

Newsroom moves and the newspaper crisis evaluated: space, place, and cultural meaning

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Abstract

Across the United States, newspapers are physically relocating their headquarters to smaller spaces, often away from the centers of downtown. This is the latest manifestation of the newspaper crisis manifest through a tangible and visible public manner. This article investigates these newsroom moves through a discussion of space, looking at why these moves matter by examining their impact on how journalists do their work and journalists' sense of cultural meaning. The article relies on a two-part field study of *The Miami Herald* for data. The article finds that physical newsroom moves are perceived to impact coverage, that objects inside the newsroom can also be symbols of newsroom decline and invigoration, and that saying goodbye to a building gives journalists the sense they may perhaps be losing their institutional relevance.

Keywords

Architecture, ethnography, newspaper crisis, newsroom moves, online journalism, place, space, time, work conditions, work routines, workspace

In the United States, facts about the news industry – especially when it comes to newspapers – can seem incredibly grim. Although the economic recovery has halted some of the sharpest pains, *The State of the News Media Report 2013* offers continued reason for concern: print advertising revenue has dropped almost 10% in the 2000s; digital advertising has ‘grown anemically’; most newspapers struggle with heavy debt loads; and the

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number of jobs in newsrooms has declined by over a fifth (Edmonds et al., 2013). With less money and fewer journalists, there has been a retrenchment in stories covered and a decline in local and political watchdog journalism (Anderson et al., 2012; Brock, 2013).

Although there has been substantial scholarship about the crisis (cf. Carlson, 2012; Chyi et al., 2012; Schlesinger and Doyle, 2014), there has been little qualitative, empirical work that addresses the perceptions of news workers as they face this decline (Boczkowski and Siles, 2012; Usher, 2010). Thus, there is a need to reexamine the newspaper crisis in light of the on-the-ground effects. A new sign of decline has been the sale of grand newspaper buildings and the move to significantly smaller newsrooms. This is happening across chains: McClatchy, Cox, MediaNews, Gannett, Advance, A.H. Belo, and GateHouse and even in a small York County, PA chain (Usher, 2014a). Some suggest that this is one more sign of newspaper companies hoping desperately to shed costs in the hope to salvage any kind of profitability (Usher, 2014a; Brandt, 2013).

As *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* moved from a building that could house 1000 journalists to office space in a transit center above a Hard Rock Café, one journalist decried, 'This is not a newsroom' (Clark, 2014). *The Boston Globe* sits on land worth more than the newspaper itself. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* moved to the offices of a once-abandoned department store, and its headquarters, once the biggest building in Philadelphia, is slated to become a casino and hotel. A tally kept by Columbia University's Tow Center for Digital Journalism recorded 35 major newspaper moves, and more of these continue – from *The Toledo Blade* to *The Birmingham News* while *The Detroit Free Press/Detroit News* building is now for sale.

These moves matter because they are testaments to the changing fortunes of the news industry. For journalists, what it means to leave behind tradition, move from downtown, and rethink space can have implications on what news they think they can cover. To a larger public, these moves might well be the first time that there has been a noticeable, public symbol that traditional journalism is in decline. A potential implication may be that if coverage changes as a result of these moves, the content of news will also change, impacting the news available to the public.

This article builds on a legacy of ethnographic and interview-based field research to investigate a newspaper that has gone through this move – *The Miami Herald*. This newspaper is emblematic of the newspaper moving newsrooms trend and serves as an ideal case study; it is a metropolitan newspaper that has weathered decline from peak circulation of around 400,000 in the 1980s and early 1990s to circulation of just under 200,000 today (*The Miami Herald*, 2014; Villano, 2006). The newspaper has moved from its 800,000 square foot building in the heart of downtown to a site in Western part of the city near the airport 12 miles away from downtown with a floor plan a quarter of the size. I base this research on two field visits, one to *The Miami Herald* before the move and one after the move, relying on a total of 44 interviews across the two sites.

