Metaphors of Occupational Identity: Traces of a Changeable Workplace in Journalism

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Abstract:

According to Social Identity Theory individuals' identity consists of a personal identity and (several) social identities. Social identities often manifest themselves in jobs and occupations (i.e. occupational identities). When organizations or industries change, employees face new requirements and unknown situations. In identity negotiation occupational identity and specific situations influence each other. This co-constitutive interdependency allows employees to make sense of a changeable work environment. In this paper we propose the approach to work with metaphors to investigate occupational identity. We develop a methodic approach and explore the question how metaphors named by journalists reflect their occupational identity in a changeable work environment.

Keywords: Occupational identity, changing workplace, metaphors, journalism

INTRODUCTION

This paper seeks to explore the related issues of occupational identity and the handling of fundamental changes in an individuals' work environment. It proposes that occupational identity might serve as a resource to cope with the far-reaching change of a profession and that those motivations related to the identity help employees to make sense of new job requirements. In our study we focus the field of journalism: A highly competitive environment, Social Media and altered customer expectations (interaction, crowd-sourcing, multimedia-based content) create an ever-evolving context for today's newspaper journalists. The ongoing changes imply far-reaching impact for their occupational identity: Customers' demand for interaction and participation in hand with the abrogated monopoly to publish for a broad audience call for a revised, rather conversation oriented concept of the relationship

between journalists and their audience (see e.g. Robinson, 2010). Huge (open) data sets, the digital environment and Social Media require extended skills from today's journalists (see e.g. Huang et al., 2006). The mentioned transformations further offer journalists new potentials to develop their personal (professional) brand (see e.g. Witschge, 2013). The listed dynamics put into question who journalists are and what they do. Established habitual routines that sustain profession-related identities in journalists' traditional work settings may no longer be applicable to the changing work environment as new tasks, requirements and relationships evolve. Journalist must consciously redesign habits, routines and their attitude to the changeable context. For example, a journalist may no longer focus on one deadline in the evening to hand in his work, but has to deal with a permanent beta status, developing his/her stories from one moment to the next.

It seems that some journalists experience these changes as extended possibilities to live out their professional role concept, for example as an investigative journalist (e.g. Glenn Greenwald), whereas for others these developments primarily seem to mean additional workload and role conflict (Grubenmann, Meckel, & Fieseler, 2013). Different journalists seem to perceive ongoing changes in different lights – whereas the age factor, against all odds, does not seem to be a crucial criterion[1]. One gets the impression that some journalists rely on a more flexible identity concept, which is capable to absorb change and readjust to new situations and requirements. Others seem to be in need of a more stable and fix identity concept, which might be threatened by far-reaching changes as we face them at the time in the industry. This manner makes us think of Bourdieu's Habitus (see e.g. Bourdieu, 1977). Characterised by its nature, the Habitus as embodied social structures is capable to integrate

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[1] Actually, the opposite seems to be true: Our analysis of a quantitative survey conducted in a Swiss local newsroom (N=94) showed, that the younger a journalist the more likely he/she approves to have nostalgic feelings concerning 'the good old times' in journalism.

ongoing change to a certain degree but avoids situations of crisis, critical questioning and radical change (Bourdieu, 1982: 238ff.).

In this article we examine the question how a journalist's occupational identity is related to his/her perception of ongoing changes in the industry and related possibilities/stress factors. Research into the relationship between work and employees' identity is dominated by the question of how work influences our identity and thereby characterized by a flexible identity concept. An example of such a study is the conceptual work of Thatcher and Zhu (2006a) who develop a framework to research the influence of changes in the workplace (telecommuting work) on employees' occupational identity. Another example is the work of Swann Jr., Johnson, and Bosson (2009) on identity negotiation at work, which is based on the assumption, that employees' identity gets negotiated in different situations at work between two or more involved individuals. For our work we propose an alternative but related perspective: We investigate the question of how occupational identity might serve journalists as a resource to cope with ongoing changes in their work. With that we follow the approach of a flexible identity concept but are interested in a broader perspective on the interplay between work and identity: We will not just explore how our work shapes our identity, but are further interested in how our occupational identity shapes our perception of changes at the workplace and how it helps to make sense of new and eventually conflicting situations. To research our approach we analyze metaphors, which resulted from 23 semi-structured interviews with Swiss newspaper journalists and give us an impression of journalists' personal role perception these days and their professional aspirations. We develop a methodic approach to use metaphors as a powerful lingual instrument to research employees' occupational identity. By presenting the analysis of two outstanding cases (a particularly progressive and a particularly conservative representative of our sample), we propose an analytical framework to research the interplay between employees' occupational identity

specific aspects of a changing work environment. We discuss interpretations and potential implications for leadership.

SOCIAL IDENTITIES IN A LATE-MODERN SOCIETY

To cope with a complex environment, individuals tend to classify themselves and others into social categories (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) such as organizational or occupational membership, age groups or religious affiliations. As these categories are associated with prototypical characteristics (Turner, 1985), they help individuals to cognitively segment their social environment and to locate him/herself in it (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Those groups and the corresponding characteristics the individuals feels affiliated to become integrated into his/her social identity. According to the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Tajfel, 1981) and later the self-categorization theory as well (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) identity at the individual level is composed of two parts: the *personal identity* and (several) *social identities*. The two components contribute to a fundamental tension between individuals' needs for uniqueness and individuality on the one hand (personal identity), and social belonging and similarity to others on the other hand (social identities). Individuals strive for a balance between the two opponents: nor being too distinct nor too inclusive (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006).

Identity Negotiation

It seems important to distinguish social identities from the membership of a social group: A membership may be voluntary or imposed, social identities are consciously chosen and "activated at some times and not at others" (Brewer, 1991a: 476f.). With that social identification provides a "*partial* answer to the question, Who am I" (Ashforth & Mael, 1989: 21). Each role in our life is related to an identity, which contains goals, values, norms, and interaction styles. Some of these identities are more central than others, but altogether they

form our global identity (Ashforth, 2001). With that, identity is multifaceted and sensitive to situational influences (e.g. Goffman, 1959; Markus & Kunda, 1986), this not just regarding the specific social identity which becomes activated in a certain situation but also in the capability to *transform* identities in reaction to changes in our environment or specific characteristics of it. Concerning the transformation of social identities past research speaks of so called *identity negotiation* as a form of identity work[2], for example in initiating relationships (Swann Jr. et al., 2009), or in order to optimize the boundaries between the personal and social identities (Kreiner et al., 2006). For this paper of particular interest is the negotiation between workplace practices and individuals' identity: Particularly dramatic events and fundamental change have the power to change individuals' identity and their view about work practices. According to Billett and Somerville its individuals' *agentic action,* which, based on such an experience, transforms workplace practices. The authors speak of a "co-constitutive" and "relational" interdependency between the individual and his/her work that can act to sustain or transform both, the self and the work (2004: 309f.).

Occupational Identity and Reflexivity

Authors exploring identity negotiation act on a *dynamic* concept of identity, emphasizing ever evolving re-creation and reconsideration of one's sense of self, generating only temporary answers to the question 'who am I' (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003: 1164.). From this perspective identity construction is cyclical and subject to many influences, including organizational and occupational demands. Thus, identification with a social group does not end with one's affiliation but underlies permanent negotiation depending on individual and social factors (Kreiner et al., 2006; Pratt, 2001). This process of on-going self-definition and re-creation speaks of highly reflexive individuals in their increasingly fluid and uncertain

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[2] Other forms of identity work are managing multiple or threatened identities, or different forms of identity management (for a brief overview see Kreiner et al., 2006).

lives on the one hand, and dramatically expanded lifestyle choices on the other (Giddens, 1991). In late modern-societies organizational change becomes common, not just in journalism, and job stability seems to be a concept of the past (Ashforth, 2001). In this post-traditional individualized society, which is characterized by a progressive lack of social structures (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002: 51), the question 'who am I' or 'what is a journalist' "has to be answered in day-to-day decisions" (Giddens, 1991: 14). One the one hand the lack of social structure, which in the past tied us to core sociological variables such as gender, ethnicity and class, holds valuable options for individuals in late modern societies: Out of never-ending possibilities they actively construct a coherent sense of self-identity. Especially consumer practices become a core strategy to construct our identities, defining who we are and what we want to present (Sweetman, 2003: 528f.). But not just consumption gives us modules at hand to consciously define our identity, our jobs and occupations as well hold valuable potentials to specify how we are and how we are perceived by our social context (Giddens, 1991). In late-modern, especially western societies individuals are no longer bound to family traditions, parents' conceptions of their future, or filiation when choosing their occupation. Aside from personal skills and dispositions today's adolescents enjoy far-reaching freedom of decision concerning their career choice. And even in an advanced stadium of one's career further education possibilities contain options for individual fulfillment and career development. The times, when an employee committed him/herself lifelong to a single employer seem definitely to be over. In the course of societal development job profiles change and offer employees flexibility in their refinement – this flexibility in equal measures becomes a request from employers' side. Likewise more and more companies offer employees on a certain hierarchical level of freedom and opportunities to play a part in the job design. Within this context, one's occupation becomes a flexible and crucial instrument of identity construction and realization, manifested in the occupational identity.

