

**“Pivoting to Instability”:
Metajournalistic Discourse, Reflexivity
and the Economics and Effects of a Shrinking Industry**

PATRICK FERRUCCI
MICHELLE ROSSI
University of Colorado-Boulder, USA

Since 2007, the field of journalism in the United States experienced what some might call a consistent and never-ending stream of layoffs. While research in journalism studies attempts to explain this labor precarity, this study uses metajournalistic discourse to understand how the field itself explains the reasons behind layoffs and the effects they have. This study found that while the industry acknowledges that layoffs negatively affect the quality of news, it lacks any semblance of reflexivity through blaming all financial issues facing the field on factors outside of journalism. The article ends by theorizing what this means for the practice moving forward, and how a lack of reflexivity potentially makes it significantly difficult for journalists to improve practice.

Keywords: business of journalism, media economics, metajournalistic discourse, journalism studies, media sociology

Since the 19th century and its transformation into a professionalized industry, the field of journalism in the United States faced constant economic threats from all directions, from decreasing credibility to ethical controversies to technological innovation to profit-hungry ownership (Bagdikian, 2004; Baldasty, 1992). However, over roughly the last two decades, most saliently since the financial crisis of 2007–2008, that growing economic precarity primarily manifested itself in significant job losses throughout the industry. *Poynter* noted that recently “layoffs have been a fact of life for American journalism” (Hare, 2020, para. 2). The number of employed journalists within legacy news in the United States is currently at its lowest number since *Poynter* began keeping track in 1978 (Hare, 2020; Jurkowitz, 2014). With revenues from advertising sinking, journalism organizations, especially legacy media, continue attempting to increase profits by laying off journalists, especially veterans of the field, and running operations with a smaller, less-experienced group of journalists (Maharidge, 2016). And this gutting of American newsrooms cannot simply be explained away through the loss of advertising revenues as “long before Google and Facebook started gobbling up advertising revenue, newsroom hiring froze and investigative teams were dissolved as corporate and hedge fund owners sought ever fatter quarterly returns” (Bauerlein, 2017, para. 1). In short, the state

Patrick Ferrucci: patrick.ferrucci@colorado.edu

Michelle Rossi: michell.rossi@colorado.edu

Date submitted: 2022-02-15

Copyright © 2022 (Patrick Ferrucci and Michelle Rossi). Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives (by-nc-nd). Available at <http://ijoc.org>.

of the newsroom in the United States remains bleak, as the number of journalists employed continues to shrink annually.

The ramifications of these shrinking newsrooms may not have seemed evident back in 2007 when layoffs started becoming ubiquitous across the industry (Saul, 2007), but they absolutely became salient in last year or so when the COVID-19 pandemic catalyzed a wave of layoffs at an unprecedented pace, a wave that came “just as the public is hungry for information about the pandemic” (Flynn, 2020, para. 2). The most hard-hit segment of news organizations is unequivocally local news, where smaller journalistic operations have been cut continuously, in some cases leaving areas of the country completely bereft of news (Abernathy, 2018).

Abernathy (2018) found that these areas of the country without access to local news—news deserts—were becoming more and more common, and that “the fate of communities and the vitality of local news—whether delivered over the Internet, the airwaves or in print—are intrinsically linked” (p. 7). She argued that local news in this digital age is becoming more and more of a service only available in large and affluent communities, the places advertisers covet, and subscription dollars abound. Without local journalists, corruption becomes easier to hide from citizens and “local government will get a pass” because there are now no watchdog journalists to hold them accountable (Casey, 2008, para. 5). In 2020, for example, the industry in the United States lost more than 16,000 jobs, a figure that bested the prior record—which occurred in 2008—by about 13% (Chan, 2021). This loss of jobs is not only a threat to journalists themselves, but it is a significant threat to democracy, something that theoretically cannot be sustained without an informed public. As noted by Bauerlein (2017), “the economics of news simply no longer guarantee the kind of deep, unflinching reporting that we’re going to desperately need” in these times of corruption, misinformation, and political polarization (para. 11). But what is to blame for the precariousness of journalism in the United States? Is it simply that the industry operates within a capitalistic marketplace?

This current study aims to identify and better understand how the journalism industry in the United States itself explains its economic predicament. To accomplish this goal, the study analyzes metajournalistic discourse from journalistic trade magazines surrounding the topic of layoffs in the industry. Metajournalistic discourse is public expressions that evaluate news, the practices that produce it, and the factors affecting the reception of it (Carlson, 2016). The journalism industry is discursively constructed, one that relies on public discourse to legitimize and delegitimize practices, normative behaviors, and overall beliefs concerning the industry (Carlson, 2016; Zelizer, 1993). It is therefore important to analyze and understand how reflexive journalists are concerning issues facing their industry (Klocke & McDevitt, 2013).

Literature Review

The Economics of Journalism

Before the birth of professionalized journalism in the United States, the industry began as an organ for political parties, with numerous newspapers each disseminating information echoing specific ideologies (Schudson, 1978). Between this time and the commercialization of the field in the late 19th century, journalism almost took on a Wild West quality, with various differing market models existing (i.e., Baldasty,

1992; Banning, 1999; Lee, 1990). However, as the 19th century ended, an almost unilateral market model for journalism arose: an advertising-funded one (Baldasty, 1992). Essentially, news organizations relied on revenue from advertisers to operate; most organizations even charged subscribers at rates lower than cost since increasing the amount of subscribers and readers resulted in larger rates for advertising (McChesney & Nichols, 2011). This market model, one in which advertising essentially pays for the cost of news production, effectively funded the journalism industry in the United States for the majority of the 20th century (Kaye & Quinn, 2010). While some exceptions such as nonprofits like National Public Radio or the *Christian Science Monitor* existed, the majority of legacy news operations—print, broadcast, and radio—operated under this model.

For roughly the first half of the 20th century, wealthy families in communities owned local newspapers, while the Communication Act of 1934 allowed the government to regulate television and radio ownership (Bagdikian, 2004). As news became more and more profitable, though, it attracted the attention of larger corporations and, eventually, conglomerates (Bagdikian, 2004). Therefore, by the end of the 20th century, most news organizations across platforms became part of larger chains whose primary interest in journalism revolved around profits and, consequently, informing the public and strengthening democracy became, at best, a secondary concern (McManus, 1992). This conglomeration of news had little discernable effect on staff sizes while profit margins at news organizations remained strong (Lacy, 1989). But as, over time, profit margins started to decrease, the need for stable profit margins manifested itself in staff reductions (Cohen, 2015). With the advent and mass adoption of the Internet, advertising became less reliant on media for dissemination, and audiences began to consume journalism online and through mobile devices, lessening the need for physical advertising that brought in far more revenue than digital advertising for journalism organizations (Kaye & Quinn, 2010).

