Doctoral Thesis

Written news at the crossroads

Entrepreneurial processes of reproduction and novelty in an institutional field in crisis

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Esperando que un mundo sea desenterrado por el lenguaje,
alguien canta el lugar en que se forma el silencio.
Luego comprobará que no porque se muestre furioso existe el mar,
ni tampoco el mundo.
Por eso cada palabra dice lo que dice
y además más y otra cosa.

Alejandra Pizarnik
In memory of my father,
who would have decried this work, and whose criticism I miss so much

To my mother,
whose pragmatic approach to the impossible taught me this was possible

To my wife, Andra,
the eternally recurrent light (and shadow) of my life

To every one of my five kids,
whose example is a continuous source of inspiration and wonder
Acknowledgments

This thesis is the product of my attempts to make sense of puzzles encountered during years of managerial work in the news industry. These problems, originally formulated in quite coarse terms, became more refined questions—perhaps more meaningful and interesting too—when framed by theories and methodologies that particularly fascinated me during my PhD education. Thus, first and foremost, I want to thank the person who started it all, Leona Achtenhagen. As my teacher at Jönköping International Business School (JIBS), she pointed me in the direction of a new vocation, academia, that I had not had the imagination to conceive. Without her nudge I would not be here, and this work would not exist. During my PhD I have enjoyed two rare luxuries: time and distance. Both were possible thanks to the funding provided by the Carl-Olof and Jenz Hamrin Foundation. I would like to thank Christina and Lovisa Hamrin for their support and their welcoming and kind character.

This book, and every paper it is composed of, incorporates countless inputs collected during lectures, seminars, discussions and informal talks at JIBS; Rutgers Business School - Newark and New Brunswick; Stanford University; the Center for Cooperative Media at Montclair State University; Stockholm School of Entrepreneurship; the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia University; Penn State University; and Harvard Business School. Many thanks go to everyone who was part of them. I am also indebted to many anonymous reviewers from journals and at conferences, and participants in presentations, who have generously provided invaluable attention and feedback, particularly at the Journal of Media Business Studies (JOMBS); the European Group of Organizational Studies (EGOS), 2015; the Academy of Management (AOM) Annual Meetings, 2018 and 2019; the European Media Management Association (EMMA) Conference, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2019; the World Media Economics & Management (WMEM) Conference, 2016; and the International Symposium of Media Innovations, 2016. The list of givers is impossible to complete, and most of them know who they are anyway. Yet, some names I cannot forget to disclose here.

My PhD has been an enjoyable journey thanks largely to the benign control of my supervisors, both tolerant and supportive coaches: Olof Brunninge and Mart Ots. Ted Baker later joined them in his evolving role as a welcoming host, a demanding tutor, a clever discussant and an encouraging benefactor. The brutality of his criticism is only surpassed by the kindness of his empathy. It was a pleasure to collaborate with my co-authors, Rachel Matthews and Adele Bendl. They have suffered my mistakes more than anyone else. I learned from them and without their contributions the first two papers in this compilation would have been very different, if not entirely impossible. I was lucky to meet Marc Ventresca at

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Stanford - SCANCOR. I was impressed by his seminar advancing on a sociology of organizational knowledge, and I wished for some of his inspiration and wit. His ideas and recommendations first and later his friendly discussion in my final seminar offered the clement guidance I needed and could use. Thomas Cyron, Songming Feng, Sarah Fitz-Koch and Shanyun Lu also contributed there—as on many other occasions—with sharp, kind and helpful comments. My research proposal opponents, Daved Barry and Samuel Kamugisha, were similarly bright and gentle. Their questions made me think in new ways then and some, even now lurking in my dreams, still do. My field research in the USA would have never taken off without the great help of Anne Hoag, Jeremy Kaplan, Bozena I. Mierzejewska, Arturo E. Osorio, Sarah Stonbely and Matthew Weber, who provided useful contacts, suggestions, feedback and assistance. Among my top educators I need to mention my senior PhD students—particularly Sarah Ekberg, Matthias Waldkirch and Sari Virta, each one of them having a unique rich combination of cleverness, human warmth and experience. All other classmates and teachers follow very closely. Colleagues at the MMTC and JIBS, starting with Rolf Lundin, have provided much of the social fabric that made me feel, here in Sweden, at home. Greg Lowe, Ulrike Rohn and all the other members of the EMMA community have also provided a peculiarly comforting blend: instant friendship and self-confidence, the latter embodied in repeated paper awards despite the questionable quality and relevance of my research. Scancorians Julia Fleischer, Regine Bendl, Philipp Friedrich, Kirsti Iivonen, Claus Højmark Jensen, Rasmus Nykvist, Kristina Rolin, Aina Slinning, Chiqui Ramirez (director) and Maude Engstrom (deputy director “in pectore” and wine socials alma mater), along with Kari Jalonen and Sara Lindberg, made my stay in Palo Alto both sunny and insightful. Last but not least, I thank Barbara Eklöf and Susanne Hasson for their well-administered moral (and physical) support. Two anonymous proofreaders improved my deficient English grammar and brought clarity to my writing and thinking.

I suspect I have often failed to heed their thoughtful advice, but much of what may be of value in this work stems from insights accumulated in interactions with them. Missteps, in the form of a lack of conceptual rigor, data inaccuracies, analytical misinterpretations, exaggerated findings, clutter and any other confusions, are all entirely mine.

In a separate category are my informants, or coauthors more accurately (I discuss my efforts to coproduce knowledge in Chapter 4). Unfortunately, I cannot name them. They are obediently anonymized in this work, but their doings and sayings constitute the basic materials this research is made of. I learned a tremendous amount from them. Their struggles are simultaneously miserable and glorious, and often their particular insights lucid and revelatory. Their work (novel or not, decoupled, constrained or whatever label I will use in my analysis, which is not important now) elevates them. Media, in them, transcended the mere function of sending messages providing information on a mass scale. It provided “conditions
for existence” akin to recent elemental expansions of the concept of media (Peters, 2015: 14). One of my informants/coauthors expresses it better:

That’s it. You have to tell the truth all the time. You have to be able to keep secrets. You have to be faithful. You have to be able to do that because that’s what it is. And so, I’ve built something that’s my job and it keeps me on the straight and narrow as an individual, too. It’s just an observation that I noticed was an unintended consequence of my venture. But a welcome one for sure [laughter].

(M., founder of ComPublishing).

I am afraid this book pays only a pale tribute to their superb candor, ingenuity and dedication.

My greatest thanks are to my multiple and changing family, who have had to put up with much more than it was reasonable to ask and have demanded nothing in return.
Keywords

bricolage, capital, constraints, decoupling, entrepreneurial processes, field in crisis, institutional arrangements, journalism, newspapers, novelty, reproduction, written news
Abstract

This dissertation explores entrepreneurial processes in an institutional field in crisis. It is based on the inductive reinterpretation of four original papers that, combined, study activities of individuals searching for solutions to organizational problems in incumbent and startup newspapers. Building on an integrative framework of compatible concepts in entrepreneurship and institutional theory, and foregrounding the role of Bourdieu’s notion of capital, this thesis provides answers to how actors’ capitals mediate mechanisms of reproduction and novelty. Based on the analysis of multiple cases situated in a macro-level shift characterized by the transformation of the material environment, this work finds how—despite the aleatory and materialistic origins of written news norms and concepts, and their failing economic traction—entrepreneurial processes in all types of newspapers reproduce structural templates. In relatively affluent incumbents, reproduction happens because, in their search for solutions to losses of capital, actors interpret imported ideas within the meaning structure provided by existing norms and concepts, and day-to-day activities—“decoupled from innovation”—do not change significantly. Also, at the moment that these new activities generate short-term (albeit small) relative capital gains, as problems seem to wane, individuals unravel their search for solutions, reinforcing reproduction. In particularly deprived newcomers, the importation of innovative ideas can even be averted upfront by the organization of unrelated-to-the-venture supportive activities that generate unrelated-to-the-venture economic capital—a condition that shields these ventures from market demands and avoids exit scenarios. The “sheltered conformity” of daily activities in these organizations also results in reproduction. Yet, not all the entrepreneurial processes this thesis identifies contribute to the reproduction of existing institutional arrangements. Instances of significant difference in organizational structures can be forged in a distinct experience of constraints resulting from severe capital scarcity. A combination of absence of economic capital and moderate-to-low levels of cultural and social capital, as they are defined by the field, inhibits common solutions to problems. When actors find that freely available inputs accumulated in their personal biographies work, these inputs become “situated new forms of capital”. As they work, significantly different activities, partly decoupled from templates in the field, are incorporated in the structure of these organizations. Because it is existing ideals in the field that fuel resource-deprived entrepreneurs to sustain efforts, institutional arrangements do play a role in their own change.
By offering empirical support to the central role of the personal experience of capital constraints and situated redefinitions of capital in processes of institutional reproduction and divergence, this thesis complements interpretations of institutional contradictions: Rather than starting from the coexistence of different templates that actors can alternatively employ at intersections of structures, this study explores early endogenous processes by which new norms and concepts enter existing fields, reinterpreting resources in them. These findings provide additional insights into questions related to the origin of ideas, emergent processes of decoupling and to definitions of an institutionalized field in crisis and organizational novelty. This research also contributes to entrepreneurship with insights into how alertness and discovery transpire. When focusing on institutional templates and problem-solving activities of ordinary actors, entrepreneurial action—even in an institutional field in crisis—can contribute to the reproduction of the status quo. And when significant differences happen, because they can result from a distinct experience of resource constraints, they may appear in humble beginnings that contrast those chronicled in later stages of change by institutional entrepreneurship theory. Additionally, this thesis adds to entrepreneurial resourcefulness by unbundling the process by which bricolage produces outcomes that depart from its institutional environment. In my findings, bricoleurs do not blatantly violate norms and concepts, and yet they can bring divergent organizational novelty to their working solutions. In fact, the efforts of entrepreneurial bricoleurs are largely sustained by the predetermined meaning of inputs and institutionally conforming ideals in ways that, I suggest, bring the concept of bricolage closer to its original definition by Lévi-Strauss.
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List of Abbreviations

AOM, Academy of Management
BCP, Branded Content Providers
CJR, Columbia Journalism Review
CMS, Content Management System
CRM, Customer Relationships Management
EMMA, European Media Management Association
GOP, Gross Operating Profit
INMA, International Newspaper Marketing Association
MMTC, Media, Management and Transformation Center
SMP, Social Media Platforms
SvD, Svenska Dagbladet
UK, United Kingdom
USA, United States of America
Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet the requirements for a degree at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.
Chapter 1. Introduction

Contemporary Western societies would be different without news. For generations, news, observed and communicated by journalists, has provided the matter for public conversation that became, for better or worse, an integral part of what we understand today as democracy. The production, distribution and economic support of written news developed into a particular form of organization, namely newspapers, and articulated a set of professional values and activities, i.e. journalism, that persist today. Yet, for 20 years now, digital technologies have been transforming consumer practices and advertising patterns, wreaking havoc on the business of written news and challenging the sustainability of these organizations. Legacy players have retrenched, and many gone bankrupt. Newcomers have popped up, but many gone bust. At a time when interest in journalism is claimed to be greater than ever, written news firms, but also civic organizations and philanthropic foundations, find themselves in a desperate search for solutions.

Solutions, so far, have proved both elusive and disputed. Elusive because innovation efforts among legacy news providers (i.e. incumbent newspapers) and digital native startups (i.e. new entrants to written news born in the digital era) have, at best, delivered insufficient results. Recent exemplary success stories among legacy players, such as the New York Times or, perhaps, the Guardian, have little applicability to other organizations, particularly at the local level—where economies of scale and available resources are limited (Newman et al., 2019). And many new ventures, even the most promising ones such as BuzzFeed and HuffPost, as they encounter mounting difficulties and setbacks, seem to be “hitting a wall” (CJR, 2019). By 2019, cuts in new and legacy organizations were continuing to roll through, threatening the entire written news field “as one reckoning after another comes for both print and digital shops alike” (CNN Business, 2019). Solutions are also disputed. In the current turbulence, significant voices increasingly regret the attention paid for years to the “empty promise” of entrepreneurial business solutions (Bell & Marshall, 2019), feeding mounting calls for public intervention and regulations to support journalism (Cairncross, 2019; John & Silberstein-Loeb, 2015; McChesney, 2016).

The field of written news seems trapped in two mutually reinforcing difficulties: first, the apparent inability of actors to find solutions to their business challenges, and second, their struggle to sustain their value-laden role in society and the activities that, allegedly, provide it. The reckoning boils down to unanswered questions related to what goes on and can be expected when a mature well-structured industry enters crisis. Unfortunately, studies on written news organizations have remained fixated with untheoretical identifications of market-driven business fixes (e.g. Goyanes & Dürrenberg, 2014; Goyanes, 2015; Graybeal & Hayes, 2011; Hansen & Goligoski, 2018; Kammer et al., 2015;
Radcliffe & Ali, 2017; Sindik & Graybeal, 2011; Yang et al., 2015). And, as none seemed satisfactory enough, calls advocating regulation (e.g. John & Silberstein-Loeb, 2015; McChesney, 2016)—based on the justification of the public service that written news provides (Hamilton, 2016)—thrive. Media management studies, where new ventures entering the field are often not in focus, have so far shed little light on why, even in a context of macroeconomic recovery, current efforts to find solutions seem not to deliver. Two threads seem to be passing through these studies: Either they blame impossible market conditions that render all innovation attempts fruitless or they propose that some cultural aspects underpinning journalism have become so sticky that change is impossible. These explanations overlook many central questions: What, in the current transformation of written news, keeps “structuring” how news is produced? Why and how do patterns (even when the way news has been traditionally supported seems to be disappearing fast) tend to linger? How can novelty possibly emerge in such constrained conditions?

Entrepreneurship and institutionalism can serve as fruitful theoretical foundations upon which to explore the underlying reasons for answers to these questions. Entrepreneurship theory focuses on processes integrating solution-orientated interactions of actors (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). The first advantage of entrepreneurship theory is that entrepreneurship can happen in both established organizations and startups (Gartner, 1988; Ling et al., 2008), which would allow explanations to be integrated in legacy newspapers and digital natives entering the field alike. The second advantage is that, by definition, entrepreneurial processes can potentially bring contextually relevant novelty influencing system-wide activities (Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990) and, therefore, those aspects behind “structuring.” Institutional theory, perhaps the perspective most widely used in organization studies, focusing on the regularity of values, routines and practices (Scott, 1995) has deciphered some of the mysteries at the bottom of “structuring.” Another significant advantage recently added by neoinstitutionalism is that—as entrepreneurship does—its focus is increasingly zooming in on the activities of actors who, as they carry out their projects, inhabit (Hallet & Ventresca, 2006), interpret and negotiate (Barley, 2008), and experience in their practices (Jarzabkowski et al., 2013; Smets et al., 2017) existing institutions.

Importantly, the current existential crisis of written news also offers a fertile empirical setting in which to locate fresh arguments to some lingering debates in both institutional theory and entrepreneurship:

Institutionalism has largely assumed that a field in crisis (Fligstein, 1997) will experience institutional problematizations and contradictions followed by a ferment of new entrants and innovative activities (Sine & David, 2003; Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013; Riaz et al., 2011). Neoinstitutional research has provided convincing explanations for how some of these independent innovations get theorized (Strand & Meyer, 1993) and gain diffusion thanks to the endorsement, for example, of professional associations (Greenwood et al., 2002). Yet, because
Introduction

these studies usually assume that “over time new organizations enter fields, bringing with them new ideas”—or start from a readily available institutional pluralism (Greenwood et al., 2011: 319) that furnishes some actors with alternative schemas or templates they can use—neoinstitutionalism has yet to clarify how, while old ideas persist, new ideas enter the stage (Padgett & Powell, 2012). The concept of capital (Bourdieu, 1986), partly ignored in neoinstitutionalism (Feldman, 2004; Sewell, 1992; Sonenshein, 2014) despite its central role in the theoretical apparatus it partly originates from, will help me to explore this gap.

Being sensitive to the role of capital in the study of the activity of actors looking for organizational solutions in a resource-drained field will also contribute with answers to one riddle in entrepreneurship theory: the possible emergence of system-wide novelty in deprived circumstances. Kirzner (1973) proposed that decision-makers with no means—thanks to what he called “entrepreneurial alertness”—could still behave entrepreneurially by driving market processes towards equilibrium. Resource ownership and control, however, have become central issues in organizational entrepreneurship theory, even if recent evidence suggests that most entrepreneurs seldom emphasize them (Kellermans et al., 2016). Indeed, new ventures rarely use the resource acquisition techniques—such as venture capital financing or resource mobilization through formal contracts—that dominate entrepreneurship studies (Clough et al., 2019). “Resourceful” entrepreneurial microprocesses remain poorly understood (Williams et al., 2019), and despite the promise of some approaches, such as entrepreneurial bricolage (Baker & Nelson, 2005), empirically based entrepreneurship studies have struggled to explain what ties resource constraints to the emergence of new ideas.

This initial justification of the need for, and possibilities of, this study is followed by a closer definition of the phenomena this dissertation attends to and the theoretical frameworks it uses to analyze them. This will set out the purpose and research question it addresses. Then, a short overview of the papers will lead to a summary of the main findings and contributions they achieve when interpreted together. This chapter finishes with a brief account of how the rest of this thesis is organized.

Entrepreneurial processes in an institutional field in crisis

This is a dissertation about the ways in which, in times of crisis in an institutional field, entrepreneurial processes interact with the institutional arrangements that surround them. This research focuses on the work of individuals (also referred in this work as “people,” “actors,” “practitioners” and “organizational members”) searching for solutions to their organizational challenges. Daily affairs and the people who conduct them populate this thesis. Their decisions shape
entrepreneurial processes that normally reproduce institutional arrangements (schemas, templates, scripts or structures of rules, norms and concepts that shape the goals and means of actors) but occasionally depart from them. It is the dynamics of how organizational members and entrepreneurs search for solutions to the challenges they confront that makes up the central focus of this research. It is the consideration of their resulting organizational outcomes against the wider context in which they happen that allows the identification of reproduction and novelty dynamics.

This research is empirically located in the socially relevant setting of written news. For more than a century, journalistic news has played a central role in the provision of information in many societies, coming to shape shared understandings and the way democracy has worked in them (McNair, 2012; Strömbäck, 2005). But the objective conditions that granted written news such a function are changing fast. It is important to note, however, that the questions this dissertation attends to do not concern primarily the future of news and its implications. Instead, what this research explores is processes of reproduction and novelty taking place within organizations when the objective conditions of a field suddenly shift. This study, however, because it is placed in the crisis of the field of written news, provokes questions related to what journalism will become and where and by whom it will be carried out in the future. These questions will not be answered here, but this study will provide direction to how these issues can be tackled.

All the papers combined in this dissertation deal with organizational dynamics of reproduction and novelty in organizations belonging to the field population of written news providers, or newspapers. They study these dynamics drawing on diverse literature and different research strategies. This introductory text wrapping them (i.e. the kappa of this dissertation), however, does not seek to recombine their disparate approaches into an eclectic mix. It rather attempts to produce a consistent body of research supported by empirical evidence emerging from the stand-alone papers it includes. In doing so, I largely rely on concepts extensively used in entrepreneurship and institutional theory. Thus, this kappa maintains a focal attention on how the activity of individuals searching for solutions to organizational challenges shapes entrepreneurial processes within an institutional field in crisis. Because of this focus, this thesis is sensitive to micro-level explanations at the intersection between entrepreneurship and institutions.

Conceptualizations of entrepreneurship typically refer to a phenomenon in which the creation of a new enterprise (Low & MacMillan, 1988)—in contexts that can be both an asset and a liability (Welter, 2011)—produces different outcomes at multiple levels of analysis (Davidsson & Wiklund, 2001). Entrepreneurship drives the market process (Kirzner, 1997) and can, potentially, bring novelty influencing system-wide activities and transforming contexts (Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990). Entrepreneurship, as I interpret it, happens in the initiation of new ventures (Gartner, 1988), but also in established organizations (Ling et al., 2008).
1 Introduction

In this work, I focus on entrepreneurial processes that integrate situated solution-orientated interactions of actors trying to get jobs done in their efforts to pursue higher expected value (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), monetary and nonmonetary. Because, in the current context of crisis in the field of written news, resource scarcity dominates, this approach to entrepreneurship also joins research focusing on entrepreneurship as “problems of designing within constraints” (Venkataraman et al., 2012) and as a form of bricolage, i.e. making do with resources at hand (Baker & Nelson, 2005). Thus, this research attends to what others have referred to as understudied ordinary entrepreneurship (Aldrich & Ruef, 2018).

Institutional theory stresses the regularity of values, routines and practices in patterns of social action regulated by rules, norms and cultural-cognitive structures (Scott, 1995), which makes organizations very similar in some aspects, i.e. organizational isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). In highly structured fields, institutionalized acts are widely followed without debate and “alternatives may be literally unthinkable” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983: 5). In these contexts, ensembles of individuals—often experiencing hard-to-evaluate outputs and poorly understood technologies—reproduce institutions, such as “what a business is and does” (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994: 648) and how “resources and their value” connect (Venkataraman et al., 2012: 29). Institutionalism has explained social reproduction, requiring no monitoring or enforcement (Zucker, 1977), as a result of both the taken-for-granted nature of many assumptions and the positive impact that conformity also has on organizations (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Yet, as institutionalism is becoming interested in how this happens through ordinary actors in everyday situations (Powell & Rerup, 2017), conformity and nonconformity, reproduction and production are increasingly found to intermingle. This dissertation brings this sensibility to the micro to a setting that, despite its relevance, has seldom been addressed as such: an institutional field in crisis.

Altogether, the kappa of this dissertation builds on compatible concepts of entrepreneurship and institutionalism. Studying cases that take place in established incumbent organizations and new ventures entering the field of written news, this work will identify three distinct entrepreneurial processes of interaction with institutional arrangements. These findings, by centering on the role of capital and the experience of constraints, add to theories of institutionalism and entrepreneurship.

Research purpose and question

The turn to the micro in institutionalism (Powell & Rerup, 2017; Smets et al., 2017) and the consolidation of entrepreneurship theories that study entrepreneurial processes in situated solution-orientated interactions (Sarasvathy, 2001; Baker & Nelson, 2005) are offering fresh opportunities for theoretical and
methodological convergence. Two areas, somehow neglected so far in empirical studies, seem particularly promising in terms of what perspectives on institutionalism and entrepreneurship together can unlock: first, the context of a field in crisis (Fligstein, 1997)—where both theoretical bodies expect entrepreneurial action to flourish (Sine & David, 2003; Greenwood et al., 2002); and second, the role of capital and resources—a root concept of institutionalism (Bourdieu, 1984) and a primary area of interest in entrepreneurship (Miller & Friesen, 1984).

Using institutionalism and entrepreneurship theory, this work explores how actors—in their attempts to find solutions to organizational challenges—reproduce or depart from institutional arrangements in a field in crisis. I approach this aim by exploring multiple cases in empirical sites that include both large established organizations and new ventures, and paying special attention to the role of capital and resources in the entrepreneurial processes that unfold in these settings. Activities that either reproduce or depart from the institutional arrangements that regulate them are kept in focus. As Chapter 2 explains, research combining these approaches remains rare.

Thus, I ask: How and why does the entrepreneurial activity of individuals searching for solutions to organizational challenges in a field in crisis either reproduce or depart from the institutional arrangements that regulate it?

Overview of the standalone papers

The original four papers in this dissertation, albeit not directly addressing the research questions mentioned above, deal with these issues in different ways and from different perspectives. I present here an overview of them in their original form, conceptual perspectives and conclusions. It is, however, the empirical materials they accumulate that are central to the development of findings and implications within the common theoretical framework this kappa elaborates. The standalone papers, in any case, are not alien to what this text attends to. All four papers study newspapers, incumbents or new entrants to the field of written news, a field in which changing objective conditions challenge the efficiency of the same institutional arrangements that dominate it. All but one of the papers (Paper 1) also focus on individual activities shaping entrepreneurial processes, which I assess against the institutional context in which they are embedded. Papers 2, 3 and 4 describe micro-level processes contributing to institutional reproduction. Finally, Paper 4 also identifies microdynamics resulting in organizational novelty that diverges from the institutional context.

Paper 1 sets the empirical context for the other papers and defines its institutional field. It analyzes—based on the empirical historic case of the provincial press in England—the path formation and lock-in of some structures that today shape the field of written news. The paper explains how different prescriptive norms and
1 Introduction

concepts were incorporated and developed through positive feedback into the practice of journalism and the business strategy of newspapers. This paper integrates a knowledge-based view of the firm (Grant, 1996a, 1996b) and path dependency (Sydow et al., 2009) to interpret the institutionalization process of the field of written news. The findings show how, in a context of relative simplicity and certainty, path-dependent formation processes are led by self-reinforcing knowledge integration processes. However, these same processes fail to explain reproduction dynamics when changes in the objective conditions of the field increase uncertainty and negative feedback. This paper is coauthored with Rachel Matthews and was recognized with an award at the European Media Management Association (EMMA) 2015 conference (Best paper runner-up). This article has already been published (Cestino & Matthews, 2016).

Paper 2 explores the reasons behind reproduction dynamics in the face of increased uncertainty and negative feedback and complements the historic approach of Paper 1 with a real-time analysis of an exemplary case of innovation efforts in the newspaper population: the “Pyramid” project at Svenska Dagbladet. The project was recognized as the most innovative in the world by the International Newspaper Marketing Association in 2016. The article uses Service-Dominant Logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008, 2016) and servitization (Baines et al., 2009; Vandermerwe & Rada, 1988) as theoretical tools to interpret current efforts to find solutions to organizational challenges in the field. It unearths some strategic determinants of an institutional nature that “restrict” opportunities to increase value co-creation. These norms and concepts, carried out through specific practices, define the limits of the path to innovation for members of legacy organizations in the field. This study is coauthored with Adele Berndt and was recognized with an award at EMMA 2017 (Best paper 2017). This paper has already been published (Cestino & Berndt, 2017).

Paper 3 shifts the focus towards new ventures entering the field of written news to find that part-time entrepreneurship forms abound. This article, based on a multi-case study approach, identifies dynamics of organizational resilience in part-time entrepreneurship as pursuits of valued forms of work. This provides answers to why and how individuals sustain their entrepreneurial ventures in nontransitional part-time forms despite sharing similar mixed motivations with full-time entrepreneurs. Part-time conditions can shield these ventures from market demands, allowing these entrepreneurs to resolve trade-offs and tensions differently and persist in their efforts. In a field in crisis, despite the modification of its objective conditions, part-time dynamics in new ventures can contribute to the reproduction of the status quo. This paper is single authored. A draft of this paper has been recognized with an award at the AOM Annual Meeting 2019 (Best paper entrepreneurship) and an abridged version is available in the Proceedings of the 2019 Academy of Management Meeting.

Paper 4 maintains the focus of this thesis on new ventures and uses a multiple-case, abductive longitudinal study to explore how organizational innovation
emerges in resource-constrained new firms searching for solutions to their early-stage organizational challenges. The article, drawing on the concept of entrepreneurial bricolage, recognizes that novelty diverging from the prescriptions provided by an institutional field can originate in deprived new organizations as a result of how these ventures experience their resource constraints in their attempt to complete—or more or less complete—their projects. By comparing instances of highly divergent novelty, this paper explores the dynamics of how it happens. This paper is single authored. Early drafts of this paper were presented at the AOM Annual Meeting 2018 and SCANCOR, Stanford, in November 2018.

Summary of this kappa

The core of this dissertation is a “reinterpretation” of the four standalone papers presented above in the light of a common theoretical framework based on compatible concepts from entrepreneurship and institutionalism. This analysis, focusing on the role of capital, provides answers to why and how the entrepreneurial activity of individuals searching for solutions to organizational challenges in a field in crisis either reproduces or departs from the institutional arrangements that still dominate it.

Figure 1 depicts an overview of the four papers and the entrepreneurial processes this kappa further identifies. In Figure 1, the standalone papers are mapped in relation to axes that define the level of analysis (actor, firm and field), focal organizations (incumbents and new ventures) and analytic timeframe (historic, real-time snapshot and real-time longitudinal) they cover. For each paper, the figure also includes the main concept they are originally built upon (in plain text) and anticipates the entrepreneurial processes (in bold text boxes) each of them will support in this kappa.

Based on the reinterpretation of the four standalone papers combined, this research will evidence that the norms and concepts that shape the current form of journalism and newspapers originated in specific historic processes led by the consolidation of working practices and product homogenization. For example, the rhetoric of the “Fourth Estate” followed the removal of taxation on advertising in the 1880s that increased the economic returns on a wide appeal and fostered mass circulation, breaking the former link between the press and partisan politics. Similarly, the discourse of news produced by members of a specific occupation, namely journalism, did not develop until the mid-twentieth century following the professionalization of journalists in associations, institutes and unions. These elements came to define specific forms of capitals in the field of written news. Despite the aleatory and rather materialistic origins of these elements, and—in the current changing objective conditions in the field—the decreasing economic traction of the capitals in which they manifest, entrepreneurial processes in both large established organizations and new ventures continue to reproduce them.
This research will also identify, in one exemplary incumbent, a process of reproduction that I refer to as “decoupled innovation.” Actors in this type of organization experience problems as capital losses, such as diminishing economic returns, and the perception that they lose some authority and control over their network of social links. These problems will trigger a search for solutions that facilitate the adoption of new ideas, such as customization or cross-functional reorganizations. However, when the articulation and implementation of these new ideas are interpreted within the meaning structure provided by existing norms and concepts, day-to-day activities, decoupled from the imported ideas, do not change significantly. For example, in the studied incumbent case, content customization—restrained by beliefs such as that readers are clustered, and newspapers need to help them “get a deeper understanding of their own life and the society”—was recently almost abandoned. Similarly, in this case cross-functional approaches increased the collaboration among journalistic and managerial positions, yet they have not made a dent in the neat separation between these functions. Furthermore, when these new activities generate immediate (albeit small) relative capital gains, actors perceive that their organizational challenges become less severe. As problems seem to wane, individuals unravel their search for solutions, reinforcing the short-term sustainability of dominant interpretative schemas and, therefore, institutional reproduction.

In new ventures entering the field, I recognize that the process of reproduction takes a different path. Some particularly deprived entrepreneurs in my data manage to organize nonrelated-to-the-venture supportive activities that generate nonrelated-to-the-venture economic capital, shield these organizations from market demands and procure them with a distinct long-term orientation. Part-time entrepreneurs, who combine running their ventures with extensive freelancing or even wage jobs, exist in abundance in the field of written news. Curiously, even
if the economic capital gains these sideline occupations procure are totally unrelated to their business, these entrepreneurs commonly experience a perception of being sheltered and orientate their ventures to the long run. This perception safeguards, for example, their value-laden community reporting to which they give priority over other venture-related activities, such as management, selling or promotion. This process, even when these ventures operate in the direst objective conditions, averts exit scenarios and reinforces the conformity of their daily activities to dominant norms and concepts, resulting in institutional reproduction. I term this process “reproduction by sheltering.”

Not all the entrepreneurial processes this work will identify contribute, however, to the reproduction of existing institutional arrangements. In the researched cases, instances of significant difference commonly form in a distinct experience of constraints resulting from severe capital scarcity, which I call “novelty by new situated capital.” In these ventures, the low available capital shapes a distinct way of experiencing problems and constraints. The absence of economic capital and moderate-to-low levels of the sort of cultural and social capital that is believed to be key to the production of written news—such as an insufficient team, a lack of journalism experience or poor connections to potential informants—trigger a particular way of experiencing problems among individuals in those organizations that can eventually generate some novel solutions. Although low capital does not obstruct the commitment of these actors to their reporting, it does inhibit common solutions to the problems they encounter. These actors find working solutions in freely available inputs their personal structures (i.e. knowledge, attitudes, beliefs… they have accumulated in their lives) provide. For example, journalists having to report on sexual abuse and lacking the infrastructure to produce a video may draw on their illustration skills and “discover” a “video animation format.” Other journalist entrepreneurs with no team and no funding to hire may draw upon all their personal acquaintances in the neighborhood and mobilize them with their activist experience to report on the community they live in. Importantly, neither casual drawing nor a rather informal network of known neighbors are considered “capital” today in the field of written news. Despite their varying pertinence for the field, these novel solutions can (albeit imperfectly) work. In these cases, these situated forms of “new capital”—despite not reproducing existing institutional arrangements in the field—can contribute to the survival of these organizations and then consolidate novelty in their structural properties.

In this thesis I will argue that these findings contribute to concepts in institutionalism and entrepreneurship. Institutional studies have seldom explored the role of capital (Bourdieu, 1986) in institutional processes beyond power struggles related to the acquisition and mobilization of available homogeneous resources (e.g. Oliver, 1997; Oakes et al., 1998; Leblebici et al., 1991). This research adds to these studies by stressing the centrality of the experience of capital constraints in ordinary actors and the implications of resource interpretations in nascent institutional processes. This study also complements extant views on institutional complexity (Greenwood et al., 2011) and
contradictions (Thornton et al., 2012). Rather than assuming the coexistence of alternative institutional templates that actors can purposefully employ in interstitial—i.e. in between spaces—positions (Furnari, 2014; Groleau et al., 2012), my findings explore alternative microprocesses by which new ideas “enter” existing fields and with what results. As I elaborate in Chapter 7, these findings also provide insights into previously unanswered questions related to whether courses of action “enabled” by a field are still orientated by institutional arrangements or not (Cardinale, 2018) and to early forms of decoupling processes (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Bromley & Powell, 2012). Finally, this dissertation discusses how changing objective conditions in a field are experienced by actors and the possibilities that the concept of capital brings to definitions of institutionalized fields in crisis (Fligstein, 1997).

This research contributes to entrepreneurship with one central insight: In an institutional field in crisis, when focusing on problem-solving activities of ordinary actors, entrepreneurial action appears in humble and mundane forms that contrast those often chronicled in later stages of change by institutional entrepreneurship theory (DiMaggio, 1988; Misangy et al., 2008; Battilana et al., 2009). Additionally, this dissertation adds to the concept of entrepreneurial alertness (Kirzner, 1973) and to resourcefulness by unbundling the process by which bricolage (Baker & Nelson, 2005) produces outcomes that significantly depart from the institutional environment. In my findings, in line with microneoinstitutionalism, bricoleurs do not blatantly violate norms and concepts, and they still bring novelty in their working solutions. In fact, the efforts of entrepreneurial bricoleurs are largely sustained by institutionally informed purposes and ideas in ways that, I will suggest, bring the concept of bricolage closer to its original definition by Lévi-Strauss (1962).

The plan of this work is as follows.

Chapter 2 provides a detail exploration of institutional and entrepreneurship theories and unfolds the converging assumptions and concepts that allow a combined interpretation of the four papers this thesis comprises. This chapter also identifies the gaps and shortcomings in this literature that Chapter 7 attempts to address.

Chapter 3 introduces the reader to the current state of the field of written news and defines what institutional arrangements linger and matter in the population of newspapers. This empirical setting is common to all four papers and this kappa. The chapter overviews the main themes that describe the opposing forces of stability and change shaping the field. It exposes the undercurrent shifts in the business of written news, the conversations taking place among the actors that populate the field and what these discourses often conceal. An extended version of this chapter, focusing on the phenomenon of new ventures entering local news deserts in the USA, is to be published in Matthews, R. and Hodgson, G. (Eds), Comparing Local Journalism: Local Newspapers, Global Views (Taylor &
Francis), under the title Journalism Startups in USA: Covering News Deserts (Cestino, forthcoming).

Chapter 4 exposes the philosophical tenets of this research and describes the methodological strategies undertaken. It does so with careful consideration of the reasons that guided the selection of the empirical field of written news, the specific setting and theoretical sampling of each one of the papers, and their distinct approaches to data collection, analysis and research ethics.

Chapter 5 presents each original paper: their individual research questions, specific theoretical perspectives and key concepts, their findings and contributions. This chapter closes with a brief interlude that introduces the opportunity to reconsider the data of these papers within a common theoretical framework to study entrepreneurial processes of reproduction and novelty.

Chapter 6 revisits the findings of all four papers taking into consideration the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2, presents models of entrepreneurial processes of reproduction and novelty and provides evidence on the empirical data that supports and illustrates them.

Chapter 7 presents a discussion on the different contributions of this research. The findings, insights and theoretical developments this chapter advances complement what each standalone paper does while remaining consistent with them.

Chapter 8 follows with an identification of opportunities for further research, ending with a discussion on the implications this study has for policy and practice.

The four papers this thesis combines are attached as an appendix.
Chapter 2. Theoretical perspectives

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial action and field outcomes

Different conceptualizations of entrepreneurship have included the creation of new products or processes (Schumpeter, 1934), entry into new markets (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996), the creation of new enterprise (Low & MacMillan, 1988), the creation of new ventures (Aldrich & Ruef, 2006; Gartner, 1988; Thornton, 1999), the nexus between entrepreneurs and opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), the introduction of new economic activity that leads to change in the marketplace (Davidsson, 2004), a creative and social/collective organizing process that materializes a venture (Johannisson, 2011), the nexus between action and interaction (Venkataraman et al., 2012), judgment of the combination of heterogeneous resources in the pursuit of profit under conditions of uncertainty (Foss & Klein, 2018) and many others. Common to most entrepreneurship research is its theoretical and empirical attention to a phenomenon characterized by personal initiative and action (McMullen & Shepherd, 2006), which can have an impact on “change, newness, and development” that transcends “organizational contexts” (Wiklund et al., 2010: 2). This aspect is central in this research. My interest in how individuals get things done through organizing processes involving people and resources brings this research close to practice approaches to “entrepreneuring” (e.g. Johannisson, 2011: 135). Ingredients of these perspectives will become evident later in this work as the theoretical focus narrows down.

As a starting point, by entrepreneurship I mean the “creation of new enterprise” (Low & MacMillan, 1988: 141). According to the authors sharing this definition, the ultimate purpose of studying entrepreneurship is to explain “the role of new enterprise in furthering economic progress.” Although the consideration of economic progress per se is not my focus, such an approach to entrepreneurship integrates various aspects that are key to my research purpose: the consideration of entrepreneurship as a process of emergence of new economic activity that originates, takes place and can produce outcomes simultaneously at multiple levels of analysis (Davidsson & Wiklund, 2001). As I elaborate in the following sections, this definition of entrepreneurship also affords two other advantages. First, it does not restrict entrepreneurial phenomena to innovative outcomes. New firms, ventures, operations, projects, business and other organizational phenomena that do not qualify as innovative can, in this view, be entrepreneurial. Second, entrepreneurship, in this interpretation, does not require the creation of new companies, firms or ventures. New enterprise within a corporate context can also be entrepreneurship (Ling et al., 2008).
“Entrepreneurship takes place and has effects on different levels simultaneously” (Davidsson & Wiklund, 2001: 81). One of the main reasons behind the increased interest in entrepreneurship phenomena lies in the belief that entrepreneurial outcomes occur at multiple levels and influence system-wide activities (Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990), with profound effects on society (Baumol, 1990; McGrath, 1999). The initial theoretical approaches to entrepreneurship suggested that the initiative of entrepreneurs explained innovation (Schumpeter, 1934) and competition, as entrepreneurship is the “driving force for the entire market process” (Kirzner, 1973: 8). Although it is individuals who carry out these initiatives, they take place in different organizational contexts (Moran & Ghoshal, 1999; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Welter, 2011) and often result in the formation of new organizations (Gartner, 1988; Schumpeter, 1934), the rejuvenation of established firms (Covin & Slevin, 1999; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Wiklund, 1998; Zahra, 1991), the formation of new industries (Aldrich & Martinez, 2003) and the creation of new institutions (Battilana et al., 2009).

**Explaining entrepreneurial action: Opportunities, information and learning**

Gartner’s (1988) challenge to the traditional interest in the personality traits and characteristics of the entrepreneur shifted the focus to what entrepreneurs do, giving focal priority to the process by which entrepreneurship activities take place. This drive away from neoclassical equilibrium (e.g. Kihlstrom & Laffont, 1979) and psychological theories of entrepreneurship (e.g. Begley & Boyd, 1987; McClelland, 1961) was anticipated by the Austrian theories of the “market as a process” (Kirzner, 1973: 1). These theories, interested in the nature of the market process rather than in individual- or firm-level processes, assigned a central role to entrepreneurial decisions in setting market processes in motion from imbalance toward equilibrium. Entrepreneurship here plays a key driving role that extends beyond the traditional optimization perspective of classic economic models and the concept of competitive advantage at the core of strategy theory. It is on some of the basic tenets of this perspective on entrepreneurship that I construct the understanding of entrepreneurial action on which this thesis is built. In Austrian theories, to understand entrepreneurial action, first one needs to look more closely at some basic concepts: opportunities, information and learning.

Although, according to Kirzner (1973), the opportunity concept was developed rather as a metaphor for “existing” market conditions (e.g. price gaps between buyers and sellers) that would explain resource misallocations, much of the later entrepreneurship research has fixated on the “opportunity creation” (e.g. Sarasvathy, 2001) versus “opportunity discovery” (e.g. Shane & Venkataraman, 2000) dichotomy. This is somehow surprising given that, according to Kirzner, the conditions behind the opportunity construct do not anticipate the future or necessarily exist in objective form “before” they are actually created or discovered. In light of the original opportunity construct, the whole discovery
versus creation discussion on which much entrepreneurship research has centered is rendered, at best, artificial. Entrepreneurial opportunities bring into existence new goods, services, inputs and organizing methods (Casson, 1982), which abstractly become a useful construct to explain market-level processes ex post (Foss & Klein, 2018). The concept, however, perhaps sheds little light on entrepreneurial processes at other analytical levels.

The concept of opportunity at the micro and meso levels of analysis has been addressed in various ways from very different perspectives: from relatively objective situations for value-added activities that entrepreneurs can identify (e.g. Shane & Venkataraman, 2000) to a set of individual cognitions and social constructions (e.g. Gregoire et al., 2010) or in the substantive terms of “what aspiring entrepreneurs do” (Dimov, 2011: 75). The diversity of approaches has split entrepreneurship research into opposing views that—not always smoothly—address and complement each other. To facilitate the theoretical precision of the term, Davidsson (2015) recently suggested a reconceptualization of the concept under the sub-constructs of external enablers (i.e. aggregate-level circumstances affecting new venture creation attempts), new venture ideas (i.e. “imaginary combinations of product/service offerings, markets, and means of bringing these offerings into existence”) and opportunity confidence (i.e. “a particular actor’s subjective evaluation of the attractiveness of new venture ideas and/or external enablers as the basis for entrepreneurial activity”) (Davidsson, 2015: 675). Within the entrepreneurship literature, the opportunity construct, however, remains a contested one, prompting calls to drop it as a valid unit of analysis (Foss & Klein, 2018).

Kirzner (1973) stated that entrepreneurial processes—at the market level—imply reallocations of resources to their best use and enable reconfigurations of the ends and means given at any time by the economic system. Two aspects are key in this view, which will remain central to the use of entrepreneurship theory in this work. The first is the primal emphasis on capital heterogeneity (Mises, 1949), resource combinations as the “true function of the entrepreneur” (Lachmann, 1956: 16) and decision making about the use of scarce resources as the central area of entrepreneurial judgment (Foss & Klein, 2018). Resources can be understood better if attention is paid to the changing attributes that entrepreneurs perceive in them and that can suggest different values and uses at different times (Barzel, 1997). This resource heterogeneity, which has often been considered a given from management theoretical perspectives, such as the resource-based view (Barney, 1991), is here explored as resulting from the experience of resources in entrepreneurship processes (Foss & Foss, 2008). In this sense, the perspective favored here aligns with judgment-based views on entrepreneurship, in which the focal unit of analysis remains centered on entrepreneurial action and, specifically, on “the assembly of resources in the present in anticipation of (uncertain) receipts in the future” (Foss & Klein, 2018: 16, parentheses in the original). The stress on ends and means reconfigurations does not limit “entrepreneurship to fundamentally new means-ends relationships” (Shane, 2012: 18, emphasis in the
original. It opens spaces for constructivist accounts of opportunities, because “opportunity, by definition, is unknown until discovered” (Kaish & Gilad, 1991: 38). As Shane put it, “people do not discover entrepreneurial opportunities through search, but through recognition” (Shane, 2000: 451).

Importantly for the purpose of this research, the Austrian perspective also stresses that entrepreneurial opportunities are idiosyncratic to what actors can recognize and to the attributes of the people who create them. Explicit in this understanding of opportunities is that people have different stocks of information that they generate through their life experiences. Opportunities are idiosyncratic because entrepreneurs are influenced by the flow of information that they develop from work experience, education, personal interests and so on in bundles of information that are not replicable by others (Roberts, 1991). Implicit in this is the idiosyncratic value that entrepreneurs also seek and extract from their behavior. According to Kirzner, entrepreneurship behavior involves “alertness to possibly newly worthwhile goals and to possibly newly available resources” and entrepreneurial action is “active, creative, and human rather than as passive, automatic, and mechanical” (Kirzner, 1973: 35, emphasis added). How alertness and creativity practically happen in practitioners’ activities is a central focus in this research.

Proceeding with the Austrian view and the possibility that entrepreneurial action is stripped from the prior search for opportunities, and for the purpose of this thesis, I assume that the “discovery–identification–recognition” of opportunities and entrepreneurial actions are not empirically distinct. A concept of opportunity that is defined “in substantive terms, i.e. in terms of what aspiring entrepreneurs do” (Dimov, 2011: 75) may, at least pragmatically, allow us to overcome the traditional opportunity recognition–opportunity creation dichotomy in entrepreneurial studies. In this dissertation, opportunities are “what entrepreneurs do”, that is, activities that require the combination of heterogeneous, and often scarce, resources and can result in reconfigurations of the ends and means as defined by an exchange field at any given time.

Two other concepts in the Austrian tradition are important: information and learning. In this view, information is imperfectly distributed in markets. People possess different information (Hayek, 1945). Some actors discover–create opportunities because they possess information that others do not. Information, however, is not static. Flows of information are continuously produced in the market and elsewhere. Information can be learned through “the testing of plans in the market” or acquired “through the experience of market participation” (Kirzner, 1973: 10 and 13, emphasis added). Today, these concepts have become almost normative jargon in current start-up arenas. In this view, the discovery–creation of opportunities and entrepreneurial behavior are far from automatic and opposed to economizing, the traditional approach to market decisions in classic economics. In addition, because “opportunities” depend on factors other than entrepreneurs’ ability and willingness to take action, what deserves the attention
of entrepreneurship scholars is what entrepreneurs do (Gardner, 1988). One way to explore what entrepreneurs do requires an understanding of their decision-making judgment and motives and the conditions of uncertainty in which they act.

**Uncertainty, judgment and motives**

Whatever the definition used, entrepreneurship studies have largely agreed on the assumption that “entrepreneurs are often uncertain about the true nature of the opportunities they wish to pursue” (Sorenson & Stuart, 2008: 530). This includes fundamental matters such as whether there would be a market for their value propositions and whether they would be able to capture any value from their business activities. Even if opportunities are formed in the emergent action of entrepreneurs (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Dimov, 2010; Garud & Karnoe, 2003; Sarasvathy, 2001), the “existence of uncertainty about the true value of an entrepreneurial opportunity is itself a pre-condition for the very existence of the opportunity” (Sorenson & Stuart, 2008: 531). In sum, in their discovery, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities, entrepreneurs face uncertainty and accept risks.

Traditionally, the entrepreneurship literature has posited a one-dimensional conceptualization of uncertainty as hindering entrepreneurial action. Although there have been attempts to elaborate on a more nuanced role of uncertainty (e.g. McMullen & Shepherd, 2006), most entrepreneurship research is based on the implicit assumption that the decision to become an entrepreneur is an inherently risky one. The so-called “plunge decision” is usually modeled as “a choice between stable employment with predictable income and a leap of faith with uncertain returns” (Woodward & Hall, 2010: 513). Idealized, but common in the entrepreneurship literature, accounts of entrepreneurs have depicted them as risk takers who largely ignore opportunity costs or, alternatively, as overconfident optimists who exaggerate the potential of their ventures.

This work aligns, however, with less idealized accounts stressing that entrepreneurs need “to make decisions about the future without access to a formal model of decision rule, as would apply to situations of rational behavior under probabilistic risk” (Foss & Klein, 2018: 13). Crucially, this view understands that, in most entrepreneurial decisions, actors do not face a set of possible outcomes to which clear probabilities can be assigned but instead face open alternatives, often with no obvious outcomes and even less discernible prospects. In these situations, different individuals can make different decisions because of their different access to information, different ways of interpreting the available data, different personal stories and predispositions, et cetera. Unsurprisingly, much entrepreneurship theory has glorified an idealized uniqueness of entrepreneurial judgment, a particular “gut feeling” or “understanding” (e.g. Huang, 2012; Mises, 1949) that defies rules and systematization.
What entrepreneurs do is to favor alternatives with a higher expected value (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). What that value can be is, therefore, not a minor aspect of entrepreneurship and, as this work will argue, a better way to explain entrepreneurial processes. Theory has traditionally argued that wealth creation combines with self-determination motives (Amit et al., 2001; Sapienza et al., 2003) in shaping the desire or willingness to initiate and sustain an entrepreneurial endeavor (Shepherd et al., 2019). Research on self-determination motives has identified three basic individual needs: autonomy or independence, competence or accomplishing goals and outcomes, and relatedness or the need to establish connections and relationships with other individuals (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Following this classification, later research has gravitated between externally oriented purposes and individual-level psychological rewards (Hmieleski & Corbett, 2008) to explain why people undertake entrepreneurial activities.

Research on psychological motives has elaborated mainly on a narrow combination of two factors: greater autonomy and more interesting work content (Benz, 2009; Benz & Frey, 2008). Abundant empirical evidence has confirmed that the desire to be independent and the ambition to exploit one’s own technical capabilities better rank highly—along with aspirations to earn a higher income—in entrepreneurs’ motivations (e.g. Amit et al., 2001; Vivarelli, 1991, 2004). Studies exploring external motivations have suggested a great diversity of possible accomplishments, such as creating societal-level value (Hechavarria et al., 2017) or changing the world by producing something new (Wyrwich, 2015). Much of this literature has contributed to the expanding field of social entrepreneurship studies (Dees & Elias, 1998). The scarce literature on media entrepreneurship has closely aligned with this view and recognized the importance of missionary aspects in the unique characteristics and business dynamics of the media (Achtenhagen, 2008; Hoag, 2008; Khajeheian, 2017). According to these studies, for many media entrepreneurs, this societal mission is both explicit and central, and its impact supersedes the wealth creation criteria. This societal mission includes providing artistic, cultural and/or societal value and implies—among other aspects—(1) engaging in continuous innovation, adaptation and learning and (2) acting without being limited by the actual available resources (Achtenhagen, 2008).

**Alertness, creative action and (lack of) resources**

Alertness and creativity, in Kirzner’s (1973) view, are important, because they allow decision makers with no means to behave entrepreneurially and play a central role in the competitive process that drives the market or exchange field. Although Kirzner himself did not take this idea any further, he anticipated what empirical research has found in many contexts: not the paradigmatic risk-taking entrepreneurial behavior depicted in much of the entrepreneurship literature but a frugal mode of organizing activities to achieve individual and interpersonal
aspirations. This is, however, not necessarily the majority view of entrepreneurship.

Traditionally, other perspectives have explored how entrepreneurs acquire (Barney, 1991) and/or recombine valuable resources (Galunic & Rodan, 1998; Shane, 2012). This view has often emphasized both the key role that sufficient resources play in the initiation of a new venture and the difficulties that entrepreneurs face in mobilizing them (Burton et al., 2002; Freeman et al., 1983; Stinchcombe, 1965). Studies in this tradition have claimed that the primary arena in which entrepreneurs can maneuver for opportunity organization and advantage is largely restricted to how they think about and mobilize their resources. Because viability is a primary goal in the first steps of a new venture (Miller & Friesen, 1984), this literature has stressed that, at this early stage, entrepreneurs need to structure their resources to support their business idea.

Research on the structuring of resources during this stage has considered a wide array of possibilities: (1) external partnerships to enable economies of scale (Miller & Friesen, 1984) and to acquire critical resources (Zahra et al., 2009); (2) flexibility, so that adaptation to new situations and competitive contexts is guaranteed (Cainarca et al., 1992); (3) experimental resource allocation patterns to select valuable and unique operational and product configurations that may eventually allow the venture to establish a competitive advantage (Morrow et al., 2007); and (4) a constant search for knowledge across different domains (De Massis et al., 2018). These studies have commonly considered the structuring and reconfiguration of start-ups’ resources to be a foundational key activity for entrepreneurs that is directly correlated with the capabilities with which their ventures will eventually perform (Sirmon et al., 2011).

In contrast to this backdrop, the empirical evidence has suggested that most practitioner entrepreneurs seldom emphasize issues of resource ownership and control (Kellermans et al., 2016) and new ventures rarely use the resource acquisition techniques that dominate the studies on resource structuration (Clough et al., 2019). Entrepreneurs often manage to pursue their business ideas despite paying little regard to both the limits imposed by the resources that they already control and the acquisition of the needed resources. Generally, the term resourcefulness has somehow been laxly accepted as an essential part of entrepreneurship, often to label aspects of the process that enable entrepreneurs to turn ideas into reality. The term, however, remains poorly defined and understood, as a recent call for papers for a Special Issue of the Journal of Business Venturing suggests (Williams et al., 2019). More theoretically developed perspectives that have reflected on this phenomenon include effectuation (Sarasvathy, 2001), bricolage (Baker & Nelson, 2005) and affordable loss (Dew et al., 2009). They partly release risk from the entrepreneurial activity equation, as entrepreneurs work with the resources and assets that they already have and invest only what they can afford to lose (Venkataraman et al., 2012).
Among the “constructivist” approaches to resources in entrepreneurship research, bricolage (Baker & Nelson, 2005) is perhaps the one that has attracted the most interest. Bricolage has been suggested as both an “apt description” of the founding entrepreneurial process (Aldrich, 2010: 346) and a basic form of entrepreneurial action (Shepherd, 2015). What is important to state precisely now is that these approaches in general, and bricolage in particular, shift the focus from models of entrepreneurship as decision making under conditions of uncertainty to models of entrepreneurship as “problems of designing within constraints” (Venkataraman et al., 2012: 29). Entrepreneurship studies relying on bricolage have narrowed their focal attention to the contingent nature of the relationship between resources and their value, often taken for granted and considered stable elsewhere. The central questions that this literature has triggered and still demand further research include what makes a resource a resource, how organizations create something from what seems to be nothing and how resource environments socially construct valuable resources. The entrepreneurial bricolage research has called for the study of the actual actions of entrepreneurs and their interactions with the physical and social environment, issues that require the spanning of micro and macro levels of analysis.

**Bricolage as a basic form of entrepreneurial action**

**Origins of the concept**

The term bricolage originated in the field of anthropology (Lévi-Strauss, 1962) and later received some attention in the political science (e.g. Lanzara, 1998) and human geography (e.g. Cleaver, 2002) fields. Lévi-Strauss originally proposed the idealized roles of a bricoleur and an engineer to depict two distinctive approaches to thought and tasks, the fundamental difference being that the “engineer is always trying to make his way out of and go beyond the constraints” resulting from a context while the bricoleur “remains within them” (Lévi-Strauss, 1962: 19).

For Lévi-Strauss, bricolage is a “science of the concrete” (1962: 1), a sort of approximation of what “primitive” or “savage” knowledge would resemble. His way of understanding “prior science” (Lévi-Strauss, 1962: 16) starts from a simple observation: “only a small proportion of observations and experiments could have yield practical and immediately useful results” (1962: 15). Thus, initial new bits of knowledge cannot just be related to a practical purpose, “they [are] deemed to be useful or interesting because they [were] first of all known” (Lévi-Strauss, 1962: 9). Usefulness, then, necessarily follows curiosity, a primary inspiration led “by a desire for knowledge” (Lévi-Strauss, 1962: 14) that is common to any mode of scientific thought regardless of how close or distant it is from sensible intuition. Lévi-Strauss proposes that in a savage scientific enquiry performed at a strategic level sensible intuition remains close to perception and relatively far from imagination. The practice of bricolage offers a conceptual
framework for speculating (Lévi-Strauss, 1962: 16) about what such science of
the concrete can be.

