The 7th Annual Symposium on Current Developments in Ethnographic Research in the Social and Management Sciences

**Joint University of Liverpool Management School
and Keele University Institute for Public Policy and Management**

**University of Liverpool Management School, Liverpool, UK
29th - 31st August 2012**

Ethnographic Horizons in Times of Turbulence

**Investigating a reluctant organization and sensitive Management topics.
The case for familiar and intimate ethnography and participant observation
implemented in French dailies' newsrooms.**

Mr. Matthieu LARDEAU, Ph.D

Assistant Professor, ESC Troyes-Champagne School of Management, Troyes, France

Address: ESC Troyes – 217 av. Pierre-Brossolette – 10002 Troyes cedex, France
Email: **matthieu.lardeau@essec.edu**

ABSTRACT

This paper is part of a recent doctoral research focused on business and management policies in the French newspapers' industry and the contemporary evolution of journalism profession in France. We address the current turmoil that affects the hard news press industry and journalism identity: journalists have to deal with more and more pressure to consider business, marketing, and even financial elements in doing their job and they have to refine the failing business and organizational traditional model of their industry and job. Consequently hard news journalism industry and profession experience a structural change that means to redefine traditional patterns by mixing journalistic elements with business ones to sustain independent and investigating journalism.

Even though academic literature points to a resurgence of ethnography in management sciences and OB-OT in recent years (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009) this investigating method is still often considered 'not suitable' to study issues such as institutional change, managerialization and marketisation processes, etc. (Greenwood et al, 2008). That meets another similar statement: 'counter-intuitively' ethnography is not widely used by Media studies scholars addressing business and management issues (Albarran et al, 2006).

This paper however aims at **demonstrating how and why ethnography is likely to be the (most) relevant method to investigate our research question – and more widely so many issues in Management and OB**: pinpointing and explaining the institutional / managerial change that currently occurs in the French newspaper industry through a shift between the dominant institutional logic (editorially-oriented) and a new emerging hybrid institutional logic mixing journalistic and business patterns (the managerial logic).

Rooted in the **new institutional theory** (Greenwood et al, 2008) this study assumes a change in institutional logic in the making, in a cultural industry (Thornton, 2004): prevailing institutional logics that rule this industry are changing, shifting from professional/editorial ones towards business/managerial logics through a deep cultural change in a short or middle-run term. This change also leads hard news media organizations and individuals to "build" their own hybrid model combining both logics.

We mainly implement ethnography and direct observation, and individual in-depth interviews in three daily national newspapers in order to conduct ethnographic studies (for many weeks) and interviews with journalist-managers and top management. Immersions

within newsrooms and newspapers' organizations allow to accurately picture and investigate the beginnings of business models' redefinition and managerial revolution concerning the French daily newspapers. We notably highlight microscopic and thick description (Geertz, 1973), ethnography and direct/participant observation allow pointing out the reason why of the gap between discourse of change and the failing implementation relying on the newsroom middle management: the loci of change resistance located in people, routines, and culture...

Moreover our ethnography relies on a two-folded baseline: (1) a highly subjective and participant observation to create a familiar relationship with informants – in line with some major contemporary French ethnographers (Favret-Saada 1981, Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot 1999) – and (2) relying on our previous experience as journalist and media manager in order to be able to interpret the deepest meanings, feelings of the observed people about managerialization and rationalization processes affecting their job.

The empirical material builds upon a close observation of the rising specific role of the journalist-manager who is defined as a mediator of the managerialization process.

This communication focuses on particular use-value and contribution of ethnography – and linked methods – to (1) study managerial issues and professional practices and values within newsrooms and newspapers' organizations, and (2) create good conditions inviting newsroom people to be observed and inquired by an ethnographer although French journalists and newsroom managers are largely reluctant to that!

Finally we highlight the following contributions basically for ethnography studies: (1) describing and analyzing the own methodological way that we define and implement in order to gain trust, respect, and sometimes legitimacy from the observed journalists to 'ethnographically' live with them and interview them in order to grasp the elements and data required to investigate the institutional change; (2) providing and discussing results and 'recipes' on the highly use-value of ethnography to investigate some complex management issues and firms that are less and less open to social science scholars.

We also show the specific challenges associated with implementing ethnography in this kind of situation: bypassing gatekeepers, defining several identities to suit each situation, building trusted relationships with reluctant people, managing reflexivity and intimacy.

Keywords: Ethnography, reflexivity, empathy, trust, intimate/familiar knowledge, newsroom, journalist

INTRODUCTION

This paper aims at presenting the methodological and epistemological findings of a doctoral thesis – defended in November 2011 – that concerns on the analysis of institutional change within the French market of the hard news print press. **We focus on the ethnography and participant observation**, the main research methods we use, and we put emphasis on the specific findings and academic contribution generated by ethnography and immersion within newsrooms. This communication is rooted in reflections that rely on the following acknowledgment: even if we can notice the beginnings of an academic trend integrating more ethnography studies in media studies, **we wonder why this methodology remains so few employed by media studies scholars despite the recognized heuristically contribution of the ethnographic method**. Moreover we aim at questioning a particular side of the basic relationship between researcher and his fieldwork: **how a researcher can build trusted relationship with organization and people who are reluctant to be closely observed through intimacy and familiarity**.

From our current fieldworks based on ethnography and participant observation, we present some personal reflections on the effectiveness and the heuristic perspective of ethnography in media studies focused on economics and managerial issues. In sum, our contribution would expose **reflections from the position of an ethnographer in newsrooms and in particular some epistemological issues and personal troubles** generated by the employment of those specific qualitative methods.

This paper begins with a short review of literature of the academic studies carrying ethnography to analyse media organizations – and especially newsrooms – and economic and managerial issues. Second we briefly present out theoretical and conceptual framework used in the master research and expose our research methods. Then we show the major findings on managerial issues inquired through ethnography and direct observation from our fieldworks with a specific focus on relationship built with fieldwork. Finally we conclude by discussing our results and pointing out the scientific benefits from newsrooms' ethnography and contribution for OB-OT studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Even though academic literature points to a resurgence of ethnography in management sciences and OB-OT in recent years (Buchanan and Bryman 2009) this investigating method is still often considered 'not suitable' to study issues such as institutional change, managerialization and marketisation processes, etc. (Greenwood et al. 2008). That meets another similar statement: 'counter-intuitively' ethnography is not widely used by Media studies scholars addressing business and management issues (Albarran et al 2006).

