

Kari Koljonen: Seuraa johtajaa! Väliportaana päällikkötoimittajien muuttuvat roolit [Follow the Leader! The Evolving Role of Middle-Management Journalists]. Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2013.

During the final decades of the twentieth century, Finnish society underwent a major reorganisation as it shifted from a planning economy to a competitive economy. Likewise, in the 1990s and 2000s, the media industry had to transform itself completely as competition tightened and distribution channels multiplied. These changes in Finnish society and the media are reflected in the professional ideals of journalists and the organisation of editorial offices and staff; in both, different ways of thinking and operating are visible. Previous research identifies two such approaches: Before the change, (1) high modern journalism with its traditional ideals and practices ruled, whereas (2) liquid modern journalism with its focus on new ideas took over during the process of change. This study focuses on the ideals and practices of these two journalisms.

High modern journalists were committed to disseminating information, educating the public, following the elite and reproducing the past. In high modern editorial organisations, professional journalists were self-directed and independent, and aimed mainly at guarding their autonomy and maintaining stability. By contrast, the professional ethos of liquid modern journalists is more varied: for many journalists, content production, customer service, challenging existing powers and anticipating the future are more attractive alternatives than the traditional ideals. At the core of operations in liquid modern editorial organisations are service-oriented multi-talented individuals who do their share of the team work under the supervision of managers. The objective is to be profitable and continually reform and reinvent operations.

This study examines the shift of journalists' ethos and editorial organisations from the high to liquid modern approach through the management of journalistic work and the organisation of the editorial process. In this study, editorial work is seen as a cycle that consists of four stages: planning, execution, evaluation and development. The findings of this study are based on a qualitative analysis of interviews with 46 Finnish journalists.

When comparing high and liquid modern editorial work and management, the liquid modern approach is more common in the studied organisations. Liquid approach seems vivid at every stage of the editorial process: journalists working in liquid modern organisation plan more, produce more ideas and are more thoroughly briefed on their duties. In addition, they create more content in less time and are more interactive throughout the process. The liquid modern organisation also differs from the high modern organisation in that its objectives are specific, its work is systematically evaluated, and its editorial practices are continually reformed. Despite all of these favourable developments, liquid modern organisation also face significant problems: the extent of planning can make editorial staff more reluctant to unexpected turns and reduce the initiative of the rank and file. The increasing pace of work and the broadening of journalists' job descriptions have already created considerable pressure on quality control. Development and evaluation obligations can also impair occupational well-being: they are seen as an unfair additional burden and a straightjacket that restricts individuality, especially when the organisation is undergoing co-operation negotiations to downsize.

Even though the shift from high to liquid modern editorial culture in this study is more a story of favourable development than decline, it can also be argued that editorial organisations seem to have become almost overly malleable, flexible, accommodating and

humble during the process of media change. For journalism to maintain its vitality in the future, journalists must be able to follow – and challenge – the leader.