In Lévi-Strauss’s original formulation (1962), the practice of bricolage includes
five distinctive aspects. First, bricoleurs do not subordinate their large number of
diverse tasks “to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and
procured for the purpose of the project” (1966: 17). Second, they remain within
their “closed […] universe of instruments” (1966: 17). Tools and materials are
thus, heterogeneous, finite, bearing no relation to and “not defined in terms of the
current project.” They, no doubt, “had a use” but “they can be used again,” “either
for the same purpose or for a different one,” eventually becoming a “contingent
result” of all the occasions on which they have been used (1966: 35). Third,
bricoleurs “interrogate” their “treasury” of available instruments to “discover”
what they could “signify” for their project (1966: 18), thus contributing to a
definition of the set of inputs for the corresponding project. Fourth, according to
Lévi-Strauss (1962) the possibilities of these inputs are always limited “by the
particular history of each piece and by those of its features which are already
determined by the ‘use’ [for which it was originally intended or modified in other
projects]” (1962: 19). This necessity is not simple or univocal, and neither is it
“unlimited” (1962: 36). Inputs, in this sense, are “pre-constrained” by their
meaning, which “impose constraints” at each stage of their employment as it “sets
a limit on their freedom of maneuver” (Lévi-Strauss, 1960: 35). Finally, because
the choice of elements depends on the possibility of new ones playing the
approximate role of unavailable alternatives, there is a reorganization of
instruments that produces outcomes never the same as “one vaguely imagined” or
“as some other which might have been preferred to it.”

According to Lévi-Strauss, bricolage’s components collectively draw
implications about the type of knowledge this form of science, so to speak,
produces: Bricoleurs remain within the constraints “imposed by a particular state
of civilization” (1962: 19). They look out for messages but collect ones which
have been transmitted in advance. These messages, that are part of “their
personality and life” (1966: 21) can become instruments or inputs as earlier ends
can be “called upon to play part of means.” Three important ideas result from this
approximation of bricolage. First, messages as instruments, means, or inputs,
cannot be considered concepts in the sense that they “do not possess simultaneous
and theoretically unlimited relations with other entities of the same kind.” In other
words, their significance is relatively fixed by their previous use. Second, this
explains why their results are always “a compromise between the structure of the
instrumental set and that of the project,” that once it materializes will “inevitably
be at a remove from the initial aim” (1966: 21). And third, bricoleurs may not ever
complete their purpose but they always put “an amount of their personality and
life by the choices they make between the limited possibilities” (1966: 21).

The original richness of the concept in Lévi-Strauss, somehow, eroded as it was
imported to other fields. In political science, what bricolage entails is (1) the
recourse to “secondhand materials to build an artifact or a structure when nothing more appropriate is available, and (2) the usage of old components and structures to perform new functions” (Lanzara, 1998: 27). A similar process of simplification has occurred in the operationalization of the concept in entrepreneurship studies.

Bricolage in entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial bricolage processes have been associated empirically with firm performance (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Baker et al., 2003) in penurious environments. As coined in the entrepreneurship literature (Baker & Nelson, 2005), the concept of bricolage encompasses three complementary aspects. First, the term “available resources” suggests strong dependence on the resources at hand, including those already under the control of an organization and those available for free or cheaply compared with standard resources. Second, “making do” stresses a bias for action and the possibilities provided by the context but also the possibilities to bypass the accepted limitations regarding what is considered to be a resource. Third, bricolage hints at novel resource combinations to meet new challenges and create value.

The above-mentioned facets of bricolage strongly resonate with the idiosyncratic nature of entrepreneurial opportunities and the possibility of novel ends and means reconfigurations, since “resources are what organizations make of them” (Baker et al., 2013: 33). Alas, much of the literature resorting to bricolage has retained metaphorical uses of the term for field-level dynamics of reassembly of different knowledge elements, paying little or no empirical attention to the actions actually carried out by individuals. Douglas (1986) theorized bricolage as a method by which entrepreneurs could construct new cognitive models and formal structures. According to her, this can happen through direct imitation or a more reflexive revision of existing models based on people’s prior experience in other organizations. Similarly, Hannan and Freeman (1984) conjectured that unconstrained borrowing can fuel recombinations of forms and categories into new types. Hardy and Maguire (2008: 117), on a similar line, argued that, since structures and actions are separable, institutional entrepreneurs can “hop and bridge from one social world to another” and referred to bricolage as processes of institutional novelty involved in the creation of new practices and institutions from different elements of existing institutions. Empirical studies have shown how field-level bricolage processes recombine borrowed cultural elements from opposing logics, resulting in the hybridization of rival categories (Rao et al., 2005).

Previous research has provided support for bricolage as a source of firm growth (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Baker et al., 2003) and innovativeness, that is, intentions to innovate (Senyard et al., 2014). Yet, quantitative operationalization of bricolage has remained overly focused on those aspects of bricolage traditionally stressed in the tradition of entrepreneurship such as bricoleurs’ “confidence in
[their] ability” to find “workable solutions” to “new challenges, problems or opportunities” by “taking action,” “using and combining” their “existing resources” (Senyard et al., 2009). This process, by means of simplification, has perhaps denaturalized central parts of the concept. Some central ideas in the original conceptual apparatus of bricolage have lost their pre-eminence, particularly that inputs’ significance is relatively fixed by their previous use, that projects inevitably materialize at a distance from the initial aim, and that bricoleurs’ choices of means are conditioned by the possibilities offered by their personality and life.

Despite the process of simplification, results in this research remain somehow ambiguous, supporting a nonlinear correlation between measures of bricolage and venture performance (Senyard et al., 2009) and some types of innovation (Kickul et al., 2018). Recently, Baker et al. (2013) identified—in a single-case study—that entrepreneurs, unable to alter the institutions that provide them with legitimacy, can still enact solutions that defy them in their maneuvering for business ideas and competitive advantage. These are not attempts to change the existing institutional arrangements but rather wide-ranging pursuits of disadvantaged organizations to find ways to thrive. Questions such as why and how this happens remain underexplored.

In sum, despite the promise that these studies have offered, little is still known about how bricoleurs experience their institutional context and the conditions and processes by which they comply with or deviate from it. Furthermore, because the primary arena in which these entrepreneurs maneuver for opportunity organization and advantage largely concerns how they think about and mobilize resources, more needs to be known about what—in these cases—makes a resource a resource and how resources are reconfigured. This is a research area that still seems to require more contextually sensitive perspectives, process approaches and qualitative methods (Clough et al., 2019). Particularly, entrepreneurial bricolage research calls for the study of the actual actions of entrepreneurs and their interactions with the physical and social environment, issues that require researchers to bridge the micro and macro levels of analysis.

Contextualizing entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurship in institutional contexts

Numerous calls have stressed the need to understand the environmental context in which entrepreneurs operate (Aldrich and Fiol, 1994; Aldrich & Wiedenmayer, 1993; Thornton, 1999). Understanding how entrepreneurial beliefs, action and results unfold requires contextually sensitive research. We can only attempt to explain entrepreneurship by looking at the entrepreneurial process in connection to its social context. Entrepreneurial “opportunities” are idiosyncratic not only to individuals but to contexts. Gartner (1995: 70) pointed out that observers “have a
tendency to underestimate the influence of external factors and overestimate the influence of internal or personal factors when making judgements about the behavior of other individuals.” Baumol (1990: 898) also stated that the rules for entrepreneurship “do change dramatically from one time and place to another”; more specifically, both socially determined decentralized institutions and centralized institutions designed by governmental authorities configure an environmental context that is central to firms’ access to resources and market opportunities (e.g. Meek et al., 2010). Exchange fields, markets and industries differ significantly in terms of their political, economic, socio-cultural and technological conditions, and these differences are likely to shape the determinants, processes and outcomes of entrepreneurship. Furthermore, although often the “context (still) is taken for granted” (Welter, 2011) in entrepreneurship studies, there is an increasing awareness that economic behavior can only be reasonably understood within its context (Welter, 2011; Zahra, 2007), be that the social (Granovetter, 1985), the spatial (Steyaert & Katz, 2004) or the institutional context (Polanyi, 1957).

Contexts in entrepreneurship theory are normally thought to set some preliminary boundaries for certain activities while facilitating others. In this sense, context may be experienced by “individuals as asset and liability” (Welter, 2011: 165). Entrepreneurial activity has, therefore, been described as an embedded socio-economic process that is encouraged (Jack & Anderson, 2002) but also constrained by the specific context of which it becomes part. This idea has recently taken form in the element of “external enablers” that Davidsson (2015) proposed as a constitutive part of entrepreneurial opportunities. This and other approaches, such as sector-based studies, are encouraging attempts to incorporate context into the core of entrepreneurship phenomena. Still, as De Massis and colleagues (2018: 4, quotation marks in the original) recently noted in a special issue of Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice on industrial sector entrepreneurship, researchers still typically focus on “a simple ‘top-down process’ of how industry variables affect lower level variables and relationships”, leaving bottom-up processes and the underlying mechanisms through which these recursive processes happen under-theorized and little understood.

Understanding how individuals interact with specific situational and temporal boundaries requires not only research sensitivity to the context, unfortunately often “viewed as differences that should be controlled” (De Massis et al., 2018: 5) but resorting to (and developing) “theories of context” (Welter, 2011: 175). The view that some sort of social structure constrains but also enables action has become a central concern across institutional theories. These perspectives, although increasingly used by entrepreneurship researchers (Su et al., 2016), perhaps still offer new ways to theorize context fruitfully in entrepreneurship.
Institutional theory

Institutional theory “draws attention to important factors that have been neglected in the study of entrepreneurship” (David et al., 2017: 671). The relationship between institutions and organizations interested classic sociologists and economists such as Weber and Marx, became the central topic for organizational sociologists such as Selznick (1949, 1957) and Stinchcombe (1965) and, under the strong influence of economists like Coase, Williamson, North and Hodson and economic sociologists such as Granovetter, regained attention with the research on increasingly sociological approaches, such as those of DiMaggio and Powell (1983), Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Scott (1975). Institutional theory has always been a far from homogeneous field. As Bruton et al. (2010) mentioned in their introduction to institutional theory, the concept “institution” has been formulated in different terms by different sensibilities in the literature, for example the formal rule sets (North, 1991), less formal shared interaction sequences (Jepperson, 1991) and taken-for-granted assumptions (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) that actors, both organizations and individuals, are expected to follow.

Institutions are commonly understood today in organizational theory as a type of social structure that takes the form of regular patterns of social action that “give stability and meaning to social life” (Scott, 2013: 56) and “owe their survival to relatively self-activating social processes” (Jepperson, 1991). Institutional theory has raised awareness and advanced the understanding of how taken-for-granted facets of the social (Powell & DiMaggio, 2012; Scott, 1995) “manifest in the ways that people frame issues, make choices, and pursue behaviors” (Garud et al., 2002: 196; Jepperson, 1991), shaping organizational behaviors and outcomes. Institutions work because, by appearing to be natural, objective and abiding (Zucker, 1977), they create conformance pressures through specific expectations about how organizations should behave (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). This renders other actions, regardless of their efficiency, unacceptable or even beyond consideration (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991).

Classic versions of institutional theory (e.g. Selznick, 1949, 1957; Zucker, 1977) interpreted “institutionalization” as an adaptive process of organizations: a process that either infuses what they do with value beyond technical requirements, making their own maintenance an end in itself (Selznick, 1957), or defines meaning, independently of actors’ views but transmitted by their actions, and the way in which tasks are and should be performed (Zucker, 1977). In these definitions, focused on either the value or the taken-for-granted meaning, actors are often depicted as strategic agents who are able to evaluate reflectively means in view of ends but whose choices of means and ends are in fact limited by different factors at different levels, be they individual, organizational or societal.

Neoinstitutionalism incorporated some of these views but reconsidered its organizational sway and centered its focus on the sources of institutionalization.
Those are sources of “rationalized and impersonal prescriptions that identify various social purposes,” that is, define ends, and “specify in a rulelike way the appropriate means” to pursue them (Meyer & Rowan, 1977: 343), that is, “shape the means by which interests are determined and pursued” (Scott, 1987: 508). According to this view, conformity to these institutional prescriptions does not happen just because they “constitute reality or are taken for granted” (Scott, 1987: 498) but also because there are organizational rewards in conformity, such as access to resources and increased chances of survival (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). It is in this light that neoinstitutionalism understands how institutions restrict action within the range allowed by shared understandings (DiMaggio, 1988; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

Neoinstitutionalism provided a bridge for organizational studies to link to the works of cultural approaches such as those of Bourdieu, Foucault and Giddens (Scott, 1987). Specifically, it incorporated advances by Bourdieu on social phenomena directly and by way of Giddens’s structuration theory (1984) (Mohr, 2013: 121). These roots, foundational to the alternative path of practice theory, are now being reconnected (Smets et al., 2017) as the recent turn to the micro of neoinstitutionalism is increasingly complementing macro accounts with explanations based on actor-level interactions. Central to Bourdieu’s work were the concepts of habitus, capital and field, which to different degrees came to inform much of the neoinstitutionalism theoretical agenda.

One can interpret the development from classic institutional theory to neoinstitutionalism and the current plethora of institutional perspectives and recent focal turns as a scholarly chase of actorhood or organizational action. Key in this literature is the socially constructed environment, or institutional field, which comprises the mechanisms of social coordination that shape behavior, and the set of rules and norms that is the source of institutional pressures in a given field (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott, 2013). However, before I present these constructs as developed by the institutional theory literature and the recent turns in the way in which they are approached, I briefly set out their roots in Bourdieu’s work. Bourdieu’s set of key concepts provides a powerful method to address institutional phenomena. This understanding of Bourdieu as a method informs much of my analysis of entrepreneurial processes within institutional contexts in this kappa.

**Fields, predispositions (habitus) and capital**

According to Bourdieu, practices, as human activities, are explained by the conjunction of different forces: habitus (referred to as a battery of practical senses, a set of mental predispositions, bodily schemas or pre-conscious know-how that is activated in individuals by their experience in a given field), fields (bounded realms of activity) and capital (a force, in all its forms, that sets the constraints that govern the functioning of the world) (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986, 1990). The three constructs are profoundly and circularly interlocked. What
happens in a given field is governed by the possibilities of action (i.e. pursuits of personal interest) granted by capital in specific objective conditions (i.e. the flow of events and circumstances that affect the capacity of capital to perform). Importantly, capital is always constructed by the field and associated with actors’ positions and habitus.

Fields

Fields comprise personal interests, different forms of capital, objective conditions and a space for actual and possible activities and meanings. In Bourdieu, fields are “relatively autonomous social microcosms” that correspond to regions of institutional life (Mohr, 2013) in which, in hierarchical spaces of social positions, the distribution of power, capital and legitimacy is constantly disputed by their members. Fields are thus spaces of relations (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) and the primary arena in which actors compete for power. Fields are “networks of social relations, structures systems of social positions within which struggles, or maneuvers take place over resources, stakes and access” (Oakes et al., 1998: 260). Although fields in neoinstitutionalism are rather a source of stability than change, Bourdieu’s sense of competitive power struggle (1975) has permeated neoinstitutional views of field transformation (e.g. Fligstein, 1990), as later sections detail. Even if a given field is not independent from other fields, each field shares a common understanding about the meaning of what occurs in it, creating a local market of capital, goals and norms. These field specificities, although overly alien to non-members, appear to be given and objective to insiders.

The system of meaning in a given field shapes the mental predispositions of those who experience it, that is, their habitus, which, once activated, reproduces the field. It is through the reproductive function of habitus that fields, according to Bourdieu, conceptually align at a basic level with neoinstitutionalism and that “normative and cognitive structures constrain field members, making some actions or meanings either unthinkable or inappropriate” (Zietsma et al., 2017: 9). Fields also shape the capital (economic, cultural and social) on which actors can draw to pursue their stakes (personal interests) in them.

Predispositions (habitus)

During their lives, people accumulate skills, experiences, knowledge, traits, attitudes and so on in their personal structure. Personal structures generate behavior in the form of daily activities that, taking place in specific fields, become experience of how to function and perform. Habitus refers to “a system of lasting and transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions” (Bourdieu, 1977: 95). It is acquired through the experience of daily activities in the conditions of the field, mostly during upbringing although also possibly during secondary socialization. It is, therefore, “embodied history, internalized as a second nature
and so forgotten as history … the active presence of the whole past of which it is the active presence” (Bourdieu, 1990: 56). Importantly, because its generation is largely an unconscious internalization of cultural rules, it becomes a way of knowing “inscribed in bodies” that allows individuals to organize their behavior according to different situations without the need to reach the level of discourse. Habitus becomes the way in which individuals are “being in the world,” implying a “relation of commitment and belonging to a field” that is invisible to them.

Importantly, habitus, once activated by events in a given field, produces meanings and generates actions that reproduce the existing practices and conditions found in the field. That is, habitus is a system of “durable, transposable dispositions … as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or by an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them” (Bourdieu, 1990: 53). As habitus is a group phenomenon, it also harmonizes the practices of the members “without intentional calculation or conscious reference to a norm” (Bourdieu 1977: 80), “allowing mutual adjustment even in the absence of any direct interaction or explicit coordination” (Nicolini, 2012: 60). Nevertheless, habitus is not habit. Habitus requires agency (Schatzki, 2002). Because habitus is “only a set of dispositions,” it needs to be realized to become action and therefore there is no determinism in its operation (Nicolini, 2012: 60).

Forms of capital

The concept of capital, “as a potential capacity to produce profits,” is a “force inscribed in the objectivity of things so that everything is not equally possible and impossible” (Bourdieu, 1986: 46) and embraces everything tangible and intangible that can be exchanged. The cruciality of the concept of capital in Bourdieu’s theory of the social world cannot be overstated. He suggested not only that capital is a “force inscribed in the objectivity of things,” that is, what sets the constraints that govern the functioning of the world, but also that, to account for the latter, capital needs to be introduced in all its forms, that is, economic, cultural and social resources (Bourdieu, 1986: 46). A fourth form of capital, symbolic (e.g. prestige, honor attention), refers to any form of capital that is not perceived as such, that gains value at the cross-section of class and status (Bourdieu, 1986) and that, in the case of cultural capital, would be recognized, for example, as legitimate competence.

Common to all forms of capital is their potential to be accumulated—being prone to persist in their being—and exchanged—although to different degrees—determining changes in legitimacy and power as a result. Also common to all forms of capital is that their value depends on the way in which the field is constructed so that different types of capital operate in different fields. Indeed, “a capital does not exist and functions except in relation to the field” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 101). Finally, also common to all forms of capital is that the
diverse access that individuals have to field-specific capital constitutes power relations. Capital equates power—“[it] amounts to the same thing” (Bourdieu, 1986: 47)—and “each field includes a fundamental metric according to which any given individual can be assessed vis-à-vis others” according to their levels of possession of field-specific capital (Mohr, 2013: 111).

Capital is expressed in a variety of field-dependent resources. According to Bourdieu, “capital can present itself in three fundamental guises”: as economic capital, as cultural capital and as social capital (Bourdieu, 1986: 47). “Economic capital is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights.” It includes all forms of economic and financial assets, including cash, stocks, bonds, bank deposits and the like, land and buildings, technology and machinery. As economic capital has been the focus of most economic theory, Bourdieu directed most of his attention to cultural and social capital. The first form of cultural capital, embodied state, refers to all forms of tacit and explicit culture and cultivation, such as related knowledge, know-how, information and so on, carried in long-lasting predispositions of the mind and body. Cultural capital requires a personal investment of time in the labor of inculcation and assimilation. This form of capital is an integral part of one person’s habitus and has a strong influence on an actor’s social progress in fields. Its transmission is at best complex, because it is linked to his or her biological singularity. The second form of cultural capital is objectified by its materiality (e.g. writings and art). Finally, cultural capital is the institutionalized state in the form of academic qualifications, a certificate of cultural competence that formalizes the acquisition of skills and knowledge, the value of which is dependent on the economic capital converted for its acquisition and which shows relative autonomy face to face with its bearer and the actual cultural capital that he or she commands. Cultural capital, in either embodied or institutionalized forms, include tastes, manners, mastery of language, general and professional knowledge, craft, artistry and skills.

Social capital is often intangible and refers to “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group—which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word” (Bourdieu, 1986: 51). Social capital is particularly specific to a given field because often it holds little or no value in another. Norms in a field also often specify the extent of access to social capital in a specific field, defining the types of activities and practices in which mastery provides membership of it. With this definition, Bourdieu encompasses various key aspects of this form of capital: first, the possibility that these relationships exist only in a practical state, based on exchanges or instituted; second, its potential volume, as defined by the extension of the network that one actor can mobilize at any given moment and the size of the capital individually owned by each of the members of that network; and, third, the key condition that
these resources possess in the network, which needs to be available to use or credit, that is, “usable.” Bourdieu described networks of relationships as the result of endless efforts—through conscious strategies or not—to be established and reproduced.

Key issues arise in Bourdieu’s conceptualization of forms of capital. Capital transformation has been suggested not to be easy, fast or costless. Many capital transmissions—with the exception of economic capital, which can be used for resourcing processes, purchasing other capital and easing other capital transformations—are considered to be problematic. This is particularly the case for embodied cultural capital, which, because it is literally embodied in the individual who possesses it, requires a process of transmission that is theoretically similar to the process of acquiring it. In addition, importantly, according to Bourdieu, what happens in a given field is governed by the possibilities of action granted by the capital—as socially constructed by the field—associated with actors’ positions and habitus.

Capital and institutional processes

As Sewell (1992) noted, capital issues hold significant implications for institutional theory, because treating resources (i.e. capital) and schemas (i.e. rules, norms and concepts) as analytically different components can facilitate explanations of how “social change, no less than social stasis, can be generated” (Sewell, 1992: 19). When resources and schemas are not collapsed together, the effects that they have on each other recursively become clearer. Schemas need to be “validated by the accumulation of resources” to be reproduced over time, “just as resources without cultural schemas to direct their use would eventually dissipate” (Sewell, 1992: 13). Sewell concluded that, because resources and schemas were multiple and intersecting and potentially transferable and transformable, “reproduction was never automatic” (1992: 19). As I elaborate in the following sections, neoinstitutionalism has amply incorporated Sewell’s concepts of multiplicity, transposability and intersections, although the extent to which his clear distinction between resources and schemas has also been embraced remains unclear.

Alas, institutional scholars have paid relatively little empirical attention to the concept of capital and resources. This lapse is perhaps understandable, as it originates from Giddens’s definition of structure collapsing both “rules and resources” (1984) and the assumption that—because resources are rather homogeneous within a field institutional—factors had an effect primarily on resource selection (Oliver, 1997). Problems related to capital attended in this literature usually centered around one conspicuous phenomenon: to the extent that its distribution among field members is not even, power struggles about who controls available capital (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017) would abound and the outcomes of these competitions would carry consequences. Research in this line has shown that resources are dependent on the configuration of the field, stressing
that the utility of resources changes as the relationships among participants in a field change. As resource disadvantage players, motivated to challenge the institutional arrangements behind their deprivation challenge them, the undervalued resources they control gain utility and centrality (Leblebici et al., 1991). Accordingly, resource mobilization became central to institutional entrepreneurship processes which required sufficient resources to create or change institutions (DiMaggio’s, 1988). These perspectives were consistent with Bourdieu’s main problematizations of capital processes as power struggles around capital transmissions and capital transformations (Bourdieu, 1986).

The few institutional studies explicitly building on Bourdieu have remained centered on his original focus (e.g. Hill, 2018; McFarland et al., forthcoming; Oakes et al., 1998). Beyond these approaches, the use of the concept of capital in institutional research has remained a rare move. A search of works in the Web of Science Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) offers only a handful of papers citing Bourdieu’s concept of capital in combination with any of the seminal works of neoinstitutionalism: Zucker (1977) [1 paper], Meyer and Rowan (1977) [no papers], DiMaggio and Powell (1983) [1 paper] or even Scott (1975, 1995, 2000, 2013) [2 papers]. To make this omission almost complete, these few exceptions are mostly research in the human resources field. The neglected role of capital and resources in neoinstitutional theory is, however, surprising given the prominent role assigned to resources in much organization theory (e.g. resource dependency theory and the resource-based view), into which insights from institutional theory have been abundantly incorporated (e.g. De Gregori, 1987; Meyer et al., 2011; Oliver, 1997).

The nascent resourcing perspective (Feldman, 2004) is an exception to this neglect. This perspective has started to look beyond capital transmissions and power struggles for resources and attended how “in addition to field changes, changes in internal organizational processes are an important influence on resource mutability” (Feldman, 2004: 295). Resourcing—based on the idea advanced by practice studies that rules and resources cannot be defined independent of their use (Orlikowski, 2000) and Sewell’s analytical contrast between schemas and resources—distinguishes between potential resources (i.e. inputs, assets, objects…, tangible and intangible, that actors may act on) and resources (i.e. inputs that has been acted on to make it useful) (Feldman & Worline, 2011; Sonenshein, 2014). This view has successfully attended “to the dynamic creation of resources during interaction” (Howard-Grenville, 2007: 562). Yet, despite its initial interest in the recurring cycle linking schemas, actions and resources (Feldman, 2004), resourcing studies have grown increasingly unsensitive to the institutional (e.g. Sonenshein, 2014; Widener et al., 2017) and its effects on organizational structures.
Sources of institutional pressures

In the neoinstitutional literature, the diverse forces that, within a given field, exert pressure for conformity have gained categorical popularity in the three pillars defined by Scott (1995, 2013), which he referred to as ingredients of institutions rather than categories of institutions themselves. These elements form a continuum moving “from the conscious to the unconscious, from the legally enforced to the taken for granted” (Hoffman, 1999: 360, in Scott, 2013).

The first pillar is regulative and can be perceived conspicuously in rules, laws and sanctions. These regulative rules base their compliance on expedience and rely on coercive mechanisms. The legitimacy of organizational and individual actions informed by this pillar emanates from their legal sanction. These regulative components “stem primarily from governmental legislation and industrial agreements and standards” (Bruton et al., 2010: 422), which provide guidelines and instructions for organizations.

The second pillar, the normative one, is less instrumental and coercive but does not necessarily exert a lesser impact. It is governed by a logic of appropriateness, as identified in certifications and accreditations, and based on social obligation resulting from specific expectations for all actors. Legitimacy, in this dimension of institutions, results from moral foundations of appropriate social, professional and organizational interaction. The normative pillar informs conformity behaviors rooted in social necessity, defining what actors should be doing (March & Olsen, 1989).

The third pillar incorporates the cultural–cognitive elements that can be identified in constitutive schemas, such as common beliefs, shared logics of action and isomorphic responses. It commits to a logic of orthodoxy and works through mimetic mechanisms. This pillar provides legitimacy to organizations and individuals, because relying on taken-for-granted and shared understandings makes them comprehensible, recognizable and culturally supported. This aspect of institutions reduces confusion, increases certainty and strongly limits appropriate, and even possible, beliefs and actions. One aspect that makes the normative and cultural–cognitive pillars so forceful is the fact that their preconscious character is socially constructed over time and operates at the level of culture and language. It comes to be “perceived as objective and external to the actors: not as man-made but a natural and actual order” (Scott, 1995: 17, in Bruton et al., 2010).

Institutional fields

Institutional theory has made the concept of fields one of its central constructs (Scott, 2000). Zietsma and colleagues (2017) recently brought clarity to this cornerstone of institutional theory. As they pointed out, an institutional field is a community of organizations that interact together “frequently and fatefully”
2 Theoretical perspectives

(Scott, 1995: 207–208) in a “recognized area of institutional life” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983: 148). Important to the theoretical usefulness of the concept of fields is that there are differences in fields’ types and conditions. As anticipated above, the concept of fields is vital to institutional theory (Scott, 2013), because they are both “presumed to be the predominant source of pressures for institutional conformity” and comprise the enabling “mechanisms of social coordination by which embedded actors interact with one another in predictable ways” (Zietsma et al., 2017: 5).

Like most institutional scholars (Zietsma et al., 2017), I use DiMaggio and Powell’s definition, which they usefully appropriated from Bourdieu (Scott, 2013), that is, “a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies and other organizations that produce similar services or products” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983: 148). This interpretation of a field as an exchange field assumes a commercial context (Zietsma et al., 2017) that closely captures the social space (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) in which market processes take place and directs the attention of the researcher to the totality of actors in the field (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This notion is strongly dependent on Bourdieu’s relational dimension of fields (Scott, 2013), and the competition and contestation dimensions have captured the interest of many neoinstitutional scholars, such as DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and Fligstein and McAdam (2011, 2012).

Fields, however, are institutional only if they are structured by the manifestation of four types of elements: boundaries, hierarchies, shared meanings and identities (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). (1) The field is defined by the network of interactions among the organizations within it, which implies the existence of a defining boundary. These organizational interactions (2) are arranged in hierarchical patterns of domination and coalition and (3) require a high degree of shared information, that is, meanings and practices. As these interactions proceed, (4) mutual awareness develops, resulting in shared identity within the field. This conception of fields stresses the nature of both relational (i.e. networks of interactions among members) and meaning (i.e. cultural connections) systems. However, as Scott (2013: 222) pointed out, meaning has been interpreted in neoinstitutional studies in the version of objective indicators of culture (e.g. “the analysis of texts, discourse, gestures, and cultural products”) rather than in the original approach of Bourdieu as habitus or internalized predispositions. Some key components of fields have centered the approach in neoinstitutional theory, mainly institutional logics, actors, relational systems and boundaries (see Scott, 2013, for an overview of these topics), arguably to the neglect of capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

Field members in exchange fields

An institutional field transcends the more limited concept of industry, as it encompasses the role of actors beyond the focal industry, such as professional
associations, conveners, regulators, media and the state. According to Bourdieu, the members of a field extend even beyond it, as actors and organizations belong to a field depending on the extent to which they produce and suffer effects in it (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This leaves the definition of the boundaries of a field a challenging issue. Common operationalizations of exchange fields have included members from specific industries (Tolbert & Zucker, 1983), often extended to their interaction partners, namely users, providers, regulators and so on (Farjoun, 2002; Reay & Hinings, 2009). Importantly, the isomorphic pressures that I discuss in the following section are expected to emerge in exchange fields from exchange partners, that is, customers, partners, regulators and so on, those on whom actors are resource dependent (Freeman & Audia, 2006; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003) and whose legitimacy judgments carry important effects.

The populations in a field are collections of similar organizations (Scott, 2013), which in organizational ecology would be defined as sharing the same organizational form and being subject to similar environmental vulnerability (Hannan & Freeman, 1977). The practices and norms in an exchange field are more likely to be shared by the members of the same population than by the full set of field members (Dhalla & Oliver, 2013). In industry exchange fields, members of one population often share meaning systems and identity, collaborate in managing common interests and coordinate within the same technology and practice standards (e.g. Garud et al., 2002). The boundaries in industry exchange fields are expected to be relatively permeable—although there is much variation by field—to new entrants (Zietsma et al., 2017), be they start-ups or established organizations entering the field. This dissertation, including all the articles that it comprises, studies the exchange field of written news and the focal population of newspapers, both incumbents and newcomers. Although all the focal cases can be identified as newspapers, the analysis of the field (e.g. Chapter 3 and Paper 1) is not restricted to the actors and organizations within this population.

Field populations

Within the field of written news, the population of newspapers corresponds to an industry population (as classified by Zietsma et al., 2017) to the extent that these organizations produce the same service–product bundle: keeping their readers informed—and entertained—through the production of written news. The population of newspapers also partially corresponds to a professional population (as classified by Zietsma et al., 2017) to the extent that it includes members of the journalism profession, which has come to define much of the identity of newspapers. Exchange fields with dominant professional bodies are expected to have a high degree of homogeneity in shared meanings and practices. Bourdieu warned against the category of professions, as it refers to “realities that are, in a sense, too real to be true” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 243, emphasis in the original), suggesting that it should be replaced with the concept of fields. In the next chapter, although I consider industrial and professional aspects of written news, they are treated as a field.
Isomorphism and decoupling in institutional fields

In highly structured fields, “individual efforts to deal rationally with uncertainty and constraint often lead, in the aggregate, to homogeneity in structure, culture and output” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983: 147). Although organizations can initially modify their ends and introduce new ways of working, as organizational members make rational decisions in time, they construct an institutional context that constrains the possibility to change and makes units in a population resemble other members of it in the same context (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), that is, isomorphism (Hawley, 1968). Although isomorphism does not imply that all organizations are neither identical, neither passive recipients of institutional pressures (Suddaby, 2010). In any given field, organizational differences abound, and actors are not necessary prisoners of existing institutions. Yet, conformity to institutional rules can lead, through path dependence processes, to a lock-in into specific ways of thinking and doing (Arthur, 1989; David, 1985; North, 1991), a sort of threshold that, once reached, drives the adoption of the legitimacy that it provides, regardless of the performance results (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Very much in the direction suggested by Bourdieu, in these views, at this late stage of structuration, what explains isomorphism is the institutional processes by which the organizations in a field compete for political power and legitimacy.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) analytically untangled the process of institutional isomorphism into coercive, mimetic and normative mechanisms that—rather than internal efficiency—increase the external rewards emanating from legitimacy and similarity for their own sake. Coercive isomorphism derives from pressures from the organizations on which a venture is dependent (e.g. government mandates and self-regulated industrial standards and rules) as well as from the cultural expectations of the societal members who dominate the field. Mimetic processes are a strong mechanism in contexts of high uncertainty, such as when goals and means are ambiguous and the use and implications of new technologies are nebulous. In these circumstances, organizations often model themselves by imitating others that are considered to be exemplary in the field because they are perceived as being more legitimate or successful. Finally, following Bourdieu (Scott, 2013), normative pressures, resulting mainly from professionalization, that is, “the collective struggle of members of an occupation to define the conditions and methods of their work” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983: 152). These processes, in the character of formal education and networks, consolidate a common professional cognitive base for all the members of the profession. Additional mechanisms of professionalization include the filtering—and socialization—of so-defined professional personnel into the organizations part of a field.

Institutional theory needed to complement isomorphism processes with a mechanism to explain the observed post-adoption heterogeneity in some fields. A dominant explanation has been decoupling (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017; Bromley et al., 2012). Originally, decoupling was suggested as a coping mechanism for organizations facing either competing and mutually inconsistent
institutional demands coexisting in complex fields or internal organizational inefficiency resulting from institutional compliance (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Recently, the concept has been extended beyond the policy and practice dichotomy (some organizations implement policies while others do not) to a more processual view that complements this symbolic adoption with versions of symbolic implementation (Bromley & Powell, 2012). In these versions, activities can be implemented and become routine in an organization, “but their contribution to promoting an organization’s primary goals may be tenuous or opaque at best, creating ‘means–ends’ decoupling” (Bromley et al., 2012: 470, quotation marks in the original). This situation is more likely to occur when strict compliance interferes with the flexibility required to achieve goals, for example in highly opaque fields (Wijen, 2014).

Despite the theoretical importance of decoupling, the concept seems to have found less empirical backing (e.g. Coburn, 2004) than initially expected (Scott, 2013). Decoupling—of the sort of gaps between policy and practice—has been identified but, fundamentally, as a result of resistance to the implementation of new policies resulting from strong coercive pressures to conform (e.g. Seidman, 1983; Tilcsik, 2010), low trust in the actors asserting such pressures (Kostova & Roth, 2002), questioned efficacy (Westphal & Zajac, 1997) or powerful executives capable of avoiding institutional pressures for change (Westphal & Zajac, 2001). Two common threads link these studies. First, when researching decoupling processes, these studies offered models in which decoupling is strategically decided by agents who “choose” to adopt new policies only formally. Second, the origin of the pressures resulting in decoupling is invariably institutional. According to these studies, new policies are usually imported because of normative or regulatory expectations, but their adoption remains intendedly symbolic. These aspects of decoupling, however, seem to fit uneasily within the theoretical foundations of institutionalism.

Additionally, decoupling—initially intended as a coping mechanism protecting efficiency (Meyer & Rowan, 1977)—has not always been shown to be beneficial in practice. Whereas some studies have argued that conformity to institutional arrangements increases the market valuation of organizations regardless of their practical implementation (e.g. Westphal & Zajac, 1997), others have highlighted the possible countereffects of decoupling (e.g. MacLean & Behnam, 2010) and the impossibility of sustaining it in the long term, whether the decoupled institutional arrangements are organizational structures (e.g. Edelman, 1992) or symbolic schemas, such as ratings or certifications (e.g. Haack et al., 2012; Sauder & Espeland, 2009). Studies have even shown that decoupling, in some conditions, can meet such employee resistance that it leads to organizational failure (Turco, 2012).

Less “agentic” and more “beneficial” aspects of decoupling remain poorly explored empirically. Coburn (2004), for example, discovered, in her study of teachers responding to new education policies, that the outcome that dominates is
a form of assimilation that she refused to label as decoupling. Most teachers interpreted new policies by drawing on existing tacit assumptions, transforming the new policy to fit the existing practice. More recently, Crilly and colleagues (2012) suggested that decoupling can result not just from intentionally faking the implementation of new policies but also from a process of coping more or less satisfactorily—that is, muddling through—with new policies in contexts of competing stakeholder expectations. Overall, however, these approaches remain empirically underexplored and decoupling remains a relatively controversial construct (Scott, 2013) that has often been overlooked in institutional studies. On the relatively scarce occasions that empirical attention has been paid to decoupling (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017), it has largely remained centered on it as a mechanism that protects organizations from the contradictory institutional demands present in heterogeneous fields.

Not surprisingly, intuitionalism—largely focused on isomorphism processes and stability—had to rely on exogenous shocks (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) to explain institutional change. The traditional approach relied on field-level factors, such as social, technological and regulatory disruptive jolts (Scott, 2013), that ease the institutional grip on actors. However, the emergence of new institutions exogenously generated by new technical and economic imperatives was not unproblematic. The basic premise in institutional theory is that institutions define and shape both organizational interests and activity requirements (Scott, 1995). This implies that, unless other premises add some flexibility to the foundations of institutional theory, new available technologies or economic circumstances by themselves would not suffice to explain the demise of institutional arrangements and their replacement by new ones. Much of this discussion has taken place around fields’ evolving conditions.

Varying responses to fields’ changing life cycles

Fields can change over their life cycle and their conditions can shift over time. Fields in the making are expected to display little consolidation along their above-mentioned dimensions. Their proto-institutions—“new practices, rules, and technologies that transcend a particular collaborative relationship and may become new institutions if they diffuse sufficiently” (Lawrence et al., 2002: 281)—will still be “narrowly diffused and weakly entrenched” as they emerge (Maguire et al., 2004: 659). Mature fields, on the contrary, are highly structured. Shared meanings and identities are widely accepted, and the institutional infrastructure is thick. Sets of rules, norms and concepts overlap and reinforce each other (Hinings et al., 2017). This does not mean, however, that mature fields cannot change, but traditionally the internal transformation of fields has been considered a rare event (Fligstein, 1997). In these exceptional cases, jolted by environmental triggers, institutional arrangements surrender part of their taken-for-grantedness and symbolic value and—although, in these circumstances,
incumbents are still expected to try to defend their power base (Fligstein, 1997)—
the opportunities for entrepreneurial action also increase (Sine & David, 2003).

Environmental jolts, that is, “transient perturbations whose occurrences are
difficult to foresee and whose impacts on organizations are disruptive and often
inimical” (Meyer, 1982: 515, when happening at the field level, are external
shocks that can create the conditions to break the isomorphism expected in
mature, highly structured fields. Environmental jolts of very different natures
have been found to be able to disrupt fields: social, technological or regulatory
changes (Greenwood et al., 2002), political (Fligstein & Mara-Drita, 1996) and
financial crises (Zilber, 2007) or environmental emergencies (Hoffman, 1999;
Holm, 1995; Phillips et al., 2000). Neoinstitutional research attending to the way
in which actors respond to fields in crisis is, however, surprisingly scarce. A
search in the Web of Science for research addressing “institutional field” and
“crisis” renders only 48 papers and 3 book chapters—half of them published since
2014—in management and business-related categories. Fewer than half of these
studies attend to organizational dynamics in a crisis of the institutional field.
Indeed, most researched crises are either macroeconomic or exclusively
organizational. A review of the 256 and 113 publications in the Web of Science
that cite Fligstein (1997) or Sine and David (2003), respectively, in management
and business-related categories offers a similar picture. Crises most often refer to
identity or conflictual logics within organizations without any explicit reference
to an institutional field in crisis, and field-level crises—when stated—are often
macroeconomic and seldom specific to the focal institutional field.

Overall, this very diverse collection of research has agreed that, following an
environmental jolt, the actors in a field increase their perception of weaknesses in
the existing institutional arrangements (Fuensfshilling & Truffer, 2016; Rychen
& Zimmermann, 2002) and their level of uncertainty (O’Brien & Slack, 2004).
This motivates the evaluation of the current institutions and catalyzes the search
processes and possibilities for action, mobilizing some actors to reformulate them
(Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013; Sine & David, 2003). The interpretation of the
existing institutions, however, often results in competing interpretations about the
past, present and future (Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013), prompting different actors
to respond differently. While some of them engage in defensive institutional work
to minimize disruptions and defend the activities within the field (Desai, 2011;
Maguire & Hardy, 2009), others charge for change (Riaz et al., 2011). Curiously,
sometimes these contradictory reactions of contestation and maintenance take
place in the very same actors, which opens up the possibilities for institutional
entrepreneurs to strike a balance of orientations (Zilber, 2007). In general,
however, the process described is one of conflict and negotiation about how to
deal with conflicting pressures (e.g. Benner & Ranganathan, 2012; Palermo et al.,
2017), strongly influenced by asymmetric and shifting power relationships
(Bjerregaard & Jonasson, 2014), the rewiring of network ties (Corbo et al., 2016)
and increasing competition for resources (Stephens & Jiusto, 2010).
This literature has also generally agreed that incumbents—those actors in control of the most important types of capital—will mostly attempt to reinforce their power base, often by introducing innovations that, although attempting to provide solutions to problems generated by the crisis, rarely challenge the institutionalized principles of the field (e.g. Ansari & Phillips, 2011; Garud et al., 2002; Gawer & Phillips, 2013). Nevertheless, these studies have not attended to the internal dynamics by which incumbents, despite their attempts to innovate, remain within the limits of their institutional base. They have rather focused on the role of incumbents in institutional change processes. Furthermore, in these processes, the apparent agreement is that organizations that are disadvantaged by the existing institutions will be more likely to challenge them (e.g. D’Aunno et al., 2000; Kraatz & Kajac, 1996; Leblebici et al., 1991; Maguire et al., 2004). In this view, challengers—those actors with relatively little influence but “awaiting new opportunities to challenge the structure and logic of the system” (Fligstein & McAdam, 2011: 13)—will need to cope with the difficulty of building strong enough coalitions (Fligstein, 1997), although fields in crisis are social spaces that are more receptive to outsiders’ approaches (Cattani et al., 2017). Given this common premise, it is hardly surprising that most of these studies have gravitated toward power dynamics.

The consideration of fields as spheres of dispute and power struggles, implicit—when not conspicuously central—to most of this literature, closely aligns with Bourdieu’s construct of fields as competitive arenas. Although much has been learnt about how incumbents and challengers wrestle for the reallocation and control of resources (e.g. Carnahan, 2017; Ferraro & Gurses, 2009), when neoinstitutional research has attended to the forms of capital in a field, it has remained overly focused on the power struggle itself (Scott, 2013). Regrettably, little attention has been directed to how capital is defined and valued by the actors in a given field and in which conditions the practitioners in a field in crisis experience capital value redefinitions.

The turn to institutional change

As neoinstitutional theory and research have matured, issues related to institutional change have become more pressing (Scott, 2013). However, because the field only recently started to pay careful attention to the problem of emergence, theory is still underdeveloped in trying to explain “how new ideas, new practices, new organizational forms [...] enter from off the stage” (Padgett & Powell, 2012: 1). The new answers have complemented the initial explanations of change generated by exogenous shocks, crises and “invasions of foreign ideas from other fields,” with endogenous change dynamics resulting from the fact that today “actors operate in multiple institutional environments” (Aldrich, 2010: 341). The diversity of attempts to provide solutions to this problem has contributed to the current multiplicity of—often loosely related—strands of theorization within institutional theory, such as institutional entrepreneurship (cf.
Maguire et al., 2004) and institutional logics (Thornton et al., 2012). Common to these approaches is an—occasionally only implicit—assumption of multiple embeddedness of actors that would empower them to exploit conflicts and mismatches between institutional elements in different fields (DiMaggio, 1988).

Institutional entrepreneurship

The analysis of the link between entrepreneurs and institutional emergence and change can be traced back to the early work of Veblen (1914), who compared the different natures of institutions and technology. While technology is one of the most dynamic forces in societies, institutions are relatively stable. Therefore, as technological change creates new information and experiences in a society, this may in turn require adaptations in the institutional setting. The key role of entrepreneurs in the process of capitalist economic development and innovation—including changes in the economic use of new combinations of technologies—was pioneered by Schumpeter (1934), who placed entrepreneurship theory at the core not only of economics but also of institutionalism. Since then, different views of how entrepreneurship influences—and is influenced by—institutions have been offered.

In the Austrian school tradition of Kirzner, Yu (2001) proposed that new economic activities are created in the competitive process driven by the discovery of opportunities by entrepreneurs. As the existing institutional framework struggles to cope with some of these activities, new institutions are needed for coordination. On the same line, Spar (2003) argued that new technologies create institutional instability only until the new norms and practices of operation that follow them are established and accepted. In a similar appreciation of the role of opportunities and rational calculation in institutional emergence and change, North (1991) traced the origins of institutional innovation to opportunities spotted by entrepreneurs. In a rational decision-making fashion, these entrepreneurs compare the gains of economic activity under the existing institutional regime with the potential gains of investing in changing those institutions. This calculation may lead some entrepreneurs to seek institutional change (e.g. McCarthy, 2012), an outcome that will eventually occur only in the event of these entrepreneurs overpowering those who resist change. This view laid the foundations for much of the early academic research within entrepreneurship on institutional change and political processes.

Opposing the previous perspectives, the current dominant view of institutional entrepreneurship attempts more explicitly to root its research in neo-intuitional theory and deal with the phenomena of entrepreneurs influencing the institutional context through direct action. This strand of research deals with the not-easy introduction of agency to institutional theory, bypassing the so-called “paradox of embedded agency” (Seo & Creed, 2002). This tension between socially constructed determinism and agency-constructing environments has proved to be hard to resolve without incurring contradicting theoretical premises. In addition,
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it is in these often-criticized theoretical foundations that institutional entrepreneurship has largely tried to build its explanations for “not only how institutions influence actors” and their behavior but also how these actors might, in turn, “influence, and possibly change, institutions” (Battilana et al., 2009: 69).

The notion of institutional entrepreneurship itself was introduced by DiMaggio (1988), who took the term from Eisenstadt’s (1980) comparative study of traditional civilizations and social change.

Creating new institutions is expensive and requires high levels of both interest and resources. New institutions arise […] when organized actors with sufficient resources (institutional entrepreneurs) see in them an opportunity to realize interests that they value highly.

(DiMaggio, 1988: 14)

These notions reintroduced actors’ agency to institutional analysis, becoming a central stream of research in institutional analysis (Battilana et al., 2009). Additionally, because implementing divergent change is costly, it is likely that institutional entrepreneurship requires abundant resources (Misangy et al., 2008). This perspective, under the strong influence of its initial twofold sensibility to intentional action and sufficient resources, readily focused its searchlight on the different strategies by which field-level institutional entrepreneurs work to create or significantly transform their institutional context.

Battilana et al.’s attempt to define the term “institutional entrepreneurs” has arguably become the most widely accepted. In their analysis, institutional entrepreneurs need to satisfy two requirements: first, they must “initiate divergent changes”; second, they must “actively participate in the implementation of these changes.” By changes, Battilana et al. (2009: 68) referred to “changes that break with the institutional template for organizing within a given institutional context.” In their use of the term, the institutional template encapsulates “a field’s shared understanding of the goals to be pursued and how they are to be pursued” (Battilana et al., 2009: 69). This terminology strongly resonates with the means–ends relationships referred to in the entrepreneurship literature.

In their own terms, two elements are of particular interest following Battilana et al.’s (2009) definition: 1) the need for institutional entrepreneurs to generate divergence from their embedding institutional environment; and 2) the need to mobilize resources actively to implement such a change. The concept explicitly allows for institutional entrepreneurs not to be successful in their pursuits, so the initiated changes do not necessarily need to crystalize into a new institutional logic. Additionally, Battilana et al.’s formulation resolved one important question that has been attracting institutional entrepreneurship studies: do actors need to initiate divergent change intentionally? The concept allows for institutional entrepreneurs whose intentions about institutional change can develop along their
entrepreneurial journey (e.g. Child et al., 2007) or who even implement such change unintentionally (e.g. Lounsbury & Crumley, 2007).

A common approach in institutional entrepreneurship studies to dealing with the paradox of embedded agency has been to research the environmental characteristics that enable entrepreneurs to initiate and implement divergent institutional changes. Much of this research has drawn, not always explicitly and not always closely aligned with its assumptions, on institutional logics (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Thornton et al., 2012). This perspective has emphasized cultural differentiation and pluralism rather than isomorphism (Ocasio et al., 2017) and has often been considered suitable for the study of entrepreneurship (Greenwood et al., 2017) because of its focus on both the strategic agency assumed in many entrepreneurship studies and the contradictions in the institutional environment that facilitate opportunities. More specifically, different—although often combined—perspectives have focused on different takes on these enabling contextual conditions. These include “institutional stickiness” (e.g. Boettke et al., 2008), “field characteristics” and “actors’ social positions,” the last two being the ones that have attracted the most attention.

The field characteristics suggested by researchers have included, in line with research on field life cycles, jolts and crises—generated by, among others, technological disruption—that can potentially disturb the structure of common rules and norms and open ways for new institutional logics (e.g. Greenwood et al., 2002). As referred to above, these environmental jolts stimulate and encourage entrepreneurs to generate entirely new or repackaged institutional solutions with the potential to replace the unsettled ones (e.g. Sine & David, 2003). Other authors have concentrated not on the change in the environmental conditions but on their configuration, suggesting that the degree of boundary strength and heterogeneity of different competing categories can also facilitate mechanisms of institutional emergence and change (e.g. Rao et al., 2003). While, in the context of institutional uniformity, conformance and similarity are expected to reign, in the face of institutional complexity, organizations’ responses can vary, including ignorance, compliance, defiance, compartmentalization and their combination (Greenwood et al., 2011). Studies on this line have suggested that several institutional logics could also be embraced simultaneously and embody compound identities, either at the individual or at the group level (Dufays & Huybrechts, 2016), resulting in hybrid organizational forms (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Pache & Santos, 2010).

Multiple embeddedness, that is, organizational positions across fields, has been proposed as an enabling condition for actors to become institutional entrepreneurs (e.g. Beyers, 2005; Boxinbaum & Battilana, 2005; Cleaver, 2002; Durand & McGuire, 2005). First, because institutional complexity is segmented and different logics apply to different groups (e.g. Pache & Santos, 2010), multiple embeddedness exposes actors to several institutional logics that could enact multiple logics (Martin et al., 2017) and embrace them simultaneously. However, at later stages, entrepreneurs’ positions across fields allow them to “mobilize a
broader set of allies and increase consensus about their institutional initiatives” (Cavotta et al., 2015). In other words, social position is important for two reasons: first, following Bourdieu (1977), it affects the actors’ perceptions of the field in which they are embedded; second, it may provide a supportive infrastructure offering wider accessibility to resources (Lawrence, 1999) and therefore play a role in the resource mobilization needed for institutional entrepreneurship. Most of these studies have dealt with how these positions influence power and political dynamics—depicting collaborative or rivalry characteristics—in the diffusion phase of institutional change (e.g. Battilana, 2006; Ferner et al., 2012; Helfen et al., 2015; Maguire et al., 2004; Phillips et al., 2000; Rao et al., 2000; Wijen & Ansari, 2007). Less attention has been paid in this literature to how multiple embeddedness affects the process of entrepreneurship itself in the stages prior to the implementation of already-envisioned, well-articulated institutional changes.

Overall, the studies in this literature have tended to research entrepreneurs empirically “in the latter stages of practice creation, where new sets of activities are theorized” and to focus on the activities of powerful organizations working alone to shape institutions (Lounsbury & Crumley, 2007: 993), normally depicting institutional entrepreneurs as powerful actors with abundant resources (Battilana et al., 2009; DiMaggio, 1988; Misangy et al., 2008) and as skillful individuals who are able to integrate several logics (Lee, 2014; Lee & Battilana, 2013; Pache & Chowdhury, 2012). This literature has been criticized for portraying institutional entrepreneurs as being “too aware of their options, too shrewd with regard to strategies, and too willing to abandon old habits” (Aldrich, 2010: 351). Additionally, despite the centrality of resource mobilization in institutional entrepreneurship, research remains “vague as to what is meant by the term ‘resources’ as well as what is done with them” (Hardy & Maguire, 2017: 270).

Institutional work

Even when studies have looked at the mundane activities of less powerful actors, focusing on institutional work, they have often found great levels of autonomy (Martin et al., 2017). The perspective of institutional work has attempted to complement institutional entrepreneurship by zooming in on “the role of actors and their efforts to interact with and influence institutions” (Hampel, Lawrence & Tracey, 2017: 559). Defined as “the purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions” (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006: 215), institutional work has dealt with embedded agency (Battilana & D’Aunno, 2009) in the particular setting of how people confront institutions in their day-to-day activities. Much of the criticism generated by agentic accounts of institutional entrepreneurship can, however, be applied to the descriptions of lower-profile actors’ reflexive, purposive efforts aimed at institutions that this literature produces. Nevertheless, the sensibility that the institutional work perspective has brought to frontline activities and individuals
has contributed to shifting the scholarly attention to more micro-institutional concerns.

**The turn to the micro**

The interest in less agentic accounts of institutional change is not entirely new. Often described in naturalistic terms (Strang & Sine, 2002) of an undirected or crescive (Sumner, 1906) process (e.g. Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Schutz, 1932), these versions of intuitional change have often emphasized “the unconscious ways in which activities evolve as multiple actors first engage with and attempt to make sense of their common situation and then develop responses that over time become habitualized, reciprocally reinforced and passed on to others” (Scott, 2013: 114). However, they coexist with more agentic accounts of how institutional fields are “the product of practical solutions developed at the micro level” (Lebledici et al., 1991). In these views, institutional designers often do not act instrumentally but are regulated by existing appropriate solutions, even if—because of the limited knowledge of actors—they do not necessarily apply to the circumstances and challenges that they face (Pierson, 2004). This naturalistic approach to institutional construction has stressed the inherited set of institutions that set the initial conditions in the processes leading to new institutions (Greif, 2006) and the activities of actors who are not necessarily able to articulate the reasons of their choices in advancing their own interests (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998).

Many of these accounts, however, remained at macro levels of analysis (e.g. Leblebici et al., 1991). These approaches to institutional processes were largely based on the analysis of field-level processual dynamics of different ideas and practices interacting with one another. This phenomenology of institutionalization has included the description of processes of displacement (e.g. Bick, 2016; Rao et al., 2003), layering (e.g. Bick, 2016; Thelen, 2004), blending (e.g. Hodge & Adams, 2012; Polzer et al., 2016), intercalation (Galison, 1997) and exaptation (Gould & Vrba, 1982) or refunctionality (e.g. Padgett & Powell, 2012). Nevertheless, in their characterization of institutional dynamics, these studies have largely relied on field-level dynamics and changes in existing organizations and overlooked both micro-processes and new ventures (Aldrich, 2010).

In the last decade, however, institutional theorists have become increasingly interested in complementing these macro accounts with arguments at the micro level. As the attention has turned toward situated interactions of actors, theoretical explanations of both change and reproduction of institutions have become increasingly integrated with the attributes and circumstances that shape these processes and shifted the focus away from typifications (e.g. Oliver, 1997) of compliance/conformity and non-compliance/non-conformity responses per se (Greenwood et al., 2017). The turn is deeply rooted. The new sociology of Bourdieu (1984) had claimed the need to explain social phenomena by looking at the daily affairs of people. The call was in tune with March’s (1981: 564)—largely
overlooked—recommendation to resist the “search for drama” in the origin of change and is materializing in various heterogeneous currents within the family of intuitional theory, such as inhabited institutions (Hallett & Ventresca, 2006), microfoundations of institutions (Powell & Colyvas, 2008), coalface institutionalism (Barley, 2008), practice-driven institutionalism (Jarzabkowski et al., 2013; Smets & Jarzabkowski, 2013; Smets et al., 2017), French pragmatist sociology (Brandl et al., 2014) or communicative institutionalism (Cornelissen et al., 2015). These strands of research, often diverging in theoretical assumptions, empirical focus and method strategies, have shown how institutions are created, modified or terminated—but also sustained—by activities and work carried out by individuals in organizations, demonstrating that the seeds for macro-social change and stability are inherent to praxis.