The key theoretical angle explored here relies on a discussion of how journalists relate to the space where they do their work – as a place of production both of journalism and of cultural meaning. Thus, I draw on social theory of space as applied to the temporally bounded and socially constructed spaces where meaning is created for individuals and groups (see Hubbard and Kitchin, 2010, for an overview). Space has long been an interest of social theorists and geographers and if analyzed conceptually and empirically can

help bring insight into changing social conditions (Gieryn, 2000; Massey, 2005; Urry, 2001); in addition, space has been considered significant in communication (Caldwell, 2004; Castells, 2011; Couldry and McCarthy, 2004).

This article attempts to answer two key questions. The first is to look broadly and ask – given the context of this move – how do journalists understand and talk about the role of space? The second is to look more narrowly across three vectors, trying to understand what role geographical location, physical objects, and symbolic constructions of space play in journalists' understanding of the crisis in journalism and their perceptions of news coverage. The article finds that a newsroom move has significant influence on journalists' sense of how news gets made and produced; shows how interior newsroom objects are loaded with symbolic meaning that give cues to journalists about the security, safety, and stability of their jobs; and underscores the more abstract symbolic implications of newspaper moves. This article proceeds through a discussion and review of spatial literature and theory, moves on to the case and the method, and then presents and analyzes the findings.

Space and place

Space is a conceptually important area of investigation for considering social life. Although there are many disagreements about the topic, many scholars agree that space is relational – that as Urry (1995, 2000) explains, it is a temporal–spatial structuring of particular entities in a changing context. Gieryn (2000) has argued that space is a social phenomenon, and when people use space, it takes on both geographical boundaries and social meaning as people begin to define what it does. Space, then, is where social life unfolds and is located.¹

Space may be considered across geographical locations: a small town (Pred, 1985), a classroom (Giddens, 1979), the financial offices of bankers (Meyer, 1991), a shopping mall (Bolin, 2004). Space is a place of active production; individuals play a conscious role in constituting how they experience their environments and thus contextually construct their relationships between time, place, and each other. Massey (2005), for instance, argues that space is a social construct where changes in processes, production, and technology impact location, as it does here. And LeFebvre (1991) provides a critically important link: the artifacts of what we find in space, such as art and other objects, help define who we are through their expressions of cultural meaning. For him, there is 'real' space, where relationships take place, and 'ideal' space, or how we conceptualize space.

An important extension of space is into actual set *places*, defined generally as physical dots, points, or object on a map. These are temporal–spatial settings where people's social experiences form in response to artifacts and people (Soja, [1989] 2011). Weber may give an early formulation of the move from space to place, arguing that place becomes an extension for forming and creating ego – such as where one is stationed in a physical neighborhood (Mayerfeld Bell, 1997). Giddens (1979) moves from space to place – what he calls *locale* – where the practical experience of daily life happens and our activities unfold, and where social conduct occurs.

Space has been directly associated with media production. Castells (2011), for example, considers space in his formulation of the information society, discussing what he

calls the ‘space of flows’ and the diminished importance of physicality. Couldry and McCarthy (2004) take this one step further whereby media constitutes a social process that influences our spatial perception. Caldwell (2004) asserts that we should consider *places of production of media* – where media actually gets made. The newsroom, then, is brought into larger conversation about media space to understand human action in the context of culture.

Based on my research questions and findings, I rely on Harvey’s (1989, 2005, 2006) theorization of space, which he defines as absolute space, relative space, and relational space. These three ideas of space suggest that there is no single way to think of space because of modalities across human existence and materiality. The first categorization is absolute space, which is quite literally where something actually is – a ‘bounded territorial designation[s]’ and ‘fixed’ – where one can ‘record or plan events within its frame’ (Harvey, 2006: 124) – so in this case, we mean an actual geographic space that is hard to move – a place on a grid: where *The Miami Herald* is located.

