restore the old practice, which is an habitus for them; it should, therefore, be their discretion that should guide the framing of a piece of news in a context, even on the new website.

In both the issue of the correlates and the issue of readers’ comments, witness the journalists’ attempt to reclaim their professional right to decide what is to be published, rather than handing it over to machines. One of the journalists suggested that it be stated more explicitly in the letter: “We need to put something about the respect of the contractual limits.” But the senior journalist answered: “I won’t put in things that I don’t know perfectly and I don’t know enough about the contractual limits.”

The contract, which contains the legal definition of the profession, has been called upon. The new alignment between the website and such practices as opening the readers’ comments and allowing automatic correlates is interpreted as disrespectful of the professionalism of journalists. Yet, the senior journalist refused to include this in the letter, as he did not verify the issue, as it is old journalistic practice to do so.

Next, the senior journalist read aloud how he had phrased the issue of the correlates.

And I also point out correlates. The articles signalled by the website do not have any relationship with the content of the main
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article, and by doing so they create confusion and perplexity in the reader. Isn’t it perhaps better to postpone it until the programme can do it better?

As discussed in the Old Alignment section, the newspaper’s public phantom is based on the idealised reader who reads the newspaper from beginning to end, and conceives of the news as related to other news in a context that needs to be framed coherently according to a thematic criterion. In other words, confusion and perplexity belong to the old alignment, but here they are aligned with the new website.

“You have been prudent,” commented another journalist, and the writer of the letter replied: “Prudentia, prudentissimi”\(^{65}\).

The e-mail was sent to the leading online journalistic team and copied to all the online journalists, and the newwork in the Online Newsroom continued as usual. After that, the automatic function of opening the comments was closed, and the comments were possible only when the journalist that published a specific article clicked on the appropriate button. The correlates, however, kept on appearing automatically.

This vignette illustrates the encounter between the new object – the website – the old perception of the public as passive and attentive to the journalists’ words, and the public interest as the interest of a society in which the journalists, but not the audience is professional. The old practice is the traditional professional practice embodied by the online journalists, none of whom is a “digital native” and all of whom have been trained as professional journalists. The result is a resistance by those embodying the old practice to the new possibilities of interaction created by the new technologies, in an attempt to safeguard the mass media and their journalistic profession, which was, as Luhmann put it, defined by the impossibility of interaction.

**Episode 2. Aligning the new object with the new practices. Creating value through clicks.**

Clicks, to use the field expression, create value. Advertising salespeople use newspaper circulation figures to sell and price advertising space in the newspaper; pageviews and visitors are the parameters used to sell advertising space online. Pageviews are the number of times per month an article is clicked and visitors constitute the number of computers from which these clicks originate. A metric system connected to the website automatically counts the number of pageviews and visitors.

But clicks create more than advertising value. When the public is discussed in the *Il Sole-24 Ore* Newsroom, it is mentioned in terms of the usefulness of a

\(^{65}\) A Latin phrase meaning “Prudence, o very prudent men!”
certain news item or service, or the ease with which it could be read. In association with the website, however, the public is reduced to numbers, to the precise metrics of the number of clicks that an article receives and by the number of visitors to the website. Clicks also create journalistic value, as they measure the success of each article. On the homepage of the new website appears a ranking of the most read articles, most viewed galleries and videos and most sent articles. Clicks are associated with reading, in an alignment between an old practice of the public (the idealised reader) and the new website features (clicks).

Figures about pageviews, unique visitors and most clicked articles are shared in the Newsroom every day. Every morning at 10:00, an online audience daily report, shown in Figure 10.1, is e-mailed to all the journalists in Il Sole-24 Ore Newsroom and is then printed and distributed by Online Head Editor during the morning editorial meeting.

Figure 10.1. Online report: My scan from the original document

This report is structured in three parts. The morning headlines in the main competitors’ websites are shown on the left: Il Sole-24 Ore, Corriere, Repubblica, Financial Times, New York Times and The Wall Street Journal. The numeric comparison of pageviews and unique visitors with last year is presented on the right, along with the ranking of today’s and yesterday’s most-read articles.
The news has value only if it is seen, which, on the website, means if it is clicked. One of the online journalists clearly formulated the reasons for the centrality of clicks in determining the online content value.

Putting these pictures in the gallery of images is like throwing them in the WC. Nobody looks at them. By the time they appear on the website, X [a public figure] has already disintoxicated herself from cocaine. Y [another online journalist] is right. To our publisher, the website doesn't matter at all. It's like making a beautiful car without pedals – putting on a good show.

A gallery of images, which makes the pictures less accessible, decreases their value, because it decreases the number of people who see them. Furthermore, not creating the best technical conditions to maximise clicks is read as an indication of the low value that the publisher places on the website.

Another online newsworker thus exhorted the online graphic assistant who was about to prepare a special section: “Tell the assistants to prepare a homepage of the section – not today, but later. But tell them to bracket it together with a graphically recognisable heading and a series of links; otherwise people do not click, and we lose them.” Viewers who do not click are lost viewers, and have therefore lost the value of the news. The online public constitutes only those who click.

There are several occasions in which clicks measure the value of the news, and therefore the practice of considering the most-clicked news to be the most relevant – those of the highest interest to the publics. Three short conversations can illustrate this point.

The first one concerns an event that took place in the Online Newsroom after the morning editorial meeting, when Online Head Editor was debriefing the other journalists about the meeting. The discussion had been broadened to issues other than the day's news, and the journalists started to talk about possible improvements to the website, which had recently been launched.

An editor raised the issue of the decrease in clicks over the weekend.

Editor: Seeing the interest in documents this weekend, we should create a place on the website where we collect all the documents.  

66 Il Sole-24 Ore publishes many official legal documents as a service to professionals, like lawyers and accountants. These documents used to be published in the newspaper before the Internet came. Then, when the website was created in 1996, the documents were published only online, but this policy was changed and the documents are now published online only after they have been published in the paper. Some of the long ones are still published only online, and there is only a reference to them in the newspaper. The reason for the changed policy was worry about the cannibalisation of sold copies, if all the documents were offered free online at the same time as in the newspaper.
of *Il Sole* during the week. And then we shoot it Saturday afternoon. Saturday and Sunday people come up and we increase pages. Let’s put it among our priorities. Saturday evening, I’ve taken note. We also need to rotate agora\(^{67}\) (...). Also Culture could use other templates. We need to find something for Saturday and Sunday to keep up.

Journalist: And also we need to find a solution for Culture. We could ask to free the cultural section from the standard template.

Editor: Yes, or put the Mediacentre\(^{68}\) only for culture. At this point it would be a good quality jump. We risk having a lot of quality material without managing to value it. Now is the moment that they\(^{69}\) follow us. We can’t wait. We need to run fast.

Encouraging clicks, in the editor’s opinion, is what should guide the packaging of news and even the timing of certain information services. The public interest has been transformed in clicks, under the assumption that the more clicks there are, the higher the interest in a certain document or a certain topic. Such interest leads to the creation of a specific section or pages in which the objects of interest are collected. When the editor said, “We should create a place on the website where we collect all the documents of *Il Sole* during the week”, he was doing something noteworthy. From the alignment between the new object and new practices – the website and the clicks as interests of the publics and thus value of news – he was drawing consequences in terms of an old practice of evaluating newswork: contextualising. He urged the collecting of all the documents of *Il Sole* during the week in one place, in a way that is similar to the creation of a section in the newspaper. He was thus thinking of readers who would fulfil their interest in documents by browsing through ilsole24ore.com, not for a moment considering the fact that they are placed side by side does not make a difference for those in the public that access the documents through a search engine. After drawing an old practical conclusion from a new-object/new-practice alignment, he realigned this old practice with the new-object/practice logic of the clicks – “people come up and we increase pages”.

The clicks create the value of the news, at the point at which they lead the newswork practices as a goal: The editor exhorted them to find something for Saturday and Sunday to keep up the audience numbers in those low-reach days. The journalists work towards making their pieces of news and articles more visible and thus clicked more often. A change in format to give pictures a bigger space, for example, represents a quality jump. Such a change would allow

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\(^{67}\) Agora is the name of the blog section in the homepage.

\(^{68}\) The Mediacentre is a space in the website dedicated to pictures and videos. It appears on the homepage with a relatively big picture at the centre of the website.

\(^{69}\) “They” refers to management – to the Company.
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the journalist to create the greatest value from all the good material, which is to expose it to as many clicks as possible.

The second conversation concerns an episode that took place in Il Sole-24 Ore Newsroom in January. It was evening, and before leaving for the day a central office editor took a tour of all the Newsroom sections to remind the editors to put a reference to related online news and services in their respective section. He entered one of the newspaper sections and told the editor to remember the reference to the online poll about the food frauds. One of the main current affairs at the time was the frauds related to food, in particular the contaminated buffalo mozzarella coming from the Naples region. The head editor replied that it has been done, and asked the central office editor if he had seen the electronic signature. He referred to the fact that at the end of the articles, the e-mail address of the author had been added. This had been suggested by Chief Editor as an editorial policy of the newspaper and a step in the integration project, in order to allow easier interaction between readers and journalists. The central office editor confirmed. Next, the head editor raised the issue of selecting topics that were treated online and that should also be recalled in the newspaper:

Head Editor: For the recall on the newspaper, I have only the metal workers. I think that instead of the metal workers we’ll put in bankers. Bankers make clicks.

Central Office Editor: Have you seen Corriere [Il Corriere della Sera – Il Sole-24 Ore’s main competitor] yesterday with the video by Rocco Siffredi [a pornography film director]? Incredible trash, …and then they criticise me if I put some boring pictures about a bikini fashion show in Red Square.

During this short exchange, the clicks argument was used as a criterion for selecting the online news that was to be recalled in the newspaper. The alignment between the new practice (clicks as the value of news) and the new object (the website) is traceable here: “bankers make clicks”. Again, as in the previously quoted conversation, the expected consequences of the new alignment are predicted, based on conceiving of the public in a way that belongs to the old alignment. The very idea that the “recall” in the newspaper will induce the reader to go to the website and click on that same news implies the conception of an idealised reader as loyal and following what has been written in the newspaper consistently and properly. The publication of such a reference is a practice based on the old alignment.

Taking clicks as a proxy of the value of news was not objected to in the case of selecting the piece about bankers instead of metal workers. It may sometimes lead to a selection of questionable news items, however. When the competition for clicks results in the publishing of a video by a porn film
director, as Corriere has done, this is trash. Yet, pushing beyond the legitimate boundaries, which Corriere has done in order to increase the clicks, does not rob from the fact that the number of clicks represents the value of the news item. To the contrary, it somehow enlarges the legitimate space by pushing its boundaries further.

The third short conversation revolves around the issue of clicks as the value of the news item but focuses on the use of clicks as a prioritising guide for the website.

Three journalists (Journalist I, II, and III) in the Online Newsroom were discussing how to change the news on the homepage: what to keep and what to eliminate from the homepage.

Journalist I: Death penalty, at 18:00. Journalist III, will you look at it?

Journalist III: The voting is today, isn’t it?

Journalist I: So I was told by Senior Editor before he left.

Journalist III: In the meanwhile, I am updating the summary of the Special.  

Journalist I: What can we take away from the homepage?

Journalist II: There was that thing about Finmeccanica [an Italian international conglomerate].

Journalist I: In any case I think the opening is strong for us there. Because here we have something happening, while on Alitalia [an Italian airline company] nothing new.

Journalist II: On Alitalia, nothing new, also according to me.

Journalist I: Therefore we can get by.

Senior Journalist II: Tyssen Krupp [an elevator company] is from yesterday.

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70 A special package of news on a special theme is called Special.  
71 Finmeccanica is an Italian company operating globally in the aerospace, defence and security sectors. It also manufactures helicopters and defence electronics and offers satellite and space services. Finmeccanica was established in 1948; it is fully owned by a public institution, and went public on the stock exchange in 1992.  
72 He uses a verb taken from the soccer vocabulary which means “passing through, getting free from the pressing opponent”.
Journalist I: “The quality of life in cities”; we keep it because it is often looked at. It’s on top of the contacts. Also the annual research by *Il Sole*. Last year I had to answer e-mails from municipalities about the quality of life ranking a month after it was published. So we decided to keep it.

Journalist II: Tomorrow the local newspapers will talk about the ranking because I have seen that ANSA[^a news agency^] has referred to it today.

Journalist I: Then we’re the only ones who have the entire ranking.

Journalist II: Even if, as Senior Editor was saying, the criteria are discussable.

Journalist I: Everything is discussable.

Journalist II: …and this makes our game.

This discussion can be considered illustrative of many aspects of the new-old/practices-objects alignments, which leave traces in the journalists’ talk. The choice of Finmeccanica to open the homepage builds on the alignment of the website to the old practice of prioritising according to journalistic criteria and the newspaper’s identity (and public interest) – “the opening is strong for us”. Similarly, the elimination of Tyssen Krupp, because it is yesterday’s news, relies on the old alignment between the time of the newspaper and the timing of what is news.

In the next passage, a shift happens, by virtue of the clicks. The *quality of life* ranking of Italian cities developed by *Il Sole-24 Ore*, is kept because it generates many clicks. The viewers mentioned two categories in particular: municipalities and other media. And it is expected that the next day’s local newspapers will talk about it because the main news agency has referred to it. In the old journalistic practice of making noise, being referred to by news agencies and other media, and raising the interest of public administration units is a sign of the relevance of the news. Thus, the number of clicks and the signals of relevant (according to the old journalistic criteria) visitors together make it acceptable for the website to have news on the homepage for a long time – a month, for example. What the clicks do here is to allow for exceptions in the real-time practice that, as discussed in Chapter 9, is usually aligned with the website. Apparently, the real time guides the publication of news on the website until there is some piece of news that collects enough clicks to keep it “high”

[^a news agency^]: ANSA is the major national news agency.

[^1]: Every year, the newspaper publishes a ranking of the most liveable cities in Italy, based on a survey on the quality of life.
on the homepage, in consideration of its value. The practice of clicks as the value of news items aligned with the website can trigger a disarrangement between the real-time practice and the website. Thus clicks are sometimes used to support and justify the choice of news, other times to support and justify the appropriateness of certain news items. Similarly, “the newspaper reader”, whom I call the idealised reader, is a figure — a fictional character — used in the journalists’ conversations to justify their newwork practices.


The clicks as measures of the behaviour of the website public and of the relevance of news items understood as a measure of the publics' interests are not indisputable. The following episode presents a case of tension between clicks as a new practice of evaluating the relevance of the news and old journalistic practices that would lead to a different evaluation of the same piece of news. It occurred in the Online Newsroom, after the launch of the new website, in a late afternoon in November.

The online journalists of the second shift in the Online Newsroom were working on the issues of the day, when a central office editor entered the room, saying loudly: “Excuse me, but is it Google that makes the DNA data bank? Can somebody look at the web?” A desk journalist Googled “DNA data bank” and read aloud: “$999 is enough for a DNA analysis.” The editor got closer to him: “There you go!”

Journalist I: But what does it have to do with Google?

Editor: Eh, it's Google that has Google health.

Journalist I: Well, yes, but this doesn't have anything to do with that. Here it only says that this DNA databank service is Google-style.