We can't provide an extensive literature review on the ethnography used as main research method in media studies and particularly to stress newsroom managerial and economic issues (see Cottle 2007). Rather we aim at highlighting the major academic works in media studies using the ethnography method in order to picture the main paradigms and directions, with a particular focus on French case.

1. Ethnography in media studies: background and brief literature review

Ethnography, direct observation and participant observation are constituent to the wide qualitative research methods (see among others Geertz 1973, van Maanen 1988a,b, Denzin 1997, Denzin and Lincoln 2000); ethnography could be defined as the descriptive and analysing study of culture and social organization that basically rely on fieldwork through many tools such participant observation, interviewing, informal conversations, direct observation and field notes, documentation collecting… Participant observation means that the researcher shares as intimately as possible in the life and activities of the people in the observed setting. One of the first major contributions is rooted in some pioneer studies developed in 1971 by Warner who conducts a participant observation study in three TV networks' newsroom and Tuchman in 1972 and 1973 (and her book edited in 1978) who developed participant observation and semi-structural interviews in two US local TV newsrooms to know intimately the meanings of terms heard and behaviours observed and to study the routinizing process of making news. We consider that the two first fundamental books implementing ethnography and participant observation inside newsrooms were edited in the USA in 1974 by Argyris and in 1979 by Gans. A few years alter another major academic contribution is published in France in 1985 by Padioleau who uses ethnography and

direct observation in *Le Monde* and *The Washington Post* newspapers to compare newsrooms' organizational cultures. We also mention works authored by former journalists who turned to academic and use their memory of journalistic experience (a tool closed to participant observation) to provide inside/outside description of daily life of newsroom, in particular the change process of practices, values, and management policies (for instance: Underwood 1993). Except those few studies we have to acknowledge that ethnography is a secondary method used by academic scholar especially concerning economic and managerial issues until the recent years that seem to carry on a renewal of ethnography, direct (and participant) observation, and immersion in newsrooms and news firms as methods. To illustrate this statement, see the *Handbook of Media Management and Economics* (2006): in the chapter dedicated to the qualitative research, Hollifield and Coffey give less than half page dedicated to ethnographic methods! Until recent years, we notice that major papers dealing with economic and managerial issues in news media and published in academic journals (in particular *The Journal of Media Economics*) implement above all quantitative methods and/or analyse a huge amount of data collected through some qualitative methods (in particular questionnaires) in a quantitative perspective or through quantitative methods, even to stress managerial and organizational issues. Here we just enumerate some of those papers to picture this trend rising in the 1980's.

Questionnaires and wide database

Many studies are for instance based on analysing data coming from mail survey and database collected through recurrent national survey in the US and led by professional organizations (The Editor and Publisher International Yearbook: 'E& P'). In order to picture what a managing editor is, what does he do and how he splits his time between duties, Trayes (1978) bases his study on a survey of 208 Associated Press Managing Editors and uses their responses given in questionnaires sent by mail. Demers (1993, 1994, 1996, 1998) send questionnaires to the highest ranking managers and editors newspapers randomly selected from the same E&P in order to analyse the impact of corporate newspapers on journalistic values and work; in the same way other scholars uses mail survey of top management to picture the role of the newsroom morale and its relationship with newspaper managerial innovativeness and market competition (Polansky and Hughes 1986). In the same slant, Kochersberger (1990) uses 3-page questionnaires to picture the newsroom interpretation of a merger operation, or Pease (1991) send 6-pages questionnaires by postal mail to know the

journalists' opinions about management (from a larger US national study, the Newsroom Barometer Project) and show how and why they blame their boss. Allen (1995) uses also questionnaires sent to TV managers and news directors (with a preliminary telephone survey) structured around 9-point scale questions designed to determine what the priorities (journalistic or business?) are in anchor hiring. Gade (1999) also uses extensive mail surveys sent to 989 managers and rank-and-file to picture the news decision-making process. Berkowitz and Limor (2003) develop a survey questionnaire relying on 88 respondents to assess the journalistic ethics decisions, and Deuze (2002) use 773 phone or face-to-face interviews to stress 5 countries' national news cultures! Even to investigate the practices in reporting on private affairs of political candidates, scholars rely on declarations of journalists through only telephone survey without controlling declarations through direct observation of journalistic practices (Garrison and Splichal 1994)! The E&P database serves also for Fee and Hadlock (2000) to inquire the relationship between management turn-over and market structure for newspapers, or in a web-based survey administrated to photo editors and Web directors in order to examine the similarities and differences in workflow of visual journalists (Zavoina and Reichert 2000). Beam – who is focused on characteristics of a market-driven newspaper or market-orientation – uses the same huge database to analyse the market-orientation strategy (1998, 2001), the newspapers' content slant (2003) and job satisfaction (2006) in correlation with market-orientation degree.