The financial crisis of 2007 and 2008 exacerbated an already negative situation in journalism (Saul, 2007). With advertising revenue already falling, the crisis made that issue more acute, and it forced those inside and outside of journalism to question the sustainability of journalism's traditional market model (Abernathy, 2018). The combination of the democratization of digital technologies and the financial crisis of 2007 and 2008 also catalyzed an already burgeoning wave of innovation concerning journalism business models. While the beginning of digitally native nonprofit journalism is often credited to *Voice of San Diego* in 2004, the decade of the 2000s saw a substantial increase in digitally native news nonprofits opening across the United States (e.g., Ferrucci, 2019b; Kennedy, 2013; Konieczna, 2018). These organizations diversified journalism's traditional revenue system by not only earning capital from advertising but also from hosting live events (Larson, 2015), from receiving government subsidies (Nee, 2014), by merging with established public radio stations (Belair-Gagnon, Nelson, & Lewis, 2019; Ferrucci, Russell, Choi, Duffy, & Thorson, 2017), from membership from the audience (Price, 2020); or from grants from foundations (Benson, 2018).

Beyond digitally nonprofit news organizations providing journalism to local areas (Konieczna, 2018) and nationally (Browne, 2010), the last two decades have seen an influx in numerous other types of news business models in the United States. For-profit news from organizations as varied as the nationally focused *Buzzfeed* (Tandoc, 2018; Tandoc & Foo, 2018) or even more hyperlocal sites are now becoming more popular (Paulussen & D'heer, 2013). The media landscape has also seen the emergence of news

organizations funded through venture capital money (Ferrucci, 2021), and others through extremely wealthy benefactors (Kennedy, 2018; McChesney, 2016). These models and others join increasingly conglomerated legacy media organizations operating nationwide (Miller, 2002). While cost cutting, especially through staff layoffs, at legacy media catalyzed many out-of-work journalists into starting new organizations with nontraditional business models (Ferrucci, 2015; Konieczna, 2018), the recent pandemic negatively impacted all types of journalistic organizations (Hare, 2020). The unexpected declines in revenues and operating capital made employment in journalism even more precarious (Harris & Miller, 2020).

The concept of labor precarity typically revolves around the notion of organizing labor in ways that align with market logics or, in other words, "precarity is a mechanism of control that determines the temporality of workers, destroying the division between work time and nonwork time, requiring workers not to work all the time but to be constantly available to work" (Hardt & Negri, 2009, p. 146). Since the proliferation of digital technologies, labor precarity became an increasingly prevalent problem across the United States, but especially within the cultural industries such as journalism (Salamon, 2016). Coinciding with the financial crisis of 2007 and 2008, it became far more difficult to find employment in journalism, especially if people wanted to be paid (Örnebring, 2018). This "precarious nature of journalists' work is a feature of contemporary journalism" (Matthews & Onyemaobi, 2020, p. 1837). In some ways, the lack of full-time employment in journalism can provide journalists with the autonomy needed to pursue stories of their choosing, and it can also provide flexibility, especially for women who can choose "career flexibility and opportunities to combine work with non-work commitments" (Salamon, 2016, p. 983). But on the contrary, entrepreneurial or non-full-time employment results in lower pay and organizations not providing benefits such as health care, sick days, or retirement packages (Cohen, 2015; Salamon, 2016). In short, labor precarity in journalism overwhelmingly leads to more negative than positive consequences for journalists (Örnebring, 2018). This precarity, on the whole, also results in lower-quality journalism for citizens (Russ-Mohl, 2006).

In scholarship, researchers have targeted numerous reasons for labor precarity and the overall declining economic health within the journalism industry. While scholars agree that technological disruptions within the field and the overwhelming decline in revenues from print and broadcast advertising are the main factors for this precarity, they are not the only ones. Much research, beginning decades ago, partly attributes journalism's economic problems to a disconnection with its audiences, arguing that the field no longer adequately serves citizens (Rosen, 1999). More recent work echoes the same sentiment: The journalism industry needs to change its practices and more acutely engage with audiences if it wants to remain relevant to communities (Belair-Gagnon et al., 2019). Other work focuses on this same problem, just with more specificity, contending that journalism tends to virtually ignore marginalized communities at the expense of concentrating resources on more wealthy and White communities (Usher, 2021; Wenzel, 2019). The lack of diversity in journalism coverage could also be traced back, according to scholars, to the lack of diversity in newsrooms, which exacerbates the field's already perilous relationship with many non-White and nonwealthy communities (Awad Cherit, 2008; Kilgo & Harlow, 2019). Finally, others have maintained that the journalism industry reacted to a negative financial outlook by eliminating the jobs of more seasoned journalists, which directly resulted in less quality in news, something that clearly affected the bottom line of the industry (Ferrucci, 2018). Therefore, while the journalism field, over the last approximately 15 years, faced many unforeseen or unavoidable disruptions that negatively affected the industry financially, scholars also point

to very controllable decisions as reasons for labor precarity within journalism. Consequently, while scholars have pointed toward various factors catalyzing layoffs in journalism, how does the industry itself place blame and measure its effects? One way to determine this is by analyzing metajournalistic discourse.