Editor: In the newspaper there will be a box\textsuperscript{75} in the stem cells package\textsuperscript{76}. Let's put it on the website, too, because it always makes audience.

\textsuperscript{75} A box refers to a particular graphic scheme. It is a schematic text in a black-bordered square. They refer to it as a box, using the English word.

\textsuperscript{76} In the stem cells package means that this box is placed within the overall space occupied by the article on the stem cells.
Journalist I: But does or doesn’t it have anything to do with Google?

Editor: Well, Google has invested in it.

Journalist I: Is it not the case that everything done by Google creates an audience, eh?

Editor: But this is cute.

This brief conversation shows the use of an audience to justify the selection and publishing of a news item. The relevance of the news is not investigated in terms of public interest or actual content, but in terms of numeric results that the insertion of a certain key word – Google – can bring. An alignment between the new practice of clicks as value metrics of the news and the website is made. An online journalist, has questioned this alignment, made by an editor whose career has been in the newspaper, but does not participate directly in online deskwork. The journalist wanted to verify the actual content of the news and establish the possible connection between the audience-generating Google and the news item (Google-style is not Google). He was reclaiming the right to question the new alignment, made by a person practiced in the old alignment, between new practices and new object. The website as a new object thus vacillates between old and new practices to which it is aligned by online and newspaper journalists. When the editor left, the same journalist commented acidly: “Bullshit! He sees something on the cell phone and immediately wants to put it on the website”. Obviously, the journalistic hierarchy principle, saying that a journalist is independent and does not obey anyone except his or her superiors, prevails, and the news will be published. So, despite his protest, the journalist, who has the right to assign tasks, immediately asked: “Which of you is free?” A young journalist was available and started by Googling the news. She became curious – and suspicious about this news. She said aloud: “The company is called ‘23 and me’. One needs to take some time to look at this properly.” The assigning journalist responded: “I authorise you to take your time to cover this.”

The issue started to attract the attention of the other journalists in the Online Newsroom.

Journalist II: We need to listen to someone else who knows more about it to know what value these things have ...

Journalist III: These are delicate things.

Journalist II: It does surprise me that this news got the attention of the editor.
Journalist III: The spotlight was switched on because Google increases access...

Journalist I: I say, this could be an occasion to do something more serious, and deeper.

Journalist II: Look, Reuters reports it from Los Angeles.

Journalist I: Because in LA there’s that thing that I forwarded to you.

Journalist III: I’d send it out as it is and cite Reuters.

Journalist I: OK, take this shit, and put it in by citing Reuters.

Journalist III prints out the news agency take once more and writes the piece. This short conversation illustrates the encounter between old journalistic practices and some of the new workings of the web. The possibility of measuring the number of clicks for each article creates the opportunity to see the direct influence of certain editorial choices on the visitors and clicks, which are taken as the proxy of the public and measures of its appreciation for the topics chosen.

Google makes clicks, as one of the journalists says, and therefore one of the editors requires that a certain piece of news related to Google is to be followed. The relevance is no longer connected to the public interest, but it is determined by the interests of the publics, at least as long as it is believed to be deduced from the number of clicks and unique visitors.

What is interesting in this episode is that the journalists on the online floor try to resist this particular alignment between the new practices and the new website, coming from their top editor, who has worked for the newspaper for a long time and only recently became engaged in the online operations. It is as if those professional journalists who have long worked with the new object have learnt to tame the new object with traditional (old) professional practices, whereas the newspaper journalists who have recently encountered the new object assume that the website must be a space for different rules: the rules of numbers and shouting news.

One of these short conversations contained hints about the relationship between clicks and real-time-driven practices. The clicks can suspend the value of real time by making news interesting and thus “high” on the homepage, despite its age. Such alignment clicks/news-value against the one real-time/news-value sometimes leads to tensions and discussions in the Newsroom.

As an example, I am reporting yet another short conversation, based on an event in which the website was obviously vacillating between old and new
practices. I was sitting in the Nova24 Room, when all of a sudden I heard shouts from the Online Newsroom. The walls are made of glass and it was easy to hear people talking or phones ringing in the neighbouring rooms.

I heard one of the journalists shouting that it is not possible to take a piece created one and a half years ago and republish it. “And for what? To gain four extra pageviews”. He was obviously irritated at the editors who had allowed and perhaps encouraged the practice. Later, in the afternoon, I visited the Online Newsroom and tried to investigate the matter, which seemed quite sensitive. One of the journalists, who started the shift later in the day and was not present during the outburst, asked a journalist who had been present to tell him the story.

Present Journalist: They have fished an old article from a person who doesn’t work for us any longer and have changed the date and published it. X got angry and started shouting. Then Editor Y at a certain point says: Enough! You’ve broken my balls. And then X says: “You can’t talk to me like that! …. and all hell broke loose. It was not the first time that I’ve said to myself, “now something bad will happen”…and we do have a lot of fights.

Absent Journalist: Usually it’s me that intervenes at that point, but I wasn’t there.

Present Journalist: When they give decision power to our editors, it will always be too late…

Then a new senior journalist intervened, and told X to calm down and reason a bit.

Clicks become here the justification for an unsupported decision and an easy reason to attack the decision to republish an old article. Independent of the fact that increasing the clicks was the real motivation behind the decision, the fact that the clicks sometimes become the measure of success and other times the unsupported (I would like to say unprofessional) motive for a bad decision is noteworthy.

**New object: Discussion**

Around the website the public is turned into publics and the public interest is turned into the interests of the publics.

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77 X in this vignette is the name of the journalist responsible for the website section in which the article was re-published.

78 This is the translation of a vulgar expression used in the field.
The public and its interests are measured through numbers, which render clicks the currency in every negotiation concerning the website. Such currency, however, must always be compared to the old idea of the public; the use of clicks as a measurement of newswork quality and a guide in practicing newswork can lead to practices that contradict the journalistic habitus, deriving from the old alignment.

Their effect is that of the pure quantity, the same effect that money has had on exchanges. Žižek (1989) writes:

> Before thought could arrive at the idea of a purely quantitative determination, a sine qua non of the modern science of nature, pure quantity was already at work in money, that commodity which renders possible the commensurability of the value of all other commodities notwithstanding their particular qualitative determination. (Žižek, 1989: 17).

Numbers make things commensurable and even out the qualitative differences. They shape practices in an important way (Hopwood and Miller, 1994; Miller, 2001). Despite the fragmentation of the audience into niches, which the web promotes, the reduction of the audience to numbers creates an abstraction that removes the qualitative determinations of whatever the numbers are referring to. Such abstraction does not display its full power at Il Sole-24 Ore, however, as it is constantly confronted with the journalistic practices built on the idea of the public and public interest as aligned with the newspaper. The public constructed around the object newspaper implies certain newswork practices that come to be defined as journalistic and thus associated with any journalistic area of activity, whether it is newspaper or website. The website begins to vacillate between the publics as measured in numbers, and the public idealised and practiced for many years by the newspaper journalists. In other words, it is through the fiction of the idealised reader – as derived from the old alignment – that the numbers are interpreted and that they guide the journalistic practices aligned with the website. It is through the phantom of public interest (Lippmann, 1927) that the numbers are used to provide light to the journalistic profession.

**Old object and new practices**

In this section, the narration is organized around three episodes, all concerning various attempts and forms of alignment between different aspects of the web-related practices of the newspaper on the one hand, and the publics and their interests on the other.

The first episode concerns resistance to the old practice of the public inscribed in the broadsheet format towards the new format trends. The second
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episode is about aligning new practices with the old object by using the online audience numbers to prioritise news for the newspaper. The third episode is the illustration of a newspaper feature being pulled between old and new.

**Episode 1. Disarranging the old alignment: New formats of the newspaper.**

The old alignment of the public and the public interest is based on the strong and taken-for-granted alignment between the newspaper and newswork practices related to the inscription and enactment of the public interest, as a central guiding principle of journalistic work. The absence of precise numerical data about the readership of the articles makes it possible to construct the public and the public interest on the basis of journalistic principles and to use such constructs as rhetoric tools to justify choices aligned with them. When, for example, a Tax and Law journalist received the request from the central office to eliminate an item about the school system, he commented: “Very good, I’d say. It’s a pity, because there is a group of readers that is interested in school rather than in bankruptcies. And to put it bluntly, they could not care less about bankruptcies.” I interpret this response as the journalist’s disagreement with the central office decision. Despite his disagreement, the boss says to eliminate the item, so he feels that he has to voice his agreement and do it. Yet, because they are professional journalists and they work as critics of society, he can not avoid expressing his opinion, although he does not act in parallel with it.

Although there are no precise and updated data about what is read and what is not read, readers are used to justifying a certain choice of news items and the elimination of others. There is a specific opinion of what is of interest for different groups of *Il Sole-24 Ore* readers, and the interests of these groups can be raised against each other to promote the publication of certain topics over others, as in the utterance above. Sometimes the journalists recognise that their construction of the public interest that guides their journalistic efforts does not correspond to the actions of readers, however, and that realisation threatens to disarrange the old alignment.

There is a more or less explicitly acknowledged tension between the public interest as central guiding principle of journalistic work and the readers’ behaviour as far as it is known. During a discussion about a full-page advertisement on an odd-numbered page (which has a higher value for advertisers), Chief Editor said in an editorial meeting:

> We have said “no” to all the formats. Only the supplement on luxury goods is a tabloid. The supplements have marked a regaining of possession by journalists in areas that had been, if I can say so, devastated by false journalists from advertising. We
believe that the readers can distinguish true journalism from false journalism. Alas, it is not so, as the press reviews\textsuperscript{79} show.

Talking about “all the formats”, he referred to the struggle to keep the broadsheet format rather than switching to the tabloid, Berliner or other possible smaller formats. Such formats have been justified in the industry by readers’ preferences, but their implementation has been accompanied with less content per page and a smaller variety of news and articles in each page. This resistance to the new formats and reacquired journalistic control over the supplements is related to a safeguarding of journalistic principles, despite the inability of readers to recognise it. The old alignment that justifies certain public interest newwork practices and newspaper features on the basis of the readers is recognised, but then it is sorrowfully admitted that it is being disarranged. Still, it is necessary to make concessions to these readers who do not distinguish true journalism from false journalism, although it may mean a change in the journalistic work. The case of redesigning the newspaper may serve as a good illustration of such reasoning. As mentioned in Chapter 9, the project of the graphic redesign of the newspaper was justified by the need to make the product easier to read by paying more attention to graphic elements, such as pictures, infographics, and the general graphic cleanliness of the pages. This redesign was motivated by the realisation that readers do not fully read the newspaper and do not recognise “true journalism”. As the editor said:

\begin{quote}
There is a readership that only flips through the newspaper. Still, they need to feel gratified that they’ve got something... Those that really read will be around 10 per cent.
\end{quote}

Readers are brought into the discussion as a justification of the restyling, but it was easy to hear a note of disappointment in the fact that journalistic understanding of the public interest does not correspond to the interests of the readers.

**Episode 2. Projecting the new onto the old. Using the clicks to set the newspaper agenda.**

The encounter between old and new means that some practices aligned with the new object begin to influence the disarrangement of the old alignment, and come be aligned with the old object. In other words, some of the practices associated with the website and its audience, particularly the practice of counting the number of clicks and visitors as measures of read articles and readers, are projected onto the newspaper.

\textsuperscript{79} The press reviews are (usually) morning radio and television shows, in which the main headlines of the main newspapers and magazines are read and presented.
A report with the figures of the pageviews and the viewers, compared to the previous month and year is distributed during the editorial meetings. Often, but not systematically, after the detailed assessment of the newspaper, the online numbers are commented upon and Online Head Editor is asked to say something about the website. Often the answer is that it is going well, except for some technical problems. He also updates the others on the multimedia (video and pictures) initiatives planned for the next days. No reproach for the new medium either for the newwork or for news products. I felt almost compassion for those who must work under the conditions imposed on them by the online technology: They surely do the best they can under the circumstances!

It is instructive to note the different evaluation bases for the website and the newspaper. The newspaper quality is assessed as a product, page by page by one of the vice-chief editors, whereas the website is evaluated through the number of visitors and pageviews and by asking Online Head Editor and Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator, “How did the website do yesterday?” These different assessment standards imply different quality criteria that are reflected in different organizing processes.

Thus, the absence of precise data on the newspaper readership creates space for discussions on the relevance of certain issues rather than others, by introducing the idealised reader’s interest, which is in line with the public interest, to support the argument. On the contrary, the availability of precise metrics on the website audience leaves little space for the discussion of what interests the public. The numbers serve as a powerful tool to promote one’s own opinion about the news hierarchy. Yet, in the encounter between old and new, the metrics about the online audience can come to influence the choice of news items for the newspaper as well. To illustrate how the numbers of clicks on the web can influence the prioritising of the newspaper, I quote one of the editors:

If the manual for grandparents is on the sixth ranking place today, it means that the grandparent public is online and therefore from tomorrow on, we should experiment with items for the third age. If technology goes well on the web, let’s do articles about technology on the newspaper. But I mean articles written by someone in the Italian Economy section, who actually covers the product, not those by… some others [he indicates a sign of a section we are passing by].

Clicks rule the news and influence the ranking of news on the newspaper. The interest of the public is a debated concept, especially regarding the relationship between the journalists and the public, between the professional practices of public interest and the public(s). Does the interaction with the readers, strongly
enhanced by the Internet, change this relationship? The next episode furthers the discussion around this issue.

**Episode 3. Between the oldness of the new and the newness of the old: About interactivity.**

The newly designed website of *Il Sole-24 Ore* is presented in light of a renewed relationship with the public. One of the key characteristics is the increased possibility of interaction between the readers and the journalists, which translates into an opportunity for readers to write comments on the news, to participate in blogs, and to vote on each article.

The relationship with the readers is considered by the old-timers at *Il Sole-24 Ore* to be one of the distinctive features of their newspaper. In fact, a section called the *Expert Answers* has existed for a long time, and it consists of a service to readers who want to ask specific questions about tax and law issues. The Newsroom Secretary, an old-timer, a male journalist in his fifties who had always worked on the newspaper side, told me that the *Il Sole-24 Ore* has been a pioneer of interactivity, as it has always been a service-oriented newspaper. Moreover, he suggested with some warmth that I should structure the thesis by departing from interactivity, so I could present *Il Sole-24 Ore* Group as an interactivity pioneer. In other words, the interactivity practice, which used to be aligned as a new practice with the new object – the website – is reclaimed as an old distinctive practice of *Il Sole-24 Ore* newspaper by the newspaper's old-timers. What is more, such interactivity as new practice aligned to the website poses some challenges to journalists in the Online Newsroom. One of the online journalists clearly expressed the difficulties posed by readers' comments and the emphasis on graphic elements on the website to his journalistic work: “I work as a journalist and not as an entertainer. I don't deal with user-generated content. People want to read text and news, not images and pictures.”