Combination of 'quali' and 'quanti' methods

However most of scholars use a combination of two methods blending 'quanti' and 'quali'. Bennett (1985) sent 3-page questionnaires and led in-depth interviews with 5 top editors to evaluate the management role of Californian daily newspaper managing editors and their real or perceived need for management training. Gaziano and Coulson (1988) sent 12-page questionnaire sent to journalists belonging to two newspapers in order to picture the individual management styles of newspaper editors and determine if a relationship exists between type of newsroom management styles and journalists' attitudes toward their supervisors. Lowrey (2003) mixes interviews and extensive phone survey of national visual journalists when Loomis and Albarran (2004) blend a mail survey with in-depth interviews to understand the functions of middle managers in radio channels. Patterson and Donsbach (1996) build a quasi-experimental test through a triangulation methodology blending 'quali' (questionnaires sent by mail) and 'quanti' (the binominal probability formula) to show a

correlation between journalists' personal beliefs and their news decisions. Gade (2002) innovates in using the Q methodology (linking quali and quanti) and factor analysis to study self-assessment by editors of their attitude and behaviour about newsroom managing change

Case study and longitudinal study methods

Numerous academic research on media economic, organizational or managerial issues are based on the case study method and therefore some of them may implement ethnography and participant observation when the scholars are embedded or immerged within those media organizations. Sigelman (in 1973) and Argyris (in 1974) use this method to inquire the organization of newspapers. There were imitated by peers (in particular in recent years) like Perez-Latre and Sanchez-Tabarnero (2003) who blend literature review, companies' internal documentation, and interviews to assess hypothesis on leadership in media firms change, Sylvie (2003, 2007) focused on the management of cultural change at *New York Times* and other newspapers, Gade and Perry (2003) who publish a four-year case study led at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in order to catch the changing newsroom culture where this longitudinal case study allows to measure newsroom employee perceptions of organizational development, newsroom restructuring, and newsroom culture (surveys administrated during one-day visits to the downtown newsroom and every news employee working that day was asked to complete a survey). Lahenius and Jarvenpaa (2004) developed a case study on policy of managing a virtual team of newspaper journalists, Kjaer and Langer (2005) scrutinize the institutionalization of the business news in Denmark through this method, and Dupagne and Garrison (2006) define a qualitative case study of newsroom work at Tampa News Centre through direct observations and in-depth interviews with 12 staff members, in addition to multiple other classical qualitative data sources: documentation, archival records. Case study is also employed with other qualitative methods: with focus groups to understand the resistance strategies of journalists to business constraints Borden (2000) or with semi-structured interviews and the snow-ball technique to find other journalists willing to be interviewed about the selection process of news (Knoppers and Elling 2004). As a result of this non-systematic literature review we notice that seldom scholar works use the longitudinal study to understand the newspapers' change, except Ihlstrom and Henfridsson (2005) through recurring interviews in 1996, 1999, and 2002, or Daniels and Hollifield (2002) who address the effect of organizational changes and change-management efforts at CNN Headline News on newsroom employees' attitudes, morale, and behaviours.

Participant observation and ethnography: a contemporary resurgence

For some years a growing number of academic studies on media practices and even on economics of journalism and managerial issues based on an extensive use of ethnography and direct/participant observation (Cottle 1996, 1998).

In a pioneer study published in 1980, Bantz, McCorkle and Baade have formed a research team of 3 members who spent 14 weeks observing a US TV newsroom as participant observers to describe the organization of the daily work as a news factory. Through our review of the academic Media studies literature, we highlight many studies based on ethnography and participant observation to investigate organizational and managerial issues. Esser (1998) compares British and German newsroom structures and work culture by staying two weeks and one week in two newspapers (to do observation and in-depth interviews). Ajrouch (1998) relies on ethnography mixed with narrative approaches to analyse the newsroom decision-making process and discover how the personalization contributes in the determination of news Karreman and Alvesson (2001) develop an in-depth study of micro-events within newsroom through ethnography (9-months participant observation and many interviews) to point out and analyse the identity construction in newsrooms. Avilès and Leon (2002) spent 2-day observation of each newsroom inquired and carried on open-ended interviews in each newsroom to describe the journalistic practices in digital TV. In France, Blin (2002) had ten interviews and direct observation in the newsroom of *Liberation* to picture the functions of copy editors. Eckman and Linglof (2003) use ethnographic case study and one of them was a participant-as-observer working directly in creating the advertorials primarily scrutinized in the paper: this specific position shows how much it is useful to be an insider to point out and explain some specific issues, behaviours or beliefs (here a conflict between advertising and editorial) rooted in the daily life and culture of the newsroom. Everbach (2006) offers a three-week (during a 19-month period) ethnography to picture the newsroom culture of a women-led newspaper, the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*. Besides we can point out some scholars who mainly work with ethnography and participant or direct observation like Ida Schultz (2007a, b) who manages extensively ethnography in her studies inquiring journalistic practices and values in Denmark.

We notice the same emerging movement in France through young scholars choosing to be embedded in daily newspapers or other news media newsroom team to conduct direct observation: Hubé (2008: long-time immersion in different newspapers' newsrooms in France

and Germany), Saïtta (2005: direct observation in the Politics Service of Le Monde), Baisnée et Marchetti (2006: ethnography of the newsroom of the TV channel Euronews), etc.

RESEARCH QUESTION

This literature review shows that ethnography and direct observation are not really widely used however these methods seem to be highly suitable to investigate sensitive or hard-to-grasp topics related to management and OB-OT studies.

The research question is two-folded – the first question appears as the prior one: first we would to initiate a reflection about the reasons why ethnography and direct observation are not widely used by scholars involved in management and organizations studies? This question requires an investigation in order to find potential obstacles or inadequacy of using those research methods in management and OB-OT studies. We particularly tackle this issue through the Media studies discipline; we assume **there is neither fundamental nor epistemological inadequacy but rather a lack of interest for these methods by scholars that has to be quested**.

Second we would to expand this basic reflections to the specific relationship built by the researcher – through the use of ethnography and participant observation – with his fieldwork; we particularly would to investigate **the way an ethnographer builds to develop trusted relationship with informants and actors through familiarity and human proximity**. Here we would to highlight the valuable reflections and outcomes provided by French anthropologists and ethnographers outside the specific field of management and OB-OT studies like Jeanne Favret-Saada or Monique Pinçon-Charlot and Michel Pinçon who have to access reluctant organizations (village; French noblesse and aristocracy) through a very long period of attempt and then immersion; how can we import some of their tools and methods in the management and OB-OT studies that face more and more organizations and firms' individuals reluctant to be closely investigated by academic scholars (and journalists as well).