Despite the differences in these strands, common to all of them is a combination of the traditional contextual sensitivity of institutional studies and closer attention to the activities that sustain or hinder social prescriptions and what connects them. In the understanding that the engine room of social order (Smets et al., 2017) is the everyday work of people, the focal actor common to these perspectives also tends to be the individual or practitioner (as referred to in practice studies), ordinary folk performing ordinary work and trying to complete ordinary jobs. When observations of everyday activities and the individuals who perform them are connected to the larger institutional arrangements that they reproduce or change, new light is cast on the aspects and dynamics of organizational life involved in institutional processes. The following exemplary quote by Powell and Rerup (2017) manifests with clarity how, while most micro-level adaptations to institutions are expected to reproduce and reinforce those existing institutions, others—without any plan to bring change on any large scale—may alter them:

From a micro perspective, institutions are reproduced through the routine activities of ensembles of individuals. Members of organizations go about their daily practices, discover puzzles or anomalies in their work, problematize these questions, posit theories, and develop answers to them, drawing on their existing stock of knowledge. In turn, participants ascribe meaning to their solutions. In so doing, they develop rules of thumb, or more abstractly theories, and reproduce new understandings that become taken-for-granted. When the established routines for conducting everyday life prove limiting, people begin to search and perhaps even experiment with new lines of activity. Seen in this light, institutional transformation is often rather subtle, not particularly abrupt, and apparent only after a considerable period of time.


Combined, these traditions have advanced the extant research on situated (i.e. context-specific) change and evolving routines in management theory (Smets et
al., 2017). The diversity of these strands can, perhaps, be roughly organized into two areas: organizational change and learning processes.

Situated change and evolving routines

Micro-level studies on organizational change have commonly agreed that changes in culture, identities, practices and so on is difficult (e.g. Czarniawska, 2010; Hurst et al., 2018; Iveroth, 2012), and, despite managerial momentum (Barton & Sutcliffe, 2010), change often fails (Jorritsma & Wilderom, 2012). Central to this literature has been the study of how change initiatives—are formed, articulated, engaged and contested (Jaynes, 2015), offering details on how these processes face both compliance and resistance (Ybema & Horvers, 2017) and generate contradictions and dualities (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016), tensions and organizational strain (Hothen & Champion, 2011) in managers, employees and professionals. Given the common assumption that change is demanding and contested, it is hardly surprising that many of these studies have attended the temporal micro-politic dynamics (e.g. Geary & Aguzzoli, 2016; Helfen et al., 2017; McGivern et al., 2018; Mørk et al., 2010) and power interactions (e.g. Holck, 2016; McGivern & Dopson, 2010) that change triggers. Much attention has also been devoted in this literature to leadership patterns (e.g. Brink & Tanggaard, 2016; Fitzgerald et al., 2013) and the discursive (Rouleau & Balogun, 2011) and rhetoric (Nilsson, 2010) strategies that managers, frontline workers and professionals use in these processes of acceptance and resistance, such as talk (Dittrich et al., 2016), open dialogue (Di Domenico, 2015), narratives (Perey & Bern, 2015), story writing (Gherardi et al., 2018), metaphors (Daskalaki, 2012) and figurative linguistic expressions (Koenig et al., 2013).

Research on situated learning (e.g. McLeod et al., 2011; Mørk et al., 2010) has been less concerned with the conflict dynamics of strategic change and centered its efforts on the study of how organizations learn. Scholars in this field have identified how different forms of learning, such as co-created learning (Butcher, 2018), group learning (Thomas et al., 2018), learning in practice (Weckowska, 2015), learning by failure and by habits (Cannavacciuolo et al., 2017), trial-and-error learning (Sosna et al., 2010), critical event learning (Song et al., 2017), learning loops (Stary, 2014) or learning as routinized enactment based on social cohesion (Kekavelakis & Edwards, 2012), affect activities and routines, potentially changing them.

Micro-level institutional research

What micro-level institutional research is adding to accounts of situated change and evolving routines is a sensitivity to institutional impacts that is often implicit or entirely absent in these studies (Smets et al., 2017). The focal interest in micro-level institutional research has partly remained on situations of contestation following the introduction of new institutional arrangements (e.g. Mair & Hehenberger, 2014) but has also zoomed in to embrace how individuals,
influenced in their praxis by institutions, as they carry out—or attempt to carry out—their daily activities, behave in ways that reproduce or change these institutions. Environmental jolts, even industry transitions, do not automatically change what companies think and do (Ellonen et al., 2015) and the ways of doing of organizational members.

Practice-driven institutionalists have perhaps provided, so far, the richest studies empirically on the micro level, although they have largely been limited to practitioners in large and established organizations. Research has suggested that institutional complexity is rather constructed by individuals than given by the context to them (Smets & Jarzabkowski, 2013) and explained how actors can manage the conflicting yet complementary logics dynamically, balancing their distinctiveness and their interdependence (Smets et al., 2015). Pioneering practice-based accounts of cognitive and normative processes in organizations, Orlikowski (1996, 2002) showed that—where others found that processes and routines dissipate strategic foresight among middle managers in their practice (Sarpong & Hartman, 2018)—change is endemic to the practice of organizing, because actors improvise and experiment with variations to accommodate their evolving use of new tools and technologies. These variations transform from solutions and ideas into workplace practice and the structural properties of the organizational context (Barley, 1986; Orlikowski, 1996) through processes of theorization, encouragement and collective meaning making (Reay et al., 2013). Curiously, these processes—as described at the micro level—manifest tensions (Groleau et al., 2012) and stages (Reay et al., 2013) that resemble the field-level dynamics of institutional change (e.g. Battilana, 2009; Lounsbury & Crumley, 2007; Morrill, 2017). Commonly, the genesis of practices, that is, “the initial emergence of new practices that may eventually become institutionalized at later stages” (cf. Lawrence et al., 2002; Padgett & Powell, 2012; in Furnari, 2014: 440), has been located at structural intersections between fields (e.g. Powell & Sandholdz, 2012; Thornton et al., 2005) but also in microinteractions in transitional interstitial situations (Furnari, 2014).

In sum, with the emergence of micro perspectives, neoinstitutionalism has renovated its interest in granular accounts of the various ways in which actors interact with the institutional arrangements in which they are embedded. Importantly, these perspectives have focused—without having to rely on agenting accounts of institutional entrepreneurs—on the individual activities that drive the organizational processes of reproduction and novelty. This turn to the micro in institutional theory is starting to explain convincingly both persistence and emergent change in the dynamics of everyday activities and small improvisations of common individuals in response to problems encountered when trying to carry out their jobs in established organizations.

However, some shortcomings linger. First, as macro approaches over-relied on external shocks to explain institutional change, micro approaches are overly dependent on institutional contradictions (Lawrence et al., 2009) and institutional
logic complexity (Thornton et al., 2012), clashing at field intersections to interpret institutional transformation (e.g. Furnari, 2014; Groleau et al., 2012). Second, despite the potential that the turn-to-the micro brings, research has mainly been carried out in large and established organizations, in which actors appropriate new tools and technologies in their work (e.g. Orlikowski, 1996) or react to collisions of practices triggered, for example, by mergers (e.g. Smets et al., 2012; Smets & Jarzabkowski, 2013). The particular context of new ventures and their entrepreneurs and organizational members, extensively explored in institutional entrepreneurship, has yet to receive sufficient micro-level attention. Third, the puzzling empirics of decoupling have yet to be attended to explicitly from a micro perspective. Fourth, despite the significance of capital and resources in organizations and their principal place in Bourdieu’s (1984) roots of institutional theory, studies bringing a micro approach to institutions have replicated, so far, the neglected attention to capital and resources in other neoinstitutional traditions. And the initial promise of the resourcing perspective (Feldman, 2004) has yet to provide clarity to the origins of resource mutability and its effects on organizational structures and conformity. Finally, studies have remained overly focused on how the institutional context enables (makes some actions possible) and constrains (makes some actions impossible) rather than on the myriad ways in which a field, the personal trajectories within it and the organizational conditions orientate behavior (Cardinale, 2018). This omission is particularly surprising for the particular context of fields in crisis. Despite their importance for institutional dissolution and formation, how action is—or is not—orientated by institutional arrangements in this sort of context remains understudied.

Converging entrepreneurship and neoinstitutional perspectives

Research on entrepreneurship, although “not firmly rooted in any particular discipline” (Wiklund et al., 2019: 420), has traditionally highlighted innovation, change and agency. Institutionalism, on the contrary, has underlined similarity, stability and non-agentic accounts of actorhood. The framework presented above, however, offers opportunities to find some theoretical common ground between entrepreneurship and neoinstitutionalism that may facilitate a systematic and unified analysis of the empirics in the papers in this dissertation. Such an integration, even if it is as tentative as this exercise manifests, has become increasingly possible due to the recent developments in both entrepreneurship and neoinstitutional theory. Bricolage, as a mode of entrepreneurship, is gaining theoretical traction on the assumptions that resources are socially constructed, that most ventures are resource deprived and that, even in deprived conditions, creative outcomes and growth are still possible—premises that, no doubt, correspond more closely to the ordinary start-up than much of the extant entrepreneurship research (Aldrich & Ruef, 2018). Similarly, the turn to the micro in neoinstitutionalism is addressing the dynamics of persistence and change in
ways and at a level of analysis, that—although not free from contestation (Cardinale, 2018)—do not require the relaxing of the basic institutional tenets of regularity, taken-for-grantedness and stability as much as previous attempts to address institutional change.

Table 1 lays out the basic concepts and assumptions in entrepreneurship and neoinstitutional theory that I use during my analysis and discussion in later chapters. All of them have already been presented in this chapter and discussed in relation to the relevant literature. The table also indicates how these concepts, despite originating in disparate fields concerned with apparently conflicting phenomena, can converge in some basic simple propositions. I argue that these convergent ideas are consistent with traditions in both the entrepreneurship and the neoinstitutionalism tradition.

Two ideas in my combination of the entrepreneurship and neoinstitutionalism concepts are particularly decisive in releasing, at least partly, the traditional tension between these two literatures. First, entrepreneurship, when understood as the creation of new enterprise (Low & MacMillan, 1988), can incorporate the initiation of projects, undertakings, operations, endeavors and other activities that do not require the creation of a new organization or fundamentally involve change. This approach to entrepreneurship does not seem intrinsically incompatible with the emphasis that institutionalism places on the regularity of some patterns of social action and isomorphic structural outcomes. Nevertheless, at the same time, it directs the researcher’s attention to the generative possibilities of situated solution-orientated interactions of actors trying to carry out jobs. Second, primarily, neoinstitutionalism theory brings to the fore the taken-for-granted, socially constructed aspect of value definitions that shape the means and ends of actors (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott, 1987). This perspective, without neglecting the central role of economic factors in organizations, complements the traditional notions of economic value that, responding to technical and exchange demands, dominate the entrepreneurship literature. The pursuit of situated higher value, in this sense, is charged by the nonmonetary normative and symbolic utilities and outcomes that often pass unnoticed in entrepreneurship studies (Wiklund et al., 2019).

A third theoretical consideration is also important. The explicit use of Bourdieu’s theoretical apparatus, at the root of institutionalism, provides a fruitful analytical method that helps to bridge entrepreneurship and neoinstitutionalism. It allows a consistent combination of the concept of capital and resources—largely neglected in institutional studies as a clearly separate component of structure but central to the entrepreneurship literature—with other constructs that resonate well with the differing emphases of institutional and entrepreneurship theory: context (i.e. fields) and personal predispositions (i.e. habitus).

The combination of concepts presented in Table 1, I argue, provides a consistent theoretical ground to explore how and why the entrepreneurial activity of individuals searching for solutions to organizational challenges in a field in crisis...
either reproduce or depart from the institutional arrangements that regulate it. Particularly, they offer some common space in which to explore empirically the recursive effect of schemas, scripts or norms on capital and resources and vice versa (Sewell, 1992), giving priority to the previously neglected role of actors’ capital as mechanisms that may mediate reproduction and divergence in context. It is on these conceptual foundations that I build the analysis and discussion in this kappa.

This relatively coherent system of thought also departs from the current definitions of institutional entrepreneurship and the commonplace use of the theoretical appliances of contradictory institutional logics. This does not suggest that those concepts are not useful per se but rather that those perspectives have proved to be less useful in the understanding of the empirical phenomena that this dissertation studies. Thus, institutional entrepreneurship, defined as the “activities of actors who have an interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create new institutions or to transform existing ones” (Maguire et al., 2004: 657), is not the focal point of this research. Neither are the stress of institutional logic studies on the complexity of alternative ways of thinking and the generative effect of institutional contradictions and clashes in my spotlight.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focal areas</th>
<th>Convergent ideas</th>
<th>Entrepreneurship</th>
<th>Neoinstitutional Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context/field/market</strong></td>
<td>Entrepreneurial processes and possibilities are enabled and constrained by their contexts.</td>
<td>Contexts are both an asset and a liability (Welter, 2011).</td>
<td>Fields are relational and meaning systems (DiMaggio &amp; Powell, 1983). Each field creates a local market of capital, goals and norms (Zietsma et al., 2017). Shared preconscious understandings (DiMaggio, 1988) restrict action within the range allowed by those understandings but also give stability and meaning to social life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entrepreneurial processes drive market/exchange fields.</strong></td>
<td>Driving market processes towards equilibrium (Kirzner, 1975).</td>
<td>Exchange field: a recognized area of institutional life, key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies and other organizations produce similar services or products (DiMaggio &amp; Powell, 1983). The site where market processes transpire (Zietsma et al., 2017). Exogenous shocks and institutional mismatches (DiMaggio, 1988) trigger field crisis (Flegstein, 1997) and entrepreneurial action (Sine &amp; David, 2003).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actors</strong></td>
<td>Individuals in incumbents and new entrants, regardless of the organizational age.</td>
<td>Individuals starting a new venture (Gartner, 1988) but also in established organizations (Ling et al., 2008).</td>
<td>Field populations include incumbents and new entrants (Zietsma et al., 2017).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities</strong></td>
<td>Entrepreneurial processes integrate situated solution-orientated interactions of actors trying to get jobs done.</td>
<td>Problems of designing within constraints (Venkataraman et al., 2012).</td>
<td>Micro: Situated interactions of ordinary actors trying to get their jobs done (Powell &amp; Reup, 2017; Smets et al., 2017).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entrepreneurial processes can result in novelty.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Possibility that new solutions eventually become institutionalized at later stages (Padgett &amp; Powell, 2012).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capital/resources</strong></td>
<td>Capital/resources are socially constructed.</td>
<td>Resources are socially constructed (Baker &amp; Nelson, 2005).</td>
<td>Capital exists and functions only in relation to a field (Bourdieu &amp; Wacquant, 1992).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capital/resources are diversely distributed among actors.</td>
<td>Capital heterogeneity among actors (Mises, 1949).</td>
<td>Each individual has different combinations of capitals (economic, cultural, social, symbolic) (Bourdieu, 1977).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entrepreneurial processes are delimited by the possibilities of action granted by available resources.</td>
<td>The primary area in which entrepreneurs can maneuver is resources (Miller &amp; Friesen, 1984). Bricolage: Resources at hand (Baker &amp; Nelson, 2005).</td>
<td>What happens in a given field is governed on the basis of the possibilities of action granted by capital associated with actors' positions and their habitus (Bourdieu, 1986).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivations/value</strong></td>
<td>Entrepreneurial processes pursue situated higher value.</td>
<td>With their ventures, entrepreneurs pursue higher expected value (Shane &amp; Venkataraman, 2000), combining externally oriented purposes and individual-level psychological rewards (Hmieleski &amp; Corbett, 2008).</td>
<td>Rationalized and impersonal prescriptions identify the various social purposes that shape organizational ends (Meyer &amp; Rowan, 1977; Scott, 1987). The ways that people frame issues, make choices, and pursue behaviors manifest the taken-for-grantedness in institutions (Garud et al., 2002; Powell &amp; DiMaggio, 1991). Other actions, regardless of their efficiency, are unacceptable or even beyond consideration (DiMaggio &amp; Powell, 1991).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Idiosyncrasy</strong></td>
<td>Entrepreneurial processes unfold based on how actors behave under the influence of their different dispositions (Kirzner, 1973). Entrepreneurs are influenced by the flow of information they develop from work experience, education, personal interests et cetera, in bundles of information not replicable by others (Roberts, 1991).</td>
<td>Information is imperfectly distributed and not static but acquired through testing and experience of market participation (Kirzner, 1973).</td>
<td>Individuals develop a system of lasting and transposable dispositions (i.e. habitus), which, integrating personal knowledge, traits, attitudes, experiences and so on, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions that events in a field activate (Bourdieu, 1977).</td>
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Chapter 3. Written news: A field in crisis

Institutional processes are difficult to examine “because institutions, as totalizing structures, tend only to reveal their inner workings during times of disruption” (Barney, 1986; Suddaby, 2010: 17). The setting of this research is the field of written news, in which massive changes triggered by new digital technologies have caused widespread failure of legacy newspapers, attempts by dominant organizations to transform themselves and a proliferation of start-ups entering the gaps left by retrenching players. In the exchange field of written news, existing populations of actors interact with formal and informal, cognitive, cultural and regulative scripts, resulting in complexly embedded professional practices, technology developments, regulatory regimes, ownership structures, attitudes and assumptions (Nerone, 2013). In defining the structure of an organizational field, a priori considerations should be replaced by “empirical investigation” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983: 148).

In the following sections, I argue that written news can be considered an established exchange field, of which newspapers—legacy and new newspapers undergoing intense difficulties—represent the central population. This chapter attempts, first, to approximate this field and the population of newspapers, and, second—starting from the presumption of organizational difference and as a way to measure its lingering institutions—to identify and describe the “dozens, even hundreds, of institutions” (Voigt, 2013: 16) that may compose the homogenizing templates in it.

Approximating the field of written news and the population of newspapers

Different perspectives on fields have commonly agreed that established exchange fields are constituted by different types of interconnected actors, delimiting boundaries, differentiating hierarchies and diverse conflict dynamics (Bourdieu, 1985; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Fligstein & McAdam, 2011; Scott, 2013; Zietsma et al., 2017). Within exchange fields, it is expected that a given population shares common regulations, norms and concepts, which structure their relationships around shared meanings and common interests. It is the extension of these webs of meaningful connections that delimits the boundaries of the field. Actors in any given field, however, are not equal. Different levels and configurations of the available capital determine relative positions within the field, shaping what different members of any population can say and do and the
effect of these. Power, status and influence are not equally distributed among the members of any population, which results in various possible dynamics of contestation, competition and struggle.

The written news media contain different populations of exchange partners (newspapers, advertisers, journalism schools, regulators, readers, bloggers et cetera). The field is currently being affected by the actions of actors as diverse and apparently external to the field as social media platforms (SMPs) and branded content providers (BCPs). As such, it could be argued—in line with Bourdieu’s definition of field boundaries—that these types of organizations already belong to the field. Written news today is, however, still largely produced in journalism organizations, mainly newspapers, the organizational form that provides most journalism (Pew Research Center, 2014, 2018).

Even when novel actors enter the field, they do so in ways that fail to transform the field’s current structures (Grafström & Windell, 2012). Newcomers, such as readers and bloggers, are mainly incorporated into the field of written news by dominant actors. Journalism organizations—by allowing these newcomers to comment and link their blogs to articles—are opening the written news production to non-journalists. Yet, as Grafström & Windell (2012: 74) show, “the reshaping of field borders in order to incorporate novel actors is achieved by dominant field actors themselves, rather than through for example technological innovations”. As a result, journalism organizations remain in control.

Thus, my focal population is written journalism organizations, specifically print and online newspapers, arguably the ones that still occupy a pivotal position in the field of written news, and I center my analysis on them. These organizations are composed of individuals, or teams of them, who also belong to different populations (journalists, managers, sales representatives, entrepreneurs et cetera), each one of them with their own identities, ambitions and struggles.

“News organizations are pluralistic organizations” (Raviola, 2017: 737). Professional journalists and management bring to newspapers their diverse identities, each of them based on their own field of expertise, knowledge, norms and ideals. Much literature, both in media management and in journalism studies, has explored this organizational duality (e.g. Achtenhagen & Raviola, 2007, 2009; Tuchman, 1973, 1978; Tunstall, 1971). Most often, these studies have stressed the tension resulting from this “opposition between two logics” (Raviola, 2012: 932; e.g. Deuze, 2008; Deuze & Fortunati, 2010; Fengler & Ruß-Mohl, 2008; Westlund, 2011) or the uneasy clash between the editorial ideals and the market demands taking place within newspapers (e.g. Eide, 2002; Franklin & Murphy, 2005; McManus, 1994). Recent research, however, has started to question these accounts as simplistic representations, outdated by the current efforts to increase collaboration and integration across departments (e.g. Bilton, 2010; Gade, 2004, 2008; van Weezel, 2009).
More importantly, studies that have closely investigated the relationship between journalism and business management in newspaper organizations show that “they are coexisting, none of them setting a clear-cut opposition between the two logics nor delineating a clear trend of supremacy for one or other” (Raviola, 1992: 951). To be sure, this coexistence does not mean an absence of disagreements, which “can be temporarily resolved in compromises,” sustaining a composite configuration (Raviola, 2017: 738). What this coexistence implies is the mutual recognition of these “logics” and their influence beyond the sharp divides between professional identities: reciprocal awareness that does not require integrated ways of working. In newspapers, actors—despite their different identities—commonly acknowledge a composite system of meaning around what the product called news and the business supporting it involve.

In fact, the process of social construction of the product called “news” (Stonbely, 2015) and the mesh of practices related to its production and support have become one central topic in journalism and media management studies. Journalism studies have explained how news work happens and have come to identify and articulate a number of values constituting the occupational ideology of journalism (Deuze, 2005)—such as objectivity, immediacy, interactivity, participation, ethics and so on—strongly dependent on an occupation “exercised by professional journalists working in industrially organized newsrooms under the supervision of editors, usually in newspapers” (Nerone, 2013: 17–18). Research has noted that “many of the routines and practices of news production observed in the golden era [mid-twentieth century] of news ethnography remain constant” (Usher, 2014: 228, emphasis and square brackets added), and work surrounding these key values—carried in the norms of the journalist profession—has extended to new settings, such as online news outlets (Domingo & Paterson, 2011; Picard, 2015). Similarly, the emergent field of media management has paid close attention to the economics of reporting, the differentiating concepts and dynamics (e.g. Albarran, 2002; Albarran et al., 2006; Alexander et al., 2003; Doyle, 2013; Hamilton, 2016; Picard, 2010) and the way in which journalism organizations have merged around specific models for the distribution and support of written news. The conditions under which the production and support of news are practiced are briskly changing.

**Written news in crisis**

The objective conditions in which newspapers operate are undergoing rapid and dramatic transformation (John & Silberstein-Loeb, 2015). The digital revolution has disrupted the business of newspapers, challenging their financial sustainability (Küng, 2008, 2015; Küng et al., 2008; Picard, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2014). Digital technologies are transforming consumer behaviors and advertising patterns, challenging the revenue streams of news organizations and demolishing the traditional entry barriers to the industry, opening the news market up to an
almost limitless number of competitors, news publishers or otherwise. The current competitors of legacy newspapers include not only those journalism start-ups entering the field but more importantly also the technological giants, such as Google and Facebook, that now dominate news distribution and control online advertising revenue. These developments have collectively disrupted the traditional business model of newspapers (Karini & Walter, 2016), caught in the “innovator’s dilemma” (Christensen, 1997). In addition, although the industry has witnessed new developments among both incumbents and newcomers during recent years (e.g. Davis, 2018), there is no clear alternative for the current business model supporting journalism, particularly at the local level (Clemons et al., 2002/3; Holm et al., 2013; Newman et al., 2013, 2017, 2019; Pew Research Center, 2018; Sehl, 2019).

In Western societies, newsroom employment has dropped by almost a quarter in less than 10 years, with the greatest declines apparent in local newspapers (e.g. Pew Research Center, 2018), giving rise to what journalism organizations have called “news deserts.” Communities, particularly those that are less wealthy and have less empowered citizens, have no newspaper covering local news: a phenomenon that has been closely followed in the United States of America (CJR, 2017) but that is not exclusive to that country in the Western world. Importantly, news in these communities is still produced and distributed, although in an “unjournalistic” manner. Neighbors, in these communities and elsewhere, gather around SMPs—they form groups on Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and others in which they exchange the information that they find relevant to themselves. Journalism start-ups are also sprouting (Sehl, 2019), first in the form of heavily funded technological ventures that claim to be redefining the business model of journalism and second in the form of frugal new organizations. The field of written news does not demand extensive production assets today, so, despite little or no access to venture funding, newcomers have little difficulty in entering the field. In some communities, these journalism start-ups—while facing “the same challenges as legacy media” (Sehl, 2019: 1)—are replacing or complementing the role played by incumbents and reporting on local stories.

The population of newspapers today, I argue, is composed—no doubt—of legacy players but also of well-founded technological news publishers and humbler journalism enterprises entering the field. In the following sections, I present the meaning system that structures the relationships among the members of this population, the evolving discourses of different actors in the field—whether or not they belong to the mentioned population—and some important dynamics of which they are part.

I organize the remainder of this chapter as follows. First, I introduce the value-laden and taken-for-granted scripts normally acknowledged by members of the newspaper population in the exchange field of written news, which I organize through two templates: journalism as an occupational ideology and the two-sided business model of written news. Second, I elaborate on the current
problematization of these templates by discussing how the transformation of the objective conditions in the field are clearing spaces for new—often ambiguous and contradictory—discourses and practical solutions and identify the ones that are being incorporated into the previously mentioned templates and those that remain deviations from them. Following Hamilton (2016), I structure these descriptions in three separate sections: how written news is (1) supported, (2) produced and (3) distributed. In the final section, an overview of the diverging scholarly perspectives that interpret these developments briefly suggests why this research may contribute to this discussion.

Templates for written news media

*Journalism as an occupational “ideology”*

In Western democratic societies, journalism is a system of norms. Based on the elemental concepts of independence, corroboration and accountability, a complex set of espoused values has helped to legitimize the profession of journalism and its business. Journalism theory agrees on a core of central values that inform the ideological occupation of journalism and define what journalism is and/or ought to be (Coddington, 2015b; Deuze, 2005; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014; Reese, 2016). (1) Journalism, through the collection and dissemination of information, monitors those in power. This watchdog role is at the core of the positive spillovers attributed to journalism as a public service (Hamilton, 2016). (2) Journalism is impartial, neutral, objective, fair and thus credible. Objectivity, despite having been dropped from the ethics code of the American Society of Professional Journalists, persists as a goal because it separates journalism from partisan news provision. The practice of corroboration and verification, as a way to discover the truth, is at the core of the value of objectivity. Objectivity, however, causes news to be driven by the zeitgeist, because reporters are often hesitant to inject issues into the news that are not already out there. (3) Journalism must be autonomous, free and independent from those whom it covers. Its first loyalty is to citizens, to whom it is accountable and to whom it provides a forum for public criticism. (4) Journalism requires a sense of immediacy, actuality and speed, inherent to the concept of news, which it provides by making points interesting and relevant. Finally, (5) journalism is exercised with personal conscience and a sense of ethics. Those who practice journalism have rights and responsibilities and need to remember that citizens have rights and responsibilities too.

Despite the historic contingency of this system of values and its questionable effectiveness (Coddington, 2015b; Conboy, 2010, 2011; Nerone, 2013), it has traditionally dominated not only incumbent newspapers but digital native news ventures entering the exchange field of written news. The current dominant themes in the written news field are interpreted through the prism provided by the
above-mentioned system of norms and occasionally instrumentalized for their
defense. The crisis of “fake news” that emerged during the American elections in
2016 is a good example of this. Fake news propagated in SMPs—although also
present in publishers and other news media—furnished newspapers and other
members of the field with claims of echo chambers, filter bubbles and propaganda
content that, despite little or no empirical support from scholarly research (Bozdag
& van den Hoven, 2015; Haim et al., 2018; Nechushtai & Lewis, 2019; Nguyen
et al., 2014; Pariser, 2011; Borgesius et al., 2017), would justify public
intervention to protect independent, corroborated and accountable journalistic
content and regulate the role of SMPs as publishers.

The professional defensiveness provided by these ideals has shown great
resilience in the most stringent objective conditions, such as the increasing
precarity of the journalistic profession. The number of journalistic jobs has been
decreasing sharply for more than a decade, increasingly stressing the working
conditions of journalists and stripping many newspapers of their reporting
capabilities. In this resource-depleted context, readers’ contributions beyond cash
are on the rise but commonly limited to “gifts of content.” Seen by most journalist
professionals and many scholars as a threat to the values of objectivity and
corroboration, citizen-based journalism attempts remain weird approaches with
little or no legitimacy outside of journalism deserts (i.e. areas with no active
newspaper). Journalists’ defensive professionalism is also evidenced even in the
face of less menacing approaches, such as cooperative reporting. Despite strong
economic incentives and some academic support (e.g. the Center for Cooperative
Media), cooperative journalism initiatives have only flourished on rare short-lived
occasions, such as the coverage of elections and politically contested issues.
However, non-journalistic cooperative approaches, for example sharing ad
inventories, content management systems (CMS) and customer relationship
management (CRM) technologies, are thriving.

This system of norms, though, is not entirely static. It is continuously being
finetuned in line with the current developments in the field. Coddington (2015b)
made a forceful point regarding how autonomy and objectivity were being
updated as issues such as native advertising and entrepreneurial journalism were
permeating their boundaries. Similarly, for example, as non-profit provision
models are on the rise, the ideal of autonomy is being further updated with
reflections about how to deal with bias from agenda-driven donors. Likewise,
driven by the increasing awareness of the low trust that the public grants to news
media, journalistic objectivity is transcending the basic approaches of
corroboration and representation (i.e. offering both sides of the story) with
enhanced efforts—mainly in still-wealthy legacy players—to provide more
analysis and expertise. These updates, however, do not challenge the core
assumptions of the value system of journalism; they rather reinforce them. For
example, novel approaches, such as “solutions journalism,” which stress rigorous
reporting on responses to social problems, have faced criticism from professional
associations for their potential bias and advocacy, and their praxis remains
extremely rare. Later sections provide a more systematic account of how these actualizations take the form of some dominant emerging solutions.

The “failing” two-sided business model of written news

On the business side of newspapers, a combination of advertising and subscription support for the provision of news has remained the norm for almost a century. The business of written news is organized around the provision of journalistic content for readers—free or not—and, with rare exceptions, such as in advertising-free formats, package the resulting audience for advertisers. The central ideas in this model include the following. (1) Revenue streams are largely dependent on audience maximization. The larger the audience, the larger the potential circulation (subscriptions and other content-related payments made by the public, such as donations and memberships) and advertising (the publication of content of commercial value, which can take many different forms: display, search, sponsorships, content, etc.) streams. (2) Additional supplementary revenue streams are organized around brand extension initiatives, such as merchandising, services or events. (3) Journalist (reporting, editing, etc.) and business-side functions (sales, management, etc.) are distinctly separated, although this does not necessarily require that these functions are always performed by different individuals. (4) The produced journalistic content, along with other complementary content, is directly distributed to end readers via the newspaper’s own publications, print and online. Often, some content is also distributed via SMPs as a promotional tool to gain new readers, but direct access to the audience, when possible, remains a priority.

This business strategy worked well for newspapers for a long time, but readers have shifted their attention to an ever-expanding array of media and advertisers have followed them, disrupting the traditional revenue streams of newspapers. A large chunk of companies’ advertising budgets, previously spent on newspaper ads, has moved online. Thus, many newspapers are currently facing the paradox of reaching a bigger than ever audience thanks to their free online activities while gaining the lowest advertising revenue in 40 years (WAN-IFRA, 2018).

Traditional print advertising in most developed countries has declined by 60 percent in the last decade, and even the increasing online digital advertising—with its stress on measurability and efficiency—cannot compensate for this decline (Pew Research Center, 2018). Even if the circumstances in the European context—in which newspapers have traditionally relied less on advertising revenue—are not on average as dire as in the US, advertising revenue losses have put the viability of the economic model in legacy newspapers to the test. Internet-based advertising methods have dramatically affected the advertising and media landscape by reducing the transaction costs between merchants and consumers (Evans, 2009; Goldfarb, 2014) and shifted the focus from graphic advertising to a new array of alternatives, such as search engine optimization, owned media and content marketing (e.g. Koiso-Kanttila, 2004; Rowley, 2008), consumers’
information and dynamic retargeting (e.g. Lambrecht & Tucker, 2013): advertising features and possibilities for which legacy news providers are today ill positioned. In fact, journalist organizations are not currently benefiting from the expanding digital advertising spending, which is increasingly being absorbed by a reduced number of big technological players (Pew Research Center, 2018).

In the last decade, the circulation revenue has remained relatively steady due to sharp increases in unit prices masking the effect of plummeting print subscriptions. Additionally, the hard-to-weigh willingness to pay for multiplatform newspapers—for example, Chyi (2012) and Newman et al. (2017, 2019) offer contradictory assessments—befuddles the prospects of online subscriptions. Recently, the revenue from online readers has shown some sway thanks to contingent circumstances, for example the Trump Bump in the US (Newman et al., 2017) and a better understanding of the relationship between paying intent, predictor variables and operational drivers (e.g. Goyanes, 2015; Goyanes & Dürenberg, 2014; Graybeal & Hayes, 2011; Hansen & Goligoski, 2018; Kammer et al., 2015; Sindik & Graybeal, 2011; Yan et al., 2015). Nevertheless, relatively successful metered paywalls and digital subscriptions (Pew Research Center, 2018) have so far failed to generate, with some very prominent exceptions (e.g. The New York Times), a sufficient alternative revenue stream to print subscriptions (Myllylahti, 2014; Newman et al., 2017, 2019).

Collapsing advertising revenues and no obvious alternative to the current print circulation turnover have resulted in a sharp reduction in newsroom sizes and the number of newspapers in most Western societies. Legacy newspapers, to compensate for their current lower returns, are restructuring and reducing their journalist workforce (American Press Institute, 2006; Currah, 2009; Franklin, 2012; Küng et al., 2008; Levy & Nielsen, 2010; Picard, 2010; Pew Research Center, 2014, 2018; Sterling, 2008). The latest available figures from the US Census Bureau show a decline of roughly 30 percent in the number of newspapers in the US from 1980 to 2016, a trend that seems to be accelerating and, to a lesser extent, is shared by most Western societies (WAN-IFRA, 2018). Additionally, as previously mentioned, the poor perspectives for online journalism to break even on any large scale (BBC Business, 2019; McChesney, 2017) have triggered serious concerns in academic centers (e.g. the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School; Tow Center for Digital Journalism, Columbia Journalism School) and professional organizations (e.g. Investigative Reporters & Editors) about the future and quality of journalism. These worries are only increasing as newspapers in Western societies every year hit new minimums in their overall revenue, total circulation, number of employees in newsrooms and number of players (Pew Research Center, 2018; WAN-IFRA, 2018).
Lingering practices and norms in changing objective conditions: Areas of problematization and dominant solutions

Despite the current organizational inefficiency of journalism and its supportive business model, they still define the working logic of the economics of written news media. The current calls to innovate these cognitive templates problematize the details of some journalism’s activities and business strategies, but they, I argue, do not modify its inner value and meaning structure. The most controversial areas of problematization commonly originate from the increasing pressure that economic strains are building in the division between journalistic and business-oriented activities (Coddington, 2015b).

For example, as digital advertising is increasingly questioned as a sustainable revenue stream for news providers, the revenue mix, traditionally skewed towards advertising, is pivoting today towards being more reader based. Even innovative new ventures that have been attempting to develop advertising-only revenue models are turning to other mixed-revenue streams (mainly the licensing of contents and marketing). This transition to a diversity of revenue sources is hardly problematic at all, as it falls in line with the traditional business model of newspapers. However, as decreasing advertising is seldom compensated for by circulation revenue, there is still a strong interest in inventive advertising solutions. Native advertising has been suggested as a potential one, but its similarity to editorial content has triggered criticism, as it manifests the often-ambiguous separation of news and advertising content in practice.

Likewise, as difficulties in monetizing readership directly from the readers expose possible underlying explanations, such as the declining trust and interest in news, there is pressure to develop “new” journalism solutions for the production of news. Some of these solutions seem not to challenge the existing norms, such as a re-focus on “quality,” understood as unique content that people would be prepared to pay for but that is still defined by the template provided by the occupational ideology of journalism. Others, however, imply—subtle and not so subtle—actualizations of some central ideals and concepts in the field. For example, a new focus on audience engagement and “quality reach” may question the traditional approach to building big numbers for a conversion funnel from users to customers. Similarly, as audiences shrink, the understanding that publics are, in fact, diverse is catching up, questioning the traditional “general store approach” to audiences and topics and suggesting that many newspapers could be attempting an iteration toward more targeted audiences and more differentiated and unique content.

These and other areas of problematization require detailed examination, including the identification of the multiplicity of answers that different actors are bringing. Although both the business model of newspapers and the occupational ideology
of journalism persist, it is important to stress that the field is diverse in many respects and that the population of newspapers is responding to its crisis in diverse ways. These ways can, however, be systematized to gain a detailed sense of what is being said and done today—and by whom—about the population of newspapers, incumbents and new entrants alike. This analysis will help to establish the extent to which the activities of the cases that Chapter 6 studies are significantly different or not.

I organize the coming sections following the key elements in the templates described above, which—in line with Hamilton (2016)—I structure in three areas: how written news is supported, produced and distributed. Although this analysis is mainly based on the specific context of the United States of America—the one relevant to Papers 3 and 4 in this dissertation—its conclusions closely apply, with minor exceptions, to other Western societies. Some of the exceptions, when considered to be particularly relevant, are mentioned when corresponding.

**How written news is supported**

Falling advertising revenues and concerns about the strategic capability to compete with SMPs are increasingly causing most actors in the field to perceive direct revenue from readers as the new center of sustainable business models. Following recent success stories of online subscription campaigns by big players (e.g. The New York Times) and smaller ones (e.g. Shawnee Mission Post), legacy newspapers and new entrants are equally oriented toward circulation-based revenue, be it subscriptions and paywalls or memberships. The actual implementation of these strategies is, however, far from successful in many cases. In appearance, new advertising approaches are similarly moving slowly away from an exclusive focus on page views and click-based readership monetization, yet this remains very much at the discourse level of consultants, scholars and newspaper managers, with little impact so far on most newspapers. Sponsorship and paid content models are, however, expanding widely and are common practice for newspapers with very different profiles.

Subscriptions—online and offline, perceived as a transaction approach—dominate legacy newspapers’ circulation revenue streams. After years of “strategic doubts” about their potential, subscriptions are picking up in some countries. This phenomenon has been labeled the “Trump Bump” in the US, although the trend is not exclusive to this nation. Across Western societies, there is an increasing perception that willingness to pay for news is gaining some traction among young payers (Newman et al., 2017), although the limits around single-publication news subscriptions are also becoming clearer (Newman et al., 2019). Common steps in newspapers that are actually developing circulation strategies include increased attention to email lists, a focus on some stories with great reach potential as a sampling tactic and the traditional sales conversion funnel, that is, transforming occasional users into habitual and paying loyalists. In practice, newspapers are testing different approaches from metered models, often
with the help and support of specialist organizations, such as the News Revenue Hub. Today, many actors in the field expect some robust paywall models to appear relatively soon, possibly in line with what has been coined the “Scandinavian” model. This model is based on a combination of technology orientation (e.g. big data processing) and customer segmentation (e.g. high–low-intensive users). Successful cases, apart from the ones that make it regularly into the headlines and industrial events (e.g. The New York Times, Shawnee Mission Post and some others), are rare. The field has recently witnessed some attempts to provide platforms for micropayments linked to the development of digital news marketplaces in cryptocurrencies (e.g. Civil). The case of Civil has received abundant attention in industry publications, but the initial results are very uncertain, and entrepreneurs and managers of newspapers, even online natives, still view these initiatives with great suspicion.

Membership approaches are different from subscriptions because they imply—in some definitions (e.g. Hansen & Goligoski, 2018)—a two-way knowledge exchange between journalists and members. Membership as circulation revenue with no paywall in place is increasingly popular among digital native news start-ups, although the “exchange” dimension that some definitions suggest has had a very limited effect in practice, with extremely seldom exceptions (e.g. De Correspondant in the Netherlands). This case has taken part in academic events in the US and is commonly offered in scholarly conversations as an exemplary case of a cooperative approach to journalism that leverages on readers’ knowledge and contributions. Journalists and managers of newspapers, however, react to this case with disbelief if not open criticism. Partly, the poor implementation of membership exchange models results from the fact that successful membership programs are thought to require a great amount of time and effort and a different culture from everyone in the organization—journalists above anyone else. As for subscriptions, different models are being tested, and scholars, perhaps wishfully, expect some robust approaches to emerge at any time. Some non-profit news sites are allowing their audiences to decide how much to pay depending on what they think the content that they produce is worth, but this activity remains exceptional.

Donations, as an alternative to circulation revenue, are on the rise. This approach is a charitable one that is strongly linked to non-profit news production models. For-profit newspapers, unless owned by a foundation (an increasingly common form in some countries, e.g. Sweden), have so far avoided this revenue stream, although in practice membership approaches—as described above—are almost indistinguishable from donation schemes. Scholars have seen donations as a complement, particularly in poorly covered areas, but not as a sustainable large-scale alternative to non-profit operations. Industrial events now usually include a not-for-profit track, followed exclusively by actors enrolled in this type of organizations. These written news outlets are slowly converging on some basic money collection tactics that seem to be working. These founders and professionals, however, acknowledge that there is a need to build a culture of philanthropy to support journalism. Actors who are particularly prone to
Written news: A field in crisis

Philanthropy include publishers with products in areas lacking sufficient coverage (e.g., news deserts). They commonly request a better alignment between philanthropists, funders and donors. Currently, however, most of the philanthropic funding is being channeled to established and well-known legacy players, although initiatives such as ProPublica are contributing to the redistribution of these funds and capabilities to deprived local newspapers. In the US, actors in not-for-profit written news providers borrow ideas through analogies from donation models in public radio and art institutes. In this country, scholars expect an entirely new sort of population to arise if philanthropy is to stabilize as a new normal in revenue: civil society players who will provide legitimacy and resources to written news approaches in this area.

Part of the current conventional wisdom in the field—shared by scholars, managers and journalists alike—is that paid subscriptions, donations and memberships, whatever their mix, are not likely to be enough and need to be supplemented. Revenue diversification is key, although chasing too many revenue opportunities at once is also considered, by consultants and scholars, to be a potential waste of investment. Other common revenue streams complementing advertising and direct revenue from readers include the following: sponsored content and events (favored by top newspaper brands and copied by many), spin-off services (e.g., website building, app creating, digital marketing and printing presses) and video licensing (particularly for distributed media corporations supported by venture capital and facing insufficient advertising revenue). Curiously, spin-off services are commonly targeted almost exclusively to other members of the population of newspapers. Legacy newspapers that retain their presses print other newspapers in their region. Digital native newspapers provide technology and marketing consultancy services to legacy newspapers that are struggling in their digital transformation.

There are reports of start-ups occasionally obtaining seed funding through crowdfunding campaigns, but most cases then become stuck because little venture capital is funneling through to them. At this point, everyone in the field agrees that the available funders have lost any interest in advertising-based models. Apparently, however, there is increased interest among venture capitalists in funding start-ups that explore non-advertising-based ways to monetize reader attention, but it is not clear which ways. Other than subscriptions, donations and memberships, they could be. Although data-supported revenue models are a trading idea (à la Facebook) that experts mention, these are still at too early a stage to have delivered well-proved success stories in any media organization. Finally, contributions beyond cash are increasing in resource-depleted contexts. When entrepreneurs, managers and journalists are asked about this possibility, common ideas refer to “gifts of content” (from the audience, e.g., in the form of tips and leaks) and software and other assets that local actors donate to written news organizations, particularly in impoverished community contexts.
How written news is produced

Objectivity, corroboration and accountability

Trust from the public in media players is decreasing, reaching all-time lows in some Western societies on a yearly basis, some of them well under the 50 percent mark (Newman et al., 2017, 2019). The underlying drivers of mistrust in media lie in the current conjuncture of deep-rooted political polarization but also in the—not so recent—public perception that mainstream media are biased. The dominant responses by written news organizations remain largely consistent with their self-image and uncritically combine: (a) a strong defense of the legitimizing ideals of independence, corroboration and accountability in journalistic production of news, (b) a sort of “philosophical shift” in ways to retain objectivity in combination with fairness and balance and (c) an increased interest in data-driven journalism.

Journalism scholars claim that the increasing divide between the public and journalists partly results from an aspect of objectivity that needs to be corrected. In this view, objectivity has traditionally made reporters hesitant to inject issues into the news that are not already out there, limiting—to some extent—their ability to help set the public agenda (Cunningham, 2003; McLeary, 2007; Wallace, 2018). These voices call for more issue-engaged journalism yet without questioning the ideal of objectivity itself. Despite its questionable empirics, this ideal persists in the field because it is useful to separate journalism from partisan reporting, and journalist professionals cling to it faithfully. However, when questioned about their objectivity, journalists commonly provide answers that claim their independence rather than objectivity, such as “I am not here to please anyone” or “I only trust my own gut feeling when reporting what I see.” Common attempts to rethink objectivity in the current context include reaching beyond the traditional approach of offering “both sides of the story” with enhanced efforts to provide more analysis and expertise, mainly in powerful and affluent players.

The current formulations of the ideals of objectivity and corroboration have another important practical effect on news coproduction approaches. Journalists in legacy and digital native newspapers have very little practical interest in ideas of coproduction of content in cooperation with knowledgeable and engaged readers. When unique exemplars of these initiatives (e.g. De Correspondant’s “unbreaking news,” East Lansing Info’s “news militia,” City Press’s “reporter’s boot camp” and others) have taken part in industrial and scholarly events, while academics have tended to analyze them with interest, professionals have rejected them as “unjournalistic,” impossible to manage in practice or useless for solving the current problems in written news organizations. In private, scholars have acknowledged that these initiatives, when presented to struggling written news organizations as a possible remedy for their shrinking resources, receive strong contestation. Timid co-production attempts in newspapers meet harsh resistance, are poorly implemented and eventually peter out.
Practical solutions to data-driven journalism are just scratching the surface of what it is technically possible. Despite the opportunities, critical studies on journalism stress the high level of confusion and delay in the way in which data journalism is thought of and conducted. Empirical studies on news organizations and newsrooms have pointed out their relatively low use of technological assets (Steensen, 2011), their high degree of “hesitancy towards numbers and computational literacy” (Borges-Rey, 2016), their insufficient data journalism skills (Appelgren & Nygren, 2014), the “vague, patchy and imprecise” role of statistics in journalistic storytelling (Cushion et al., 2017) and the long and costly process of data journalism artifacts in the established epistemologies of journalists’ investigations (Parasie, 2015). The exercise of data journalism today is largely restricted to the use of free online options that are not easily customizable and use unsophisticated interaction techniques (Young et al., 2018). These accounts confirm the very underdeveloped state of the field. Top journalism schools are promoting pioneering computational journalism as a way to lower the costs of discovering stories and tell them in more personalized and engaging ways (e.g. Stanford Computational Journalism Lab). However, the field still seems to be trapped by the dominant narrow definitions of the innovative solutions that data journalism can bring to newsgathering, storytelling and the dissemination of news (Young et al., 2018).

Immediacy of news

The digital and mobile consumption of news dominates, unbundling access to news and challenging the general store approach to audiences and topics common to traditional print formats. In this context, a new mantra is gaining currency among media managers, journalists and scholars: to pursue audiences with targeted content that no one else is covering. This has some implications, particularly for the 24 hour cycle of news, now increasingly complemented—at least in many newspapers’ declared intentions—with investigative journalism, subject to longer time cycles. The practical implementation of these declarations is often strongly compromised by shrinking newsrooms and reduced journalist teams in most newspapers.

In under-covered urban and suburban areas, a newly emerging down-sized digital-based model seems to be forming (although still rare and tentative) around a new concept of “immediacy.” The focus is on offering news coverage that is actionable and that local residents deem necessary and valuable. This approach requires fewer stories (perhaps as few as two or three stories a week), a morning email letter (most often packed with curated news) and a reader-based revenue model centered on membership and networking events and marginally complemented with some advertising. Players in this model position their efforts in a strong sense of belonging to the community that they serve.

Other conceptualizations include the idea of vertical journalism, occasionally mentioned in academic events by influential scholars as a possible way to create
value in news reporting. However, actual references are scarce, and, when influencers are asked to provide models for the implementation of this idea, none are offered.

Common public good

The field is united in the agreement that journalism provides a public service as a watchdog, active collector and disseminator of information. Nevertheless, most practitioners tend to question the extent to which other players, particularly their direct competitors, are delivering on the task. Despite the current limited approaches to data-driven journalism, the digitalization of information is increasingly facilitating the discovery of new journalistic sources, including media archives and publicly available and crowdsourced data, as the basis of new products. User-generated reports are slowly appearing as a very unconventional approach that involves the community in deciding and reporting on the issues arising in local areas. These approaches, as mentioned earlier, despite their potential for the common public good, clash directly with defensive versions of journalistic ideals, such as objectivity and corroboration. These rare non-profit citizen-reported journalism cases produce a hybrid of volunteer and paid-off reporting in journalism deserts. They can integrate fellowships, public newsroom events and documenters’ programs that help to define the standards that limit what is publishable. These exceptional cases often base their revenues on donations and membership programs. Exemplars of this approach are appearing in some urban areas (e.g. East Lansing Info in Lansing, MI; City Press in Chicago, IL) and are examined by scholars and often praised by civic organizations. Journalists as well as most managers in written news organizations, however, reject these approaches. As a mild alternative, occasionally, some local newspapers experiment with group pages on SMPs, which they gatekeep and on which they post some stories and look for cues for stories that they can report.

Solutions journalism (i.e. a combination of putting problem solving at the center of the narrative, focusing on the details of implementation and presenting evidence of the results) has often been suggested by scholars and some journalists as a way to bring value to news, but emerging initiatives remain rare. Because solutions journalism requires consistent and lengthy coverage of topics that have previously often been thought to be intractable, it is challenging and requires cultural change in newsrooms. Successful cases are rare. Organizations that promote solutions journalism (e.g. the Solutions Journalism Network) acknowledge the difficulties involved in expanding this practice. Newspapers that focus on solutions journalism are extremely rare. Successful exemplars are unique, and different industrial events need to showcase the same ones continuously (e.g. Richland Source). Despite the obstacles, solutions journalism stories are becoming more prevalent, even in top legacy players such as The Washington Post, The Guardian, The Chicago Tribune and many others (Solutions Journalism, 2017).
Transparency and autonomy

Transparency and autonomy—a clear separation of editorial and advertising content and functions—remains a claimed value in the population of written news providers, invariably argued by advertisers and journalists, sales reps and managers in newspapers. Collapsing revenue streams, however, have prompted calls from media professional publications and academic organizations (e.g. Reynolds Journalism Institute) to remove the silos between advertising and editorial sides, engaging all members of newspapers in designing and implementing long-term strategic planning that may contribute to the future of their organizations. These claims are devised as attempts not to challenge transparency or autonomy but as a demand for mutual awareness between journalistic and business-side functions. The fluctuating interest in journalism entrepreneurship can also be understood as part of the argument that journalists should not ignore the business aspects of their occupation. These ideas trigger conversations (among scholars and practitioners) about how business elements could be put at the core of journalism. Today these conversations continue to be shaped by the risks that entrepreneurship brings in the form of influence on coverage.

A particular aspect of these conversations is far from new: transparency. In the 1990s, advertorials—an advertising format “mimicking the storytelling aesthetic” of the host publication (David Carr, media critic in the New York Times)—were common practice, even though they triggered widespread contestation because they were considered to be deceptive. The hot format today is native advertising, different from previous editorial–advertising hybrids in its stress on content that is “valuable to the readers” and distinguishable from editorial content (Coddington, 2015b: 76). Native advertising remains an ambiguous practice. It is widespread in legacy players and elsewhere, yet it faces similar criticism to that received by advertorials: its potential deceptiveness. Practitioners formally reaffirm their commitment to a clear separation between editorial and advertising content but combine it with “the rhetoric of survival, describing native advertising as a key to maintaining journalism’s viability” (Coddington, 2015b: 77).

The current conventional wisdom, particularly favored by journalists, is that the “true opportunity” lies in the current trend toward more circulation-oriented revenue models. As journalism will be moving away from advertising, the way in which newsrooms will actively participate in revenue is thought to be mainly through understanding how readers use data and active listening. The argument works as follows: data will help journalists to produce unique valuable content for which readers are willing to pay. On this line of thought, some newspapers are testing new incentive structures and systems for journalists to engage with their audience members. No standard model has arisen yet, but these moves are already producing questions related to the kind of organizational indicators and goals that journalists should have. Questions related to who, in newspapers, will eventually
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decide what to report and how are not asked in the common understanding that journalists should keep control of the process.

As an exception to the taken-for-granted journalism autonomy, some scholars have questioned the effect on independence that revenue mixes increasingly depending on agenda-driven donors may have. Members of organizations that are heavily dependent on donations and grants—mostly not-for-profits—offer solutions that mostly rely on unrestricted funding (i.e. to cultivate sources of unrestricted funding rather than subject area funding or to dilute the role of major individual donors with appeals to less restrictive smaller donors). Restricted funding, however, seems to be prominent in many newspapers, although this fact is seldom proactively disclosed and almost never discussed. Emerging sophisticated approaches include the development by some non-for-profit entrepreneurs and journalists of guidelines for transparency, disclosing sources of philanthropic support (e.g. The Texas Tribune). These practices remain exceptional.

Not only have newsrooms shrunk in the last decade, but the population of newspapers has lost its attractiveness to managerial talent. Top managers in newspapers acknowledge that they need to rebuild capabilities, whether human or automated. Often, in the current conjuncture, partnering is seen as at least part of the solution to expand capacity and capabilities at a lower and more flexible cost. Traditional partnering across newspapers has included ad inventories as well as approaches to develop and share technologies in content management systems (CMSs) and customer relationship management (CRM). More ambitious new initiatives to cooperate among newspapers in their coverage efforts are being undertaken. These initiatives often relate to the coverage of local elections and complex topics with geographically divided conversations, fact checking, misinformation content tools and shared databases. Initiatives promoting cooperative journalism at local levels (e.g. New Jersey News Commons, Center for Cooperative Journalism; ProPublica election coverage) are gaining some traction among new ventures. Elsewhere, aggressive approaches to cooperative journalism, despite remaining project based and temporally limited, often face great resistance from journalists in legacy organizations, usually subject to very strong competitive dynamics, and have low success rates.

**How written news is distributed**

Digital and mobile consumption of news dominates, pushing the boundaries beyond the traditional print, web page and news-feed algorithm model (Bell et al., 2017; Newman et al., 2017, 2019; Radcliffe & Ali, 2017). Media convergence—the combination of internal print and online news operations in newspapers—has been a hot topic of conversation among scholars, journalists, managers and consultants for decades but is already abating. The initial resistance by journalists, under pressure to acquire new technological capabilities and to produce more for less, has publicly receded. However, while many legacy newspapers are still
struggling internally in their convergence process, traditional digital formats (e.g. front-page, article and multimedia add-ons) are increasingly questioned by advertisers.

The dominating multimedia add-on is video. All types of written news organizations are extensively incorporating short video formats. Initially, video expansion was mainly driven by managers’ belief that it would increase online advertising and the SMP dissemination of their brands. This has shown to deliver, at least partly, on both accounts, but, beyond those intentions, video is being embraced by journalists as a strong complement to written news. The incorporation of video, however, is not uniform. While well-resourced top legacy brands have made video production an important complement to their written content, and some are even expanding to innovative virtual reality (VR), 360-degree formats (e.g. The New York Times; ekstrabladet.dk) and live streaming (e.g. The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Guardian and many others), small and medium-sized newspapers are still struggling to find the funding and journalists’ time to produce them. Well-funded digital native new ventures, originally orientated toward distribution on SMPs, have made video, along with listings, quizzes and photo galleries, an important format in their audience strategy (e.g. BuzzFeed, NowThis News, Vice or TicToc by Bloomberg). In less-well-funded start-ups entering the field, video remains an unusual format.

