Newsroom dissonance: how new digital technologies are changing professional roles in contemporary newsrooms

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Part I

Chile’s media ecology, a laboratory of capitalist experimentation

Introduction

Journalism is changing. It has been transforming since its inception. However, as Schapals et al. argue, ‘recent technological, economic, and societal developments have changed its forms and arguably also its functions in fundamental ways’ (2019, p. 19). Some authors have claimed with angst and dread that the situation in journalism, both as a profession and as a practice, is actually shifting so rapidly ‘that it is difficult to get a sure sense of what is going on’ inside the newsrooms (Lemann, 2013). Digital or online journalism, which was heavily opposed by the news industry at least until the early 1990s (Kawamoto, 2003), is now rampantly transforming the ways in which information and communication technologies (ICTs) are being utilised by media workers (Westlund, 2013). Technologies inside newsrooms are mutating, and journalistic practices, norms, and values are being reshaped with them (Dörr & Hollnbuchner, 2017; O’Sullivan & Heinonen, 2008).

Members of the now large, atomised Chilean audience have witnessed, not without some measure of surprise, how journalists have started to integrate into their own routines new technological platforms and social networks (Santana & Hopp, 2016); reporters now stream live via Facebook or Instagram to their followers from inside protests or rallies across the world; new journalistic bot services send, upon request, the most important headlines of the day via WhatsApp every morning (see Gurney, 2019); debates and interviews with presidential candidates are produced exclusively for YouTube or Twitter; and if people have the correct type of subscription, then they may be able to read tomorrow’s newspaper on their tablet computer tonight. As with many other communication-related industries, news media companies are facing a growing financial crisis worldwide and have entered a scenario of hyper-competition ruled by a new attention economy (Nixon, 2017).

What these transformations entail – what they mean to the everyday modes of production of news makers – is more difficult to tell. Authors such as Deuze (2007) have noticed that media-related work is increasingly becoming more ‘liquid’. Previously, it was possible to observe clear boundaries; now we have blurry lines between role descriptions, tasks and responsibilities, ethical and economic interests, and the private and professional temporalities of media workers. Thus, despite recent efforts in the academic literature and the growing body of research regarding similar topics, I have found questions that have yet to be answered: How has the inclusion of new technologies in the newsroom changed the journalistic routine? In what way has the inclusion of new technologies influenced or transformed the production of news? How have the new temporalities and rhythms introduced by new digital platforms changed the relationship between journalists and their sources? Perhaps even more importantly, if news makers are adapting professional journalism to the digital age, as Alexander et al. (2016) wonder, then are they also adapting the digital technologies they utilise every day to match their journalistic values?

These kinds of questions about the new epoch of technology in which we live do not respond merely to a fascination for the flashy, addictive characteristics of the habit-forming modern technology that has significantly changed the way in which we consume information. Rather, as Peterson states, 'communication is […] mediated by the relations of production that are associated in a given time and place with particular media technologies' (2003, p. 7), and therefore these questions rest on the idea that the way mass communication occurs is closely intertwined with the technological transformations and economic conditions in which the communication system operates. Moreover, communication refers not only to the ability to send texts and tweets halfway across the globe, albeit important for many, but also to the ability we must have to maintain a system of checks and balances as the basis for the liberal democracies in which we live (Waisbord, 2000).

The research I present in these pages directly addresses the question of how newer digital technologies affect the production of news in journalism and how journalists themselves – and other media workers – are responding to these transformations. Notwithstanding, this study regards media production, not news reception or audience consumption routines. During my fieldwork, I found the audience to be an ever-present and yet tacit subject – something and someone for whom journalists admittedly were writing in their minds; they are 'the people formerly known as the audience', as Rosen (2006) states. Regardless, they remain an extraneous influence in the production of news and are therefore outside the immediate purview of this ethnographic research. In other words, although the audience has an important role in news production (Usher, 2013), this thesis does not measure their impact on newsrooms.

The literature that addresses media and technology can hardly offer a unified, consensual interpretation of the consequences of the phenomenon occurs when new digital technologies are introduced in the newsrooms (Örnebring, 2010). Rather, the narrative about the crisis facing journalism upon the introduction of new technologies has been described as 'sharply binary' (Butler Breese, 2016). On the one hand, it has been argued that some journalists have 'put up a furious resistance, adamantly refusing to subordinate their sacred professional ethics and idealistic civic morals to what they see as the profane, polluting logic of market and technology' (Alexander et al., 2016). Doomsayers argue that the introduction of modern-age tools are responsible for the decline in traditional journalism, and they fear a breakdown in the values over which the profession is held (Harris, 2006). Moreover, Erdal (2007) argues that the inclusion of new technologies in the newsroom is causing high levels of distress between media workers because they are constantly changing professional practices and blurring the lines between different journalistic genres.

On the other hand, however, as Boczkowski suggests, online journalists exhibit an 'occupational identity that resembled the one of their print counterparts, as defined partly by a traditional gate-keeping function and a disregard for user-author content' (Boczkowski, 2005, p. 103). Stated differently, some of the literature seems to indicate that independent of the platform on which media workers labour, some core ethical and professional values remain the same as long as workers identify themselves as journalists – as if the job title carries with it certain inherent, inalienable, agreed-upon standards. Similarly, Singer concludes that journalists normalise new technologies during the news-making process, maintaining already established 'journalistic norms and practices' (2005, p. 173). In some contexts, he argues, journalism may be enduring the technological transformations happening around itself.

With new media practices also comes new economic structures. Livingston and Bennett argue that the economic pressures imposed by new technological models of production are threatening 'traditional gatekeeping based on reporter judgement and professional editorial standards that define the quality of news organizations' (2003, p. 364). Likewise, as Menke et al. argue, 'shifting from a traditional print or broadcasting culture that has had pre-determined journalistic roles, professional norms, and routines for decades to a convergence culture where distinct boundaries and categories have blurred or vanished is a major challenge' (2018, pp. 881–882) because the allocation of resources has changed, creating new work teams within newsrooms and eliminating other traditional job positions. Similarly, the inclusion of new technologies has also demanded hiring new and more specialised professionals who are not necessarily journalists by profession or occupation.