This double-sided research question involves some theoretical, methodological and epistemological issues we try to connect and expects to primarily provide empirical and practical reflections and outcomes for management studies research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ROOTED IN NEW INSTITUTIONALISM

The current research takes part in the new institutionalism paradigm or school (hereafter: TNI or NI) in the field of research in management and organization studies. We here expose some insights of this framework to understand the fundamentals of the approach, core tools and above all its justification and relevance for this research (see Greenwood et al, 2008). This presentation intends to highlight some of the current theoretical debates affecting the TNI directly related to our research question; in particular how to connect TNI and its concepts with ethnography and participant observations methods in order to grasp some core research topics developed in NI studies.

As Djelic [2001: 9-10] notes, the NI approach is "*a theoretical framework that would take on complexities, including a priori conflicting developments. A revised version of the neo-institutional argument, combining a 'theory of constraint' with a 'theory of action' and enlarging the embedding environment to its geopolitical dimension appeared to fit the historical and empirical material best. (…) Institutional or neo-institutional arguments (…) underscore the cultural nature of embedding national environment (…). National culture has been defined (…) as a historically constructed system of reference embodied in a set of basic practices. [It] (d)escribe(s) economies and industries as being deeply embedded within national institutional environments, understood as constraining framework of an essentially structural nature. Within this perspective, the state and political institutions are key elements of the constraining framework (…)"*

TNI mainly consists in "*articulat(ing) a system of institutional constraints with individual choices and actions. Framework reconciling partial determination with the possibility of unexpected change and unforeseen evolution. Individuals may indeed have a strong impact on systems of institutional constraints if they belong to or weave networks that can amplify their decisions, increase their capacity to implement those decisions, and widen the span of their action. Intervention of individual actors through such mechanisms undeniably represents one potential source of unexpected change and unforeseen evolution.*" (Djelic 2001: 14).

Managerialization and marketization process

Our works (Lardeau, 2008, 2009, 2011) show that the daily hard news press in France faces the early beginnings of an institutional change characterized by the implementation of a

double and correlated process: the **managerialization** or "**managerialism**" (Underwood, 1993) and **marketization** (McManus, 1994) of managing policies and governance of Press firms and newsrooms.

Marketization process *"refers both to market ideologies and market-oriented reforms. A market ideology reflects the belief that markets are of superior efficiency for the allocation of goods and resources. In its most extreme form, this belief is associated with the commodification of nearly all spheres of human life. Market-oriented reforms are those policies fostering the emergence and development of markets and weakening, in parallel, alternative institutional arrangements. (...) Marketization implies a redefinition of economic rules of the game but also a transformed perspective on states, regulation and their role. Marketization is questioning all forms of protective boundaries and barriers and having an impact, as a consequence, on social but also, for example, on cultural or legal policies."* (Djelic 2007b). According to Djelic (2006: 53-54), the *"marketization implies a redefinition of economic rules of the game but also a transformed perspective on states, regulation, and their role"* and *"refers both to market ideologies (reflects the beliefs that markets are of superior efficiency for the allocation of goods and resources), and market-oriented reforms (policies fostering the emergence and development of markets and weakening, in parallel, alternative institutional arrangements"*.

Djelic (2007a) alos provides a definition of managerialization process: *"(m)anagement has progressively imposed itself as a new form of (catholic-like) "religion", with its churches (business schools), its missionaries (consulting firms of many different kinds), its priests (academics and all forms of gurus), its rituals (many different kinds of managerial practices, fads and fashions) and its followers (managers) who regularly turn for advice to the "texts" and the "encyclicals" (managerial literature and press) produced by a hierarchy of authorities. (...) In the 1950s, professional managers had lots of power – over their own firms but also over the constellation as a whole."*

The managerialization process is highly correlated with a brother concept: the marketization (Djelic, 2006, 2007a,b; Kitchener 2002). Although definitions of those concepts are close, a major difference can be established. Even those both concepts are interdependent and highly correlated due to their common ideological and historical roots, Djelic warns not to consider these concepts always coupled and necessarily used together in academic research. Both concepts could be "decoupled" (a decoupling process). Concept of marketization implies that the ideology of free and competitive market is the best way for allocating firm resources

and consequently market is stated as the best institution and better than all other organizations or arrangements (firm, cartel, etc.) Therefore marketization has to be a flexible policy in the hands of entrepreneur or firm executive in order to adapt constantly the organization to the market evolution. Managerialization is seen in its essence as the internalization process of transaction costs through new management tools and policies mainly driven by managers. In a managerialization process and a management-driven world managers play a key role: their main duty consists in contributing in the growing and sustaining their firm by adapting day after day their firm to their market and environment.

We much more implement the concept of managerialization – and not directly the both, even if this concept is built on the marketization and is on debt of it. Market-orientation which is actually weak for major newspapers inquired, and managerialization appears more heuristic to give a wider picture of the in-progress institutional change by giving a special focus (but not only) on organization and people management and on the daily-life working of the journalist-managers within their newsroom.

This managerialization process which is **interdependent of an economic liberalization** process (Djelic 1998) is today worldwide global and affects quite all the business industries in the open-market economies and countries. This managerialization process is translated into an interdependent adoption of corporate governance, firms' organizational design, and redefined business models market-oriented linked with professional practices.

Scholars in business administration and organization studies develop increasing and various research from a decade now about how marketization and managerialization process occur in numerous and various industries and carry out deep institutional change. Most fruitful academic studies about this issue concern cultural industry concerning by growing market and financial pressures and have to integrate more market-oriented policies and strategies. Those studies focus on how managerialization process is translated into an interdependent adoption of corporate governance, firms' organizational design, and redefined business models market-oriented linked with professional practices. This trend is particularly well-studied in markets which are (or were) by nature or historically spared economic liberalization, in particular cultural industries (Jones and Thornton 2005) and industries based on an intellectual or artistic activity like publishing, architecture, consulting, art and fashion industry, public utilities and civil service, health, education … Academic studies on this process show a transfer, a shift between two professional business cultures: from a

professional and traditional culture – which is primarily characterized by professional actors' attention focused on craft and product – to new professional culture – which is major characterized by market-oriented and finance-oriented attention and practices.