OCCUPATIONAL IDENTITY IN JOURNALISM

Social identities often manifest themselves in jobs and occupations (Barley, 1989; Kreiner et al., 2006; Pavalko, 1988; Trice, 1993). An individual's job or occupation is an important area for social identification: In this process, characteristics of a social group become related to the individual's self and distinctive group norms serve as guidelines for his/her own behavior (Ellemers, Gilder, & Haslam, 2004: 462). In our work we focus on the occupation of journalism based on the assumption that journalists' sense of belonging to the occupation helps them to make sense in their daily work and to reduce complexity in unknown situations. With this approach we hold the view in an ongoing debate to see journalism as an occupation or even profession[3] and not just as a craft in spite of the fact that some experts argue in favor of journalism as a "semi-profession", as non-professionals can and should not be excluded from the field[4] (T. Witschge & Nygren, 2009: 39). In the 20th-century a professionalization of journalism has been observed (Deuze, 2005, p. 444), which was characterized by the aim to create shared value systems and norms on the one hand (e.g. by standardized education), and by the wish to border the profession against 'non-professionals' in changeable times on the other hand (Evett & Aldrigde, 2003; T. Witschge & Nygren, 2009). For our research the aspect of official exclusion/inclusion is not crucial. We rather focus on shared values and expectations, which motivate individuals to become a journalist.

Identity as a Resource to Cope with Uncertainty

In our study we interviewed 23 journalists of a Swiss national newspaper to capture their occupational identity influenced by ongoing changes in the industry. Even though we've

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[3] In the following we will speak of an ,occupation', to stay in line with the terminology of recent research into identity negotiation at work.

[4] This leads to the interesting discussion on the question if bloggers and other online publishers should be approved as journalists or not and where to draw the line between producers and users in the digital sphere (e.g. Lewis, 2012).

limited the sample of our study to journalists working for one particular organization (for the reason of comparability), we do not contribute to the recent research stream focusing on the importance of employee identity in the dynamics underlying intra-organizational phenomena such as organizational change (Empson, 2004), changes in the nature of a specific workplace (e.g. Thatcher & Zhu, 2006a) or work motivation (e.g. Ellemers et al., 2004), but rather focus on identity negotiation within a particular defined occupation. In this we follow the approach of Ahrens and Chapman (2000) or Kreiner and Sheep (2006) who focus their research on social identities within a certain occupation (i.e. management accountants and priests).

We investigate how journalists reason their decision to enter the occupation and with which aspirations concerning their role as a journalist in society they connect it. Starting from this, we are interested how different concepts, concerning the decision and motivation to become a journalist, are related to the capability to cope with ongoing changes. Do the journalists in their narrations refer to ongoing changes? And if so, how do they relate in their personal story to it? Is there a link between the personal motivation and aspirations, and the perspective on ongoing changes? With that, we are interested in the reciprocal influence between occupational identity and changes in the journalists' work environment. To research the interdependency between occupational identity and work environment, Billet and Somerville (2004), based on Sondergaard (2002), refer to the concept of storylines, as the "explanatory framework of one's own and others' practices and sequences of action" (Sondergaard, 2002: 191). Employees take up social discourses and integrate them into their storylines. This allows us through the analysis of interview data, to explore how journalists integrate their perception of ongoing changes into their occupational identity and how they make sense of unknown and potentially conflicting situations. In this paper we are going to connect the concept of storylines with the work of metaphors. We asked interviewees for a metaphor, which describes the role they aspire as a journalist in society. Metaphors stress a certain

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aspect of what we say, by equating it with something else. They "*add* something – an additional level of meaningfulness" (Gauntlett, 2007, p. 142; italics in original). In the interviews the journalists interpret the named metaphors by themselves. This enables us to analyse journalists' personal interpretation in form of the interview data and consider it in the context of the storyline constructed in the interviews. This research interest leads us to the following research questions for our study:

Research Question 1: Which metaphors do journalists use to describe their professional aspirations in society?

Research Question 2: Do the chosen metaphors reflect changes in the journalists' work environment?

Research Question 3: What pictures deliver the chosen metaphors of journalists' occupational identity?

Research Question 4: How do the metaphors reflect journalists' occupational identity as a resource to cope with changes in the work environment?

SAMPLE

We focus on occupational identities within one particular occupation and related motives and aspirations on the one hand, and the interplay of occupational identity and a changing work environment on the other hand. To answer the listed research questions we investigated journalists' occupational identity for two reasons:

(1) Journalism is related to certain normative values, which to some degree differ between cultural areas/nations, but to some extend are shared among journalists around the world (for current international studies see e.g. Hanitzsch, 2009; Patterson & Donsbach, 1996; Weaver, 1998). According to Hanitzsch, objectivity and impartiality are two values which are strongly related to the professional self-concept and practices around the world (2009: 465). Furthermore, these values are not just accepted within the industry, but are also connected to the sense of quality within societies from a recipients' perspective (e.g. Gladney & Ehrlich,

1996, or Neuberger, 2012). Journalism therefore seems to be an occupation, which attracts individuals who at least to some extent feel committed to such values attributed to journalism. We are going to see, that the properties, which attract different individuals to become a journalist, differ on a manageable range. For some, it is the mission to deliver 'the truth' as fast as possible to citizens – as fast as possible, for others the freedom to write for an audience. In our analysis we will show that the central motivation, why someone becomes a journalist seems to be an important factor how he/she faces ongoing changes in the industry. So, similar to a judge or a doctor, there seems to be a certain image of the occupation in society connected to a (more or less) concrete imagination of how it would be to work as a journalist. The assumption that social identities are consciously chosen and activated (Brewer, 1991: 476f.) seems to be a conceivable for the case of journalism. For many, this job is rather an attitude towards truth, fairness and power than just a random occupation. Journalism seems to further be associated with a certain status in society ('journalism as the fourth estate') what fosters the willingness for identification with this group (Haslam, Powell, & Turner, 2000).

(2) In our research we are interested into the interplay of employees' occupational identity and changes in their work environment. Journalism constitutes such a profession, facing far-reaching transformation (see e.g. Deuze, 2005, 2008a, 2008b; Lewis, 2012; Singer, 1997, 1998; Strömbäck & Karlsson, 2011). In particular, five factors are reshaping this industry: a decline in print circulation and audience awareness (particularly among younger demographics), a shift of classified advertising to the Internet, the rise of low-cost alternative online news outlets, the rise of citizen journalism, blogging and self-publishing as well as fundamental shifts in user behavior towards the access of news content (Flew, 2009). For journalists, these developments mean new requirements in their daily work affecting the whole production process from the stage of investigation to the publication of and feedback to articles. These days journalists work in permanent beta status, developing stories through

the day. Technical skills become increasingly required (produce multimedia content, publish stories online, apply basic programming skills, or work with huge data sets) and the relationship with "people formerly known as the audience" (Rosen, 2006) has changed. For journalists, the mentioned factors mean increased workload, role overload (responsibility for additional tasks, e.g. maintenance of a Twitter account), and role stress (e.g. to see readers as equal party) (Grubenmann et al., 2013). Budget cuts induce additional stress and insecurity in this already changeable environment. If we consider Bourdieu's theory of Habitus, the illustrated developments have far-reaching meaning for the field of journalism: Social Capital becomes of even more importance as in social media the size of one's network has huge implications not just for reach and click rates but for access to sources and information, too. The meaning of Cultural Capital changes as readers and journalists more and more have to be seen as partners on par with each other. And in the vastness of the internet there is always an expert who knows better than the journalist. Regarding Economic Capital, journalists face the development that in many countries wages go down since years and budget cuts lead to downsized newsrooms (see e.g. Benson & Neveu, 2005).