This is the state-of-the-art that precedes this thesis: because of new digital technologies, journalism is changing rapidly and no agreement has been reached about the dimensions of that change. Yet, although we cannot concur on this problem's size or shape, we are aware that this phenomenon affects the way journalists present the news on a daily basis. With this certainty in my backpack, therefore, I embarked on seven months of ethnographic fieldwork between 2017 and 2018 to answer the main question of this research: *How are news makers* *appropriating digital technologies, and how are these innovations transforming the infrastructure, temporality, and platforms of the news-making process in Chilean newsrooms?* This doctoral research explores the news-making process in two contemporary multiplatform Chilean newsrooms to examine how journalists and media workers are appropriating digital technologies into their routines. Concurrently, this ethnographic study seeks to better understand how technological innovations and political and economic configurations are impacting the infrastructure, temporality, and platforms of the news-making process in Chile.

Following Ringel's definition, in this thesis I draw from recent works on the anthropology of time to use the concept of temporality as the temporal characteristics of 'specific groups, situations, sets of practices, institutions and material objects as well as […] certain ideas and concepts' (Ringel, 2016, p. 393). Thus, 'temporality' in this dissertation refers to the conceptualization of time by media workers through their practices and values.

Directly related with the concept of temporality, I draw from Larkin's work to define infrastructures as 'networks that facilitate the flow of goods, people, or ideas and allow for their exchange over space' (Larkin, 2013). Thus, in this thesis I use the concept of infrastructure to describe not only the materialities of the newsrooms, but also the techniques, sociotechnical systems, and material culture inside the newspaper or broadcasting offices.

The Chilean media market offers a unique opportunity to study how journalism and journalistic practices are changing with the introduction of new technologies. Predominantly closed to external investments until the 1980s, the Chilean economy has experienced an accelerated process of privatisation and deregulation in all industrial sectors, including news and entertainment media companies. Unlike other countries in the region, which have strong subsidies and state benefits for the creation of state-public media outlets, Chilean television channels and newspapers, with some exceptions (see Wiley, 2006), have had to invest large amounts of their own capital to bolster the technological innovations in their newsrooms. The competition to capture the ever-more connected and ever-more fragmented audience has encouraged media conglomerates to seek new and better strategies to report the news, including the injection and adaptation of state-of-the-art digital tools inside their newsrooms (Gronemeyer, 2013).

For this thesis, I conducted newsroom ethnography, including participant observation, and interviewed journalists from two Chilean news media organisations: *La Tercera*, a newspaper, and Canal 13, a television station. Both companies have a lengthy record in Chile, and the transformations they have undergone are the result of key political, economic, and social moments in the country's history. Moreover, the different formats with which these media operate allowed me to observe how new technologies impact the infrastructure, temporality, and platforms with which these media tell the news every day.

Questions for the field

The focus of this study has changed many times since I wrote the first research proposal in 2016. Originally, I had a vague idea of wanting to know how journalists discussed and editorially negotiated the coverage of human rights stories in a country that continues to struggle with its own political past and the memory of its recent history. As Thomsen argues, ‘national news plays a crucial role in creating the nation’s shared memory, history, knowledge and identity’ (2018, p. 9), which holds true for the Chilean case (Couso, 2011). As I witnessed during the few years that I worked as a journalist myself, human rights topics were rarely covered by traditional media. Between 2013 and 2014, I worked as a correspondent for the Spanish international news agency, Agencia EFE. Repeatedly I saw how our company was one of the few that addressed news about the dictatorial period between 1973 and 1990 in Chile. Because EFE is an international agency, I witnessed with frustration how my articles about this grim era in our history were more likely to be published in media outlets around the world than in Chile. Needless to say, an international news agency is not the same as a national newspaper or a television station. It has a different economic structure, relies less on commercial or governmental advertising, and therefore understands that it can function with a greater degree of independence. Thus, I proposed a newsroom ethnographic study of the ‘hot topics’ (as I called them) that were to occupy a dominant part of the media agenda during the coming years: the legislative discussion about same-sex marriage and migration laws. As Maeckelbergh states, ‘much anthropological research is driven by an ethical impulse – by a desire to change, or at least improve slightly, the world in which we live’ (2018), which is an idea that drove my fieldwork and the work I present in these pages. However, as I reviewed the literature about how media works, that is, how the agenda is established and journalists frame the news, the prominence of digital technologies in contemporary newsrooms repeatedly appeared in every article and every book I read. Therefore, I began to view my own research slightly differently and proposed a shift from media coverage to media production, thus conducting a study that aimed to examine how media representations of human rights issues are produced inside Chilean newsrooms.

Following the recommendations of my advisers, I later decided to instead focus on the infrastructural dimension of the news-making process rather than tackle specific topics. The idea was to study the relationship between what Wenger (1999) calls the ‘designed organization’; that is, not only the spatiality and temporality of a place but also the stratification of roles and jobs within the same and the constellation of practices that ‘gives life to the organization’ (p. 241).

As Thomsen notes in her own research, one of the benefits of conducting newsroom ethnography is that our studies can move in a circular fashion, that is, ‘from theories of the field to observations in the field and then back to re-considerations of theories of the field and so forth’ (2018, p. 15). Consequently, my research questions could also move in a circular path, as I was immersed in the field. Indeed, as I was already conducting fieldwork, I realised the unquestionable importance of the temporality and the platforms with which journalists work in the news-making process and how, concurrently, they have been impacted by the introduction of new digital technologies. It became inevitable to consider these two spheres of study as indispensable elements as I analysed media operations and addressed infrastructural dimensions. Only two years after starting this study, I arrived at a research question that aimed to illuminate how journalists are appropriating digital technologies and how these technologies are affecting the infrastructure, temporality, and platforms of the news-making process in Chilean newsrooms. Orbiting around this main research question, other queries that were organised around these three concepts accompanied me to the field: How are journalists adapting their media forms in response to the introduction of new technologies that enable new ways of reporting the news? How are news makers adapting the infrastructure of the newsroom to new digital technologies, and how does the existing infrastructure limit this adaptation process? How does the introduction of new digital technologies transform the temporality of news making, and how does it affect news makers?[2] Does the reconfiguration of media infrastructure, temporality, and form in the digital age change the way news is reported, and if so, how?