Change of dominant institutional logics

The concept of institutional logics (hereafter: IL) – a core concept of TNI (Greenwood et al, 2008) – appears as a heuristic tool describing practices and assumptions that shape institutions' and individuals' behaviours in highly rationalized institutions. We use the integrative definition of IL given by Thornton et Ocasio (1999: 804): *"the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality"*.

Thornton (1999, 2004, 2005) studied how the **managerialization process occurred in the US higher education publishing** by changing the prevailing **institutional logics** that shape the publishing business: from a period defined by professional logics towards another period mainly defined by market logics. She demonstrates how this business is evolving from a professional culture (mainly shaped by the search of keeping up with editorial goals which are primarily defined in the personal relationship between editor and writer designed to publish books recognized as real intellectual contribution) towards a new culture more shaped by managerial and marketing interests (where the most important goals for editors are to improve the profitability of the publishing house and books are tools or ways to reach this goal). **Thornton shows how the market logics impose its capitalistic rationalization to this market**. In the publishing industry professional logics are defined as the logics that lead the publishing house owner to satisfy his main objective: building a deep and strong relationship (professional and personal sometimes if any) with "his" writers. And at this period, the main business goal is to publish the books – acknowledged by all the sector individuals – as the best intellectual contribution. In a way we can say that at this period the personal, professional and business goals are convergent in focusing on the same interest. On the contrary market logics describe a situation rather different: nowadays most of the publishing houses, governed by professional managers, are focused to reach firstly economic and financial goals. Then the legitimacy and the sustainability of a US higher education publishing firm depends more on market results (circulation, benefits…) than its ability to publish books that could be acknowledged as intellectual and cultural major contribution for

the society. She contributes a lot in academic research by analysing how cultural (and economic) changes within the publishing field shape the decision-making process of individuals, in order to highlight which and how institutional logics contribute to shape major decisions within the organization. Thus she develops the concept of (cognitive) attention of publishing managers to inquire on what problems, issues and solutions are focused decisions' managers within the decision-making process.

The journalist-manager, mediator of this institutional change

The press and news industry, especially the French daily one, is now strongly affected by (institutional) logics which drive hard news press to adapt its business model to market conditions. This shift affects professional practices of journalists, business model, newspapers' and newsrooms' organizational designs, management practices, business policies and strategies, etc. We focus on prevailing institutional logics within this market out and study the economic and organizational change process within the newspapers business, especially the hard news one. This concept of institutional logics articulates cultural values, social and economic environment structures with structuring rules and norms of organizations and markets (Thornton, Jones, and Kury 2005).

The individuals who are expected to properly and actually carry out the managerialization and marketization process within newspapers' organizations and especially within newsrooms: **the journalist-managers**. Our basic definition of the journalist-manager includes a double major feature: the individual in charge of the job does carry out at the same time both major duties in journalistic/editorial and in management. Those differences between concepts (and job) of journalist-manager and media manager are major since the first one is deeply involved in journalistic duties and since the journalist-manager has to manage a conflict in his daily work between two different logics: the journalistic and editorial, and the managerial and economic one. Following Mintzberg (1993) we focus on the daily work of managers. Recent researches about managers try to catch the managers in the situation by describing and analyzing their daily practices, values, and effective behaviors (Grey 1999; Golden, Dukerich, and Fabian 2000).

First academic studies focused on the process of managerialization in newsroom and journalist-managers appeared in the 1980's when scholars and some professional news media people developed the first inquiries and debates on the development and the rise of the market-driven journalism in hard news dailies caught in its early stages (Meyer 1985,

Underwood 1993, McManus 1994). Here scholars pioneer the rise of these processes in correlation with liberalization and globalization process and its grounded consequences on newsroom management practices, and on the definition of the outlet content. Scholars also point out not only work and identity of managers in news media (and management policies and its consequences on the content) but also a new media actor or a new role: the journalist-manager who is primarily defined as a journalist fulfilling and combining two distinctive duties: editorial and managerial. The focus is on the middle management level (Peters 1999, 2001), and management practices and policies within newsrooms affected by organizational change (Müllern 2006, Achtenhagen 2007) and market change.

Scholars traditionally split newsrooms' people and employees in top and middle management (Green 1999; Albarran et al. 2006; Gade 1999, 2002, 2003, 2004; Sylvie and Whiterspoon 2002). Besides scholars get closer to the concept of journalist-manager by deploying growing relevant and heuristic studies focused on leadership in newsroom, particularly to explain how is driven organizational and managerial change within newsroom (Sylvie and Moon 2007). Recent academic works on those issues inquire the relationships between leadership and change in newsrooms and media organizations, organizational issues and values (Mierzejewska and Hollifield (2006). Thus most of recent studies inquire the effects of institutional and managerial change on newsrooms practices. Gade (Gade 1999, 2002, 2003, 2004) analyzes managers and rank-and-file in newsrooms in order to catch and highlight the spirit of organizational change characterized by instilling a more reader-driven and market-driven newsroom culture. He sorts newspapers' top newsroom managers in three categories according to their beliefs and agreements toward integrating marketing: the critical skeptic, the change agent, the resigned pragmatist.

METHODOLOGY & RESEARCH DESIGN

We focus on actors' behaviour and motivations (i.e. by focusing mainly on decision-making), this approach implies to link them with mezzo and macro variables without deciding, *a priori*, some mezzo or macro variables totally explain the micro reality surveyed. The aim is to insert individual behaviour in their environment (Djelic and Quack 2003) that explain it, more or less, and let open the opportunity to give some psychological explanations and motivations that could not be totally shaped by environment or cultural variables.

We assume that **this institutional change in progress is mainly carried out by specific individuals**: journalist-managers defined as journalists who daily manage in the same time a second duty (besides journalistic one) in management (newsroom unit management, employee management, involvement in marketing duties or in strategic issues, etc.)