Relative space is distance experienced by objects’ differentiation through time – how positions between objects and people influence each other. In this way, relational space reflects how people engage with these *material* constructions (some just look at object to object orientation; cf. Zaman, 2013). Relative space is a way to discuss how people relate to the objects, the social relationships formed, and the cultural meaning extracted.

Finally, a relational view of space addresses the idea of mental models of space – space as it exists in the way ‘people define it’. As Harvey (2006) writes about this space, ‘processes do not occur in space but define their own space’ (p. 124). This notion of space and time implies ‘the idea of internal relations’ where external influences get internalized in specific processes or ‘things through time’ (p. 124). None of these categorizations should be considered more significant than the other; rather, they work together to construct an overarching discussion of space.

Newsrooms and space

As scholars Wallace (2005, 2012) and Cressman (2009) argue, news buildings are significant statements because they represent institutions deeply connected to the public. Historically, news buildings themselves have been expressions of a news outlet’s ego and health (e.g. *The New York Herald* and *The New York World*). Today, even the Times building is symbolic, with its landmark glass building a beacon of promise for the future (Usher, 2014b).

Turning inward, scholars have also focused on the connection between space and news production – if not always explicitly. Tuchman (1978) examined the influence of location on news production. Keith (2015) looked historically at the role of U-shaped copy desks. Gade (2004) considered the rearrangement of news desks during the rise of team reporting. Boczkowski (2010) explored how the office settings reflected different cultures of news. A number of scholars have looked at the relationship between putting web and print together to help make work more efficient (Quinn, 2005; Verweij, 2009), although this certainly may not be effective (Colson and Heinderyckx, 2008). Others have looked outside the newsroom to the rise of backpack journalists (Dailey et al., 2005). Similarly, news locations impact reader’s perception of their community,

suggesting that where news gets made helps create a public understanding of community (Mersey, 2009).

In journalism studies, there have been a number of new studies about space. Shumow (2012) examined transnational professional identity in Miami among immigrant journalists who have a connection to their home country and new country. Robinson (2011) offers a spatial turn in journalism studies to talk about the contested nature of web and print newsrooms. Zaman (2013) notes how space affects news production and labor understandings. Wall (2015) wrote about the Pop-Up Newsroom, a virtual, mobile news organization for citizen journalism. Schmitz Weiss (2015) argues for the importance of the spatial turn in journalism to look at physical communities and mobile spaces. Notably, Robinson suggests in her piece that a look at industry forces on space is required.

The case

The Miami Herald was chosen because it is a major metropolitan paper going through this newsroom move and because its fortunes match many of those in the industry. The paper was bought by John and James Knight in 1937 as their flagship newspaper. The Knights built *The Miami Herald* at 1 Herald Plaza in 1963 on Biscayne Bay with a view so expansive that Knights decided not to have a rooftop lunchroom deck for the fear that employees would not return to work. The newsroom was built to serve a projected circulation of 1 million and remain up to date through 1980 (Smiley, 1974). When it was built, it was the largest building in Florida. Movies such as *The Mean Season* and *Absence of Malice* were filmed there during the glory days of the 1980s. In 2011, though, the paper was sold to a Malaysian casino operator – and the newsroom was given 2 years to find a new home – which it did 12 miles west of downtown near the airport in sparsely populated Doral. Just after the newsroom's move, the television show *Burn Notice* filmed an episode of the *Miami Herald* building burning down (Hanks, 2013). Although not all newsrooms that move will face such extreme geographic changes, many are moving from centers to peripheries and downgrading their footprint.

The method

The project followed both the observational practices of newsroom ethnography (cf. Gans, 1979) and interview research (cf. Singer, 2004). I first visited the newsroom for 4 days in April 2013, 2 weeks before the move, and returned in October 2013 to the new site, when I spent 3 days in the newsroom. I chose my visits based on timing and access opportunities.