Other add-ons have often come and gone in short cycles of high expectations and early disappointment. The emerging new channel today seems to be podcasting, currently experiencing a revival as a result of smart speakers being “the next big thing” according to industrial publications, scholars and practitioners in dominant legacy newspapers. Top newspaper brands are launching podcast products, some of them with strongly advertised success (e.g. The Daily by The New York Times). Podcasts are considered to be an excellent way to reach new young readers but also—through sponsorship—a medium that could be sustainable in itself, that is, not just another promotional tool to sell subscriptions. Just a few years ago, that “next big thing” was the tablet, but this device failed to meet the expectations of written news executives and journalists.

Besides podcasting, email and newsletters are increasingly seen as a product for building loyalty and conversion. This approach, conceptually close to the “daily print edition” in many respects, is becoming common practice in most newspapers, particularly in start-ups, the founders of which see newsletters as a way to bypass SMPs and establish a direct relationship with readers. Additionally, there are continuous attempts in the field to optimize news products for search engines (SEO): an area in which journalists and marketers have cooperated more easily than in others. The extent to which these attempts bring changes to personalization remain in question. In new ventures, there are rare instances of partnering with other publications to increase exposure to coverage. In legacy
players, new syndicated forms of sharing content are explored, but deeper cooperative attempts, as referred to above, remain limited.

Audience maximization, a traditional taken-for-granted pillar of the written news business model, is facing plummeting returns. The decline of print and low advertising returns on, even exploding, digital audiences are prompting questions related to “maximum reach” as a driving key performance indicator for some newspaper boards. This is bringing some changes. The posting behavior of publishers is morphing with a decrease in free natives, an increase in native paywalls and a resurgence of networks as a marketing platform. The common strategy to build audiences today in legacy players with well-established customer bases focuses on (a) publishing on the SMP used by targeted audiences as a way of testing their products and gaining new readers; and (b) producing and publishing continuously in their own platforms to match audience members’ lives. In practice, however, the pressure to maximize the marginal advertising revenue keeps pushing journalists and marketers to publish abundantly on SMPs, on which most of the traffic is generated. Only exceptionally are top newspaper brands managing to escape this dynamic. New ventures depend even more strongly on SMP-generated traffic. Attempts to build a direct relationship with readers through newsletters and direct traffic work only very slowly.

As a result, in newspapers, the standard aspiration in distribution remains centered on their own publications, print and online. SMPs, however, dominate as the main source of news in most Western societies. Thus, online micro-local newspapers with very limited audiences on their websites maintain a strong orientation toward SMPs as their only available alternative to reach readers. Actors in the field, however, mainly legacy newspapers and some central academic and professional positions in journalism, often claim that access to news via these platforms results in echo chambers and filter bubbles. However, the emerging data mostly suggest that users of social media, aggregators and search engines experience more diversity than non-users (Borgesius et al., 2016; Bozdag & van den Hoven, 2015; Haim et al., 2018; Nechushtai & Lewis, 2019; Newman et al., 2017; Nguyen et al., 2014). Reluctantly, many newspapers, particularly local news sites, remain heavily dependent on readership generated on SMPs, although the associated revenue remains, in these cases, largely negligible. Often, these newspapers are so dependent on it that changes in their algorithms can strip them of almost all their readers.

Because news brands are struggling to cut through on distributed platforms (their branding, access to audience data and revenue are all at stake and with dubious results on SMPs), the extensive use of SMPs is increasingly questioned. Even new ventures that have been attempting to develop wholly distributed strategies (i.e. distribution of content only through SMPs) are moving toward mixed approaches. Wholly distributed approaches on SMPs, common in heavily funded native digital ventures (e.g. BuzzFeed, NowThis, etc.), are increasingly questioned not only by other actors in the field but even by these same organizations, which are
increasingly announcing plans to reduce their dependence on SMPs. Declared attempts from SMPs to support news sites are often received with incredulity or even open contestation by influential scholars and top executive journalists in dominant legacy newspapers. The reactions in start-ups are diverse: entrepreneurs complain about their SMP dependence but also acknowledge the opportunities that SMPs have brought to them to distribute their content, often massively. These views are rarely voiced at academic events. The future relationship between SMPs and written news is one of the current hubs of “hot topics” in the field. Specific issues include how to share revenue produced by news consumption, how to supervise the “publisher role” of SMPs and how SMPs should respond to and control “fake news.” These topics, which are conceptually different, often interweave as different actors see, in the possibility to define them through new regulations, opportunities to advance their confronted interests. This subject, however, is beyond the focus of this work.

Perspectives on the state of written news and newspapers

Sterile innovation efforts

As the previous sections detail, in the current context of negative results, most newspapers are trying new approaches. Often, however, the strategic actions that newspapers take in their attempts to innovate receive unfavorable reviews. Scholars, industrial associations and other media have stressed how, so far, newspapers have failed to reshape their strategies to create sustainable growth and, as a result, remain largely locked into an obsolete business model (American Press Institute, 2006; Koch, 2008, 2011; Pew Research Center, 2014, 2018; Rothman & Koch, 2013; Teece, 2010; The Economist, 2011; Wikström and Ellonen, 2012; WAN-IFRA, 2018). These views highlight that the traditional newspaper business model—built on low consumer selling prices, high circulation and dependency on advertising—remains largely unmodified despite the transformation of consumers’ and advertisers’ behavior.

For example, Wikström and Ellonen (2012) investigated why Scandinavian print media firms have not transformed their business model despite the potential changes in its value propositions and key competences triggered by the social media features that have been newly added to their online services. According to the authors, this potential has not been realized because legacy firms “have not allowed the social media features to affect their online revenue models” (Wikström & Ellonen, 2012: 63). On a similar line, Casero and Izquierdo (2013) and Günzel and Holm (2013) pointed out that the various innovation approaches in news media organizations have been dented by poor internal coordination and relatively unstructured strategies. Similarly, studies have shown the level of confusion, struggle and delay in legacy newspapers’ attempts to incorporate artificial
intelligence into journalism practices (Young et al., 2018), despite its glorified capacity (Coddington, 2015a). To explain the apparent paradox of continuous activity innovation and organizational inertia, Rothman and Koch (2014: 66) analyzed the case of legacy newspapers in Germany, dealing with the digitalization of their strategies, and proposed that “organizations tend to use up all their creative potential to maintain problematic strategies rather than explore new ones.” This results in effortful activities that, compared with inactivity, have a relatively positive effect but fail to revise their strategic pattern. As I elaborate in Chapter 6, my findings in Paper 2 support this view.

At the same time, digital native new players—like Buzzfeed, Quartz, Huffington Post, Vox, Now This, the crowdfunding platform Byline, the cryptocurrency-driven marketplace Civil and a myriad of other ventures—are entering the written news scene. Unlike legacy newspapers, these companies are built around an innate understanding of technology, and some bring revenues produced in other areas of their business, technological knowhow and top talent to their news operations. Attracted by some of these initiatives, new venture capitalists, insiders of the tech industry but outsiders to journalism, are entering the field (Pew Research Center, 2014, 2018). However, the fate of lacking financial sustainability that looms over legacy news players also appears to be casting its shadow over emerging news providers, causing journalism operations’ sustainability to remain unclear (CJR, 2019; CNN Business, 2019; Nel, 2015).

Emerging opportunities

Despite the impending doom, some media management and economics scholars have claimed that the current changes are producing opportunities for fresh organizational forms of operation. These relatively more optimistic views combine the assumption that the outstanding profitability of news provision during the twentieth century is a historic anomaly and that today “workable new business models are appearing in news provision” (Hansen & Goligoski, 2018; Picard, 2014: 280). In this opportunity mode view, others have highlighted the unmet potential that big data hold for the value-creating process of legacy newspapers and the implications for their business model (Evens & Van Damme, 2016; Hamilton, 2016) or focused on the emergence of innovative public interest journalism models from non-profit institutions and community-funded platforms (e.g. Carvajal et al., 2012). Acknowledging that not-for-profit and foundation support is not a “panacea for contemporary challenges,” Picard (2014: 275 and 280) stated that “news providers are becoming less dependent on any one form of funding than they have been for about 150 years.”

Optimistic scholars have reported that they are witnessing a momentum of new market enablers, business ideas and developments in the news field. Significantly, in these views, these new opportunities would be pursued not only by start-ups and online ventures but also by legacy newspapers (Küng, 2015; Picard, 2014). Despite the barriers and inertia, legacy players would manage to develop new
cognitive foundations in the field. Drawing on an opportunity mode (although without disregarding the existing challenges), Doyle (2015) suggested that the current evolution of media legacy players toward multi-platform suppliers of content is modifying processes and output in news provision and, more importantly, making media managers conceptualize what content is. On a similar line, Picard (2014) suggested that the field is undergoing a process of unbundling of the traditional news production system into two separate modes: one of service production (basically the transformation of news products into multiplatform distributed services) and one of craft production (the consolidation of the production of unique and quality news in highly specialized organizations). He concluded: “more independent, entrepreneurial journalists and production cooperatives will emerge to provide specialized coverage and localized news and information” (Picard, 2014: 280). Küng (2015: 92) took a step further and recently identified—in innovators coming from the ranks of either legacy newspapers or pure digital news providers—a few features common to successful journalistic organizations today: “they know what they are trying to do, which audiences they serve, and how to create value for them.” More specifically, these innovators integrate technology into editorial processes and create content through “processes that are response and data driven,” have achieved a “pro-digital culture,” start early in their digital innovations and, finally, allow a high degree of autonomy in how the organization innovates and responds to the market (Küng, 2015: xi).

The above-mentioned perspectives share an appreciation of the moderate optimism arising among a few succeeding news company executives. On this line, researchers who are not in the media economics and management field have recently testified—from different theoretical perspectives—to the current progress of newspapers in finding sustainable business models. Within the field of institutional theory, Ocasio and Radoynovska (2016), following Gilbert’s (2005) research on organizational responses to changes in the news industry, speculated—although without empirical backing—that regional newspapers, exposed to incompatible contradictions between institutional logics, can modify their business model while preserving their governance strategy. In the corporate entrepreneurship field, Karimi and Walter (2016: 355) surveyed 148 newspapers in the US to find that “size, autonomy, risk-taking, and proactiveness have significant direct impact on disruptive business model innovation adoption in responding to digital disruption.” The authors suggested that an autonomous and proactive mode is helping large newspaper organizations in adopting disruptive new business models, which they defined as “producing and selling digital noncore products” (Karini & Walter, 2016: 54).

Institutional arrangements

In sum, as the previous sections have illustrated, the current strategic pursuits of newspapers are interpreted alternatively as non-innovative activity variation or as
moderately successful attempts that combine reasonable exploration of opportunities with the exploitation of the remaining current business. These conflicting interpretations have only very recently turned to account for the existing rules, norms and taken-for-granted ideas about the business of journalism written news (e.g. Hampton & Conboy, 2014; Nerone, 2013; Ohlsson, 2012), although—with the exceptions already mentioned above (e.g. Grafström & Windell, 2012; Raviola, 2012; Raviola, 2017)—these analyses have largely remained within the confines of journalism history. Organization studies have yet to attend explicitly to the effect of these institutions on the way in which organizations construct and respond to the current challenges and opportunities in news provision.

Concerns about the sustainability of the traditional political economy of journalism are, however, raising the academic interest in how, in a digital era dominated by a few high-performance technology companies, the current institutional arrangements of news provision will change (John & Silberstein-Loeb, 2015). The concern is arguably becoming more urgent as consumers increasingly rely on SMPs to obtain their news and studies report the shaky levels of trust that citizens place in journalists (e.g. FT Focus: The Future of News, 2019; Newman et al., 2019). Although the initial research suggested that the emergence of native and pure online news suppliers was only supplementing legacy media by specializing in niche audiences and/or niche contents (e.g. Sirkkunen & Cook, 2012), there is little scholarly disagreement today about the radical transformation of the way in which news is consumed. In many Western societies, SMPs have already become the main source of news, although this trend seems to be flattening out in some markets (Newman et al., 2017) and SMPs (Newman et al., 2019). This is a trend that, if sustained and combined with the decreasing levels of public trust in journalism organizations, will accelerate the dissolution of both the long-existing locality-based monopolies that have supported the traditionally costly production of professional journalism and the democratic function that it arguably provides (John & Silberstein-Loeb, 2015; Picard, 2014).

Again, two alternative perspectives seem to polarize the academic research. One suggests that journalism, in its current form, needs to be protected. In this view, journalism has always been subsidized anyway (by advertising revenues or other forms of financial support), thus proving that journalism is not a commercial undertaking (McChesney, 2016). On this front, dramatic statements about the end of newspapers are gaining momentum, prompting calls for the design of new regulations that may support journalism (Dumpala, 2009; John & Silberstein-Loeb, 2015; McChesney, 2016). This position argues in favor of the creation of new regulations to “protect the organizational capabilities that up to until now have proved necessary to the making of high-quality news” (John & Silberstein-Loeb, 2015: 243) and, additionally, of public funding so that journalism—a classic public good—can be provided: policies that would direct public money but without government control to “create an independent, uncensored, competitive news media systems with lots of voices” (McChesney, 2016: 129)
and provide regulations and tax relief to secure better commercial treatment for news publishers (Cairncross, 2019).

Alternatively, a different view—largely based on the assumption that the current media struggle results not only from a market problem but mainly from a product idea problem—questions the fascination with media subsidies and other supportive regulations (Picard, 2015). This perspective focuses on how the online news providers in the digital era, as they cooperate with other information producers and end users, are more networked and open than traditional legacy players (Picard, 2014). Adding to that, as news providers distribute their contents and engage with the public through different platforms, the traditional concepts of audience, information needs, distribution and user participation will naturally evolve (Picard, 2014). Therefore, journalism’s future lies in the opportunity to shift to an open system in which (1) different players can specialize in different functions (e.g. the gathering of data, interpretation of facts and crafting of stories), (2) journalist independence incorporates the notion of liberation from corporate control and (3) news emerges from a wider array of sources than ever, including public observations and commentaries (Van der Haak et al., 2012). In other words, the opportunity for written news would lie in the emergence of new norms and concepts.

This scholarly discussion has been gaining momentum inside and outside academia and has increasingly suggested that, rather than the recent fixation with the monetary challenges that news production faces today, what deserves closer analytical attention is how, by whom and by which means the new factors resulting from the digital business transformation of the objective environment are bringing changes (or not) to the institutional arrangements that surround organizations and activities in news provision. It is in the boiling cauldron of this friction between old structures, norms, rules, practices, relations, concepts and so on and the new objective conditions of the field that the entrepreneurial processes of individuals in their search for solutions to organizational challenges unfold.
Chapter 4. Method

This chapter outlines the reasons behind the method design and execution in this dissertation, which unfold in each stand-alone paper and in the findings and discussion that this kappa revisits in Chapters 6 and 7. However, before I deal with the theory–method fit and detail the methodological tools and their configurations used in this dissertation, let me present the philosophical foundations that guide them.

Preliminary ontological and epistemological reflections

Toward a reduction of scientific knowledge

Since Kant suggested the impossibility of “pure reason to discover the object in itself, objectively and independently of our ways of discovering it,” science—in particular social science—has increasingly limited itself to the phenomenological world (Gombrowicz, 1971: 20). Reality is personally experienced by our contact with it, contact that is mediated by our senses and intellect (Russell, 2001). This collection of subjectively experienced appearances is one main resource of materials to produce knowledge. However, if these materials are “contaminated” by our acts of perception, how can we make sense of them in a way that produces certainty? Russell suggested that, if we discard idealistic approaches to reality (i.e. that the nature of reality needs to be in some sense mental), judgment can allow humans to apprehend reality without having to experience it personally. The identification of commonalities in sense data among different people and at different times and the discovery of the rules that sense data follow may allow humans to approach reality such as it exists. Knowledge can therefore be inferred by a careful study of commonalities and rules that integrate and make sense of the different subjective experiences of reality manifested in the available sense data. These scientifically based descriptions of reality can facilitate the production of knowledge.

However, the line of reasoning advocated by Russell is based on a primal choice: that idealistic accounts of reality—such as the idea that reality is a sophisticated dream in the mind of one individual (Borges, 1944) or, in more updated accounts, that reality is an incredibly complex computer simulation in which human beings are just unaware characters in a digital game (Boström, 2003)—are less plausible than naturalistic ones. Russell’s choice is based on the belief that naturalistic accounts provide simpler explanations of reality, but would this choice of simplicity not be evidence of ungrounded favoritism? This ultimately aprioristic choice is not exclusive to Russell. In every theory—regardless of the
completeness and robustness of its system of thoughts—there is an initial factor of favoritism. Ideas often precede arguments. The development of bodies of reasoning within given perspectives serves only to justify previous choices. It is this conviction that has led philosophy to a better understanding of the limits of thought—an increasing reduction of thinking. The influence of the phenomenological reductionism of Husserl and Hegel demanded, particularly in the social sciences, alternatives to positivism. These alternatives have ranged from close to traditional science postpositivism to “relativist” postmodernism. Particular attention requires, for the purpose and methods undertaken in this research, critical realism and social constructivism.

**Social constructivism and new realism**

Social constructivism (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) argues that the world is constructed through processes of intersubjective common sense. It is this sort of social processes that produces the “objectivations” of reality of which the world is made. In this view, the social order is not something inherent in the “nature of things” but “an ongoing human product.” This ontological view has one important implication: the social does not—cannot—express itself in any “natural law.” Given this understanding of the nature of reality as socially defined and negotiated, social constructivism epistemology restricts itself to (inter)subjective construction processes and outcomes. Is this reductionism imposing inappropriate limits on the scope of scientific exploration of the social world? Some scholars have argued that, in any case, social science—despite the obvious difficulties—should aspire to look beyond the surface of social phenomena. Different new versions of realism (e.g. Bhaskar, 1975; Gabriel, 2015; Garcia, 2014) are attempting to rescue science from both the traditional grip of empirical positivism and the reductionism of social constructivist accounts of reality.

Bhaskar’s systematic realist account of science (1975) was one of the earliest of these attempts. Bhaskar built on the notion that there is an ontological distinction between the real, the actual and the empirical. The empirical is what is experienced, a subjective and negotiated account—such as in constructivism—of what happens, but reality does not stop there. Factual events (the actual), although experienced by our imperfect observations of them, can respond to scientific laws and patterns (the real). In other words, theory is a “picture of a natural mechanism or structure at work” that is independent of the specific events that it generates, events that can often be “out of phase” with the mechanisms that govern them (Bhaskar, 1975: 12). These events also occur independently of the experiences that humans have of them. Bhaskar did not negate that knowledge is a social product but stated that the objects of this knowledge “exist and act” independently of men. Two dimensions of the object of knowledge therefore exist: a transitive dimension that materializes in socially constructed knowledge and an intransitive dimension in which objects of knowledge respond to a real structure that “exists and acts independently of men and the conditions which allow men access to it.”
Against post-positivism, critical realism argues that it is not possible to reduce the world only to observable objects and facts. Opposing social constructivism, it argues the possibility to discover the underlying dimension of the real.

In critical realism, therefore, science is about producing both taxonomic—or definitions of the actual and empirical kinds that exist—and explanatory knowledge—how these kinds behave because of causal laws. In this view, something is “real” if it has a causal effect on the social world, that is, if it affects cognition, affect or behavior. Emotions, ideas, meaning, discourse, individual and aggregated personal experiences, definitions of material arrangements and many other strongly social phenomena are also real because they can have causal effects. Because underlying structures “exist,” building theory requires attempts to find them—even if the possibilities of these attempts are necessarily limited and ever changing. Critical realism provides a conceptual framework that, while recognizing the “reality” of the objects of science (ontological realism), and therefore the possibility to discover them, also embraces a phenomenological perspective that recognizes the theory-laden, historically contingent and socially situated nature of knowledge (epistemological realism).

More recent versions of realism discard ontological distinctions of the kind suggested by critical realism. In these accounts, “everything is equally real, meaning that nothing is a mere derivative or representation that could be reduced to a presumably more fundamental and real substance, process or structure” (Kleinherenbrink, 2018: 129–130). These new versions of realism do not associate it “with a reality in any sense independent of how we think of it” (Gabriel, 2015: 9). Any perspective on an object is as real as the object itself. Still, new ontological realism differs from constructivism in that the objects that constructions serve to individuate do not need to be constructions themselves. Facts are, thus, relational but not in the sense that they only involve observers. They involve both the object and the observer.

Importantly, from a methodological perspective, a new ontological realism stance would not only accept a constructionist element in research but, as a starting point, require it. In the critical realism of Bhaskar, this is the case because the only way to reach the real is through the actual and the actual is only observable in the empirical. In the sort of speculative realism of Gabriel, this is because perspectives and constructions are world-involving relations and real in themselves. This notion that reality encompasses subjective experiences involving not only the subjects who experience them informs my approach to methods.

**From what it is to how to change it**

The phenomenological reductionism of Husserl and Hegel also led philosophy to replace the more traditional question “What is the world?” with “How can the
world be changed?” approaches (e.g. Marx) (Gombrowicz, 1971). Critical realism’s stress on critical approaches, valid for entrepreneurship research (Neergaard & Ulhøi, 2007), has also moved in this direction and contributed to the political discussion. Political intentions for scientific research need not be illegitimate, although not at the expense of a reflexive mindset and the proficient use of sophisticated methodological tools. New speculative realism (Gabriel, 2015: 11) takes a step even further when explicitly supporting an epistemological pluralism that acknowledges the plurality of methods “for finding out how things are” and rejecting the needed justification of knowledge through privileged discursive scientific practice.

It is, however, not my purpose to bring new political arguments to an already-crowded political discussion but rather to contribute to a depoliticization of science in media and journalism studies. The discipline deserves to reflect on the normative foundations on which it builds much of its research. This may strip the field of any instrumentality in silencing the needed political discussion (Latour, 2000) about the role of written news and newspapers in larger societal issues. It may also provide some insights into which others can build better-informed claims and policy recommendations. I elaborate this further in the final chapter of this thesis.

Neither is it my purpose to find out how things are in my focal area of interest through methods that are alien to social science. The rest of this chapter elaborates on my choice of methods and my attempts to design and carry them out in a reflexive way.

One pragmatic assumption and some reflexive methodological intentions

Based on the position elaborated above, I build my methodology on one pragmatic assumption that I frame in terms similar to those of Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009): I assume that there is reality beyond the researcher but also that empirical social reality is not external either to the experience—that is, consciousness and language—of people or to the objects themselves. This research, therefore, navigates in the epistemological tension between developing phenomenological detail and achieving some—albeit limited—conceptual closure that attempts to produce explanations. At the baseline, this research, at least, describes a process of understanding in the researcher (me and those who coauthored my papers, supervised my studies and discussed and reviewed my research) that allows me to try to say something insightful (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009) about the reality that I analyze.

Although it is pointless to defend the idea that common-sense naturalistic observation is objective, dependable or unbiased, “it is all we have, [and] the only route to knowledge, fallible, and biased though it be” (Campbell, 1975: 191). In
this study, I rely on this conviction to make—even if provisionally and contextually situated—truth claims. These claims, however, are based, to the best of my possibilities, on skeptical reflexivity. I seek to achieve this in two ways. First, following Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009), I try to challenge both the phenomenon of study and the approaches to reach it through reflexivity at and among different levels: empirical material and construction of data, interpretation of them, reflections on social issues related to interpretation frameworks and self-criticism. Second, I attempt, to the best of my skills, to use the accepted scientific tools today to provide—the best possible at this time—“discipline” to my imagination, in Weick’s terms (1989, 1999).

In the following sections, I articulate the methodological strategies by which these intentions unfold in this kappa and the papers that compose this thesis. In Chapter 8, I add some final considerations about the methodological limits met in this research. These observations may suggest further research possibilities.

Process of understanding: Modes of inquiry

This research deals with institutional arrangements and the entrepreneurial processes that either reproduce or diverge from them in the empirical setting of the exchange field of written news and the population of newspapers. I approach my research strategy with a combination of qualitative modes of inquiry.

Abduction

To understand my object of study, both the empirical material and the existing theories are relevant. My interest in micro-approaches that pay close attention to the activities of ordinary actors and what they experience in searching for solutions to organizational challenges in an institutional field in crisis moves this research towards social constructivism. My interest in contributing to the existing theories in entrepreneurship and neoinstitutionalism requires the study of the underlying structures and patterns, moving this research towards social realism. In the previous section, I have already anticipated the pragmatic way in which I accept and meet these opposing forces. Methodologically, abduction may provide some tools to cope with them.

Empirical material is of prime importance, but observed facts are always theory laden. What we see is interpreted data, necessarily placed within a certain frame of reference (Hansen, 1958). In an abductive mode of inquiry, “theory and empirical facts are successively reinterpreted in the light of each other” (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009: 4). Qualitative methods start from the perspective and actions of the subjects studied and produce a style of understanding that facilitates reflection and theory generation. An abductive qualitative methodology may serve to strike an uneasy balance between theory and empirical material. All the
stand-alone papers in this dissertation share this mode of inquiry, although each of them has its own epistemological leaning. This dissertation, however, combines them, bringing an additional challenge to achieving this consistently. In this kappa, the abductive approach may also allow a somehow heretic combination of two traditions: theory building from cases rooted in the tradition of grounded theory (Glasser and Strauss, 1967) and the constructivism of Bourdieu and others (1992). For Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009), these two traditions need not be mutually exclusionary. Following their suggestion, Chapter 7 attempts to complement them by focusing on theory generation and “building on a looser coupling to data and a more reflective focus upon the empirical material” (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009: 73).

In Chapter 6, I find, perhaps too pragmatically, that keeping a focus on the micro—understood as accounting for the details of the way in which ordinary actors “interpret” their experience in a field—allows the researcher a view of the volatile processes of construction of the social. However, it also helps to approximate some underlying relationships, perhaps not deep structures and mechanisms as one would expect in natural sciences, with explanatory power. In the study of entrepreneurship phenomena, Neergaard and Ulhøi (2007) advised researchers not to confine research to the direct experiences or accounts of human actors. This work follows this suggestion. Certainly, it starts at the level of individuals’ perceptions, but it also synthesizes and moves beyond them to identify possible underlying patterns that can explain some social phenomena.

As I develop further in a later section, to try to understand these patterns in my data, this research centers on intensive studies of a small number of cases. This approach facilitates the handling of context and process issues, which I also elaborate in a corresponding section. Reflections on where and when these underlying dynamics may operate and some implications for the transferability of my findings are developed in the final chapter.

**Genealogy**

Foucault, in his research, featured rationality as normative, not transcendental and un-emancipatory, an assumption that is widely shared by institutionalism. His approach—for which Foucault himself rejected the term postmodernist—offers some promise as a mode of inquiry that is aware of the historicity and temporary nature of knowledge and that, in its attempt to see the ordinary with a fresh vision, proposes alternative modes of thinking to confront and reject received opinion. A Foucauldian analysis allows “for both the search of generic principles and for detailed empirical investigations of strange local events in single organizations” (Burrell, 1988: 23).

Foucault’s genealogy (1972, 1977) attempts to unearth the formation rules of discursive practices, that is, their origins. The production of these forms, the origins of which are often aleatory and purely materialistic, do not necessarily
result in a sense of progress. Importantly, genealogy is not historicism but a mode of research of the present. “Genealogy records the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality; it must seek them in the most unpromising places” (Foucault, 1971: 76). Therefore, genealogy is interested in what is apparently superficial and, by viewing practices from the inside, rather than from the viewpoint of the detached observer, attempts to find knowledge in unexpected places, actors and circumstances (Foucault, 1977, 1982). A genealogical focus helps to shift the focus from the obvious to the micro-physics of organizational life: the complexity of things; the things within things. It involves a collection of activities in which understanding is enmeshed in institutional contexts (Burrell, 1988).

This research partly draws some of its findings on discourses as “configurations of assumptions, categories, logics, claims and modes of articulation” (Miller & Dingwall, 1997: 32). The focus is on how what is said—and concealed—constitutes objects and subjects. The focus here is neither the speaker as an independent actor nor the details of the language that he or she uses. This displaces subjects and their consciousness from the center of theoretical concern while also allowing a search for common features in a desire to point to underlying commonalities in a wide range of practices (Burrell, 1988; McKinlay & Starkey, 1998). Discourses, understood as forms of knowledge, establish normality and deviation. Nevertheless, because they are often ambiguous, complex, contradictory and unstable, the researcher needs to reconstruct them with careful attention to what is said and not said, by whom and in which positions and contexts.

This mode of inquiry predisposes the researcher to see organizations as totally contingent. This approach places the methodological effort on patient, meticulous, documentary research on organizations’ individuality, while it also predisposes the researcher to view these minutiae as manifestations of underlying institutions (Burrell, 1988). Against Giddens’s structuration approach (1984), which diverts part of the researcher’s attention toward agency and power dynamics, the research mode in this dissertation narrows its focus and assumes—as a starting point and only for methodological purposes—that the institutional organization of our lives is total, that is, that even reflexive actors cannot fully disembody themselves and escape the organizational world to act on it.

In this dissertation, Paper 1 is approached from this mode, so the exchange field formation dynamics are identified in the historical evolution of newspapers. However, this interest in the past stems only from a deep commitment to understanding the present. It has been suggested that to understand how something works, one must first understand how it got that way (Myers, 2014). In this work, what the analysis of the past intends is the identification of traces of the present in it. This leads to a genealogic mode that becomes ever more prominent in the research mode of Papers 2, 3 and 4. Chapter 3 in this kappa attempts to summarize the relevant details of the current discourses in the field of
written news. While previous studies of entrepreneurial phenomena based on institutional theory have largely focused almost exclusively on the cultural dimension of institutions (Bruton et al., 2010), this research aims to take special care in the identification of the details that articulate the existing institutions in the field. This attention to the particulars allows the identification of normality and deviation in the contingent and fragile activities of members of the population of newspapers in the field of written news.

A collaborative approach to research

Being a researcher who comes to academia with years of experience in newspapers, I share the views of Pettigrew (2002) and Van de Ven (2007) when they proposed that knowledge is produced not only in academia but also in industry. Researching can also be a form of active social engagement. The methodology of this dissertation aims to qualify for engaged scholarship as the mode of inquiry, favoring a pluralist approach in which researchers and practitioners coproduce knowledge. Engagement is mainly about managing a plurality of interests, views, information, actors and so on in the research process; it requires “negotiation, mutual respect, and collaboration to produce a learning community” (Van de Ven, 2007). Informants from start-ups eagerly engaged in the research because of the potential gains from a better understanding of what others in similar situations were experiencing and doing. Informants from academia, professional bodies and institutes engaged initially just to “promote” their views. As the research progressed, those who stayed engaged did so because it was instead sharpening their thinking about the field. I promised all the participants executive summaries of my findings and critical feedback on their strategies, perceptions and opinions. It was also agreed that no deliverables would be produced before the fieldwork had ended.

The research question raised in this research is firmly embedded in a specific context: the field of written news. The population of newspapers operating in this context is composed of organizations that include entrepreneurs, journalists, managers and many other members. However, various other actors are also relevant in this field, such as an array of suppliers and vendors, readers and supporters, donors and financial contributors, policy makers and researchers. I include in this research participants in many of these segments to allow a more reflexive approach to the identification and framing of some of the issues that arise in the field. Thus, the participants in this research include not only journalist entrepreneurs and legacy newspapers’ managers but also a wide array of stakeholders of the focal organizations. Paper 2 and particularly Papers 3 and 4 include different actors in these segments to allow not only a triangulation of data but also a more reflexive approach to the identification and framing of the relevant research problems.

One benefit of this collaborative mode is that the research questions originate not only from possible theoretical gaps and puzzles but also from practitioners’
doubts, complications, struggles and frustrations. The research question that ties the studies in the stand-alone papers and this kappa together originated from my conversations with informants. Many of them encountered difficulties when trying to make sense of why, despite general calls and widespread efforts in the field, significant innovation in written news remained so rare and mysterious.

A collaborative approach also involves participants being confronted with aggregate data and actively reflecting on them. For example, informants have in every case reviewed the write-ups of their single cases (redacted to exclude second-order coding and analytic interpretations) and provided their own explanations for what, according to them, was taking place in their organization. Apparently, interviewees can react “adversely whenever they are confronted with individualized data” (Yin, 1981: 64). However, as the cases were built with the collaboration of various informants, this approach also minimized their negative reactions. A different and more profound collaborative approach was also carried out during my conversations with my co-authors, supervisors, discussants, opponents and attendees at many seminars and conferences at which I presented my research at different stages. Here reflections transcended the mere data to handle theoretically informed interpretations of them as well.

Selection of a method

Authors have suggested that entrepreneurship studies, too dependent on existing theory and narrowly defined methodologies, have largely produced “pedestrian findings” with little, if any, interest to practitioners (Bygrave, 2007: 24). Similarly, neoinstitutionalism has invested a great deal of effort in theoretical developments, perhaps at the cost of empirical studies that are close to the field and rich in data—something that the current turn to the micro is well poised to remedy. In both cases, more field research, more longitudinal studies and more empirically driven models can be helpful. Although I did not disregard the existing theory, my selection of a method was partly driven by these concerns.

Case study method

The questions that this work addresses are located in conceptual and focal areas (e.g. entrepreneurial bricolage or the micro-level of institutions) that—despite the considerably expanded theoretical traditions that they belong to (entrepreneurship and neoinstitutionalism)—are still emerging. Bricolage studies have recently relied on quantitative approaches that have produced empirical results that demand theoretical integration and development. Inversely, neoinstitutionalism has flourished in elaborate conceptualizations that demand close-to-the-field empirical research and “a return to the study of organizations with an emphasis upon comparative analysis” (Greenwood et al., 2014: 1206). In both cases, empirically based theorization seems to be required.
Qualitative methodologies can stem from different scientific traditions, such as new ontological realism or social constructivism. As referred to above, these traditions differ in the degree to which the researcher accepts subjectivity (Morgan & Smircich, 1980) and in the extent to which they lean towards more inductive or deductive approaches. With the exception of their extreme poles, qualitative research in both traditions shares an interest in coming close to the field and learning from it (Wigren, 2007) and in grounding those findings theoretically. Case studies have been used, although differently, in both positivist and interpretivist leaning approaches. More positivist approaches would start by identifying a research gap and developing research questions that address it (e.g. Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007), in the basic assumption that different researchers would find similar results. More interpretivist views would alternatively argue that findings are produced by engaging with the personal experience of actors (e.g. Gioia et al., 2013). Such insights do not correspond to the “truth claims” of positivist positions, but they, nevertheless, demand a progression from first-order raw data to higher-order concepts that are well grounded in theory. Thus, the central methodological approach in this thesis is theory building from case studies.

Qualitative case studies are adequate for generating novel theory, particularly when the current theory is problematic or partial (Eisenhardt, 1989), and particularly suitable for answering process questions, such as “how something happens” (Langley, 1999). Case studies also allow an examination of “(a) a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when (b) the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 1981: 59). Because of this, they have also been advised for the study of contextualized entrepreneurship phenomena (Welter, 2011) and are particularly suited to analyzing institutional dynamics in which different activities, actors and contexts interact in complex ways and with different outcomes (Battilana et al., 2009; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Johns, 2017). Additionally, case study research strategy is well suited to interpreting complex processes and dynamics present within single settings: either to explore subjectivity openly and explicitly address the lived experience of actors as a source of knowledge (e.g. Gioia et al., 2013) or to understand complex configurations of variables or constructs that are hard to measure and isolate (Eisenhardt, 1989). Case studies also facilitate an examination of “(a) a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when (b) the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 1981: 59). Finally, the case study approach has also been suggested to facilitate access to evidence in a friendly way that is particularly valid to inform policy intervention (Flyvbjerg, 2006). All these circumstances are particularly relevant to this research.

In sum, the case study method relies on grounded theory building in the tradition of Glaser and Strauss (1967), “where researchers walk in the door and don’t have a preconception of what relationships they are going to see” (Gehman et al., 2016: 287). This abductive methodological manner facilitates the previously outlined
reflexive (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009) and collaborative (Van de Ven, 2007) modes of inquiry. The baseline of a case study is “a rich empirical instance of some phenomenon” (Gehman et al., 2016: 287). However, the case study is a systematic research tool only if it transcends mere storytelling (Miles, 1979). For that to happen, a proper selection of empirical cases, data collection techniques and analysis strategies is key. The following sections detail these aspects of my research design.

However, before I specify these details, it is important to note that case studies are approached in multiple ways in this dissertation. Although, in every paper, I have (1) approached my analysis abductively, with some previous knowledge of the relevant literature but no a priori hypotheses, and, in all the papers, I have (2) aimed to facilitate the generation of insights into processes, the similarities end there. Some papers rely on a single case (in Paper 1, the case is the regional press in the UK; in Paper 2, the case is one single organization: a legacy newspaper) and others on multiple cases (Papers 3 and 4 are built on a number of new ventures entering the field of written news) and even cases within cases (Paper 4 adds, as subcases, instances of novel solutions within the researched new ventures). Some articles stay at single levels of analysis (Papers 2 and 3 remain at the actor and firm levels and Paper 1 largely at the field level), but Paper 4 combines the micro, meso and macro levels. Most of the research is in real time, occasionally with sufficient engagement with the empirical setting to claim longitudinality (Papers 3 and 4), but one paper focuses on and remains within historic processes (Paper 1). Figure 2a provides a diagram of the different approaches to case studies adopted in all the papers in this dissertation.

The combination of these approaches complements and enriches their individual findings as this dissertation elaborates in the final chapters of this kappa. Here, the analysis progresses in a dialogue among the data and the findings that each stand-alone paper develops within the convergent theoretical framework outlined in the final section of Chapter 2. Because different papers bring different strategies to the case study approach, in the following sections, I present the different research designs, theoretical sampling, data collection techniques and analyses in every one of them.
Research design and theoretical sampling

Single case and multiple cases

Paper 1 is based on the historical case of the provincial press in England. The case in this article is defined by the group of regional papers operating in that country as they pioneered the written news field to current times. Because the first newspapers were founded in England and developed there prior to developing in most other Western countries, this exemplary case is well suited to understanding the formation of current institutional arrangements in the field of written news. Paper 2 builds an exemplary case too, although in this article the case is restricted to one single project, an internationally awarded innovation project in one leading newspaper in Sweden. Again, this case—an apparent polar type in the dimension of novelty—offered a rare opportunity to study the impact of institutional arrangements on the innovation efforts of newspapers.

To understand organizational behavior in an institutional context, it is important to pay attention to both mature and new organizations (Greenwood et al., 2014: 1211). Papers 3 and 4 incorporate multiple cases, all of them newspaper start-ups located in the greater NYC area. The theoretical sampling in both papers was initiated by attending industrial events in the area and visiting schools and centers related to journalism entrepreneurs. In both research projects, snowballing from a small initial set of organizations allowed the final theoretical selection of cases. Both papers combine a sampling of polar types (Eisenhardt, 1989; Pettigrew, 1997) along the variation of interest. Paper 3, containing six cases, is anchored by one outcome: the persistence of entrepreneurial efforts, allowing variation in full-time versus part-time entrepreneurship forms. Paper 4 extends the sample of Paper 3 with two other organizations and adds cases within these cases, as it identifies...
instances of novelty within some of these organizations, which are analyzed comparatively, controlling for antecedent conditions. Paper 4 focuses on the variation of resource scarcity.

The combination of a case study approach with the final number of cases in Papers 3 and 4 facilitates the approach to two common limitations in the research on entrepreneurship phenomena in highly institutionalized contexts. First, Battilana et al. (2009) pointed out the limits resulting from the fact that most analyses of institutionally innovative entrepreneurs have been based on single, in-depth, longitudinal case studies. Second, following Aldrich’s (2010) concern about the common inclusion in institutional entrepreneurship studies of incredibly rare and only retrospectively predictable “black swans,” I considered regular entrepreneurs for this research (Su et al., 2016), intentionally selecting a balanced mix of cases. Network theorists have suggested that marginality is a determinant of innovation, because it benefits either from structural holes (Burt, 1992) or from diversity resulting from weak ties (Granovetter, 1973). Fringe players have also been suggested to be instrumental in the generation of new practices in the media (Leblebici et al., 1991). In my sampling, I initially contacted a total of 23 written news start-ups. Some of them such, as NowThis News or BuzzFeed, belong to the segment of well-funded technological ventures that represent but a minimal fraction of the new ventures entering the field. None of these organizations were finally considered as case studies in this research. Certainly, the information gathered in and about these organizations is part of the data supporting the analysis of the context of the field of written news.

Media systems

The papers in this dissertation combine the study of legacy and start-up newspapers located in three countries: the US, England and Sweden. An extensive literature has discussed how different countries compare—and diverge—in their media systems. Hallin and Mancini (2004) initially suggested that, when considering Western societies, three different media system models could be identified depending on different configurations of four dimensions: the inclusiveness of the press market, the degree and forms of political parallelism, the degree and forms of journalistic professionalism and the role of the state. In their classification, the US and Great Britain would belong to the North Atlantic Liberal model, characterized by a long reach of the mass press, a relative lack of pluralism and political diversity in the media (e.g. a dominant role of the local press), the absence of representative media, well-established and dominant journalistic professionalism, the lack of an active role of the state and relatively little differentiation between media and market. Sweden, according to Hallin and Mancini (2004), would belong to a different model, which they labeled Northern European Democratic Corporatist. The differences between the latter and the North Atlantic Liberal model consist of the greater role of the state and the lower political parallelism that they found in countries under the Northern European Democratic Corporatist model.
Such an approach to media systems, however, has been highly criticized for its lack of both empirical support and a standardized set of indicators, and various alternative typologies have been suggested (e.g. Brüggeman et al., 2014). Taking the Hallin and Mancini model—or any other alternative—at face value, however, misses the fact that what they offer is, rather than a close taxonomy of systems, an ideal framework for comparative analysis (Hallin & Mancini, 2010). Furthermore, increasing tensions for convergence have contributed to eroding the differences among countries, particularly in the more normative dimensions, such as journalistic professionalism (Hallin & Mancini, 2010). On this line, recent research on journalism organizations in Western countries has stressed the strong similarities of the organizational strategic responses to the changing business of news both cross-nationally and among incumbents and start-ups (Cornia et al., 2018). In my study, centered on key aspects of the mass press business and journalistic professionalism, the differences between Sweden, the UK and the US are in fact largely insignificant and, when existing, noted (see Chapters 3 and 6).

Data collection

To improve the comprehension of the setting, this research combined proximity to the field with the collection of rich-in-points empirical material, such as detailed accounts of activities and experiences in the field obtained through extensive interviews with a diverse collection of informants. Access to the field was perhaps eased by my previous experience of about 10 years in management positions in newspapers. The collaborative approach to this research facilitates the necessary “closeness of the cases studies to real-life situations” and the appreciation of their “multiple wealth of details.” These are important prerequisites for the development of the “nuanced view of reality” needed to produce learning and advance theory (Flyvbjerg, 2006: 223). Table 2a summarizes the chosen cases’ characteristics, their main sources of data and the papers of which they are part.

The data collection techniques included multiple forms. Primary sources, such as interviews and live observations, were complemented with internal strategic documents, venture pitch videos, web pages, posted videos, Twitter feeds and other SMP posts by the focal actors. Secondary sources included industry reports, thesis write-ups and press coverage. Because the research in all the papers was sensitive to contexts, the sources of information covered not only the focal organizations and practitioners but the state of the exchange field and wider contextual circumstances. The nature of the field under study, written news, greatly facilitated the access to all types of multimedia resources on the organizations and their contexts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Meetings</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Documents</th>
<th>Present in</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entrepreneur(s)</td>
<td>Employee(s)</td>
<td>External stakeholders</td>
<td>Total interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SvD</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FreshReport (anonymized)</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
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<td>ComPublishing (anonymized)</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>RevToday (anonymized)</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Some interviews included more than one interviewee
4 Method

In Paper 1, with a historical approach, the primal sources of information were secondary and archival sources on the historical developments of the provincial press in England, which were enriched with written testimonies from journalists and other practitioners working in the field. Papers 2, 3 and 4 share a real-time approach, and the primal source of information was a combination of in-depth, semi-structured interviews, meetings, observations, follow-up emails and archival material.

In Paper 2, the main data source was abundant external and internal archival material on the focal innovation project and its organization, complemented with in-depth conversations with four key members of the project, followed by a high number of clarifying follow-up emails and observations made at the organization’s headquarters. The data gathering lasted for a period of 11 months (September 2016 to July 2017). The in-depth interviews were conducted after a careful examination of the available secondary data and included conversations with highly knowledgeable participants. Interviews were arranged with the CEO, Head of Communication, Editor in Chief and Head of Marketing. All the interviews were transcribed. The observations made were annotated during the visit and later revised in contrast with the collected corporate materials. Secondary sources included press coverage on the case, corporate presentations about the focal project, other internal strategic documents, interviews with the CEO available from news sites and blogs on industrial trends in the media.

The data sources in Papers 3 and 4 overlapped. Aggregately, the main source of information was—at the time of drafting this version of the thesis—105 semi-structured interviews with 74 different informants. Initial interviews allowed the identification of additional actors in the exchange field of written news in the greater NYC area, facilitating the sampling process. The informants primarily included founder-entrepreneurs but also key employees and external stakeholders, such as funders, vendors and partners. At this point, at least 3 informants per venture were interviewed. The interviews had a duration of between 20 minutes and over 2 hours and were usually organized following a similar structure that included historic information about the venture, the personal background of the informant and detailed accounts of the activities of the organization and the tasks of the interviewees. Almost all the interviews were taped and transcribed.

Because the interviews often took place at the locations where the practitioners work, these visits, which occasionally continued well after the interviews were over, offered opportunities to participate in informal conversations, observe meetings and witness routine activities. Memos were produced soon after every visit, mostly on the same day, including not only extended notes about these observations but also the context, tone and topics of the interviews. These personal observations helped to grasp the essence of both the visits and the interviews performed during them. The memos also referred to a list of follow-up questions and identified needs to cross-check information as well as new possible informants and additional sources of data. At this point, the transcriptions and
memos together amount to over 1,000 pages of written material. So far, the total field research time spent on both interviews and observations adds up to over 200 hours.

In many cases, I had access to internal documents and materials, including grant applications, strategic plans, financial budgets, KPI spreadsheets and even videotaped business pitches. These useful additional sources of information allowed the verification of facts referred to in informers’ utterances in formal interviews and informal conversations and provided a deeper understanding of business activities and decisions, ventures’ internal dynamics, personal roles and organizational circumstances. The media field is a highly (self-)reported one. The initiatives and deeds in most of the cases have been covered by other media outlets, on some occasions extensively. External coverage has been complemented with self-produced documentation: many activities of media outlets, in their pursuit of readers and awareness, became evident in their news reporting, customer acquisition practices and audience engagement in SMPs. Occasionally, the same key activities were, in fact, directly registered in their own reporting.

Paper 4 pays particular attention to the context of the exchange field of written news, critical for the assessment of divergent organizational novelty. For the study of this context, I attended a total of 15 industrial conferences, seminars and showrooms. Although none of these events was taped, memos were produced in a similar fashion to the ones reporting visits. These reports not only included extensive notes on what was said and what happened during these events but also details of a great number of informal conversations that I held personally with the participants in these events. The total field research time spent on these events amounts to over 70 hours, which produced over 100 pages of notes. In addition to these events, during the fall quarter of 2018, as a participant observer, I audited the graduate course Perspectives on American Journalism at Stanford University (C225), consisting of 18 additional sessions in lectures and seminars. The analysis of the field was complemented with hundreds of news pieces, reports and studies on the state of written news. The complete list of the meetings and industrial events that I attended and the key secondary sources that I additionally consulted for the specific purpose of understanding the exchange field of written news is shown in Table 2. A stylized summary of these findings is presented in Chapter 3.

Figure 2b depicts the timeline of the data collection in Papers 3 and 4, and Table 2a presents all the researched cases and data collected and indicates the papers in which these cases appear.

This research has been developed through data collection and analysis proceeding together and simultaneously influencing each other. The data collection for the longitudinal papers, Papers 3 and 4, was initiated in July 2017 and is ongoing. The overlapping of these activities has been suggested to be a key feature of theory-building case research and an advantage for the resulting freedom “to make
adjustments during the data collection process” (Eisenhardt, 1989: 539). As this dissertation has been unfolding over the last years, it has made use of that freedom. “Emergent themes,” such as part-time entrepreneurship, and “special opportunities,” such as auditing the course on Perspectives on American Journalism at Stanford and the exemplary case in Paper 2, have been incorporated as they happened.

**FIGURE 2b: Timeline of Data Collection (Papers 3 and 4).**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of source</th>
<th>Source</th>
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Analytical approaches to levels and processes

Different approaches to analysis are used in this thesis. Some papers pay attention to field-level dynamics (Paper 1 and to a lesser extent Paper 4), others pay close attention to processes at the organizational level (Papers 3 and 4 and only partially Paper 2) and all the articles (even if only to a limited extent, such as in Paper 1) consider micro-level dynamics and explore interpretations of different individuals living through the same processes. In this section, I justify and describe these different analytical approaches.

The choice of levels of analysis should be informed by the definition of the phenomenon under study. Entrepreneurship takes place and has effects on different levels simultaneously (Davidsson & Wiklund, 2001), a case that is particularly relevant when the institutional context is in focus. In addition, although authors have suggested that institutional theory would benefit from multi-level research, studies of this kind remain a minority (Battilana et al., 2009; Greenwood et al., 2017). This dissertation is focally interested in the entrepreneurial processes of organizational actors in their attempts to perform their jobs within an institutional field in crisis, and understanding these processes benefits from a cross-level study approach in two senses. (1) Organizational processes are shaped by actor-level activity, which requires micro-level sensitivity to individual aspirations and motives, tensions and trade-offs, decisions and so on. (2) If the focal context is an institutional field in crisis, one can only make sense of the organizational processes against the contextual conditions and institutional arrangements in which the organizational activities take place. This transcends the mere identification of a contextual background. Activities need to be interpreted and tied to the context, and specific outcomes, such as novelty or reproduction, can only be evaluated contextually.

The multi-level methodological approach in this work does not imply an ontological positioning. The architecture of reality could be multiple levels of social structures and individual action (e.g. Giddens, 1984; Lévi-Strauss, 1962) or a flat plenum of constellations of practices (e.g. Schatzki, 1996, 2002, 2010). Multi-level structures seem to resonate well with critical realism, while flat ontologies are closely related in appearance to speculative realism and social constructivism. However, perhaps this does not need to be the case. How flat ontologies may or may not be connected to critical realism and its ontological structures of the real, the actual and the empirical falls beyond the limits of this work. This study neither enters nor adds to this conversation. Flat ontologies and practice-based research are promising avenues to understand the social, but, for analytical practicalities, this research remains within a multi-level approach. This choice is exclusively methodological. Furthermore, despite the close attention that some of the studies included in this dissertation pay to interactions among ordinary individuals in their daily work, the method of this research is not ethnographic. A sufficiently deep and longitudinal immersion in the sites was not possible. Nevertheless, as detailed above, during the field research, I combined
significant proximity to the field with the collection of vast and diverse empirical material on actors’ activities and their experiences and interpretations. Aggregated patterns from a bird’s eye view only would have said very little about how individuals acted and why.

The consideration, at different levels, of conditions, activities and outcomes also orientates this research toward processes. Process thinking is interested in how things evolve over time and pays attention to flows of activities and events (Gehman et al., 2016). In this research, process is understood, in line with Bergson’s recent interpretations, as “ongoing unfolding advancings” (Schatzki, 2018), in which creation is the actualization of the virtual, unforeseeable and improvisable and grounded in difference but also containing convergence (Helin et al., 2014). In this work, processes are affirmative and practical (Scott, 2013) as opposed to dialectical confrontation, as in Hegel. This view sensitizes the researcher to finding dynamism in heterogeneous multiplicity, looks at strategic foresight with incredulity and gives priority to the exploration of links between organization and context.

In the light of my approach to levels and processes, Paper 1 is designed to define the contextual setting of the dissertation and determine how some of the most relevant institutions in the field have formed. Based on the historical case of the regional press in the UK, the paper combines the macro and micro levels in its analysis, although the main outcome in focus stays at the macro level: institutional arrangements that are active in the field. Because the case is historical, micro-level dynamics are inferred rather than observed. Papers 2, 3 and 4, based on real-time case studies, delve deeper into the micro-level analysis of practitioners’ activities and cognitions, which are contrasted with organizational-level outcomes and field-level scripts. Although the contextual conditions are always kept in sight in all these papers, Paper 4 specifically makes explicit the context of the exchange field of written news. Papers 1 and 4 add to each other in the understanding of the deep structure of this exchange field, which is now in crisis. Chapter 3, Written news: a field in crisis, presents a summary of these findings that is instrumental to the assessment of novelty that I will describe later. The findings and discussion that I advance in Chapters 6 and 7 would not be possible without this explicit account of the institutional context of written news.

Analytical process: Within and cross-case analysis

The analysis in Papers 1 and 2 was determined by the fact that both are single-case studies based on theoretically sampled exemplars. However, my approaches to each of these papers differed. Paper 1 is a historical case that precluded most of the possible interpretation of thoughts, intentions and actions in actors. Paper 2, however, provided a great opportunity to explore in real time and account for the informants’ experience. Because the informants’ interpretations were particularly important to understand the effect of shared meaning in their activities, the analysis in this article followed a process of reduction from close to
the data codes and categories toward theoretically grounded concepts in a data structure reminiscent of that of Gioia et al. (2013). First-order codes gave way to a more parsimonious structure of themes and aggregated dimensions that explained the presence and role of taken-for-granted norms and concepts in the innovation project under focus.

Papers 3 and 4 do not disregard actors’ activities and experiences. In fact, these aspects are key in the patterns and underlying relationships that they try to identify. Yet, the study of individuals does not overshadow “how organizations are designed and function” within their institutionalized context (Greewood et al. 2011). These papers are both multi-case studies and share a similar iterative within- and cross-case analytical process. Like the single-case papers, I started with a within-case analysis. I followed a nonlinear process that, for the sake of simplicity, I need to describe as stepwise. First, by triangulating all my data, I developed thick descriptions of each case. These write-ups paid special attention to my areas of interest: key events in the venture’s development, past and current activities, the personal experiences and interpretations of the informants, the particular conditions under focus in each paper and the organizational characteristic standing out in each case. As drafts of all the cases were developed, data inconsistencies (i.e. conflicting versions of factual details related to specific events) and new information needs arose, leading to additional interviews and the identification of other data sources. Second, I incorporated the identified focal outcomes into the corresponding cases tracing the links between events, actors, moments and places and the key elements driving these events, such as the availability of inputs, trade-offs, intentions, motives and so on. These chronological drafts, redacted in non-factual aspects that I considered could be controversial, were then validated with key informants in each case and—when needed—revised, resulting in the current case versions used for this study. These write-ups were not mere data points representing single observations but complete longitudinal analytic units that combined multiple information sources to show sequences of interconnected events, activities, choices and so on. Constructs and analytical interpretations were, however, censored to the informants. Third, still using within-case analysis, I proceeded to identify the key issues present in each individual case as a stand-alone entity focusing on unique patterns (Eisenhardt, 1989). These emergent issues, showing temporal relations among entities, often led me to insights that developed into preliminary explanations of individual and organizational dynamics. These initial conclusions were based on the best possible alternative among different explanations (Yin, 1981, 1989). In Paper 4, this process needed to be extended. To understand how divergent novelty happened, I had to pay attention to particular instances of novelty in the ventures with higher aggregated divergent novelty. These instances of novelty became subcases that I could study individually. The next section explains, in more detail, how I interpreted novelty.

Because Papers 3 and 4 are multi-case studies, the analysis proceeded to compare the within-case preliminary inferences using replication logic among the different
cases. Some consistent regularities emerged at this point (Yin, 1989), which I tested in a general cross-case analysis (Eisenhardt, 1989). The validated patterns drove me to existing theories and concepts relevant to these phenomena. This literature was useful to clarify and improve the initial inferences theoretically and facilitated their refinement into preliminary theoretical relationships and constructs that explained the phenomena under focus. Although I have described these analytical processes as progressive phases from raw data to theoretical interpretations, I largely proceeded in an iterative way, with continuous backward and forward jumps. This analytical cycling improved the production of insights and the emergence of working hypotheses and theoretical explanations. The resulting theory building and sharpening of concepts (Eisenhardt, 1989) that these papers suggest are the result of the outlined analytical process.