Thus our two-folded **challenge** is the following: (1) grasping "on the ground" (inside newsrooms, through the observation of daily job of journalist-manager) processes of managerialization and marketization which are mainly invisible, untouchable, theoretical; (2) adapting major NI concepts – which have been mainly built for macro and mezzo-level analysis – to micro-level analysis and articulating with ethnography and participant observations methods (Bartunek, 1984; Barley, 1986, 1996; Jackall, 1988; Zilber, 2002). Most of NI concepts and tools have been mainly developed for/through macro- and mezzo-level studies (Greenwood et al, 2008) and they consequently are not directly compliant with micro-level analysis (Zilber, 2007, 2008).

This research pertains to the **interpretive approach**. Thus we try to identify, underline and understand the motivations of actors surveyed. Moreover, the interpretative paradigm is partly founded on Weber concept of 'Verstehen' which means that researcher has to understand subjective significations given by actors observed to explain their behaviours and motivations. Then researcher try to interpret the subjective significations that shape behaviour of actors surveyed. That suits well with this research question and fits with ethnographic and observation methods applied to investigate newsroom people (Padioleau, 1985).

Due to my specific background and relationship with the field of journalism and news business (I have been journalist and media manager for a decade previous this research), we

pay attention to avoid interpreting journalists' activities and subjective significations through my own experience and personal signification of journalism and media firm administration.

Despite those strong epistemological problems to solve, qualitative methodology – especially field observation and **ethnography** – are totally appropriate to study this research question (Eckman and Lindlof, 2003; Hollifield and Coffey, 2006). We hope to be very close (in mind and in fact) to journalists' and journalists-managers, especially by implementing observation methods (van Maanen 1988, 1998). Basically we use the **thick description** (Geertz, 1973), an ethnographic method that aims to describe and explain not only human behaviour and motivations but its context as well as.

One of the best appropriate methodologies is the **participant observation** (Jorgensen 1989). However we face a lot of refusal of newspapers' owners and managers: a lot of them refuse us to conduct this kind of research methodology inside their firms and newsrooms. Another practical difficulty to access to date and fieldwork depends on the nature of this field and particularly the culture of each news organization. Contrary to Whyte (1993) who quite needs to require the agreement of only one person to access to his fieldwork (the Italian American slum chief in Boston), here we adapt our introduction and first contact to each newspaper and need to find the key 'access person' (Tuchman 1973). Due to all those conditions and constraints and related to the research question, we have to build our own flexible methodology framework borrowing some elements from ethnography, (participant) observation and all other qualitative methods (Ericson, Baranek, and Chan 1989). So we gather a lot of information and data about newsrooms organizations, practices by interviewing in a long-term run some journalists-managers who agree to be our informant (Whyte 1993).

Following Zilber (2002, 2006, 2008) we state our research design – combining ethnography, participant and direct observations, in-depth individuals interviews, long-time immersion within newsrooms) – supplemented with an interpretive approach of behaviors and discourses of journalist-managers appears as the best methodic framework to identify, grasp and interpret managerialization and marketization processes, their impact on newsroom daily life and construction of occupation of newsroom journalist-manager.

We develop a research design relying on ethnography and participant observation within three dailies' newsrooms:

- two-week immersion in a for-paid daily newspaper, *La Croix* (paid circulation: around 100.000 copies a day, employing around 80 print and online journalists in Paris) in October 2007,

- four-week in a free daily, *20 Minutes* (circulation: around 700.000 copies a day, employing around 80 print and online journalists in Paris) in May and June 2008,

- and five-month immersion in a for-paid daily, *Le Parisien-Aujourd'hui en France* (paid circulation: around 520.000 copies, employing around 380 print and online journalists) from October 2008 to February 2009.

We have been made about 160 in-depth interviews with quite all journalist-managers in these three newspapers and other journalists and news media people.

RESULTS (1): WHY ETHNOGRAPHY IS NOT SO POPULAR IN MEDIA STUDIES?

Even though we reviewed some recent studies that carry out ethnography, we notice that ethnography remains (so? too?) few implemented in media studies, in particular to investigate economics and managerial issues. What could be explaining this "disgrace" of those tools in the last decades? We here express major reasons we infer from our research and that seem to be rooted in the following statements or considerations that irrigate all the social science disciplines:

(1) ethnography and direct observation are highly qualitative ones that are considered old-fashioned to the detriment of quantitative methods that are seen more "scientific", more heuristic and more respectful than qualitative ones (because of the large manipulation of extensive data, numbers, models, etc. that give only the finery of science and knowledge).

(2) ethnography and direct observation are often considered too simplistic. According to a large part of the denigrators of ethnography and defenders of "quanti", ethnography and direct observation seem to be used by anyone (that means by anyone who could not be skilled in academic and scientific knowledge and background) since this method effectively appears to be easily used without specific skills: it would only require to note everything observed and listened and then write chronologically all that facts…

(3) ethnography and direct observation can be considered too close to journalism, journalistic investigation: even though we personally consider this closeness appears much as creating bridges and opportunities for scientific research − we make the hypothesis most of academia defend the opposite point of view… like journalists regularly develop a negative approach of Academia and researchers (at least in France).

In fact ethnography − and some main qualitative methods − doesn't required pre-requisite specific or highly-technical skills: e.g. the ability to manage software programs (in particular those that help to manipulate a load of quantitative data or analyse a large amount of coded stories: Bishop 2001), or the ability to draw some formal models based on mathematics or econometrics, etc. Indeed ethnography seems to be easier to manipulate but this statement implies to neglect the specific skills and abilities required to use ethnography and qualitative methods in order to select the only prevailing variables and facts and draw an interpretative analyse that "really explains what's going on"… However despite those non-

relevant critics, some scholars have used extensively ethnography and direct or participant observation to relevantly investigate the daily life of newsroom and even some economic and managerial issues.

Through this literature review and our own experience in developing ethnography and direct observation within newsroom, we propose a summary of the reasons explaining the lack or the sub use of those methods. However we acknowledge this reflection is difficult to expose since the academic literature in media studies is lacking of testimonies of scholars and researchers (even journalists themselves) explaining the difficulties they face to implement ethnography within newsroom and media organizations. Unlike other research areas where scholars expose their epistemological difficulties, in particular in anthropology and ethnology (for the French case, see Pinçon et Pinçon-Charlot 1999).