During my first visit, I collected 23 interviews, and during the second, 21 interviews for a total of 44 interviews, re-interviewing 17 people. Journalists were selected via a snowball and a convenience sample. I interviewed 5 section editors, the top 3 editors in the newsroom, 3 online staff, 1 photographer, and 11 reporters. I relied on a semi-structured interview protocol (Weiss, 1995), where I asked a pre-set list of questions about the move and then added questions as seen fit to the flow of conversations. The interviews lasted between 20 and 40 minutes and were transcribed via laptop as they took place. Journalists are not named unless their position is clearly public (e.g. executive editor), but identified generally

by position. I did not find managerial/employee conflict as a major theme, although there were some differences.

For analysis, I relied on Corbin and Strauss' (2008) method of constant comparative analysis. First, I began by looking for repeated and related concepts. The concepts were evaluated according to related categories, looking for patterns and deviance. The categories were analyzed into broad themes related to the physical move, changes in the newsroom space, and 'big thoughts' about the change. These were placed into the context of the research questions and then into theory.

The findings

The Miami Herald building moved from the 1 Herald Plaza building to the Doral building in May 2013. Just before the move, employees had set up a commemorative space to memorialize their time in the building. Along the central marble wall was a white piece of drywall that read 'Thanks for the memories, 1 Herald Plaza', with notes on it. Along the stairwell were pictures of current and former employees. The newsroom itself was very, very messy, but the sweeping views were quite clear, with large windows open to a view of Biscayne Bay, a beautiful wide stretch of blue.

The Miami Herald's new newsroom was located across from a cow pasture in a strange zoning area that combined agriculture and industry in the former US Southern Command with leftover military decorations: concrete bunkers and barbed wire. The newsroom itself was light and airy, with a huge industrial loft-like ceiling and with a media wall with 22 TV screens in the middle of the newsroom. Unlike the old newsroom, there were few offices and more conference room space; in fact on the editorial side, only Executive Editor Mindy Marques and Managing Editor Rick Hirsch had office doors.

Absolute space: newsroom location

Absolute space posits that there are real, geographic boundaries that affect how people understand space, social relations, and sites of production. These unchanging physical locations are further influenced by time, as Harvey attests. One example he gives is transportation: where people can go within these physical constraints affects what they are able to do. In looking to this absolute space, it is important to consider the ways in which journalists used this bounded geographic space to produce their work. How journalists conceive their relationship with these locations yields insight into time, space, and news decision-making.

Before the move: the best news happens here

One of the perceptions before the move was that the physical location of *The Miami Herald* at 1 Herald Plaza – the actual building itself – was a place where news happened. In the case of newswork, time is a critical factor: what journalists can cover, particularly within the context of breaking news, is determined by how quickly they can access this information. In many respects, absolute space may affect news decision-making.

Before the move, journalists expressed concern that they would no longer be able to have access to some major stories that had occurred right on *The Miami Herald's* doorstep. An editor explained how *The Miami Herald* was able to quickly jump on weather events, a major consideration for a city prone to hurricanes:

Just from our windows you can see some of the biggest news being made. You can see a hurricane blowing in or other severe weather. You can see any major explosions or major events on the Bay ... We're certainly not going to be able to get that when we move to Doral.

Other journalists were keen to discuss how being at The Herald building made for a way to get distinct news. In 2013, Miami had a sensational story that received nationwide attention – a man high on bath salts ate another man's face – and he was referred to as a 'zombie' in the city's press (Barry, 2013). One reporter noted,

We are able to break big stuff when @#\$@ hits the fan I mean we are right near the MacArthur Causeway. That's how we got the zombie story.

In fact, as the managing editor explained to me, the event was actually captured on *The Miami Herald's* own surveillance cameras. A very senior reporter mentioned a famous *Herald* story, when a corrupt politician walked over from City Hall and took a shotgun to his head in the lobby. Thus, after the move, journalists could find themselves in a situation where they would both be limited by time and awareness of breaking news stories, thanks to a lack of geographic proximity. The effects of this could create changes in coverage.

After the move

After the move, I found journalists clinging to a frustrated version of the past, although top editors remained positive, as one might expect. Journalists believed coverage had been changed.