The analysis behind the findings of Chapter 6 does not diverge greatly from the one already described but differs in a few facets. First, the analysis is largely based on the analytical materials already produced for the stand-alone papers (memos and collections of secondary material and case write-ups, for example). Second, the accumulated data and materials were interpreted within the compatible concepts outlined in Table 1. Often, this required returning to the raw data to resolve doubts. Occasionally, it called for the collection of additional evidence. Third, because the theoretical framework was baggy, or better less tight than in the stand-alone papers, it functioned more to clarify the data than to inform any validation of a priori propositions. Fourth, the process of revisiting the data and analysis in the independent papers added distance between interpretations and data, allowing greater analytical freedom and creativity.

All the papers, as well as Chapter 6, attempt to visualize both the analytical process and the emerging insights with abundant “explicit citations of particular pieces of evidence” (Yin, 1981: 63) and tables reporting the insights and constructs emerging from data.

**Assessing novelty**

To differentiate entrepreneurial processes based on their outcome, it was essential to identify what was new, in relation to the field in which they took place, in the solutions that they were developing. The section on data gathering and Table 2 detail the activities performed to collect information on the institutional arrangements lingering in the exchange field of written news. The prescriptive templates identified are summarized in Chapter 3. These templates provide a consistent framework that integrates the various parts—values, concepts, activities, expectations about the future and so on—that define the occupational ideology of journalism, the current two-sided business model of newspapers and the type of solutions that are being integrated in these scripts.

By juxtaposing the activities in my cases with these templates, I could identify the solutions incorporated into the organizing structures of these organizations
(Orlikowski, 1996) that did not replicate the mentioned scripts. Previous definitions of novelty in micro approaches to institutions have referred to challenges and enactments (Groleau et al., 2012: 665). While “challenges” encapsulate “newly created patterns of interaction deemed incompatible with existing institutionalized practices and norms,” “enactments” apply to “situated changes compatible with an existing institutionalized practice” and therefore reproduce existing institutionalized contexts. However, institutional arrangements, as the templates referred to above manifest, are not holistic entities devoid of parts. In addition, my focus is not the emergence of institutional contradictions and subsequent clashes and contestation dynamics. Importantly, the regulative, normative and cultural–cognitive elements in the exchange field of written news do not regulate all the action that takes place in it. Many activities and routines in the field vary among actors and contexts and remain within the shared understandings that dominate it. Therefore, I considered as novel all solutions and actions that—whatever their institutional disruptive potential—were “significantly different” (Schatzki, 2018) from the templates referred to and the organizational solutions currently arising in the field. In many of these instances of novelty, the solutions and actions incorporated into the organizing structures of the focal firm were simply rare solutions, adding “significantly” to those templates and, therefore, changing them in the organization under consideration. On other occasions, these occurrences of novelty “significantly” contradicted relevant parts of these templates. Both cases were interpreted as novelty. Why some differences were “significant,” and therefore accounted as novelty, is a relevant component of Papers 2 and 4 and is further elaborated in Chapter 6.

**Reflexivity in this research**

It has been said that research on entrepreneurship benefits from holistic approaches because it “tends to decompose when researchers try to break it into its component parts” (Bygrave, 2007: 20). In a similar sense, perhaps, Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009) advised authors to approach qualitative research with a holistic reflexivity that should combine different levels of reflection that are mutually informing and question each other. Bourdieu’s approach to reflexivity stemmed from a radical doubt able to “break with common sense” and question through critical examination the same concepts on offer to explain our object of research (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 235). Because just “being on the alert is important but hardly suffices” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 238), I provide here some remarks on how I sought to follow these recommendations.

**Data-constructing level**

Data come first, perhaps not in chronological order, but there can be no truth claims, no understanding, no patterns or underlying relationships and no knowledge without at least some sort of observation of the researcher and the
surrounding world. I believe that no theory can be totally absent of data. In this dissertation, data are important: they have been given importance and have played an important role. The following paragraphs detail some strategies taken in the collection of the data, herein referred to as data generation. Data generation, however, needs to be understood here as a process of construction and deconstruction. Data are necessarily constructed, because the same act of collection requires and carries interpretation. Data are also deconstructed when the object of research is the “social work of construction of the pre-constructed object” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 229). The analysis of the field of written news and its lingering institutional templates in Chapter 3 is an explicit—and priority—attempt to achieve this in this work.

Much effort in this research has been directed to, and is still being directed to, data generation. As a novel researcher, I tried to learn how to design and execute empirical research. My previous experience in market analysis and marketing research and my participation in the field of written news as an executive in a group of legacy newspapers sometimes helped to expedite my access to informants and empirical materials. It did not help so much, however, in building rigorous research designs and methods, which, regardless of the progress, I owe to my PhD education. This chapter, and the method sections in the stand-alone papers, provide details about the timeline and stages of data collection. Figure 2b further specifies them for the data generated about new ventures in the US, which support Papers 3 and 4. Further information is provided as appendices, such as the complete list of interviews performed, events attended and the most significant reports and documents used. Further information tracing and documenting the process of data construction can be provided on request. This includes OneNote files with snippets of key documents preparing each case, all interview and event transcriptions and memos, change-tracked write-ups for every case, Nvivo files and the coding process (for the case of SvD) and analytical figures in all their iterations.

The generated data were also shaped by two other aspects that deserve attention: sampling and triangulation. The theoretical sampling criteria are described in every paper, but it should be noted that the cases resulted from a combination of theoretical and convenient reasons. All the cases were theoretically sampled, but not all the case respondents approached agreed to take part in this research, and I did not manage to develop enough trust in all those who consented. The cases presented in this work combine the two. Not only did they engage in this research willingly, but they also granted sufficient access to internal and external informants. Occasionally, some cases were identified and selected as a result of unexpected discoveries. It was a lucky strike that SvD, a leading legacy newspaper in Sweden, won the International Newspaper Marketing Association prize in 2016 and that its CEO was a personal contact of a senior colleague in my research center, the Media, Management and Transformation Centre (MMTC). I was also lucky to meet so many helpful scholars and experts in the New York
area, without whom I would have never been able to give the initial push to the snowball sampling that produced so many interesting cases there.

The quality of the data gathered can only be assessed in terms of appropriateness rather than quantity (O’Reilly & Parker, 2013) to address my research question. Details about the data that were collected can be found in the previous sections and more extensively in every independent paper. Overall, the strands of information that I have prioritized are threefold. The first consists of the data on the context, its changing objective conditions and the multiplicity of discourses, not just what dominates and is dominated but what is said and concealed, by whom and in which conditions. This context is present in every paper, in Chapter 6 of this kappa and, in a summarized form, constitutes Chapter 3. The second contains data on the experience and interpretations of informants. I paid attention in face-to-face interviews and observations to instant feedback and the multiple cues that informants provide. Hopefully, this attention allowed me to retain at least part of the high fidelity that meaningful interaction with informants can produce. Third, I also tried to identify key events, actions, results and so on: those “identifiable facts” that provide the matter for personal experience and subjective interpretation. To achieve this, I made an effort to check the consistency of the data gathered across different sources through triangulation (Denzin, 1970) but also through other techniques, as I elaborate below.

Informant bias and memory transformations, such as memory decay, hindsight bias and rationalization after the fact, are a potential setback in research that, at least partly, relies on remembered accounts of events, even if very recent ones, and easily romanticized versions of past achievements and failures. I tried to minimize this effect in different ways. First, all the informants were offered anonymity before their first interview. Second, I interviewed informants who were directly involved in the organizational events under research. Third, most events central to the analysis in the papers based on real-time cases happened during the field research and were reported while or soon after they happened. Fourth, importantly, I attempted to separate events from subjective experiences. To establish events in most interviews, I remained as close to the facts as possible, avoiding speculative discussions, although I always let the informants elaborate their answers to the best of their knowledge. Subjective experiences, however, were also important in this research. Many interviews and conversations explored extensively how practitioners interpret their own actions and reactions, what motivates them and what meaning actors give to and extract from events. Fifth, the triangulation of methods within a reflexive engaged approach to research increases reliability and validity while maximizing learning and discovery (Van de Ven, 2007). The information extracted from the interviews was cross-checked against other sources, such as other informants, internal documents and, when available, press coverage or external reports. Unconfirmed data and conflicting versions about specific events were resolved (i.e. by finding credible accounts of them) or discarded for this analysis when not strictly related to personal experiences and informants’ motives. Finally, as already reported to some
informants, I offered feedback—once the field research was over—on their ventures’ business strategies or interpretations about what occurs in the field of written news, enhancing the informants’ eagerness to contribute trustworthy information.

To the best of my abilities, I gave priority to data and treated them with care. Data, however, also played an important “proactive” role in this research. Many theoretical ideas would never have been considered in this dissertation without the questions that data inspired. For example, part-time entrepreneurship and behavioral decision making (in Paper 3) were never part of the theoretical framework that I intended for this research, but the dominance of part-timers in my informants triggered questions that these perspectives helped to understand. Similar comments can be made about service-dominant logic (in Paper 2) and cognitive creativity (in Paper 4). Importantly for this kappa, resourcing from institutional theory was triggered by the findings of Paper 1: the current lock-in of legacy newspapers could not be explained by knowledge integration mechanisms. That puzzle pushed me to take two routes that I had not envisioned: first, to question purely mechanistic approaches to explain my data and, second, to embrace institutional theory as a promising explanatory meta-framework for the field of written news. Finally, the theoretical contributions that some of the findings in this dissertation triggered—for example reshaping some of the assumptions in the part-time entrepreneurship literature (in Paper 3)—were developed to accommodate the emergent data within the extant theory. The active role played by empirical material also prompted the use of various alternative ways to interpret it.

Repertoire of interpretations

Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009) proposed embracing the possibility of various interpretations in reflexive qualitative research. This research combines a diversity of interpretations. At a basic level, it contains a triangulation of analysts, different people who analyzed the same data and applied different theoretical frameworks to interpret them (Patton, 2002). Papers 1 and 2 were coauthored, and their findings and discussion were produced with my coresearchers acting as external reviewers who checked my initial interpretations, questioned them and contributed to refining the final findings and theoretical discussion. Papers 3 and 4 followed a similar process with the active participation of my third supervisor (Ted Baker), who relentlessly challenged my way to address data and to make sense of them. Often, we saw different things in the same data; often, we favored different theories to interpret them. The reflections that followed even opened additional ways of thinking. The current state of Papers 3 and 4 distils these analytic dynamics. This process of reduction, however, left many dilemmas unaddressed. Some of them are discussed in Chapter 8, because they open opportunities for further research.
Other emerging questions were so relevant to the empirical setting that they suggested complementary interpretations within this dissertation. These puzzles included, for example, the resilience of some values in financially underperforming ventures and the surprising role of capital—or rather the absence of it—in the emergence of novel solutions to organizational problems. These questions offered opportunities to interpret the data in the different papers from a new perspective that perhaps could unify them. This is the reason for this kappa extending beyond a summary of the papers that comprise this work. That new interpretive framework was institutional theory, and—in my view—it forcefully adds to what each of the stand-alone papers already states. It complements their findings, but I believe it also unifies them at a kind of metatheoretical level, as it required the development of the common basic set of compatible concepts that Table 1 outlines.

Critical interpretation and self-criticism

The interpretations favored in this work do not necessarily correspond to the ones dominating entrepreneurship and institutional theory. Entrepreneurship is still dominated by positivistic views supported by quantitative research measuring stylized constructs in which the entrepreneur is often out of view and the ordinary actor is mostly absent (Aldrich & Ruef, 2018). In neoinstitutionalism, institutional logics populate research and the turn to the micro remains a promise that requires more empirical research to be fulfilled (Powell & Rerup, 2017). I cannot, however, claim that my interpretive frameworks are fringe ones either. The ones presented and used in this dissertation are those that made more sense to me and my coauthors. This does not imply that the interpretation process was free of doubts and ambiguities, but our final findings were convincing for us, and I hope that the way in which this work transparently illustrates its qualitative methodology and displays empirical evidence supporting its findings allows the reader to see the same as the authors.

In the media field, critical interpretation demands—beyond problematizing received theories and methodologies—“taking a step back from the media industry and reflexively uncover which taken-for-granted assumptions inhabit the field” (Achtenhagen & Cestino, forthcoming). Much in this dissertation was undertaken as an attempt to expose the cultural norms, unconscious logics and professional ideologies present in the field of written news. It is a value-laden field, and I tried to be precautionary and critical. Two factors helped me in whatever my possible achievement was here: first, my main supervisor’s (Olof Brunninge) watchful eye on me and call for my attention when I was letting my critical guard down; second, the possibility that this research granted me to reenter the field as an alien to it. The years that passed between my experience as an executive in newspapers and this research built the distance needed to gain reflexivity. When, during my PhD, I reentered the field, this time as the empirical setting of my research, I still knew the special vocabularies and the intricacies of the business and its professions. However, surprisingly, when conducting my interviews,
something struck me: behind what the informants were saying, often, there was something else: a layer of hardly concealed data that had never been obvious to me before. I could also see at least some, possibly not many and certainly not all meaningful shortcuts, taken-for-granted assumptions, ideological values and wishfully imagined outcomes. The findings, discussion and implications that I present in Chapters 6 and 7 will tell the reader the extent to which I may have succeeded in this.

One additional way to tell, perhaps, could be to consider the winners and losers that the implications of this study may generate. In case study research, “the resultant theory is likely to be empirically valid” (Eisenhardt, 1989: 547). Rich and qualitative empirical material generated in close contact with the field of study can generate quality insights (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009) that help interpretations beyond the obvious and may facilitate an impact on practice and policy. In Chapter 8, I suggest that resource-scarce journalism start-ups are the undeservedly forgotten population in written news. I also propose that any new regulatory framework should not be designed on the assumption that journalism can only be performed in the protective form that newspapers provide. Moreover, I suggest that protecting those values that democratic societies want to preserve perhaps requires the social function of journalism to be unbundled first and then reassembled.
Chapter 5. Original findings and contributions in the stand-alone papers

This chapter replicates, with only minor redactions, the original introductions of the stand-alone papers. It exposes their purposes, theoretical perspectives, methods, findings and contributions in their original form. The chapter ends with a short discussion of the research areas and opportunities related to the research question that this thesis addresses but that these papers left outstanding. This will justify the revisiting of the findings and implications that Chapters 6 and 7 develop.

Introductions to the original papers

**Paper 1. A perspective on path dependence processes: The role of knowledge integration in business model persistence dynamics in the provincial press in England**

Extensive literature has tried to explain how technological changes and new business strategies generate industry transformations (Anderson & Tushman, 1990; Teece, 2010; Vlaar et al., 2005). Scholars have stated that, in these circumstances of change, while new entrants engage in profitable pursuits, incumbents struggle to abandon their existing know-how, acquire a new skill base and transform their business model (BM) successfully. Recently, there have been calls for a more integrative analysis of the mechanisms that lead to persistence and—eventually—immobility (Schreyögg & Sydow, 2009).

In this paper, we attempt to provide a conceptually integrated reasoning of organizational persistence building on (1) the knowledge-based view (KBV) of the firm (Grant, 1996a, 1996b), (2) strategy understood as a process (Pettigrew, 1992, 2012) and (3) the emerging literature on BMs (Wirtz et al., 2015). The field of legacy newspapers offers a suitable ground for such an analysis. In a media industry context in which the contours, structures and strategies are rapidly changing (Küng, 2008), a doomed atmosphere has recently dominated traditional newspapers. The digital revolution is transforming consumer practices and advertising patterns, challenging the traditional revenue streams of traditional media. Legacy newspapers, caught in the “innovator’s dilemma” (Christensen, 1997), have so far failed to develop clear alternative opportunities to create sustainable growth and significantly reshape their organization. This has mostly been interpreted in the literature as the result of a locked-in, obsolete dominant

Path dependence has been furnished as a plausible theoretical explanation for the locked-in dominant BM of legacy newspapers (Djerf-Pierre & Weibull, 2011; Ibrus, 2014; Koch, 2008, 2011; Rothman & Koch, 2013; Ryfe & Kemmelmeier, 2011). However, studies on legacy newspapers adopting this perspective have usually referred to path dependence in rather general terms as synonymous with organizational inertia, have been insensitive toward multi-level contextual inquiries, have offered a limited focus on knowledge and reflexivity and have not attempted to operationalize BM innovation in a theoretical way.

This paper analyzes the sociocultural contexts, practices and self-reinforcing mechanisms that shape the dominant BM in legacy newspapers using the example of the English provincial press. It specifically contributes to the theoretical framework showing how organizations become path dependent (Sydow et al., 2009). This research provides insights into the role of the integration of knowledge as a relevant mechanism at the heart of organizational path dependence and the boundary conditions in which it operates. Because our analysis explicitly accounts for the role of context and business model dynamics through the different stages of a path-dependent process, we also contribute theoretical approximations for the definitions of a lock-in, activity variation within a lock-in and de-locking. In doing so, we also explore what it would take for newspapers to break their current lock-in and how this might happen.

**Paper 2. Institutional limits to service-dominant logic and servitization in innovation efforts in newspapers**

In the current changing environment of the media industry, many service aspects are becoming increasingly critical and visible, yet analyzing media as a service has been “rare in media management studies” (Viljakainen & Toivonen, 2014). This paper intends to address this important gap and explore these service-oriented strategies in newspapers from the marketing theoretical perspectives of service-dominant logic (SDL) (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008, 2016) and servitization (Baines et al., 2009; Vandermerwe & Rada, 1988) in its focus on value co-creation among various actors, always including customers (the readers).

While servitization is a mid-level theory with a clear priority for the analysis of service implementation managerial strategies, SDL aims to achieve a marketing grand theory status, favoring a high level of abstraction. In this paper, we combine the SDL and servitization perspectives to facilitate a better grasp of the organizational implications for newspapers of their service aspect. This analytical approach, we argue, is fruitful to assess the potential impact of and barriers to many of the current innovation activities in the newspaper industry. Servitization has received a great deal of research in the manufacturing sector (Baines et al., 2009; Kowalkowski et al., 2016; Militaru, 2015; Vandermerwe & Rada, 1988),
yet it has not received the same attention in the media industry apart from the study by Fließ and Hagenhoff (2016). In addition, although SDL has arguably become the new dominating paradigm in marketing studies, no research has, to our knowledge, explored current innovation activities in the media industry from an SDL perspective. This paper supports the view that the current challenges and strategic changes that the newspaper industry faces cannot be addressed properly without accounting for the service dimension thereof. Accordingly, this research attempts to join and promote a scholarly conversation on newspapers as service providers and link to the existing service theory.

We base our analysis on the exemplary case of The Pyramid in the Swedish newspaper Svenska Dagbladet (SvD), a project that received accolades from the International News Media Association (INMA) in 2016 and that therefore has attracted attention as a state-of-the-art role model for innovation in the newspaper industry. The Pyramid is an initiative that explicitly aims to boost paid content and subscriptions in SvD as part of an emerging strategy that attempts to connect the current trends in customer needs with the brand values of SvD. The approach intends to develop a competitive SvD positioning that is specifically focused on the business opportunities that the digitalization of the business brings. Despite the fact that The Pyramid gives priority to the circulation revenue stream and only partially addresses the advertising side of the SvD’s business model, largely as a side effect of an improved customer experience, the INMA has described the initiative as a strategy that was designed for success, with “excellent brand positioning and outcomes” (McMullan, 2016). Although we are aware that the case largely addresses only one side of the current business model of newspapers, the significance and prominence of the case suggest that it still deserves a close study, which we perform from the servitization and SD logic perspectives.

Equipped with our combined theoretical tools of SDL and servitization, our research on the SvD case supports the claim that newspapers have added services without “developing a deeper understanding of the service relationship” (Viljakainen & Toivonen, 2014), capable of fully transforming their business. Additionally, we suggest that this limitation possibly results from some current institutions in the news provision industry that integrate and condition the value creation process of newspapers. Institutions provide meaning and certitude, a shortcut to cognition, communication and judgment (Vargo & Lusch, 2016: 11), and, because they can sustain themselves, they result in persistent structures that condition organizational and individual behavior (Scott, 2013). In this sense, our service sensitive analysis allows us to expose some shared beliefs, values and ideals behind the aggregate dimension of “qualitative news” that define clear-cut boundaries for what is possible (or not) in the innovation efforts in the newspaper industry.

Our approach, we argue, opens interesting avenues for conceptualizing a better integration of the role of institutions into the discussion of servitization and SDL. In doing so within the newspaper industry, this paper also provides some practical
implications for news providers. While previous research has focused on identifying the strategies that newspapers currently consider in their design and implementation of service offerings connected to existing products or core competencies (Fließ & Hagenhoff, 2016) or on how legacy news organizations develop new digital news products and the motivations driving these projects (e.g. Cornia et al., 2017), our approach also offers clues about how the industry may also progress. Since, in the SDL view, “customers alter their roles, improve their capabilities, and contribute their own resources to the process of creating value” (Michel et al., 2008), this paper suggests how newspapers could increase their own capabilities and those of their users through customization, resource development and coordination, and dialogue-based marketing communication, resulting in the co-creation of value. As we analyze in our discussion, this possibly requires the reconsideration of some of the institutional components that today compose the current understanding of qualitative news. This, in turn, will possibly imply the end of knowledge monopolies (Chesbrough, 2003)—and watchdog and trust monopolies—and the adoption of new meaningful interactions between newspapers and the audience, blurring the traditional lines between the two.

**Paper 3. Hybrid entrepreneurship as the pursuit of valued forms of work**

Most entrepreneurship research assumes that the venture is the entrepreneur’s primary work activity. The creation of part-time ventures, however, is vastly more common than full-time entrepreneurship. Of those who start a new venture, 80 percent simultaneously hold paid jobs (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2017), resulting in up to 60 percent of ventures being operated on a part-time basis in many Western countries (Ebbers & Piper, 2017; Feenstra et al., 2003). To make matters more complex, more than one-third of the members of the American population “freelances” (Burke, 2015; Freelancers Union, 2018)—organizing part or all their work efforts around temporary job assignments—and this emerging new form of workforce is blurring further the traditional boundaries between employment and self-employment (McKeown, 2015). Because of this mismatch between the focus of research on “full-time” ventures and the empirical prevalence of hybrid entrepreneurship, it is unclear whether and how the current theoretical models can explain what turns out to be the most common forms of entrepreneurship.

Scholars have offered two contrasting portrayals of hybrid entrepreneurship, that is, the process of initiating a business while simultaneously remaining employed for wages (Folta et al., 2010). In the positive depiction, hybrid entry allows some entrepreneurs either to pursue nonmonetary benefits that are not available in their primary jobs or to try a low-risk step toward full-time entrepreneurship (Folta et al., 2010). Part-time founders can test their ideas without giving up their full-time employment and income (Raffiee & Feng, 2014; Wennberg et al., 2006). The empirical evidence suggests that engaging in hybrid entrepreneurship makes
transitioning to full-time entrepreneurship more likely and that the experience and learning during the period of hybrid entrepreneurship result in higher survival rates for those who make the transition to full-time ventures (Wennberg et al., 2006). In contrast, other scholars have stressed a much grimmer picture of hybrids, focusing on issues of marginality (Thompson et al., 2009), a lack of independence and wage job constraints (Block & Landgraf, 2016), lower self-perceived success, sluggish business growth (Jacobs et al., 2016) and poor satisfaction levels (Bögenhold & Klinglmair, 2015; Ebbers & Piper, 2017). Thus, the current theory treats hybrid entrepreneurs either as beneficiaries from a risk-reducing learning path to full-time entrepreneurship or as victims, marginalized by the need to make a living in an environment of increasingly fractured employment. However, neither of these perspectives has tackled the mounting empirical evidence suggesting that entrepreneurs who hold a secondary wage persist longer in their hybrid forms (Gimeno et al., 1997; Raffiee & Feng, 2014).

Quantitative research (e.g. Folta et al., 2010) has recognized the likelihood that hybrid entrepreneurs intentionally enter their hybrid form to attempt to gain nonmonetary benefits that are not available in their primary job. There is a long-standing tradition in entrepreneurship studies to explain entrepreneurs’ behavior as the result of their very diverse spectrum of motivations, aspirations and meanings (Shepherd et al., 2019). Perspectives addressing the relevance and heterogeneity of nonmonetary benefits include studies on entrepreneurial motivations (e.g. Scheinberg & McMillan, 1988), motives (Sapienza et al., 2003) and utilities (e.g. Benz & Frey, 2008), social entrepreneurship (e.g. Battilana et al., 2015; Mair & Marti, 2006) and founder identity (e.g. Brickson, 2007; Nag et al., 2015; Petriglieri et al., 2018; Powell & Baker, 2014, 2017). To my knowledge, none of these growing strands of research has recognized the specificity of hybrid entrepreneurial forms, and hybrid entrepreneurs’ intentions and motivations, largely inferred (e.g. Folta et al., 2010), remain unobserved. As a result, questions such as why individuals would prefer to receive nonmonetary benefits as hybrids rather than as full-time entrepreneurs remain empirically unanswered.

In this study, I therefore explore two theoretically and practically important questions: why and how do individuals sustain their entrepreneurial ventures in non-transitioning hybrid forms? I address these questions in the research setting of the disrupted written local news industry in the US, which has experienced a proliferation of online start-ups as the traditionally dominant players—local newspapers—struggle in the transformation of their business (Küng, 2015). Relying on organizational paradoxes and decision-making theories, I investigated these questions through a longitudinal study of six start-ups, four of which are hybrids and all of which are situated in the same industry and geographic area. By following these cases as they strived towards different goals and confronted trade-offs, I was able to observe their motivations and determine how they made decisions about different issues, including transition to full-time, exit and/or persistence of their entrepreneurial efforts. Some of my observations were predicted by prior work; most were not.
In contrast to early depictions, my findings challenge the notion of hybrid entrepreneurship as being essentially about transition to full-time engagement or about learning how to make such a transition. Instead, I detected that—despite hybrids having mixed motivations that are similar to those of full-time entrepreneurs—the conditions in which hybrids make their decisions can shield them from market demands. In these cases, organizations deal with trade-offs, dilemmas and other tensions with leadership and management practices that tend not to integrate monetary and nonmonetary utilities, setting their reference points around valued forms of work—their dominant utility—which hybrids prioritize and safeguard. This decision-making process can eventually sustain a self-reinforcing path toward the persistence of hybrid forms. As a result, transition intentions can become abstract and dormant, losing priority in hybrid entrepreneurs’ goals and activities. This situation tends to stabilize, because, against speculative propositions in previous research (e.g. Block & Landgraf, 2016), hybrids can also achieve a deep sense of independence.

Overall, my findings suggest a decision-making process in hybrids that, not discounting the possibility of testing the business potential of their ideas, provides answers to the question of why constrained individuals “prefer” to receive nonmonetary benefits as hybrids rather than as full-time entrepreneurs (Folta et al., 2010). These answers demand an understanding of how hybrid entrepreneurs’ conditions influence their decision-making process, facilitating options that avoid putting their valued form of work at risk and forging a persistent orientation of their efforts. This approach contributes to developing the foundations for a more richly contextualized and nuanced theoretical understanding of hybrid entrepreneurship. The proposed model also directly confirms previous accounts of hybrids’ resilience to low financial performance, commonly attributed to unobserved threshold levels of performance in socio-emotional goals (e.g. Gimeno et al., 1997; DeTienne et al., 2008; Folta et al., 2010). However, I complement these accounts with insights into how that happens. Additionally, the suggested model expounds one phenomenon that has passed unnoticed in previous studies: reverse transitions from full-time self-employment to a hybrid form. In my cases, reverse transitions are intentional moves that allow entrepreneurs to continue to engage in valued forms of work that yield insufficient monetary returns. Finally, this research broadens the theoretical palette of entrepreneurial motivations, paying attention to some situational and social factors that determine the predominating utilities in hybrids that are able to endure economic hardship. Through this process, hybrid entrepreneurship may contribute to the conservation of institutionalized values in the face of dramatic industrial change.
Paper 4. Organizational innovation and resource constraints: How entrepreneurial bricolage generates divergent novelty

Occasionally, a hot funding market manages to rally substantial resources behind innovative start-ups and routine oversize investments and mega-rounds make the headlines (Griffith, 2018). News reporting funding frenzies, however, hide the fact that one of the most notorious challenges in most new ventures is their lack of resources. Management theory agrees that, in new ventures, resource acquisition is the primary task for achieving growth and becoming viable (Gilbert et al., 2006; Stinchcombe, 1965). Management scholars have also stressed that innovation is one of the most important determinants of firm performance (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010). However, most new ventures emerge as mere replications of established organizations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), and innovation is often in short supply (e.g. Hausman & Johnston, 2014). Considering the importance and scarcity of both resources and innovation, it is surprising how little agreement exists on the effect of the former on the latter. The two dominant perspectives on this issue seem to provide contradictory evidence: where the innovation literature has seen resource constraints impeding innovation, recent entrepreneurship and creativity research has observed that innovation can happen despite—or even because of—resource constraints.

The dominant perspective in organizational behavior, creativity and innovation studies posits the benefits of some slack, that is, having more resources than needed to meet the current commitments (Mishina et al., 2004). Resources are a key driver of creativity and innovation performance, and, although at very high levels of slack innovation curbs, some slack is a key determinant of innovation (Amabile et al., 1996; Cyert & March 1963; Damanpour, 1991). Alternatively, entrepreneurship studies have suggested that constrained resources do not necessarily impede growth but can even be a path to survival and innovativeness (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Garud & Karnøe, 2003; Senyard et al., 2014). Works in cognitive psychology and creativity research, based on individual-level experiments, align with this perspective, as they have demonstrated that a constraint mindset can drive creativity, innovation and novel solutions (e.g. Dahl & Moreau, 2007; Finke et al., 1992; Goldenberg et al., 2001; Mehta & Zhu, 2015; Moreau & Dahl, 2005; Ward, 2004). Additional support for a positive relationship between resource constraints and innovation has been provided by some context-specific exploratory studies (e.g. Gibbert & Hoegl, 2006; Gibbert & Scranton, 2009; Nonaka & Kenney, 1991) and research on team-level innovation performance (Keupp & Gassmann, 2013; Weiss et al., 2011), indicating that some constraints in some circumstances can promote, rather than impede, some types of innovation. Despite the mounting evidence, this body of work is far from homogeneous, and there is still little theory linking resource constraints to innovation. It is in this emerging field that I position my research.

Among the diverse literature streams focusing on resource constraints, entrepreneurial bricolage has provided the most theoretically elaborated account
of how scarcity can be beneficial for organizational innovation. Early work on entrepreneurial bricolage—making do with what resources are available at hand, resulting in a creative recombination of them (Baker & Nelson, 2005)—primarily defined its use as a coping mechanism allowing the survival of highly resource-constrained young firms (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Baker et al., 2003; Garud & Karnøe, 2003). Recent work has begun to focus more narrowly on links between bricolage and innovation (Senyard et al., 2014), suggesting that, for resource-constrained firms, bricolage facilitates the processes of recombination of resources that are core to innovation. This research has provided clues about how the processes tying resource constraints to innovation through bricolage might work. For example, Baker and Nelson (2005) suggested that resource-constrained entrepreneurs, because they refuse to accept socially constructed definitions of resources, can provide unique services by creatively exploiting inputs that other firms reject or ignore. Senyard and colleagues (2014) extended this and provided quantitative evidence linking a measure of bricolage behavior with innovativeness. Overall, however, this research has yet to incorporate insights into this relationship from cognitive psychology, creativity and innovation performance research, and we still know very little about the underlying processes of innovation that are supported through the behaviors of bricolage. Moreover, prior work has largely ignored the strong evidence that most small and new firms are under a great deal of pressure to conform to the rules, norms and concepts of the institutional environment (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott, 2013). The vast majority of start-ups are “me too” organizations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), emerging as close copies of many other organizations and operating in accordance with established industry norms and templates. Organizational innovation is a challenge for any new organization, and developing a persuasive theory of innovation under resource constraints needs to take into explicit account the effects of the institutional context in which the start-ups operate (Welter, 2011).

As Hoegl and colleagues (2008) have noted, resource scarcity can hardly be the sole driver of innovation when innovation in deprived contexts does not abound. This suggests that, perhaps, the relevant question is not whether resource constraints drive or impede innovation but rather why and how “resource constraints constitute an enabler of innovation” (Gibbert et al., 2014: 199). My research question, therefore, is: How does organizational innovation emerge in resource-constrained new firms entering a highly institutionalized industry? Given my purpose, I choose a theory-building case study approach (Eisenhardt, 1989) and address my research question by conducting an abductive field study of eight new organizations in the industry of written news. This industry—despite the current transformation of its objective environment (John & Silberstein-Loeb, 2015)—is dominated by two overlapping templates: the occupational ideology of journalism (Deuze, 2005; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014) and the lingering two-sided business model of newspapers (Cornia et al., 2018; Küng, 2015). I address my question with careful consideration of different areas. First, examining the context to which organizational actors react, I operationalize innovation as divergent novelty, that is, activities constituting the venture that fall outside of the
dominant templates in the industry. My definition of novelty, as I compare firm outcomes with organizing templates at the industrial level, advances previous approaches to innovation in resource-constrained ventures that stop at new-to-the-organization outcomes (e.g. Baker & Nelson, 2005; Keupp & Gassmann, 2013) or new-to-the-industry intentions (e.g. Senyard et al., 2014). Second, I expand the existing perspectives on resource scarcity as nonobjective and heterogeneous resource constraints (Baker & Nelson, 2005) and analyze their breakdown into different tangible (equipment and financial) and intangible (human and social) resource conditions and the way in which these are perceived (Keupp & Gassmann, 2013) and experienced (Rosso, 2014). Third, I pay attention to the organizational conditions in which activities take place and identify some patterns that can explain why and how experiences of resource constraints result in divergent novel outcomes.

Building on the concept of entrepreneurial bricolage, my study provides a non-predictive process model showing how divergent organizational innovation occurs in resource-constrained ventures and presents some first steps toward a theoretical framework linking constraints to innovative outcomes in new firms. This study suggests that novelty in highly institutionalized fields can originate in deprived new organizations as a result of the way in which these ventures experience their resource constraints in their attempt to complete—or approximately complete—their projects. As organizational members scramble for solutions, the lack of resources both inhibits automatic common responses and directs their attention to the available intangible inputs. It is the personal background of the entrepreneurial team, other firm members and external stakeholders that provides these inputs. Divergent novelty emerges when the commitment of actors to a firm’s projects, in liminal—or transitional—sites, enacts disparate intangible resources, including apparently useless ones that connect and recombine into novel solutions. This novelty becomes organizational when these solutions are incorporated into the unfolding activities that constitute the new venture. My model provides answers concerning the link between resource constraints and innovation and details previously unknown aspects of the process of entrepreneurial bricolage. Because I identify a form of organizational innovation that is particularly relevant to highly institutionalized contexts—what I call divergent organizational novelty—and show how resource scarcity pushes new players off industrial templates, I also contribute to the literature on the emergence of new organizational forms (Padgett & Powell, 2012).

Interlude

The papers presented above deal with institutional influences, organizational problems, actors’ activities, decisions and goals, a field in crisis, the possibility of sustaining normatively informed aspirations and values, the possibility of novelty and many other aspects that relate to entrepreneurial processes and institutional
reproduction and novelty dynamics. These papers, however, do not deal explicitly with any of these issues from an institutional point of view. Institutional arrangements are often relegated to the background and institutional dynamics are just implicit or, worse, overlooked. Furthermore, entrepreneurial processes tying individuals’ activities are frequently disregarded or only referred to in passing. The empirical data in these papers, however, is often rich enough to allow a more granular and integrative analysis of what takes place in them. This offers opportunities—by combining them within a common theoretical framework—to study explicitly the entrepreneurial processes of reproduction and novelty, the role of capital in them and the institutional dynamics of conformity and decoupling. The next chapter attempts to undertake such a job.
Chapter 6. Findings revisited: entrepreneurial processes of reproduction and novelty

This work asks how and why the entrepreneurial activity of individuals searching for solutions to organizational challenges in a field in crisis either reproduces or departs from the institutional arrangements that regulate it. In the following sections, I address these questions by presenting a combined reinterpretation of the findings in all papers in the light of the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2. As data and findings that were separated in their paper silos combined, new possibilities of understanding developed. These findings, however, remain consistent with the ones each paper develops and with the data that support them. The new insights and implications that follow from this process inform the theoretical discussion that follows this chapter.

Findings revisited

This chapter reconsiders the findings included in each of the standalone papers under the common theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2. Findings are presented here in a rather stylized way in the understanding that detailed empirical support and data illustrations are offered abundantly in the standalone papers. However, when needed, I provide additional data illustrations not included in the original papers. The presentation that follows then departs in some respects from what the individual papers do. Some areas have gained priority and detail, others—necessarily—have lost them. To allow the reader to situate where these findings originate and how they relate to the original papers, I provide indications of the papers that originally covered the data and findings I expose here.

In these overviews, my focus is the work and decisions of individuals searching for solutions to organizational challenges and I identify different entrepreneurial processes within the institutional field of written news that can either result in institutional reproduction or novelty. Figure 3 displays how the data in each paper lean either towards reproduction or novelty outcomes. Because the definition of the institutional field and its crisis is important for understanding how these processes unfold and result in these different outcomes, I begin with my findings in this area. Thus, I organize the exposition of my findings in the following way. First, I present insights related to the emergence of the institutional field of written news. Then, I introduce three entrepreneurial processes that take place at the micro level within this field. Figure 1 (included in Chapter 1) presents these processes in relation to the papers in which they are mainly covered. One of them,
which I call “reproduction by decoupled innovation,” is identified in an exemplary case of a large incumbent in the field, while the other two, “reproduction by sheltering” and “novelty by new situated capital,” happen in new entrants. Although, in my data, these processes are recognized in these specific organizational contexts, what matters is not necessarily the size or age of the organizations where they take place but the capital conditions and the experience of problems and constraints that shape them.

The institutional field of written news

For an institutional field to be in crisis, it must be institutionalized in the first place. In the study of the historic development of the English press, Paper 1 finds the rather accidental chain of events that resulted in the current form of journalism and newspapers. Taken-for-granted institutional arrangements that dominate the exchange fields of written news—such as the concept of the “Fourth Estate,” the ideals of impartiality and autonomy, the norm that news requires wide appeal, et cetera—originated in specific chains of historic events, often in processes driven by the consolidation of working practices and homogenization of products. Despite the current changes in the objective conditions in which these norms and concepts operate, they are showing an extreme resilience. But before I explore the entrepreneurial processes in incumbents and newcomers that support, or may challenge, this resilience, it is important to understand how these institutional arrangements came into being.

Newspapers in England can be traced back to the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries. These early newspapers were produced by printers seeking to profit from the emerging need for news to facilitate trade, which underpinned early industrial capitalism. Newspapers back then were
entrepreneurial products filled with “cut and paste” content from other publications and adverts for other business interests – such as “quack” medicines – which were produced alongside the papers. These papers were not produced by “journalists,” and the news they published was not fact-checked. These newspapers, however, soon became periodical and were characterized by the inclusion of time-sensitive information. The stamp duty that applied to all titles from 1725 restricted newspaper ownership to those who could afford to stock up on the costly sheets of pre-stamped paper. An advertising duty was also imposed by this legislation. Under these rules, newspaper copies were expensive the equivalent of $20 in today’s money—and newspapers were an uncertain business, often lasting only a few years. Of the 150 papers founded in England from 1701 to 1760, half are thought to have lasted fewer than five years. The scope of activities and forms in the business was significant, with no regular patterns in how these papers were organized, produced or supported.

The context of newspapers changed significantly with the repeal of stamp duty in 1855, as it became economically viable to use paper supplied in bulk on a roll and to feed into the newly developed steam presses. For the first time, newspapers developed into a low-cost, mass-circulation product. Press owners were also able to specialize and concentrate on the business of newspapers alone. The number of newspapers rose dramatically. By then, the titles were expected to make a profit and would generate around 50% of their income from advertising. Key political figures interested in the communication possibilities that the product offered sought to establish chains of newspapers with a political stance. However, by the 1880s, coincidentally with the removal of taxation on advertising, the link between the press and politics weakened as titles that widened their appeal managed to build mass circulation and gain an upper competitive hand. The process had been anticipated in the United States in about 50 years by the phenomenon of the Penny press, which, by then, already played a major role there. Newspapers in England, intentionally or not, soon modeled some of their activities in line with the Penny press and shifted to a standard of low cost and high circulation that required nonpartisanship and claimed objectivity (Dovifat, 1927, in Raviola, 2012). Technology, in the form of better presses and mechanical composition, helped in this process. One of these technological advances, the Linotype composition machine, which was first used in 1889, also required a specialized workforce. This shift, both technological and organizational, coincided with the development of the nonpartisan and society-wide appeal rhetoric of the “Fourth Estate” and the emergence of an increasingly segmented and professionalized workforce. The National Association of Journalists was founded in 1886 and was soon followed by the Institute of Journalists in 1890 and the national Union of Journalists in 1907. The increasingly codified conditions and methods of journalism amalgamated with the developing rhetoric of the Fourth Estate. The ideals of impartiality and autonomy and the watchdog role assigned to the press acquired meaning during these years. Simultaneously, as cover prices fell with the rise of mass circulation, the significance of advertising as a revenue stream rose. The relevance of editorial content to the newspaper’s
circulation increased. The coverage of relevant news widened further and became even more cohesive, covering everything important happening to a whole local community, region or to the entire nation. The tone was lightened to attract as many readers as possible and make news understandable to everyone, and new sections such as sports, that had a wide appeal and offered commercial opportunities were also incorporated.

The early twentieth century deepened the above-mentioned developments with the professionalization of journalism and the adoption of editorial directives, norms and routines such as the inverted pyramid style—with key information included at the top of the story—and the particular journalistic discourse with information presented in the third person and as objective facts telling the truth. At the same time, newspapers refined their commercial operations so that editorial, advertising and managerial functions were increasingly demarcated and subject to their own hierarchies (e.g. a chief reporter, an editor, subeditors and reporters in the newsroom), interrelations (e.g. managerial staff have no say in journalistic content and readers are passive recipients of news) and professional routines. Journalism’s basic task was understood to be to provide news content allowing publishers to sell advertising (Bücher, 1926, in Fengler & Ruß-Mohl, 2008). The adoption of this shared structure of meaningful and relational rules, norms and cultural-cognitive aspects of newspapers was, however, not sudden, but a process of subtle change led by the education and filtering of personnel. The National Council for the Training of Journalists was formed in 1951 and put in place a training scheme to codify the practice of journalists learning their trade in the press. The resulting similarities among newspapers’ routines only grew deeper during the mid and late twentieth century, as the most successful newspaper corporations grew into publishing centers and had to develop ever more complex coordinating rules, concepts and routines, consolidating specific managerial solutions across newspapers. By 1974, the top 10 newspaper groups controlled 81% of all regional newspaper circulations in England, a figure only higher if national titles are also considered. This consolidation of working practices also coincided with an increasing homogenization of products. The process of concentration of ownership merged titles in many regions, with only one single title remaining, and incited the development of well-established high-quality standards that all players had to abide by in order to remain competitive.

The advent of digital jolted the field by modifying many of the objective conditions that gave rise to the current form of journalism and newspapers. News could be delivered online without the physical limitations imposed by print formats and distribution. Readers could also search for news at any time, from their own personal computers first and smartphones and other devices later. Advertisers soon found out about the increasingly accurate alternatives that digital offered them in terms of reaching and interacting with their potential customers. A number of new forms of players, such as SMPs, now interacted with the traditional populations of the field. While these new developments were transforming the conditions in which the field of written news had worked for
decades, in newspapers the Internet was fundamentally regarded as a new distribution channel that had to be added to print operations. Because circulation revenue online was considered problematic for both technological and news consumption reasons, online revenue was expected to come, initially, from advertising only. As advertising revenue in print operations was closely linked to mass circulation and readership, newspapers also escalated their efforts to increase reach and engagement in their online audiences. In the new conditions of the field, however, newspaper activities were losing economic traction. Yet, despite the increasing economic strains that newspapers were experiencing, the taken-for-granted assumptions, i.e. institutional arrangements, that came to dominate the exchange fields of written news lingered. Paper 1, however, remains silent about what goes on in the work and decisions of individuals in the population of newspapers as they search for solutions to their mounting organizational challenges. And in particular, it does not explore whether these activities reproduce these institutions or not and how it happens. Papers 2, 3 and 4 provide granularity to these processes, showing details that have passed unnoticed in previous literature.

Institutional reproduction in a field in crisis

This research asks in what ways, in times of crisis, institutional arrangements shape entrepreneurial processes, and particularly why and how, in their search for solutions to organizational challenges, individuals’ decisions and work shape entrepreneurial processes that either reproduce those institutional arrangements or divert from them. Papers 2, 3 and 4 study at the micro level, in a collection of different cases, processes that reproduce norms and concepts that “defy” purely technological and economic demands. For new entrants, these processes are analyzed in a combination of the findings offered by Papers 3 and 4 in the empirical setting of eight new ventures in the greater New York metropolitan area. Paper 2 studies what goes on among incumbents, focusing in on the exemplary case of one corporate entrepreneurship initiative in Sweden: SvD’s “Pyramid” project. I begin this section by explaining the theoretical sampling of this latter case, followed by the findings it provides.

Organizational solutions within an incumbent

Case selection

Sweden’s SvD innovation model “Pyramid” won, among 699 entries from 264 brands in 40 countries, the “Best in Show” award at the INMA Global Media Awards 2016 competition. The prize contributed to the image of Scandinavia as a hotspot of innovative approaches in the population of newspapers. In the current context of business uncertainty and poorly understood new technologies, some of these initiatives have become benchmarks for other newspapers elsewhere. INMA
is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of marketing in newspapers and the reinvention of their business. The organization has around 7000 members in more than 80 countries and pursues its mission by identifying and disseminating global best practices for written news organizations, particularly newspapers. SvD, founded in 1884, is one of the largest newspapers in Sweden in terms of circulation, readership, revenue, economic assets and number of employees. In 1998, SvD was sold to the Norwegian Schibsted group, the largest media group in Scandinavia, and has become its majority shareholder since then. The group has a declared strategy to “build up product and technology capabilities as (…) essential in order to strengthen the foundation for profitable growth and value creation” (Schibsted Media Group Annual Report, 2016).

Towards entrepreneurial processes of institutional reproduction by decoupled innovation

Figure 4 depicts the process model that explains how, in a field in crisis, the problems and constraints that actors, in an incumbent organization, experience following capital losses result in the adoption of new ideas that despite bringing changes to day-to-day activities do not disrupt institutional reproduction. This happens because, in the articulation and implementation of the imported new ideas, these are interpreted within the meaning structure provided by existing norms and concepts. Thus, day-to-day activities change, but—decoupled from the imported ideas—their differences are nonsignificant when compared to the institutional arrangements in the field. When these new activities, at least in the short term, contribute to a perception of immediate capital gains, they reinforce both organizational persistence and institutional reproduction.

SvD, like most newspapers in Western economies, had been facing diminishing returns since the burst of the financial bubble in 2008. It was not until 2012, however, that the board of directors grasped the structural dimension of their declining performance. The combination of economic losses that year and the availability of statistics showing the explosion of SMPs as a primary source of news in Sweden made the board of directors perceive the “structural dimension” of SvD’s declining performance. Economic capital was curving even if the financial crisis was now over, but, more strikingly, the capacity to produce profits from their assets of social and cultural capital seemed to be subsiding. Puzzled by the changing nature of the problems they were encountering, the board agreed that
to “secure a future for SvD” (CEO) a strategic shift was needed (Table 3a provides some details about this stage, Period 1).

The design of the new strategy, conceptualized at the top management level as a “new business logic,” engaged—under the leadership of SvD’s CEO—employees at all levels in various project groups, workshops, creative meetings and so on during most of 2013 and 2014. The CEO of SvD had joined in 2005 as marketing and sales director—and then promoted to CEO in 2009—bringing to the newspaper her knowledge on business, the Internet, disruption theory and leadership (gained at high-ranked education institutions such as Harvard Business School), as well as her executive experience with one of the global leaders in fast-moving consumer goods (Unilever). The plan was finally operationalized around some selected drivers: (1) increase engagement and willingness to pay; (2) design and promote a new subscription initiative; (3) sustain a “profusely awarded winning journalism”; (4) overhaul the multi-channel strategy; (5) gain understanding of customer needs; (6) segment the audience and target different segments differently; and (7) grow digital readership (Table 3a posts details about this stage, Period 2).

The new strategy—reached almost with unanimity among the participants and launched in 2015—materialized in specific practical solutions in three main areas: (a) the implementation of a metered paywall; (b) a customization of contents online; and (c) a cross-functional approach to teams and organizational structures. Metered paywalls were a solution for online circulation revenue which was still rare. The Pyramid approach targeted online readers differently depending on their type of engagement and monetization potential and brought immediate results. In 2016, increases in online circulation managed, for the first time, to offset declines in print subscriptions. The customization of contents, however, had a more limited impact. Its most advanced solution resulted in the “Everything about/Quick about” choice offered to readers, who by clicking on either of these options would access different types of content related to any piece of news. This solution, however, was soon replaced by the more standard “Related stories” caption common in most online newspapers. Finally, the cross-functional organizational transformation required a strong focus on organizational education and investment in information technologies (IT). And although top management in the organization claimed that “this whole transformation has changed our organization” (CEO), its impact has been limited. Collaboration among journalistic and managerial positions, which now work in cross-functional teams more often than before, has increased. So far, however, functions in their operation remain neatly separated. A content management solution (CMS) that combines algorithms and big data to maximize readership is currently used in the following way: Journalists decide what news to cover and how to do so, marketing staff help to make sense of the readership data and A/B tests different ways of increasing engagement and eventually online subscriptions (see details in Table 3a, Period 3).
Actors in the organization commonly agree that these solutions brought a new logic to SvD. Associations in the field also recognized them in 2016 as “the world’s most innovative initiatives” and part of “a sophisticated road map boldly designed to thrive in the news media ecosystem” (Senior Editor, INMA). Certainly, the Pyramid project brought many differences to SvD. Concrete walls between departments were torn down and replaced with glass panels; some office spaces were now open and shared by staff from different areas; new technologies were developed and adopted, such as the new algorithm-based CMS fed with big data, and huge screens showing real-time readership behavior were installed everywhere; journalists engaged more often than ever with readers in SMPs, such as Facebook and Twitter, searching for tips, reading their comments on their articles and assessing their reactions to breaking news and topics; marketing staff now had access to engagement metrics and A/B tested every possible detail they could think of in the conversion funnel to subscriptions; and the spirit of commitment and collaboration was high across the organization.

These “innovative” differences, however, were not significant when assessed on what followed from them when compared to the dominant templates in the field of written news. From a business model perspective: Online circulation revenue was a replication of print subscriptions online (replicated activity); content customization, largely abandoned, had not made a dent in the traditional “general story approach” (new nonsignificantly different activity); and journalist and management functions remained clearly separated (modified nonsignificantly different activity). From the perspective of journalism as an occupational ideology, the differences were even less significantly novel. Journalists were now “listening” to readers in new ways, such as monitoring big data on readers’ engagement and, when needed, corrections were made in some content following readers feedback in ways that were unconceivable before the Internet. Yet, the new activities and solutions were bringing no significant differences when compared to the institutional arrangements in the field. In the day-to-day work and decisions of individuals, these concrete practical solutions—in their institutionally abiding operationalizations—hollowed the imagined, but abstract, possibilities found in the narratives of these actors: declarations such as “together with the reader we can create news” (editorial head of communication) or “we are not separate organizations anymore” (head of marketing) or “everything from security to editorial content, to how the business model is implemented… everything comes down to customer needs. Everything goes in there” (CEO).

Innovative schemas brought nonsignificant change to SvD because, to operationalize these grand possibilities into particular organizational solutions, the new ideas had to be interpreted. Alien to the organization and the field, imported innovative schemas such as “customization of content,” “coproduction of news” or a “cross-functional organization” had little meaning to members of SvD. For the interpretation process, actors at SvD had to rely on existing norms and concepts belonging to dominant schemas in the field. Meaning had to be added or assigned to empty schemas. In the process, uncertain—and alien to the
Findings revisited: entrepreneurial processes of reproduction and novelty

field—meaning was also pruned or eliminated. As a result, both the formal policies of the organization and the practices in it remained largely unchanged, conforming to existing templates.

Practical solutions related to the customization of content, for example, were restricted by pruning meaning and possibilities: “The site won’t be completely personalized [because] I think our strength is to sort, to explain, and to make the society and the news (...) more understandable” (Editor in Chief), so that the readers get “the most important content they need to get a deeper understanding of their own life and the society” (CEO). This limits customization because people “are clustered, so they don’t communicate [among each other] often enough” (editorial Head of Communication). Similarly, when meaning had to be assigned to the schema of personalization, it was provided by one concept that was common already in the print-only era in the organization and field: the need to pack and present news in an attractive way to readers. When practitioners in SvD had to imagine a newspaper that could be different depending on the reader, what they managed to envision was to “package and present it differently to different groups” (HoM).

Curiously, newly imported ideas, reinterpreted in the meaning of preexisting schemas and decoupled from practice, survived in the organization as empty declarations of policy; what I term “decoupled innovation.” Not only did these ideas coexist with practice conforming to existing templates in the field, but they could also concur with formal declarations of policy conformity. The potential conflict between old and new schemas had dissolved from practitioners in the organization. After all, the new ideas had already been interpreted within the meaning structure provided by preexisting schemas and therefore made consistent with the dominant templates in the field.

Importantly, preexisting schemas, ideas and beliefs were supported by the possibilities of action granted by SvD’s abundant resources in terms of field-related forms of capital. Despite the financial hardship, SvD held unmatched economic and financial assets in the population of newspapers and remained an economic superpower in the written news landscape in Scandinavia. Cultural and social capitals were not lagging behind. The well-staffed newsroom and management teams at SvD were among the best educated, most experienced and most knowledgeable in the field. As a market leader, its network of ties with politicians, businessmen, professionals and common citizens alike—in their multiple roles as sources, vendors, customers or mere readers—was second to none.

The short-term economic results of the Pyramid seemed to avert existing doubts about the survival of the organization and largely reinforced the described dynamic. The metered paywall’s immediate success contributed—along with the improvement of the macroeconomic conjuncture—to a slow recovery in ordinary revenue from external contracts, although it peaked again in 2016. Along with economic capital, the other forms of capital persist as the newspaper has
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maintained its relative position in the exchange field of written news in Sweden and much of its cultural and social capitals have been sustained. As long as this is the case, although the challenges brought by the changing objective conditions of the field have not changed much, the work and decisions of individuals at SvD will likely reproduce their ideals and beliefs; even if they defy technological and economic demands and their own grand claims. Table 3a provides details on the stages in SvD’s search for solutions. Table 3b presents the data structure of the case with evidence supporting the findings presented above.