In our study we interview 23 journalists of a national, Swiss newspaper. The interviews took place in summer 2013 and were conducted by two researchers. The journalists who were asked for an interview have been selected in an iterative process with the editor in chief, the researchers and recommendations of already interviewed journalists. A central criterion for the choice of the journalists was to reach maximal variance in journalists' experience: So we integrated young and older journalists, journalists with more, some with less experience in the occupation, career changer and blooded journalists, journalists of every desk, some, who were member of the former online editorial team[5] and some, who hardly work for the digital outlet, men and women, doubters and evangelists (regarding the converged newsroom and a

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[5] The mentioned newspaper has been working with a converged newsroom for three years.

Digital First strategy). In our procedure we first randomly selected five journalists, who were interviewed. Based on the interview data of these talks we step-by-step selected the next interviewee. With this approach we applied theoretical sampling geared by Glaser and Strauss (2005) and aimed for contrasting cases with counterexamples (Kelle & Kluge, 2010, S. 43). We repeated the procedure until we have reached data saturation (Strauss & Corbin, 1996). With the chosen sample we made sure that our interviewees faced the same situation regarding change in their work environment, as they belong to the same occupation within the same newsroom (aiding in generalizability), but can be characterized by their individual motivation and aspirations, which constitute the personal role concept (aiding in thick description).

METHOD

Our approach calls for a concentrated and qualitative study. We assume that identity lacks sufficient substance and discreteness to be captured in questionnaires and to simply be measured and counted (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003: 1165). For this reason this work is based on exploratory qualitative study. Each interview took place in the journalist's office or a meeting room and lasted between one and three hours. We first contacted each journalist over the telephone to ask him/her if he/she would be willing to take part in an interview. If a journalist agreed, we fixed a date and sent him/her a written invitation via email.

We assume to talk about our own identity and reflect on motives and aspirations in presence of two unfamiliar researchers as a difficult task for interviewees, as one's own identity is not object of everyday reflection (Gauntlett, 2007). For that reason we gave interviewees a preparation task, which should facilitate the access to and the reflection on personal identity, to find a way to capture norms and values one feels related to, and to ease the talk about these issues in the interview. As s preparation task we asked journalists to think of a lingual metaphor, which describes the role they aspire as a journalist in society and to bring the defined

metaphor to the interview. To avoid, that the framing of the invitation would influence journalists reflections, we only delivered very basic information about the interview.

The actual interview was semi-structured and consisted of three central topics: (1) Why and how the interviewee became a journalist, (2) how he/she perceives ongoing changes in the industry, especially the daily work, and (3) his/her outlook on the future of journalism in five years. We asked for the metaphors at the transition from the first to the second topic. When journalists named the metaphor(s) we asked them to explain what the metaphor stands for and why they picked it. Leaving the interpretation of the metaphor to the journalist allowed us to analyze the interview data. The additional questions in the interview were broad to enable the collection of multiple viewpoints and leave interviewees space to elaborate and articulate their feelings and perceptions.

In the interview we wish to stimulate journalist to illustrate themselves as a representative of a particular group/occupation and to feature their self-description with (for them) distinct group characteristics and associated norms (see Ellemers et al., 2004). Based on this data we want to find access to their occupational identity and relate it to on-going changes in the industry. For the design of our study and analysis of the interview data we follow the tradition of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1996).

FINDINGS

In the findings section we will focus on the analysis and interpretations of the metaphors journalists referred to in the interviews. Wherever it helps the reader to follow our interpretations, we will present further information from the interview and from ethnographic observations. We will present our findings following the process of our analysis: In a first step (1) we identify different types of occupational identity and discuss the marks of recent changes in the industry (research questions one and two) to get a sense of our data. To give

the reader an impression of the variance of answers we received in the interviews, we collocate an overview in table 1. We've listed all the interviewees, his/her motivation to become a journalist, the named metaphor with some extracts of his/her rationale and an abstract of how he/she thinks about changes at the workplace. In a second step (2) we identified the two most outstanding cases of our sample, representing a particularly conservative (interviewee number two) and a particularly progressive (interviewee number eight) representative considering his/her attitude towards change in journalism, to develop an analytical framework which helps us to interpret the named metaphor in the context of the interview. We will introduce the two journalists and the picture of their occupational identity we received in the interview by presenting rich descriptions of their cases and using power quotes. In our analysis we develop our understanding of how identity negotiation helps journalists to make sense of current changes in their profession (research questions three and four). By presenting our analyses in this paper we wish to discuss our approach to work with metaphors to research occupational identity and the corresponding interpretations. The aim of this procedure is it to deduce recommendations for future research. In the last section of our findings chapter we will discuss the significance of occupational identity to cope with far-reaching changes in journalists work environment.

Metaphors of Journalists' Professional Identity

In table 1 we present an overview of all interviewed journalists (year of birth, desk), with information about their career and the motivation to become a journalist, the named metaphor and a power quote of their interpretation of it, and an abstract of their stance on recent changes in their work and the industry. In the interview we've started off with the question on how they became a journalist and to which motivation this was related. From the motivation we turn to the metaphor, which interviewees defined as a preparation task for the interview in

advance and brought to the interview. After interviewees named the metaphor we asked them for an interpretation and talked with them about the meaning of the metaphor for them. By asking interviewees if they were able to realize their aspirations in their daily work and if this changed over the years, we conclude with the journalists' perception of recent changes in their work and the industry.

Insert Table 1 about here

Turning to the named metaphors, which function as the core element of our analysis, we were impressed by how well this task worked as (1) a stimulator to make interviewees think about their own identity and to facilitate this task as a preparation of the interview, and to (2) serve as an entry point in the interviews to reach a different form (or even level, a more intensive examination) of talking about interviewees identity subsequent to our talk about their motivation to become a journalist. Most of the interviewees brought a metaphor to the interview. However, even those few who did not were willing and able to come up spontaneously with a metaphor during the interview.

If we have a closer look at the named metaphor, two things attract our attention. The first is the variation amongst the named metaphors. We can find similar but not identical ones which reflects a range of approaches of a journalists' function in society. We get the impression that journalists really gave some thoughts to the task rather than picking the first image at hand. We find some creative constructions, which speak of the journalists' personal approach to the task and his/her work, as the metaphors seam to reflect those aspects of the journalists' work of particular importance to him/her (e.g. "Migration bird" versus "The fourth power"). The named metaphors actually tell us a lot more than 'just' the journalists' perspective on his/her role in society, by leaving marks of further aspects of the journalists' personality (e.g. which aspects of his/her work have been stressed?).

Considering the particular named metaphors from a conceptual perspective we find some examples of traditional concepts (i.e. "Watchdog", "The fourth power", or "Advocate of the reader") but miss others (i.e. Gatekeeper (White, 1950) or Agenda-Setter (McCombs & Shaw, 1972)). Limiting our focus on the use of metaphors, which are based on such traditional concepts, we could assume a certain shift to a more service oriented approach where the journalist is in duty for his/her readers to fight for (their) right and truth as citizens and consumers. Based on this assumption it seems surprising that we miss the gatekeeper and agenda-setter concepts as in a time of information overload and technostress such services might be an attractive offer for customers as well. Saying that, we must consider that such traditional concepts were characterized by a certain paternalism towards the reader and have become updated as an adaption to more contemporary concepts of the relationship between journalists and their readers. Overworked concepts rather stress aspects of gathering and enabling (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2010) or the collaboration between journalists and his/her network (Jarvis, 2006), which are popular among researchers and experts. We find elements of such updated approaches in several statements: One journalist describes his/her function as a "mixture between adapter, translator and sorter", another describes him-/herself as a ""classificator, selector", a third one speaks of "a triage" and another draws the picture of a "ferryman", who "can give orientation in a turmoil of news". These concepts embody some of the before mentioned elements/services and speak of a contemporary attitude, considering readers daily needs and challenges in an information society.