The label “journalist” has been used here to recall the practices associated with it. Journalists do what people want from them, which is the presentation of news in the form of text. The alignment between the website and new practices, such as opening readers’ comments and significantly increasing the photo galleries, user-generated content (…) images and pictures, introduces another label: entertainment. A journalist does not do those things. In other words, the new practices are disassociated from journalists; by excluding them from that label, they are pushed out of the institutional area of journalism. Instead, the old practices are reclaimed by virtue of the old label of “journalist” and realigned with the website. Interactivity is seen as a way of obtaining feedback from the public.

On some occasions, this feedback can even lead to the creation of products that would not otherwise exist. This was the case of Nova100, a network
comprising, ideally, 100 blogs. A network of blogs means that under the brand Nova100.ilsole24ore, there are 100 bloggers sharing a platform – all the same platform for blogging – and an aggregator, which is software that picks the last posts and publishes them on a common homepage.

One of the Nova journalists explained the birth of this project to me with these words:

At the beginning there was only the blog of Nova Òra, which two or three people fed. The podcast was uploaded and the issue cover and topics, but not very much was done. In fact, we received critiques from the readers saying “we expect something more from Nova”. Therefore the Nova100 project was born [a network of 100 blogs accessible from the common homepage nova100.ilsole24ore.com]. In the beginning, it was circulated among those that hang around Nova. They were 30 at the start and little by little it has been enlarged, and now requests come. We evaluate the project and not the people. The idea is sharing competences. There should be the charge of updating it quite often. Now this idea of the entertaining television journalist, Paolo Liguori from Studio Aperto has emerged. The important thing is that there are not political arguments. There is no control and the space is quite rigid. And then there is this aggregator.

He clearly thinks that there is an overlap between the newspaper audience and the online audience, as they are loyal to the Nova brand. It is this idea of the overlapping that justifies for him the influence on the construction of a media product by of readers who have become surfers.

**Old object: Discussion**

The introduction of numbers as currency in the news negotiations and of interactivity as a new practice of newswork does not come without influence on the old alignment. The public of the newspaper begins to be shaped by online practices: The numbers begin to influence the prioritising of news, and the interactive activities are reported on the newspaper and have an impact on the newspaper newswork. Thus, the old newspaper starts vacillating between old and new public(s) and between the public interest and the interests of the publics. In this vacillation, the old and the new practices overcome their being strangers to each other, as they are always translated in relation to each other. Therefore interactivity, which is one of the web-derived features, comes to be

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80 Paolo Liguori is an Italian television journalist, working on Italia 1, one of the free commercial channels. He was working for Studio Aperto, the Italia 1 news bulletin, which is known for being more entertaining than informative.
loaded with the idea of oldness: We have always been interactive in our newspaper, says Il Sole-24 Ore. In this way, the old becomes new and the new becomes old.

Discussion

In this chapter, I have presented an analysis of vignettes, conversations and interviews from the field related to the area of practice concerning the public interest. From describing the old alignment between the newspaper and the idea of the public and the public interest guiding journalistic practices, I have moved to discussing how the web, as a new object, is originally cast as alien and what are the consequences of the encounter among the old and the new of objects and practices as aliens, which remain under the label of journalism. I have summarised the development of the discussion on the encounter between old and new in Table 10.2.

Table 10.2. Episodes of encounters between old and new in the area of public interest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objects/Practices</th>
<th>Old</th>
<th>New</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old</td>
<td>Disarranging – New formats</td>
<td>Aligning – Clicks used to prioritise news Realigning - Reclaiming the oldness of the new practice of interactivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>Realigning – Limiting readers’ comments (Reclaiming the old practice)</td>
<td>Aligning – Using the clicks to prioritise news – DNA case Disarranging – Protesting against practices done to follow the clicks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the area of the public and the public interest, as in the area of news and newswork evaluation, discussed in Chapter 9, the encounter between the old and the new object has opened the field for disarranging the old alignment and creating new alignment between new and old. Both new and old objects vacillate between old journalistic practices built around the fictional character of the idealised reader and the phantom of the public interest, and new journalistic practices guided by the abstractions of the public into numbers.

Rather than having one or the other journalistic practice as the one and only way of doing journalism, old and new practices are translated onto new and old objects in relation to the other practice. The clicks are a measure of quality on the web, but as a guiding principle in practicing newswork they are interpreted in light of the old journalistic practices. The practices resulting from the desire to increase the number of clicks are performed in the frame of the old
In the public interest or the interests of the public(s)

journalistic habitus of contextualising the news in pages and prioritising the news according to the identity of the newspaper. Yet the fictional character of the idealised reader is given particular interest through the numbers from the web and through the interactive possibilities offered by the new website. Furthermore, even the old actions of the idealised reader, such as the letters to the newspaper, are revised as harbingers of the new practices of interactivity.

In summary, the encounter between the new and the old creates the space for redefining institutions at work in the area of the public and public interest. Such a redefinition takes place as a process of translation of old practices into the new object and of new practices into the old object. As this translation process is relational, the encounter between old and new objects increases the diversity of the institutions at work, while decreasing the relative alienness/strangeness.
11. In defence of the profession: Journalistic vs. business-like practices

The distinction between journalism and business is of core importance to journalists. Truth vs. publicity, journalism vs. advertising content, independence vs. ownership interests, and public service vs. the market are key dichotomies on which the definition of the journalistic profession is specified. The journalistic field is the locus of an opposition between two logics and two principles of legitimation, which Bourdieu (1992/97, 1996) called pure and commercial, and which I call journalistic and business-like. On the one hand – the journalism side – legitimation is gained through peer recognition, which is given to journalism professionals whose work is recognised as highly competent, and whose values and principes internes to the profession are beyond reproach. This process of legitimation through peer recognition is typical of the cultural production fields (see e.g. Bourdieu, 1979); a good historian is one whom the other historians consider to be a good historian. On the other hand – the business side – legitimation in the journalistic field is attained through numbers: The higher the numbers for revenue, readership, viewership, advertising, sales, and profits, the greater the recognition. So, in business logic, the verdict of the market accounts for a democratic plebiscite, which sanctions or rewards journalistic work.

The journalistic and the business sides of newspaper organizations are not without their tensions, the well known Los Angeles Times (LA Times) scandal at the end of the 20th century being a good example. In 1999, the LA Times published a supplement on a new sports arena in Los Angeles, and it was later revealed that the advertising revenues of this supplement were split between the newspaper and the sports arena. The case became a national scandal and LA Times appointed one of its best reporters to investigate what had happened and to write a report on it. The report, published in LA Times explained that newspaper production differs from “normal” types of business, precisely because of the higher professional drive.

In the Italian context, the Document of the Journalist’s Duties, agreed upon by the national committee of the Association of the Journalists (Ordine dei Giornalisti, OdG) and the National Federation of the Press and signed in the first half of the 1990s, emphasises the importance of the distinction between journalistic and advertising content. The separation must not only be made in theory; it must be clearly signalled to the public. A paragraph on Information and

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81 Or, as Bourdieu (1992/97, 1996) would say, field.
Advertising under the chapter on journalistic duties explicitly illustrates this point.

Information and advertising

Citizens have the right to receive correct information, always distinct from the advertising content and not harming individual interests.

In every case, advertising messages must be distinguishable from the journalistic texts through clear indications.

The journalist must observe the principles established by the agreed protocol on transparency of information and by the National Contract for journalistic work; he or she must always make the advertising information recognisable and must in all cases make it possible for the public to recognise the journalistic work as separate from the promotional message. (The Charter of Journalists’ Duties, 1993: 3)

This is the norm that Marco Liera, Plus24 Head Editor at Il Sole-24 Ore, evoked in one of his university lectures (Bocconi University, Milano, September 2007), in justifying the newspaper’s organizational structure, as I report in the next section of this chapter.

Old alignment

Over their long tradition, media studies have consistently acknowledged the existence and strength of dualities in newspaper organizations (Tunstall, 1971; Tuchman, 1973, 1978; Picard, 2002; Achtenhagen and Raviola, 2007, 2009), as in other media companies. The co-existence of different institutional logics (Friedland and Alford, 1991; Thornton and Ocasio, 2008) is at the very heart of media organizations in general and newspapers in particular, so they could be referred to as examples of pluralistic organizations (see e.g. Denis et al., 2007) or pluralistic institutions (Jarzabkowski et al., 2009).

The balance between the journalism and business spheres is a delicate one – one often emphasised by my interlocutors (see Bourdieu, 1977). This balance is translated into the organizational structure as a distinction of responsibilities between the Company and the Newsroom.
In defence of the profession: Journalistic vs. business-like practices

Old alignment in everyday organizing

As Marco Liera argued during his university lecture:

The organization of the Newsroom must be separated [from the Company]. This is a consequence of the norm requiring a separation between journalistic and advertising content. There can’t be precise and effective distinction between journalistic and advertising content if there is blending in the organizational structure. (Bocconi University, Milano, September 2007)

The argument is that for the norm to be effective, it must be inscribed not only in the physical newspaper, in which there is a visible distinction between journalistic and advertising content, but also in the organizational structure, in which responsibilities and work practices must be clearly distinguishable. To make things clear, he drew on the blackboard the organizational structure of Il Sole-24 Ore. I was in the audience, and reproduced it, as shown in Figure 11.1.

Figure 11.1 Organizational structure of Il Sole-24 Ore Group: Electronic reproduction from my notes
The thick black line that he marked on the blackboard between the Newsroom and the Company signals the division of responsibilities: Chief Editor answers for his work only to his readers and the Newsroom answers and reports only to him; the CEO answers to the shareholders and the managers of the various divisions answer and report to him. This division of responsibilities is inscribed in the newspaper, which reports every day on the names of the people responsible for the content and for business issues. In the first Commentaries and Reportage page, on the top left-hand corner, is a little square called drum (tamburo), in which these names are reported: a faithful inscription of the organizational structure of the Newsroom. Studying its evolution can therefore provide useful insights into the evolution of the Newsroom structure.

The organizational structure of the Newsroom contains a special position for managing the interface between journalism and business issues. A journalist called the Newsroom Secretary is in charge of the practical issues such as organizing the journalistic personnel and the everyday newspaper operations, which involve the relationship with various business managers.

The thick black line on the blackboard symbolises Il Sole-24 Ore's elevators and double staircases that divide the Newsroom – the newspaper and radio and press agency – from the Company rooms. This black line also reproduced on paper the distinction between journalistic and advertising content, required by the Document of the Journalist's Duties. The design of the newspaper pages includes both journalistic and advertising content, whose respective spaces are negotiated all day long by an editor and an advertising person, whereas the rest of the Newsroom simply receives the foliation resulting from such negotiations.

Old alignment in not-so-everyday organizing

The imaginary wall between the Newsroom and the Company rooms can not have windows or doors between the two sides. Using the metaphor of the wall, I asked one of the editors about possible movements across it.

Elena: If a person works on the other side of the wall, in marketing or advertising for example, can he or she not come back?

Editor: No, as far as I know, this can't be done. The personnel department, maybe, but advertising or marketing – not at all. Maybe a certain kind of marketing, but when you have to deal with products, with companies, it becomes sources, become objects that you write about, you can't have that kind of relationship. You can't be passive in what you do, or you can't do it well. Of course, you can't work with advertising, but advertising doesn't give a damn about the newspaper. It only has to collect money and it would therefore sell its mother, if needed. In
In defence of the profession: Journalistic vs. business-like practices

In contrast, we never have to sell ourselves for anything. In other words, if you have to give bad news, you give it and that’s that. If you come from that world, you’ll go in that direction; you’re used to it. It isn’t possible to contaminate. They are, so to speak, two different mentalities. Doing advertising and being a journalist are two different things; advertising is just another thing. I can imagine joining maybe a small publishing group, but even there it isn’t ideal. But if you talk to our Anglo-Saxon colleagues, they are even more obsessed with this issue: That is, I think at least, that even though they have less corporate structure than we do, I don’t think they can imagine osmosis between a journalist and someone who works in advertising.

The separation between business issues and the people on the Company side and journalism matters and the people on the Newsroom side is enacted in everyday organizational practices and is inscribed in the materiality of the newspaper. In the everyday production of their print products, journalists work independently from the Company, and there are established practices to organize the necessary communication across the divides.

One of the principles of the journalism profession is explained in the document of the duties of the journalist:

The responsibility of the journalist towards citizens always prevails over any other thing. The journalist can never subordinate it to the interests of others, and, in particular, not to those of the publisher, the government, or other state organisms. (Document of the Journalist’s Duties, 1993: 1)

The publisher, owner of the publishing company for which the journalist works, is the critical person from whose interests the journalist must maintain independence. In the eyes of the journalists, the Company represents the publisher in everyday operations by the Company. The journalists here call everything Company if it is within the newspaper organization but outside the Newsroom. And as it is crucial for the independence of journalism to maintain the separation. It is necessary to watch for attempts to control the journalistic content at all times. As Marco Liera said:

If there were perfect separation between the two sides of the organization, I would not even need to mention this. But we live nowadays in very imperfect times, when the owners – through managers – will always try to influence the activities of the editorial department. (Bocconi University, Milano, September 2007)
The relationships between the Newsroom and the Company often result in open conflict over the scarcity of resources or the interference of managers, advertisers, and shareholders in journalistic work. It should also be mentioned that as of 2008, the journalistic contract had not been renewed for over three years, as the National Federation of the Italian Press and the Italian Federation of Newspaper Publishers could not reach an agreement.

An extraordinary incident occurred during my time at Il Sole-24 Ore, which illustrates the level of tension between the two sides of the organization. In December 2007, the appointment of a new head editor was announced in the Newsroom: a professional journalist, with a license, who worked for some years in the Newsroom, and then decided to work on the Company side, becoming Director of Personnel. The CEO has promoted him to a head editor in the Newsroom. Here is the reaction of the journalists, as expressed in a release by the journalists’ union committee:

Il Sole-24 Ore is not out today. The assembly has declared an immediate strike after the communication to the union committee that the Human Resources Manager [Director of Personnel] will come back to work in the Newsroom and will be promoted to the position of a head editor. The union committee considers this to be very serious and unacceptable that promotions in the daily newspaper are decided for merits acquired not in the Newsroom, but in the Company, when it is known that the confusion of roles does not guarantee the independence of information. It furthermore confirms, once again, that no attention paid to the intellectual capital of the Newsroom, which constitutes, together with the autonomy, the primary source of value creation in the publishing companies. This fact is even more serious in a company that is listed on the Stock Exchange. It is serious, moreover, that the promotion was signed, against any contractual rules, by the CEO and not by the responsible Chief Editor. The journalists’ assembly, unanimously with only two abstentions, has therefore provided the union committee with a three-day strike package.

Playing naive, I asked around the office what was the problem in having Director of Personnel working as a journalist in the Newsroom. I received many outraged answers about the inadmissibility of such a move, it being evidence of a continuous violation of journalistic norms and a humiliation for journalists. Furthermore, the need to separate business matters from journalistic

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82 The agreement for the renewal of the contract was signed on 26 March 2009 and the new contract became effective as of 1 April 2009.

83 The direct reference is to the print edition, as the language denotes, but the website was also stopped when the strike decision was taken.
In defence of the profession: Journalistic vs. business-like practices

matters, in terms of people and physical space and media space, is just something everybody knows. It is part of those rules of the game that need to be respected, part of that mutual respect of the private space of the house in which business and journalism must cohabit.