The case of Sweden’s SvD, further explored in Paper 2, finds aspects of what goes on when actors in an incumbent player—with high capital and a central position in the field—search for solutions to organizational challenges within a field in crisis. The case says nothing about less privileged players.
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<th>Table 3a: Searching for solution stages in SvD</th>
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<td>Capital loss</td>
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<td>Experience of problems/constraints</td>
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<td>Organizational conformity with institutional arrangements</td>
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<td>Imported innovative schemas interpreted within existing meaning structure (decoupled)</td>
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<td>(Nonsignificant) differences in day-to-day activities</td>
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<td>Short-term (perception of) capital gains</td>
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Darker shades indicate degree of manifestation
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<th>Representative first-order categories</th>
<th>Illustrative data</th>
<th>Second-order themes</th>
<th>Aggregate dimensions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Diminished ordinary revenue</td>
<td>Ordinary revenue from circulation reported by Schibsted Sverige Publishing posted negative growth till 2016. &quot;In December 2012 [circulation] dropped almost 13 percent from the year before. It was an enormous drop,&quot; CEO. GOP and GOP minus deductions and amortizations reported by Schibsted Sverige Publishing decreased till 2013 and then again decreased in 2015.</td>
<td>Economic capital</td>
<td>Capital loss</td>
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<td>Diminished gross operating profit (GOP)</td>
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<td>News readership for SMP</td>
<td>SMPs exploded as a primary source of news in Sweden. In 2016, 51 percent of the Swedish population got its news from social media sources, while only 39 percent got it from print [Digital News Report 2017]. SVD’s board of directors became aware of this trend in 2012.</td>
<td>Social capital</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Leading newsroom</td>
<td>SVD sustained one of the largest newsrooms in Sweden and remained one of the leading news producers though its economic returns were at stake. &quot;This is not something that had to do with the economical [sic] environment,&quot; CEO. SVD remained a leading national newspaper in Sweden, with unparalleled access to official and informal sources, potential advertisers... Yet, &quot;our advertisers found new ways of reaching their target audiences,&quot; CEO.</td>
<td>Subsidizing capacity for producing profits</td>
<td>Experience of problems/constraints</td>
</tr>
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<td>Leading networks of sources, advertisers...</td>
<td>&quot;I could really see the frustration. I think there was great uncertainty in this big transformation,&quot; CEO. &quot;It was kind of, 'Are we having this black hole more or less?' That's when this picture came up in front of our eyes... It's a bridge and... it had to be crossed... to secure a future for the newspaper,&quot; CEO.</td>
<td>Insecure future</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of working solutions in the industry</td>
<td>&quot;But I don't think we will see, at least not here, a site that's completely personalized. I think our strength is sorting, explaining and making society and the news a bit more understandable,&quot; EIC. &quot;Together with the readers we can create news... [yet] today everybody can be their own journalist, almost everybody has got tools and channels to provide the world with their own vision of reality. And that is fine. But there is a risk in building a concept of the world on information that might not be based on facts but on pure lies sent by undemocratic people with hidden agendas. This must come to an end. People must be more source critical and quality media needs to cross-check facts even more,&quot; HoC. &quot;You can have a dynamic product without losing your integrity. We never interfere with what our journalists write. They choose, they have the integrity, but they can choose different things within their integrity; different angles,&quot; CEO.</td>
<td>Pruning meaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to secure a future for the organization</td>
<td>Q: &quot;Could you imagine a newspaper that is different depending on the readers?&quot; A: &quot;Yes, to a certain extent.&quot; Q: &quot;To what extent?&quot; A: &quot;We need to be relevant, but it's not only about content but also how you package and present it. Maybe we can package and present it differently for different groups,&quot; HoM. &quot;We expect that everybody is going to want to combine [content],&quot; CEO. &quot;Reader interaction is going to strengthen the investigative part of our business,&quot; HoM. &quot;To create readership or engagement, [...] we believe that the content is the best way of promoting our products. There's no [better] advertising campaign [...]. But then, which segments are we going to target, [with which] articles? Then there are no two organizations anymore, there is one,&quot; HoM.</td>
<td>Imported innovative schemas interpreted within the existing meaning structure (decoupled)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customization of content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-production of contents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cross-functional organization</td>
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<td>Customization of content</td>
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<td>Co-production of contents</td>
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<td>Cross-functional organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Representative first-order Categories</td>
<td>Illustrative Data</td>
<td>Second-Order Themes</td>
<td>Aggregate Dimensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Online subscription model</td>
<td>&quot;No one or at least not many take it for granted anymore that news should be free,&quot; HoC.</td>
<td>Replicated activities</td>
<td>(Non-significant) differences in day-to-day activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; CRM solution</td>
<td>&quot;We've made heavy investments in the CRM systems to make sure that we can align a print customer and a digital customer,&quot; CEO.</td>
<td>New (non-significantly different) activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Multifunctional teams</td>
<td>&quot;We have cross-functional teams... in the digital area they are not separate organizations any more. Now, we move together with the digital press team, with the premium editor team. Now, they're sitting together.&quot; Q: &quot;For that, you claim that the insights provided by these new premium editors are really important, right?&quot; A: &quot;Yes, very important. Also, we have a data scientist and an analytics team,&quot; HoM.</td>
<td>Modified (non-significantly different) activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Algorithm-based CMS</td>
<td>&quot;[We have] invested in innovative digital development, [because we] need to be multi-channel, [and] we have a completely new content management system. This makes it possible for journalists to work in a much more efficient way,&quot; CEO.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Journalists engage with readers on SMP</td>
<td>&quot;All of them [our journalists] are out there in social media and scan it for news or follow their own topics,&quot; EIC. &quot;We have always been dependent on our readers to find the topics. We have always got a lot of tips from the readers: 'You should really look into this. You should really talk to this person or I have something you should write about.' I hope that interaction grows in the future and gives us more opportunities to talk to the readers. Because I think there is a lot of news out there that we don’t get to hear about,&quot; EIC.</td>
<td>Policy conformity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Circulation revenue</td>
<td>&quot;No one or at least not many take it for granted anymore that news should be free,&quot; HoC. &quot;That is our core... give the readers the most important content they need to get a deeper understanding of their own lives and society,&quot; CEO.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Common public good</td>
<td>&quot;I think the newsroom would not exist without that. At least not our newsroom. In public service and other institutions they can react to news and do a good job but we have to create the news. We have to be the ones poking the politicians and the directors and managers making them feel a little uncomfortable,&quot; EIC.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Journalism is autonomous</td>
<td>Marketing staff now has access to engagement metrics and A/B tests every possible detail they can think of in the conversion funnel to subscriptions. The &quot;Everything about / Quick about&quot; customization choice offered to readers, who can access different types of content related to any piece of news by clicking on either of these options was replaced by standard &quot;Related stories.&quot; Collaboration among journalistic and managerial positions does not blend their separate functions. &quot;The newsroom is still 100 percent in charge of [deciding and] producing content, but once content has been produced, then marketing and the newsroom work together to select which is the appropriate content that is to be used on other platforms to promote the newspaper,&quot; HoM.</td>
<td>Practice conformity</td>
<td>Organizational conformity with institutional arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Subscription model</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; General store approach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Journalism and management as separate functions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Recovery of ordinary revenue</td>
<td>2016 online circulation revenue compensated for the first time drop in print circulation revenue. GOP and GOP minus deductions and amortizations reported by Schibsted Sverige Publishing recovered from 2016.</td>
<td>Economic capital</td>
<td>Short-term (perception of) capital gains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Recovery of GOP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; International award for innovation</td>
<td>INMA 'Best In Show' Global Media Award 2016 to SvD's Pyramid Project. Extensive coverage in International and American media of the 'Scandinavian Model', referring to success cases in some Scandinavian newspapers (including SvD) which managed to increase their online subscriptions.</td>
<td>Symbolic capital</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organizational solutions within new entrants

In this section I present my findings in a very different empirical setting: new ventures entering the field of written news. Before I outline the distinct entrepreneurial processes that I identify, it is convenient to introduce the studied context and the criteria that have led its theoretical sampling.

New entrants to the field of written news: empirical setting and case selection

Papers 3 and 4 focus on new entrants in a different geographical context: the greater New York metropolitan area. Despite the obvious distance between Sweden and the USA, the two contexts share many key similarities. Sweden and the USA post relatively similar levels of trust in news (39% of Swedes and 32% of Americans express an overall trust in news), and also a similar percentage of readers use SMPs for news (around 46% of the population in both countries), although, overall, online sources of news have a lower penetration in the USA (72%) than in Sweden (84%) (Newman et al., 2019). The main differences between these two contexts lie in their diverse competitive environment and their contrasting approaches to press subsidies and other forms of state support for journalism.

In the USA, some national newspapers such as the New York Times, and others to a much lesser extent, enjoy the scalability provided by their potentially global target market, a possibility that no national newspaper in Sweden experiences. Inversely, while local newspapers in Sweden remain relatively profitable thanks to a revenue mix that is traditionally less dependent on advertising, local and metro newspapers in the USA are suffering from slumping ad sales and retrenching fast, giving way as they reduce their covered areas to what has been termed “news deserts” (CJR, 2017). These communities, particularly those that are less wealthy and have less empowered citizens, are left with no one reporting on their local news. These differences in their market structures favor two dynamics that are relevant to the sampling and data gathering in this work: on the one hand, the pressure to think differently that Sweden’s bigger newspapers need to confront with no foreign news markets to compensate for their shrinking domestic revenues. This pressure, evident in the case of SvD, reinforces its adequacy as a polar case in the population of incumbent newspapers: high pressure to innovate and high public consideration of successful innovation; on the other hand, the possibilities that news deserts—void of any written news competition—may offer to new entrants in local news in the USA. This dynamic is evident in the study that will follow in the coming sections.

The gradual liberalization of European media markets (Ots & Picard, 2018: 5), “a decreased use of market interventions in the form of press subsidies and public service initiatives, and an increased reliance on market mechanisms in the functioning of markets for cultural products,” has eroded many of the initial
differences in the regulatory frameworks in the USA and Sweden. Yet differences linger basically to the extent that some operation and distribution subsidies to the local press in Sweden, some of them intended initially to avoid market concentration at the local level, are still in place and provide—despite discussion about its sustainability in the future—a certain stability to local newspapers. Importantly, although they diverge in their regulative frameworks and their competitive dynamics, both contexts—despite many differences and variations among and within them—also share the same sets of institutional norms and cultural-cognitive elements. These elements, as Chapter 3 describes, shape a similar understanding of journalistic professionalism and the business of the press market, i.e. newspapers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Founding date</th>
<th>Approx. revenue</th>
<th>Entrepreneurs (founders)</th>
<th>Approx. employees 1</th>
<th>Other primary occupation 2</th>
<th>Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TallStory</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11+</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UseNews</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wage job</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RevToday</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4+</td>
<td>Wage job</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BoroughNet (Corp)</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$700,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4+</td>
<td>Retainer agreement</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BoroughNet (Local)</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4+</td>
<td>Retainer agreement</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LocalNext</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$750,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15+</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FreshReport</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wage job + freelancing</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PlazaMedia</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6+</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ComPublishing</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Freelancing</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 This includes the entrepreneurial team and regular freelancers and trade contracts that the organization considers its members
2 In members of the entrepreneurial team
3 Revenue and employees only include corporate level data, not the whole network of franchisees
4 One of the founders has left the venture

All the studied new entrants are active members of the population of newspapers. Table 4 (adapted from Table 1 in Paper 4) presents the new entrant cases and Table 5 (adapted from Table 5 in Paper 4) overviews their main areas of activity and catalogs their most important structural properties. Their activities center in written news, their members define their activities as journalism and, when asked to identify their main “competitors,” invariably name incumbent newspapers. Additionally, in the mixed motives of the entrepreneurs behind these new entrants, I find a common pursuit of higher value. All cases manifest a social purpose to serve the good of the communities they report about. This externally oriented motivation shapes organizational goals in all cases (SvD and the new ventures), and it is normally shared by entrepreneurs, top executives and employees in them. Individuals across these organizations commonly declare their interest in serving their community, whether it is a local neighborhood, a whole city or the nation, by reporting on it and, therefore, helping their members know and understand what is important for them (Table 3.1 in Paper 3 and Table 5 in Paper 2 provide abundant pieces of evidence about this).
Capital, however, is not evenly distributed among the cases. One key aspect that sets all studied new entrants apart from SvD is their relatively lower levels of capital as defined by the field. All the new entrants, despite their disparities, enjoyed much weaker levels of field capital than SvD. Table 6 (adapted from Table 6 in Paper 4) provides some details on the levels of capital in the sampled cases, which I aggregate at the level of the entrepreneurial team. At the highest range of capital, LocalNext, BoroughNet (Corp.) and PlazaMedia, all three full-time organizations, enjoyed a relative abundance of economic, cultural and social capital. For example, LocalNext—founded by a respected executive in the field with past roles at top brands in the news industry and an extensive network of contacts in the media sector—started with about $500,000, an exceptional amount for a written local news startup. The figure was enough to make the founder feel safe for a minimum of 18 months. This funding allowed LocalNext to start with a team of four full-time employees, including one developer who was flown over from Europe before the launching of the news site. Another good illustration of moderate to high capital availability is PlazaMedia. It was started by a well-regarded personality in the field of local news, with extensive management and journalism experience and a relevant preexisting network of contacts—some of them top personalities—acquired during years of involvement in the field. The venture was also founded with enough funding—resulting from the sale of a previous news outlet—to employ staff upfront.

At the lowest end of capital availability, organizations such as UseNews, RevToday, FreshReport and ComPublishing were started with almost no equipment, or technological or physical resources, and very limited—or no—initial funding. The lack of economic capital did partly replicate in lower to moderate levels of social and cultural capital. The founder of UseNews had no education and no experience in professional journalism, although he enjoyed a relatively relevant network of followers on social media, while the founders of RevToday, FreshReport and ComPublishing are all professional journalists but with no management education and experience. Their social networks—with the exception of ComPublishing—were also extremely limited, or nonexistent, and provided little access to key resources for their ventures, whether in terms of local sources, possible advertisers or even readers in the communities they intended to report about. Also, none of these organizations were launched with any employee.

Two other organizations, BoroughNet (Local) and TailStory, can be placed somewhere in the middle ground between high capital availability and extreme capital scarcity. Both counted on some limited initial funding, although in the case of TailStory, with two founders entirely relying on the new venture, its economic capital became exhausted after only three months. Their relative levels of social and cultural capital were also moderate. BoroughNet was launched by a small team of freelancers and built on an existing base of customers, equipment and technology solutions provided by the franchise network it was affiliated to. TailStory also enjoyed the relatively extensive network of contacts the founders had amassed during years of experience as professional international
correspondents and the affiliation of one of the founders to an entrepreneurship university program. Their website was developed, pro bono, by one of these contacts. Culturally, both ventures also display a moderate (rather than high) level of capital. While the founders of TailStory had education and professional experience in journalism, they knew little about management. The enrollment of one of the founders in an entrepreneurship program was a late attempt to remedy this. Inversely, the founder of BoroughNet (local) had neither education nor professional experience in journalism but had run for many years his own firm of communication services. TailStory is the only aggregated capital-deprived venture that started with some level of symbolic capital. It was launched with a board of directors that, despite having no practical management responsibility, included top executives in three relevant players in the field: Human Rights Watch, Thomson Reuters and HuffPost. The founders skillfully used these names to get the attention of existing and new relationships.

Table 6 (adapted from Table 6 in Paper 4) presents additional pieces of evidence for every case on their available forms of field capital and their relative levels: aggregated and by form.

Towards an entrepreneurial process of institutional reproduction by sheltering

The studied new ventures displayed, as was the case in SvD, many differences in their properties. Some were advertising revenue oriented; some were circulation revenue oriented; others relied on grants and donations; and in each case their day-to-day activities were organized around these lines. Their ways of reporting were also diverse. Some were narrowly centered on hyperlocal community stories, others were more interested in specific topics, or even in sociodemographic segments, and their daily problems and search for solutions were informed by these different approaches to news. All of them, however, shared a strong interest in the social purpose associated with journalism—to play a democratic role by keeping their readers informed—and claimed to be doing just that: quality journalism, although with their own particular version of “quality.” The studied organizations, however, varied a lot in their time perspectives and the range of alternatives they considered for the future. These variations, strikingly, had little to do with their objective capital conditions. Some organizations showed a resilience to a lack of capital, particularly economic capital. This resulted from the organization by the entrepreneurs of a particular type of activity: sideline supportive economic activity not related to the venture. Coincidentally, informants in these part-time new ventures did not make statements similar to SvD’s “strategic shift to secure a future” for the organization, so common otherwise in other ventures.
In sum, in some deprived organizations, thanks to the organization of nonrelated supportive activities, low economic capital seemed to have little effect on their persistence. This fact, closely linked to the generation of nonrelated economic gains, had important implications. When the experience of constraints and problems was mediated, in some new ventures, by the organization of sideline occupations providing alternative sources of revenue to the entrepreneurs, two dynamics unfolded: first, a perception of being shielded from market demands; and second, a long-term orientation in goals and decisions, which these actors claimed was needed to do things “in the right way.” This process averted exit scenarios and—to the extent that novelty is rare in these organizations—largely contributed to reinforcing the conformity of daily activities resulting in institutional reproduction even in conditions of economic unsustainability. Figure 5 depicts the referred entrepreneurial process. In the following lines, before I provide details and empirical support to this process, I explain what I mean by nonrelated supportive activities and how “hybrid entrepreneurship” in this study does not correspond to the notion of the term as used in some neoinstitutionalism traditions.

In half of the cases, the focal ventures are the only main activity of their entrepreneurs. For the other half, the venture is run on a part-time basis, which I refer to as “hybrids.” Hybrid entrepreneurs hold other primary occupations that procure them with an alternative source of revenue. J, founder of UseNews, has a full-time wage job as a consultant in land development. At BoroughNet (local), S, its owner, has also kept providing communication services under retainer agreements to a few customers for years, becoming almost a member of their organizations. M has been freelancing since long before starting ComPublishing. The founders of FreshReport, E and B, have also been engaged in freelancing, although E briefly stopped her freelancing to fully commit to FreshReport. All these occupations, in the economic scarcity of these ventures, provide significant alternative sources of revenue that become the solution these entrepreneurs find to get their jobs done.

It is important to note here that “hybrid” in this work does not refer to “hybrid units” (D’Aunno, Sutton & Price, 1991) or “hybrid organizations” (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Pache & Santos, 2010) in the sense that the institutional logics tradition has assigned to the term. Research in this literature has applied the hybrid denomination to organizations that combine different logics and need to cope with their competing demands and expectations. All my cases, if considered as subjects
to the different “logics” of journalism and business, would qualify, from an institutional logics perspective, as hybrids. My use of the term “hybrid,” however, is different. In this work, hybrids are entrepreneurs who engage in their ventures while simultaneously remaining employed for wages (Folta, Delmar & Wennberg, 2010), which I extend to retainer agreements for nonemployment long-term contracts and significant and regular freelancing to a lasting set of patrons. Both are commonplace modes of “wage employment” in the service industries of media and communication. Hybrids, in this connotation, are a common form of entrepreneurship in the field of written news.

The referred to nonrelated-to-the-venture supportive activities bring important implications to hybrid entrepreneurs. The generation of nonrelated-to-the-venture economic capital gains to the entrepreneur is accompanied by two key developments: first, a perception of being shielded from market demands; and second, a long-term goal orientation. Both are important in terms of their organizational persistence and the possibilities of institutional reproduction even in the direst economic conditions.

The perception of economic stability resulted in my cases from very different objective circumstances, but because the entrepreneurs in hybrid ventures felt they could make their living from the sideline set of work activities, their ventures were shielded from market demands in a way that other ventures were not. Hybrid entrepreneurs, as a result, were running their organizations with greater autonomy and with fewer financial worries than their full-time counterparts. This, in turn, protected their institutionally informed purposes and goals as their “occupation in quality reporting” was shaping them. In all these cases, day-to-day activities related to their local community reporting occupation were safeguarded by the “solution” provided by sideline occupations. These solutions were in some cases already in the conditions under which the ventures were founded. But in other cases, sideline occupations were purposefully organized when the sustainability of the venture was at stake. FreshReport exemplifies this. The venture was started with minimal freelancing and one initial investment from the private savings of the founders. When – as they were running out of money – they faced the possibility that they may have to stop reporting on their community, they increased their sideline occupations (initially with more freelancing and later with one wage job). Immediately, their initial allocation of commercial and reporting roles to both founders was abandoned, and both allocated their available venture time to their priority commitment: reporting related activities.

A second consequence is the dominant timespan orientation of actors in hybrid ventures. Across all nonhybrid cases, entrepreneurs and organizational members place expected outcomes in the short to medium term. PlazaMedia monitors performance in the short run and has no time to waste to land results that will guarantee – for a period of time – its survival. Similarly, LocalNext, while still assessing the returns on its recently launched membership campaign, has already initiated negotiations for a third venture round and the whole venture’s future
hinges on the immediate results of this movement. Even TailStory is setting high expectations and defining goals that need to be achieved in the coming year, as one of its founders claims referring to 2019: “[T]he big thing for the next year is figuring out how to do products that will generate money and increase our journalism at the same time.” Hybrids, however, commonly take the long view, which they link to doing things “the right way.” S, owner of BoroughNet (Local), says: “I could take it slowly and get it done the right way.” One of the entrepreneurs of FreshReport agrees: “Right now it feels we can continue in this pattern” [B]. M (ComPublishing) adds: “I can live modestly and try to grow this thing slowly because… right now my ambitions aren’t that great.” Importantly, in these cases, as institutional purposes take over and everyday activity aligns with them, other goals that may conflict with them are postponed or, provisionally, forfeited. FreshReport again provides an exemplary illustration of this. Its founders understand that, with almost no commercial activity and all their available time centered on their daily occupation of community reporting, their initial goal – to become a market alternative to the local legacy player – is currently unachievable. Yes, “it is a long-term project, and it is going to take a really long time” [E].

Table 7 (adapted from Tables 4.2 and 5 in Paper 3) presents pieces of evidence for the future orientation of every case, detailing their considered alternatives for the future and the time perspective that frames them.

When the perception of shielding from market demands combines with a long-term perspective, institutionally informed motives and day-to-day uneconomic activities – which otherwise could be compromised – reproduce unchallenged. While SvD or LocalNext, with abundant capital, even in economic form, PlazaMedia, with moderate economic capital, and TailStory, in conditions of capital scarcity, share a framing of current strains as threatening the future survival of the organization (and therefore the activities their members carry out), hybrids do not. In ComPublishing, FreshReport, UseNews and BoroughNet (local), all the hybrids in my sample, exit is not considered as a possible immediate scenario, even if the economic returns in none of these ventures are enough to sustain them. Even when hybrids are directly questioned about which conditions may result in exit, entrepreneurs fail to imagine such an outcome as voluntary for the time they remain engaged in the venture. J only imagines exit if a fatality occurs to him: “[I]f something happens to me, right?” (Founder of UseNews). For M of ComPublishing, exit would be an existential epiphany he expresses with a touch of irony: “I know that there is a price to that freedom, but I don’t think it is the price of my existence [laughter].”

In nonhybrids the possibility of exit is a pressing reality that shapes many behaviors. During the field research, the founder of PlazaMedia, when working on the business plan for 2018, understood that the business was not sustainable. Then, in a mode similar to SvD, she decided to change strategy, question some of her assumptions about the business and launch a membership program that would
change its advertising-only revenue strategy. She set specific goals and outcomes: “If by the end of this year I haven’t reached the 3000 subscribers mark, I am closing down… I have already informed my employees.” The results met expectations and the business continues but, as the founder and employees acknowledge, the possibility of exit lingers. Similarly, only a few weeks before I was withdrawing from the field, LocalNext announced it was selling off its local sites and pivoting to consulting. In stark contrast, in RevToday, doubts about the economic sustainability of the venture were prompting the founder to consider an “imaginative” solution: Start to freelance and, by becoming a hybrid, perhaps manage to sustain what he cares most about, i.e. his daily occupation in community reporting.

In sum, all the studied hybrids share a sense of being shielded from market demands and frame their goals and aspirations in a long-term time perspective that dispenses with exit scenarios that would put an end to their activities. In these conditions, with the organizational fix that part-time occupation procures, their valued daily work persists in reproducing—despite economic unsustainability—the ideals and concepts that shape it. Because, as I show in the following section, novelty in these organizations is a rare occurrence (I could only identify one instance of divergent novelty, specifically, in the case of UseNews), the replication of schemas resulting from this process largely contributes to the reproduction of preexisting institutional arrangements in the field.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Structural properties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| TailStory              | Not-for-profit legal form and accountable independent governance: Volunteer board with majority vote of external members.  
Locally based topical journalism: provides context to a changing selection of social crises.  
Multimedia native: Most contents take storytelling forms that combine text, video, audio and illustrations.  
Main channels of distribution of content: partnerships and licensing.  
Coproduction strategy.  
Mixed revenue streams: Advertising free, grants have been recently complemented by reader memberships, multimedia coproduction and licensing to third parties.                                                                                      |
| UseNews                | Community-based reporting and curation of news: Most content is curated from third parties or produced by the audience, which exerts control over its quality.  
Main channels of distribution of content: Audience is almost exclusively reached in social media platforms.  
Network structure: undesignated organization, with most activities organized by non-organizational members, and existing organizational members with almost total autonomy.  
Advertising-based revenue model.                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| RevToday               | Bilingual, hyperlocal and community-focused content partly produced by local citizens.  
Activist-driven investigative reporting oriented to local impact.  
Main channels of distribution of content: website, social media platforms and print.  
Mixed revenue streams: advertising, memberships and grants.                                                                                                                                                                    |
| BoroughNet             | Franchise: Franchisees receive training and business-side support, and are monitored to guarantee minimum quality reporting standards. Franchisees share content and advertising.  
Provision of hyperlocal news: reporting led by community-embedded journalists.  
Main channels of distribution of content: website and social media platforms.  
Advertising-based revenue model.                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| (Corp and Local)       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| LocalNext              | Provision of local news: aggregated and original.  
Millennial friendly.  
Mobile first channels of distribution of content: daily newsletter, social media and website.  
Mixed revenue streams: live events, membership, advertising and spin-off services.                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
Service to the community: News are provided as a service to undercovered communities.  
Main channels of distribution of content: daily newsletter and website.  
Mixed revenue streams: Events, advertising and online subscriptions.                                                                                                                                                      |
| PlazaMedia             | Provision of hyper-local news: reporting led by community embedded journalists.  
Service to the community: News is provided with no paywall as a service to undercovered communities.  
Main channels of distribution of content: website and social media platforms.  
Mixed revenue streams: advertising revenue complemented by memberships.                                                                                                                                                        |
Service to the community: News is provided with no paywall as a service to undercovered communities.  
Main channels of distribution of content: daily newsletter and social media platforms.  
Mixed revenue streams: advertising and online subscriptions.                                                                                                                                                                  |
# TABLE 6
Summary of Evidence of Availability of Forms of Capital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Aggregate</th>
<th>Capital Forms</th>
<th>Illustrative data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>They launch their pilot project with about 55,000$, but almost no equipment, technological or physical resources. In three months they had run out of money but managed to develop a proof of concept (internal documents and interviews with one entrepreneur.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TailStory</td>
<td>Moderate-low</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>The entrepreneurial team had education and a long experience in the profession of journalism (as foreign correspondants working for NYT, BCC and others), but limited knowledge and no experience in management and business. Both entrepreneurs had a wide network of preexisting social connections, although largely limited to former coworkers and international correspondents. The first employee joins after six months. New employees are either expatriated to, or largely hired in, low-cost locations (internal and external documents and interviews with one entrepreneur).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>The venture starts gathering an &quot;advisory council&quot; (with no management function) that includes a few brass names in the field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>Almost no equipment, technological or physical resources. No funding. &quot;It started as with zero resources, actually... [it was just me and] so it went almost two years without making any money&quot; (Entrepreneur). &quot;Except for a few t-shirt No formal education or professional experience in journalism, although he was Editor in Chief of his high school newspaper, a contributor to the college newspaper and an active blogger. The entrepreneur had built a network of online followers with whom he shared an interest in urban development or in weather conditions (other local surfers).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UseNews</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Unobserved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>No funding and almost no equipment, technological or physical resources. &quot;We did not have any resources beyond the normal things that you have as a private citizen. I had a computer&quot; (Entrepreneur).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>The founders had education in journalism and one of them a long experience in local newspapers. A small network of sources in the area, but no access to advertising customers. No employee in the first five years (corroborated by the first employee).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>Unobserved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RevToday</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Economic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case</td>
<td>Aggregate</td>
<td>Capital Forms</td>
<td>Illustrative data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BoroughNet (Corp)</td>
<td>Moderate-high</td>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BoroughNet (Local)</td>
<td>Moderate-low</td>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LocalNext</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case</td>
<td>Aggregate</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FreshReport</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PlazaMedia</td>
<td>Moderate-high</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ComPublishing</td>
<td>Low-moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case</td>
<td>Capital (aggregate)</td>
<td>Form</td>
<td>Shielding from market demands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TailStory</td>
<td>Moderate-low</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UseNews</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>Yes. Monetary income from other primary occupation covers operating costs and provides financial stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RevToday</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case</td>
<td>Capital (aggregate)</td>
<td>Form</td>
<td>Shielding from market demands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BoroughNet (Corp)</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Fulltime</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BoroughNet (Local)</td>
<td>Moderate-low</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>Yes. Monetary income from other primary occupation covers operating costs and provides financial stability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LocalNext</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Significant differences emerging in a field in crisis: the case of new entrants

**Novelty: significant differences in some structural properties**

The organizations I study here are diverse and present a high degree of formal heterogeneity. SvD is a legacy newspaper with more than 100 years in the field, occupies a primary position in the Swedish market and its entrepreneurship has recently become a role model for many other newspapers around the globe. LocalNext is an emergent online native news provider targeting millennials with local sites that now cover three metropolitan areas along the western coast of the USA and has become a flagbearer of the new entrants that are expected to shape the future of written news. PlazaMedia covers one large borough in New York city with a small newsroom run by a founder whose journalism entrepreneurship has been covered by the New York Times. In FreshReport, a marriage of two investigative journalists, both working part-time, is bringing high-quality news to an impoverished beach community on the western coast of the USA. The sole owner and employee at ComPublishing, M, struggles to make ends meet, juggling different occupations while managing to provide uncompromising reporting to a small town wrestling with its own post-industrialism challenges.

As expected, there were plenty of differences in their daily activities. Sometimes and in some places, the differences were apparently immense. At SvD’s impressive headquarters in central Stockholm, journalists and management staff share glass-walled state-of-the-art open offices, where monitors throw in real-time readership data. Journalists there will start their day by consulting how readers have been reacting to the latest news, how they are, perhaps, commenting on other topics and incorporate these tips into their reporting, perhaps suggesting to a junior marketing staffer that a particular topic is becoming hot and that something should be done to promote it online. Most read articles may also be picked and considered in the planning of the newspaper’s landing page so that the chances of getting new subscribers increase. That day at PlazaMedia two reporters would talk over their desks about a recent local story, to which the sales rep—with whom they share their light-drenched single-room office—would also add her own comments in an open discussion about what really matters to their neighbors, the conversation eventually dying when the founder, from her own desk, gave direction. At the same time, M, the sole man at ComPublishing, would be sitting behind his laptop at The Revolution: an old abandoned cinema theater turned into a noisy coffeeshop and co-working space where he spends most of his day surrounded by mechanics’ workshops, a bakery, a coffee roaster and many other “indi” ventures. While he edits a recent interview to a local business developer in town, he will also engage in informal conversations with a passerby, perhaps a mother with two toddlers, and learn about her opinion on some local news. The passerby could perhaps also be a customer, who (on his/her own initiative) has
been advertising on ComPublishing for the last couple of years, just because “it’s the place to be [if you live and work here].” That same morning, E and B from FreshReport would be at home, working on the standup stations they have tailored with used cardboard box cutouts. They have just moved in, and the move is not yet complete. Half-empty boxes litter everywhere. Their youngest child is staying at home today, sick, and will be walking around and demanding attention until he finally falls asleep on a sofa. This would not interfere much with their work. B is finishing the introductory text to the daily roundup he prepares curating news published elsewhere in their community. He will soon send it out to their paying members—not subscribers, because those who have registered will also receive it even if they do not pay. E would be hastily finishing an in-depth report on last year’s financial statements of the casinos that populate the area. The report breaks news that will eventually make it to the national press, but she cannot enjoy the work; she is in a real hurry because the deadline for a freelance assignment is approaching and there is still much to do.

Despite the extensive diversity, nothing in these activities—when part of the organizational structure of these firms—is not specified, covered or anticipated in the templates that Chapter 3 describes. Certainly, many of these activity parts of the structural properties of these organizations exhibit some degree of novelty. Daily roundups, curation and memberships, as combined by FreshMedia, are relatively new and still uncommon in the population of newspapers. Yet, these differences are part of the identified solutions arising in the field of written news and therefore not significant.

Yet, other organizations in my sample (TailStory, UseNews and RevToday) feature in their structural properties an assemblage of particularistic unfolding activities that do not reproduce arising organizational solutions in the field of written news, which I identify as instances of significant differences to the institutional arrangements that Chapter 3 details. Table 8 provides summaries of evidence of significant and nonsignificant differences in the structural properties of the studied new ventures. Extensive details about existing templates in the field, wider contextual conditions and instances of novelty in the sampled cases can be found in Tables 3, 4 and 5 in Paper 4. Behind I literally reproduce from Paper 4 the five instances of significant difference accumulated in the structural properties of TailStory, UseNews and RevToday.

RevToday is a bilingual, hyperlocal and community-focused newspaper supported by advertising, memberships and grants, and distributed on its website, SMPs and in sporadic print editions. Apart from its exploration of memberships, nothing in how this newspaper is supported and distributed is new to commonly arising approaches in the field of written news. However, the way RevToday produces news is significantly different. Content in this newspaper is partly produced by local citizens who volunteer for very low pay to deliver an activist-driven investigative reporting strongly oriented to generate local impact. Although citizen-reported journalism and activist-driven solutions journalism are
not unknown to the field of written news, they remain extremely uncommon and are often contested, and no solution templates seem to be available in these areas. Approaches to user-generated reports appear to be a very unconventional solution that involves the community in deciding and reporting on the issues going on in local areas. These approaches are commonly defined as nonjournalistic and are often questioned and contested. Solutions journalism (i.e. a combination of putting problem solving at the center of the narrative, focusing on the details of implementation and presenting evidence of results) is often suggested by some actors in the field (e.g. the Solutions Journalism Network and the International Journalists’ Network) as a way to bring value to news, but emerging initiatives are uncommon, successful cases remain extremely rare and all attempts to introduce lasting “solutions journalism” approaches in legacy newsrooms have so far failed.

Similarly, TailStory accumulates a large number of areas featuring novel approaches. As a not-for-profit news outlet its revenue model is heavily dependent on donations and grants, although it is also exploring memberships and other revenue streams such as coproduction fees and licensing. As a result of its coproduction strategy, it partners with other news outlets to produce and distribute its contents. All these activities are low-to-moderately innovative in the field. What makes TailStory significantly different, however, is its approach to locally based topical journalism in single-story reporting and native multimedia multiformats. TailStory’s single-story reporting strongly resonates with the idea of vertical journalism. This is a concept that is occasionally mentioned in “future-of-news” forums as a possible way to create value in news reporting, but practical references are scarce, and no organizing scripts in this area are available. The combination of formats in TailStory is also significantly different. New formats beyond video are still rare, and although podcasting is in revival, the combination of long texts, video, animations and podcasts that TailStory deploys significantly departs from multimedia approaches in written news outlets that largely enhance dominant text formats by adding short videos and complementary podcasting.

Finally, UseNews also demonstrates a high degree of significant difference. This community-based reporting news outlet reaches its audience almost exclusively through SMPs (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) and coproduces and codistributes much of its contents in partnership with a local radio station. Its approach to a wholly distributed audience (no distribution role assigned to its own website) and strong dependence on a partnership for production, distribution and revenue are uncommon in the field of written news. Early attempts to monetize wholly distributed strategies (e.g. BuzzFeed and Now This) are today considered unsustainable and their practitioners are retrenching to mixed distribution designs. It is a coproduction strategy with the audience, however, that differentiates UseNews most significantly from current templates and arising organizing schemas. Although a basic flow of contents and news curation is provided by the venture’s team, most of UseNews’s content is organically produced by the audience. While curation is a moderately novel approach in some written news
startups, a news outlet whose content is dominated by audience participation significantly differs from journalistic solutions to the production of news.

Common to these three cases is the emergence of significantly different solutions, which I will refer to as “novelty,” as an endogenous process in which activities are not copied from other organizations in the field, but “discovered” in the work of actors as they deal with organizational challenges or problems in their attempts to get their jobs done, carry out their projects, finish their tasks, do what their valued occupation requires and so on in conditions of capital scarcity. Why and how does this happen?

**Towards an entrepreneurial process of novelty by new situated capital**

All instances of significant difference are forged in problem-dealing activities completed in overall conditions of low capital as defined by the field—and particularly deprivation of economic capital (Table 6 provides details on capital availability for all cases). Importantly, not all cases experiencing low field capital ended with significant differences. Only some of them did. Although individuals in all the organizations faced capital constraints, resource trade-offs, tensions and paradoxes in their decisions, those bringing novelty experienced the combination of (a) encountering challenging problems with (b) the constraints imposed by low capital in a specific way. First, extreme scarcity of economic capital significantly inhibited—at least some of—the initial ideas the actors (entrepreneurs but not only them) had in mind when considering and starting their activity. Second, while in many individuals, constraints often deactivated action, in startups exhibiting instances of divergent novelty, constraints did not obstruct the commitment of their focal actors to activities, tasks and projects. And third, crucially, in their attempts to get their jobs done, these actors directed their attention towards “capital alternatives.” By capital alternatives, I mean available—but often functionally uncertain—inputs not considered capital in relation to the field. These capital alternatives were invariably provided by the diverse personal structures of the focal actors. In the conditions provided by this situated “new capital,” the emerging differences in day-to-day activities, when sustained, were incorporated into the structural properties of these ventures. Interestingly, novelty in organizational structures, in these cases, did not compromise claims of organizational policy conformity, even if some of their activities now, as a result of their significant differences, evidence poor fit with those claims. Figure 6 depicts this process.
With only one exception (single-story reporting in TailStory), in each of the instances of significant difference I could document, or directly observe, how in conditions of low capital, constraints inhibited common responses, did not obstruct commitment to activities and directed the attention of the focal actor to uncertain forms of “noncapital” inputs. In the following lines I illustrate with empirical evidence from some selected exemplary cases the whole process resulting in structural properties significantly diverging from institutional templates. Tables 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 provide supporting pieces of evidence for all the cases.

Experience of problems/constraints

TailStory’s solution to native multimedia formats exemplifies perfectly the process of novelty emergence by new situated capital. The initial solution for TailStory’s founders was to produce multimedia content. It made perfect sense for their rather abstract idea of single reporting, and both entrepreneurs—one coming from print news, the other from broadcasting—were bringing the right complementary skills to do it. Ideas of multimedia content dominate the field of written news, with an increased focus on complementary video and audio contents. However, nothing in their initial approach suggested their current radically original combination of illustrations, short videos, audio and long reads in most of their stories. The first time such a combination appeared in TailStory, it resulted from a particular experience of resource constraints. One of the entrepreneurs articulates this vividly: “We wanted to do a video on a man who was raped... then, because of the content we didn’t want to show his face, and he was also talking about the past... we could not do a video. So that’s when we thought we would do illustration. That’s the first illustrated video we did” (Entrepreneur). Their common response, to produce a video, was this time not an option. In this specific instance, the organization did not have the economic capital that commonly fixes this problem (a studio in which to shoot anonymized interviews, cash to purchase archival video material to portray the context where the events had occurred, and so on). Importantly, this constraint did not obstruct their commitment to the project. Participants in the project “assumed they could fix it” (Entrepreneur) and kept trying to complete the task, even if their lack of capital made the optimal approach not available anymore. As participants in the project scrambled for solutions, one unexpected and, otherwise, of little value input became apparent: Someone in the team, K (husband of one of the founders)
had drawing skills and could illustrate the events. The solution was not optimal, but the task was completed, and it worked well enough to be used in other projects, becoming a structural property of TailStory today. For the other instance of significant difference in TailStory, single-story reporting, I could not find evidence supporting two of the elements of the experience of problems and constraints just described: inhibition of a common response and attention directed toward capital alternatives. Single reporting is already present in the very first sketches of the venture and solidly conditioned by a central form of capital in the field available to both founders: proficient investigative journalism skills gained from years of experience as international reporters in legacy news organizations. Yet, at least partly, the current form of single-story reporting that TailStory uses differs from its original conception, which I suspect can be explained at least partly by a lack of sufficient resources. In any case, I do not consider this instance to be supportive of the model I presented above and discuss later.

An experience of constraints similar to TailStory’s drives all the instances of significant difference in the other studied organizations, even in those ones in which the entrepreneur claims that their solutions had already been anticipated by their original designs. Table 11 provides supporting evidence for the way every sampled case experiences problems and constraints. UseNews provides another vivid example of the particular experience of problems and constraints that drives the process of novelty by new situated capital. In his blog, J, the founder, had been asking media players to increase their coverage of community planning issues. An excerpt of one of his blog entries in January 2010 (years before he started UseNews) highlights his view on new media:

Nascent new media has spawned a culture of self-creators and a brave new world of hyperlocal publications and news aggregation sites… The people are empowered. They’re listening to what their neighbors are saying on Twitter, writing about issues of local concern on their blog platforms, and reading hyperlocal sites.

This simple idea was at the core of the inception of UseNews. A natural disaster hitting his community encouraged him to start to self-publish, mutating his former reporting on his personal SMP accounts (Twitter and Facebook) into a branded product: UseNews. “I created it to fill a need, a niche that I saw... as a journalist. I started reporting as a citizen” (Entrepreneur). His initiative attracted attention but remained strongly limited to his own first-hand reporting. As he engaged in his reporting, he noted, however, that—thanks to the dramatic expansion that social media were experiencing during those years—many photos, videos and other information provided by residents had gone viral during and after this natural disaster. When, one year later, another hurricane—with forecasted devastating effects—approached, he wanted to increase his commitment. J still had no economic capital to hire journalists who could help him produce the first-hand reporting the needed. This time, however, he would do it differently. His attention went to the freely available alternative resources he had observed the
Findings revisited: entrepreneurial processes of reproduction and novelty

previous year. This time, instead of relying primarily on his own reporting, he used—as his primary source of information—all the social media content that he knew his neighbors were to produce and share on SMPs. J managed that year to provide—by tracking, selecting, fact-checking, curating, redistributing and amplifying pieces of information and rumors produced and posted by his neighbors—extensive breaking news that remained vital in the area even months after the catastrophic event. These contents—“dependent on more than 200,000 contributors” (Entrepreneur)—became the central source of his reporting. This time, the role of UseNews attracted national attention as a “critical information resource during the hurricane and the ensuing recovery efforts” (Excerpt from Champions of Change, The White House, 2013). Note that this atypical journalism is not a mere echo of what the founder was anticipating in his blog years before.

What kept some of these individuals committed to activities despite the limitations that low capital was imposing on them? Invariably, it was the occupational ideology of journalism that provided these actors with bigger-than-themselves duties that required resources they apparently lacked. It was a deep sense of normative responsibility, in the form of social purpose articulated in reporting news, that sustained the efforts of these practitioners—entrepreneurs and other organizational members—despite the disadvantages they encountered. But the emergence of novelty required more than remaining committed to activities and tasks in conditions of scarcity.

In the studied cases, significant differences arose in activities of individuals dealing with organizational challenges and problems when a lack of capital—as defined by the field—restricted the actual availability of common-in-the-field responses. But, crucially, these instances resulted in novelty only when they directed their attention to available but valueless and functionally uncertain inputs. It is the varied personal structure of the actors involved that provided these inputs.

Diversity in personal structures

All the actors involved in the emergence of significantly different solutions, when confronted with the limitations that capital scarcity imposed on them, in their commitment to get their jobs done, directed their attention toward what their own experience, skills, abilities, artistry, knowledge, interests et cetera could provide. Key inputs in the emergent solutions always originated in their personal histories and were, therefore, retrieved from memory. In all the cases, significant differences originated in the confluence of low capital with highly diverse personal structures. Sometimes the inputs retrieved from memory had been acquired as individuals engaged with the exchange field of written news, sometimes they did not, but in all cases, they were at hand in the idiosyncratic personal histories of the actors involved. Illustrations on the personal structures of actors in all the focal organizations are detailed in Table 9.
For example, in UseNews, J had gained knowledge on the possibilities of freely available content posted by residents in his experience of the market during a hurricane emergency. When he was unable to hire journalists to cover yet another hurricane approaching his community, that knowledge provided him with a way to act. K, in TailStory, knew how to do illustrations. This self-taught hobby came in handy when they could not afford the video infrastructure that they needed to cover one sensitive story. RevToday prints educational flyers as an alternative to costly print editions and hard-to-reach online audiences. One of the founders, C, had been engaged in activism during his years in college. None of these inputs were part of the initial predispositions in these actors when entering the field of written news, yet they have become standard activity in their ventures.

New situated capital

Key to the outcome—in the outlined entrepreneurial process—of significant differences in the structural properties of surviving ventures is the transformation of valueless, uncertain inputs at hand into situated new-to-the-field capital that granting new possibilities of action- is incorporated to the organization. That is, the inputs at hand that actors use to approximate solutions are freely—or very cheaply—available and rarely used as resources by other players in the field, simply because, as such or in such use, they are not considered capital in relation to it. In other words, what becomes capital for individuals in these ventures is not considered capital by other actors in the field. Therefore, when these inputs are incorporated to the ventures—because there is not a capital market for them in the field—it does not require acquisition in any formal process.

In UseNews, the founder uses content generated in SMPs by a network of over 200,000 local residents to construct his reporting. This free input, which—at that time and there—no other player considered of any value for journalism purposes, performs as central capital in UseNews. This situated capital is appropriated by UseNews at the same time as participants “agree” to become active in the organization. C, entrepreneur of RevToday, largely depends for his reporting on citizen reporters, some of them undergraduate students in journalism but many others just neighbors in the community with no education or experience in journalism: an aggregated form of cultural capital other newspapers consider of little or no value. In RevToday, activism ideas and mobilization tactics that have no perceived value in legacy newspapers also play a key role in how C carries out his activities: “We definitely did some articles on it but also made a flyer and I went to every house in that neighborhood and gave them a flyer… it was an educational flyer… and then at the public meeting, 40 people came to the public meeting... they came out and they spoke out. And we got the meeting on video and we put the video out [on the newspaper’s website] to everybody” (Entrepreneur). In this case, the educational flyer and the community attending a public meeting perform as aggregated cultural capital that provides the resources needed for the production of news in RevToday. Again, there is little formality in the way these resources are “transferred” to the venture. In the instances of
significant difference in TailStory the dynamics are different. The illustration skills of the spouse of one of the founders became a key free input, not acquired by any formal process and rarely used as such in the field of written news. Similarly, the codistributed and coproduction approach in TailStory results from cultural and economic capital informally “acquired” in the performance of casual partnerships with other media players, which they access through their network of personal contacts.

It is the performance of these inputs at hand as they are part of approximate solutions in the activities of actors getting their jobs done that, as new situated capital, grants new possibilities of action. Two notions follow from this. First, through experiencing these activities, individuals involved in them develop new predispositions. Some valueless inputs gain value, some unexpected solutions work, some differences in organizational activities gain traction in the changing objective conditions of the field. All these experiences of specific events that happen in the field as they carry out their activities are integrated into how these practitioners think and act. Second, when succeeding in providing a solution, albeit not a perfect one, these inputs become capital that as it aggregates at the organizational level is key for keeping the venture going.

(Significant) differences in day-to-day activities

Across all cases, ex ante ideas largely corresponded to solutions commonly offered as responses to the current challenges experienced by written news organizations and therefore not significantly different for the field. This does not preclude the possibility of original new-to-the-field ideas, particularly when the field is dominated by a sense of innovative urgency, but at moderate levels of related-to-the-field cultural capital, this—in my cases—was a very rare occurrence (perhaps the vertical journalism ideated by TailStory). Also, importantly, the final execution of these ideas, strongly shaped by the experience of economic capital constraints, greatly diverged from their original sketch. Video illustrations, one of the most significant differences in TailStory, were not part of its novel approach to native multimedia formats. Similarly, the single-story reporting that this organization does today in codistributed and coproduction partnerships can only partially be found in its original conception: a general approach to single-issue reporting that gave no role to partners. In UseNews—the only case with initially low cultural capital—the earlier ideas of its founder were, however, already relatively different, although, as in the other cases, the distance between their original sketch (an abstract interest in the possibilities of online self-creation) and final execution (a wholly distributed, community-based, audience coproduced news flow) is substantial.

In sum, significant differences in my data can hardly be traced back to “original” ex ante ideas. Rather, they are emergent solutions that originate in the experience of capital—specifically economic—constraints.
Organizational conformity (partly decoupled)

Importantly, even if the significant differences in day-to-day activities shape the structural properties of these organizations, the actors involved do not necessarily manifest new institutional interests. Across all the cases with novel structural properties, the new possibilities for action that these actors experience are not the result of discursive strategies attempting to theorize intended different activities, but of specific actions at concrete moments and places in which valueless inputs become new-to-the-field capital. Old and new in these cases blend together in claims of policy conformity to existing institutional arrangements that differ little from the ones I find in organizations with no significant differences in their day-to-day activities. I illustrate this below with exemplary data of each case bringing novelty. Table 12 provides supporting evidence for all cases.