These two groups of professional conceptions (readers' advocates and ferrymen in the information society) represent a large amount of named metaphors (ten out of 23). Derived from this finding we can state as a first conclusion of our analysis that journalists' occupational role concepts have become influenced by recent changes in the industry and society at large to some degree: Some of the interviewed journalists seem to have adapted

their professional concepts to reader's confrontation with information overload and disorientation in a digital age. For others, the rather traditional approach of the journalist as the reader's advocate seems to possess ongoing validity, considering that this concept, too, offers a service in a more and more complex and international context but stressing different aspects of a journalists' work (rather investigative work). Even though we may state a certain impact of current changes in journalism on journalists' role concepts, we have to consider that we do not have any possibility to compare our results to a similar study in the past.

In the following we will present our analysis of the two outstanding cases and develop our analytical approach to use metaphors to explore occupational identity. We will first present the particularly conservative case (interviewee number two) and then will present the particularly progressive case (interviewee number eight). We will analyze the two cases in detail and then finish with a concluding reflection.

The Artist and His Followers

Talking to interviewee number two, we will call him Abram, you somehow get the impression sitting in front of either a pretty important person or at least an artist. Sitting in his office as a guest in a big leather armchair, you suddenly feel small and unknowing facing all the books lined up in the bookcase and piled up literally everywhere around you. A big, old clock ticks above the door. During the interview the phone rings three times. Talking about his work, you get the impression of the high demands Abram places on himself, on the literature he deals with, and on his audience. Abram calls the claim of his work "a grounded examination of the *big issues of life*, which are brought up inter alia in literature" (italics by the author). In his explanations he specifies our impression by calling himself "a literary critic" and describing his aspiration as a journalist in society as to be "a mediator between art and life or between the artist and the audience" and giving consideration to both. Abram is a

journalist at the Feuilleton department since more than twenty years and with that one of the editorial team members with most seniority. Born in 1961, he studied German philology, philosophy, and art history. It was not his plan to become a journalist, he rather "slipped into it". During his studies he recognized to be a "good writer". So, when a research assistant at the institute asked him to write for a weekly-published literary criticism page in a local newspaper, he accepted and started to write book reviews. "Those were obviously that convincing, that people from the Tages-Anzeiger and from the NZZ [two of the most common Swiss newspapers] as well, became aware of me, to simplify it." This career, which was not originally motivated by the aspiration to become a journalist but rather a grammar school teacher, becomes apparent in the statement, that he would not call himself a "blooded journalist" and he "would not be interested [to work] in the national desk or any other".

Talking about journalists' daily work in the editorial team he emphasizes the complexity and cognitive demands of his own work and distinguishes the works at the Feuilleton department from that for other desks.

> *"Those are pretty complex books and so, myself, for example, I cannot write a whole review within one week. However, if you are working, for example, for the [international] desk you go to a press conference, and then it gets written pretty fast."*

Even though he would never explicitly devalue the work of colleagues of other desks, during the interview Abram keeps stressing the peculiarity of the Feuilleton and highlighting the value of his own work. In doing so, he not just distinguishes himself and his colleagues at the Feuilleton from (journalists of) other desks, but furthermore conducts a delineation on the object level:

> *"[…] in doing so, to be understandable, but [laughing] not being under complex considering the act. Well, there is literature I would not write about, just because it is so mundane. A Martin Suter [Swiss writer] – do you know Martin Suter? […] That would not interest me at all. […] Well, he gets reviews because he is kind of*

a [local] hero, but in most of the cases he becomes torn apart [receive a very bad review]. What kind of sense makes that? Well, each and every year he publishes a new book and each and every time we tear it apart."

By mentioning the example of Martin Suter, Abram picks a famous Swiss writer, who received several literature prices and who topped best-seller lists not just once. So, by referring to this particular author he seems to aspire an upward delineation of himself and his colleagues against the taste and understanding of literature of a Swiss 'Joe Six-Pack'. However, the statement further tells us about the relationship between the journalist and the author: Considering Abram's statement one would even wonder why Martin Suter is still publishing books. The statement speaks of the position and status Abram considers for him and his colleagues considering their function and role in society or at least the industry. His metaphor, in which he describes himself as "mediator *between* the artist and the audience" [italics by the author], becomes an even stronger meaning: He seems not just to see himself as a "mediator" but rather as a gatekeeper or an authority, watching over the Swiss book market. To legitimate his status he, on the one hand, refers to his experience and the hard education and selection process he had to pass through during his first years in the editorial team, on the other hand he seems to justify his position by referring to his "pretty big readership".

With this negative delineation (in the statement above and at other aspects of the interview) against other desks and certain pieces of literature, which are not worth his attention, and several positive delineations (e.g. by referring to complex acts and the cognitive resources necessary to deal with it) he seems to point to his cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1982), which he, following Bourdieu's approach, appears to put ahead of all other forms of capital (i.e. economic capital). We find attributions to his cultural capital in several statements of the interview, for example when he talks about his family and describes him and his wife as an "academic couple" and his children as "tomorrow's educated elite". Degradation of the

economic capital he conducts when arguing that you should not become a journalist if you want to earn money, implying that money is not a primary motivation for his work. His occupational identity seems to be strongly connected to his cultural capital. It makes the literary critic out of him and not 'just' a journalist. The connection between his activity and the level of his cultural capital seems to be reciprocal: His cultural capital legitimizes his status and his activity as a critic. On the other hand his work and related activities seem to be the source for his self-esteem and a confirmation of his cultural capital.

The importance of the cultural capital becomes of further interest if we consider recent changes in Abram's work we talked about in the interview. An important development for him as a Feuilleton journalist is the rising prominence of click rates as a tool to measure the reach of singular articles. On the one hand, this instrument appears as a threat because Feuilleton articles per se reach a smaller audience as for example national or sports news. On the other hand, the instrument to measure clicks on article level seems to stand for the economic doctrine and a revaluation of the economic capital (Bourdieu, 1982). A revaluation of the economic capital might be interpreted as a thread to Abram's status, which is defined and legitimized by cultural capital.

> *"[…] they have started to measure which articles become clicked and so, and they say that, it would – well, we are not, how would you call it?… 'click-driven'. Everything has its eligibility, if I review a poetry collection, which gets two clicks than it values the same as if some random news gets ten thousand of clicks. This certainly is a noble attitude, but I kind of have the impression that, no matter what they say, they leer at these numbers either way. More and more you find articles, some online, some even in print, which would never have been published in the past. And in my opinion this harms the basic philosophy or the idea of our paper as it used to be, considering relevance and standard."*

Considering the statement, he not just perceives click rates as a direct thread to his position but also as an indirect thread by degrading the paper. Another source for the degradation of

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the paper he sees in changed hiring practices. For him it started with the composition of the former online team: He is convinced that unqualified staff was hired for these positions and that they applied inappropriate selection procedures (which he compares to the procedure he had to pass through himself). He considers that freshmen would not be paid as good as in the past and that it might get harder to hire good people, as they would not turn to journalism. He describes the work in the former online team further a "student's job" and only attractive for those hoping to find a way into the editorial team. Referring to these developments he describes a divided culture in the newsroom consisting of onliners on the one hand and print journalists on the other. With 'online' he associates bad quality, respectively not the quality he attributes to their print outlet. He tells us that the cultural challenge got better with the converged newsroom three years ago, but that it would "stick to people" (as there are still people of the former online team in the current crew). The problems between the two cultures would persist, but it would not be that fundamental anymore. However, the quality of the paper's digital outlet for him is a fundamental threat to the paper's brand – and with that to his own status and cultural capital.