From old alignment to new encounters

The relationship between journalism and business involves different aspects and takes different forms in organizing practices and designing objects. In my fieldwork, I have identified three aspects of this relationship, the respective forms of which concern the newspaper and the website:

- independence of journalism and advertising;
- independence of journalism and ownership;
- independence of journalism and management, which is related to the previous point.

Table 11.1 I shows the old alignment, between these practices of defence of the profession and the newspaper.

Table 11.1 Old alignment in the defence of the profession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journalistic practices</th>
<th>Materiality/objects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independence of journalism and advertising</td>
<td>Visible separation of the content in the newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Different rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No direct interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impossibility of filling an advertising position with a person from journalism vice versa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence of journalism and management</td>
<td>Different rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No interference in personnel choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No possibility of crossing the wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence of journalism and ownership</td>
<td>Drum: Separate ownership and editorial responsibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The old journalistic work practices, aligned traditionally with the newspaper, have been transmitted over time across generations through the alignment of practices, the object, and the labels. Being a journalist in the newspaper world – and not only through the professionalisation of the occupation – means being autonomous and independent from the Company – whether it is the people in management, marketing, advertising, or the owners – and following newswork processes that forbid interaction with the business side, particularly with advertising. By professional code, this separation must be made visible, as inscribed in the newspaper.

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The encounter between two parties, whether in practice or in the objects, may question the old (perhaps ideal) alignment within the profession of journalism. The website's encounter with the newspaper and vice versa, means that different objects and practices meet through the integration project. “Different” here means as new, which is *per se* a relational attribute – new media vs. old media, new school of journalism vs. old school, new organizational relations vs. the old wall. Following this reasoning, and in symmetry to the previous chapters, I have organized the rest of this chapter into encounters between old and new objects and old and new practices, but this time concerning the area of the relationship between business and journalism.

Various episodes reported here illustrate the possible disarrangement of the aligned practices and objects and the new alignments being tried out or formed.

**New object and old practices**

The website (and the web) is consistently associated with the *new*, with varying degrees of newness, depending on the launch date of the website and on the age of operation of the content management system. In contrast, the newspaper is associated with the *old*. This object, not yet consistently and durably aligned with certain practices, is “shaped” – attached to different meanings – by old and new professional practices. This process may create conflicts and discussions about the way journalism should be done.

**Episode 1. Reclaiming old practices and labels onto the new object. What is a journalistic product?**

Journalistic vs. non-journalistic: This is how products are classified at the newspaper. They are journalistic if they are written by journalists hired by *Il Sole-24 Ore*; they are non-journalistic if they are written by someone else – the marketing people, for example. This is equally valid for the newspaper and the website. Certain websites are journalistic and certain others are non-journalistic: The former are written by employed journalists, the latter by the marketing people or outsourced to external content providers. Thus the label “journalist” is assumed to be associated with journalistic practices, to which non-journalists can not be associated.

Journalistic authorship is stressed in the union agreement signed for the integration project, as implicitly opposed to managerial or marketing authorship: “The Online Newsroom keeps the original production of contents” (Union Agreement, 2007: 2)

In the integration project, the content published online should be produced by journalists working in the online section of the Newsroom, and not by someone outside the Newsroom, as happened for some of the websites at the
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time the agreement was signed. This is specified later in the multimedia union agreement, as quoted in Chapter 8:

The presence of the Il Sole-24 Ore Group website will increase with new projects that will see direct participation of journalists on the information side. All the vertical portals\(^{84}\) on the web will have an adequate journalistic content, with realisation always be agreed upon with top management. The new portals (for example Job24 or House24) with information content will always have a journalist as a reference point/contact/responsible.

The Company will commit itself to favouring the new ways of working agreed upon with the Newsroom top management and the Newsroom and to put in place adequate technologies in order to favour collaboration and development of new projects.

There is a non sequitur between these first and second paragraphs, to be interpreted as a way of contrasting the subjects central to the first paragraph, namely the Newsroom journalists, with that of the second paragraph, namely the Company. The Company, which, in journalist language means everybody outside the Newsroom, is in charge of providing technology and support to the integration project.

The internal presentation of one of the thematic websites at its launch can well illustrate the emphasis given to the adjective “journalistic” aligned to the new object, as put in the hands of an experienced journalist.

On a Friday morning in September 2007, the meeting room was filled with head editors and vice-chief editors sitting at their places, ready to start the news conference of the day. The editor responsible for the new website and two other junior journalists working for the website entered. When Chief Editor arrived, he gave the floor to the editor, who took the lead and started presenting the product of their work, while technicians were connecting the teleconference screen to the laptop. The two junior journalists sat and listened to the presentation, barely lifting their eyes to look at the audience. They kept staring at the laptop screen in front of them.

The website comprises different sections, which the editor listed. For the launch, the journalists and their editor focused on the design festival in London, and asked some fashion designers to describe their own cities as they live in them. It would be updated on Mondays and Thursdays, the editor said, except for the fashion weeks, when it would be updated every day. The aesthetic and journalistic efforts are remarkable, as the editor stressed during the presentation.

Chief Editor added:

\(^{84}\) Vertical portals are websites specialising in certain themes, such as luxury, job, or houses. Here I simply call them specialised thematic websites.
The website has journalistic content *stricto sensu* [strictly speaking]. It is not an e-commerce website. Doing it, we have anticipated what others would do.

He specified that the website is journalistic in nature, as it was created and organized by a journalist. He also specified what the website was not: an e-commerce website. As this was in anticipation of what other competitors would do, the specification about the e-commerce aspect implied that the other competitors' websites were not journalistic – merely e-commerce websites. In this way, Chief Editor reclaimed the alignment between old journalistic practices (aligned with the label “journalistic”) and the new object.

Now a central office editor took the floor and added: “Some interactive spices are added as article evaluation and polls are made available to the readers”. Whereas Chief Editor aligned the old practices with the new object, the central office editor aligned the new object with the new practices. He did so by using a food metaphor that seemed to suggest their complementarity to the core journalistic character of the website. Interactivity is thus like a spice to the main journalistic fare.

Before closing the presentation, the editor responsible for the thematic website added that there were still some technical problems related to the homepage, the last one to close – just like the front page of the newspaper – but before Monday “there was an ocean of time to go”. At the end, Chief Editor made final remarks about the start of this project. Alluding to but not looking at the two junior journalists, he said: “They were interns, and they made this project. These young colleagues have come with a project in hand. And here it is, made real.”

The public presentation of the new thematic website has therefore become an opportunity to align certain old labels and practices with the new object. It was defined as journalistic, even journalistic *stricto sensu*, implying that it followed the same practices as the journalists on paper. The newspaper remained the basis of comparison for creating and thinking about the website. As the editor said, there are some problems related to the homepage, the last one to close – just like the front page – a clear alignment between old newspaper practices and the new object. Actually, in the case of web 2.0, it would be more obvious to think of the idea of opening to the public rather than sending a newspaper to print, as aligned with the website. Furthermore, the editor explicitly made the comparison between the front page and the homepage. Whereas the homepage is a window for the other website sections, and therefore much of the public on the web does not pass through the “front page” (the homepage), but access the articles directly through search engines.
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Episode 2. Disarranging the alignment between the new object and the new practices. How to signal a distinction between journalistic and promotional content

The story narrated here concerns a thematic website and the main news website. It relates to the encounter/co-operation between two of the junior online journalists, Junior I and Junior II, working for the thematic website, and two of the senior online journalists, Senior I and Senior II.

It was the end of September 2007 and, due to some happenings in Milan, it was a busy morning for juniors. They and their editor were hanging around the Milanese happenings in their branded Smart Car, carrying their branded microphones for interviews and videos. They had to follow the happenings in the city and then go back to the Newsroom to write and to ask the press offices of the happenings organizers to send photos for their website photo galleries. Tension and adrenaline were in the air. It was the first acid test for the team since the launch of the website.

Late one Tuesday morning, the thematic website team had organized a live-stream transmission of one of the happenings on their website. The thematic website editor was at the happening, ready to go online, live. Junior I was behind her desk in the Newsroom in direct mobile connection with the editor. Junior II was at another show, on which she would report later during the day. The rest of the Online Newsroom was following the daily news flow.

As was the custom since the beginning of website operations, live streaming (live transmission) was announced on the main news website homepage in the morning. Senior I took care of it. After a couple of hours, when the streaming was about to start, Senior II noticed that the announcement disappeared from the main website homepage. He then encouraged Junior I to post the announcement of the live streaming on the ilsole24ore.com homepage. She had already noticed that it disappeared from the homepage, and pointed out that it had been there earlier. Senior II suggested that she used the little boxes, the light blue ones.

The website still had the old design layout, with a section in salmon pink, a section in white, and a section in light blue – organized in compartments called boxes. These boxes are used by the marketing department as a promotional space for the products of Il Sole-24 Ore. Junior I did as she was instructed, after further encouragement from another journalist, and with the technical support of the graphic assistants, as she had never inserted anything in those boxes before.

The live streaming started, and the announcement was on the homepage in one of the blue boxes. Junior I was excited about this first live streaming, and shared her excitement with the editor through an almost continuous mobile connection. At this point, Senior I, who had first put the announcement on the homepage in the early morning, came closer to her desk:
Let me ask you a question out of curiosity. You have to tell me clearly. If this website enters the advertising space, and I’m not saying it for nothing, I won’t write even one single line about it anymore. If that’s advertising, none of it will enter the news space. It’s incredible! I put a post on the homepage, and I find that the news turned into advertising after two hours! At this point, nobody even had the decency to tell me…

Defending herself from Senior I’s attack, Junior I said that it was Senior II who told her to do this:

Senior I: I’m not picking on you. You’re a junior without responsibility. I’m in charge of managing the journalistic part. If it stays there, it doesn’t go anywhere else.

He calms down and speaks in a calmer tone of voice.

Senior I: These doubts have existed since the birth of journalism. No problem.

He is still visibly irritated and continues:

Senior I: If it’s an advertisement, we’ve solved a problem. If it’s advertising, it isn’t journalism any longer. At least here there is not even the hypocrisy any longer. My role is to take care of journalism!

The discussion was interrupted by some other news to be updated. About a half hour later, Junior II, also working for the thematic website, arrived, and Junior I reported the episode to her. Behind their desks, in front of their computers, without their eyes leaving the screen, they started discussing what happened.

Junior I: At one point, the image is gone. The photonews on the homepage, I mean. It is not there any longer. So, I asked the editor: “Excuse me. They have taken it away without telling me anything. Where should I put it?” He says to use the little box in blue.

Junior II: Oh no! Not that one!

Junior I (reacting promptly): Well, I have put it there. Then, the senior sees it and...
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Junior II interrupted the story and started talking about the happening she had just been at. It ended with her in a wedding dress with water scenery in the background – very scenic, in her opinion. Then she returned to the episode, and her young colleague continued to justify herself:

Junior I: I talked to the boss before doing anything. And then, Senior I says that if it stays there he won’t take care of it any longer.

Junior II: And he’s right.

Junior I: But what could I do? They didn't have space. Senior II told me to put it there. And I did.

Junior II: You don't have to rely on him.

Junior I: Then she should talk to the boss. They decide, I just want to do a good job.

Junior II: I understand, but we have to fight for this website. Has Senior I attacked you? It was already clarified. The little boxes must be used when there is no news for the thematic website – only for its promotion.

Junior II mentioned an established rule – that the promotional box had to be used exclusively to make the thematic website more visible as a website, but not to promote certain news. Otherwise, the news becomes advertising.

Later in the afternoon, Senior II, who had suggested putting the announcement of the live streaming in the blue box, returned. He saw that the announcement was still on the homepage and warned the junior journalists:

Senior II: See to it that you take away that live streaming from the homepage of the website. If you take charge of something, you must follow it.

Junior II: Ok, but may I say something? We use the little blue box only when there is no news.

Senior II (unaware of the heated episode): Put it wherever they like. I gave this suggestion just because from there it is possible to put a direct link to the website.

When writing in the white and pink space of the website, it is not possible to link another website directly from the homepage. It is necessary to add a small
item where the link is included. In that case, there is a specific process of accessing the website: The reader clicks on the title on the homepage, and a webpage with some lines of text opens, where the link can found and clicked. The priorities governing the decisions of the two senior journalists are obviously different. The useability of the website, the facility with which it can be accessed, and the importance of maximizing the clicks, are all of greater interest to Senior II than is the journalistic norm of distinguishing between journalistic and advertising space.

This episode illustrates the vacillation of the new object – the website – between old and new practices, and the efforts made by an experienced practitioner to repel new practices and realign the new object with old practices. The episode occurred before the launch of the new website. In the previous version of the website, the practice of separation between information and advertising was articulated (Latour, 1991) or inscribed/objectified (Czarniawska, 1996) into different colours of the website: The blue space was for advertising, the pink and white one was for journalistic content (information). What made a piece of content journalistic distinct from non-journalistic (that is, business-like) was the place and the author. If a journalist wrote it and put it in its proper place, it is undoubtedly journalistic. If a non-journalist wrote it, or if no journalist requested that an external expert write it, it is not journalistic. If a journalist writes it, but places it wrongly, conflicts and doubts arise. Therefore, when Senior I noticed that journalists, who are supposed to write in the journalistic space, were writing in the advertising space, he was disappointed and upset. It was a violation of an institution, which, in his eyes, needed to receive negative sanctions (Jepperson, 1991), but instead the episode challenged the taken-for-grantedness of the way in which the institutional norm had been articulated in the technology. A given practice has been incorporated into an artefact – the website in this case – and it remained unquestioned until it was violated by a new way of using the object (Latour, 1992). Thus, the object in which the practice was inscribed became a way in which the journalists controlled themselves and socialized members of their profession into the institutional norms (Czarniawska, 2008). This particular website design became the locus of the alignment between the old practice of journalism as opposed to business content and the new object: the website. The responsibility of distinguishing and clearly signalling the distinction between advertising and information has been partially transferred to the object, or rather to a particular feature of the object: its colour. This is not a compelling feature; it permits the journalist to choose among different practices to which they want to align this feature. Therefore, the institutional responsibility of the distinction between advertising and information, when removed from everyday awareness, can be unattended by newcomers who have not practiced such responsibility long enough to be able to align the technological characteristics with the compelling exercise of such responsibility.
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Another interesting aspect of this story is the way in which Junior I defended herself against the accusations of Senior I. In saying that it was her boss, Senior II, who told her to use the light blue space, she evoked another of the journalist’s norms:

Responsibility of the journalist.

(…) The journalist accepts indications and directives only from the journalistic hierarchies of his own heading, as long as these dispositions are not contrary to the professional law, to the national contract and to the document of duties. (The Charter of Journalists’ Duties, 1993: 2)

In other words, she defended her violation of one institutional norm by evoking another institutional norm. This, in fact, has had the effect of dissipating the conflict, perhaps by reminding the old-timers of the difficulty of reconciling different professional norms, old and new practices aligned to the new object.