Some top editors argued that the advantages were different in the new space. The managing editor noted,

Look, our tourism beat reporter is practically in walking distance from the companies she covers. If there is an election we are right there. Obviously the other news organizations [the case: the large TV studios of Univision] thought this was a good place to be located.

However, the managing editor later showed a photo of a shark-shaped boat coming down the bay that would have only been seen from *The Miami Herald's* old newsroom, noting that the crazy, fantastic 'only in Miami' news frequently happened downtown.

Other journalists were concerned about their estimation of the time spent getting to top stories, suggesting how they saw coverage might change. In particular, reporters who found themselves working in Miami most of the time were concerned that they couldn't get back to the newsroom or couldn't reach sources in time. A reporter explained,

A candidate was giving a surprise announcement in downtown, and it was going to take me 45 minutes [to get there from here]. And when I need to get a court document in the middle of the day to write a story, it's hard to just drop in and go.

In this respect, breaking news on her beat was impacted by the actual physical distance between the new newsroom and the old space. Other reporters echoed this difficulty with drop-in reporting.

An editor explained to me that she had to schedule in face-time in the downtown area with newsmakers to cultivate sources; before the move, this had been far more casual, unplanned, and frequent:

I am more disconnected from the core of the community than ever before. I try to do breakfast in downtown and get coffee three times a week with the people I need to see – for me the [x-industry] leaders until I get so busy that I can't do it.

She offered a counterpoint which was that she was learning about some new potential coverage areas, but 'the ones that we are driving through are not the ones that drive policy or shape the tenor of the city'. In other words, *The Miami Herald* was removed from the newsmakers.

Most of the reporters I spoke to – the people on the ground actually doing the work – felt the new location had significantly affected their ability to do their work. In their view, the important news was where they had left, and if they wanted to be in the newsroom, this would mean that they would face difficulty with a simple empirical fact: what was news to them was not happening nearby.

Harvey's theoretical definition of absolute space discusses the importance of considering physically and temporally bounded space. He argues that this space matters to the way people establish cultural meaning. In this case, we see the impact of this newsroom move on how journalists think they physically relate in space to their work and the creation of cultural meaning via the content that can be produced.

Relative space: objects in the newsroom

According to Harvey, relative space addresses how people relate to fixed, material objects and create meaning and significance around them. So in this case, how journalists felt about actual physical *things* inside the newsroom would offer insight into their perceptions of newsrooms change. Two key objects emerged as subjects of discussion: the actual desks in the newsroom and what they symbolized and the creation of a new and improved continuous news desk for breaking news.

Prior to the move, journalists were faced with a quiet newsroom filled with too many desks for too few journalists. The emptiness was accentuated by the debris left behind of reporters who had been laid off or bought out – a staff halved from 350 to 175 according to official numbers, but according to a count by senior reporter, what amounted to only 35 reporters on the ground. The perceptions of these empty desks – and whether this could be addressed by the move – give us insight into how journalists felt about the health of their news organization and their general outlook on the future of news.

Prior to the move, journalists talked about these desks. One reporter explained,

It's empty, it's lonely and sad. We have lost so many people ... It's empty with all these people gone and on furloughs.

Other reporters echoed the discussion that the newsroom felt empty and sad. The move, to one journalist, would be a way of acknowledging the downfall of the newsroom: 'There's a general dread to leave, it means coming to terms with very [sic] smaller newsroom and all of these empty desks'. An editor explained that he looked out and 'nobody was there'. The top managers similarly expressed these views. In short, the old newsroom was a sign of decline, but perhaps by changing the actual physical objects and orientations in the newsroom, *The Miami Herald* might eliminate some of this psychic decline.

After the move, management told me that the space was light and airy, and the open floor plan created an ideal working environment, bringing together reporters and editors in a closer space. When the journalists arrived in the new newsroom, for the most part, they noted that the space continued to feel empty and were disheartened as a result.

One reporter explained how the emptiness would likely continue:

I still feel like the space is too big, there are still a lot of empty desks – we got a memo yesterday about buyouts which I am sure you saw – and we will get those people's areas [empty] in the newsroom next.