> *"Well, the problem manifested itself for the first time, in my eyes, with the former '[brand name] online', as this never was the [XXX]'s quality. It drifted apart -, eventually it was never intended, but it actually became a discrete 'plant', which never met our standards. […] well, we never saw our standards to be represented by this thing. At the same time-, it seemed problematic that, I think, those people they somehow, I think they suffered from missing approval […]."*

With the converged newsroom, the division of work lapsed. However, this would not mean, that every journalist automatically became an online editor. Today, for many journalists it depends on their personal interest, skills and willingness if they get in contact with digital journalism. Talking with Abram about Twitter, he clarifies to not see the point of this tool at all: "Well, first of all I simply would not have the time for it and secondly, I simply never got

the point [laughing], why this [Twitter] should make sense at all." Arguing, why he would not use Twitter, he refers to the status and characteristics of his work and the department. However, considering the statement that "Twitter is just too shallow" for "the issues [they] give attention to", we get the impression that he was not too much engaged with the tool before. Proposing him alternative ways to use Twitter by turning his followers attention to recent articles published, he downplays this option:

> *"Ye-es, but that's not so much my ambition. I think, I do have a pretty big audience, and those, who are interested in it, they have recognized me a long time ago, and those, who did not, well they are probably not so much interested in it [laughing]. Well, I think, it is just about different people [using the English term], isn't it?"*

It becomes apparent that Twitter is just not compatible with Abrams professional role perception: "First of all I am literary critic and I do not think that literature is suited to be mediated via Twitter [laughing]." He is clearly distinguishing himself and his work from a world, or people, he does simply not feel related to, represented in this case, by Twitter. We further get the impression that, for Abram's occupational identity not just the picture he holds of himself is important, but the image he perceives of his readers, too. As Twitter stands in contrast to his personal role conception, he could never imagine one of his readers be an active tweeter.

For Abram, all 'digital work' (referring to digital journalism and the use of social media) seems to somehow be 'dirty work' – just not compatible with his role concept. Talking about social media, we get the impression that he seems somehow positive about the possibility that one day in the future the importance of social media would go down:

> *"Whatever, I think, that all social media, (…) it's all overrated. I think that all of this and the enthusiasm for it, one day will…-, it will always be there, but it fades, if the fascination (…), I see it with my kids […]."*

Considering what we have learned about Abram, his cultural capital seems to be a crucial element of his occupational identity and the fear of its degradation by recent changes in his

work, the newsroom and the industry keeps him away from this 'dirty work', which is just not compatible with his role concept. If one would find a way to relate cultural capital convincingly to digital journalism, this might be a way to influence Abram's attitude. Two additional elements, which contribute to his role concept, are his colleagues of the Feuilleton and his audience. However, currently he would not associate one of these two groups or even single members of it with up-to-date developments in digital journalism.

The Underestimated Elite

In the editorial team we find a small group of what we could call the 'digital elite'. These journalists are ambassadors to a contemporary digital journalism. On the one hand it's about their skills, what makes them stand out from the crowd, as they combine some important capabilities a modern newsroom should be able to rely on (data driven journalism, online community building, some programming). On the other hand it's all about their attitude towards timely journalism, or even journalism in general. The group consists of around six or seven people and is not exclusively definable (we can clearly identify the core members of the group but this gets more difficult at its boarders). The members are rather young (30+) but nevertheless have some (outstanding) experience in the industry (not all of them in journalism), which distinguish them from others (and were they got some of their skills from). However, at this particular newspaper, status is not so much about one's (technical) skills – rather the opposite is the case as 'the producers' (those who maintain the website) are low in status - and experience in the industry, but much more about your topical expertise (what they call "one's dossier responsibility") and your corporate affiliation. Because of these circumstances the members of this group are not outstanding considering their position in the newsrooms' hierarchy, neither considering the official one (journalists, head of desks, editor

in chief and his delegate) nor in one off the record (corporate affiliation, dossier responsibility, graduation, function).

However, it does not seem like the members of this group would be reliant on official hierarchy. They rather seem to enjoy their position as mavericks. They appear self-reliant and as if they knew about the real value of what they do and what they know – and the others ("old men") just don't get it yet, either because they are not aware of current changes in the industry or they close their eyes against it. Interviewee number eight, we will call him Henry[6], brings this to a point, when he talks about his skills and the their importance:

> *"Yes, well, that's the reason I'm producing videos with the guys of the video team. We've produced 35 videos within one and a half years. And that's what it's all about. That many people stand still. You know, anyone ever asked me if I was able to do Photoshop. Or even html and other stuff, I'm just able to. And whatever I cannot do or was not able to, I thought myself the upcoming weekend. And that's a thing that often gets mixed up, when some old men say, well, anyone who knows that kind of stuff won't be able to do journalistic work."*

In this quote two things appear: (1) On the one hand we see a differentiation on the skills-level. It's not that Henry would preen himself by listing his capabilities, at least not explicitly. However, the (probably not by hazard) mentioned skills, producing videos, programming in html or being able to work with Photoshop, may be seen as a representative for contemporary journalism, for digital journalism. By stating that anyone asked him to learn those skills, he is somehow downplaying them by implying that these skills are just preconditioned for a (digital) journalist' work. However, by ascribing the skills to himself he presents himself as a representative of contemporary journalism. On the other hand he accentuates the ignorance of coworkers and supervisors by mentioning that no one asked him to learn those skills as they seem not to see the necessity of it. (2) On the other hand he mentions the "old men" who

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[6] Names have been changed to safe interviewees' identity.

would question if a guy like him would be able to do real "journalistic work". With this he introduces the group of traditional journalists, a past generation, from whom he seems to distinguish himself, as they would not understand contemporary journalism. However, in the course of the interview he keeps on stressing that against all other appraisals he actually *is* able to do 'real' journalistic work, by referring for example to his last scoop, experience at leading newspapers or appreciative letters of readers. He somehow seems to be torn apart between a certain affiliation to this group of "old men" and the commitment to this traditional role concept they represent ("I see myself as a representative of the forth power") and the need to distinguish himself from this group by stressing their disability to understand today's journalism and their capability to keep up with recent changes ("One day, the old men will beg to […] go with the little, spry speedboat"). Nevertheless he seems to feel at ease in this role of an outlaw, who is not really part of the group but at the same time always one step ahead – because he knows better. With this head start and because of his skills, his experience and his network he always knows this important bit more than his chasers, what gives him a competitive edge but makes him misunderstood and underestimated until they one day will know better. This strange uniqueness seems to be an important element of his occupational identity.

> *"And its funny, I'm always on the left side. And that's a very important thing to me, and I'm really proud of, and I (…), that's the hot stuff about journalism, you see, I put on a shirt like this, I can wear some dirty white shoes if I like. I'm always like, you know, that's not romantic or anything, but I'm always kind of the outlaw; I creep around. I can creep around Silicon Valley or around Microsoft[…], and either they know they need to talk to me, or they just know who I am. And that's hot, somehow, you see, that's power."*

This role perception and the related aspiration to be always one-step ahead forces him to be always up to date concerning issues related to his department, but dynamics and changes concerning possibilities in (digital) journalism as well – as for him the two are inseparable

connected, as the one is the content of his mission and the other are the instruments to fulfill his mission. On the one hand this kind of work provides him with energy and power. On the other hand he describes his attitude and the related way of working as extremely exhausting and as something, which sometimes costs him quite an effort. Having said that, his attitude and the related beliefs are not something he can switched on and off: "If you are a journalist, you are *always* a journalist. That's the reason why many of us become alcoholics, get divorced or do not have any social life".