Metajournalism and the Theory of Metajournalistic Discourse

All types of journalism are a form of discourse, as they inform and define how we understand social phenomena (Zelizer, 1993). For journalists themselves, much of what they believe to be the norms, ethics, and practices of the profession come from various types of published discourse as journalism is a socially constructed field or an "interpretative community" (Zelizer, 1993). A socially constructed profession such as journalism is something that remains fluid in its attempts to provide the role needed by citizens, and the profession typically reflects the culture in which it is created. To bring together many disparate concepts that help us understand how journalism is discursively defined, Carlson (2016) explicated the concept of metajournalistic discourse. He contended that because the "ways of doing journalism are inseparable from ways of understanding journalism," studying this type of discourse allows scholars the ability to understand "how utterances about journalism shape news practices and the meanings attached to these practices" (Carlson, 2016, p. 350). Simply defined as journalism about journalism (Craft & Thomas, 2016), metajournalistic discourse is the type of published text that can help us understand how the industry of journalism is constructed "through both the exercise of institutionalized news practices and through explicit interpretative processes justifying or challenging these practices and their practitioners" (Carlson, 2016, p. 350). In other words, when journalists publicly comment about the field itself, it typically provides both insiders and outsiders the ability to better understand "what journalists say about their capacity to do what they ought to do" (Craft & Thomas, 2016, p. 1). Metajournalistic discourse also provides researchers with a clear opportunity to understand how reflexive journalists are within their communications inside the industry (McDevitt & Ferrucci, 2018). As noted by Klocke and McDevitt (2013), understanding how reflexive journalists are concerning their profession provides an important window into understanding journalists' capacity for change. Ahva (2013) argued that a true understanding of a profession requires reflexivity and, therefore, a lack of reflexivity would, in turn, signal a lack of understanding of how outside forces can and should impact professional norms. Various critical incidents in journalism such as reform movements like public journalism often catalyze reflexivity (Ahva, 2013), so the current financial situation within United States' journalism should do the same. In short, understanding how reflexive journalists are about certain factors impacting the profession is hugely important in terms of better understanding why journalism does what it does and how it will adapt in the future (Ferrucci & Canella, 2021; González de Bustamante & Relly, 2016).

In his theory of metajournalistic discourse, Carlson (2016) articulated the three main components of metajournalistic discourse and contended that these components should remain at the forefront of all studies concerning such discourse, as they provide the necessary context for analysis. The first component is site/audiences, which explains where the discourse is published. It is impossible to separate audiences and site because the site affects how the audience interprets the message, and who the type of audience depends on the site. The second component is the topic of the discourse. The topic can be reactive, meaning it concerns one particular occasion, or it can be generative, meaning it concerns the entirety of the industry.

Finally, the third component comprises the actors who compose the discourse, either journalists or the audience. In other words, journalism “is a profession that relies on internal and external actors discursively legitimizing and justifying its practices” (Ferrucci, 2019a, p. 288), and, thus, metajournalistic discourse provides a site where this type of discourse becomes visible to all. This type of discourse, most saliently, provides a meaning system that those within the field can then put into practice (Schmidt, 2010).

In recent years, scholars have studied metajournalistic discourse in pursuit of knowledge surrounding three outcomes of this type of discourse: definitional control, boundary work, and legitimation (Carlson, 2016). In short, by studying this type of discourse, scholars can understand how journalists internally define key concepts (Ferrucci & Taylor, 2018; Vos & Thomas, 2019), define boundaries between, for example, what is an ethical practice and what is not (Ferrucci & Schauster, 2022; Hindman, 2005), or legitimate or delegitimate occurrences within the field such as *The New York Times* eliminating its ombudsman or public editor position (Ferrucci, 2019a). For this particular study, we turn to generative metajournalistic discourse to better understand how journalists explain labor precarity in the field and how they perceive its effects. Therefore, this study asks the following research questions:

RQ1: How does the metajournalistic discourse from industry trade magazines explain the reasons behind layoffs in journalism since 2007?

RQ2: How does the metajournalistic discourse from industry trade magazines explain the effects of layoffs in journalism since 2007?

Method

To conduct a study such as this one that aims to understand the notions undergirding journalism by analyzing metajournalistic discourse, it is essential to understand that this work views journalism, as Carlson (2016) wrote, “as a variable practice situated within shifting social, economic, and technological contexts” because “this perspective opens up space for a conceptualization of metajournalistic discourse as the means through which journalistic practices, norms, and institutions come to be legitimated or contested” (p. 354). Therefore, this work follows the pattern of the vast majority of similar studies by utilizing textual analysis (i.e., Vos & Singer, 2016). Vos and Singer (2016) contended that a study such as this, one that examines a very particular issue within the field of journalism, only aspires to “modest empirical goals,” but still makes an important and significant contribution by illuminating important beliefs present in the industry (p. 149). When conducting a textual analysis, researchers aim to uncover various interpretations, which allows for more extensiveness concerning what readers could infer from the discourse (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Textual analysis is optimal for this type of work because it lets researchers analyze and contextualize how ideas and concepts are being constructed in the data.

To gather data for this particular study, we conducted a search for the terms “precarity,” “layoffs,” and “financial crisis.” The data come from industry a corpus of trade magazines as defined by Vos and Singer (2016), a corpus of 17 publications that include trade journals, content from journalism institutes, and more traditional trade magazines. This study only concerns itself with publications from the United States, so, as noted by Ferrucci, Nelson, and Davis (2020), we could “eliminate any potential differences due to national

variances" (p. 1592). This study, along with dozens before it, only includes trade magazines for specific reasons. First, while it is acknowledged that these publications might not reach a majority of professional journalists, they have an outsized impact in terms of reflecting the current norms and belief systems of the field (Carlson, 2016). Essentially, for any industry, trade magazines act as a central site of metadiscourse since industry-focused content is unambiguously concerned with said industry communicating to itself; regardless of field, trade publications are tasked with defining the industry to those inside of it (Hyland, 2017). Therefore, in total, for this study, we searched for articles from January 1, 2007, through June 1, 2021. This left us with 168 articles to analyze (see Table 1).

Table 1. Publications Included in the Analysis.

Publication	Number of articles
<i>American Journalism Review</i>	10
<i>Broadcasting and Cable</i>	36
<i>Columbia Journalism Review</i>	23
<i>Editor and Publisher</i>	6
<i>Extra!</i>	10
<i>Folio</i>	8
<i>Grassroots Editor</i>	10
<i>Media Magazine</i>	3
<i>Media Report for Women</i>	6
<i>Mediashift</i>	10
<i>NiemanLab</i>	10
<i>Poynter</i>	24
<i>Quill</i>	6
<i>Reynolds Journalism Institute</i>	6
Total Articles	168

This total *N* for articles is very similar to the total *N* from other similar studies (i.e., Vos & Singer, 2016; Vos & Thomas, 2019). The unit of analysis for this study is each total article featuring metajournalistic discourse. To better emphasize this study's focus on the journalism industry as an institution, the following findings section once again follows the model implemented by both Vos and Singer (2016), among others, in that it does not identify the names of publications, writers, or speakers of a quotation. If identified, this information would inevitably privilege some outlets and not others. This information would take away from the themes presented by the industry as a whole.