Another reporter explained this fact as well, noting that

With all this stuff going on we have lost people – the truth is that we have allocated a certain number of people to lose which means there are already a lot of empty cubicles. People who have left are not replaced.

The changes in the physical objects were supposed to make a difference to journalists' perception of the vitality of their work. The intention behind fewer empty desks was supposed to bring a reinvigoration for newsroom employees and offer a chance to leave behind memories of years and years of newsroom decline. Now, in a new space, journalists were supposed to be able to concentrate on forming new associations by moving forward rather than looking backward. Within the discussion of Harvey's relative space, the emptiness of these objects signals a deeper loss. These empty desks impact perceptions of journalist's sense of what they can do and the state of the crisis.

Managers were particularly excited by what they perceived to be an innovative step toward increased digital innovation – the creation of an amped-up continuous news desk in the news building. The old *Miami Herald* newsroom had a small Continuous News Desk intended to facilitate breaking news, but it was far from where the actual reporters sat. Management believed a key element to the larger economic survival of the newsroom would be a regular supply of breaking news to keep the website fresh and up to date so that people would continue clicking on the site throughout the day. One of the stated advantages of moving out of the old space was that *The Miami Herald* would be able to facilitate a faster flow of news through better physical communication.²

Prior to the move, Mindy Marques, the executive editor, wanted something that would transition the journalists from being ‘out of sight, out of mind’ into a position where they could be physically present and visible, actively engaged, and communicating with the people charged with the Web site. She explained,

You want to also be able to quickly communicate to readers, and within the newsroom you need to be talking and acting like this ... From the day slot, you want to be able to yell at reporters.

According to Marques’ plan, the new newsroom would have 16 people at a U-shaped CND which would include the day news editor, the social media editor, the social media reporter, the photography editor, reporters, a copy editor, and the home page producers.

Reporters and other editors were aware of the vision and thought that this might be a sign that *The Miami Herald* was taking steps to do more work digitally. One reporter expressed,

They say it is better for news ... we are jumping in to the future, and I guess with the digital thing we will be further along.

An editor suggested how things might change:

There will be more of a conversation point with people sitting together for the day’s business – and a little more ability to focus on the mission of the moment.

Thus, the CND stood in as a way for journalists to see some potential for a digital change. The consequences were significant – if the CND worked, it would be a sign of *The Miami Herald* moving forward, and if the CND did not work in any major way, it would also seem to signal another failure in the move and ability of the newsroom to make successful adaptations to change.

When I went back to visit the CND, the CND was far from an operational hub of buzzing digital action. The majority of the desk was empty all the time, save from a single sports producer, a home page producer on the desk occasionally, a General Assignment reporter on in the afternoon, and the online editor. Out of the 16 seats, 4 were filled. The media wall with its 22 screens had the majority playing sports or soap operas throughout the day, and the Apple TV designed to offer live metrics to the newsroom was not yet operational even 7 months after the newsroom had changed locations.

Some were disposed to give it the benefit of the doubt, as one editor did: ‘The CND works well, though it’s empty most of the time’. But as the head of the CND pointed out, perhaps the most significant person to assess the success of the CND, he simply did not have the bodies he needed:

We don’t have a morning breaking news reporter. We don’t have a dedicated night breaking news/cops reporter. We haven’t been able to fill those spots ... It’s just me in the morning. I answer the phones now because there’s no one to answer them anymore. This is something that really hurts us.

But as top management acknowledged, the digital vision of fast, copious, and plentiful breaking news had not yet been realized.³ With limited manpower, the empty CND had

promise, but remained yet another sign that resources were low. The CND was limited by the institutional realities that more people needed to be hired to make it truly operational.

As Harvey argues with respect to relative space, the way people relate to objects creates symbolic connections that ultimately influence their sense of who they are and how they relate to the world. These objects have a direct impact on how people feel – the intention of the CND as a physical, material *thing* influences the emotions people have about how they do their work and their perceptions of the capacity for both newsgathering and the future of journalism.