The methodological approach that I utilise to answer these questions is based on media anthropology, which is an expansive field that covers many topics. Since its popularisation in the mid-1980s (Bräuchler & Postill, 2010), media anthropology has addressed topics such as visual representations of society and photography (E. Edwards, 2001; Ruby, 2000), indigenous media (F. Ginsburg, 1994; F. D. Ginsburg et al., 2002), film (Ruby, 1976), and digital technologies (Coleman, 2010; Underberg & Zorn, 2013). As Eiselein and Topper state, 'We feel that media anthropology is an awareness of the interaction (both real and potential) between the various academic and applied aspects of anthropology and the multitude of media' (1976, p. 114). However, within this field, an area that has been underdeveloped is news and journalism. By building on the few previous studies of the anthropology of journalism, in this thesis I examine three concepts – infrastructure, temporality, and platforms – that enable me to understand how news makers are appropriating digital technologies as well as how these innovations are transforming the news-making process in Chile and creating professional dissonance. In the next section, a brief description of media anthropology is presented, followed by an approach to the anthropology of journalism and some examples that I engage throughout the development of this research. I particularly focus on Tuchman (1978) and Gans' (1979) ethnographic works, since their research informed not only the way I planned my own research but also how I organised my results.

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[2] In this thesis, I use the concept of “newsmakers” as an encompassing term to refer to all the professionals working inside the newsrooms who, in one way or another, are involved in the production, gathering, or presentation of news. The term “journalists” refers exclusively to reporters.

What can media anthropology bring to the table?

Osorio defines mass media anthropology as the 'field within the discipline dealing with the relationship between the mass media and culture. The specific point of this is how culture is transmitted through the mass media' (2005, p. 36). Therefore, he argues, media anthropology is the study of how culture shapes society when it is communicated through mass media products or outlets. Similarly, Bird argues that media anthropology is a 'way to explore the nature of news as a form of cultural meaning making – its creation, content, and dissemination' (2010, p. 1). Additionally, she identifies two particular strengths in media anthropology. First, she notes the advantages of an anthropological epistemology that compares these mediated cultural phenomena. Second, she highlights the benefits of conducting ethnography or other ethnomethodologies inside the newsroom, in contraposition with studies that remain far from their objects of study. These points have also been addressed by Rothenbuhler and Coman, who argue that ethnography brings to the study of media the potential to achieve '*thick* descriptive detail designed to reveal the contexts that give actions meaning to a community' (2005, p. 2). In this sense, for these authors, media anthropology is not merely applying old or traditional cultural anthropology objects to a new field. Rather, it raises the question of how anthropology should adapt these new objects of study and their theoretical fields. However, when Rothenbuhler later redefines media anthropology, he suggests that this field is 'to one degree or another, in varying ways and for varying purposes, the usage of anthropological concepts and methods in the study of media' (2008, p. 3). Thus, how would an anthropological approach to media look?

An anthropological approach to media suggests that studying and operationalising the human and the media independently would be unproductive. Rather, they should be regarded as interconnected aspects of a more global process of configuring the object of study (Othold & Voss, 2015, p. 75). As Alexander argues, 'new technologies can be, and are being, shaped to sustain value commitments, not only undermine them' (2016, p. 2). Thus, media anthropology informs this research because it allows the understanding of the ontologies of humans and media not as two separate categories but as 'always already intermingled facets of a broader dynamic configuration' (Othold & Voss, 2015, p. 75). Othold and Voss call this process *anthropomediality*, which is 'an umbrella term for different hybrid and temporary modes of existence, that consist of interacting heterogeneous facets and entities – organic and non-organic, human and non-human ones' (2015, p. 80). Therefore, in the following chapters, I demonstrate how both the technical and cultural-professional systems participate to produce values and ethics in news production processes that guide the work of journalists and other media workers in different platforms.

The benefits of media anthropology have also been highlighted by Askew et al., who define media anthropology as an 'ethnographically informed, historically grounded, and context-sensitive analysis of the ways in which people use and make sense of media technologies' (2002, p. 3). I draw on this definition as one of the starting points for my research. The different contexts I encountered during my ethnographic fieldwork can only be the result of historic, social, and economic events that have occurred in Chile in the past 50 years. Moreover, as Bird (2010) argues, anthropology allows you to see cultural phenomena comparatively, that is, not assuming that 'my way' (in this case, of making the news), is better or more defined than 'your way'. Similarly, Peterson argues that 'to understand what a journalist writes, it is necessary to understand his or her place in the journalistic field [and] the status of the newspaper for which the journalist writes' (2003, p. 81). Ethnography aims to 'make direct contact with social agents in the normal courses and routine situations of their lives to try to understand something of *how* and *why* these regularities take place' (Willis, 2000, p. xiii); consequently, the strength and value of newsroom ethnographies is that they enable analysis of journalistic practices and newsroom structures concurrently (Willig, 2013). For Bishara, ethnography on media production 'makes clear that news is not the product of a narrow, unified ideology. Instead, it is shaped by journalism's on-the-ground and collaborative – though by no means egalitarian –

exchanges' (2013, p. 24). Bishara highlights the complex chain of production, which is often overlooked by the media audience and consumers and even by media researchers who are responsible for the publication and broadcasting of news bits, which is under no circumstance the product of the work of one journalist alone (2010).