The researchers analyzed the data in the empirical manner defined by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995). This process includes three distinct steps: First, researchers read through the entirety of the data, making notes about how the publications considered the concepts. Second, researchers once again read through the data, this time looking for emergent themes or patterns. Finally, the researchers return to the data once more, this time with themes in mind, and write notes and observances concerning these themes. After completing all three stages, one researcher wrote the findings section.

Findings

After a thorough analysis of the data, three themes emerged concerning each research question. For the first research question, the three surfaced themes are: inside the newsroom economics, outside the newsroom economics, and a need for innovation. For the second research question, the three emergent themes are as follows: a loss of institutional memory, a decrease of important work, and a need to do more with less. The following section elucidates these findings by research question.

The Reasons Behind Layoffs

The first research questions posed by this study asked how the metajournalistic discourse from trade magazines analyzed explained why layoffs have occurred in journalism since 2007. Essentially, the question seeks to answer how the journalism industry itself explains layoffs.

Inside the Newsroom Economics

The most prominent theme that emerged surrounding how the metajournalistic discourse analyzed explained why layoffs in journalism have occurred since 2007 concerned various economic reasons emanating directly from newsrooms. The reason most consistently blamed for layoffs revolved around the rather nebulous idea of declining revenues within news. Discourse discussing revenues noted facts such as "revenues (have been) flat for the past four years, (while) newsprint costs are going up." Sometimes, this fact was made even more ominous, with numerous articles espousing the idea that "newsroom revenues (are) in free fall." According to the discourse analyzed, though, the idea that revenues have been "in free fall" is consistent across the time period examined. Numerous articles in 2007 noted that the country-wide economic downturn resulted in a crumbling of revenues in news, while in 2021, the economic impact of the pandemic "has thrown a wrench into the revenue plans of virtually every news publisher out there, big or small." In short, regardless of the time period, revenues in news have been decreasing. Some articles also directly connected this to layoffs by arguing that "the revenue is not supporting the old way we operated," or that organizations need "to re-engineer the newsroom to operate in a world with new revenue realities." Beyond the more general concept of revenues, much discourse more specifically talked about declining readership/viewership as the cause of that lower revenue. Many articles mentioned "shedding millions of" readers or viewers. For much of the discourse, declining readers and viewers led to a downturn in advertising, specifically digital advertising, the historic main source of revenue for news. The data made this point with commentary about the "long-term declines in print revenue and lower-than-expected digital advertising results," and blaming

layoffs on impacts of the Great Digital Disruption, now well into its second decade. Regional and national advertisers taking big hits from online retailers have cut back spending on print ads . . . (with) digital revenue has not closed the gap from declines in print advertising and circulation.

In many cases, this connection between declining readers/viewers resulting in declining advertising was cited as the only reason for layoffs. For example, one article noted, "The reason we're downsizing and

laying off reporters is really only because of market forces. It's because our subscription rates are shrinking, and so is our advertising revenue." While revenue, generally, and declining readers/viewers and advertising, specifically, overwhelmingly made up this theme, it is worth noting that dozens of articles did blame layoffs, at least partly, on journalism unions, noting that layoffs happen due to "disgruntled negotiations with unions" or because of "too generous labor contract(s)," essentially arguing that organizations have no choice because journalists expect too much from organizations facing shrinking revenues.

Outside the Newsroom Economics

While revenues from news organizations themselves put the locus of blame on the news business itself, much data also argued that economic forces having nothing to do with journalism catalyze layoffs. The primarily named forces include ownership, funders, and Wall Street. In these instances, articles were cognizant to mention that news companies experienced "strong overall financial performance," but still laid off employees. In these cases, layoffs were "happening despite a rise in profits," with many companies experiencing "record years" for profits, but still cutting jobs. In many examples, this was blamed on ownership, often corporate owners who needed news organizations to bear "the brunt of failed investments from parent companies." Essentially, the data often evoked stories of various ownership groups needing news organizations to generate more and more profits to cover up for failed expenses across their businesses. One article, quoting a long-time journalist, explained:

When I entered the industry, I thought that bloodletting was a natural result of publishers failing to evolve. I was horribly naive. I've now realized I had a front-row seat for the decision-making processes and warped priorities of publishers, who chase scale with abandon, pay gobs of money for traffic, and preach an ethos of independence while quietly maneuvering toward a lucrative exit for themselves.

Fundamentally, news organization owners, according to trade magazines, are all about "maximizing profitability" without any regard for journalism. While owners were often blamed, outside funders also received much criticism. For example, venture capital, or funders expecting a return on investment, were painted as only economically driven vultures whose investments gave some news organizations "stratospheric valuations and unattainable revenue projections" that resulted in layoffs despite healthy profits. Most often, though, journalism trade magazines blaming outside forces targeted Wall Street. In this discourse, news organizations, over the last two decades, became owned, more and more, by publicly traded companies whose only concern was stock prices. This was explained, often, as layoffs happening because "the company wanted to make a reassuring gesture toward Wall Street. It wanted to show that it was getting its profit picture back in shape." Numerous articles explicitly contended the sentiment that "newsroom cuts have long been a fixture among publicly traded newspaper companies," and that newsrooms make profits that would be "Nirvana (if not Pearl Jam) for many industries. But it's a number that's steadily falling" so layoffs happen to please Wall Street.

A Need for Innovation

The final theme that emerged concerning why layoffs happen in journalism did not discuss economics in any way but rather the need (or failure) of journalism to innovate. In these examples, the very field of journalism and its refusal to adapt to new technology catalyzes the layoffs. In short, it is journalism's own fault that its field is becoming decimated. In this discourse, all companies, especially journalism, needs to "innovate or obliterate," or "find a way to invest in true transformation." Articles proposing this theme often viewed technology in a decidedly utopian manner, arguing that "innovation can kill a business that refuses to adapt and change," but if journalism realized "it's reinvention time," it could stop these layoffs. For most stories espousing this theme, the overall message is that journalism needed to take advantage of technological disruptions as "the news business is in a transformative phase, so there's plenty of reason for rethinking and revamping and restructuring." However, while the potential existed for newsrooms to figure out "creative ways of linking editorial and advertising" or "effective and innovative ways" to tell stories, or to start a "movement toward reinventing local information systems that serve everyone," none of these could easily happen because "news is filled with a bunch of internal assumptions that are proven false when tested outside." Fundamentally, the main takeaway of this theme is that journalism is too slow to understand the unlimited potential of technology, stuck in the past, and too beholden to outdated norms to take advantage of various opportunities to innovate.