Relational space

Harvey's third categorization of space underscores the way that individuals and social groups bring together the external influences of space with their internal understandings. This aspect of the spatial dimension suggests a more *reflective* domain, where instead of focusing on actual places or things, people focus more on the more *abstracted* notions of the spatial – the symbolic extractions of space. This goes beyond looking at location or objects and rather considers how people experience space as a statement for understanding the world – in this case, through the symbolic power of an institution.

Prior to the move, only a few *Miami Herald* journalists were concerned about larger symbolic statements. Most were primarily occupied with considering what the move might mean to their daily work, and they were not thinking about the social significance of what it meant to say goodbye to the building. Just a handful I spoke to consider the move on a more relational level. An editor talked about the company losing what she called 'mindshare' upon the move – as a continuing element of the larger decline of the company:

We are worried about losing mindshare here – who is the first source you think of when you think of information- this is a branding and usage issue.

Other journalists worried that the departure from downtown might seem like a signal to the city that they were abandoning their interest in the area, which was now becoming a center of investment and activity. 'We are murdered just when downtown is coming back', said one journalist. *The Miami Herald* had been part of the renaissance of the city, and now the newsroom would be foregoing this area. Because journalists were so concerned with the immediate implications of their move from one physical place to another, it is possible that this consideration of Harvey's relational level to this more abstract connection of the more detached, symbolic assessment of the move had not yet occurred.

But after the move, journalists reached a point where they looked back on the move and saw what had happened as a key sign of decline. Leaving behind 1 Herald Plaza was a clear signal that the golden age of news was over; the new newsroom was reconfigured for a digital era, smaller, more nimble, but the old memories of the good times were just that – news would never recover to the point of profit and stability. Thus, journalists began to see the building as relational space, interpreting it as a sign of lost glory.

One online editor explained,

We felt very proud. You could see the building and it was not hard to think about the glory days of newspapers, and now this represents the new way of the business.

Another editor echoed the point:

We made a big sacrifice to get out of that prime location. *The Herald* had this big sign and you couldn't miss it – it was an important factor – but we had to realize that the newspaper business is not the same.

Perhaps more significant than just the memories of journalists in assessing the past with the loss of the building was their fear that the community would forget about them. They believed that The Herald building underscored the power of *The Miami Herald* as a significant voice – and without this building, the city would no longer consider *The Miami Herald* important.

A reporter pointed out that in Miami, having a branded building was key given the culture of the city. He said, 'In this town, image is everything'. Another reporting colleague picked up on this point:

I do feel that it's a question of visibility and there is a real signage and branding problem. And now we have no branding except for a banner ... Branding is part of visibility ... you have to let people know, and not everyone is on the net. Just because you don't see us doesn't mean we aren't here.

Another two reporters exchanged how the city had 'just lost a major institutional figure'.

The editor who had spoken before about 'mindshare' had additional thoughts:

It's bad for the psyche for there to be no building to exist for people to see every day that's associated with a traditional media company. That's a problem. We are fighting for our brand share particularly [with] a generation who thinks we are nothing but dead trees. To not have that downtown marquee to look at every day is not good for us.

Journalists associated the symbol of *The Miami Herald* building with their relevance. Without this visibility, staffers worried that *The Miami Herald* would be forgotten, out of sight, out of mind. The physical existence of the building itself had a direct relationship, in their view, to the creation of larger culture meaning from the community to *The Miami Herald*. In this way, the structure of the place – and its absence – meant a distance from these social relations. Harvey's notion of relational space helps reveal these abstract connections to the symbolic as journalists consider what *The Miami Herald* building means as a larger construction to how they craft a story about their relations to work and to society.