RevToday consists of an assemblage of activities that only approximate to quality journalism. It provides impact-oriented investigative journalism, but it does it thanks to the local citizens who volunteer for very low pay to produce reporting and to use activism tactics that rally members of the community in the generation of some of the news that gets reported. C, the founder, but also other members of the organization know that these inputs can work and behave accordingly. To some external stakeholders, particularly those with little or no direct experience of RevToday, what they do is at best “intriguing” and the venture has received critics. The organization, however, for those involved in it, works well enough to keep the daily activities of its members going. The combination of these resources—not considered capital in the field of written news—blends into the activities of its members with a stringent abidance to the journalistic norms of corroboration and autonomy. This “standard”, in the view of the entrepreneur, differs little from journalism, perhaps, in that “I don’t hold back in the way that a traditional journalist who worked for a corporate newspaper would bite their tongue” (Entrepreneur). Similarly, in TailStory its novel multimedia native formats originate in various iterations of approximate solutions to projects that worked thanks to a similar combination of resources from new capital: the initially valueless illustration skills of an informal member of the organization or the discovered podcasting knowhow in a personal contact one of the entrepreneurs originally contacted just for a text-only-based project. These resources have cumulatively combined into original multimedia formats that work well enough to be driving the future direction of the venture. These and other inputs, actions and goals in this organization have become an intrinsic part of how their organizational members think and act in their daily occupations. Although many activities in this venture are strikingly—and significantly—different to what templates in the field prescribe, no one in the organization claims to be doing anything really new. All they want is to produce the “best possible investigative journalism” they can. After being repeatedly asked about the possibility that they are significantly different from other news organizations, one of the founders concedes that they could be “more experimental when it comes to content.” Finally, UseNews delivers community-based reporting because most of its
content is organically produced by the audience, curated—only occasionally—by informal journalism norms and distributed by members of the community and external media outlets. This solution—initially a tentative approximation to solve a public emergency situation—proved to work well enough to launch the business and now plays a central role in how J and his current employee understand and engage with journalism and the business of written news. In previous sections I have shown how these activities in UseNews were not designed but emerged in a particular experience of constraints. Yet, in this case—a hybrid shielded from market demands—declarations of stringent obevance to existing norms in the field—“I apply journalism to everything I get” (Entrepreneur)—mix more openly than in other cases with claims of compliance to innovative schemas—“I saw that [user-generated content, i.e. people’s ability to become their own reporters] was going to be a big deal.” The marriage of schemas has not always fit together seamlessly. Organizational members know that the audience is sometimes not engaged enough to produce a continuous flow of news and the founder has needed to recycle and outsource content. Occasionally the founder has also encountered difficulties in fact-checking what is published… Despite the difficulties, in the aftermath of the weather emergency that consolidated the venture, J became a “media superstar” and was honored at the White House as a Champion of Change for his “accurate news reports” in a moment of crisis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Aggregated difference</th>
<th>Areas of differences</th>
<th>Pieces of evidence (areas of differences)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td></td>
<td>The board of directors (x5, three of them not owners and linked to Human Rights Watch, Thomson Reuters and HuffPost) could theoretically outvote and sack both founders. It is in charge of finances and strategy, controls management and is responsible for TailStory’s mission. It provides evidence and creates a controlling authority (largely nominal). About 80% of its total revenue comes from grants (corroborated by internal documents, interviews with internal and external stakeholders).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single story reporting (significant)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Single-issue reporting that puts a team of journalists on one crisis at a time and stays with it, providing unique depth, continuity and understanding to events. They are topical, not focused on breaking news but still concerned with them. Originally concerned with avoiding parachuting and wanted to produce longer stories. This was the original premise in the very first conversations (corroborated by their production outcome and by interviews with employees).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TailStory High</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;A lot of our news stories are long-form journals, articles... a 3,000-word piece or longer. And we condense [them] into one- or two-minute social media video animation... into a graphic novel... into a podcast&quot; (Founder). &quot;In their native multimedia [approach] not one medium dominates&quot; (External stakeholder). Already in their pilot project but not central. &quot;We had no idea how important it would be to have multimedia contact&quot; (Founder).</td>
<td>Initially their website was central. Then, they started with people they knew within their existing network and offered their content. As the relationship was deepening the agreements developed bidirectionally (e.g. offering photography) and ended like project-based joint ventures. Early examples of just content distribution include The Guardian. Later examples of coproduced content include Foreign Affairs (written stories) and World Policy (cobranded podcasting). This approach to distribution and production was absent in their original venture pitch (corroborated by available taped material) and business plan (document).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native multimedia multiformats (significant)</td>
<td>Partnership approach to production and distribution</td>
<td>About 15% of revenue is generated in coproduction activities. Licensing and memberships remain minor contributions to revenue.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case</td>
<td>Aggregated difference</td>
<td>Areas of differences</td>
<td>Pieces of evidence (areas of differences)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UseNews</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Coproduction with audience (significant)</td>
<td>A basic flow of contents is provided by the venture’s team, but most of the content is produced by</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wholly distributed audience</td>
<td>the audience (although not most of the “hard news”). The content generated by the audience is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Partnership approach to production and distribution</td>
<td>complemented, occasionally led by ad hoc reporting and curation (corroborated by the website and</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>social media activity).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RevToday</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Citizen-reported journalism (significant)</td>
<td>Content and traffic on the venture’s website is negligible. The venture, however, has over 240,000</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>followers on Facebook, 30,000 on Instagram and 12,000 on Twitter (corroborated by their social media</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>profiles). “The platform goes far beyond what traditional outlets do in terms of engaging with</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>audiences” (External report).</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Activist-driven solutions journalism (significant)</td>
<td>“We give anybody a chance who wants to try journalism, so that includes people who have studied it or</td>
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<td>who have done it before but also people who have no experience and have other specialities, other</td>
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<td>expertises. We pay people every month, so in any given month, we’ve got 15 to 30 people being paid</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>for their work” (Entrepreneur). Most of the content, however, is produced by a core team of</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>contributors (corroborated by the web page and internal and external stakeholders).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Memberships</td>
<td>“[RevToday] has always been an activist form of journalism... [it] advocates on behalf of the</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>community that it covers as opposed to staying ‘neutral’, which only ends up sort of serving the</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>people who are already in power” (External stakeholder 1). “[Their] real investigative work... [has</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>received] some criticism for partisanship... [but] their impact has been phenomenal for local news”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(External stakeholder 2).</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Around 100 members make the baseline monthly revenue of the venture, occasionally complemented by</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>grants, donation campaigns and advertising (corroborated by internal documents).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case</td>
<td>Aggregated difference</td>
<td>Areas of differences</td>
<td></td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>BoroughNet (Corp and Local)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Franchise model</td>
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<td>BoroughNet is a network of more than 70 online local news franchises in New Jersey and New York (corroborated by internal and external documents).</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cooperative journalism</td>
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<td>&quot;[in BoroughNet] collaborations are ongoing and the partners involved are integrated at the organizational level... they are made up of local outlets operating independently, but whose back office services are integrated... they share an ad network, a proprietary platform, accounting services and editorial policy and quality standards... This model is not very common but today is viewed as an innovative way to address the challenges of the local media landscape&quot; (External document. Report: Comparing models of collaborative journalism).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LocalNext</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Reliance on curation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>They combine original stories with third-party content. They are not afraid of redirecting readers to other sites. 1/3 is own, 2/3 is others'. Every reporter is in charge of curation. The approach was already in the original business idea but curation has evolved to keep the audience within their site, reducing the redirection of readers to third parties (corroborated by the website and interviews with the founders and employees).</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Memberships</td>
<td></td>
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<td>After three years, later than they had initially intended, they launch their first membership campaign. &quot;That should supersede [other revenue streams] quickly, or not quickly but probably within six months. Based on modeling, we should be making more money in membership&quot; (Founder).</td>
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<td>Centrality of events in business model</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>&quot;We wanted to do events as a core business model, and it's still our core business model&quot; (Founder).</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case</td>
<td>Aggregated difference</td>
<td>Areas of differences</td>
<td>Pieces of evidence (areas of differences)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>FreshReport</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Reliance on curation</td>
<td>A daily roundup selects, introduces and links news in other outlets featuring the community the venture covers. Exclusive investigative reporting pieces are added to the roundup when available (corroborated by their website and newsletter).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Memberships</td>
<td>Around 100 members make the most of the monthly revenue of the venture (corroborated by internal documents).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PlazaMedia</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Memberships</td>
<td>Around 2,000 members achieved this in barely one month, December of 2017, when a membership campaign was launched to avoid the venture closing down (corroborated by their website and internal documents).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ComPublishing</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Memberships</td>
<td>Around 100 members make the baseline monthly revenue of the venture (corroborated by internal documents). Efforts to increase revenue are most often organized around new membership campaigns, in display ads on the website and calls for support in the daily newsletter (corroborated by their website and newsletter).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**TABLE 9**

Summary of Evidence of Actors' Diversity in Personal Structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Areas of significant difference</th>
<th>Capital</th>
<th>Diversity in personal structures</th>
<th>Pieces of evidence of actors' diversity in personal structures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TailStory</td>
<td>Single story reporting</td>
<td>Aggregate: Moderate-low</td>
<td>Economic Low</td>
<td>&quot;[Referring to the founders] We have different backgrounds... she comes from broadcast and radio... I'm print and online... She is 10 years younger... from Georgia... grew up in the Soviet Union... she is female [I'm male]... she has two children, I have no children... she had no business background, I got business background&quot; (Entrepreneur).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native multimedia multiformats</td>
<td>Native multimedia</td>
<td>Aggregate: Moderate-low</td>
<td>Cultural Low</td>
<td>The founder is a Master graduate in City and Regional planning and works full-time as a consultant to developers. He is also a surfer. He has no formal education or professional experience in journalism, although he was Editor in Chief of his high school newspaper, a contributor to the college newspaper and an active blogger. He was very active on social media already in 2007.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UseNews</td>
<td>Coproduction with audience</td>
<td>Aggregate: Low</td>
<td>Social Low</td>
<td>The first of the two founders graduated in journalism, has worked as a community organizer in some nonprofit organizations, volunteered as a staff member at different Model United Nations and Model Congress conferences, served at college as chairman for the student union, got involved in local government and politics and taught journalism undergraduate students. The second founder was an experienced journalist in legacy newspapers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RevToday</td>
<td>Citizen-reported journalism Activist-driven solutions journalism</td>
<td>Aggregate: Low</td>
<td>Symbolic Low</td>
<td>The founder is an attorney at law. He started the venture with his wife. He was involved in politics; his wife was a teacher. He had some previous experience with the college newspaper and had always been interested in media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BoroughNet (Corp)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Aggregate: Moderate-high</td>
<td>Economic Moderate</td>
<td>&quot;I did history and political science... and a master's degree in public affairs and politics... I went to work for the mayor's office... an speechwriter and press release writer... I worked for a state legislator, and for the labor unions. I became state director for our senior US senator. And then, I started my own full-service communication firm. I help my clients communicate their message... helping them write their speeches or communicate with the media.&quot;(Ent).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BoroughNet (Local)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Aggregate: Moderate-low</td>
<td>Cultural Moderate</td>
<td>Only one of the founders played a role in the venture (the other one is his wife and was never involved in it). The active founder has an ample experience in management and journalism positions in legacy and new entrants media (e.g. washingtonpost.com, Digital First Media and TBD.com and AOL). He has been president of national associations in the field and serves on the boards of a number of foundations, associations and other organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LocalNext</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Aggregate: High</td>
<td>Social High</td>
<td>The founders have 11 years and 13 years of experience, respectively, working as editors and reporters. She has written for The New York Times and The Guardian. She was foreign correspondent for Reuters in Mexico City for five years. She specialized in financial news. He is local. He grew up in the community the venture covers. He also wrote and (self-) published a book, a history of the famous local folk story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FreshReport</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Aggregate: Low</td>
<td>Symbolic Low</td>
<td>The founder has no formal education in journalism but a major in economics and urban planning, and professional experience in finances. She entered the media industry as early as 2007 with her own local reporting blog, which became a network of hyperlocal news sites. Acquired by Patch Media, she became its National Community Editor, before quitting and restarting -from scratch - her own venture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PlazaMedia</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Aggregate: Moderate-high</td>
<td>Economic Moderate</td>
<td>The founder has a bachelor’s degree in journalism and has been reporting since the age of 19 in specialized media and local news, including AOL Patch.com.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ComPublishing</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Aggregate: Low-moderate</td>
<td>Cultural Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aggregate: Moderate-low</td>
<td>Social Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aggregate: Low</td>
<td>Symbolic Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Significant differences in day-to-day activities</th>
<th>Aggregate</th>
<th>Forms</th>
<th>Non-related capital gains</th>
<th>New situated capital</th>
<th>Illustrative data (New situated capital)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TailStory</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Native multimedia multiformats</td>
<td>Moderate-low</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Amateur illustration skills</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>The husband of one of the founders had drawing skills and could illustrate events. The solution was not optimal, but the task was completed and it worked well enough to be used for other projects. &quot;We wanted to do a video on a man who was raped... then, because of the content we didn’t want to show his face, and he was also talking about the past... we could not do a video. So that’s when we thought we would do illustration. That’s the first illustrated video we did.&quot; (Entrepreneur).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UseNews</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>Co-production with audience</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Freely available social media content posted and shared by neighbors</td>
<td>Content “dependent on more than 200,000 contributors” (Entrepreneur) became &quot;a critical information resource during the hurricane and the ensuing recovery efforts,” Champions of Change, The White House.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizen-reported journalism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Economic Low</td>
<td></td>
<td>Activism tactics such as educational flyers, gatherings and bringing issues at official meetings of governmental bodies</td>
<td>&quot;We did some articles on it and also made a flyer and I went to every house in that neighborhood and gave them a flyer... it was an educational flyer... then at a public meeting, 40 people came... they came out and they spoke out. We recorded the meeting on video and we put the video out [on the newspaper’s website] for everybody.&quot; (Entrepreneur).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RevToday</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural Moderate</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Citizen reporters with a very low pay (initially no pay)</td>
<td>Fifteen to 30 citizen reporters, some of them undergraduate students in journalism but many just neighbors in the community with no education or experience in journalism produced about half of the news (Reported by the entrepreneur, corroborated by external stakeholders and an analysis of the content available on the website).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activist driven solutions journalism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social Low</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case</td>
<td>Form</td>
<td>Significant differences in day-to-day activities</td>
<td>Aggregate</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Non-related capital gains</td>
<td>New situated capital</td>
<td>Illustrative data (New situated capital)</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BoroughNet (Corp)</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Moderate-high</td>
<td>Economic: High, Cultural: Low, Social: High, Symbolic: Low</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BoroughNet (Local)</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Moderate-low</td>
<td>Economic: Moderate, Cultural: Moderate, Social: Moderate, Symbolic: Low</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LocalNext</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Economic: High, Cultural: High, Social: High, Symbolic: High</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FreshReport</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Economic: Low, Cultural: Moderate, Social: Low, Symbolic: Low</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PlazaMedia</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Moderate-high</td>
<td>Economic: Moderate, Cultural: High, Social: High, Symbolic: Moderate</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ComPublishing</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Low-moderate</td>
<td>Economic: Low, Cultural: Moderate, Social: Moderate, Symbolic: Low</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 11
Summary of Evidence of Experiences of Problems and Constraints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Significant differences</th>
<th>Capital</th>
<th>Does not obstruct commitment</th>
<th>Inhibits a common response</th>
<th>Directs attention to capital alternatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TailStory</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Moderate-low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>&quot;We had a sub-grant to make illustrated videos for another non-profit company, but their content was not suitable for the videos and... they ended the contract, but we had an animation editor whom we had hired and had to pay... but we didn't have the funding [any more]. So we decided to try to sell the service... we started making these illustrated videos... and that's now 20 percent of our revenue was generated&quot; (Entrepreneur). &quot;When dealing with a new problem, we assume we can fix it&quot; (Entrepreneur). &quot;In the current materially deprived conditions they find an incentive in being entrepreneurial. They are very project driven&quot; (External stakeholder).</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>&quot;At the beginning we decided that we wanted to be multimedia... that was our background... but we had no idea that we'd be creating 45-second videos for social media along with a 2,000-word story. We had no idea how important it would be to have multimedia content... or to co-publish as much as possible... podcasting 'come a bit later'&quot; (Entrepreneur). &quot;It's has been more reactive than having a productive vision and planning&quot; (Entrepreneur). &quot;Refering to how Illustrations became a part of what they do&quot; &quot;We wanted to do a video on a man who was raped... then, because of the content we didn't want to show his face, and he was also talking about the past... we could not do a video. So that's when we thought we would do an illustration. 'That's the first illustrated video that we did'&quot; (Entrepreneur).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>&quot;We're under-resourced... we need more talent. Eventually we need more computers and more support for that talent... we have to attend more conferences. We have to talk to more people... Our existing resources are minimal so... we're partnering with others to boost [them]&quot; (Entrepreneur). &quot;One of our main tactics was to exploit or leverage other people's expertise and reputations... to ride other people's horses&quot; (Entrepreneur). &quot;He [referring to one of the entrepreneurs] called me for an informal talk and asked, 'Could we work together?' I had met him years before when he was a tech reporter covering the Bay area in San Francisco. At that time we were still not into podcasting and when he approached me years later he didn't know how we could cooperate&quot; (External stakeholder).</td>
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### TABLE 11 (Cont.)

Summary of Evidence of Experiences of Problems and Constraints

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Significant differences</th>
<th>Capital</th>
<th>Does not obstruct commitment</th>
<th>Inhibits a common response</th>
<th>Directs attention to capital alternatives</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UseNews</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
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<td>The founder created UseNews as a platform based on his previous experience as an amateur reporter and his interest in social media to report on a natural disaster hitting his community. &quot;I created it to fill a need, a niche that I saw... as a journalist I started reporting as a citizen&quot; (Entrepreneur). His reporting worked. During this natural disaster, different photos, videos and other information provided by local residents also went viral on social media. He undertook this venture, with no thought of earning revenue in his mind, but it &quot;evolved into a real-time citizen kind of news network... so there wasn't a formal process behind it...&quot; (Entrepreneur).</td>
<td>&quot;It started as with zero resources, actually... I felt a calling to create a 'pop-up' two-way news outlet in an effort to supply reliable and factual real-time news and encourage reporting from ordinary citizens -just like me- on the ground&quot; (Entrepreneur). &quot;There's very few people working and... you can't clone yourself to be in all these places at once, to do all these things. So, rather than doing, it's delegating... creating ways... to get more people involved in any aspect... get more people on the team... the community covers that a lot of those times... and you don't have to cover that piece&quot; (Employee).</td>
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<tr>
<td>RevToday</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>[Referring to a previous job] &quot;It was part of my job to do it [to get regular people as journalists], and then I kind of learnt how to do it there, and then it only made sense to do the same thing here. Nevertheless, it still took a little while to cross that bridge. In the early days of RevToday, it was just me doing the work. [I had no revenue to pay for my work so paying other journalists was out of question]. I had one or two friends who helped out here and there and I sort of honed the process for bringing people on board with those friends, and eventually started getting requests from people I'd never met wanting to join the team and I helped bring them on board. Some of these efforts turned into really amazing success stories&quot; (Entrepreneur).</td>
<td>&quot;I pressured my friend to make the website and he did that... and then it was my own personal network&quot; (Entrepreneur). &quot;I met Charlie at a student council meeting as he was covering a story and he invited me to work with the newspaper... at the time no one was getting paid... it was an all volunteer operation&quot; (Community Engagement Director, Former Employee). &quot;We built a huge movement with lots of students and non-students that were interested in challenging the... political machine that runs our city&quot; (Entrepreneur). I am not afraid to use the other tools that citizens have, be it protests or speaking a public meetings&quot; (Entrepreneur).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case</td>
<td>Significant differences</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Does not obstruct commitment</td>
<td>Inhibits a common response</td>
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<tr>
<td>BoroughNet (Corp)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Moderate-high</td>
<td>&quot;And then the other thing is because I have no real journalism experience or any real sales experience, it enables me to look at it in a different way, right? So when the bookkeeper was complaining about all the spreadsheets she was doing, I was like, 'Wait, this is a problem. Why is this a problem?' 'Oh, well because it's all this work I got to do.' And I'm like, 'Well, let me talk to our tech guys and see if we can build something.' We went through three different tech guys to build a system because it was so complicated. Once we built it I was like, 'Well this is pretty cool. If we have this, that's probably the most valuable thing we have, so let's patent it [laughter].' So we applied for a patent&quot; (Entrepreneur).</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BoroughNet (Local)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Moderate-low</td>
<td>&quot;It's a huge time commitment... You can't put it down to two or three or four days and say you'll get back to it at the end of the week. It's everyday you're working on [this]. You're generating content every day if you want to keep it robust and keep the readers interested and keep the readers informed... [I am] making it a part of my daily routine. I know that every day I need to be turning out content. It's just a matter of doing it. Constantly out there talking to people and making contacts and communicating and seeking out where the stories are that are relevant and need to be told&quot; (Entrepreneur).</td>
<td>Unobserved</td>
<td>NA</td>
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</table>

[Dialogue about innovative resourcing] "I would be utilizing some other resources to generate the content" (Entrepreneur). Q.: "Ok. And when you talk about other resources, what are you referring exactly?" (Researcher). A.: "Freelance reporters, the community themselves, getting more people to generate content themselves and report the news directly, sort of thing. And not so much the news. The community can't report the news, but we can work a bit more to get the community to be posting community events and that sort of thing, to make sure they're communicating through the platform. In terms of reporting news, it would be a matter of having freelance reporters" (Entrepreneur).
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<tr>
<th>Case</th>
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<th>Directs attention to capital alternatives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LocalNext</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Unobserved</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<td>&quot;I think there are lots of new organizations in town with a lot more resources than us that could cover those kinds of things. What we're trying to do is find stories that are out there that will kind of have an echo for a while...&quot; (Entrepreneur). (Talking about innovative resourcing with the VP Strategy) &quot;We did the things that were cheap because we did not have much of the money... We have talked our way into hosting events at places that will trade us that space in exchange for the foot traffic we will drive to it... That's a huge part of the philosophy&quot; (VP Strategy). (Trading services for advertising and exposure is common practice in newspapers).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FreshReport</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Unobserved</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<td>[Responding to questions related to whether they are dealing with their challenge to fill the gap left by a retrenching newspaper] &quot;We would love to&quot; (Entrepreneur 1)... &quot;We don't have the resources&quot; (Entrepreneur 2). &quot;I know where to find solutions to challenges. My problem is having [the] resources&quot; (Entrepreneur 1). [Asked about innovative resourcing] &quot;The biggest way we use our resources to our advantage [compared to a legacy newspaper] is by being very fast and not having layers of management&quot; (Entrepreneur 1).</td>
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"You've got to really believe in what you're doing if you're going to put your own money into it. You never doubt your commitment. I guess, when people do that... [and] sure, there are lots of challenges. I mean, if you are small and have no friends you've got to fight every day to get everybody to recognize who you are" (Entrepreneur).

"[They] try to cover the city with limited resources with a major publication already there... they are willing to try new things. They are willing to be collaborative. They are open-minded... And they really give a shit. They do. They really care. And it comes through in their work" (Stakeholder).
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PlazaMedia</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Moderate-high Low</td>
<td>[Asked about offering an entirely new product or service] “We would love to, but I think we are still trying to. We don't have the extra funds to innovate. That's part of the problem... that's part of the frustration” (Business Development Manager).</td>
<td>Unobserved</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ComPublishing</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Low-moderate High</td>
<td>“It's a full time business with part time revenue” (Entrepreneur). “ComPublishing is heavily involved but with [only] 1 or 2 people. It's M and then just one. He's heavily involved and he's always giving advice, but he doesn't have a lot of resources to offer. He just has his own experience” (Stakeholder).</td>
<td>Unobserved</td>
<td>NA</td>
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[During a conversation about offering an entirely new product or service] Q: “If you had the resources what would you do?” (Researcher). “I think we would do a lot more. Well, obviously, we'd have more staff so then we could engage more with our readers. I mean that's part of the frustration is wanting to really engage with readers... And I'm not a reporter so what am I going to say to them?” (Business Development Manager). “When it comes to business side and the business products, or any other non-editorial offerings, it's on her [referring to the Head of Business Development]. And I could not make editorial resources to something that doesn't have a business line” (Entrepreneur). [Asked about whether he does some innovative resourcing] “Yes. Absolutely, all the time. Because again, I don't think it has to happen any particular kind of way as long as it gets done. [But] I guess I don't think about things that I don't have. We are trying to do [a product] that I don't think is entirely new, but about as new as we can” (Entrepreneur). “I learned to conserve my resources a little bit more. My resources being myself and my time really and that was the idea” (Entrepreneur).
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Significant differences in day-to-day operations</th>
<th>Initial capital</th>
<th>Organizational policy conforming with institutional arrangements</th>
<th>Illustrative data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TailStory</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Moderate-low</td>
<td>Partly decoupled</td>
<td>&quot;I think we are similar in more ways than not... we fit into the way journalism is done in the world. We are part of larger media networks. It's not like we are some strange hybrid between software and media or a clothing company and media or something. I think we are a traditional media company in many ways&quot; [Entrepreneur]. &quot;We actually have a pretty old-fashioned sensibility when it comes to the practice of journalism. But it's more of... experimental when it comes to content&quot; [Entrepreneur]. &quot;[From the business model side we're looking at various ideas... But... in the fundamental sense... I think we are consistent with other media in that we are addressing things outside advertising. But... you don't need to take a radically different approach&quot; [Entrepreneur].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UseNews</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Partly decoupled</td>
<td>&quot;People have the ability to be their own reporters. I saw that [user-generated content] was going to be a big deal who why didn't we try and create a kind of citizen news outlet... [although] I apply journalism to everything I get. So everything that I receive is verified, is fact-checked, and I'm able to deal with a lot of that stuff... that's really how I construct a lot of my reporting&quot; [Entrepreneur]. &quot;A lot of what we are trying to do is [like in] local journalism... is to get back to the people&quot; [Employee]. [During a conversation on how they practically deal with user-generated content] &quot;On Instagram it's pretty much all user-generated. There are a few curated pieces. It's curated outside and not user-generated. On Facebook, the production is mostly done by us, but it's garnered from what people come up with a lot of the time. On the other point, there are news articles that [J] puts together&quot; [Employee].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RevToday</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Partly decoupled</td>
<td>&quot;We give anybody who wants to try journalism a chance and this not only includes people who have studied it or who have done it before but also people who have no experience and have other... 'expertise'. Well... stories only get published if they are up to a certain standard&quot; [Entrepreneur]. &quot;[It is blended] journalism and activism in some ways. I care about the community here... so I don't hold back in the way that a traditional journalist who works for a corporate newspaper would... My strength is that I am able to do the journalism work and also train others and work with others to do the journalism well&quot; [Entrepreneur].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case</td>
<td>Significant differences in day-to-day operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>BoroughNet Corp</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Moderate-high</td>
<td>Not decoupled</td>
<td>&quot;We are closer to pure journalism as compared to other publications. I mean everything. Even, for example, if we put up a press release for a business that’s advertising, it has a disclosure on it. And it’s in the press release section, it’s not in the news section. We have all these disclosures so I try to keep it as clear as possible&quot; (Entrepreneur, Corp). &quot;What BoroughNet franchisees do: They report the news and get more involved locally; post content on the site and social media; develop relationships with community leaders; build site traffic; present marketing opportunities to advertisers; and provide customer service to users and advertisers&quot; (Excerpt from BoroughNet's information sheet). &quot;We send out a weekly training email... [it] highlights policy changes... we also provide training to all franchisees and focus on those with more problems&quot; (Corp. staff). &quot;When they first started out there was a lot of criticism of this model particularly because it did not require you to be a journalist or have any training in journalism... but as it's grown it's attracted more competent publishers and editors. They require that you abide by a certain level of journalistic ethics&quot; (External stakeholder).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BoroughNet Local</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Moderate-low</td>
<td>Not decoupled</td>
<td>&quot;I'm not trying to recreate a local newspaper-sized newsroom... [Yet] I think what we try to do at LocalNext... I don't know that there's a thing I could point to and I could say 'That's something that's brand new'. I think it's a combination of a lot of different things that are out in the market... one thing I do feel strongly about is, while the journalism you produce should aspire to all of those things that good journalism does - objectivity, fairness, detail - the voice itself, in a generation that's looking for a little bit more energy and life, a very institutional voice does not work for the audience we are targeting&quot; (Entrepreneur).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LocalNext</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Not decoupled</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Case</td>
<td>Significant differences in day-to-day</td>
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<tr>
<td>FreshReport</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Not decoupled</td>
<td>&quot;What we want to do is not innovative... (Entrepreneur 2). &quot;I still feel that journalism should slowly get there&quot; (Entrepreneur 1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PlazaMedia</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Moderate-high</td>
<td>Not decoupled</td>
<td>[During conversations about what is innovative in what the venture is doing] &quot;So definitely [what we do is] journalism, but it’s not just journalism because there’s more to living in the community than just reporting all our stories. I care about social impact&quot; (Entrepreneur). Q: &quot;So it is through reporting that you serve your community?&quot; (Researcher). A: &quot;Yep. That is spot on&quot; (Entrepreneur). Q: &quot;How would you compare your journalism with what your legacy newspaper competitors do?&quot; (Researcher). A: &quot;We are certainly quicker... [and] we do not have to put out a paper&quot; (Entrepreneur).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ComPublishing</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Low-moderate</td>
<td>Not decoupled</td>
<td>&quot;We are trying to build [a product] that I don't think is entirely new, but is as new as we can be&quot; (Entrepreneur). [Refering to a foundation] &quot;They are worried about finding ways to help us collaborate or find ways to help us follow new models of integrative journalism. I just want to do my job and I want them to help generate the revenue for it&quot; (Entrepreneur). &quot;The things that I [am] doing in my coverage [are] sort of startup service journalism&quot; (Entrepreneur).</td>
</tr>
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Chapter 7. Discussion

Introduction

Usually, studies sensitive to institutions have alternatively focused either on the distinct features of similarity, stability, resilience and homogeneity that institutionalization processes generate or on the differences, heterogeneity and processes of change that make institutions evolve (Greenwood et al., 2017). This thesis attempts to keep both in sight and finds that when focal priority is given to the activity of practitioners, both reproduction and novelty brim with “chance and naivete” (Powell & Rerup, 2017: 332) and are intimately linked. My findings, however, provide details about specific aspects of that “chance and naivete” and how they are alternatively tied to outcomes of reproduction and novelty. Feldman and Orlikowski (2011) suggested that reproduction or novelty are different outcomes of the same dynamic. What I find is that, although they do not result from dramatically different dynamics and their clarification does not require different theoretical assumptions or sensibilities, reproduction and novelty result from distinct processes. These processes coincide in many aspects, but as some of these elements work differently, their outcomes also differ.

This research also combines two empirical settings that have often been separated by different theoretical perspectives. While new ventures and startups have normally been scrutinized through institutional entrepreneurship lenses, the different sensibilities to the micro in neoinstitutionalism research have mainly focused on individuals in large and established organizations. As far as I know, research that attends—within the same mature but jolted exchange field—to the activities of actors in both large well-positioned firms and new ventures entering it remains rare.

The particular research approach mentioned above provides findings related to entrepreneurship processes that, based on the same set of compatible concepts and assumptions, explain why and how the experience of constraints and problems by actors searching for solutions in different capital conditions can alternatively contribute to institutional reproduction or novelty. These processes do not exhaust the possibilities, nor do they offer a systematic taxonomy of what goes on in incumbents and new entrants in a field under an environmental jolt. They do not suggest either that novelty can only take place in new entrants, although a large literature suggests that, and, in my data, the rare instances of significant novelty emerge in these organizations. The processes I discuss are only those that approximate better to what I see goes on in the cases studied here. With these precautions in mind, the collection of findings presented in the previous chapter do bring some implications to institutionalism and entrepreneurship theories.
I explore these implications in the coming sections. Although this discussion does not incorporate all contributions that each standalone paper independently develops, it attempts to be consistent with all of them.

Implications for institutionalism

*Fields in crisis: changing objective conditions, conformity and decoupling*

My research brings insights to one specific type of conflicted environment: an exchange field in crisis. In his seminal work, Fligstein (1997) did not clarify what he meant by a field in crisis, implicitly suggesting that the term may apply to all fields that experience a disruption in their internal structure of power relations. Institutionalism has traditionally perceived conflicted environments as contexts leading organizations operating in them to “exhibit greater administrative complexity and reduced program coherence” (Scott & Meyer, 1994: 129). This complexity has commonly been explained as a result of a process of deinstitutionalization and independent innovation (Tolbert & Zucker, 1996) based on two alternative explanations, both originating in environmental jolts (Meyer, 1982). One suggests that shocks introduce new rules, norms or ideas, increasing institutional arrangement contradictions. The other suggests that jolts disturb the efficiency of existing solutions. In both cases, some sort of shock smacks into stable institutional arrangements (Sewell, 1992) undermining their taken-for-grantedness and offering actors some cognitive space to imagine and adopt alternatives (Clemens & Cook, 1999; Lounsbury, 2002; Thornton, 2002). Received theory explains that when, in a field, institutional arrangements do not comprise efficient solutions or different institutional arrangements contradict, organizations decouple their activities from their conforming formal structures (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). As decoupling increases, so does heterogeneity in any given field (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017).

The study of the field of written news can be conceptualized as one particular kind of field in crisis: a field that goes through an increasing efficiency mismatch between the objective conditions in which actors and organizations operate and the regular patterns of social action that shape both their goals and means. In this sort of crisis, an environmental jolt shifts the objective conditions of a field, increasing inconsistencies between isomorphic goals-ends schemas and organizational efficiency, further eroding the link between conformity and the possibility of persistence. As problems accumulate and organizations fail, theory expects that not only decoupling but also entrepreneurial action (Sine & David, 2003) will increase. Decoupling increases because “technical activities and demands for efficiency create conflicts and inconsistencies in an institutionalized organization’s efforts to conform to the ceremonial rules of production” (Meyer & Rowan, 1977: 355). Entrepreneurial action will also increase because—
according to accepted theory (Greenwood et al. 2002)—actors, increasingly aware of institutional weaknesses, will evaluate current institutions, search for solutions and eventually mobilize to reformulate them (Fuenfsfshilling & Truffer, 2016; Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013; Rychen & Zimmermann, 2002).

My data support the view that innovative solutions originate in the experience of problems that jolts precipitate, although they do not necessarily lead to a process of deinstitutionalization understood as reflexive problematizations of existing institutions. Practitioners in the field continue to interpret their organizational problems within the meaning system provided by existing templates in the field, and do not engage in field-level purposive action. To this extent, they do not engage in institutional work (Lawrence & Subbaby, 2006). Certainly, they need to practically cope with the arising problems they encounter and mostly they do so in ways that reproduce existing norms and concepts dominating the field, helping, therefore, with their maintenance. But this maintenance work is not aimed at the institutions per se but at the resolution of present issues. Yet, it is, paradoxically, this orientation towards getting their jobs done that opens up to committed actors the possibility of independent innovations.

My findings complement this literature in different ways. First, they provide some clarity to how jolts smack into existing arrangements, not directly, but through changes in the objective conditions in which a field operates. Second, they illuminate what changing objective conditions may mean and what personal experiences may follow from them. And third, they flesh out what goes on in those actors that theory expects to become aware of options and opportunities and how it relates to concepts of decoupling. These insights will help me elaborate on additional discussions related to lingering debates in neoinstitutionalism: the role of capital beyond power struggles, the origin of ideas and the multiplicity of actorhood.

Changing objective conditions

Bourdieu (1986) gets into the objectivity of things through the concept of capital. It is the potential capacity of capital—to produce profits—that distinguishes what is possible from what is not. Objectivity refers to the former. In this view, ever-changing conditions in social life become objective when they affect what is possible. In a field, objective conditions will change when the continuous flow of events affects the efficiency of capital, i.e. its capacity to consummate actions, generate results, effect change et cetera. In turn, objective conditions realize themselves only as they are internalized by actors through their system of dispositions, affecting their conducts (Bourdieu, 1968). In the field of written news, objective conditions changed, for example, when—driven by the arrival of the Internet—new behaviors in readers and advertisers eroded the capacity of field capitals (such as journalism skills and access to a mass audience) to produce profits. As these objective conditions are internalized by actors in the field, they also affect behavior. As I have shown before, most of the observable new
activities, however, do not bring significant differences when compared with existing templates in the field.

This perspective is useful not only to define what a field in crisis might be—one that is experiencing a change in its objective conditions—but also to understand how the changing conditions of a field in crisis come to be perceived by individuals and organizations. Elaborating on Meyer and Rowan’s (1977) distinction between problems of efficiency and conflicts among rules, a field in crisis can be analytically distinguished from a complex field in that in the former mismatches between objective conditions and available schemas are manifested in the erosion of capital. It is a field in crisis of this kind, the one I refer to. In a field in crisis of this sort, what used to work, to be effective, to produce profits, begins not to. In more affluent actors, it is the sense of puzzlement this lack of traction in capital brings that triggers the adoption of new activities. In less affluent actors, this experience is further enhanced by resource constraints. In this sort of environment, potential institutional complexity and clashes would be outcomes of changing objective conditions, not antecedents of them.

Conformity and decoupling

This research also illustrates why and how decoupling may occur in some circumstances (Scott, 2013). In particular, my findings can contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics in very early stages of decoupling. Institutional arrangements can only produce stability at the field level through being exercised by individuals in daily activities. Inconsistencies and conflict between what is considered pertinent in a field—covered, specified or anticipated by available templates—and what goes on in the activities that constitute it increase heterogeneity and “entropy” (Zucker, 1988: 44). In fields in crisis, inconsistencies are expected to arise, contributing to the gradual decline of the traditional structures in the field, and perhaps to the emergence of new ones (Fligstein, 1997; Greenwood et al., 2002; Morrill, 2017). My findings suggest that this process of decline is far from homogeneous and unidirectional and provide some insights into the micro-level decoupling dynamics through which this happens.

First, when objective conditions in a field shift, the efficiency fit—whatever its actual level of fitness—between institutional arrangements and activities may worsen. This is the case in written news, where since the Internet revolution players have commonly been exposed to capital losses, subsiding capital efficiency and an insecure future (see Table 3b for the case of SvD). Under pressure to find solutions, actors have imported from elsewhere ideas, structures, myths... The case of SvD shows how this happened. Models of “cross-functional organization,” “coproduction” and “customization” were imported by managers with experience in other fields. In the tension generated by perceived decreasing functionality, alien ideas and structures can enter a field through individuals acting in it. In the implementation of these ideas, however, I observed that daily activities—in conditions of relative abundance of field capitals—changed only
7 Discussion

insignificantly: replicating old activities, modifying insignificantly existing ones and introducing not significantly different new ones (see Table 3b for the case of SvD).

Thus, the tight preexisting coupling among practice and institutional arrangements in the field endured. My data did not allow me to discover many details of how this happened, but nothing suggested the active avoidance and defiance (Pache & Santos, 2010) or contestation and resistance (Turco, 2012) of professionals refusing to act suggested or described in other studies. In line with the assimilation process of new policies that Coburn (2004) observed in classrooms, what my data indicate is that “avoidance” can be a relatively harmonic process in which organizational actors interpret new ideas within the meaning structure provided by existing institutional arrangements. My findings provide some insights into how actors figure out how to fit new ideas into their organizations (Bromley et al., 2012). Preexisting templates dominating an organization provide the interpretative system actors use. These schemas, when used by practitioners in an organization, both prune and assign meaning to newly imported ones. By pruning, existing concepts and norms discard off-limits significance that new schemas may carry. By assigning meaning, poorly known new schemas gain substance. Surprisingly, this collective process of sense making, in my data, seemed—even in a field in crisis—less prone to conflicts and disputes than others have suggested (Pache & Santos, 2010; Turco, 2012). It is important to note here that all actors in SvD had already been engaged in the field for years when the new project was designed and implemented, which suggests that their personal dispositions had been relatively aligned in their common experience in the field. As such, the interpretative process seemed to be characterized by accordance and consistency. In this context, a new idea could purposely be imported into the organization. Yet, as its members (collectively) had to interpret it, its implications for bringing significant differences to everyday activities were neutralized by organizational members’ dominating preexisting beliefs. However, because the new ideas were formally kept but—contrary to Coburn (2004)—not incorporated, a sort of different decoupling emerged, which I term “decoupled innovation.” In this sort of decoupling, new and old schemas can harmoniously coexist because the new ones are co-opted when interpreted within the meaning structure of old ones.

The sort of decoupling described above did not result from the processes commonly reported in extant literature, resulting from low consensus among stakeholders (Crilly et al., 2012), or “decided” by powerful organizational members (Tilcsik, 2010). Decoupling didn’t even provide a buffer between institutional demands and efficiency goals, but rather a buffer between efficiency demands and institutional arrangements, contributing to the sustainability of the latter. Implicit in this idea there is also a secondary consequence. As organizational activities partly changed to comply with the new ideas—although not to the point of bringing significant differences to them—activity variation increased, but only within what was already considered pertinent within the field.
Increases in entropy, in these cases, may reflect weakly connected institutional elements entering a field (Scott & Davis, 2007). However, as long as the described sort of decoupling persists, increased entropy will not contribute per se to the decline of the traditional structures in the field.

Second, in some of the new ventures, a process strikingly different to decoupling occurred. When facing severe efficiency problems, some entrepreneurs managed to organize ranges of new activities out of the venture that helped them to get enough support to generate a perception of financial stability capable of shielding these firms from market demands. Rather than efficiency demands resulting in widespread decoupling (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), in my data, activities often remained strongly coupled to the dominant templates in the field. This finding offers one key insight into how, even in the face of stringent economic inefficiency, institutional arrangements do not lose their stickiness and can still reproduce in mature fields in crisis. Actors in—otherwise failing—organizations, by organizing sideline occupations that shield their valued forms of work from market demands, manage to buffer their compliance with institutional arrangements from efficiency challenges. Conformity finds its way even when changes in the objective conditions of a field make it obvious that the link between adoption and efficiency does not work.

Finally, in the new ventures bringing novelty in their activities, the dynamics I find are, in some respects, different to the ones described above. In these cases, a more classic form of decoupling emerges. My findings provide insights into how it originates. Activated by their experience of constraints, actors in these organizations use inputs (e.g. ideas, knowledge, schemas…) available in their personal structures that may not correspond to the institutional arrangements that dominate the field. Those inputs—in situated interactions with other organizational members and external actors—become new-to-the-field capital and significantly transform activities in the organization, adding elements to these organizations not connected to existing templates in the field. This process contrasts sharply with a purposeful importation of ideas from alien institutional fields. One extreme example of this takes place in RevToday. The firm has incorporated aspects of activism alien to the field of written news not as a result of purposeful ex ante design but in the experience of constraints. At these very early stages, however, I did not observe the elaborate attempts to theorize and legitimize these new schemas other studies have extensively documented in perhaps later moments of novelty (e.g. Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002; Zott & Huy, 2007). Across all cases bringing significant differences, actors’ allegations of conformity to institutional arrangements take priority over formal claims of novel schemas, even in those organizations where novelty is at the root of the sustainability of their practice. Furthermore, in my data, actors’ allegations of conformity to any institutional arrangement alien to written news were muffled, or entirely muted, even though these significant differences were largely responsible for the situated interactions supporting the survival of the venture and already part of its structural properties. In these cases,
the decoupling I observed was conceptually akin to the buffer between conformity claims and organizational efficiency that Meyer and Rowan (1977) suggested. But because these instances of loose coupling only happened in those organizations displaying novelty, they were rare.

Even rarer in my data were open and public attempts to theorize blending schemas. At best, theorizations—such as UseNews’s announcements of a new paradigm: user-generated data—were cautiously pronounced and happened in conditions sheltered from market demands by nonrelated-to-the-venture capital gains. The case of UseNews, a hybrid, suggests the possibility that public theorizations—an activity commonly linked to the role of institutional entrepreneurs in field-level dynamics of institutional change (Battilana et al., 2009; Lounsbury & Crumley, 2007; Morrill, 2017)—may be shaped by capital conditions. In the following section, I discuss how my consideration of capital adds to traditional accounts of its role by institutional studies.

The role of capital

Traditional accounts of capital in institutional theory have focused on the influence of institutional factors on resource selection (Oliver, 1997), resource mobilization for institutional entrepreneurship (DiMaggio, 1988) and power struggles about who controls available capital (e.g. Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017). Only occasionally have researchers followed Sewell’s suggestion to differentiate resources from schemas (Sewell, 1992), empirically exploring how they recursively have effects on each other. Studies within a resourcing perspective (Feldman, 2004), despite its initial focus in the dynamic creation of resources, have yet to provide more clarity on why and how resources mutate and with what effects on conformity to the institutional arrangements dominating a field.

The problems related to capital attended to in institutionally sensitive literature have usually centered around one conspicuous phenomenon: Capital can be relatively homogeneous at the field level but, to the extent that its distribution among field members is not even, power struggles about who controls available capital (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017) will abound and the outcomes of these competitions will carry consequences. Research in this line expected that those resource-disadvantaged players in the field would either fail and exit or be motivated to challenge the institutional arrangements behind their deprivation (Leblebici et al., 1991). Accordingly, resource mobilization became central to institutional entrepreneurship processes that required sufficient resources to create or change institutions (DiMaggio, 1988). These perspectives were consistent with Bourdieu’s main problematizations of capital processes: capital transmission—particularly for embodied cultural capital—and capital transformations (Bourdieu, 1986). The rare institutional studies explicitly building on Bourdieu have remained centered on his original focus (e.g. Hill, 2018). My findings complement these views.
Capital at the root of performance concerns

The conditions imposed by capital are a common antecedent in the entrepreneurial processes I identify. In their everyday activities, in trying to get their jobs done, actors seek solutions to the problems and challenges they encounter. Greenwood and Suddaby (2006) have suggested the key role of adverse performance in triggering a motivating dynamic in incumbents that can eventually result in institutional change. In my data, adverse performance manifests in various ways depending on differences in the availability of forms of capital as defined by the field and their efficiency—i.e. their capacity to produce profits. Although both incumbents and new entrants share performance concerns, these concerns originate in two capital dynamics that are distinctively different: While constraints and problems in incumbents reveal capital losses, constraints and problems in new entrants result from initially low levels of capital.

Actors in incumbents find that they face problems when environmental jolts result in apparent losses of capital, and its efficiency, to their organizations, triggering a search for solutions that only recedes when following the implementation of new activities—in my data not significantly different to the institutional arrangements that dominate the field—actors perceive a recovery, albeit only partial, of capital. Figure 7 identifies this as “short-term capital gains.” In new entrants, low levels of capital, particularly economic, and low efficiency of available capitals, particularly social and cultural, are at the origin of the constraints and problems their organizational members experience, which also triggers their search for solutions and affects their activities in ways that can either reproduce the institutional arrangements in the field or divert from them.

Diverging capital dynamics: resource interpretations

What sets reproduction and novelty processes apart is not only relative levels of available capital and their changes, but—importantly—aspects related to capital interpretations, i.e. what makes a resource a resource in the corresponding field. In my data, new activities—significantly different because they do not reproduce schemas in the field—occur when the experience of constraints “forces” actors to use inputs not considered capital in relation to the field. When these inputs work, at least partly, they become resources or, what I call, “new situated capital.” In other cases, when no new situated capital emerges and capital constraints persist, while some entrepreneurs need to consider the possibility of exit, others shield their organizations from market demands by organizing nonrelated-to-the-venture supportive activities (e.g. taking a primary job). As a result of these “nonrelated capital gains,” the venture increases its chances of survival and—because novelty is not a common occurrence—its day-to-day activities remain in conformity with the institutional arrangements in the field. Figure 7 depicts the performance of capital in each of the papers in this dissertation.
This consideration of interpretations of capital, and the possibilities it sheds on the emergence of situated new forms of it, adds to previous accounts of institutional processes that have centered on capital acquisition and control. In these views the agent-driven solutions that invent or modify activities “necessarily come from those possible within available resources, technology and regulatory constraints” (Leblebici et al, 1991: 363, emphasis added), remaining vague, however, as to what is meant by the term “resources” (Greenwood et al., 2017).

In my findings, “available resources” at the micro level can be inputs that fall out of what is considered capital within a field, i.e. nonresources.

My findings align with the resourcing perspective and add insights into the origin of a recurring cycle between actions, resources and schemas (Feldman, 2004) resulting in novelty. Resource mutations originate in conditions of low available capital that inhibit common responses in actors looking for solutions to problems encountered in their daily activities. It is the personal structures of the actors involved that provide the freely available new inputs or schemas that are capable, if useful, of creating more resources that do not correspond to capital as defined by the field. Research on resourcing has found that resourcing is triggered by a lack of scrutiny and minimal coordination costs in strategic change initiatives (Wiedner et al., 2017), or by hierarchically imposed enactments of alternative schemas (Feldman, 2004). In my findings, resourcing results from the experience of constraints.

In light of this, and very much in line with Sewell’s idea that resources are polysemic (1992), capital identification and definition are important for understanding both institutional reproduction and the possibility of change in a field. And since capital values are predefined by the field, new forms of it will only show—and only tentatively—their possible value when enacted and for the situated conditions of the actors involved in it. My findings empirically support the notion that emergent new forms of capital are only validated, and only
situationally, when put into action. Sewell suggested that “resource consequences of the enactment of cultural schemas [were] never entirely predictable” (1992: 18). This unpredictability could, perhaps, be clarified—at least partly—by unbundling it. The process by which cultural schemas become situated new capital or resources and, perhaps eventually, new forms of field capital requires first its identification (a given input becomes situated capital even if not considered as such by the field), then its validation (it situationally works) and eventually its definition (what it does and means for the organization is understood by situated actors). I elaborate this in a later section in the light of the concept of bricolage (Lévi-Strauss, 1962) applied to the entrepreneurial concepts of discovery and alertness. It will suffice to say here that resource interpretations in my findings, and the creative possibilities they bring, do not depend, as commonly suggested, on the availability of complex topographies of institutional fields “composed of multiple intersecting and competing styles of valuation” (e.g. Mohr, 2013). This insight also departs from institutional entrepreneurship accounts of emerging “value propositions” that result from expectations to incorporate critically important cultural elements because of their “symbolic value,” whatever little obvious economic value they may bring (David et al., 2017). In my findings, novel resource interpretations originate in constraints imposed by low capital availability.

In their everyday activities, in trying to get their jobs done, actors seek solutions to the problems and challenges they encounter. In a field in crisis, many of these problems in my cases arose as actors attempted to realize value from their transactions; a phenomenon also noted elsewhere (e.g. Leblebici & Salancik, 1982). In incumbents, solutions made use of extensively available established forms of capital in the field, did not significantly modify actors’ day-to-day activities and provided short-term results that reinforced a perception of capital gains. In new entrants, solutions often implied the generation of capital gain by activities not related to the venture. Sometimes, however, new entrants modified their activities significantly, but not as choices among alternative critical resources, or because in these less powerful actors, “experimentation” was “less costly in final outcomes” (Leblebici et al. 1991: 358). Novelty in my cases is linked to situated resource interpretations resulting from the situated performance of valueless inputs freely available in the personal structures of the actors involved.

Endogenous change processes: constraints on constraints and sustained commitment to projects

Zooming in on the role of capital at the micro level also sheds some light on the notion of institutions as constraints. Institutionalism, centering on how thoughts and actions are usually constrained by today’s social patterns, has explained how organizations are driven to incorporate the practices and procedures defined by prevailing institutionalized concepts (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Others have complemented this view suggesting that when “the established routines for
conducting everyday life prove limiting” (Powell & Rerup, 2017: 311), people searching for solutions may generate new ways of acting that bring new institutional potential. My findings confirm that limits have creative potential. They also add to the idea that, because “human knowledge and capability is the prime resource and the one that defines all others” (De Gregori, 1987: 1241–1242), the experience of scarcity is intrinsic to, or a condition of, the processes of reproduction and novelty. De Gregori was referring to technology and physical resources, while my findings confirm the possibility suggested by resourcing perspectives that anything can be a potential resource. These findings go further and provide empirical details about how limits on creative solutions can have generative effects. The experience of capital constraints can act as a constraint on constraints, opening creative possibilities not as a result of choices among alternatives but as a result of constraints on sustained action. Also, because, even in constraining conditions, action is sustained by normative goals and aspirations, institutional arrangements in the form of social purpose play their own role in their possible change.

In this light, when exploring the very early moments of novelty in a field, change seems to be less imported than internally produced. Even when triggered by incidents happening outside of the system, novelty requires “the operation of structures internal” to it (Sewell, 1992: 16). My findings shed some light on these endogenous processes: While low availability of normatively defined forms of capital acts as a constraint on constraints, normative goals and aspirations sustain the commitment of individuals even in conditions of severe scarcity. Significant novelty in organizational structures emerges in the concurrence of both.

The above-mentioned insights flesh out some specific dynamics driving the recursive effect between resources and schemas that Sewell (1992) had suggested. Sewell remarked that schemas or templates not empowered by resources will eventually wane. My findings, however, suggest that this process is not necessarily lineal and straightforward. Even when objective conditions challenge the efficiency of normatively defined forms of capital, existing norms continue to reproduce, sheltered from market demands or as interpretative systems of meaning that largely deactivate the possibility of change in new solutions. Still, novelty that departs from schemas, sometimes, is possible, and as Sewell perceived, it is an effect of resources. He proposed that new ideas were possible because the multiplicity and intersection of structures allows “actors embedded in different structural complexes” to apply “a wide range of different and even incompatible schemas and have access to heterogeneous arrays of resources” (Sewell, 1992: 19, 17). My findings, not assuming the existence of these readily available alternatives, provide complementary insights to questions related to the origin of new ideas.
Where ideas come from

In the tension between deliberate choices by organizational actors among alternative structural models (Scott, 1987; Sewell, 1992) and mimetic or normative mechanisms (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) that incorporate organizational structures reflecting institutional arrangements in a field, institutionalism has only recently started to attend to questions related to the initial moments of new norms and concepts. Extant research has studied how new ideas transform into practice and therefore get institutionalized (e.g. Reay et al., 2013), but attention to how new ideas enter the stage (Padgett & Powell, 2012) remains scarce, partly at least because these “initial moments are often lost in historical reconstructions” (Furnari, 2014: 440).

So far, studies attending these early junctures have commonly built on two not necessarily incompatible ideas. The first one is intimately linked to the previous discussion on fields in crisis. Precipitating jolts, such as technological disruptions and competitive discontinuities (e.g. Fox-Wolfgramm et al., 1998), trigger a process of deinstitutionalization characterized by the emergence of problems and institutional weakness and uncertainty (Fuensfshilling & Truffer, 2016; Rychen & Zimmermann, 2002; O’Brien & Slack, 2004). As incumbent and new players independently seek solutions to these problems, possibilities open up for the introduction of new ideas and innovative solutions (Tolbert & Zucker, 1996), often carried by outside actors who enter the field bringing with them “practices rooted in logics from other fields” (Maguire et al., 2004; Greenwood et al., 2011: 336). The second idea does not require fields themselves to be in crisis and actors to migrate across fields. As organizational members deal with strategic contingencies, “organizations come to mirror or replicate salient aspects of environmental differentiation” (Scott, 1987). Organizations occupying interstitial places among different fields would be exposed to institutional contradictions and, naturally, be the most likely to import to a given field aspects from alien ones. These intersections have been identified at structural boundary-bridging and boundary-misaligning positions (e.g. Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006; Powell & Sandholtz, 2012; Thornton et al., 2005) but also in situated interactions, durable or transitional, and even when part of mere occasional and informal activities (Furnari, 2014).

This work adds to these views in different ways. First, it suggests that interstitial positions do not necessarily antecede novel solutions but can emerge as a result of them. In my findings, significantly different ways of acting do not emerge because actors, located at intersections, enjoyed available alternative possible repertoires to employ in their pursuits (Scott, 1987; Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006), nor because they had to deal with different logics clashing (e.g. Furnari, 2014; Groleau et al., 2012) due to logic complexity and institutional contradictions (Thornton et al., 2012). In my data, multiplicity, rather than being littered on the social landscape opening opportunities for action, “enters” a field at the micro level in the experience of constraints and problems. In these cases,
7 Discussion

Intersections appear when, in their search for solutions, actors are pushed by constraints to rely on inputs that the field does not consider to be capital. Intersections, in this sense, emerge first within individuals who realize that valueless schemas work and, therefore, follow action or happen simultaneously to the performance of it.

Second, my findings illuminate the possible role institutions play at early stages of independent innovation in a field in crisis. Actors—or better, skills, knowledge and attitudes accumulated in their personal structures (Bourdieu, 1977) through their lived previous experiences—are indeed carriers of ideas. As my findings show, many of these ideas and inputs correspond to schemas originally acquired in the experience of other institutionalized fields (e.g. the activism tactics in RevToday or the coproduction of social media in UseNews). The possibility of diverging action is therefore not necessarily free from institutional influence but still orientated by it (Cardinale, 2018). Yet, new schemas are not transposed because they are carried in the practices of new actors entering a field, but rather activated in particular ways. In my cases, these alien-to-a-field schemas do get activated, but in the personal experience of problems and constraints deep within a given field, not in the boundaries, intersections or overlaps among fields, nor carried in ready practices new actors bring. In line with recent discoveries in practice-driven institutionalism, my findings subscribe to the belief that “individuals, and not just organizations, can ‘carry’ multiple logics” (Smets et al., 2017: 381, quotation marks in the original). But they go further, adding a key insight into how this multiplicity can be activated in the first place.

In fact, at any time, a multiplicity of possible inputs populates a given field as they—stored in personal biographies—are part of individuals acting in it. Most of them, however, not being relevant to the field, remain dormant. In the experience of a field, some schemas get transposed from one institutional field to another “to tackle unfolding situations” (Cardinale, 2018), but only when specific ways of experiencing problems and constraints awake them. Extant research has framed this process as one of filtering of institutional logics (Greenwood et al., 2011) linked to organizational attributes such as field position, structure and ownership and governance. Peripheral positions within a field would facilitate the filtering of new schemas because these organizations would be less aware of institutional expectations (Davis, 1991) and less likely to receive the incentives of conforming practices (e.g. Westphal & Zajac, 2001). Complex structures of different groups and communities inhabiting institutions (e.g. Hallett & Ventresca, 2006) within organizations would also trigger dynamics that can facilitate filtering, a process that would also include power dynamics shaped by ownership and governance arrangements. My findings add to these perspectives by explaining why and how, in new ventures, schemas filter, or enter, new organizational structures in the experience of constraints. D’Aunno and colleagues (2000: 698) found quantitative evidence linking market forces (proximity to competitors and disadvantages in their service portfolio) in fragmented fields with divergent change. They inferred that heterogeneous institutional forces would “make searches for new templates
acceptable and successful” for market-disadvantaged organizations limited in their critical resources to support their templates. My findings offer qualitative details as to why and how—even if the field is not yet exposed to institutional contradictions—the experience of constraints can activate schemas. If, in the situated interactions that follow, they contribute to solving these problems, suddenly the stage is theirs.

Emergence and reproduction of new personal predispositions

My findings also contribute to bringing clarity to how personal predispositions (i.e. habitus) and field can recursively change each other, an area where previous studies adopting Bourdieu’s apparatus have attracted criticism (Smets et al., 2017). In any given field, objective conditions will eventually be subject to change. Recently, Pratap and Saha (2018) have shown how—when an external incident disrupts the value of capital forms in a field—those practitioners’ predispositions that benefit from the new conditions imposed by the jolt shape the new emerging forms of capital. I add to this insight by identifying one of the possible early dynamics by which changing objective conditions can modify habitus and therefore “realize themselves” in any given field (Bourdieu, 1968: 705). Occasionally, in the experience of constraints, some individuals may resort to inputs in their personal structures that do not belong to their habitus in the field. If these inputs—even if only approximately—work, they become situated new forms of capital that consolidate in the organizational structures in which they emerge. This process, as it integrates personal experiences, can modify in the involved individuals the system of lasting and transposable dispositions that habitus is composed of. As this allows for the introduction and reproduction of new personal predispositions (i.e. habitus) in any given field, some of them may eventually diffuse and accumulate sufficiently to bring field-level change.

From responses to complexity to the possible multiplicity of action

These insights somehow suggest that there is potential in complementing the traditional attention paid to the activity of individuals as manifestations of organizational responses to institutional complexity (Greenwood et al., 2011) in a sort of reverse causality mode. At very early stages of novelty, what my findings suggest is that rather than individuals and organizations responding to institutional complexity, what emerges is situated entanglements of schemas responding to practitioners’ activities in their constrained attempts to approximate solutions to their organizational issues. In this sense, organizational responses precede institutional complexity. This may explain why, when studying everyday activities of actors, practice scholars have commonly found that institutional complexity is typically more constructed than encountered (Smets et al., 2017). In my findings, alien-to-the-field inputs do not get activated as a result of actors’ exceptional foresight or willingness to bring or avert change. In my cases, in fact,
simplicity dominates. New ideas lose their novelty potential because they are either assimilated (process of reproduction by decoupled innovation) or directly avoided (process of reproduction by sheltering). Significant complexity in my data is therefore rarer than in much practice research. When it arises and gets embraced (process of novelty by new situated capital), albeit in its initial steps reluctantly and partly decoupled, it results from constrained and situated emerging solutions that consolidate into organizational day-to-day activities. In my data, significant novelty emerges in constraints.

Paradoxically, this perspective aligns with and complements views that stress the limitations of trying to explain possible action only in terms of constraint and enablement (Schatzki, 2002; Nicolini, 2012; Cardinale, 2018). In institutional fields, norms and taken-for-granted concepts prefigure—i.e. make pertinent—large aspects of the ends actors in the field pursue and the means to achieve them. Shaped by the institutional arrangements that dominate a field, some activities, tasks, projects and actions are pertinent, others are not. Actors who act pertinently get rewarded. Organizations that incorporate these institutionalized elements in their structures increase their resources and survival capabilities (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). But in studies on these categories and processes, institutionalism has often backgrounded the same actors that reproduce—or divert from—the institutionalized ways of acting. When attention is paid to the actors themselves, however, individual activity does not seem to be just enabled or constrained by what is pertinent and what is not. Given ends and the means to achieve them are no longer just enabled or constrained, “cleared or obliterated,” but courses of action become:

- Easier, harder, simpler, more complicated, shorter, longer, ill-advised, promising of ruin, promising of gain, disruptive, facilitating, obligatory or proscribed, acceptable or unacceptable, more or less relevant, riskier or safer, more or less feasible, more or less likely to induce ridicule or approbation – as well as physically impossible or possible and feasible or unfeasible.


In the analysis of how individuals experience problems and constraints in an institutional field, the multiplicity of possible action becomes clearer. Yet, against dominant views in practice theory that “celebrate a world of endless improvisation and potential for change” (Smets et al., 2017: 371, emphases added) and detect continuous and widespread change (Nicolini, 2012), my findings suggest that differences significant enough to amount to change (Schatzki, 2018) are a rare occurrence. They also shed some light on how what seems to be endless improvisation can be explained—when looking at the “box,” i.e. at organizations and their specific properties (Smets et al., 2017)—in particular dynamics of individual experiences of problems and constraints in specific organizational circumstances and conditions.
Studies have acknowledged that individuals “actively mediate [institutional] pressures in a process that is framed by their preexisting beliefs and practices, which, in turn, are rooted in past encounters with institutional pressures” (Coburn, 2004: 212). Certainly, although—even in highly institutionalized fields—that potential for multiplicity is always there (stored in the personal structure of individuals), it needs to be activated. In my data, it happens in singular experiences of constraints in practitioners as they attempt to deal with problems and challenges in organizational conditions of capital scarcity in new entrants. These particular conjunctures and organizational conditions facilitate courses of action that do not reproduce social patterns in the field. Yet, they are still orientated by those socially acquired schemas that, accumulated in the personal structure of the actor, constraints turn on.

In sum, the entrepreneurial processes I describe in my findings exhibit dynamics more complex than compliance versus noncompliance binary options. In my data, it is the changing objective conditions of a field that triggers the experience of problems in individuals, who—despite sharing similar socially informed purposes—organize their activities very differently. Actors in incumbents make insignificant adjustments in their activities that suffice to create a perception of capital gains. Meanwhile, in new entrants some actors manage to shield their normatively informed activities from the objective conditions in the field and avoid exit scenarios. In others, however, when the experience of constraints switches on inputs in their personal structures that become new forms of situated capital, solutions and ideas display significant differences. Multiplicity of action transpires in these nonreproductive differences in ways that an exclusive focus on constraint and enablement falls short of explaining.

My findings also bring insights to forms of entrepreneurial action. Because these contributions require an explicit dialogue in relation to entrepreneurship theories, I elaborate them separately in the following section.