When the website design was renewed, the distinction between pink and light blue background disappeared, no longer signalling the distinction between journalistic and advertising content and creating some irritation in the Online Newsroom. One of the desk journalists pointed out several times to the editors that the distinction between advertising and journalistic content no longer existed. In his eyes, this blending created confusion, as it broke the established and visible alignment between author and place, which, in the past had signalled the distinction between journalistic and advertising/promotional (business-like) contents. A multimedia marketing manager answered that these were internal issues that should not be reflected on the website.

Episode 3. Aligning the new object with new practices: Voices from the Newsroom and the Company.

Journalists and advertisers should have no contact in their day-to-day work. Theirs are different jobs, driven by different interests, and requiring different mindsets. Therefore, the relationship between the Newsroom and the Company (especially the advertising side of the Company) must be kept as separate as possible. The very fact that Marco Liera was reinforcing the message so strongly in his university lecture meant that it was somewhat under threat, needing constant reinforcement.

Newspaper-Website Co-ordinator expressed an opinion that the relationship between advertising and journalistic content is more delicate on the web than it is in the newspaper:
You must say the brand of cell phones or computers and take a position on them because the reader wants to know, but you must maintain journalistic honesty. When the advertising managers have advertisers interested in a special topic – for example franchising – they ask if we intend to make a special issue.

He continues, saying that this is done on paper. And that he supports the co-marketing – when Nokia, for example, pays to make a service on cell phones, not on their own, but in general. Thus, it becomes like a technical sponsor.

It’s a delicate relationship, but the task of desk editors is to check that the content is newsworthy, and not just an interview with an important manager talking about his products.

Next he told me a story of a technology paper supplement, which he used to run during the dot.com bubble. Back then, the line between advertising and journalistic content was even finer, and he was extremely strict in monitoring and ensuring that journalists did not cross the line. It all depends on how the distinction between journalistic and advertising content is managed. In a supplement on direct marketing sponsored by the company, Post Mail, for example, the sponsor was mentioned in only one line of the entire supplement. He then repeated that on the web the relationship was even more delicate, but it was also possible to correct, which was impossible on paper.

Multimedia managers are of the same opinion. One of them discussed in an interview the issue of an advertisement of a particular product or company being cited in an article:

If they are cited among others, it is a common praxis. If, instead, there is an article dedicated to it, one should generally avoid it. And, in general, one knows in advance, because the Newsroom receives the press release about the advertising campaign. The co-existence is never desirable. …Of course it could happen, but it never has happened, as far as I know.

On the old website, there was a distinction between the blue part and the pink part, so I asked if this distinction would be reproduced on the new website as a distinction between promotional and advertising contents and journalistic contents. The answer is no: “This is more of an internal topic of ours – who manages the content? Is it the Newsroom or someone else?” Still, the distinction between journalistic and non-journalistic content seems not to be an easy one, and it is constantly threatened both online and on paper. Or at least it seems that there is a need to watch for this distinction to be practiced as a journalist’s professional norm.
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Although it is difficult to document such an observation fully, my impression was that the relationship between the Company and the Newsroom on the website was less tense and the daily contact more frequent. This intensification of contacts probably makes both parties realise that they are striving for a common goal. Here are some quotes from my interview with a multimedia manager:

Within the Online Newsroom, there is real day-by-day contact. Now we’re working with the new website. There’s maximum interaction in the sense that the projects are looked at together. In marketing, we’ve given the briefing to four graphic agencies and have selected one, which has started to work with us. It’s always a dynamic among three parties: the publisher, or in any case, the Company; the Newsroom; and the technicians who co-ordinate all parts of the development, from the graphic appearance to the html. We work at the co-ordination of the three parties in order to make the editorial aspects meet the technical ones – the pageviews, the viewers – which have economic significance for the advertising company. (…)

In the sense of the journalism involved, there obviously isn’t much interaction between us and the Newsroom, but in the sense of the development, well, if there’s a particular project there’s day-to-day interaction. We need to gather every proposal and consider if it fits the budget, and if it doesn’t fit the budget, to understand how to develop the pages. We also interact with the advertising department, in the sense that we update them and see if there are possibilities of sponsorships, of advertising coverage of the project, and then of supporting the realisation. We check whether it needs to be given to an external agency or not, so we keep this network internally. We are also in charge of the external communications, of the whole supporting campaign.

The website seemed to vacillate between the old practice of separation and the new practice of collaboration and teamwork towards the same goal. The manager recognised that there is independence of the journalist work simultaneous with an intense collaboration between managers and advertising people on the Company side.

New object: Discussion

The website is pulled between old and new practices on the issue of the relationship between journalism and business operations. It is not a coincidence that two of the episodes concerning the new website developed around a
thematic website. Although in the journalistic subfields of these thematic websites, the relationships between business and journalism could be closer, and advertising is an influential factor in creating the product, such websites are still produced in the context of Il Sole-24 Ore, which is traditionally a financial newspaper. Thus, the reclaiming of the thematic websites as a journalistic website sounds like an attempt to forge a stronger alignment between the new object and the old practice. Moreover, the violation of the colour code for information and advertising content on the website is even more sensitive, as it is related to a type of website that may already be on the borderline between advertising and journalism. Thus, the subsequent reaffirmation of the alignment between the website – ilsole24ore.com – and the old practice of separation between advertising and information content is even stronger.

As for the previous institutional areas, the new object vacillates between new practices, which come from the website, and old ones, which come from the newspaper. The result is a continuous shaping of alignments, disarrangements, and realignments between objects and practices that consequently influences the understanding of journalism as professional work.

Old object and new practices

The encounters do not happen only between the new object and the old practices of journalism – or in the words used in the field, the Newsroom and the Company – but also between the old object and some new practices, between the newspaper and some new fashions concerning the relationship between journalism and business.

Some of the practices are not perceived as new because of their association with the web, but because of the forging of new connections between journalism and business, which are often but not necessarily associated with the web. The following episodes illustrate concessions, resistance and conflict when some of these new practices come to be newly aligned with the newspaper, an old object.

Episode 1. Old practices realigning with the old object after disarrangements provoked by the new: About Rapporti

The practice of sponsored pages started in 2000 after the dot.com bubble burst and advertising revenues decreased. It is now a relatively frequent practice to have 2, 4, or sometimes 6 pages with content written by journalists and looking like journalistic content, but sponsored by specific advertisers. These pages are usually signalled as “advertising information” or “sponsored pages” on top of the page.
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Some products are more vulnerable than others to the confusion between journalistic writing and advertising content. One of the most questioned newspaper products is the thematic supplement, the Rapporti. When sponsored pages started to be published in the newspaper, the Company decided to dismantle the journalistic team responsible for producing the thematic supplements and transform them in advertising pages “with an advertising information content”, as Rapporti Head Editor told me.

[The fact that the supplements around 2002 did not have a dedicated journalistic team] has generated a lot of problems, because it’s clear that in the absence of a Newsroom defending journalistic practices, the advertising sellers went wild, like in the far west, and there was an assault on the Newsroom in order to inform the journalists about this or that company that the advertising sellers had talked to. It’s clear that the sellers sometimes bump into information about the advertisers that could be news, because when a company undertakes an advertising campaign, it wants to communicate something, usually because there’s a change going on. At this point, there’s usually also news. This doesn’t take away from the fact that in our job and in this newspaper, it’s inappropriate for an advertising seller to call a journalist to say that there’s news.

The editor thus claims that it is not an exclusive right of the journalists to discover the news, but the respect of the institutional distinction between journalism and business, which dictates that the exclusivity of the identification and selection of the news must pertain to the journalists. This implies that it is inappropriate for the advertising salespeople to cross the line. Contamination must be avoided. She continues:

Such an event is experienced as contamination between information and advertising. Contamination occurs when the advertising agent serves as the intermediary between journalists and sources of information (like companies). An advertising agent could also sell the journalistic content or just be misunderstood by the client that would expect a journalistic report on its own business. And there could be a mechanism of *do ut des*85: “As an advertising agent, I put you in contact with the Newsroom and you, as an advertiser, buy our advertising spaces”. There is no proof that it has always been done, because the selling network has always been well briefed on this point. In any case, the advertising sellers are the wrong people to act as intermediaries.

85 *Do ut des* is a Latin expression meaning, “I give you something so that you give me something back”.
They must say to their company: “The news seems to be interesting; you need to call the Newsroom or send a press release, and they’ll decide what to do”.

The contact between advertising salespeople and journalists needs to be avoided, because it could undermine the independence of journalists and add pressures other than the duty to inform citizens. In this institutional area, the process of communication is critical.

Therefore, when there have been some episodes of advertising selling agents who – even in as a goodwill gesture – called the Newsroom, or sometimes threatened...that if an article does not come out, they won’t provide advertising, sometimes even with the rope around their necks, called in these conditions...This has created problems, which were reported in the assembly of journalists and stigmatised by our union committee.

It does not matter if the intention behind certain practices is good or bad, Rapport Head Editor: They simply must not occur. Thus, it is the role of journalists to reaffirm the alignment between their newspaper and the old journalistic practices of independence, and, by doing so, set the boundaries for the actions of the Company.

Therefore I’ve played, and still play an educational role with regard to the Company and the advertising sales agency, by fixing rules and checking that they’re respected, on the basis of our duty code and our contract. It’s clear that they try. It’s their job.

They often try to cross the boundaries when a journalist is a junior professional whose practices are still are not well inculcated and can be bent to the will of the advertisers. The editor told me that when, at a certain point, the size of the supplements was doubled or tripled each week in order to please the advertising investors, the Newsroom Secretary in charge of their co-ordination could not handle the situation any longer:

The result was that the co-ordinator was often a junior journalist, without the necessary competence to manage the advertising side, because of the power relationships with the advertising sellers, or the internal side, where the articles were often commissioned to interns or external collaborators. Nothing wrong with that, but this newspaper employs specialists and to keep away from a supplement the know-how of its internal journalists is a mistake for sure, because an internal journalist can better weigh the measures, and identify the news from the fake information;
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whereas an intern buys everything he or she is told to buy. So, the quality decreased, and the advertising and the company had a more and more proactive role, experienced by the Newsroom as practically aggressive. The number of these supplements also increased. At this point, Chief Editor proposed that I become Rapporti Head Editor.

Apparently, the job wasn't easy.

At the beginning it was difficult. For example, an event occurred that one can interpret as a malicious act or as a pure coincidence. The editorial system changed the position of an advertisement without any notice given to the Newsroom. Consequently, in a supplement on the car industry there was the advertisement of a car, and on the next page an article on the same car presented at a car fair. And this was repeated on four pages. At that point, yes, the advertisers absolutely wanted those positions for their advertisements in the supplement and precisely beside those positions there were those articles about those advertisers’ products...let’s say that I believed their apologies. At any rate, such things do not happen any longer.

Most of the time there’s no problem, because there’s no direct link between the advertisers and the topic of the articles – the situation I prefer. In this way, there isn’t even the impression that there’s collusion between advertising and the Newsroom, because not only can there be no blending between journalistic content and advertisements, but we need to be seen by readers as not allowing even the slightest possibility that such blending could or does occur. And this is difficult.

This story about supplements shows how complicated can be the relationship between journalism and business – advertising in this case. It is not a coincidence that this episode concerns a supplement and not the main spine of the newspaper, as it is easier for the complementary products to be the locus of a disarrangement of the old alignment. At the same time, the editor reinforced the importance of aligning the print product to old journalistic practices of separation between journalistic and business responsibilities in the company.

When I asked if the distinction was different for online content, the answer was that online advertising was still relatively marginal and therefore the bargaining power of advertising selling agents was much lower. In the paper, however, it is difficult to resist when a company puts €250.000 on the table, as has happened, to have a supplement created on a certain topic. It is difficult to
refuse, but sometimes it is absolutely necessary to do so. “Even so, friends as before”, was the conclusion, she concludes.

**Episode 2. Vacillating between old and new practices: About quartos**

Although the supplements became realigned to the old practices, other parts of the newspaper were aligned with new practices, including contamination between advertising and journalism. It is the case of quartos, which refers to supplements that are in a size format obtained by folding a whole sheet into four leaves. In this case, the pages are sponsored by advertisers and focus on a topic of interest to them. Such pages look like regular newspaper pages, except for a small heading on top, which signals that the pages are sponsored by advertisers. The practice of using such pages began at the turn of the millennium, when the advertising market experienced a significant recession and the newspapers needed to find new ways to gain revenues. At first quartos were published without a heading to signal that they were sponsored pages. Then, this signal was inserted and they became a usual component of the newspaper.

One day, during the course of my study, two people from the advertising department visited one of the Newsroom sections. They wanted to talk about a quarto on nuclear energy.

They said that they had agreed with the sponsor that there would be two half pages.

Advertising Person: We have thought about focusing on ENEL, Edison, and Ansaldo because they have central sites in [City X].

Head Editor (to his Vice-Head Editor): The e-mail that you have sent with the programme of the section on nuclear energy. Can you send it to him [the Vice-Head editor] as well?

Advertising Person: Perfect! Thanks, so I will have a better idea.

Head Editor: But we don’t go beyond four pages.

Advertising Person: No, no.

Head Editor: I know you, and you will have me making six.

After the advertising people left, the head editor said, “Unbelievable! They do a collection of advertising money targeted to specific thematic pages”.

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This short conversation illustrates that the relationship between advertising people and journalism is not as neat as the institutions would ideally prescribe it. It is part of the daily work of the journalists to keep the advertising managers in their place, and therefore to make and remake the alignment between the practice of separation between business and journalism and the newspaper.

Episode 3. Aligning new practices: Journalists’ perplexities concerning odd pages of full-scale advertising

Concerns about the relationship between advertising and journalistic content arise not only around special supplements or sections of the newspaper, but also around the main spine of the daily. Every day, all the journalists writing for the daily receive the foliation (a scheme indicating the number of pages per section and the advertising space on each page). The design of the pages by the editors and their deputies starts from designing the advertising space: space that is lost to the journalists. The foliation changes several times during the day, as the advertisement people negotiate with customers and the talks between the foliation responsible in the advertising department and the one in the Newsroom central office proceed. Every time the foliation changes, about four to five times a day, the pages need to be redesigned.

It is the task of the desk editors to design the pages so as to avoid the situation in which there are articles about a company with products or brands that are advertised in the same page or on the next page. This is a shared rule for journalists, which extends to the Online Newsroom as well.

Not only is the advertising content discussed in relation to the journalistic content, but the position of advertising is a matter of discussion in the context of the newspaper, as every day the size and positions of the advertisements change. During one morning editorial meeting, a fascinating discussion ensued. On that day, the newspaper had a full-page advertisement on pages 9 and 11 – on odd pages that appear to the right when opening the newspaper. Those pages are believed to be the ones that receive the most attention by the readers when they open the newspaper, and advertisement prices for spaces on the right pages are appropriately higher. One of the editors was given the floor to start presenting the day’s news menu:

Editor I: Excuse me, maybe these are my obsessions, but you, doesn’t it upset you to have the full advertising page to the right?

Chief Editor: Yes, but everybody feels that way.

Editor II: Yeah, the women’s magazines started it.
Chief Editor. We are even the least exposed. We have tried to keep a barrier.

Vice-Chief Editor: They have even asked to have the third page.