Reasons rooted in the method itself

The first reason could be that ethnography would not be designed or non-useful to investigate media question research and hypothesis in economics and management? Of course not! There is neither essentialist nor scientific reason why…

The second one relies on the nature of the ethnography as a method and research tool: if a scholar wants to implement an open (it's of course different for a covert work) and middle or long-term embedded observation, he requires the right to do and to enter the newsroom from the top management. Except when top management (i.e. newsroom director or the leading editor-in-chief) is interested in this kind of inside study that could be turned in an audit, an outsider researcher implementing such a method to inquire managerial and business issues is not welcome. Indeed a long stay in a firm and the subsequent trust relationships built with newsroom or firm people can allow the researcher to gather a lot of sensitive and/or strategic information about the firm and the top management, through interviews or discussion, from people interested in criticizing their boss, managers or peers! In recent years some French newspapers were shattered by investigative books or lampoons focused on their management, economic, and strategic policies: even those books were authored by journalists and not academic scholars, news media firms' managers don't discriminate between both and consider that every in-depth study as potentially disturbing and negative! Because of those books – that could be in on hand useful for researchers – academic scholars have to redefine and adapt their research strategy in order to access even so to their fieldwork and it becomes

more and more difficult when implementing embedded or inside methods like ethnography! We currently personally face this situation with our fieldworks…

We can highlight two main explaining reasons: mainly because most of newspapers' directors or leaders are reluctant to speak about the bad economics of their firm, the failing business model, and their weak management and marketing policies: all those issues are too *sensitive* to be exposed outside the firm or the field. Another reason is that this scholar could be a *disturbing agent*: some newsroom groups may use him to point out some problems and raise them in order to initiate a conflict between top management and the newsroom.

Reasons rooted in the media and journalistic field

About the French case we state that news media and newspapers top management is – more or less – reluctant to allow an outsider to observe the daily life of their organization, and implement ethnography and therefore to be able to investigate some issues that remain covert ("black boxes") by the newspaper industry leaders who want to keep secret, to protect the deciding elements of their career (salary, covert social and personal networks, etc.) or strategic information about company economics and management. Hubé (2008) mentions that access to newsroom is more difficult in France than in Germany; we personally face high difficulties to contact newsroom chiefs in France contrary to US ones (Lardeau 2008b).

RESULTS (2): A CASE FOR ETHNOGRAPHY AND PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION IN OB-OT STUDIES

Following Cottle (2007), we state that ethnography helps to better understand the relationship between newspaper and audience in a "customer-centric approach" (through the immersion in the daily life of readers in order to deeply and intimately know their needs about news), and how "newsrooms are resistant" to change, particular within an interpretative perspective (Hollifield and Coffey 2006)…

Here we would to state that in one hand ethnography and immersion methods are heuristic to inquire deeper media studies hypothesis and research questions, and in second hand even to stress some media economics and management issues (even though a priori those in-depth qualitative tools are not useful to investigate those issues…)

(1) Maybe the first reason would be considered tautological but it needs to be reminded: as mentioned by Edwy Plenel (former newsroom chief of *Le Monde*), *"the production of a newspaper mainly relies on discussion, talks, exchanges, and interactions between human beings"* (Hubé 2008), therefore it's better for the scholar to personally and lively attend those interactions than ask to journalists to recall those verbal interactions in a later interview… Moreover the immersion of the scholar allows (partly) avoiding a major trap for every social science researcher who works on the (non-perfect) human factor: observing and notice the differences between discourses and statements of actors (that are quite always rational, easy to-implement, perfect-oriented, and non-selfish) and implementation and their effective results… that are so far the early desires!

(2) The second interest to introduce more or develop ethnography in media studies is methodological: it could contribute to develop triangulation perspective by associating 'quanti' and 'quali' methods. Moreover we state that ethnography and direct observation (with in-depth interviews and internal documentation analysis) is useful and quite designed to be the basis of a research design linking the three classical levels of organizational analysis, in particular to investigate institutional change (Sylvie and Witherspoon 2002): micro (actors), mezzo (newsroom, the firm), and macro-level (market or field of the media, environment).

(3) A third interest is well-known but we remind it since we directly experienced that in our fieldwork. For instance, in one of the three newspapers' ethnographically inquired, we didn't plan to focus our observation on the Web newsroom but rather on the relationships between the newsroom and the advertising department since apparently (before entering the newspaper and because the academic literature didn't pointed out this issue) the issue needing to be inquired was located in this relationship. But thanks to a many-weeks immersion and a fieldwork research plan remaining open to be remodelled, we were able to develop a second major issue to specifically inquire the Web newsroom department since it appeared highly relevant to understand the major change management that appears in this newspaper.

(4) Ethnography and immersion in newsroom allow the researcher to better identify some major issues and problems that faces the newspaper industry:
(a) e.g. the loci of resistance and strategies deployed in the newsroom against the up-down management change policies. Concerning our current research we state that without deep and long immersion in some studies newsroom, we would not have deeply understood why and how some journalists annihilate new management policies defined by newspapers' CEO and implemented by newsroom middle managers,
(b) e.g. why and how much the newsroom and newspaper organizational culture remain a powerful and core element of the newsroom life and still shape many journalists' behaviours, beliefs and values.

Despite of many pitfalls associated with immersion and ethnography, in particular the risk to be too closed to journalists or other people who are primary informants, we notice that the **proximity** with newsroom people is highly useful to gather premium, personal and heuristic data and information about those people and the organization which are usually very difficult or quite impossible to collect: personal data, biographical information, salary and package associated, etc. One of that is the salary: even if the salary of most of middle manager and rank-and-file journalists is depending of national and professional scale, a growing part of remuneration relies on negotiation with the firm. Another kind of data usually hard to collect is the internal or sensitive documentation and documentary evidence about our research question pertaining of strategy and management. Another kind of information is pertaining to biographical and personal path life of the people studied that are highly relevant and essential to deal with our research question. Here we are following Saitta (2005) who is able to build

the accurate history of the Political service of *Le Monde* and restore more than biographical sketches (available through resumes or in some professional newsletters, studies or database) but all the relevant elements of biography thanks to a close relationship and because the scholar has enough time to interview newsroom people when those ones have time to do… Many people interviewed have given us some personal and sensitive information about them which are explaining and heuristic variables to understand some unusual professional career paths, attitudes towards the management, etc.