Somehow or other this aspiration seems to be what makes him flexible and ambitious concerning change and development. However, to keep this attitude alive presumes an occupational role concept, which is capable to integrate permanent evolution. Permanent enhancements must be part of his occupational concept or at least be related to it. Henry perceives himself very traditionally as the "reader's lawyer" and as a "representative of the fourth power". In this he follows a service-oriented approach, connecting his investigative activity with a strong customer orientation. This attitude becomes apparent in several episodes of the interview when Henry emphasizes that his readers' gratitude is his most appreciated earning:

> *"As I said before, money is not my primary motivation, otherwise I would have chosen a different occupation. I'm here, because I want to change things […]. To formulate it in an exaggerated way, for me it is the greatest thing, if a reader tells me, "Dear Henry, I desisted from this or that, because I've read one of your stories and you advised me to be cautious". That's what's important to me. In this sense I'm very traditional."*

Asking him for a metaphor, which describes the function he aspires in society, he names the "clips", which hold ceiling panels at its place. He wants to be such a clip, which cramps in someone's "ass". He wants to be displeasing, annoying, and inopportune. "I don't want people to be friends with me", he states when talking about his mentality. The only form of journalism that's going to survive is in his eyes is "critical journalism". When he

differentiates himself from colleagues of the editorial team, he imputes them to work for the paper because the job is comfortable, they have to work little and enjoy freedom. He stresses that they could also have become a teacher or anything else. He would certainly call himself a blooded journalist in contrast to for example interviewee two, a Feuilleton journalist, who "rather slipped into" journalism and who would never call himself a "blooded journalist" and would never be interested to work for any other desk than for the Feuilleton. Henry sees himself as "a real journalist" what he fixes to the characteristics that he wants prestige, reach, impact and he wants to be heard. For these high aims the current dynamics in journalism just seem to fit perfectly: Journalists' personal brand becomes more important than ever, which (in the best case) is connected to prestige, and reach as impact can be pushed through different publication channels to an international audience and be measured more accurately than before. Henry points to different of such measures for his success (traffic, followers on Twitter and revenue from digital advertisement on the desk's site) in the interview, as if he wants to convince the interviewer from his achievements with arguments, which seem to actually be intended for the "old men" he likes to refer to.

If we consider the different references to Henry's occupational identity at hand, the ambitious, service-oriented, and thereby competitive role concept, which on the one hand serves to distinguish him from the "old men", but on the other hand is strongly committed to a traditional and rather romantic approach to journalism, seems to be a perfect stimulator for permanent evolution and optimization concerning the uncovering of risks for his readers in their daily life and, strongly related to this, the adoption of alternative ways and options to discover and deliver these stories in even a more efficient way to his readers. For Henry, permanent change seems not to be a question of will but rather of the journalistic honour. However, aside from this ambitious striving, Henry has to admit how exhausting this attitude can be and how in particular moments his attitude becomes a bane.

Occupational Identity as the Cliff in the Breakwater of Change

In our approach we see identity negotiation as the interplay between workplace practices and individuals occupational identity. The constitution of an employee's occupational identity defines his/her perception of changes in the work environment. However, changes in the work environment, dramatic events and fundamental change in particular, on the other hand have the power to influence the employee's occupational identity. This "co-constitutive" interdependency (Billett & Somerville, 2004: 309) allows the employee to cope with and make sense of unknown and eventually conflicting situations.

Our study delivers a snapshot of journalists' perception of changes in their work practices and the industry as a whole – a dynamic analysis, comparing different points in time, is therefore not possible. However, our detailed presentation of the two cases gives us an impression of the interplay between occupational identity and the situation in the work environment of two totally different examples. From the two cases (and our overview in table 1) we derive three conclusions: (1) The first is, how entirely different occupational identities of two members of the same profession (but not the same desk) can look like. The two cases show this in an impressive way. (2) The second conclusion we want to point to is the interplay between aspects of identity and the related perception and interpretation of situational or social factors. To take an example we might consider the discussion about click rates. From Abram's perspective click rates constitute a thread to his status and revaluate economic capital in comparison to cultural capital. For Henry reach is one of his basic ambitions, as it is related to power and his aim to deliver valuable information to as many readers as possible. From this perspective click measure becomes an important tool and a point of orientation in Henry's work. (3) We also wish to discuss is the meaning of their professional role concept for the employees. Even though we cannot act on the assumption of a conscious perception and construction of their personal occupational identity, we either way have to consider it as a

central factor for employees perception of their environment in daily work and (with that) as a crucial determinant in change processes. The presented cases show the differing perspectives considering several aspects and on different levels. Even though for us the different examples show the variance of perspectives and dependence of it from employee's occupational identity, we have to be aware of the fact that for the employees their perspective doesn't appear random at all. Quite in contrary one's occupational identity, even though subject to evolution as well, serves as a point of basic orientation and stability for the employee confronted with a changeable environment. In an unconscious process, the occupational identity helps the employee to make sense of new requirements and unknown situations. However, as the sense making is rather a process of evaluation and classification, this process doesn't have to lead to acceptance as the two presented cases show.

We can conclude that occupational identity becomes a crucial factor in change processes and with that an interesting starting point for leadership questions. However, it is likewise a very individual factor, although we were able to identify a first idea of certain unifying clusters in the first part of our study showed (see also overview in table 1), at least on the level of the metaphors.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Journalists face far-reaching changes in their work and the whole industry. For some journalists some of these changes imply a threat to their professional role concept, for others the personal evolution constitutes a basic element of their occupational identity. In this paper we present our approach to work with metaphors and interviewees' interpretations of it to research occupational identities in the particular field of journalism. Our study shows how journalists perceive their professional role concept and changes affecting their work. In our analysis we present two detailed cases, which illustrate the interplay between journalists' occupational identity and elements of their work environment. The reader receives an

impression of the importance of the occupational identity for journalists' attitude towards factors of change. Journalists' occupational identity serves as a point for orientation in changeable times and help to make sense of new requirement and unknown situations.

Practical Implications

Our analysis bears important implications for the management of change processes. Our findings give interesting insights into employees' professional role concepts and the related perception of change in their work environment. If we take the example of Abram our analysis showed the importance of cultural capital, status and the paper's brand. To ease Abram the acceptance of particular changes and new requirements in his work environment, one potential strategy would be to relate it to Abram's cultural capital. A supervisor could point to examples of people highly related to cultural capital successfully active on Twitter or presenting cultural work in an outstanding digital realization, to give two examples. If management has an idea of an employee's occupational identity they can apply tailored leadership. This seems to be a costly strategy for daily work, but becomes a cost saving approach in change processes. It will be object of future studies to research if and how management can influence employees' occupational identity and how we have to design leadership to influence employees' professional role perception to facilitate change.

Metaphors in Identity Research

To talk about our personal identity is a challenging task, as reflecting upon it is usually not a daily activity for people. So, to study identity researchers have to come up with suitable methods to ease this process for interviewees or participants. David Gauntlett (2007) describes metaphors as a powerful approach to explore human identity. In his work he applies workshops with Leo Serious Play and interprets participants' creative constructions.

Certainly an interesting approach – but extremely time consuming (just the stage of 'Skills Building' takes two hours, with more hours to come for the actual identity building and the interpretation talk). Searching for an alternative approach to study (occupational) identity, we came up with the idea, to ask interviewees for metaphors describing the role they aspire in society and discuss (and analyze) their own interpretation of it (in this we follow Gauntlett, pointing to the argument of the validity of interpretations). We had to develop the method and apply some adjustments (e.g. you have to be very careful to not prime participants when giving them the task, because otherwise you risk a bias). At this point we perceive it as a powerful and applicable instrument to study identity – not just from a researchers' perspective but from participants', too. It gives participants a creative tool at hand, which is not too hard to control. We certainly have to consider that in this study we worked with journalists, which is a group of professional with an extraordinary access to language. Journalists are used to apply the fineness of language each and every day. It's going to be an important stage of development for the elaboration of this research method to test it with members of alternative professions.

Turning to the interpretations and findings of our study, we developed an analytical approach, conducting three of four steps in this paper. The fourth step is planned to be subject of future research: (1) First we considered the different metaphors and related interpretations. From the range of answers we (2) identified the most conservative and the most progressive case concerning journalists' attitude towards change in journalism. (3) Based on the two analyses we propose an interpretation of the interplay between journalists' occupational identity and the perception of specific aspects of a changing work environment. Integrating the feedback to this paper, we will elaborate the analytical procedure and (4) apply it to the other interviews of our sample. Such a detailed and in-depth analysis of all the interviews would deliver the basis to design a model illustrating the interplay between journalists' occupational

identity and situational factors. This model might help us to elaborate our recommendations to adapt leadership to employee's occupational identity in processes of organizational change.