Chief Editor: And we have said no to all the formats. The supplement on luxury goods is a tabloid, ok. But in the Rapporti the journalists have regained the areas that had been, if I can say so, devastated by false journalists from advertising. We do this and think that the readers can distinguish between true journalism and advertising, though it is not so sure, as the press reviews show. At any rate, the two pages inside need to be revised.

He referred to two pages with “promotional content” created by the advertising department. In the day’s newspaper, they were pages 28 and 29 in the Tax and Law section.

When trying to keep the separation between the advertising rooms and the Newsroom, placing a full-page advertisement represents a concession made to advertising pressures. An odd-numbered page full of an advertisement is highly visible to the readers, who see the ad in front of their eyes as big as the news. In an environment where size and place have symbolic importance, this is a significant concession made to commercial pressure. Yet, it is still fully and visibly distinct from the journalistic content.

**Old objects: Discussion**

The newspaper, including all its ancillary products such as supplements, is aligned with the practice of the separation between journalistic and business-like content. This alignment is quite strong, but in the Newsroom’s discourses some signs of the disarranging of this alignment can be traced. Thus, parts of the newspaper have been associated with new practices of contamination between business and journalism. Some of them have been reclaimed back to the old practices of independence, such as the supplements, whereas others, such as the quartos, have been accepted and to some degree institutionalised in the newspaper. Other practices of contamination, like the full-page advertisement on an odd-number page, still create discussion and perplexities, in name of protectionism (corporatism) of the profession, and are associated with new trends in the newspaper world. In sum, it is difficult to claim that the new practices have come into the Newsroom through the introduction of the new object – the website. However, it can be speculated that the website could represent the occasion of creating a way to accelerate the alignments between the old object and the new practices.
Discussion

In this chapter, I have investigated the alignments between old and new practices and old and new objects, namely the newspaper and the website, concerning the relationship between journalism and business.

The newspaper has traditionally been aligned with practices of separation – from advertising, management, and ownership – whereas in the realm of the web, the boundary between business and journalism and the boundary between commerce and culture are perceived as being more blurred. Other scholars (Fagerling and Norbäck, 2005) have discussed how the transformation and transgression of these boundaries in a web-related project have triggered an intensification of social identity construction work.

Yet the new object – the website – is not fully aligned with practices of blending between journalism and business; rather the alignments between it and old and new practices are continuously made and remade. The result is a new object that vacillates between old practices (see the episode of the violation of the coloured information/advertising space on the website and the insistence on naming websites journalistic) and new practices (see the episode reporting the journalists’ and managers’ feelings of being closer).

At the same time, the instability of the alignments related to the website is accompanied by a disarranging of the old alignment on the side of the newspaper. New practices of concession to commercial pressures are aligned or there is an attempt to align them with the newspaper, where the journalists fight for the old alignment. Table 11.2 summarises the episodes narrated in this chapter.

Table 11.2 Episodes of Defence of the Profession

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<th>Objects/Practices</th>
<th>Old</th>
<th>New</th>
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<td>Old</td>
<td>Disarranging – Quartos Reclaiming – Supplements</td>
<td>Aligning – Full-page advertising</td>
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<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>Aligning (Reclaiming) – luxury24.com as journalistic website</td>
<td>Aligning – New relationships between Newsroom and Company</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Disarranging and aligning - luxury24.com and the colours code</td>
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A question raised here is of key importance both for the empirical field – for the newspaper – and for theoretical development. If we accept that there are signs of a decreasing opposition between business and journalism, especially regarding the news website, what are the consequences of this development for the value of the news?

Bourdieu (1977) has argued that, in the field of symbolic goods, among
which newspapers can certainly be included, there is strong opposition between culture and commerce, and the value of each of these sides comes from this opposition. The value of culture, he believes, is that it is opposed to commerce (Bourdieu, 1977). The economic value of these goods is that their cultural value is claimed to be a denial of the market. If one follows this reasoning, the diminishing of the opposition between culture (or profession in the case of journalism) and business, which seems to be constitutive to the identity of the journalistic profession, would have as a consequence the diminishing of the economic value of the news. In other words, one could say that the concessions made by professional journalists to market and management pressures could potentially, in the long run, hurt the economic value of their product and thus of their profession.

In contrast, I would argue that the opening of a space for disarranging the old alignment and new/realigning new and old objects with new and old practices represents a refinement of the institutional area where the relationship between business and journalism is forged and reforged. Rather than making the news more commercial, I would argue that the encounter between the website and the newspaper create the occasion for a new articulation of existing institutional arrangements between journalism and business.
12. The analysis in summary

The framework of the analysis in this dissertation is structured around the triad – objects, practices and labels – and the contrast between old and new. Thus the plot revolves around encounters between old objects, practices and labels, which are aligned; and new objects, practices and labels; and the disarrangements, realignments and new alignments triggered by these encounters. The storyline includes several episodes of journalists’ work, showing how the institution of news production works.

Chapter 12 is a summary of the three previous chapters, in which the main analytical considerations of this study were developed. The aim of this chapter is thus to conclude Part IV – the analysis part of this dissertation – and prepare the reader to move to Part V, the last part of the book, in which I attempt to draw general conclusions from the study.

In this chapter, I begin with a restatement of the main elements of the framework of analysis, including the main lines of the story plot that have been developed according this framework. Then I present a summary of the developments of the plot around the three main areas of professional practices covered in Chapters 9, 10 and 11: evaluating news and newswork, in the public interest or the interests of the publics, and in defence of the profession.

The plot of the story – short version

Institutions are at work in shaping and reshaping, and being, in turn, shaped and reshaped, by the relationships among objects, practices and labels. They work precisely in these vacillations of objects, practices and labels between new and old, while simultaneously shaping them and being shaped by them.

Certain objects, practices and labels can be aligned with one another, which means that each of the entities of the alignment necessarily acts with the other two. The newspaper (as object) necessarily has implied (and, despite the encounter with television and new media, and the consequent changes, still does imply for the most part) making news in a certain way (as practices), according to what is called journalism (as label).

The forming and persisting of this alignment can be due to a number of reasons, such as the absence of alien objects to conduct practices labelled in the same way, the absence of a plurality of ways to use the same objects and the absence of a plurality of labels for the different practices used on the same objects. In other words, the familiarity of objects, practices and labels is what makes an alignment durable.
Yet, when alien elements enter – and, as we learn from studies on the travelling of ideas (Czarniawska and Sevón, 2005), ideas, practices and objects are constantly migrating from place to place – this old alignment comes to a disarrangement under the circumstances of encounters with the new – the “alien”. In other words, if any of the entities of the old alignment (among objects, practices and labels) encounters something that is new, whether it be an object, a practice or a label, and is thus cast as alien, this can disarrange the alignment. The consequences of such an encounter with the alien can be the opening up of new spaces for new alignments and realignments.

The story in this dissertation is the story of the encounter of an old alignment (that of newspaper journalism) with a new object and new practices, that are, in part, brought to the encounter directly by and with the new object, and in part enter the newspaper field from general societal trends, and find it easier to be aligned with the newspaper because of the disarranged alignment.

Disarrangements, new alignments and vacillations in the three areas of professional practices

My analysis has focused on relationships among things that act – objects, practices and labels – following the traces left by these relationships and actions in the narratives of my interlocutors. They constitute traces of the old alignment, of disarrangements resulting from encounters with the new objects and practices, and of new alignments and realignments. As they changed and moved, they could be seen as traces of vacillations of old and new objects between old and new practices and labels.

New and old are relative concepts, of course. The website is called new and the newspaper is called old. The web is still cast as new more than 10 years after it entered the newspaper organization. What explains the destabilising effect it has on the newspaper alignment is not the age of the website, but its protracted casting as alien. As a result, the website, although still labelled as new, at some point can be considered familiar enough and stable enough to be worthy of engagement. Casting the website as new helps to disarrange the newspaper alignment, but when this new has been around the old for a prolonged period, the old can consider it worthwhile to “try out” the new.

It is around these encounters that I emplotted of my empirical material, as indicated in Table 12.1, reproduced from Chapter 4.
The analysis in summary

Table 12.1. A summary of the framework of analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objects/Practices</th>
<th>Old Practices</th>
<th>New Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Old Objects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old journalism practices for newspapers (old object)</td>
<td>New journalism practices for newspaper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Objects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old journalism practices for website (new object)</td>
<td>New journalism practices for website</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The encounters occur in three areas of professional practices: evaluating news and newwork, in the public interest or the interests of the publics and in defence of the profession.

Area 1 – Evaluating news and newwork

I have labelled the first area of practice evaluating news and newwork and have attempted in Chapter 9 to show how news and newwork are evaluated in the Newsroom. I identified three main practices through which newwork and news are assessed in the newspaper: prioritising the news, contextualising the news in pages and justifying the product through the process. These were the three main practices of the old alignment. I then presented by quoting conversations and interviews and inserting vignettes, traces of disarrangements of the old alignment, new alignments and realignments between old and new practices and old and new objects.

They were organized around the two objects: old (newspaper), and new (website). I demonstrated how the website vacillates between alignment with new practices and old practices, such as contextualising the news in pages and prioritising the news. One could say that the web itself is a character with an anti-programme to the Professional Journalism’s programme – such as fragmenting the news, equalising (instead of prioritising) the news and justifying the process through the product.

I also found traces of alignments between old practices and the new object: in the construction of special pages on the website, which seems to be a translation of the paper pages; in the newspaper supplements and in the construction of the homepage, in a way that is analogous to the front page of the newspaper, which seems to be a translation of prioritising the news on the website.

Traces of alignment between new practices and the new object could be also found in the training for constructing each article in order to be searched on Google; in the real time update of the news, which diminishes the importance of assigning it a place in a hierarchy; and in focusing on the (numeric) results of the website instead of publicly analyzing its production processes. In particular,
the real time update possibility offered by the web invites reflections on how this possibility has been used in the newspaper website. The very fact that it is possible to update the news in real time does not mean that the journalists must update the news as soon as they receive takes from the wires. But this is what happens, more or less, and I believe that this occurs because this technological updating possibility enters an environment where the old alignment dominates, and thus the possibility itself becomes aligned to old practices. As I have argued, following Luhmann (1996), the daily issue of the newspaper is based on the expectation that each day there will be enough news to fill the newspaper pages; because of this expectation, news professionals assign the news category to events because there is space to be filled, and thus they literally create news.

This practice, which I would say belongs to the habitus of professional journalists, becomes translated onto the website, and through the real-time update possibility becomes a continuous update practice, with significant consequences for the construction of news by professional journalists.

Table 12.2 summarises the episodes involving the vacillating alignments of the new object – the website – with new and old practices. Technical features of the new object are presented in the middle of the table and the two side columns contain practices aligned to these features.

Table 12.2. New objects between old and new practices: A summary of episodes from Chapter 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New practices</th>
<th>New Objects</th>
<th>Old practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constructing each article as searched and searchable</td>
<td>Articles vs. webpages</td>
<td>Constructing pages and sections with the idea of contextualising each article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuously changing priorities as the news continuously changes</td>
<td>Real-time updates</td>
<td>Prioritising news according to the hierarchy of news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justifying the process through product</td>
<td>Speed</td>
<td>Empty Cell86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The encounter with the new object has certainly not left the newspaper indifferent in its relationships with journalistic practices. The old alignment has been disarranged, and the old object encountered opportunities of new alignments with the new practices and realignments with the old ones. Il Sole-24 Ore has been redesigned in order to achieve – in the words of the editor responsible for the redesign project – “a graphic style more adequate to the new communication demands, not only written but also visualised”. His phrasing demonstrates an attempt to align the old object to new journalistic (communication) practices.

86 This cell is empty because the new object seems to be consistently aligned to the new practice of justifying the process through the product.
The analysis in summary

Table 12.3 summarises the disarrangements of the old alignment and the opening of a space of vacillation for the old object between new alignments and realignments. “Innovation within the tradition” was the slogan of the redesign project.

Table 12.3. Old objects between old and new practices: A summary of episodes from Chapter 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New practices</th>
<th>Old objects</th>
<th>Old practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using pictures to improve the newspaper’s appeal</td>
<td>Pictures</td>
<td>Selecting a few simple, informative pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritising news according to a hierarchy around one main news item per page</td>
<td>Pages</td>
<td>Prioritising news in the context of a page where more than one news item could be leading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using thread and headlines to give the image of a clean and easy-to-read newspaper</td>
<td>Thread and headlines</td>
<td>Separating different topics and each article from the others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, the encounter between objects and practices that are strangers to one another have created numerous spaces for new relationships between the actants. The institutionalised ways of evaluating news and newwork are continuously redefined in these spaces, in a vacillation of old and new objects between old and new practices.

Area 2 – In the public interest or the interests of the publics

I have labelled the second area of practice in the public interest or the interests of the publics. I have identified an alignment between the traditional definition of the public and what is in its interest (consistent with the definition of public opinion and the citizen in western democracies), and the newspaper (its material feature). The conception and enactment of the idea of the public interest must pervade the newspaper, its paper material, its construction through pages and its distribution through kiosks and post delivery. Thus, the newspaper as an object carries with it the concept and practices of the public and the public interest, and with them the labels of journalism, journalists and journalistic. Even in this area, I have found that conversations, interviews and vignettes bear traces of disarrangements of the old alignment and of new alignments between old and new practices and old and new objects. I have structured the analysis of these alignments and disarrangements once again around the two objects: old (the newspaper) and new (the website).

The website, the new object, carries the possibility of precise measurement of the clicks on each article that is published. These clicks are taken as a
measure of the pageviews and of unique visitors to the website. They forge a new image of the public and its interests for journalistic practices. The tyranny of the clicks is not unquestionably aligned to website, however, as this latter object vacillates between the new practices exploring the interests of the publics and the old practices expressing the public interest. The web, particularly in its 2.0 version, offers the possibility of interaction between journalists and publics in new and different ways, the most common of which is the opportunity to comment on the article. Thus, the idea of a public as separate from the journalists, and the idea of the journalistic practices as consisting of the production of written and visual content and delivering it to more or less silent receivers, is challenged by the website. Professional journalists who have been socialised in the old alignment, however, attempt to translate the old idea of a distant and silent newspaper public into a silenced public of the website.

In other words, the public and the public interest are translated on the website as “publics and their interests” and the website vacillates between old and new practices, as summarised in Table 12.4.

Table 12.4. New objects between old and new practices: A summary of episodes from Chapter 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New practices</th>
<th>New object</th>
<th>Old practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prioritising and selecting news on the basis of numbers</td>
<td>Measuring clicks</td>
<td>Selecting on the basis of journalistic criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening comments by default</td>
<td>Opportunity to interact</td>
<td>Placing boundaries on interactions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The encounter with the new object disarranges the old alignment, so that new associations between the old object and new practices become possible. A first trace of possible new alignment between a newly defined public and the newspaper is to be found in the justification of the refusal to change the format of the newspaper. This resistance confirms the old alignment, whereby the format of the newspaper carries a certain history of professional practices, including a certain idea of the public and the public interest.

A second new alignment between the measurable and measured public and the old object is documented in the episode in which the clicks influence the priorities of the news in the newspaper.