Some recent ethnographic works have informed my study more than others, including those that focus directly on how new technologies are affecting the journalistic routines inside newsrooms. Gürsel (2012) examines the infrastructures of representation inside the Agence-France Presse (AFP) in Paris. Specifically, she examines the roles and practices of photo department professionals. She primarily explains the circulation of visual representations and how they originate, although she realises that 'the number of new image brokers who used the Internet as a way to circulate all kinds of images […] made the consequence of changes in the infrastructure of representation [stand out] starkly' (Gürsel, 2012, p. 84). These vendors have also changed the work of photojournalists and challenged established hierarchies inside and outside the newsroom. From this example, the anthropology of journalism interprets these changes not as mere transformations in the daily work but as the mutation of the practices that 'initiate a general […] mode of enhanced experience, of transitory communicative intensification' (Pfeiffer, 2016, p. 174). By changing the tools utilised in the production and circulation of international news images, newer Internet-related technologies have radically changed the way image brokers relate to their peers as well as to their own work. We observe these changes happening with the photo- and video-sharing social networking service Instagram. Although the literature on Instagram and news consumption is only emerging (Nashmi, 2018), some authors have already investigated the effectiveness of Instagram for news consumption, especially when the content is aimed at younger generations (A. O. Larsson, 2018). Borges-Rey (2015), for example, argues that the aesthetics and affordances of the platform have produced a hybridisation of professional and amateur photojournalists; as Mark Zuckerberg states, Instagram has become 'one of the best places to get a real time snapshot of the world' (Chaykowski, 2015).

However, as Bird suggests, 'while anthropology [underwent] a "reflexive turn" a generation ago, the anthropology of *journalism* has only recently gained the maturity to even begin the process of reflecting upon its practices' (2010, p. 34). This thesis builds on those few ethnographic works that have furthered the anthropological study of journalism, such as Hannerz's anthropological foray into the world of foreign correspondents (2004): "'Remember that this is a dying occupation', said one of the first foreign correspondents I talked to, as we parted ways in a busy street in New York' (2007, p. 309). This closeness, Hannerz argues, is what media anthropologists should achieve during their ethnographic work because 'it can give a human face – better yet, a number of different faces, and voices – to large-scale, too easily anonymous processes and offer an understanding of what human agency has to do with [journalism]' (p. 231). I hope readers of this thesis will witness throughout these pages that I aimed whenever possible, as Hannerz did before me, to provide a voice to the journalists and media workers that reflects their own histories, values, and beliefs.

Hannerz's work focusses on the personal implications that digital technologies have for news correspondents, whereas Hasty's research illuminates how these same transformations affect public conversations among the audience. Hasty's ethnography on the daily routines of news making in Ghana (2005) finds that while television and radio cover the most important events in that country, Ghanaian newspapers ideally construct the mainstream narratives and political discourse to explain the most important local events and characters. The particular media practices surrounding the newspaper platform partially explain why this is happening.

Nikki Usher (2014) studies how journalists inside *The New York Times* negotiate the challenges of creating online and print content 'according to emergent online journalism values: immediacy, interactivity, and participation' (p. 4). Usher describes the power struggles between online and print editors as well as how journalists must adapt to new needs in their day-to-day work to satisfy new types of audiences. In her conclusions, she stresses that 'the great danger for this newsroom is falling subject to the rat race of the hypercompetitive world of the Web – doing stories because other people are doing them, moving as fast as everyone else, pushing out the same content, and failing to offer a distinct product that speaks with a unique, clear, authoritative voice of news coverage' (p. 238). Usher's research informed my own by emphasising the seriousness of emergent online journalism values. Usher, as many others before her, based her work heavily on previous U.S.-based studies on media production, such as those of Tuchman (1978) and Gans (1979).

Tuchman (1978) approaches the production of news making by arguing that news is a window to the world. Shouldering Goffman's framing theory, Tuchman argues that 'news media set the frame in which citizens discuss public events and […] the quality of civic debate necessarily depends on the information available' (p. ix). For Tuchman, the events that receive more coverage in newspapers or television are perceived by the public as the most relevant issues to discuss. Those issues that are rejected or receive less airtime are considered less important in public discussions and therefore are not included in the civic debate. Consequently, Tuchman starts with the question, ‘How do newsworkers decide what news is, why they cover some items but not others, and how they decide what I and others want to know?’ (p. ix). Thus, by setting the window through which we observe the world, Tuchman posits that the media outlets are involved in a routine process of social construction of reality.

Furthermore, Tuchman understands that news does not merely happen. Conversely, news is the result of the processes inside news organisations and the news workers who exist within. She, however, does not to consider the personal concerns and biases of those news workers, arguing that those are topics ‘better left to the psychologists’ (p. 2). This is perhaps my dominant departure from her research. Although I am not a psychologist, I would be unable to explain the actions of my interviewees without considering their biases, values, and inner motivations. Yet, Tuchman considers news stories to be the product of ‘cultural resources and active negotiations’ (p. 5). Thus, even when she is not examining journalists’ moral and value agendas, she understands them as relevant agents in the construction of news. This happens primarily because news provides occurrences for their *public characters*. Media enables ‘geographically dispersed individuals to know something about one another’ (p. 4), she argues. News transforms occurrences into relevant issues for unfamiliar people, and therefore, news is predominantly a social institution within which journalists are the professionals that ‘located, gathered, and disseminated’ (p. 4) the information. However, these journalists do not work by themselves. They operate under institutional processes and conform to institutional practices. I explore Tuchman’s questions about the extent to which journalists must conform to institutional practices in Chapter 5.

Central in Tuchman’s book is the question of newsworthiness and how it is understood in practice by journalists. From her own experience, she argues that for a story to be worth telling, it ‘must be judged pertinent to both speaker and listener in order to be judged newsworthy and must somehow present [itself] to the speaker in the course of the day’ (p. 8). She argues that ‘using their past experiences with the unfolding of news events, newsworkers have created classifications of newsworthy occurrences’ (p. 13). This conclusion suggests that what is news and worthy of publication responds to previous experiences in which the journalists succeeded or failed to pass an issue through their editors. Thus, I follow Tuchman, who considers news organisations to be complex bureaucracies in which ‘flexible negotiations are an organizational necessity’ (p. 31). These ideas held true throughout my entire fieldwork. As I present in the following chapters, active bureaucracy and flexible negotiations are part of a cumulative process based on journalists’ previous experiences, which digital technologies have significantly impacted by favouring the bureaucratic aspect of news production.