And this long-time immersion **"urges" the scholar to be in an open-minded position** that allow everyone to enter in contact with him – even people who are not primarily in the corpus of the person to be interviewed – and offers to the researcher himself an ideal position to meet anyone, in particular people who are not usually interviewed or worthy of interest by academic scholars. We refer in particular to the administrative assistant or secretaries of top managers or each newsroom unit: as we suspected all the ones we could interview are major informants about the history of newspapers or the daily life of newsroom (since they are employed in their media for a more long time than journalists or newsroom managers who are more involved in staff turnover than secretaries). Some of them even refuse to be interviewed, even off the records: since their position very closed to their boss and managers, they are reluctant to be placed in a situation that could break the professional (and sometimes personal) relationship with their boss relying on trust and… secret!

However (or because of this particular relationship) we argue that further research in media studies (and more extensively in general business and management) would be highly nurtured in interviewing secretaries, administrative assistants and even other rank-and-file employees. Journalists and media workers know that those people are often useful informants and sometimes more interesting than newsroom top managers who are reluctant to be interviewed or well manage the waffle (one of the foes for scholar and… journalist as well)!

DISCUSSION AND CONTRIBUTION

Finally we would to propose a last (but maybe the best) reason to promote the use of ethnography and direct observation within newsroom and news media organization is epistemological. Indeed, ethnography implemented in a long-term immersion generates many results and effects on the study itself and the scholar himself. We experienced many reflections which are not (or so few) quoted by scholars in textbooks on ethnography or in academic papers based on ethnography fieldworks. Here is a list of a couple of them:

- implementing ethnography requires from the researcher **a particular hexis and general personal behavior**. We mean that to produce the best results as possible that allow ethnography, the researcher needs to adopt a particular hexis which include **humility**, **self-criticism**, **reflexivity**, ability to **adapt oneself** to each fieldwork, ability to **interact** with people belonging to different social and intellectual status, etc. From our own experience we state those human qualities contribute to "build" a hexis, a status allowing to immerge oneself in different newsrooms and organizational cultures and inquire them with relevance. Here we would to remind two major French ethnographic works: Favret-Saada (1981) and Pinçon-Charlot and Pinçon (1999) perfectly illustrate how much researchers not only accept to wait for many months or years before gatekeepers or observed people accept their presence and work but also accept to be ignored, mocked, denigrated and held up to ridicule by (future) informants and observed people.

Like so many other ethnographers we had to endure these attitudes and feelings for only one reason: we considered that was the only way to finally access the newsrooms and was a stage of the process to create a trusted and familiar mood and relationship with our informants (here journalists and media managers). To an extent we can assume it was easier to endure these attitudes because we were a junior scholar and that would be probably more difficult to suffer that in the future… Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot who are two senior and highly experimented researchers (more than 30 years academic background) never complain about these humiliating behaviors because that's the only way for us to gather robust information; this high level of humility and ability to stomach that is outstanding and appear as a reminding lesson for any ethnographer (see the outstanding documentary dedicated to their work produced by Jean-Christophe Rosé, "Voyage dans les ghettos du Gotha", 2008).

- Moreover because ethnography is fundamentally a method used to discover a field, to collect data that are unavailable or not already gathered before the study, it "ipso facto" implies that the **researcher considers himself day after day as an ignoramus**. Indeed even if the scholar increases his deep knowledge day after day it's better to consider himself as in a continuing learning process in order to let his mind available and stay aware of observing, hearing, feeling in the field. This statement invites to **redefine the degree of the saturation in data gathering process** and direct observation: from our experience, we notice that it is often useful to break out the feeling of reaching the saturation point in gathering enough data.

- Finally ethnography as we implement it (in an **empathy** perspective) invites (and sometimes urges) the researcher to enter in a self-criticism process leading him to daily not only redefine his research question and object (which is a common task required by every scientific research…) but also **rethinking about himself as scholar**, himself caught in the middle of his research, his fieldwork and his relationships with the people of his fieldwork.

From the basic literature review mentioned above and our current fieldwork experience, we also state that ethnography and participant observation are useful and heuristic methods to investigate some media economic and managerial issues. For instance, to stress the newspaper business model, scholar uses primarily quantitative and macro data about the newspaper firm economics. But in order to understand why this business model fails or where are located some loci of resistance, it's required to gather also some micro data inside the newsroom to observe and hear their journalists and managers explaining why and how they could be reluctant to implement some economic or change management policies that compete with journalistic goals (Lardeau 2008a). In the same way, through a long-time insider position, we are more able to gather from the unions or some individuals (self-interested in providing such information) some strategic data about financing, top management hiring (salaries and benefits, etc.), relationships between CEO and journalists' unions (in France most of institutions of the industry and even some newspapers are historically involved in co-management between CEO and unions), etc.

To conclude we would to raise the following issue to initiate a debate with OB-OT and management studies scholars: we probably have to shift our point of view about the

reluctance of organizations to academic observation. Even though organizations and firms are really more and more reluctant to that, academic scholars are probably co-responsible of this situation when we give up too early accessing these organizations and probably accept too much deny of access objected by gate-keepers. Through this statement we don't ignore all the practical difficulties and constraints that shape the work and life of academic researchers in particular the pressure created by the motto "Publish or Perish" and the more and more limited conditions to escape academic duties in order to conduct long-term research, ethnographic studies and the conditions to bypass deny of requested access to organizations.

Following other scholars – and more and more reporters and journalists who face the same situation – we feel that this growing reluctance to be observed appears as a strong soft power deployed by organizations and firms. We consider this trend should be an issue that academic scholars in management and OB-OT studies would gain to raise and discuss in order to avoid that a growing number of organizations, firms or markets become black boxes not open to academic research.

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