The Effects of Layoffs

The second research question posed by this study asked how the metajournalistic discourse from trade magazines analyzed articulated the effects layoffs have had in journalism since 2007.

The Loss of Institutional Memory

The most constant and consistent theme to emerge regarding the second research question concerned how layoffs in journalism resulted in a loss of institutional memory at news organizations. Fundamentally, the discourse contended that layoffs target more experienced and, hence, higher-paid journalists. Describing one particular layoff in a manner that so many articles echoed, one article noted "that the bulk of the victims were relatively old, which is to say, they had larger salaries, escalating pension costs and higher potential health care costs for the company." Throughout the data, trade publications discussed how layoffs would disproportionately affect veteran journalists who would then leave an organization, taking with them vital knowledge about communities. One article about a specific organization noted that "the ranks of the discharged in the recent layoff included longtime, presumably better-paid staffers—including the reporter who won (the organization's) only Pulitzer Prize." When an organization is forced to produce the news without veterans, without those with institutional memory, it "is antithetical to quality." In many cases, articles noted how the manners in which laying off veterans negatively affected quality. Multiple articles discussed how "accuracy rate has plummeted to new lows" across the field. The argument inherent in these pieces is that younger, less-experienced reporters had time to verify information but simply did not know to do so when producing news about certain topics. In other instances, articles discussed how organizations now boasted "fewer seasoned reporters who know how to ask the right questions," implying that less institutional memory results in more generic

question-asking, which means worse stories. One piece noted that when “communities lose . . . institutional knowledge,” the result is that “local newspapers wither.”

Decrease of Important Work

The data analyzed overwhelmingly contended that one insidious result of layoffs is the inability of news organizations to do the kind of journalism that is truly necessary for citizens. First and foremost, articles consistently noted that when layoffs decimate newsrooms, important watchdog or investigative reporting is the first to be negatively impacted. Numerous articles noted that layoffs “compromise Fourth Estate values,” and that fewer journalists means “fewer reporters than ever are serving as watchdogs” of various local, state, and federal governments. In one anecdote utilized in a handful of different stories across trade magazines, a journalist investigating significant staff reductions at a major metropolitan newspaper found politicians jokingly feigning excitement. One article recounted,

There was a lawmaker who was quoted by a public radio station reporter, who was going around and asking for reactions at the legislature, “What do you think about all of this stuff at the (the newspaper)?” She overheard some lawmaker joke, “Well, I guess it means we’ll be able to do whatever we want now.”

Beyond watchdog journalism, the articles also consistently sounded alarms about a significant decrease in local news. Some pieces noted that it remains far less expensive for chain ownership to set up reporting hubs that provide news to multiple organizations, but this setup results in the mindset that “content generation drives ad revenue, the Internet feeds of new constant production, not news gathering, which takes time and energy,” which means on-the-ground journalism gets eliminated. Discussing one giant journalism chain, an article noted that the company

doesn’t want to give up entirely on reporting on institutions of power, but consider what’s been cut out from under the journalists that remain. Court reporters are gone, as are “runners,” people who head out to the street to get initial reactions for breaking news. The photography department, full of veterans who know the city inside and out, is gone.

The implicit message is that “local media produces a range of content—from watchdog reporting to coverage of local sports, arts, human interest stories and listings—which support different information needs. Much of that content cannot be found elsewhere.” Augmenting this same overall message, many articles pointed specifically to the loss of local journalism in rural or poorer areas of the country as a direct result of layoffs. As one article warned when discussing a large layoff across a chain of newspapers, “a huge part of the American people, the less-than-affluent majority, is civically malnourished due to the sad state of U.S. journalism—and that the nation’s broad electorate is thus all but certainly ill informed?” More specifically, this malnourishment happens because “it’s no secret that local news coverage has been lacking in many—mostly rural—communities.”

The Need to do More With Less

The final theme that emerged revolved around the cliched idea of fewer journalists at news organizations meant the ones left had to accomplish more with fewer resources, both people and time in this case. In many cases, this was explicitly described using sentiments such as “places are slashing newsroom staff and running the survivors ragged.” In other cases, this contention was made in a more nuanced or specified manner such as noting that “smaller staffing levels may require fresh approaches to aggregation and greater use of wire services, as well as dropping certain beats or doing them differently.” In effect, the idea of doing more with less can be accounted for in two different manners: Remaining staff must do more work to pick up the slack created by staff diminishment, or newsroom norms such as producing local copy or having a set amount of editorial layers must adapt to new realities. For example, one piece lamented,

Layers of editors have been reduced, and team leaders typically supervise more reporters than before. “We had as many as six layers of editors between a reporter and me,” says (a journalist). Now it’s no more than three. Some stories get fewer reads. “We have less of a safety net,” she acknowledges. “But it’s also about pushing accountability down.”

Fundamentally, the data argued that today’s newsrooms actually require more journalistic staff due to the influx of digital technologies needed to produce content across platforms. Instead, newsrooms are forced to accomplish various processes with less. For example, one article described the “online revolution that brought vast new duties and the accompanying downsizing that left fewer people to accomplish them,” adding that, “now these changes are rushing toward a threshold that seems likely to remake the homely print newsroom into a multimedia center fighting for survival and success.” The intrinsic message in this metadiscourse is that downsizing simply leaves newsrooms not only struggling for success by doing more with less but also inherently with survival.

Discussion

One of the core reasons studies of metajournalistic discourse provide scholarly value is due to their ability to better understand industry belief systems (Carlson, 2014, 2016). Considering that the field of journalism is an interpretative community, and its rules and normative notions are socially constructed primarily by those inside the field (Berger & Luckmann, 1990; Zelizer, 1993), this type of work affords a deeper and more robust inquiry into the industry’s current notions surrounding the economics of journalism. On the surface, the results unearthed answering this study’s first research question should not surprise: According to the discourse analyzed, labor precarity in journalism is primarily due to lowering revenues earned from journalism organizations; financial pressures from corporate owners, funders, and Wall Street; and the industry’s slow acceptance of technological innovation. While all these reasons echo the findings from various bodies of academic literature, what is not mentioned is more interesting.