Limitations and Future Research

Even though our research design is consciously chosen, it inherits certain limitations that bear examination, as it is the case with all research designs. In our study we focused on journalists within one particular newsroom to keep certain variables constant (i.e. changes in journalists work environment). However, as we are interested in occupational identity among members of a particular profession rather than in organisational identity, it might be of interest to enlarge the sample in a future study to journalist of (an)other but comparable newsroom (s) (comparable concerning most important changes in the work environment). Such a study might help us compare identity constructs of members of a particular occupation working for different organisations. This would allow investigating the influence of organisational peculiarities on occupational identities. As a further step we could consider to enlarge the sample to groups with slightly deviating characteristics, as for example local journalists, freelancers or even bloggers. This dimension would make it possible to elaborate different identity approach to a joined activity. What differs bloggers from employed journalists concerning their occupational identity and what implications can we draw from it regarding the ability to cope with changes in the industry?

Another source for potential findings are timely comparisons. We have already mentioned it as a limitation of our study that we cannot compare our results to those of a past study because we lack suitable (empirical) data. However, regarding further research we can aspire to enable a future comparison by replicating the study at another (or multiple) point(s) in time. An alternative approach would be to realize a replication with young journalists, who just enter the profession or even with students. This arrangement would enable us to compare

journalists, characterized by different phases of work conditions in their career with young professionals without any experience.

Aside from the already mentioned variations we might consider a replication of our study in a different profession and compare the choices of metaphors to describe occupational identity.

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TABLES & FIGURES

Table 1: Overview of Interviewees (names have been anonymized to protect the interview partners' privacy)

Labeling/ Sex/ Year of birth/ Desk	Career	Motivation to become a journalist	Metaphor for function in society	Quote	Stance on change
Interviewee 1 m *1967 Science	- Medical studies and doctor - Part-time writing for professional scientific journals - Internship at current newsroom - Science journalist at current paper	(1) Writing (2) Fascinating world of media (3) Contributing to clarification of facts (4) Disillusionment of clinical medicine	"Intermediator"	"We do not see us just as a speaking tube for science, but to look closely, what happens in science, so critically, not just to 'transport' what they tell us. And the critical classification."	Critical and skeptical: - Sees rising speed and more workload - Criticizes lack of deep reflection - Points out lack of orientation and strategic focus (feels lost in possibilities)
Interviewee 2 m *1961 Feuilleton	- Studies in German Philology - Feuilleton journalist at local newspaper - Part-time job at advertising agency - Feuilleton journalist in current editorial team	"[…] I didn't want to become a journalist desperately, I just did the high school teacher education; I just slipped into it. I wouldn't call myself a blooded journalist."	"Mediator between art and life/ the artist and the audience"	"[…] as a literary critic, I'm a mediator between art and life or between the artist and the audience. You try to give consideration to both."	Very critical: - Sees rising workload and speed - Worries about quality and brand delusion - Sees domination of user orientation
Interviewee 3 m *1978 Sports	- Studies in History, Geography and Earth Sciences - Freelancer and journalist at daily newspaper - Frequent journalist for current paper, now fully-employed	"In eighth grade I did a presentation on public broadcasters […]. I forgot about it for a bit, wanted to become a teacher, but during gymnasium I started writing […]. Then the fascination was just there."	"Gold miner with wits and subtlety"	"[…] I think that in journalism we're looking for a rare good, like, […] truth or maybe reality, and somehow it's really difficult to actually find it. "	Unsure: - Seems to be afraid of changes and new requirements - Seems to be drifting - Seems unsure about the future
Interviewee 4 f *1967 Local	- Studies in History, German Philology - Internship at local newspaper - Editor-in-chief at small family-owned hyper local newspaper - Co-creation of new local newspaper - Regional correspondent at current paper	"Already my father has been writing lots, my father worked as a journalist for some time, even though he was a lawyer, and at home writing has always been important."	"Mixture between adapter, translator and sorter"	"[...] primarily supplying the reader with background knowledge [...] reveal connections, highlight backgrounds; recall things we used to have, or work out certain stereotypes or maybe point at mistakes that happen repeatedly, point out schemes."	Flexible and supportive: - Change is too slow; criticizes structures - Calls for mixed teams and know-how transfer - Names cultural issues and free access as a reason for reluctance to write for online
Interviewee 5 m *1961 Sports	- Studies in German Philology and Roman Philology -Journalist at Swiss national newspaper - Freelance journalist in Canada - Back to former newspaper - Changes to current paper	"I've always enjoyed reading the newspaper, even as a child. (...) […] my parents had to subscribe to additional newspapers. [...] the reason was that I did sports as a child. And at that time the daily papers had only a tiny sports section, that wasn't enough for me."	"Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee"	"[…] in journalism, you should always be an observer, but one that slightly floats over the matter, floating, not right in the middle, and then waiting for the right time to push with a deadly pen."	Slightly critical, but flexible: - Sees a conflict between the speed of the digital world and journalism and a rising workload - Criticizes sport journalist's obsession to control everything - Develops an appetite for online journalism
Interviewee 6 m *1961 Stock Exchange	- Studies in Macroeconomics - Jobbing at a bank - Financial journalist in Germany - Changes to another German newspaper - Changes to current Swiss newspaper	"I [...] tried various things for a certain time, and by accident I came across a job offer for a journalists […] that was a real new-technology corporation, that built newsrooms everywhere in the world and wanted to enter into the journalism business in digital age."	"Classificator, selector"	"[…] this mass needs to be looked at more closely, and then one realizes that a big part of this mass stems from some weird agencies, and sometimes they are very fast and very simple, and with many news you realize shortly that they aren't true in that sense."	Aware and supportive, but also skeptical: - Observes how the industry changes and sees potentials for service oriented journalism - Sees himself as cutting-edge in the editorial team because of his experience - Sees cultural and resource related challenges - Considers Twitter a redundant medium
Interviewee 7 m *1969 Economics	- Studies in Economics - Doctoral program - Research and teaching in Boston - Entry in economic desk at current paper - Stage as correspondent in Paris - Correspondent in Frankfurt and Washington	"[…] I like what I do. I would like to keep doing it, and I have the feeling that I'm able to explain things to people […]."	"A triage"	"I want to explain [...] the American economy to the people from a liberal perspective and give them an understanding of it. This is what I see as my duty."	Open to change, but skeptical: - Sticks to chronicler role - Thinks that online asks for more capacity - Calls for print quality online and for further education in online - Sees no personal benefits of online yet