Discussion

This article attempts to offer a spatial dimension to the discussion of the newspaper crisis through a visible sign of decline: newsrooms moving newsrooms to smaller, lesser versions of their past homes. Harvey's breakdown of absolute, relative, and relational space helps us understand the different ways that we can operationalize and categorize this move and maps well onto a grounded theory approach I used. There remain a number of

open questions: why these moves even matter in a world where remote is more possible than ever before, and whether journalists can adapt successfully to these changes.

We see here that Harvey's notion of absolute space has a significant role as journalists conceive both of their importance in the news ecosystem and as they consider their capacity to do their work. The history of journalism – particularly news decision-making and news distribution – depends on speed and time. Now, in a time of increased competition for breaking news, seen as critical to keeping traffic on a site, there is more pressure to respond quickly to what is perceived as the most compelling news – be it crime or zombies. The considerations of a news building as an actually physically rooted space suggest just how much journalists think that a specific place matters to how they do their work. They believe that the move will or has changed how they do what they do and impacts the way they cover the news.

Similarly, Harvey's discussion of relative space helps us consider how specific physical objects matter to journalists. These objects are less permanent, and the material composition of what is inside an absolute space like a building may indeed change. We see this through the contested way that journalists view the emptiness of the desks in both the old and the new buildings – these objects are a sign that trust in the larger newspaper organization to provide staff for quality coverage has been broken and that journalists must acknowledge the dire state of the news industry. The CND, on the other hand, offers a far more hopeful assessment of what might be the future for journalism, but journalists closest to this new project are emotionally invested in the fact that the object has unfulfilled potential.

Thinking about relational space is most prominent after journalists have had the time to digest the move and settle into the new surroundings. Since relational space is about abstracted notions of the symbols people see from their environment or larger philosophical claims distant from actual material things, journalists ruminate extensively on what it means on a more conceptual level that they have left behind where they once were. They think about larger notions of decline and detachment away from the immediate work conditions, and from this conception of space, we get an explicit conversation about how decline is experienced.

Notably, though, it can become difficult to distinguish all of these conceptions of space – each ultimately reflects back to some larger symbolic meaning. This is precisely because space is so connected to the context through which we form social relations. Thus, this analytical framework offers a way to break apart different levels of materiality, but each category has blurry contours as made clear through the analysis.

One aspect that remains an open question is why the place, objects, and symbols that emerge actually even matter to these journalists in a time where remote work is possible. As some of the literature on media production and space makes clear, information exchange is no longer bound by space and time. Why aren't these journalists happily backpack journalists? These journalists did not address the potential of mobile journalism, although a few worked from traditional remote sites, like the 'cop shop' and city hall. However, to these journalists, being rooted in a space where news happens, having the ready proximity to institutions, and being embedded in a larger environment of journalists who share similar goals, similar problems, and similar self-conceptions may perhaps be one key reason why space is significant.

These moves matter to journalists and the public. If journalists cannot adjust, and newsrooms remain caught up in reminiscing about the old physical location, they may not look for stories that may be equally compelling and new. Newsrooms may fall behind in thinking about information and their public role as a critical source of news in an urban information ecology. Ultimately, this matters to the kind of news that people are able to receive from traditional journalists who have a claim of authority and expertise that few others may match. And as newspapers physically decline, people may lose interest or even forget about the role of the newspaper as an institution in the community.

In a much broader sense, the time/space orientation for journalism is critically rooted in a construction of the newspaper crisis. The research does indeed find that external industry pressures shape the constructions of the individual and social experiences of the way journalists experience time, place, and space as they go about their daily work. As the preface to this article suggested, the moves from newspaper headquarters are symbolic constructions of newspaper decline that have real effects on how journalists understand their fate in a rapidly changing industry and impacts the actual work that journalists do. Thus, a spatial application to journalism gives particular insight into the industry pressures as experienced by journalists going through the changes in the industry.

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Notes

1. Space is often critically linked to a discussion of time. Although time is discussed relationally here, a specific space/time explication is beyond my reach here.
2. One could look explicitly and specifically at workflow changes through process, but that is not my goal here.
3. The newspaper would later make a handful of hires for the desk.

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