Nowhere in the discourse did journalism as a field display even the smallest amount of reflexivity concerning journalists—and their practice—themselves. When considering the three themes that emerged regarding the first research question, they can all be classified as conveniently outside the purview of

journalists. The first two themes, ones that directly discussed economic issues emanating directly from newsrooms and from outside of newsrooms, both have nothing to do with how journalists perform their duties and, of course, normatively journalism should not concern itself with economic factors (Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng, & White, 2009). Innovation, or a need for it, is also an organizational decision, one not directed by journalists, but rather owners (McManus, 1994). In a sense, it is easy to argue that journalists do not see themselves at all to blame for the financial issues of their field; they believe—and through metadiscourse reify the idea—that they are doing their jobs well, but those around them are not. Professional reflexivity refers to “journalists’ capacity for self-awareness; their ability to recognize influences and changes in their environment” (Ahva, 2013, p. 791). In short, journalistic reflexivity refers to journalists’ “ability to be self-aware,” the ability to understand how their own actions (or lack thereof) impact their professional surroundings, and the professional outcomes experienced (González de Bustamante & Relly, 2016, p. 686). As an industry, research consistently and overwhelmingly finds that journalism is almost incapable of reflexivity and that the idea of reflexivity arguably contradicts normative notions at the heart of the profession (Schultz, 2007). Therefore, even though the market for journalism is failing (Koniczna, 2018), journalists continue behaving as if the normative patterns and notions acted on in newsrooms are beyond reproach (Klocke & McDevitt, 2013).

In fact, McDevitt and Ferrucci (2018) contended that there is almost a third-person effect evident when examining metajournalistic discourse, that the field’s inability to be reflexive about its failures results in a consistent “foreclosing on the aspirations of deliberative journalism” (p. 522). Therefore, when considering labor precarity and the growing regression of journalism’s standing as a cultural industry, it is obvious that the field struggles to adapt to real issues facing it. As scholars such as Usher (2021), Wenzel (2019), and countless others have so forcibly and credibly illustrated, one main reason for journalism’s economic downturn is its blind devotion to historic norms that result in news selection that almost completely ignores marginalized communities and, especially, the issues of interest to those groups. This cannot get better unless journalism becomes reflexive and publicly grapples with these issues. Historically, the journalism industry often skews coverage of marginalized and nonaffluent audiences, often due to an enlarged focus on suburban communities with more of the disposable income advertisers desire (McManus, 1994; Usher, 2021). In recent decades, movements aimed at disrupting journalism’s historical norms in favor of ones that better serve audiences of all kinds, movements such as peace journalism, public journalism, engaged journalism, and solutions journalism have become popular within and outside the industry (Ferrucci et al., 2020).

These movements explicitly and implicitly contend that many of the normative notions at the heart of journalistic practice actually fail communities in various manners, yet the data here show that journalists do not acknowledge these issues in any more than a cursory manner. It is important to note, though, that marginalized communities, by their very definition, are small, so it is possible journalists do not believe this historic failing contributes to negative economic consequences but rather, potentially, only credibility issues. Regardless, to not at all mention this issue explicitly within more than a decade of data illustrates a lack of reflexivity within the industry. As of right now, as shown through this discourse, the field of journalism created, effectively, a feedback loop that consistently tells journalists nothing is their fault, and like many feedback loops, this is a “feedback loop to the profession that increasingly impacts on how future news is produced” (Orgeret, 2020, p. 293). Even the third unearthed theme on this research question speaks to a

convenient trope in the journalism industry, one Carey (2008) described as a “nostalgia for the future” (p. 198). It is within this similitude that “the belief that harnessing a given technology will usher us into a new democratic utopia” is disseminated across the industry (Siegelbaum & Thomas, 2016, p. 388). This type of discourse, again, allows journalism and journalists the ability to aggrandize the practice with an immense power, value, and effectiveness that conveniently makes reflexivity difficult or impossible.

The reason for why this reflexivity remains so important can be seen in the themes illustrated in this study’s second research question. Unlike in the first research question, the discourse demonstrates that while they believe they are not at all at fault, journalists do understand how labor precarity negatively affects the industry. It is no doubt accurate to contend that fewer journalists working in the industry results in less important work, both local news and investigative work; journalists having to accomplish more with far fewer resources; and an erosion of institutional memory across the field. In many ways, one could argue, as some discourse did, that the business of journalism is erroneously focused on short-term gains without any appreciation for long-term effects. In other words, in economic terms, all these layoffs in journalism continue to negatively impact the quality of the product, which makes consumers less likely to invest, which, in turn, creates a corrosive cycle that makes it impossible for the industry to financially stabilize itself. As one article noted, the industry, in its unending search for short-term profits, “pivoted to social” and then “pivoted to video,” only to find itself actually “pivoting to instability.” Many have argued that partly or completely separating journalism from the market is the only solution (McChesney, 2016), but it is also not wrong to say that this hypothetical separation would require a complete re-rendering of journalism as it is constructed in the United States, something definitively not possible over anything but a long period of time.

As Vos and Singer (2016) noted, while this type of study provides a window into understanding the belief systems and socially constructed norms undergirding how journalism operates, there are other factors a study such as this cannot investigate. Obviously, only examining content from trade publications catalyzes both positives and negatives. These types of publications wield great influence and illuminate many of the beliefs across the field, but they also mostly deal with more elite forms of journalism, which slightly limits the utility of their usage. Future work could remedy this by surveying or interviewing working journalists from across the profession about these very topics. Also, this study intentionally examines the journalism field as a whole and did not separate data concerning national journalism, local journalism, legacy journalism, nonprofit journalism, or the like. Future work could examine these same issues, but in the context of one particular type of journalism or examining journalism in another country. Saliently, though, this study effectively elucidates not only a journalism industry unwilling or unable to reflexively account for its own failures that have partly led to precarity in the field, but also one that understands that due to economic impacts, it is not succeeding. By examining this content, this study clearly illustrates how arguably the most influential group of journalists, those at trade publications (Carlson, 2016; Hyland, 2017), explain the current predicament U.S. journalism finds itself in. As one article so eloquently stated, “the takeaway” about layoffs across the industry should not be multiple stories “about a dying newspaper” but rather an overall story of “a dying culture.” In other words, while journalism faces financial challenges beyond its control, it needs to confront its internal failures reflexively and do its part to stabilize the field. New market models that potentially shield the industry from market concerns will not fix everything.