Perhaps the most important finding in Tuchman's work is that newsgathering must be routinised if the organisation is expected to cover unexpected occurrences. Both reporters and editors must know immediately how to respond to any event utilising the tools provided and designed by the organisation. Journalists and editors must share the same idea of what constitutes news and which occurrences could be defined as news. She argues that 'the news net is a hierarchical system of information gatherers, and so the status of reporters in the news may determine whose information is identified as news' (p. 24). Thus, she understands knowledge as power; consequently, the power of media comes from the typification and eventual dissemination of knowledge as news as well as the suppression of other ideas. For example, during her fieldwork in mainstream organisations, Tuchman learned that journalists preferred to utilise centralised sources for collecting information, such as bureaucrats, politicians, and academics. She argues that journalists, at least those with whom she worked, do not interview or seek social movements' leaders, thus proving that journalists prefer the powerful over the dissidents. I utilise this idea to conduct a particular study regarding NGOs as sources in Chapter 4.

Recent studies of media production (Bechmann & Nielbo, 2018) have begun to abandon Tuchman's 1978 interpretation of news practices, especially considering the growing impact of automated editors and filter bubbles in online news consumption (Flaxman et al., 2016). However, my own findings highlight the relevance of 'routinizing the unexpected' in the construction of journalistic values despite the shrinking resources in multiplatform newsrooms. As I demonstrate toward the end of this thesis, that same process of standardisation and routinisation in hierarchal newsrooms has, when confronted with new digital technologies, increased the level of stress for media workers as a result of the growing gap between what they feel they ought to be doing and what they actually are permitted to do.

Unlike Tuchman's interpretative sociological approach to news, Gans (1979) portrays the study of journalism as 'an empirical discipline' (p. 39). Therefore, to understand how news is made, the researcher should examine not only the results of this discipline (the news article) but also the concepts, methods, and assumptions underscoring the discipline itself: the norms and values. Reality judgements are journalists' action when they observe the nature of external reality. These judgements are the result of the empirical methods that journalists utilise to grasp the occurrences that overlap on a daily basis. However, although 'journalists try hard to be objective, […] neither they nor anyone else can in the end proceed without values' (p. 39). Thus, Gans frames his research by arguing that beneath the news is an idea or image of the country and society as it ought to be. But in Gans' idea of news production, these values do not necessarily come from journalists. Rather, journalists would not be able to identify the values behind their work since such principles are rarely explicit and can only be found by reading between the lines. According to Gans, many of these values actually originate with the sources from whom media workers acquire their information. For Gans, these sources, not the journalists, deliberately condition the values that are presented in the news. The idea that journalistic values do not necessarily emanate from journalistic practice features prominently in this research. However, I depart from Gans' research by arguing that those values do not come from the sources themselves but rather from the organisations that journalists inhabit.

Newsroom ethnography

As Eric Klinenberg (2005) states, researchers who are attempting to unveil the impact of recent technological changes on both journalists' daily routines and new patterns of media production do not commonly enter the newsrooms about which they write. Consequently, he argues, researchers can only speculate about the reasons behind their findings.

Could the data and observations that I present here have been obtained by a researcher who merely conducted interviews with journalists? Perhaps. Many of the researchers I cite in this thesis have arrived at their conclusions by interviewing journalists and simply asking them to describe their daily work. However, the aim of media anthropology is not to describe the unmediated world of the respondent; as Hastrup (1992) argues, the challenge of ethnography resides in the interpretation of data as a social relationship between ourselves and those whom we have studied. In this betweenness*,* the world of the others is understood. In this thesis, I utilise my position as a journalist and researcher not only to describe a journalist's work but also to explain the role of digital technologies in the gap between what journalists say they do and what they actually do – or at least what I saw them do during my stay in those newsrooms. For seven months, I worked, observed, and participated full-time inside two newsrooms. My fieldwork occurred in the newsrooms of *La Tercera*, the second-largest national newspaper in Chile, and Teletrece, the news department of Canal 13 television news. From August to November 2017, I wrote and reported for Teletrece's website, and from November to February 2018, I wrote for the website and newspaper of *La Tercera*. I worked full-time in both newsrooms, sometimes changing shifts to better observe the routines of different media workers throughout the day and night. The choice of these two newsrooms was based on the opportunity to observe the work of both television and newspaper journalists with physical and non-physical information technologies. Both television reporters and newspaper journalists create news content, but they do so with different technological infrastructures, temporalities, and platforms. Additionally, I had the opportunity to observe how both platforms have been impacted by new technologies and how these distinctive forms require different professionals to function. The creation of digital platforms has generated a new category of journalists and news makers that must be integrated into the news team as well as into the purview of this research.

Although my fieldwork ended over two years ago, I maintain contact with several of the journalists and media workers I met during my stay in those newsrooms. We comment regularly on news occurring in Chile, and occasionally they update me about events in their newsrooms that they believe can be useful for my research.

I was not an invisible fieldworker or a mere mechanism for recording data (see Hobbs & Wright, 2006). Rather, I am a journalist studying journalists, and this presents both advantages and disadvantages that must be addressed. Let us begin with the disadvantages of my position. Thomsen, another journalist studying journalism, argues that ‘when the culture, habits and everyday life studied are similar to one’s own, it is equally important to apply theories and methods for finding out what can be understood, what meaning can be gained’ (2018, p. 63). Consequently, one of the most important exercises during my fieldwork was to detach myself from that which, after five years of work to obtain a journalism degree, one considers self-evident. During interviews, I frequently asked questions such as, ‘What is news?’ and ‘How do you decide what news is?’ to remind myself to challenge the fundamentals of our work as journalists. This position was similar to what sociologist Bruno Latour calls ‘deliberate myopia’ (2005) in which the researcher pretends not to see what one otherwise would understand as obvious. Notably, the answers to the most basic questions I asked during fieldwork are perhaps the most relevant findings in this thesis, such as how these journalists understood the meaning of news and their roles in the media companies in which they worked.