Implications for entrepreneurship

Introduction

This research combines the study of individuals engaged in new enterprises (Davidsson & Wiklund, 2001) in both a large established organization and new ventures entering the field of written news. The findings presented in the previous chapter align with views of entrepreneurship as contextualized (Welter, 2011) idiosyncratic activity (Roberts, 1991) related to problems of designing within constraints (Venkataraman et al., 2012) that can result in means-ends reconfigurations driving an exchange field from unstable situations towards new equilibria (Kirzner, 1973).
7 Discussion

A central initial insight is that, in an institutional field in crisis, entrepreneurial action takes forms that are strikingly different to the ones most often described in institutional entrepreneurship studies (DiMaggio, 1988; Misangy et al., 2008; Battilana et al., 2009). In my data, resources do not abound; capitalized actors manage to invent new activities without challenging the institutional arrangements that support them; resource-deprived individuals succeed in defying the changing objective conditions in the field by organizing activities that shield their organizations from market demands so that they can sustain the institutionalized forms of work they value; and seemingly powerless actors, because of their experience of constraints, manage to bring novelty.

At the very initial moments of novelty, my findings question two common understandings in neoinstitutional takes on entrepreneurship. First, although in my data novelty emerges—as anticipated in previous studies—in disadvantaged organizations (e.g. Kraatz & Zajac, 1996; Leblebici et al., 1991), it does not happen because, as this literature suggests, having less to risk and more to gain, actors in these organizations are motivated to act entrepreneurially. In a field in crisis, practitioners in all sorts of organizations commonly need to deal with problems they are set to solve entrepreneurially. What explains why novelty emerges in some of these organizations—albeit exceptionally—and not in others is not differences in their motivations to act “more or less” entrepreneurially in the way they deal with their problems and challenges; it is a particular way of experiencing constraints in an organizational context of severe scarcity. This links to the second idea my findings challenge. At late stages of institutional change, empirical studies have confirmed the initial intuition of DiMaggio (1998) that resources play a determinant role in the chances of implementing divergent change by institutional entrepreneurs (Battilana et al., 2009). Yet, at very early stages of novelty—before concrete forms of institutional change can be envisioned and therefore before institutional entrepreneurship as conceived in received literature forms—my findings question the necessity, even the utility, of abundant resources. This insight perhaps deserves some additional discussion in the light of how approaches to contexts in entrepreneurship literature build on links between search and resources.

Search and resources in entrepreneurship

Recent attempts to sensitize entrepreneurship to contexts have built on two ideas: first, that “entrepreneurship depends primarily on the ability of entrepreneurs or enterprises to constantly search for knowledge across different domains in order to prospect, develop and exploit opportunities” (Levinthal & March, 1981; March & Simon, 1958; Nelson, 1982; in De Massis et al., 2018: 7, emphasis added); and second, that prospecting, developing and exploiting opportunities implies “reconfiguring human, social and financial resources with and across industry sectors” (De Massis et al., 2018: 8, emphasis added). My findings provide some insights in relation to these ideas.
In my data, entrepreneurial behavior in problem-solving processes facilitate the search for knowledge across different domains. This observation is hardly novel. Extant literature has also amply praised the benefits of searching for knowledge and other resources across fields (e.g. Ahuja & Morris Lampert, 2001; Fleming, 2001; March, 1991; Rosenkopf & Nerkar, 2001; Stuart & Podolny, 1996) and stressed how entrepreneurs identify “new solutions to market and customer needs” with a combination of alertness to opportunities, prior knowledge and experience, and search of information (e.g. Baron, 2006: 105; Ko & Butler, 2007). My findings complement this literature in different ways. First, in my cases, the problems at stake are not entirely external to the organizations. Certainly, all organizations in my cases, incumbents and newcomers, attempt to solve problems among their intended customers (e.g. a lack of information about their communities). What triggers the processes I study, however, is the actual experience of problems and constraints among individuals either in starting or sustaining their organizations, so that those external customer-centric problems can be attended to. Second, my findings detail contextual conditions and organizational processes that sterilize entrepreneurial search for new knowledge. New useful knowledge and resources (e.g. management ideas and new technologies in the case of SvD), even if identified and purposively imported, can lose their transformative potential when they become assimilated within the meaning system dominating the field. Third, and more importantly, my data provide some novel insights into how entrepreneurial search is triggered, contributing to definitions of entrepreneurial alertness.

According to Kirzner (1979), entrepreneurs’ prescience and foresight allow them to see what others do not, allowing them to identify and bring new means-ends configurations. Not focally interested in the entrepreneur per se, he did not elaborate on this idea much further. The conceptual attractiveness of entrepreneurial alertness, however, has attracted the interest of many scholars, who have identified and theorized it in many alternative ways. Some have suggested that it is “a propensity to notice and be sensitive to information” with special awareness of—among other things—possible “novel combinations of resources” (Ray & Cardozo, 1996). Gaglio has stressed alertness connotations of “heightened sensitivity to the unusual or unexcepted” (Gaglio, 2004: 539). Others have linked it to cognitive biases such as overconfidence and lower risk perception (Keh et al., 2002) or to a combination of personal traits, experiences, prior knowledge, access to social networks and other environmental influences (Moreno, 2007).

Significant novelty in my cases, because of the role played by situated new capital and its assessment against exchange field dominant templates, closely resonates to new market-related means-ends configurations in the “Kirznerian” sense. In those cases, practitioners—not only founders and owners, but also managers and frontline employees getting their jobs done—commonly identify new solutions when capital constraints, not breaking their commitment to projects, direct their attention to freely available inputs (i.e. knowledge that become a resource)
accumulated in their personal biographies. In these cases, alertness—at the baseline—is being sensitive to commonly available information that can solve organizational problems resulting in ends and means reconfigurations. The way this sort of alertness activates tacit knowledge and subjective experience carries some implications. First, it suggests that alertness does not necessarily refer to an a priori condition entrepreneurs carry with them. It is triggered by particular experiences of constraints that do not stop efforts. This does not discard other possibilities for entrepreneurial alertness, such as an unrestricted search for optimal solutions to real or imagined problems, but I have not been able to identify them in my data. Second, this version of alertness clarifies why entrepreneurs seem to discover only those opportunities related to their own knowledge (Shane, 2000), but also why many forms of knowledge, despite their widespread availability and obvious relevance, only get activated in some actors and circumstances.

Finally, these insights align with a recent surprising observation: While researchers on resources largely focus on issues related to their ownership and control, practicing entrepreneurs do not (Kellermans et al., 2016). Kirzner (1973) theoretically anticipated that entrepreneurship does not require the actual ownership of resources. My data suggest that situated new forms of capital, linked to the experience and knowledge entrepreneurial actors already possess, need not to be formally acquired, owned or controlled by the organizations where they produce effects. Literature on bricolage has emerged from similar observations. In the following section I discuss how my findings might complement it.

**Bricolage as a basic process of entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurial bricolage, creativity and alertness to available resources

When interpreted within the conceptual framework of bricolage, as originally elaborated by Lévi-Strauss (1962), my findings expose new details on how organizations can create something from what seems to be nothing. These details also provide linkages between bricolage behavior and the sort of entrepreneurial creativity, alertness and discovery behind market-level processes in Austrian economics. Kirzner has always claimed that his theory has nothing to say about the way actual entrepreneurs behave and what makes them successful or not (Foss & Klein, 2018). Analyzed as a process of entrepreneurial bricolage at the organizational level, my data can explain microlevel aspects of the entrepreneurship function as a market driving mechanism.

Entrepreneurial bricolage and the function of entrepreneurship in Austrian economics share some relevant points. In Austrian economics, entrepreneurship works, first, as the needed market mechanism reallocating resources to their best use and, therefore, enabling reconfigurations of the ends and means given at any
time (Kirzner, 1973). In this tradition, the “true function of the entrepreneur” is to recombine resources (Lachman, 1956: 16); resources that, as Kirzner (1973) warned, do not need to be owned. Contemporary approaches to entrepreneurial judgment can be seen as an update of this perspective: entrepreneurial decision-making is—above anything else—about the use of scarce resources (Foss & Klein, 2018). In my data, entrepreneurial bricolage emerges from the way actors experience changes in the objective conditions in which a given field operates, i.e. from problems and constraints related to efficiency and availability of capital. Kirzner emphasized the generative possibilities of the limitations of the price system in bringing about efficient resource allocations. My findings suggest that bricolage behavior can play a relevant role in driving the discovery of new means. New-to-the-field forms of capital, i.e. new means when no market has yet defined rules for their ownership or set their pricing mechanisms, situationally emerge through a process akin to bricolage.

A second central aspect of the entrepreneurship function in Austrian economics is that it is idiosyncratic and nonreplicable. Entrepreneurship is idiosyncratic because, even if information is in a continuous state of flux, it is based on packages of information not replicable by others (Roberts, 1991). Information is learnt “through the experience of market participation” (Kirzner, 1973: 13) thanks to the combination of individual creativity and alertness to resources not necessarily owned by the entrepreneur (Kirzner, 1973). Studies of entrepreneurial bricolage have also highlighted a form of “local, incremental and experimental” action that is not subordinated to the availability of resources (Klein & Bylund, 2014: 272). Much management science using the concept of bricolage has largely remained focused on field-level dynamics (e.g. Gundry et al., 2011; Hardy & Maguire, 2008; Rao, 2005) or used bricolage as a useful metaphor of unobserved intrafirm processes of recombination (e.g. Ciborra, 2002; Salunke et al., 2013). These approaches, however, have struggled to clarify how, in resource environments where valuable resources are socially constructed, individuals within organizations can create something from what seems to be nothing. More recently, Baker and Nelson (2005)—by providing a clear definition for entrepreneurial bricolage heavily supported by rich-in-insights empirical evidence—brought microlevel precision to this process and its expected outcomes.

In contemporary entrepreneurship literature, the term bricolage is commonly understood today as a process characterized by making do with resources available at hand that creatively recombine into novel solutions allowing organizations to meet new challenges (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Kickul et al., 2018; Senyard et al., 2014). In this light, bricolage processes manifest in a refusal to “treat (and therefore see) the resources at hand as nothing” (Baker & Nelson, 2005: 359) that flesh out the rather abstract “alertness to resources” in Kirzner (1973). Similarly, entrepreneurial bricolage has been shown capable to create “economic value without withdrawing resources from any current use” (Baker & Nelson, 2005: 361): very much in line with Kirzner’s (1973) intuition that the
function the entrepreneur performs in putting resources to their best use does not require ownership of resources. This dominant version of entrepreneurial bricolage, however, may have not gone far enough. In my findings, the process “Novelty by new situated capital” provides some details about the process of bricolage that, I argue, have passed relatively unnoticed in its current streamlined version.

In the process of novelty by new situated capital I have proposed, bricolage transpires in the combination of five elements. (1) Those organizations bringing novelty to their structural properties commonly share low levels of initial capital as defined by the field. In other words, these organizations lack those resources (such as video infrastructure in CodaStory or a team of journalists in UseNews) individuals in the field demand for the purpose of their organizational projects. (2) Yet, individuals in these organizations, although unable to follow common responses in the field, do not subordinate their tasks to the availability of resources. In their commitment to these tasks they need to direct their attention to capital alternatives. Their attention however remains within their closed universe of inputs. (3) Invariably, they scan inputs—knowledge accumulated through experience in their personal structures (such as the amateur illustration skills in one organizational member of CodaStory or the observation made by the founder of UseNews that neighbors had posted and shared social media content during a previous natural disaster in the area)—interrogating how they can contribute to their project. (4) Occasionally, when these inputs are put to use, in conditions largely defined by their meaning, they do work, becoming new situated capital. (5) The outcomes, however, are not initially as originally preferred or intended. In my data, none of the solutions originated through bricolage (such as native multimedia illustration-based formats in CodaStory and coproduction and codistribution of reporting with the audience in UseNews) were in the original approaches of these organizations.

In my view, two aspects in my findings, although present in the original theorization by Lévi-Strauss (1960; 1962), have not been sufficiently emphasized in extant literature on entrepreneurial bricolage. First, that bricoleurs discover new resources by interrogating available inputs accumulated in their personal histories. It is this process of questioning what defines the set of available inputs they enact in addressing organizational problems and challenges. In this light, the superior foresight traditionally assigned to entrepreneurial alertness (Kirzner, 1979) seems to be mainly introspective and knowledge based. In bricolage, entrepreneurial discovery, in this sense, implies an investment of personality and life from the entrepreneur. This observation, common in studies of new ventures, seems to be driving the expanding interest in identity dynamics in entrepreneurship literature (e.g. Fern et al., 2012; Powell & Baker, 2014). And second, discovery is also prior to the use of resources. Alertness, or curiosity—in the term used by Lévi-Strauss (1962)—, antecedes practical purpose. Inputs become useful because they are first of all known. It is later, when inputs get activated as resources, or tools, that they can be granted some extra causal power. Yet—in the early moments of
bricolage—they are expected to act as they did before. When the founder of UseNews resorted to freely available social media content he did so to cover a natural disaster similar to the one that had previously hit the area, and that had prompted neighbors for the first time to post and share online what they were experiencing. In the other cases, the meaning of available inputs that turn into resources was also predetermined by their particular history and previous use.

If inputs, expected to perform as they had done before, are pre-constrained by their meaning, they impose constraints that go beyond the traditional emphasis on limited resources at hand made by entrepreneurial bricolage literature. Bricoleurs, in this sense, face indeed two distinct levels of constraints. First, those—heavily stressed in entrepreneurial bricolage literature—imposed by the closed universe of existing resources and inputs and, second, those resulting from the inputs’ meaning possibilities and necessary relations among them. The possibilities that inputs grant are always limited by the meanings they have acquired along the history of their use and necessary relations. This second level of constraints becomes more apparent when research pays attention to the institutional; and helps to understand the type of immediate outcomes that can be expected from the process of entrepreneurial bricolage. Let’s explore this in turn.

Entrepreneurial bricolage and significant novelty

Lévi-Strauss (1962: 21) suggested that bricoleurs—in their constraints—would inevitably accomplish their projects “at a remove from [their] initial aim”. But being removed from initial aims does not necessarily imply significant novelty in itself.

Empirical studies of bricolage behavior have struggled to tie it to novelty. Baker and Nelson (2005) cleverly suggested this possible consequence but restricted their empirical findings to growth outcomes. Later studies have either normatively proposed bricolage for innovative results without measuring them (e.g. Andersen, 2008; Engelen et al., 2010) or wrestled with their measure of innovation, offering innovativeness as their dependent variable (e.g. Senyard et al., 2014). But innovativeness assesses innovation intentions and says little about the possibility that bricolage behavior may traverse institutionalized activities (e.g. Baker & Nelson, 2005; Baker et al., 2013). Recently, Kickul and colleagues (2018) have quantitatively explored the relation between bricolage and various forms of social innovation, finding a positive linear impact on low-end disruption, i.e. product offerings based on simpler and less costly alternatives to existing ones. However, they also find a puzzling curvilinear effect of bricolage on new market disruption, meaning that beyond a point bricolage would negatively affect offerings to market segments considered unattractive and, therefore, ignored by existing players. Thus, my study is the first—to the best of my knowledge—to qualitatively explore the inner workings in the process of entrepreneurial bricolage resulting in novelty that departs from institutional templates dominating a field.
In my findings, the process of bricolage can end in the sort of novelty I have defined as differences in the structural properties of organizations that significantly depart from dominating templates in a field. These differences are not just at a remove from the bricoleurs’ initial aims, importantly, they do not reproduce available solutions in the field. What makes my deprived cases deliver significant novelty is one extra particularity not within the elements traditionally considered to define bricolage. Certainly, bricoleurs who bring significant novelty make do with resources at hand they recombine, but significant novelty originates only when their limited universe of available inputs inhibits initial common responses. There is no significant novelty in my cases when low levels of initial capital inhibiting common responses in the context of organizational projects do not trigger bricolage behavior. There is no significant novelty either in those bricoleur cases when the limits imposed by their closed universe of inputs does not suffice to inhibit common responses or solutions. Bricolage in itself will not suffice to bring significant novelty.

When bricolage results in significant novelty, it does it in ways that contrast, first, with the innovative intentions some researchers expect in bricoleurs and, second, with accounts of institutional entrepreneurship and institutional work. In initial conditions of low capital, the co-occurrence of (1) the unavailability of common solutions with (2) bricolage behavior will, occasionally, generate significant novelty. Available inputs may recombine into newly working solutions that, despite being significantly different, contribute to situated efficiency and, as projects are sustained, become part of the structural properties of the organization. As such, the significant novelty that bricoleurs may bring will not result from any innovativeness bricolage may trigger but from compromises between the set of available inputs and the structure of the project—what Lévi-Strauss labeled as “objective hazard” (1962: 21). Besides that, previous accounts of bricolage have sometimes reported its outcomes as apparent blatant violations of rules (e.g. Baker & Nelson, 2005; Baker & Pollock, 2013). This view does not exclude an alternative interpretation. Significant differences in my cases are better described as novel working solutions emerging from constrained cross-examination of resources by actors who, being well aware of existing norms, do not intend to break them. It is, in fact, a deep sense of institutionally informed social purpose that often sustains the efforts of these deprived organizations.

The perspective on bricolage that I offer closely aligns with the original definition of Lévi-Strauss (1962: 19), who originally proposed the idealized roles of a bricoleur and an engineer to depict two distinctive approaches to thought and tasks. In his view, while the “engineer is always trying to make his way out of and go beyond the constraints,” the bricoleur “remains within them.” In my data, entrepreneurs remain within the limits of their own constraints to the extent that, when low levels of capital inhibit more pertinent solutions, they invariably turn to old skills, knowledge, attitudes, et cetera available in their own personal structures. When these activated predispositions perform new functions in significantly different ways, novel organizational properties diverging from
existing templates are possible. Yet, these differences do not emanate from questioning and trying to make a way out of the constraints imposed by them—“the universe” in terms of Lévi-Strauss (1962: 19)—, but from the situated performance of the predefined set of inputs at hand. So divergent solutions fall out of existing institutional templates not necessarily as a result of intentional challenging “engineers,” but rather as part of, often, day-to-day work in struggling projects carried out by ordinary “bricoleurs.” Accordingly, bricoleurs remain within their existing constraints—even when new situated capital emerges from their inputs—imprisoned in the received meaning of the “events and experiences” their inputs are made of.

Yet, even if immediate novelty outcomes of bricolage remain within the same constraints they emerge from, bricoleurs, as they carry out their projects, create conditions for new knowledge. Lévi-Strauss (1962: 22) acknowledged that bricoleurs generate “structures by means of events”. As these novel structural properties are sustained by new forms of situated capital, the resulting reconfigurations of resources and their relations update the lived history of these inputs. This may trigger an engagement with concepts that would eventually turn a bricoleur into an institutional entrepreneur or worker. Much research has shown how theorization processes of sense making contribute to the emergence and diffusion of new institutions (Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994; Reay et al., 2013; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002; Zott & Huy, 2007). In my data, centered on very early stages of significant novelty, there is still little of this. There are, at best, faint theorization attempts. For bricoleurs, their inputs—even when working as situated new capital—still possess limited theoretical relations with other elements in their organizations and the field they populate. They will need to make a qualitative shift to directly question their meaning and be able to play with “structures” to create “events” (Lévi-Strauss, 1962: 22). By them, and to be consistent with Lévi-Strauss’ distinction between bricoleurs and scientists, they should not be considered bricoleurs anymore.
Chapter 8. Limitations and implications

This research has many limitations. Many of them relate to the nature of my findings: contextually dependent “possibly true” claims whose contingent validity requires an understanding of their boundary conditions. Many other limitations result from my data and analysis, which I will argue open opportunities for further research. In the following sections I elaborate on these ideas under the headings “Transferability” and “Further research.” Despite the limitations, my findings may also shed some light on the specific context of written news. This dissertation started by stating that the primary concern of this research is not what the future of written news will look like. Yet, my findings may provide some clues about actors and activities helping and preventing change in different aspects of that future. One area where contextually rich critical approaches often contribute is policy discussions. Thus, perhaps presumptuously, I finish this book with some implications for both policy and practice.

Transferability

A reduction of the possibilities of our thinking has resulted in views that assert that “social science has not succeeded in producing general, context-independent theory and, thus, has in the final instance nothing else to offer than concrete, context-dependent knowledge” (Flyvbjerg, 2006: 223). This is entirely possible, and this research carries no universalistic pretensions. I do not intend to hide the locality to which my findings pertain. It is, however, also possible that by noting the boundary conditions relevant to my findings, some of them may be transferable to other empirical settings (cf. Bacharach, 1989). The accumulation of cases in this research and their use in different but interconnected analytical processes argue in favor of the potential transferability of my findings to other empirical settings sharing similar conditions: individuals searching for solutions to organizational challenges in an institutional field in crisis.

I would expect entrepreneurial processes like the ones described in this work in other highly institutionalized exchange fields in crisis where changing objective conditions affect the efficacy of capital. In particular, I would expect, in such fields, the emergence of diverging novelty in the presence of two conditions: (1) the experience of capital constraints and (2) the availability of valueless inputs accumulated in the personal structures of the actors involved. But do all fields in crisis depict a similar ability in their institutions to find ways to reproduce? The stickiness of institutions that the suggested reproduction processes manifest, however, could be relevant only to some types of fields in crisis. The societal role
played by written news in the last generations has offered to actors in this field the opportunity to make grand claims about the central function of journalism in the workings of democracy. Perhaps other players in other fields do not have similar opportunities to claim links to institutions as central to our societal system as democracy is – and crises easily wipe away preexisting norms and concepts. Moreover, not in all fields, for example in many manufacturing industries, are actors able to run their ventures or join the population of producers with such little upfront investment, particularly in terms of physical assets. Hybrid forms in other fields may not be available—or not in the conditions described in this study—to actors to shield their valued occupation from market demands.

Further research

Longitudinal real-time research and behavioral experiments

One major limitation of this research is the relatively short period of real-time field research (about 21 months for the cases in the NY city area) of which I was only physically present at the site for nine months. For the case in Sweden the period of field research was noticeably shorter. Thus, many junctures in the described entrepreneurial processes were not directly observed in real time, although many others were.

For example, while I witnessed every described aspect of the process “reproduction by sheltering” unfolding in all the corresponding cases, key moments in the other processes had to be reconstructed retrospectively. For instance, in “reproduction by decoupled innovation,” the initial experience of problems, the resorting to new management ideas and the early steps in the interpretation of those ideas had already taken place within the year prior to my first interview with the sampled case. So, many details of how this sort of decoupling emerged were lost and threads of evidence were not too convincing or impossible to verify, and therefore discarded in my analysis. The same applies to the process of “novelty by new situated capital”: The very moments instances of novelty were born had already happened months, in some cases years, before I entered the field. In my reconstructions I triangulated sources, paid extra attention to the details that emerged from every one of them and analyzed these threads of data critically. The inhibition of common responses and the attention directed to capital alternatives appeared to be reliable accounts of what had happened in all these cases, but I cannot claim I directly witnessed their occurrence.

Longitudinal approaches may facilitate direct and more complete observations of these processes. Experiments may also offer interesting alternatives to test, in controlled conditions, the behavioral decision-making aspects of these processes. Several studies in cognitive psychology have, for example, shown in consumer and artistic contexts that time and input constraints can enhance creativity by inhibiting conventional responses to a problem (e.g. Burroughs & Mick, 2004;
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Goldenberg et al., 2001; Reitman, 1965; Scranton & Gibbert, 2009; Stokes, 2001). Scopelliti and colleagues (2013), based on self-reported information, have empirically proved a similar effect in financial constraints, but the behavioral mechanisms that may link novelty to economic and other forms of capital constraints remain underexplored.

Practice research

Perhaps one of the most promising new strands of literature in the neoinstitutional turn to the micro is practice research (Powell & Rerup, 2017; Jarzabkowski et al., 2013; Smets & Jarzabkowski, 2013). An important strength of this emerging body of studies is its linkages to a quite well-developed philosophical framework, practice theory. Research in this tradition shares a keen interest in both contexts and the wide array of understandings, prescriptions, acceptable aims et cetera that shape action. The methodology in this dissertation, however, diverts from what practice research demands. Observations are an important part of my data, but they are insufficient for the purpose of researching practices. Multilevel analysis of microprocesses within macrostructures are also, somehow, alien to the flat ontologies that practice theory favors. Yet, some aspects of the processes I identify can possibly be better understood, perhaps revised or corrected with a practice approach. One of these aspects is particularly relevant: context, or sites, in practice terminology. What practice theory brings is a fine-grained, theoretically consistent way to make sense of different types of phenomena that demand ethnographic research.

For practice theory, social life cannot be understood if not tied to a context of which it is inherently part (Schatzki, 2005). This implies that social phenomena are not only “constructions of or out of individuals and their relations” but that “a certain type of context (sites) is central to analyzing and explaining social phenomena” (Schatzki, 2005: 467). These sites are more than mere spatial and historic contexts in the sense that context and contextualized events constitute one another, i.e. “what the event is is tied to the context, just as the nature and identity of the context are tied to the event” (Schatzki, 2005: 468). Sites are distinct social settings that constitute the features of the actors in them, but which are also constituted by these actors and therefore not diverse in character to them. The mutually constitutive nature of sites and actors is somehow implicit in this dissertation: journalists are what they are because of the field of written news, but also the field is constituted—and therefore is what it is—by what journalists (among other actors) do and say in it.

A practice approach would allow the sites in my empirical data to be dissected in a way that is very different—and possibly promising—to my approach to fields, institutional templates, populations of organizations, daily activities, individual actors and so on. I see this promise in the alternative detailed classifications of phenomena that practice theory proposes and the implications these descriptions may bring to what can be observed and understood in the data. For example, sites
in practice theory are composed of (a) practices and (b) material arrangements (Schatzki, 2010). The former, (a) practices, are understood as “an organized, open-ended special-temporal manifold of actions” (Schatzki, 2005: 471; 2010). In turn, these actions include: (1) practical and general understandings of how to do things, (2) rules or explicit formulations that provide prescriptions, requirements or instructions, and (3) a teleoafffective structure of acceptable ends, projects, uses or emotions for those actors participating in the practice. The latter, (b) material arrangements, include setups of material objects such as human beings, artefacts or things (Schatzki, 2010; 2012). Additionally, different practices and material arrangements mesh and interlace to configure larger nets and confederations of practices and material arrangements. Organizations are seen in practice theory as bundles of practice arrangements that result from actions performed in existing practices. Organizations “embrace existing, to varying degrees altered, practices and a mix of new and old material arrangements” and “continue in existence via a perpetuation of its practices and a maintenance of its arrangements that accommodates evolution and focused changes” in them (Schatzki, 2005: 476).

To understand how organizations behave, practice researchers need to identify the practice arrangement bundles of which the actions they study are part, how these bundles cohere or compete and how they are tied to larger nets of bundles. Explanations of complex social changes from a practice perspective imply providing overviews of the multitude of causal nexuses that give rise to them. “An overview conveys the gist and significant, salient or essential features of a field of entities, for instance, multitudes of causal nexuses” (Schatzki, 2018). From this perspective, fields would perhaps be closer to the conceptualizations of complexes favored in coalface institutionalism (Barley, 2008), and the multiplicity of logics (Thornton et al., 2012) less a matter of sustained conflict and tension than a matter of diverse ways of activating general understandings, rules and teleoafffective structures in relation to specific courses of action.

Moreover, for some practice researchers, change is so widespread and continuous that it hardly needs explanation; what is puzzling is persistence (Nicolini, 2012). My findings suggest that change is perhaps less common than these views celebrate; nevertheless, the emphasis that practice scholars put on change is a welcome advantage for microstudies of institutional phenomena. Institutional studies have often explained reproduction and novelty separately. The initial interest in reproduction seems now to be forfeited in the current neoinstitutional turn to the micro. Practice-based research may strike, with the focus on individuals and organizations, an uncommon balance between change and persistence in institutional studies. The aim here would be not to explain institutional processes per se but as a way into understanding organizations (Greenwood et al., 2017). Finally, practice studies are well positioned to develop theorizations of the institutional that may conform to flat ontologies and strip social structures of hierarchical connotations. Developments in this direction may contribute fruitfully to current discussions about the utility of multilevel
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methodological approaches in addressing the structure vs. agency debate (c.f. Cardinale, 2018; Harmon et al., 2018; Lok & Willmott, 2018).

Delivering—at least some of—these promises, however, requires not only a consistent and detailed grounding in practice theory but also empirical approaches that get closer to the data than what this study manages to do.

Capital, decoupling, growth and legitimacy

Some additional opportunities for further research do not directly emerge from methodological limitations but are related to how I use—and disregard—some theoretical constructs that seem relevant to explain my data. Some of these opportunities lie in my limited use of some concepts (capital and decoupling). Other opportunities result from the likely relevance for entrepreneurship and institutional theory of other concepts this thesis does not explore at all (growth and legitimacy). I briefly refer to these concepts in the following paragraphs.

I have attempted to explicitly understand the role of capital in entrepreneurial processes in an institutional field in crisis. My analysis of capital, however, remains very limited. Bourdieu (1986) detailed a typology of capital (i.e. economic, cultural, social and symbolic) suggesting that different forms of capital work differently. In my analysis, this remains relatively unexplored. Different forms of capital are assessed, and it is the scarcity of economic capital that seems to trigger the search for solutions in actors. The particular experience of constraints that results in novelty also takes places in contexts of low economic capital and various combinations of moderate to low levels of the other forms of capital. Yet, my sample and available data at the moment of drafting this text did not allow further elaborations.

In addition, capital availability at individual and organizational levels, even in very small organizations, do not necessarily coincide. While economic capital can be easily tied to organizations, cultural and social capitals are intrinsically individual. Even if cultural and social capitals can be aggregated, shared, even transferred, at the venture level it is likely that these operations will perform differently depending on the type of capital, the possibilities of action they grant and their contexts. In my analysis I have largely made an abstraction of these issues and assumed aggregations of capital at the organizational level as triggers of the different processes this dissertation identifies. For the emergence of novelty, however, it is individual capital scarcity that seems relevant, as the available inputs provided by the personal structure of the focal actor initiating novelty necessarily originate at the individual level. These analytical jumps between levels may mask nuanced aspects in the processes I study. Real-time observations and closer zooming in on individual data may prove useful.

Similarly, my exploration of decoupling processes is limited. Somewhat surprisingly, I find decoupling mechanisms both in reproduction and novelty
This suggests that decoupling potentially generates both homogeneity and heterogeneity. In other words, decoupling—treated as a singular construct—cannot be tied to one single type of institutional outcome. So, rather than trying to use decoupling as a mechanism behind field-level outcomes (e.g. heterogeneity of practices in Meyer & Rowan, 1977; heterogeneity of ends in Bromley et al., 2012), what perhaps deserves more attention is the organizational processes by which different forms of decoupling happen and how they distinctively help in understanding organizational outcomes (e.g. Bromley & Powell, 2012). Research could pay supplementary empirical attention to how and why mismatches among what individuals do and say—and interpretative misalignments—emerge in the first place, in which initial conditions and with what organizational effects. Discursive research—through the contextual analysis of written and verbal discourses—seems well positioned to advance in the role of decoupling within meaning structures, power dynamics and sense-making processes at the core of organizational dynamics (e.g. Czarniawska, 2010; Vaara et al., 2010).

Many of my observations raise questions my data cannot answer about the role of growth in the stabilization of significant difference in firms’ structural properties. I can only guess in my cases about the critical role of growth as “fuel” required to sustain these emergent structures that still lack the legitimacy of field-level institutional arrangements. This would suggest there is potential for further research, for example, on bricolage behaviors in which growth is not considered an outcome in itself (e.g. Baker & Nelson, 2005) but an intermediate condition for other consequences at different levels. Similar arguments can be made in relation to legitimacy.

The questions that some findings in this research open up in relation to legitimacy deserve attention. Legitimacy—a conceptual bedrock both in institutional studies and entrepreneurship theory—has become a pivotal concept in management studies (Suddaby et al., 2017). The most widely used definition of the term refers to “the generalized perception” that the actions of an organization are “appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions” (Suchman, 1995: 574; Deephouse & Suchman, 2008). It is generally accepted, both in entrepreneurship and institutional literature, that achieving legitimacy allows new ventures to acquire resources, reducing their liability of newness (Stinchcombe, 1965) and improving organizational survival and performance (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Aldrich & Fiol, 1994). Yet, what would be the role of legitimacy if resources were not formally acquired but—as in my findings—discovered and enacted in alternative forms of situated capital? Would these organizations be illegitimate as they do not incorporate proper, adequate, rational and necessary institutional elements from their social context (Parsons, 1956, 1960; Scott, 1995)? How would the subjective legitimacy judgments of individuals (Bitektine, 2011; Tost, 2011; Bitektine & Haack, 2015) form in these cases? Through which interactive processes (Überbacher, 2014) may these organizations achieve legitimacy?
Similarly, studies of legitimation in new ventures—the process by which an organization demonstrates its legitimacy to stakeholders (Maurer, 1971)—also largely assume that organizations start with low legitimacy and need to gain it in the first place by demonstrating its fit with preexisting categories and institutions (Deephouse et al., 2017). It is this need that would explain why so many new ventures fail and what would justify acquiring legitimacy as the central purpose of legitimation processes, processes that have often been described as consecutive to organizational design and led by entrepreneurs who skillfully gain legitimacy via impression management (Zott & Huy, 2007), social mobilization (Weber et al., 2008) or cultural agency (Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994; Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001). But does legitimation also follow a stepwise progress in bricolage forms of entrepreneurship? What is the role those stakeholders involved in new forms of situated capital play in the legitimation process? How do legitimacy judgments—made by internal and external stakeholders—interact with organizational activities and outcomes?

None of these questions my findings trigger has been addressed in this research, although the answers they demand seem key in better understanding key aspects of the entrepreneurial processes this dissertation has presented.

Implications for policy and practice

This work has tried to cast light on lingering institutional arrangements in the field of written news and a type of actor in it who, so far, has received scant attention: individuals in resource-scarce journalism startups. These organizations have, somehow, got lost in the open crevasses between retrenching legacy newspapers and heavily funded but never-quite-achieving technology-oriented digital natives. Curiously, one initial baseline finding in this research is that this type of organization experiences similar problems to those of incumbent players, triggering—in their search for solutions—processes that are all entrepreneurial. A second finding is that, in these processes, reproduction and novelty are intimately interconnected. Certainly, the processes I identify are different, but they share central constructs in them. In all of them there are perceptions of capital scarcity or capital losses, personal experiences of constraints and problems, a search for solutions that brings new activities, some sort of decoupling. Outcomes, however, differ, but these differences are not based on entirely alien dynamics. Reproduction or novelty happens depending on minor aspects of these processes that can hardly be assigned to crude binary categories, and cannot be easily anticipated from afar either. A final basic, but not necessarily new, finding common to this kappa and the papers it wraps is that institutions—including in the field of written news—come in bundles: Ideals and activities fuse in ways that become indistinguishable to actors, and concepts become interpretative systems that impose meaning on initially different ideas. These apparently simple findings have some, perhaps important, implications for written news.
The growing concerns about the business sustainability of written news have been feeding calls to re-envision how the production and distribution of news can be protected. Most of these calls are based on the growing assumption that market incentives and technological imperatives on their own may not suffice to provide a way forward (e.g. John & Silberstein-Loeb, 2015; McChesney, 2016). There is a sense of despair barely hidden in these calls—particularly in the regulatory adverse context of the US—that increasingly regret having “wasted a great deal of time and money talking about a profitable future and entrepreneurial journalism, when we should all have been digging deep policy trenches around protecting what was so clearly under threat” (Bell & Marshall, 2019: 3, emphasis added). This dissertation has little to add for or against regulation as such. What this research suggests is that what is key is the definition of that “what” that needs to be protected. It is too easy to fall under the spell that the idealistic societal contributions of journalism, the ways it has been traditionally practiced and the forms of organizations that have supported journalism are the same thing or, even worse, an indivisible bundle.

Most extant research in media management and political communication has focused on strategic processes in legacy organizations and the design of flashy ideas in well-funded startups. Because the findings have so far been considered largely disappointing, protective regulation of “news production as a public good” (Ots & Krumsvik, 2016: 126) has emerged as the obvious priority. Specific proposals, generated in the US (e.g. McChesney, 2016), the UK (e.g. Cairncross, 2019) and the Nordic countries (e.g. Kammer, 2016), reflect and, partly, react to the different media systems they originate from. While in continental Europe the state has traditionally played a very active role in the design and control of infrastructures aimed at supporting public deliberation, the Anglo-American model has consistently avoided public intervention as the right approach to achieving similar goals. Despite these systemic differences, in the current state of crisis, many of these proposals have often gathered interest and sparked conversations out of their national boundaries. These recommendations normally center on one or combinations of the following lines:

- Improve commercial terms for publishers: for example, rebalancing the commercial treatment SMPs and other technological giants give to news publishers, so that the latter can benefit more from online advertising; or extending a zero rating for VAT for all publications, digital or print.
- Increase or initiate direct or indirect public funding to support news providers: such as, granting tax reliefs for public interest journalism, like those in the creative sector; or establishing public subsidies supported by taxpayers’ money, like “the citizenship news voucher” for nonprofit news media (McChesney, 2016) or the “Institute for Public Interest News,” which would administer an innovation fund (Cairncross, 2019).
- Regulate characteristics of quality journalism: in particular, promulgating guidelines about what online news is trustworthy and what
is not; or extending to SMPs the consideration of publishers and, therefore, the rules that apply to them.

Often, these ideas of state intervention, where the socioinstitutional character of written news media takes over its private business nature, raise concerns both in the continental European and Anglo-American systems. In continental Europe, authorized voices have warned that “public service institutions tend to be more focused on market reach to legitimate their financing privileges, rather than fulfilling the role of providing desired content not available due to market failure” (Ots & Krumsvik, 2016: 126). In the Anglo-American model, the dominant view still insists on the conflicts of interest that even indirect funding may generate (Bell & Marshall, 2019). These concerns are important but, to the extent that they reflect on past dynamics and remain within their own reference systems, they also miss the point. This research, rather than raising additional concerns about the risks of regulation or lack of it, may complement these considerations by pointing out some situations these policies, and elite actors in the field of written news, should not ignore.

First, this dissertation has embraced within its focus the humblest forms of entrepreneurship in the exchange field of written news: resource-constrained journalism entrepreneurs—and their organizational members—struggling to accomplish their aspirations and projects. In these forms, I have found the possibility of both novelty and sustainability. Novelty in these ventures originates in working—even if imperfect—solutions to organizational problems. The generative possibilities of constraints and problems should in any case be taken with precaution. It does not seem reasonable to advise on innovation by suggesting actors increase their misery, obstacles and difficulties. What policies could consider, as they tend to shift from supporting news organizations to supporting journalism and from supporting ongoing operations to supporting innovation and entrepreneurship (Ots & Krumsvik, 2016; Ots & Picard, 2018), is the role that humble new entrants play in the generation of new solutions. Actors in these and other organizations in the field may also find some comfort in the finding that novel solutions can emerge in unexpected places. Perhaps new entrants, and incumbents alike, do not need to keep copying others’ solutions emerging in the unlikely rising star or the unoriginal legacy player.

Moreover, these small organizations often find ways to sustain their value-laden efforts not available—perhaps not conceivable—in bigger firms. As many have suggested, extravagant profits—so common in the media business for decades before the Internet revolution—distorted the economics of written news (Picard, 2014, 2015). Some experts are beginning to suggest that the way to think about the business of written news should not center as much on profits as on sustainability (Bell & Marshall, 2019). Perhaps it is not impossible to imagine a future where the provision of written news is sustained not by disproportionate financial profits but by socially oriented entrepreneurial motives arranged in some form of microorganizations, or networks of them. Many barriers, particularly in
the US, such as health insurance costs, limiting social security schemes and not-for-profit legal requirements, hinder the formation of such ventures.

Policy measures have so far been aimed at directing entrepreneurial efforts, such as innovation subsidies, or at sustaining existing journalism organizations, like the Scandinavian press subsidies. Results indicate that, so far, they have been unsuccessful in delivering a way forward (Ots & Picard, 2018). My findings may help explain why this is the case. Innovations in written news, when interpreted and implemented within the meaning system provided by existing institutional arrangements in the field, get assimilated and fail to bring significant novelty. The sustainability of journalistic socially valuable services does not seem to depend on monetary incentives but on long-term commitments to valued forms of work that only require minimal sheltering from market dynamics. And eventually, in the current context of problems and constraints, significant innovation will arise in the most unexpected places. Policy recommendations may consider dumping unrealistic intentions to shape the future of written news—either sustaining current organizational forms where journalism is done or intervening in the design of new ones—and concentrate on just dealing with those difficulties that deter the start of new entrants.

And finally, this work exposes institutional arrangements that—despite their current misalignment with the objective conditions in the field—continue to shape business and professional practices in the field of written news. This research also identifies some, perhaps not fully conscious processes—such as decoupled innovation—by which these institutional arrangements reproduce. These observations may provide some means of reflection to actors in the field. They also suggest that new regulatory frameworks may benefit from questioning the assumption that ideals traditionally associated with written news can only be achieved under the supporting form of professional journalism practices and newspapers. Protecting those values democratic societies want to preserve perhaps requires the social function of journalism—its constitutive system of rules, norms and concepts—to be unbundled first and then reassembled, securing what deserves to be kept without the handicap of possible free-riding elements.
References


Andersen, O.J. (2008). A bottom-up perspective on innovations: Mobilizing knowledge and social capital through innovative processes of bricolage. *Administration & Society, 40*(1), 54-78.


References


References


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Appendices 1 and 2
### APPENDIX 1A

**Sources of data on the context of written news**

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
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<th>Organizer</th>
<th>Speakers</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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</table>
| Tow Center for Digital Journalism: Educator's Symposium | 19 September 2017 | Columbia University School of Journalism, New York | Tow Center for Digital Journalism | Meredith Broussard, Professor, NYU  
Hilke Schellmann, Professor, NYU  
Jonathan Stray, Professor, Columbia University  
Sissen McCarthy, Professor, Center for News Literacy, Stony Brook University, School of Journalism  
Jen Schaffer, Founder and Executive Director, J-Lab  
Marie Gilot, Head of New Professional Development Program, CUNY Graduate School of Journalism  
Jeremy Caplan, Professor, CUNY Graduate School of Journalism | 20+ from academia | Presentations, discussions and workshops |
Dominic Carroll, Associate Professor of Media Design, The New School  
Christian Guimaraes, Director, Verizon Open Innovation  
Travis Riddle, Postdoc, Columbia University  
C. Kearney-Volpe, S. Parr, G. Cammarata and P. Myers, students, NYU Tandon School of Engineering  
Christopher Mitchell, Founder, Geogap  
Evan Huggins, Visiting Instructor in Industrial Design, Pratt Institute | 1,000+ from academia | Presentations, media and technology corporations, civic agencies, startups and accelerators |
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<th>Event</th>
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<th>Organizer</th>
<th>Speakers</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
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<tr>
<td>LION Publishers Summit: Keeping it real: Local News results</td>
<td>26, 27 and 28 October 2017</td>
<td>Columbia College, Chicago</td>
<td>Local Independent Online News (LION)</td>
<td>Jan Schaffer, Founder and Executive Director, J-Lab; Brian Wheeler, Director of Communications, Charlottesville Tomorrow; Kelly Gillilan, Associate Publisher, Home Page Media; Eleanor Cipoll, Co-Founder, Great Life RE; B. Shock, E. Deen, N. Jones, L. Phillips, Z. Hiser, Journalists, Richland Source; Julia Smith, Director, Institute for Nonprofit News; Travis Smith, President, Hop Studios; Kim Clark, Founder and Publisher, Nooshank; Kathy Hashbarger, Sales and Marketing Rep, My Edmonds News; Elizabeth Page, Sales Rep, North Carolina Health News; Dylan Smith, Editor and Publisher, TucsonSentinel.com; Matt DelRienzo, Executive Director, LION Publishers; Teresa Wippel, Publisher, My Edmonds News; Dana Mendoza, News Partnerships Team, Facebook; Josh Mabry, Local News Partnerships Lead, Facebook; Christopher Guess, Fellow, Reynolds Journalism Institute; Teresa Gorman, Senior Program Associate for Local News, Democracy Fund; Karen Randlet, Director of Professional Development, Knight Foundation; Molly de Aguilar, Managing Director, News Integrity Initiative; Jan Schaffer, Founder and Executive Director, J-Lab</td>
<td>200+ from academia, media and technology, lightning talks, corporations and civic discussions, agencies</td>
<td>Interviews and workshops</td>
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<td>Event</td>
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<td>Local News in a Digital World</td>
<td>15 November 2017</td>
<td>Columbia University School of Journalism, New York</td>
<td>The Brown Institute for Media Innovation</td>
<td>Damian Radcliffe, Professor, School of Journalism, University of Oregon Christopher Ali, Assistant Professor, Department of Media Studies University of Virginia R. Baker, Deputy Head of News, NY Daily News, and President, Society of Professional Journalists Anjanette Delgado, Digital Director, Axios; Ichud.com, part of the USA Today Network John C. Emslir, Multimedia Reporter, The Record and northjersey.com I. Krattek, Co-Director, Center for Community and Ethnic Media, CUNY School of Journalism Anthony O’Neill, Associate Editor, Queens Chronicle</td>
<td>25+ from academia and local media organizations</td>
<td>Presentations and discussions</td>
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<td>Guide to Audience Revenue and Engagement</td>
<td>9 January 2018</td>
<td>Columbia University School of Journalism, New York</td>
<td>Tow Center for Digital Journalism</td>
<td>Emily Bell, Director, Tow Center for Digital Journalism Elisabeth Hansen, Senior Research Fellow, Tow Center for Digital Journalism Emily Goligoski, Research Director, Membership Puzzle Project at NYU Sue Cross, Executive Director &amp; CEO, Institute for Non-Profit News Ernst-Ian Pfautz, Co-Founder &amp; Publisher, De Correspondent Kate Myers, Executive Director, Revenue &amp; Operations, First Look Media The Intercept Harry Backlund, Director of Operations, City Bureau</td>
<td>100+ from academia and media organizations</td>
<td>Presentations and discussions</td>
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<td>Financial Times Live: The Future of News</td>
<td>22 March</td>
<td>10 on the Park, New York</td>
<td>Financial Times</td>
<td>Stephen J. Adler, President and Editor-in-Chief, Reuters</td>
<td>150+ from corporations, civic agencies and academia</td>
<td>Presentations, interviews and discussions</td>
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<td>2018</td>
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<td>Samantha Barry, Editor-in-Chief, Glamour</td>
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<td>Lydia Polgreen, Editor-in-Chief, HuffPost</td>
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<td>Emily Bell, Director, Tow Center for Digital Journalism</td>
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<td>Matthew Belloni, Editorial Director, The Hollywood Reporter</td>
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<td>Campbell Brown, Head of News Partnerships, Facebook</td>
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<td>Arayeh B. Bourkoff, Founder and CEO, Lion Tree</td>
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<td>Ingrid Ciprian-Matthews, Executive Vice President, CBS News</td>
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<td>Jim Cramer, Host 'Mad Money', CNBC</td>
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<td>Ken Fisher, Founder, Fisher Investments</td>
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<td>Richard Gingras, Vice President of News, Google</td>
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<td>James Goldston, President ABC News</td>
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<td>Tamara Ingrum, CEO, J. Walter Thompson</td>
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<td>Valerie Ford Jacob, Partner, Global Transactions Group Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer</td>
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<td>Colin Kinsella, CEO, Havas Media Group North America</td>
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<td>Jason Kint, CEO, Digital Content Next</td>
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<td>Isaac Lee, Chief Content Officer, Univision Communications and Grupo Televisa</td>
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<td>Jessica Lessin, Founder, CEO and Editor-in-Chief, The Information</td>
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<td>Scott Lippstreu, Principal, Deloitte Consulting LLP</td>
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<td>Sharon Rowlands, President, USA Today Network Marketing Solutions</td>
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<td>Ben Smith, Editor-in-Chief, BuzzFeed News</td>
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<td>Josh Tyrangiel, Executive Vice President, Vice News</td>
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<td>Dear Bagel, Executive Editor, The New York Times</td>
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<td>Jeff Zucker, President, CNN</td>
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<td>Stephen K. Bannon, Former White House Chief Strategist and CEO of Trump campaign</td>
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<td>Matthew Garrahan, Global Media Editor, Financial Times</td>
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<td>Lionel Barber, Editor, Financial Times</td>
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<td>John Ridding, CEO, Financial Times Group</td>
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<td>Startup week: Penn State University</td>
<td>27 and 28</td>
<td>Penn State University</td>
<td>Penn State University</td>
<td>Stacy Glisson, Business Consulting Director, PwC</td>
<td>1000+ students</td>
<td>Presentations, discussions, workshops and demos</td>
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<td>March 2018</td>
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<td>Steve Baker, Head of Med Chem, GlaxoSmithKline</td>
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<td>Jennifer Duke, Director of Aerodynamics, Pratt &amp; Whitney</td>
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<td>Melanie, Head of Engineering, Cubic Innovation</td>
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<td>Brad Groznik, Entrepreneur, PR Business</td>
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<td>Anne Hoag, Director of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Penn State College of Engineering</td>
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<td>Jenna Spinelie, Digital Communications Specialist, College of Liberal Arts Penn State</td>
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<td>Reader Revenue: Building a business with your audience</td>
<td>4 April 2018</td>
<td>Montclair State University</td>
<td>Center for Cooperative Journalism</td>
<td>Stefanie Murray, Director, Center for Cooperative Media, Montclair State University</td>
<td>100+ from academia and media organizations</td>
<td>Presentations and discussions</td>
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<td>Matt DeRienzo, Executive Director, LION Publishers</td>
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<td>Gwen Vargo, Director of Reader Revenue, American Press Institute</td>
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<td>Christina Shih, VP of Business Development, News Revenue Hub</td>
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<td>Emily Galigowski, Research Director, Membership Puzzle Project at NYU</td>
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<td>Matt Skibinski, Advisor, The Lenfest Institute</td>
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<td>Jay Senter, Founder and CEO, Shannon Mission Post</td>
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<td>Maria Archangelo, Publisher and Executive Director, The Notebook, The Philadelphia Public School</td>
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## APPENDIX 1A (Cont.)

### Sources of data on the context of written news

**Events attended (complete list)**

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<th>Event</th>
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<th>Speakers</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
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</thead>
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| Collaborative Journalism Summit    | 11 May | Montclair State University | Center for Cooperative Journalism                                          | Karen Rundlet, Director of Journalism, Knight Foundation  
Stefanie Murray, Director, Center for Cooperative Media, Montclair State University  
Jon Funabiki, Executive Director, Renaissance Journalism  
Gregoire Lemarchand, Deputy Global Editor-in-Chief and Head of Social Networks, A. France-Presse  
Tom Trewhinard, Director of Business Development, Medialab  
Maria Sanchez Diez, Partner Manager, ElectionLand ProPublica  
Aimee Rinehard, Director of Training and International Projects, First Draft  
Lee van der Voop, Managing Director, InvestigativeWest  
Rachel Glickhouse, Partner Manager, ProPublica  
Jeremy Bernfield, Director of Collaborative Reporting, WAMU88.5  
Andi McDaniel, Chief Content Officer, WAMU88.5  
Joe Amelitis, Associate Director, Center for Cooperative Media, Montclair State University  
Nacy Solomon, Managing Director, WNYC New York Public Radio  
Lee Hill, Senior Digital Editor, WNYC New York Public Radio  
Scott Klein, Deputy Managing Director, ProPublica  
Eric Abrahamson, Co-founder and Project Director, Black Hills Knowledge Network  
Charlotte Anne Lucas, Managing Director and Online Instigator, NOWcastSA  
Jennifer Velasquez, Coordinator of Teen Services, San Antonio Public Library  
David Beard, independent consultant  
Guilherme Amado, JSK Fellow, Stanford University, and investigative reporter, O Globo  
Ziva Branstetter, Senior Editor, The Center for Investigative Reporting  
Amy Pyle, Editor in Chief, Reveal News  
Uza Gross, VP of Newsroom Practice Change, Solutions Journalism Network  
Heather Bryant, Director, Project Facet  
Kara Wentworth, Strategic Impact Analyst, Twin Cities PBS  
Sarah Stonbely, Assistant Professor, Center for Cooperative Media, Montclair State University  
Dexter Bridgeman, CEO, MIA Media Group  
Tim R. Porter, JSK Fellow, Stanford University  
Debbie Blankenship, Interim Director, Center for Collaborative Journalism, Mercer University  
Kirstin McCudden, Managing Editor of Digital and Multimedia Content, Kansas City PBS  
Dennis Moore, Co-editor, Mississippi Today  
John Schrag, Executive Director, Pemplin Media Group  
Jean F. Rudowsky, Editor, Broke in Philly, and Executive Director, Resolve Philadelphia | 150+ from academia, civic organizations and media organizations | Presentations, discussions and workshops |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Organizer</th>
<th>Speakers</th>
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| Presentation of the Reuters Institute Report                          | 14 June 2018     | Columbia University    | Tow Center for Digital Journalism                                                                                                         | Emily Bell, Director. Tow Center for Digital Journalism  
   Rasmus K. Nielsen, Director, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, Oxford University  
   Campbell Brown, Head of News Partnerships, Facebook  
   Erica America, Google News Initiative  
   Poi Green, Huffington Post  
   Mark Thompson, New York Times | 100+ from academia and media organizations | Presentations and discussions |
| Graduate course: Perspectives on American Journalism                 | Sept. - Dec. 2018 | Stanford University    | Stanford School of Education                                                                                                             | James T. Hamilton, Professor, Stanford School of Education                                                                                   | 50+ students | 9 lecture sessions and 5 seminar sessions |
| The Battle for the Soul of the Internet                             | 17 October 2018  | Stanford University    | Center for International Security and Cooperation                                                                                         | Colin H. Kahl, Co-director, Center for International Security and Cooperation  
   Alex Stamos, Adjunct Professor, Hoover Institution, and Former Chief Security Officer, Facebook | 200+ from academia | Presentation and discussion |
| Deep Learning and Society Governance in an emerging new world: The information challenge to democracy | 5 November 2018  | Stanford University    | Hewlett Teaching Center  
   Hoover Institution                                                                                                                   | Jeff Dean, Head of Artificial Intelligence, Google  
   George P. Shultz, Former Director, United States Office of Management and Budget  
   Condoleezza Rice, Former United States Secretary of State, and Professor, Stanford University  
   Niall Ferguson, Senior Fellow, Hoover Institution  
   Joseph Nye, Commissioner for the Global Commission on Internet Governance                                                                        | 200+ from academia | Presentation and discussions |
| Effect of the changing media landscape on democracy                 | 27 November 2018  | Stanford University    | Stanford School of Law                                                                                                                   | Rasmus K. Nielsen, Director, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, Oxford U.  
   James S. Fishkin, Professor, Stanford University  
   Jennifer Henley, Director of Security Operations, Facebook                                                                              | 50+ from academia | Presentations and discussions |
| Exploring computational journalism: Final presentations             | 4 December 2018   | Stanford University    | Stanford School of Education and Computer Science                                                                                            | Students team A: Congressional Misinformation index  
   Students team B: Cablenews archive analysis  
   Students team C: Speech interaction with a news service  
   Students team D: Self-service local news  
   Students team E: Measuring the influence of Russian bots  
   Students team F: Florida votes  
   Students team G: Not the usual sources                                                                                                                     | 50+ students | Student presentations, discussions and demos |
APPENDIX 1B
Sources of data on the context of written news
Reports, studies and other documents (partial list and journal papers excluded)

To rebuild trust, we need to change journalistic process (2018). Columbia Journalism Review, 3 July 2018. Wallace, L.
Assessing the Health of Local Journalism Ecosystems: A Comparative Analysis of Three New Jersey Communities (2015). Rutgers School of Communication and Information.
Taking the pulse: Impressions from the Journalism Entrepreneurship Summit (2015). NEL. F.
40 INMA Global media awards winners announced, Svenska Dagbladet takes top prize (2016). INMA. McMullan, D.
## APPENDIX 2
Sources of data on the cases
Interviews (complete list)

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<th>Case</th>
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Note: The above table represents a sample of the data collected for the study.
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<th>Source</th>
<th>Role in the case</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Interview Date</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<td>FreshReport</td>
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<td>Associate Director</td>
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<td>Senior Reporter</td>
<td>2018-10-04</td>
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Only the focal cases are anonymized.