References

- Abernathy, P. M. (2018). *The expanding news desert*. Retrieved from https://www.cislm.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/The-Expanding-News-Desert-10_14-Web.pdf
- Ahva, L. (2013). Public journalism and professional reflexivity. *Journalism*, 14(6), 790–806. doi:10.1177/1464884912455895
- Awad Cherit, I. (2008). Cultural diversity in the news media: A democratic or a commercial need? *Javnost-The Public*, 15(4), 55–72. doi:10.1080/13183222.2008.11008982
- Bagdikian, B. H. (2004). *The new media monopoly*. Boston, MA: Beacon.
- Baldasty, G. J. (1992). *The commercialization of news in the nineteenth century*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Banning, S. A. (1999). The professionalization of journalism: A nineteenth-century beginning. *Journalism History*, 24(4), 157–163. doi:10.1080/00947679.1999.12062498
- Bauerlein, M. (2017, December 5). *It's a perfect storm for destroying journalism*. Retrieved from <https://www.motherjones.com/media/2017/12/a-perfect-storm-for-journalism/>
- Belair-Gagnon, V., Nelson, J. L., & Lewis, S. C. (2019). Audience engagement, reciprocity, and the pursuit of community connectedness in public media journalism. *Journalism Practice*, 13(5), 558–575. doi:10.1080/17512786.2018.1542975
- Benson, R. (2018). Can foundations solve the journalism crisis? *Journalism*, 19(8), 1059–1077. doi:10.1177/1464884917724612
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1990). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. New York, NY: Anchor.
- Browne, H. (2010). Foundation-funded journalism: Reasons to be wary of charitable support. *Journalism Studies*, 11(6), 889–903. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2010.501147
- Carey, J. W. (2008). *Communication as culture: Essays on media and society*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Carlson, M. (2014). *What's all the fuss about? Metajournalistic discourse as methodological intervention in a time of media upheaval*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association: Qualitative Political Communication Research Pre-Conference, Seattle, WA.

- Carlson, M. (2016). Metajournalistic discourse and the meanings of journalism: Definitional control, boundary work, and legitimation. *Communication Theory, 26*(4), 349–368. doi:10.1111/comt.12088
- Casey, M. J. (2008, December 30). When the watchdogs don't bark. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/31/opinion/31wed3.html?searchResultPosition=1>
- Chan, J. C. (2021, January 7). *U.S. newsrooms lost a record 16,160 jobs in 2020, study finds*. Retrieved from <https://www.thewrap.com/2020-newsroom-layoffs-data/>
- Christians, C. G., Glasser, T. L., McQuail, D., Nordenstreng, K., & White, R. A. (2009). *Normative theories of the media: Journalism in democratic societies*. Champagne: University of Illinois Press.
- Coffey, A., & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data: Complementary research strategies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Cohen, N. S. (2015). Entrepreneurial journalism and the precarious state of media work. *South Atlantic Quarterly, 114*(3), 513–533. doi:10.1215/00382876-3130723
- Craft, S., & Thomas, R. J. (2016). *Metajournalism and media ethics*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association, Fukuoka, Japan.
- Emerson, R., Fretz, R., & Shaw, L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Ferrucci, P. (2015). Primary differences: How market orientation can influence content. *Journal of Media Practice, 16*(3), 195–210. doi:10.1080/14682753.2015.1116754
- Ferrucci, P. (2018). Are you experienced? How years in field affects digital journalists' perceptions of a changing industry. *Journalism Studies, 19*(16), 2417–2432. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2017.1349550
- Ferrucci, P. (2019a). The end of ombudsmen? 21st-century journalism and reader representatives. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 96*(1), 288–307. doi:10.1177/1077699018805986
- Ferrucci, P. (2019b). *Making nonprofit news: Market models, influence and journalistic practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ferrucci, P. (2021). Joining the team: Metajournalistic discourse, paradigm repair, the athletic and sports journalism practice. *Journalism Practice*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1080/17512786.2021.1907213

- Ferrucci, P., & Canella, G. (2021). Resisting the resistance (journalism): Ben Smith, Ronan Farrow, and delineating boundaries of practice. *Journalism*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1177/14648849211064379
- Ferrucci, P., Nelson, J. L., & Davis, M. P. (2020). From "public journalism" to "engaged journalism": Imagined audiences and denigrating discourse. *International Journal of Communication*, 14, 1586–1604. Retrieved from <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/viewFile/11955/3010>
- Ferrucci, P., Russell, F. M., Choi, H., Duffy, M., & Thorson, E. (2017). Times are a changin': How a merger affects the construction of news processes. *Journalism Studies*, 18(3), 247–264. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2015.1065197
- Ferrucci, P., & Schauster, E. E. (2022). Keeping up with the boundaries of advertising: Paradigm repair after Pepsi's big mess. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1177/01968599221095164
- Ferrucci, P., & Taylor, R. (2018). Access, deconstructed: Metajournalistic discourse and photojournalism's shift away from geophysical access. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 42(2), 121–137. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2019.1577165>
- Flynn, K. (2020, March 27). Hundreds of journalists are being laid off, right when the public needs them the most. *CNN*. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/27/media/media-layoffs/index.html>
- González de Bustamante, C., & Rely, J. E. (2016). Professionalism under threat of violence: Journalism, reflexivity, and the potential for collective professional autonomy in northern Mexico. *Journalism Studies*, 17(6), 684–702. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2015.1006903
- Hardt, M., & Negri, A. (2009). *Commonwealth*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hare, K. (2020, December 28). What I've learned from covering a year of media layoffs and closures. *Poynter*. Retrieved from <https://www.poynter.org/locally/2020/what-ive-learned-from-covering-a-year-of-media-layoffs-and-closures/>
- Harris, L., & Miller, G. (2020, December 18). The 2020 journalism crisis: A year in review. *Columbia Journalism Review*. Retrieved from https://www.cjr.org/business_of_news/journalism-crisis-in-2020.php
- Hindman, E. B. (2005). Jayson Blair, *The New York Times*, and paradigm repair. *Journal of Communication*, 55(2), 225–241. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2005.tb02669.x>
- Hyland, K. (2017). Metadiscourse: What is it and where is it going? *Journal of Pragmatics*, 113(2017), 16–29. doi:10.1016/j.pragma.2017.03.007