However, being a journalist also had some advantages. Reich argues that one of the predominant problems that media researchers experience is the demand for confidentiality inside the newsrooms, which often translates to denials from editors-in-chief to allow an external investigator to wander freely inside the newsroom, strolling through desks filled with notes from recent interviews, especially as ‘it appears that mainstream news organizations increasingly refuse to open their gates to outsiders’ (2006, p. 501). Hannerz also notes this problem when interviewing foreign correspondents: ‘I have tried to make the point that I do not intend it as an attack on their work and its products. Indeed, journalists often have a reasonable suspicion that academics generally are inclined to be critical of news work and sometimes to forget the implications of such constraints as deadlines and space limits' (2004, p. 8). In *Foreign News*, an ethnographic work about foreign correspondents around the world, Hannerz urges anthropologists to understand the journalists' point of view. This argument is interesting in a context in which a substantial body of the related literature, especially pieces regarding news consumption, presents an explicit criticism of journalists' work. However, the political overtones that this kind of research could have are inescapable. As a researcher, I was (and I remain) aware of the consequences and possible weaponisation of some of the stories I tell in these pages: they could be utilised to discredit my sources, distort reality, and generally demonstrate that journalistic work is full of imperfections and susceptible to errors. It is one of the risks of peeking behind the curtain of news production. However, journalists are accustomed to this, and with the permission of the managing editors in the newsrooms of *La Tercera* and Canal 13, I include only the information essential for my arguments. All the names in this thesis are real and utilised with explicit permission. All the interviews were recorded and were on the record; the media workers explicitly agreed to this. Those who did not want to be named are instead identified by their position whenever possible.

While gaining access to the newsroom is one difficulty, much more complicated is earning journalists' trust. According to Reich (2006), an obvious difficulty is present when academic interviewers attempt to interview professional interviewees. Journalists can easily predict the answer that interviewers are seeking and may slide into certain degrees of heroism. Consequently, I utilised my participant observation as a basis for shaping the interviews I conducted. The interviews did not occur until after a specific period of time had been spent performing participant observation. Hereby, I became acquainted with the people working within the newsroom, and thus I could decide which relevant questions I should ask each person based on their work or the topics in which they expressed interest. In practice, this also meant that when an interviewee glossed over an issue presented in one of my questions – perhaps in the hopes of not elaborating upon the most complicated subjects regarding organisational censorship or gender discrimination, for example – I could simply state, 'I was there when it happened. Remember?'

This problem has also been emphasised by other researchers conducting newsroom ethnography. Thomsen, for example, claims that one frustration she encountered during her fieldwork was 'the amount of repeated phrases staff gave me when asked the same question' (2018, p. 63). This problem adds to the existing social desirability common in interviews with professionals who are marked by a strong sense of ethics, such as journalists. Social desirability is defined as the tendency to 'deny socially undesirable traits and to claim socially desirable ones and the tendency to say things which place the speaker in a favourable light' (Nederhof, 1985, p. 269). Journalists are constantly placed in the spotlight and receive pressure from both the audience and their sources; therefore, it is not unreasonable to think that, at the moment that they answer a question prepared by an outside observer, they would tend to improve their responses to resemble the teachings in the canons of ethics and appropriate behaviour in journalism. However, being in the field allowed me to first build a trusting relationship with the media workers around me and prepare questions based on my knowledge of what their role was and who they were.

However, I asked every interviewee some general questions. For example, I asked them to describe their routines on a daily basis, their relationship with their colleagues within the medium, and their strategies to contact their sources. Another general question for all workers was to describe the tools they work with every day and the utility they attribute to them. Finally, other sets of questions related to a more personal level, specific job position, and opinions I had heard them express inside the newsroom.

Another characteristic of my fieldwork is that during my time in the newsrooms, I not only interviewed journalists but also producers, camera workers, technicians, designers, and other news makers who had a significant role in the process of creating the news but whose names did not appear on bylines. Indeed, a particular focus for this research involved observing and understanding the participation of other non-journalist media workers in the production of news. This research suggests that the work of technicians, accountants, directors, and commercial producers are important in news production. Therefore, it was also important during my fieldwork to identify who they were, what they did, and how I should engage with them. From my first day in each newsroom, I learned the power distribution within the newsroom and asked myself questions such as, 'Who are the decision-makers here?' or 'Who approves the topics to be covered?' and 'Who decides if a topic may be relevant material for a news story?'

As I mentioned previously, I also worked as a journalist in the newsrooms, which meant that I was writing, editing, and publishing stories on a regular basis. Consequently, I was in constant contact with sources and other interested parties, such as NGOs, politicians, and government officials. This allowed me to experience firsthand the rhythms of the relationships between sources and journalists. Furthermore, I pitched my own stories and witnessed firsthand the reasons offered to justify the newsworthiness of a story.

During my fieldwork, I quickly adapted to the language utilised by journalists and other media workers, which was both highly professional and specific. Words such as *angle, break, sources,* *evergreen, masthead, slot editor, splash, tag, spike,* and *skyscraper* indicated that the journalistic work had been performed with a particular level of specificity. Have new digital technologies affected the specificity of journalistic work? When journalists now need to dialogue with non-journalist colleagues, how are they communicating with each other? These were some of the questions I had before beginning my fieldwork.

Without doubt, my personal background impacted the way I collected data. However, this background also allowed me to experience the newsroom differently than many others. The newsroom is where ‘news habitus’ meets the journalistic ‘gut feeling’ (Schultz, 2007; Willig, 2013). Specifically, the rapid implementation of technological innovations at Teletrece (the news department at Canal 13) and *La Tercera* was transforming these newsrooms into environments where many characters gathered, each with different functions and qualifications, and I was eager to meet them all.