A third trace of alignments between a new idea – and practices – of the public and the newspaper is to be found in various accounts of interactivity of the newspaper. From suggesting that the focus of my dissertation should be to show that *Il Sole-24 Ore* was interactive ahead of its time to saying that the birth of *Nova100* was due to the interactions with the readers of *Nova24* and its blog, I cited many examples to illustrate the desire to align the old object to the new practices of interactions and numbers, and to root it in the real old history of the newspaper.
The analysis in summary

Table 12.5 summarises the vacillation of the old object between old and new practices.

Table 12.5. Old objects between old and new practices: A summary of episodes from Chapter 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New practices</th>
<th>Old object</th>
<th>Old practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Converting to tabloid in order to make it easier to carry</td>
<td>Broadsheet</td>
<td>Keeping the broadsheet format, so that the highest possible number of stories per page is kept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the website numbers as a proxy of the interests of the public</td>
<td>No precise measures of the public</td>
<td>Prioritising the news according to the interests of its public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceiving products for direct interaction with users</td>
<td>Specialised services to target audiences</td>
<td>Interacting with users in a limited way and time (See L’Esperto Risponde)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, the encounter between the newspaper and the website and old and new practices concerning the public and the public interest has opened up space for new alignments between old and new objects and old and new practices. The result is not a frontal struggle between the old public inscribed into the newspaper and the new publics objectified into the website, but rather much more complex and dynamic vacillations of new and old objects between new and old public practices.

As a consequence, the public and the public interest are not put aside or radically changed. Instead, this area of practice is refined on the basis of the anti-programme carried by the web.

Area 3 – In defence of the profession: Journalistic vs. business-like practices

I labelled the third area of practices in defence of the profession, in the particular form of journalistic vs. business-like news production practices. In Chapter 11, I attempted to illustrate various practices amounting to the defence of the profession, in particular in the opposition between journalism as a cultural logic, dominant in the Newsroom, and business logic, dominant in the Company.

As in previous areas of practice, I analyzed some stories, conversations and interviews containing traces of disarrangements and new alignments between old and new practices and old and new objects. This is the most obvious area to assume the issue of institutions at work, because independence, translated traditionally in the opposition between profession and commerce, is a core aspect of journalistic professional identity. It can be also said that the old
alignment has resisted more in this area than it has in the other two areas, just like in fairy tales, where having passed two treacherous lands successfully, the hero comes to the third, where the final test awaits.

The web has been previously aligned to both managerial practices (mainly due to the possibility of measuring audience), and to advertising. Some of the websites launched by *Il Sole-24 Ore* are produced outside the company by outsourcing or by the automatic content management system run by marketing. These are not journalistic. But the journalists within the integration project tried out several ways of aligning the website to journalistic practices by making visible and thus rewarding the journalists’ authorship of the content.

Although the area of the newspaper devoted to advertising is not accessible to journalists, who can only access the journalistic area, they may write in the promotional spaces on the website. The institutionalised separation of content is translated onto the website, however – through a distinction of colours of the journalistic and promotional space, for example. This is not a compulsory feature, however, and thus the alignment between old translated practices and the new object may be disarranged. Consequently, the practices and objects may vacillate between new alignments and realignments.

The barriers between business and journalism are said to be weaker on the website, where more interplay between the two is recognised as normal and implicit in the new medium. Table 12.6 summarises the vacillations of the new object between old and new practices concerning the opposition between journalism and business.

Table 12.6. New objects between old and new practices: A summary of episodes from Chapter 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New practices</th>
<th>New object</th>
<th>Old practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Producing content through automatic systems or through marketers’ work</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Producing content through journalistic work – through the work of journalists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not signalling, through colours, the different types of content</td>
<td>No technical barriers between promotional and journalistic content</td>
<td>Colouring the information and advertising content differently</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information that I gathered through vignettes, conversations and interviews concerning the disarranging of the opposition between profession and commerce, was grouped under several episodes. The first was a story of a thematic supplement that had seen the appropriation of the advertising managers “like cowboys in the wild west”, but had been saved back to journalistic practices of separation of territories between advertising and journalistic. The second concerned an advertising manager’s unsuccessful attempt to sensitise journalists to his advertising efforts. The third was about the publishing of a full-colour advertisement that covered an entire odd-numbered page – the ideal newspaper advertising space. This practice provoked
The analysis in summary

some perplexities among journalists, because it was recognised as coming from more commercial segments of media, such as women's magazines. But a translation of such a business-oriented practice to the newspaper is recognised and more or less accepted. A fourth episode was about the Newsroom strike against the owners' decision to reintegrate into the Newsroom a former journalist who had gone to the other side of the wall and worked as Human Resource Manager.

I can not conclude that the disarrangements of the old alignment have created a significant loss of independence for journalists. They have held up to the established alignment between the newspaper and the opposition practices, but the very fact that various efforts of a narrative nature are needed to reaffirm the old alignment may mean that the old alignment will be open to further disarrangements and new alignments.

Table 12.7 summarises the vacillations around the old object concerning the disarrangements of the old alignment and the alignments with new practices.

Table 12.7. Old objects between old and new practices: A summary of episodes from Chapter 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New practices</th>
<th>Old object</th>
<th>Old practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seemingly similar – I Quartini</td>
<td>Line between journalistic and advertising content</td>
<td>Neatly separating them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning together certain sections or supplements of the newspaper – I Rapporti</td>
<td>Advertisements and journalistic contents uploaded by different people at the same time</td>
<td>Journalists neglecting the of the content of the advertisements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, although it is difficult to argue that the website creates growing opposition between journalism and business, and may, therefore, completely disarrange the old alignment from the newspaper, it can be argued that a redefinition of journalistic independence from business is taking place. Following the more general marketing- and managerial-oriented trends in society, the newspaper's new alignment to such practices as allowing sponsoring and direct advertising to influence certain supplements, would be considered unacceptable under the ideal old alignment.
PART V: Conclusions

Chapter 13, the last chapter in this dissertation, presents my final considerations on theoretical, methodological and practical implications that can derive from the study. The aim of this last chapter is to present the conclusions of my reasoning about the way institutions work, and to reflect on the construction of the story about how institutions work.
13. How Institutions Work

This is not the end. Not even the beginning of the end. Rather, and hopefully, this may be the end of the beginning, to use Churchill’s famous line. In this concluding chapter, I aim at taking some further steps towards sharpening the theoretical, methodological and practical considerations that I want to make.

As a doctoral candidate in business administration, I am expected to conclude my dissertation by sharply and boldly pointing out my contributions to science, in order to wrap up this four-year project and reassure my school about the wisdom of investing in me and my doctoral education. Yet, this implies that I can decide if I had something important to say, if I discovered something new, and if this new thing is original, all of which sounds extremely ambitious, even pretentious. As Samuel Taylor Coleridge said: “The dwarf sees farther than the giant, when he has the giant’s shoulder to mount on. (1818/1865: 158)” If I have seen a little further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants. I find it difficult for me not only to assume the merits of possibly seeing further – that is to claim any contributions to science – but even to establish if I managed to mount on the shoulders of giants to stand there, or if I am still standing on their feet. For me, a midget, any part of giants is gigantic.

Referring to Robert K Merton’s On the Shoulders of Giants. A Shandean Postscript (1985), Mary Douglas (1986) has pointed out the irony of the scientists’ surprise when they learn that they discovered things that others have already studied and theorised about some hundred years before them. The idea of contribution is built on the notion of a scientific community working with a perfect memory, so that it is possible for researchers to establish the novelty and the groundbreaking impact of their work. Merton and Douglas had strong doubts about that, so perhaps it is better for me not to make any claims of originality or first authorship of any thought conceived in this dissertation. This would be truly naïve, as science is a group practice, conducted within a large network of humans and non-humans, despite the fact that authorship of scholarly works is attributed to single human beings.

All I can do here, therefore, is to articulate my reasoning about the ways in which institutions work, based on my empirical study, and to spell out some practical conclusions that may be useful both for newspapers and for other societal sectors influenced by new media. Although it is bad manners for the narrator to explain the moral of the story to the readers, I will do so here, in order to allow readers to help me understand whether I am standing on the shoulders or on the feet of giants.

I take my reflection into three directions: 1) what can be learnt from this dissertation about how institutions work, 2) what are the implications for
practitioners in other newspapers, and 3) the possible transformation of other sectors of society as a consequence of the encounter with new media. In each of these, I delineate possible future research projects. Finally, I present what I see as the limitations of this study.

This story is about the ways institutions work

Stability, which has been the primary focus of institutional theory, especially in its new institutionalist variant, has been traditionally explained as the effect of the existence of institutions. Institutions, which are stable over time, provide stability to other things by legitimising conformity and encouraging isomorphic forces. They have been defined as stable without opening the black box of their workings. My argument, after having worked for unboxing institutions and their functioning, is that institutions produce labels, objects and practices, and that they are at work in the relationships among them. It is the historical products of the institutions that preserve the stability of institutions.

I have analyzed the movements among practices, objects and labels, and have made the workings of institutions visible in these movements, in this shaping of relationships among objects, practices and labels – relationships that create the space in which institutions work. I tried to open the black box by following the traces left by these movements in texts, but also in practices and objects, as institutions are both producing and being produced – while enacting – by practices, objects and labels. Institutions work by aligning practices, objects and labels, while these practices, objects and labels work to maintain the stability of institutions. Figure 13.1 represents this “going round” (to use Mary Douglas’ expression, see later in this chapter).

![Diagram](image)

Figure 13.1. First opening of the black box of institutions: My elaboration of practices, objects and labels as producing and being produced by institutions.

I have illustrated the work of institutions by showing narrative traces of alignments, disarrangements and realignments among objects, practices and
How Institutions Work

labels. Some such alignments become so strong and are taken so much for granted that each element of the alignment evokes the other two, and the naturalised label implies the necessity of the alignment. When we say “journalism”, we imply work practices related to the newspaper. When we say “newspaper”, we have in mind the practices of journalism. Although it is the objects that stabilise, then, their presence evokes linguistic associations implied by an institution. One could say that institutions work like metonyms – figures of speech that substitute something in the vicinity for the original object or its attribute for the object itself (Czarniawska, 2004: 20). Except that there is no “original object” – merely alignments among objects and practices and labels. Thus, the newspaper carries within itself old journalistic practices and old journalistic practices carry features of newspapers with them.

As time is an inescapable referee (Orlikowski and Yates, 2002), a new is always there as opposed to an old. In fact, I decided to study the institutions’ work during a time of proximity between old and new. I chose to investigate how institutions work during a time when I could crush the gate easily by associating myself with an alien, the website, which was already in the house. In other words, I have chosen an encounter between the old (aligned) practices, objects and labels of news production and the new practices, objects and labels of news production (as aliens) as the moment in time to open and shed light inside the black box.

Others before me have studied the encounter between old and new media. Bolter and Grusin (2000) developed the notion of remediation, which stands for the remaking of old media by the (new) digital media, and the other way around. The notion, which has been used by organizational scholars (see e.g. Lanzara, 2009), helps to corroborate the claim of the uniqueness of the new media while simultaneously denying their uniqueness. Old media, say Bolter and Grusin, are represented in new media. Television videos and newspaper pages are reproduced on websites, but they are not simply reflected; they are remediad. Beyond the modernists’ enthusiast claim of the novelty of new media, however, all media acquire their significance in relation to each other, and thus new media are remediad by the old media as much as vice versa.

My understanding developed similar to that of Bolter and Grusin in understanding the relationship between old and new as a mutual influencing and redefining relationship instead of displacement. Their analysis, however, aims at understanding the consequences of remediation. For them, remediation is “representation of one medium in another” (Bolter and Grusin, 2000: 45) and works through two opposing tendencies: immediacy (a logic of representation aimed at making one forget the presence of the medium) and hypermediacy (a logic of representation constantly reminding one of the presence of the medium). The contrast between these two results of remediation can be fascinating, but it concerns consequences related to the reception of the media and to communication. My aim is to understand the unfolding of the encounter between old and new media from the angle of its implications for organizing.
As Figure 13.2 shows, my study focuses on the old alignment among practices, objects, and labels, vis-à-vis the new as alien practices, objects and labels encountered by the old. The figure demonstrates the multiplicity of practices, objects and labels: Old and new are labels produced by institutionalised thinking that reduces the complexity and variety of practices, objects and labels to an encounter between two sides.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Label</td>
<td>Label</td>
<td>Label</td>
<td>Label</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLD</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>OLD</td>
<td>NEW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 13.2. The Old and the New encountering each other: My elaboration.

The very casting of the new results from the ways in which institutions think: the acknowledgement of a difference between something that is already in place and something approaching it. It was Mary Douglas who, in 1986, noted that institutions think, and that they do so by classifying, remembering and forgetting. The way people think now is based on the classifications established in and by the institutions dominant in a given place and time. The divisions between art and science, emotion and cognition, imagination and reasoning are all results of the institutions’ classifying work. In Douglas’s words, “the work of classifying that is already done for us is performed as a service to instituted profession” (Douglas, 1986: 100). The cognitive associations with new and old media result from the thinking of the institution of news production and related institutions, such as journalism, and their remembering and forgetting. They
remember that the profession of journalism is a search for truth (not least with the aid of such products of popular culture as Hollywood movies about heroic journalists), but they now seem to forget that journalism has been a business enterprise since the beginning of its history.

“Institutions produce labels” – wrote Douglas (1986: 100) – and these labels are a self-fulfilling mechanism, as they have implications for what people do. Once a label is established, it has a stabilising effect on the “flux of social life, and even create to some extent the realities to which they apply” (ibid.). Labels are like objects: They make society durable. The labels created by institutions, therefore, function as an anchor that is used in the work of institutions to stabilise them, as their very creation is a way of insuring that people will conform to them.

Take the labels readers and clicks. As I noted in Chapter 10, the institution of news production has historically given the label “readers” to the public of the news. Readers are those who read, and therefore have consequences for journalists’ work, that is aimed at being read. The website comes into the Newsroom by calling its public “clicks”: Click is the action made with the mouse when looking at a webpage. It is an action that can be repeated many times and counted – as opposed to counting the number of people reading – and does not necessarily imply the act of reading. As a consequence, the journalists’ work will be aimed at being clicked rather than at being read.

However, the clicks come into a newsroom with old and established readers, created historically through the institution of news production. Therefore, the readers are working at making the clicks; and somehow the “clicks of readers” and the journalists’ practices are working to make the website for the clicks of readers. As Mary Douglas wrote, it is a “dynamic process by which new names are uttered and forthwith new creatures corresponding to them emerge” (1987: 100). If objects are never simply objects, labels are never simply labels. Mary Douglas argued:

The relation between people and the things they name is never static. (...) Naming is only one set of inputs; it is on the surface of the classification process. The interaction that Hacking describes goes round, from people making institutions to institutions making classifications, to classifications entailing actions, to actions calling for names, and to people and other living creatures responding to the naming, positively and negatively. (Douglas, 1986: 101)

It is this going round that is the main point of my story. The institution of news production in the interface with journalism works in thinking (ahead of the journalists themselves) that the website is new as an object and so are the practices related to it. It takes the actual journalists’ practices, the objects in their features and functioning and the same journalist/journalistic/journalism
label to bring what has been cast as new in the framework of the old, and hence make the institutions of news production stable. I argue, therefore, that practices, objects and labels are what makes institutions stable over time. If I call something “news”, or “news production”, it will imply, by alignment, a certain way of making news, although there are new tools for making news and new ways of doing it. In the very utterance of the labels “news production” or “journalism”, stability is produced by referring to and mobilising practices that have been traditionally aligned with the labels.