- Jurkowitz, M. (2014, March 26). *The losses in legacy*. Retrieved from <https://www.journalism.org/2014/03/26/the-losses-in-legacy/>
- Kaye, J., & Quinn, S. (2010). *Funding journalism in the digital age: Business models, strategies, issues and trends*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Kennedy, D. (2013). *The wired city: Reimagining journalism and civic life in the post-newspaper age*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Kennedy, D. (2018). *The Return of the moguls: How Jeff Bezos and John Henry are remaking newspapers for the twenty-first century*. Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England.
- Kilgo, D. K., & Harlow, S. (2019). Protests, media coverage, and a hierarchy of social struggle. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 24(4), 508–530. doi:10.1177/1940161219853517
- Klocke, B., & McDevitt, M. (2013). Foreclosing deliberation: Journalists' lowering of expectations in the marketplace of ideas. *Journalism Studies*, 14(6), 891–906. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2012.755373
- Konieczna, M. (2018). *Journalism without profit: Making news when the market fails*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Lacy, S. (1989). A model of demand for news: Impact of competition on newspaper content. *Journalism Quarterly*, 66(1), 40–48. doi:10.1177/107769908906600105
- Larson, C. (2015). Live publishing: The onstage redeployment of journalistic authority. *Media, Culture & Society*, 37(3), 440–459. doi:10.1177/0163443714567016
- Lee, A. M. (1990). *The daily newspaper in America: The evolution of a social instrument*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Maharidge, D. (2016, March 2). What happens to journalists when no one wants to print their words anymore? *The Nation*. Retrieved from <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/these-journalists-dedicated-their-lives-to-telling-other-peoples-stories/>
- Matthews, J., & Onyemaobi, K. (2020). Precarious professionalism: Journalism and the fragility of professional practice in the Global South. *Journalism Studies*, 21(13), 1836–1851. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2020.1797524
- McChesney, R. W. (2016). Journalism is dead! Long live journalism?: Why democratic societies will need to subsidise future news production. *Journal of Media Business Studies*, 13(3), 128–135. doi:10.1080/16522354.2016.1184919

- McChesney, R. W., & Nichols, J. (2011). *The death and life of American journalism: The media revolution that will begin the world again*. New York, NY: Nation.
- McDevitt, M., & Ferrucci, P. (2018). Populism, journalism, and the limits of reflexivity: The case of Donald J. Trump. *Journalism Studies*, 19(4), 512–526. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2017.1386586
- McManus, J. H. (1992). Serving the public and serving the market: A conflict of interest? *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 7(4), 196–208. doi:10.1207/s15327728jmme0704_1
- McManus, J. H. (1994). *Market-driven journalism: Let the citizen beware?* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Miller, R. A. (2002). The Frankenstein syndrome: The creation of mega-media conglomerates and ethical modeling in journalism. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 36(1), 105–110. doi:10.1023/A:1014248014732
- Nee, R. C. (2014). Social responsibility theory and the digital nonprofits: Should the government aid online news startups? *Journalism*, 15(3), 326–343. doi:10.1177/1464884913482553
- Orgeret, K. S. (2020). Discussing emotions in digital journalism. *Digital Journalism*, 8(2), 292–297. doi:10.1080/21670811.2020.1727347
- Örnebring, H. (2018). Journalists thinking about precarity: Making sense of the “new normal.” *International Symposium on Online Journalism*, 8(1), 109–127. Retrieved from <https://isoj.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/FINALISOJ.pdf>
- Paulussen, S., & D'heer, E. (2013). Using citizens for community journalism: Findings from a hyperlocal media project. *Journalism Practice*, 7(5), 588–603. doi:10.1080/17512786.2012.756667
- Price, J. (2020). How to feed The Ferret: Understanding subscribers in the search for a sustainable model of investigative journalism. *Journalism*, 21(9), 1320–1337. doi:10.1177/1464884917733587
- Rosen, J. (1999). *What are journalists for?* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Russ-Mohl, S. (2006). The economics of journalism and the challenge to improve journalism quality. A research manifesto. *Studies in Communication Sciences*, 6(2), 189–208. Retrieved from https://de.ejo-online.eu/wp-content/uploads/2006/09/Russ_Mohl-The-Economics-of-Journalism.pdf
- Salamon, E. (2016). E-lancer resistance: Precarious freelance journalists use digital communications to refuse rights-grabbing contracts. *Digital Journalism*, 4(8), 980–1000. doi:10.1080/21670811.2015.1116953

- Saul, S. (2007, April 23). More staff cuts expected at *Chicago Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times*. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/23/business/media/23paper.html?searchResultPosition=7>
- Schmidt, V. A. (2010). Taking ideas and discourse seriously: Explaining change through discursive institutionalism as the fourth "new institutionalism." *European Political Science Review*, 2(1), 1–25. doi:10.1017/S175577390999021X
- Schudson, M. (1978). *Discovering the news: A social history of American newspapers*. New York, NY: Basic.
- Schultz, I. (2007). The journalistic gut feeling: Journalistic doxa, news habitus and orthodox news values. *Journalism Practice*, 1(2), 190–207. doi:10.1080/17512780701275507
- Siegelbaum, S., & Thomas, R. J. (2016). Putting the work (back) into newswork: Searching for the sources of normative failure. *Journalism Practice*, 10(3), 387–404. doi:10.1080/17512786.2015.1025415
- Tandoc, E. C., Jr. (2018). Five ways BuzzFeed is preserving (or transforming) the journalistic field. *Journalism*, 19(2), 200–216. doi:10.1177/1464884917691785
- Tandoc, E. C., Jr., & Foo, C. Y. W. (2018). Here's what BuzzFeed journalists think of their journalism. *Digital Journalism*, 6(1), 41–57. doi:10.1080/21670811.2017.1332956
- Usher, N. (2021). *News for the rich, white, and blue: How place and power distort American journalism*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Vos, T. P., & Singer, J. B. (2016). Media discourse about entrepreneurial journalism. *Journalism Practice*, 10(2), 143–159. doi:10.1080/17512786.2015.1124730
- Vos, T. P., & Thomas, R. J. (2019). The discursive (re)construction of journalism's gatekeeping role. *Journalism Practice*, 13(4), 396–412. doi:10.1080/17512786.2018.1478746
- Wenzel, A. (2019). Public media and marginalized publics: Online and offline engagement strategies and local storytelling networks. *Digital Journalism*, 7(1), 146–163. doi:10.1080/21670811.2017.1398594
- Zelizer, B. (1993). Journalists as interpretive communities. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 10(3), 219–237. doi:10.1080/15295039309366865