Two ethical frameworks

Before I embarked upon my fieldwork in Chile, I was already aware of two categories of ethical considerations that had the potential to conflict with each other during my time in the newsrooms: the journalistic and the anthropological. I knew that I would have to tussle with these considerations even before I entered any of the newsrooms and would continue to do so after I left. These ethical frameworks would be in a constant state of bargaining and negotiation with each other, pushing the boundaries of where one started and the other ended.

The first of these considerations relates to journalism ethics and standards, which are described as a code of beliefs that encompass matters such as public trust, fairness, and accountability. The subset of media ethics under which I work includes protecting my sources and colleagues as well as deciding which parts of the information I gathered during my fieldwork would be appropriate to utilise as an anthropologist. The second set of ethical considerations relates to anthropological ethics for research, which have been described by organisations such as the American Anthropological Association. During my research, I carefully weighed ethical considerations, and I continue to do so. My subject was journalists and their practices, and I was working on a daily basis as a reporter; therefore, during my fieldwork I approached some of the data as a journalist and some as an anthropologist. Hasty (2010) also makes note of these contradictions. She argues that ‘at first glance, anthropologists and journalists may seem to share an idealistic commitment to strategic forms of discursive representation that champion the voiceless against the abuses of power’ (p. 137). However, and as I will show in this chapter, the relationship between power and journalism is much more contradictory than the one between power and anthropology. That is, anthropologists have the ‘luxury’ as Hasty calls it, to maintain a more oppositional relationship with power (government, business, so on) than journalism could ever possibly afford itself.

I illustrate these ideas with an example. During my fieldwork, I had contact with a diverse group of sources almost every day. Those interactions were based on the presumption that they were working with a journalist from X media organisation. Therefore, they correctly assumed that I would only publish the information that we agreed beforehand was on the record. However, as someone conducting participant observation, I was also considering the entire interaction between the sources and myself. That is not to say that I have included in this thesis information that I explicitly agreed would be off the record. Rather, a grey space exists between those two concepts that comprises the daily interactions, greetings, tones, and phrases that my sources utilised, and I have indeed included these components in my analysis. I have ensured, however, that the grey-space information I provide about these sources in this thesis has been successfully anonymised and cannot be utilised to trace a specific person.

Yet, journalists and journalism are constantly under heavy criticism. Their work often implies criticism of others and relates negative stories about political or influential figures. Consequently, one may reasonably expect that the results obtained during this research, once published, could be utilised to strengthen criticism against the journalists I interviewed and the organisations in which they worked. As the person responsible for this research, I cannot control the ways in which the results of this investigation can be employed to harm the journalists who trusted me during my fieldwork. This danger, however, increases the importance of utilising ethical criteria in the dissemination of information collected during my fieldwork.

This situation encourages a broader discussion about the collision of two sets of guidelines in the same research. The researcher must constantly analyse and identify which bits of all available information inside the newsroom meet both types of ethical standards. Researchers experience difficulty predicting the type of information that they will receive during interviews with journalists; consequently, they must be aware of the consequences that a mistake in these aspects may carry to those involved. Publishing the wrong kind of information would endanger the delicate relationship that journalists have with their sources and the bonds of trust that are created from that relationship.

Other ethical considerations relate to the information I gathered about the journalists themselves as well as other professionals working inside the newsrooms. For example, during my fieldwork I had access to several WhatsApp groups in which journalists freely opined, to utilise a candid word, about politicians, academics, or other regular sources who appeared on the news. As a journalist, I do not have an off-the-record obligation toward the information I collected from those groups, as the off-the-record tool exists only between reporters and sources. Nothing prevents any of those journalists in these groups from taking screenshots of the chats and publishing them online, except that they probably would become unemployed quickly. As an anthropologist, however, I am aware of the negative consequences that mismanagement of this information could have for everyone participating in those chats (see Barbosa & Milan, 2019). Hence, I have a tacit off-the-record agreement with these reporters.

Knowing the unpredictability of the events that could occur during the fieldwork, I conducted some research before I started working in these two Chilean newsrooms. I contacted the editors of each media outlet and jotted the implications of having an external researcher observing their journalists. Additionally, I told them some, although not all, of the things I planned to observe during my stay. Why only some? As Hammersley and Atkinson note, 'ethnographers rarely tell *all* the people they are studying *everything* about the research' (2014, p. 210). This happens for many reasons, but the one that relates most to my research concerns the fact that I simply did not know particularly well what I would find once I arrived at Canal 13 or *La Tercera*. Each newsroom is an ecosystem in itself with different logistics of operation, sources of financing, and dissimilar professionals for various functions. I did, however, explain to the editors that, regardless, I would observe the ways and routines in which journalists and other professionals worked and the impact of new technologies on the news-making process.

Another ethical question that arose before I began my fieldwork related to the inevitability of publishing information that could be viewed negatively by journalists and reporters. However, one of anthropology's ultimate goals, as with any social science, is to generate knowledge, even if this knowledge presupposes a criticism that could affect the reputation of those involved. Another difficult situation arises regarding this point. Anthropologists generally offer their subjects the ability to decline to participate in their research, which I also offered in my interviews. However, I could not extend the same courtesy during participant observation. Once I entered the newsroom, every person and every object that I could observe was observed, including all conversations, interactions, calls, and meetings. It was important, therefore, that I actively reminded my colleagues of my true intentions in the newsroom and the consequences of sharing information with me.

Furthermore, two conditions allowed me to acquire permission to enter the newsrooms without any major complications. As I commented previously, the first concerned my studies and experience, however limited, as a journalist who was writing as a correspondent for a news media agency. Therefore, I presented myself as someone who had something to offer in exchange for them granting me access: I could report and produce news while I was working in each newsroom.

The second involved my age when I started my fieldwork. While I presented myself as a doctoral student, I believe that being 26 years of age when I arrived allowed me to be seen as less threatening than if I had been an older anthropology professor. Additionally, I believe that, concurrently, it enabled my argument of wanting to learn how journalists work to seem truer than if I was an academic with years of media studies experience.