It is the journalists’ old way of doing things, together with the stable label “journalism” that pull back the new onto the old and construct a new alignment between old practices and the new object that is a translation of the old alignment into the new space. When encountering a new object – the website – journalists translate onto it elements of the newspaper both via technical inscriptions (different colours to signal the different types of content, for example, or special pages as newspaper supplements) and via nontechnical ones (in conceiving the homepage as the front page of the newspaper, for example) (Joerges and Czarniawska, 1998). In turn, from these new alignments involving the new object, the translated practices are retranslated onto the old object, producing further new alignments. In other words, the newspaper encountering the website has opened for vacillation both old and new objects between old and new practices.

My reasoning in Chapter 4 was that these encounters still occur in the realm of journalism, populated by journalists and journalistic objects. Yet, the presentation and analysis of the empirical material regarding the project of online-offline integration at Il Sole-24 Ore have shown that some new labels are emerging. Online Newsroom is a common new label, which is distinguished from Newspaper Newsroom (see the union agreement, Chapter 8). Online journalist is a common label to indicate the journalist working for the Online Newsroom, and thus mainly for the website and the portals. Online journalism is a rarely used label in the Newsroom, yet, when mentioned, it is often accompanied by an emphasis of the commonalities with newspaper journalism.

These new labels are all coined by associating the new label “online” with the old institutional labels of “journalist”, “newsroom” and “journalism”. Nomina sunt omnia – names are destinies– an old Latin adage goes. Thus, these very labels carry – predict and seal at the same time – the vacillations of the new object between old and new practices. The very fact of labelling certain practices aligned to a certain object like online journalism simultaneously makes possible and sets the limits of the vacillation of the website between old and new practices. It makes it possible for the website to be associated with both old and new practices, but does not allow it to be a totally new “thing”, pushing it back to old “things”. In other words, labels as linguistic artefacts have a control function (Czarniawska and Joerges, 1988) over the possible movements of the new objects and practices that come to encounter the old alignment.
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The moral of this story is that institutions are not simply taken-for-granted, rationalised myths that justify conformity and homogeneity (see Chapter 3). Institutions must be maintained as stable, and this happens through the aligning, disarranging and realigning of these practices, objects and labels. Institutions are made stable while changing continuously. Institutions would change all the time if their incorporation in people’s bodies through practices, their objectification in objects and their utterance in labels did not actively work for their stability. Change is therefore not a break in stability. It takes the work of institutions between practices, objects and labels to bring the new back in line with the old and thus create a new line parallel or intersecting or overlapping with the old alignment. In other words, institutions are at work precisely in the movements between the old and the new and in shaping the relationship among practices, objects and labels by being simultaneously shaped by these practices, objects and labels produced by themselves.

If it were not for the workings among labels, objects and practices, institutions could be continually changing. The very same institutions that make something old or even obsolete and something else new are at work in realigning the new with the old partially, newly, impossibly. Here is the way Mary Douglas explains this encounter of the new and its consequent disarrangements, realignment, and new alignment (not using my vocabulary, of course):

This is how the names get changed and how the people and things are rejigged to fit the new categories. First the people are tempted out of their niches by new possibilities of exercising or evading control. Then they make new kinds of institutions and the institutions make new labels, and the label makes new kinds of people. The next step in understanding how we understand ourselves would be to classify kinds of institutions and the kinds of classification they typically use. (Douglas, 1986: 108)

And here is how I have represented, in Figure 13.3, how institutions work in the encounter between old and new through the disarrangement of the old alignment and the reconstitution of new alignment and realignments.
It would be valuable to follow the transformations of news production, particularly journalists' work, in order to see what happens with the labels: Old and new, online and offline, journalism/journalistic/journalist. Will new alignments be sealed and established? When will what label stick? Will new labels substitute old ones or will they co-exist, and if so, how?

This story is also about what a newspaper is

A wisdom is spreading in the newspaper industry: that a newspaper is not its material product. Luca de Biase, journalist at Il Sole-24 Ore, popular author of books, blogs and articles concerning the extraordinarily good-for-society possibilities of the new media, wrote on his blog a response to The Economist’s (2006) “Who killed the newspapers?”

The newspaper is not its paper. (…)

Distinguish. Paper is a medium and does not coincide with the concept of newspaper. Paper has its dynamics, its costs, and its advantages. It will come to an end, perhaps, but the newspaper will not necessarily come to an end with it. The newspaper is not
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its paper: It is the newsroom, the brand, the relationship that it has built with its public, its vision, its interpretation of the facts, its competence. And the newspaper is not its publisher either. (http://blog.debiase.com/2006/08/25.html; my translation)

He repeated this mantra, at State of the Net, at a web practitioners’ conference where he gave a speech on the economy of happiness. He repeated it on Nova24 in several articles — on the issue entitled “The society of mutual telling. The symbiotic collaboration between journalists, bloggers and active public” (4 October 2008), for example. He repeated it again in Problemi dell’Informazione, an Italian journalism quarterly review, in an article entitled “Newspaper is not its paper”.

In the same vein, Mark Bowden wrote in the Atlantic (October 2009: 48-49) that “those giant presses and barrels of ink and fleets of delivery trucks were never what made newspapers invaluable”. Rather, it was “the mission and promise of journalism”, which Bowden defines as “the hope that someone was getting paid to wade into the daily tide of manure, sort through its deliberate lies and cunning half-truths, and tell a story straight” (Bowden, 2009: 49). My conclusion in this dissertation emanating from my empirical study is, however, that the newspaper is indeed its paper, because the paper is not only paper. This does not mean that news will vanish if the printed newspapers stop circulating, as some journalists predict (see e.g. Meyer, 2004, Sabadin, 2007). Instead, it means that news and news production are what they are precisely because the newspaper has existed and exists as a paper product.

News on the web is the same and yet different from news on paper. It is the same thing thanks to the workings of the institution of news production and journalists’ work. But new on the web is another product because the new object has different features: It makes different things news and makes news a different thing. Yet I believe that the newspaper is its paper even when news is produced on another medium, as labels carry the memory of the past and practices embody history and make it present.

De Biase wrote not only that the newspaper is not its paper but also that the newspaper is not its publisher. Behind this statement we can read the opposition between the Company, which is the publisher in charge of the business, and the Newsroom, which is what a newspaper is, says De Biase (see also Chapter 11). This distinction is key to defining a newspaper and professional journalistic work. In my research, I have come across it only in a marginal way, through the investigation of the online-offline integration project. Yet, I think it is one of the most fascinating aspects of a newspaper organization and that it would be valuable to conduct research focused on the interface between the Newsroom and the Company on the influence of new technologies in shaping the relationship between the two sides of the organization.
Finally, this story is about how new media are changing our society and our knowledge

New media, in particular the web, have an impact far beyond news production onto other societal sectors, such as politics and research. As mass media play such a key role in constructing our reality, their transformation has a strong impact on our society.

The very concept of the public and public interest was traditionally perceived as fundamental to our democracies. Public opinion, the public good, and the public interest are still central concepts in our societies. They are made possible by a certain sociotechnical arrangement, of which mass media are a part, while making the arrangement legitimate (for a discussion on public service broadcasting and its institutional change, see Norbäck, 2010). The web, producing an audience that more and more comprises publics rather than a public, loaded with diverse and conflicting interests, questions the ideas of a public opinion, of a public good, and a public interest.

In the field of practice, such as organized politics, it would be valuable to investigate the co-existence of various media and how it is dealt with, and how the specific interests expressed by a web community combined with the old public interest. The new media offer politicians a new way of interacting with citizens and of persuading potential electors and supporters of the goodness of their projects: Through websites and blogs, politicians directly shape communication with their public, outside the traditional mass media. Do new media actually change the practice of politics, or are they simply a new and different way to communicate and gain consensus? In the same stream as news production, the institution of elections could be studied to investigate their workings among labels, practices and objects.

It is not only the field of politics to be influenced by media and their changes, but also the field of business. As Hjavard (2008) pointed out, we live in an increasingly mediated society. Thus, in light of other scholars’ work (see e.g. Pallas and Strannegård’s edited volume Företag och Medier, 2010), I think it would be very interesting to build on the understanding of news production practices on different media in order to further investigate the relationship between media and business organizations. Shedding light on the complex interactions between media and businesses is particularly valuable at this point of transformation of news production between old and new media.

Such a study would intersect with a study of professions in the era of new media. One of the consequences of new media may be a reshaping of the boundaries between the general public and practitioners of a profession, whether politicians or journalists or physicians – between experts and nonexperts. The web, in fact, promotes an idea of knowledge and expertise that differs from that of the world of professions. Professions exist on the basis of a specific knowledge, limited access, and a set of ethics, as described in Chapter
How Institutions Work

3. On the web, however, one relies on different parameters when searching for information. Google constructs its ranking of relevance based on clicks, links, and links to links from other websites, and on the “right” number and position of relevant words on a webpage. Google can be accessed by anybody, and in this way may acquire some of the formerly exclusive knowledge of professionals; but the most relevant source of information in Google is not necessarily the deepest or the most accurate expert, but the one that has been to most parties and thus it is most linked.

Another societal issue related to new media is what Mary Douglas has called the institutions’ remembering and forgetting. Such remembering and forgetting depends on the classifying work of the same institutions that happens among practices, objects and labels. Our knowledge and our actions depend on institutions. As this study demonstrates, new technologies are not simply new technologies. It would be more correct to say that they have implications for the way news production is performed and as a consequence of our construction of reality.

Remembering and forgetting happens in a world where objects are actively working in order to remember or forget. What does Google as opposed to mass media (or together with them) allow us to remember and forget? What does it not allow us to remember and forget?

First and last, this is a story

This dissertation is built on a narrative approach: Narrative is my choice of discourse used to analyze and present my fieldwork. Here, at the conclusion of my work, I want to reflect on the limitations of this choice.

The framework set objects, practices and labels as the main actants in my story. The story plot develops across encounters among old objects, practices and labels, encountering the new ones, initially cast as alien. Thus, the framework has helped me to identify an initial equilibrium – which I call here the old alignment – and then disequilibrium, created through these encounters with the new objects and practices, in which the new and the old end up in disarrangements and new alignments. These disarrangements and alignments appear to be temporary states of things; it is not yet certain if a new equilibrium has been reached, and what shape will it take. Thus, the story of this dissertation develops around the minimal plot where actants, or “any subject affecting any other subject” (Czarniawska, 2004: 79), produce narrative programmes that “become chained to one another” (Czarniawska, 2004: 79) and

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87 The term actant comes from Algirdas Greimas (cited in Czarniawska 2004). An actant is “that which accomplishes or undergoes an act” (2004:80): Thus anything can be an actant, as long as it acts. Only some actants through the development of the story acquire a character and become actors.
form a narrative trajectory. It is the story of an old and well known character (a network of actants called the institution of news production) that had previously successfully realised its programme, based on the old alignment, which encounters an anti-programme (new object and new practices, coming from various other characters). As the new objects and practices disturb the equilibrium, the other characters – business, for example – are trying to come with anti-programmes, disarranging the old alignment by sending in new objects, new practices, and suggesting new labels. News production, allied with journalism, defends itself, realigning as well as it can. The story is not finished because it is difficult to say what the new alignment will be and if it will defend journalistic news production (or if will it collapse like the Wizard of Oz), although the perspectives at present seem to be rather good for it to survive.

Thus, this story has reduced the complexity of empirical material to a limited number of vignettes, episodes and short conversations that involve only three types of actants:

- two objects (the newspaper and the website, labelled the old and the new, respectively);
- three areas of practice (evaluating news and newswork, in the public interest or the interests of the public, in defence of the profession);
- one label (journalism/journalistic/journalist\(^{88}\)) with some others wandering around (other new labels, such as bloggers and entertainers).

The plot of the main story of this dissertation revolves around a multitude of small events that can be summarised as one main event creating disequilibrium of the old alignment: the encounter of the newspaper with the alien, objectified in the website, the new object. This construction of the story has forced me towards some brutal simplifications. The framework, comprising three entities and the duality of old vs. new, has created a geometric space where the three actants create lines (alignments), disarrange them and create new ones. In this space, the old alignment is designed as the established metonymic relationships among paper, news production practices and journalism. Even before the arrival of the Internet, however, news production and journalistic work did not happen only on paper: Radio and television had already shaken the field of journalism and introduced new objects and new practices. My construction of the tale does not take these old new actants into account, mainly because *Il Sole-24 Ore* Newsroom did not produce news for radio or television. Nevertheless, as radio and television are in the journalistic field and *Il Sole-24 Ore* Group has a radio station and used to have a television channel, these old new actants influence the organizing of news production in the *Il Sole-24 Ore* Newsroom.

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\(^{88}\) These are three words, but I consider all of them one label because they have the very same root and they simply have different grammatical functions.
excluded this influence from my study, which certainly has led me to simplifications.

The narration in this dissertation alludes to a fairy tale now and then, although it can not pretend to that well established form, with a distinct beginning and an end, and the hero going through three realms and winning (maintaining its identity?) over many obstacles. It is an episodic, fragmented narration consisting of short stories, vignettes, conversations, interviews and documents. Indeed, as noted by Czarniawska and Hernes (2005: 13), “modern organizing is not best captured in a fairy tale format, for the contemporary organization landscape is populated by dispersed centres of calculation rather than distinct heroes.” So though I would like to convince the readers of this dissertation of the value of a narrative approach for tracing institutions at work; it needs to be remembered that narration is a form the absence or refusal of which “indicates an absence of refusal or meaning itself.” (White, 1987: 2). My narrative in this dissertation does not display a proper “coherence, integrity, fullness, and closure” (White, 1987: 27), however; rather, the text demonstrates my struggle and the impossibility of my rendering such a fiction successfully, and the impossibility of my writing a complete story.

I agree with Gherardi and Nicolini (2005): The encounter with the alien crumbles reality and leaves stories unfinished. Thus, in this dissertation I wanted to maintain the centrality of narration, while simultaneously rendering the plurality, the incompleteness and the fragmentation of the reality that I studied. The fact that these episodes do not conclude and that the disequilibrium created by the encounter of the alien does not lead to a stable new equilibrium is an inevitable consequence. This story and its stories terminate; they do not conclude. They are somewhat weakly emplotted, contradictory and broken, as chronicles tend to be. Perhaps this is a conclusion in itself.
## Appendix

Table A.1 Newspapers Circulation in Italy 2008.

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<td>358</td>
<td>780 412</td>
<td>-5.44%</td>
<td>620 605</td>
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<td>567 910</td>
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<td>16 280</td>
<td>-2.98%</td>
<td>34 052</td>
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<td>-2.98%</td>
<td>34 052</td>
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<td>E POIX</td>
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<td>513 197</td>
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<tr>
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