Interviewee 8 m *1978 Digital	- School of Journalism and studies in Economics - Journalist for national newspapers and online sites - Digital journalist for current paper	"I want validity, I want reach, and I want impact. I want this to be heard. I've become a journalist because I see myself as a representative of the fourth power. […] I see myself as the reader's advocate."	"Advocate of the reader"	"[…] I try not to abuse those guys, I kind of try to use my contacts to make sense for the reader in the digital jungle."	Very open to change: - Sees himself as a pioneer of change - Has no fears for the new and learns by himself - Seems very motivated and sees the new as the future and change as necessary
Interviewee 9 f *1979 Panorama (local, boulevard)	- Studies in German Philology, History, Philosophy - Internships in journalism - Freelancer and online (local) journalist - Reporter, news desk, panorama journalist at current paper - Head of panorama	"I've always enjoyed writing, so it's not that much of an accident, even at the gymnasium I liked adding a preface to my papers. Writing has always been of interest, and also talking to people, and dig something out of them, interesting information and so on."	"Entertaining mediator"	"The panorama, they say, I quite like the image, is like a bench where you can relax from all the analyses that take place in the newspaper otherwise." "[…] My ideal would be that the reader actually thinks while he is reading, [...] something in the mind changes [...]."	Positive and open to change: - Sees difficulties - Sophisticated understanding of online mechanisms and capacity issues - Positive attitude towards data journalism - Appreciates print journalism - Sees website as a different tool
Interviewee 10 m *1970 Politics	- Studies in International Relations - Journalist at local newspaper - Education at journalism school - Journalist and editor-in-chief at weekly newspaper - Editor-in-chief for parliament section at current paper	"I'm a curious person, and in journalism you can satisfy your curiosity in a legal way. Second,[…] it'd be hard for me to simply work on the same dossiers in a corporation or an institution. […] What I also like is the detective part […], digging around and so on."	" The character of the narrator and the watchdog"	"[...] On one hand simply narrating what is happening, but still explaining in a way, classifying, maybe also criticizing etc. Then there are other metaphors, the watchdog, I definitely acknowledge that we have a certain watchdog function."	Open to change and supportive: - Sees change and speed as an opportunity - Sees Twitter as a possibility for interaction and feedback - Calls for more thematic differentiation between different channels - Supporter of measurability
Interviewee 11 m *1978 Correspondent	- Studies in General and Eastern European History and Russian Literature - Part-time at local newspaper - Stage at current paper - Political correspondent in Russia and China at current paper	"[...] first of all it's my possibility to devote myself to things, to many new things, that usually interest in principle, [...] the possibility to encounter people, situations, that wouldn't have happened otherwise [...]."	"Interpreter"	"Yes, I see my role also in creating a piece out of a lot of information, many things that I develop myself, but that shouldn't be an entire subjective thing, that's for sure, but indeed with some analytical worth and with a certain point of view."	Observant and slightly concerned: - Observes process of change closely - Positive stance on change but concerned about maintaining depth while working faster - Afraid of multi-tasking journalism
Interviewee 12 m *1969 Human & Technology	- Studies in Economics - Research assistant and doctor, professor - Journalist at international newspaper - Human & Technology journalist at current paper	"[…] this incredible freedom that I can enjoy here. […] ultimately I see myself kind of like a self-employed person that at times is in touch with other people."	"The fourth power"	"So I see my role quite strongly in clarifying, showing background and maybe also stand for opinions that the mainstream not necessarily likes to hear, [...]."	Open to change: - Acknowledges change as a fact - Doubtful about current online strategies - Strong belief for the future of print - Strong brand identification
Interviewee 13 f *1961 News desk	- Started studies in German Philology and Journalism - Online department of a company - Internship and - Editor at internet news agency - Documentalist and news desk (current paper)	[did not talk about her motivation to become a journalist]	"Lion, as king of the animals"	"The role I am striving for [...] is a lion, like the king of the animals, who is just and well respected. [...] it would be nice if people had trust in journalists and do have a good reputation."	Very open to change: - Comes up with own suggestions for change - Seems very flexible - Sees new ways of doing things, and ways for improvement
Interviewee 14 f *1983 Correspondent	- Studies in History, Arabic Studies and International Law - Communication assistant at public service IT-department - Stages in diplomacy and human rights - Correspondent in Jerusalem (current paper)	"[...] in the beginning of my studies, more like a dream, I thought it would be great to work at [name of paper], middle east and such. I soon dismissed the idea again, because I felt the probability was very low."	"Bridge"	"[...] I don't know how many people read my things in the end, and from those who do, how many pick up what I want to tell them. [...] But I would like to impart something or broaden the understanding, and not only tell some fun stories."	Skeptical towards change: - Sees a problem in the unwillingness to pay for information - Concerned about speed and shorter articles - Concerned about lack of reflection
Interviewee 15 f *1983 International	- Work at radio station during high school - Studies in International Relations and History - International journalist at current paper	"[…] I thought, if Aladin would show up with his magic lamp and it didn't matter, what I have studied, what would be the jobs that I'd find great?"	"Migration bird"	"I am the contact point for all our correspondents, and I also have to have an overview on what happens all over the world, in order to be able to decide [...] what we bring in the paper, in order to have ideas."	Open to change: - Wishes for some more new momentum - Supportive - Also sees a necessity to focus on strengths

Interviewee 16 m *1980 International	- Studies in Political Sciences and International Relations - Traineeship at embassy - Freelancer at local newspaper - Correspondent in the US and Brussels	"On the one side, it is the creative process of writing. One also tells a story somehow, it is not only [...] a listing of facts, but one also has to present it in a way, to tell a story."	"Enlightenment"	"[...] to feed information, to transmit, to contribute to the formation of an opinion. On these grounds, it is a […] contribution to the political debate."	Open to change: - Sees necessity of gaining speed for quality journalism - Sees possibilities to improve - Started career in times of change
Interviewee 17 m *1968 Sports	- Stage at local newspaper - Studies in Law and court reporter - Post-graduate studies in American Law and Journalism - Stages at national and current paper - Freelance journalist for law journal - Sports journalist at current paper	"On the one hand, I am very interested in sports, which is why I know a lot about it. [...] I also like to write very much, and always said that I would need a Job, where I can write [...]. I also have a good network, and the curiosity and creativity needed, and the ideas and implementation as well."	"Ferryman"	"[...] it is about the transition from the reader into the environment, in which the reader likes to move around. That is actually the role of the ferryman, who can give orientation in a turmoil of news and everything that's there, and who shows the right way."	Open to change: - Change happens too slowly - Doubtful about current strategy, and wants some change - Sees cultural issues - Is interested in and supportive of new multimedia possibilities
Interviewee 18 m *1960 Feuilleton	- Studies in German Philology and Philosophy - Work at bank and software firm - Editor for literature encyclopedia - Feuilleton journalist at current paper	"Simply the passion for writing. About what one has learned, and what one knows, to simply write a text about that. Not necessarily a journalistic text, I could also have imagined to go into research"	"Masquerader	"[…] a literature critic […] has the tools with which to treat literature. And one continuously comes into the situation to write about things one vaguely knows, but acts as if one knew everything."	Open to change: - Seems flexible and supportive - Is aware of necessity of change - Sees differences and acts accordingly - Seems willing to learn
Interviewee 19 f *1962 News desk	- Stage at local newspaper - Studies in Journalism and Computer Sciences - Integration of print and online sections of current paper - Responsible for inserts sections online	"When I came, the paper just had adapted to electronic Text [...]. I was a trained Journalist [...] but at some point thought, the electronic development is very interesting, and then I studied Informatics."	"Aha-experience"	"Aha! That's how it is! Or: these are the connections. [...] and I read something, and it actually helps me somehow [...] which can also be something banal"	Positive and open to change - Positive towards change - Sees journalism as very dynamic - Has seen many changes during own career - Thinks of journalism as currently inflexible - Desires more flexibility
Interviewee 20 m *1953 Economy	- Studies in Economics - Financial analyst at bank - Editor for business desk at current paper - Correspondent in Scandinavia, Rome, Basel - Economic journalist at current paper	"The motivation to be a journalist is research, to search for stories, to search for explanations, to analyze and to comment. That is, what interests me most in this job."	"Analyst, commentator"	"I see myself as an analyst. Rapporteur, commentator, analyst. [...] I think stories are something for children, […] an emancipated [...] reader needs a good analysis, a good text, but no story. "	Skeptical and not open towards change: - Concerned about speed and the quality of work online - Expresses dissatisfaction with own work when not having enough time
Interviewee 21 m *1959 Digital	- Studies in History, Computer Language and Media Studies - Freelance journalist and software instructor and developer - Digital journalist at current paper	"I really don't remember anymore. I only know, that as a twenty year old I wished I worked at (name of paper). But I really can't remember, how I got there. But I really think, it's a vocation."	"A pair of glasses/ recycle bin"	"[…] I am their [the readers'] glasses, I help them to understand certain things, to see them better than they do themselves, [...]."	Skeptical and "internally resigned": - Concerned by the changes and speed - Sees a lack of quality and mistakes caused by shift towards speed and quantity - Sees some online content as non-relevant
Interviewee 22 m *1967 Local	- Studies in Art History - Teacher during studies and afterwards - Freelance journalist for international desk of current paper - Local journalist for current paper	"[…] I just always enjoyed writing, that's also my leading motivation for being a journalist."	"Tool box and chisel"	"[...] I see the job as a simple crafting activity, and b) I try to make something nice out of the material given to us, to formulate it in a way for one to enjoy reading it."	Open to change, but also critical: - Sees a negative influence of online media on the quality of print media - Sees a challenge in satisfying the reader while being independent - Flexible to write more creatively
Interviewee 23 f *1983 News desk	- Studies in Sociology and Media Sciences - Internship at human rights NGO - Studies in International Affairs - Online journalist for local news portal - Full-time news desk at current paper	"Why? I don't know. It was not my dream [to become a journalist]. NGOs, I don't know, if this was after or coexistent - those were the things, I was interested in, NGOs or journalism."	"Megaphone/ speaking tube"	"[…] I would describe my function as to bring important topics to the public or to the people and call people's attention to difficulties or problems."	Open to change: - Criticizes cultural aspects (online journalism as of minor value and unwillingness to learn from each other) - Seems open to learn new things