However, my ability to camouflage myself in the sea of journalists in each newsroom – in which the majority of people appeared to be near my age – also presented an ethical dilemma: 'even when the fact that research is taking place is made explicit, it is not uncommon for participants quickly to forget this once they come to know the ethnographer as a person' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2014, p. 210). Thus, the same conditions that could ease my entrance to the newsroom could also cause journalists to forget that my actual role was to study their behaviour and processes.

Breaking any of the ethical rules, whether journalistic or anthropological, could have consequences not only for me, my interviewees, or my sources, but also for other academics and researchers who conduct future fieldwork in the same media organisations as myself. As Hammersley and Atkinson state, 'research that is subsequently found objectionable by the people studied and/or by gatekeepers may have the effect that these and other people refuse access in the future' (2014, p. 218). Thus, the research I present in these pages considers the implications that my results may have for future studies.

Finally, while I was conducting fieldwork, I trusted my own criteria – my 'gut feeling', as Schultz calls it – to know which ethical framework to utilise in any specific moment.

Chapter outline

Seven months of ethnographic fieldwork, writing and publishing 50 news articles, and endlessly capturing recordings and field notes have allowed me to conclude that the impact of new digital technologies in media infrastructures, temporalities, and forms is producing a high level of professional dissonance in contemporary Chilean journalists who work in television, web, and newspapers. Professional dissonance is defined as 'a feeling of discomfort arising from the conflict between professional values and job tasks' (Floyd, 2012). The temporalities, infrastructures, and platforms in journalism have been impacted by the introduction of new technologies, which have frequently been implemented following mere economic motivations. This impact has created a lack of harmony between the way journalists are expected to work, the topics they are expected to cover, and the journalistic values they hold true. As Rosa posits, ‘human beings perform activities happily and joyfully when said activities contain within themselves the ultimate objective that defines them’ (2019, p. 8). In this thesis, I argue that the transformation of organisational culture and norms due to the introduction of new technologies and editorial decisions has altered the objective of journalism. Those journalists and media workers who practice journalism as an activity now have difficulty finding in their routines the objective that they feel should define the profession.

In the following chapters, I present the ruptures, assimilations, and extinctions in journalistic professional values. First, however, in the opening chapter of this thesis, I focus on recent political and economic history in Chile. I explain how the accelerated processes of privatisation and market deregulation have impacted the media industry in the country. Drawing from media scholars who focus on Chile and Latin America, I demonstrate how the political transition to democracy in the 1990s has affected the economic growth and market domination of private media companies in the country. Chapter 1 follows the story of one of the oldest men working today in Chilean television, thus laying out the current economic and political situation regarding the media industry with a focus on audience competition, Internet penetration, and social media presence. The main argument of this chapter is that the deregulation experienced in the country since the end of the dictatorship in 1990 has led to a competitive market in which companies have been forced to heavily invest in technological innovations to capture the audience’s fidelity. In turn, these innovations have changed the priorities of media organisations, forcing the submission and conversion of traditional journalistic values to market-oriented goals and paving the way to the increase of dissonance in Chilean newsrooms.

The second part of the thesis covers the main findings of my fieldwork. In this chapter, I examine how newsrooms are adapting the channels that they employ to tell the news, ranging from social networks to online broadcast platforms. Here I explain why and how new channels and platforms have been included, by whom, and how journalists are adapting to these changes.

Chapter 3 elaborates on the digitalisation of news production, the transformation of reporting tools, and the physical changes that newsrooms have undergone because of the introduction of digital technologies. My main argument in this chapter is that newsroom infrastructures have experienced radical transformations in recent years, both in the physical materiality and in the relationship of power and subordination among the media workers. This chapter also argues that this change is ongoing and is likely to continue to transform with every new technology introduced to its structure.

Notions of time in news making are the main topic in Chapter 4. This chapter delves into the current debate in the literature regarding the concept of temporality that examines whether journalism should accelerate or decelerate. As Starkman argues, media workers are accelerating their production by becoming hamsters trapped in metal wheels: ‘The Hamster Wheel isn’t speed; it’s motion for motion’s sake. The Hamster Wheel is volume without thought. It is news panic, a lack of discipline, an inability to say no’ (2010). However, the argument in this chapter extends beyond the time utilised to report the news and presents the ways in which time is experienced inside and outside the newsroom: between editors and journalists, journalists and their peers, and journalists and the audience as well as from the feedback that media workers receive from the audience’s online responses. I utilised data from my fieldwork regarding the usage of WhatsApp to illustrate how this instant mobile application has forced journalists to adapt their daily tasks and journalistic values.

The final part of this thesis centres on the theoretical and practical implications of my results. By building on the information presented in the previous chapters, Chapter 5 examines how temporality, media forms, and infrastructure are increasing the feeling of professional dissonance inside Chilean newsrooms. The interrelationship of the different concepts that are being affected by the introduction of digital technologies is discussed here to offer a more comprehensive overview of professional dissonance in journalism.

The idea of professional dissonance has been growing slowly in the literature regarding media and technology. Specifically, a mismatch between journalists’ values and practices has been identified in the literature that observes the increasing impact of audience metrics inside newsrooms (Bunce, 2019; Tandoc, 2014). Undurraga (2017) was the first to apply the concept of professional dissonance to news making. Drawing on newsroom ethnography as well, Undurraga observes journalists from different platforms invoking different principles to determine newsworthiness. For Undurraga, the idea that professionals from different platforms have dissimilar valuations of principles such as access and accountability not only affects how journalists believe they should report on certain issues but also ‘concerns journalistic ways of knowing’ and ideal service to their communities.

The infrastructure, time, and platforms that newspaper, television, and web journalists work with is evolving. This diversity has traditionally produced a specific journalistic culture that favours some and hinders others who work in what is considered a less serious medium.

However, the introduction of new technologies has begun to change relationships within the newsroom in favour of those who adapt more quickly and understand newer technologies. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes this thesis by extracting key insights presented and establishing how and why the results herein relate to other research results in the literature, offering potential new tactics and recommendations for future newsroom ethnographies.