

One Journalist, Two Roles
What happens when journalists also work as media coordinators?

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. & Jonathan Peters

Individuals interacting with society possess multiple roles, and yet the study of journalistic role conceptions, based on the assumption that role conceptions influence journalistic outputs, has not addressed the idea that journalists possess multiple roles inside and outside the journalistic field. A peculiar arrangement in Missouri is the appointment of journalists to serve as media coordinators for the courts. Using a symbolic interactionism framework, we explore how media coordinators experience this duality of roles.

KEYWORDS: conflict of interest, interview, journalists, observation, role conceptions, role accumulation, role strain

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It is the role of journalists in a democratic society to keep people informed by providing accurate and complete information about public affairs. This role is best fulfilled when journalists enjoy autonomy. Thus, we were intrigued when we first learned of media coordination in Missouri, where the Supreme Court of Missouri appoints journalists to serve the lower courts. Coordinating media coverage with public officials, we thought, was a function traditionally performed by public information officers—salaried government employees. This made us wonder: When the demands of journalism conflict with those of the court, where do the media coordinators stand?

Understanding how the judicial system operates, and how it regulates media access to courtrooms, is important. For the press to bear witness to what happens in the law is as much an obligation as an opportunity. The idea is that most people cannot get for themselves the information they need to be informed and to participate in the political process. They have to rely on the press. In the judicial system, the press is the primary link between the judges and the public. It is not an easy role to play or place to be, because legal reporters, perhaps more so than other reporters, operate under the threat of immediate sanctions from the people and institutions they cover: On the legal beat, a misstep might mean that a judge would hold a reporter in contempt of court.

In the last 30 years, many states have opened their courts to cameras, allowing the press to record and broadcast judicial proceedings (Abrams and Kaminer, 1995; Chance, 1995). The U.S. Supreme Court, however, does not allow cameras inside the hearing room (Ott, 1980). States that allow cameras have also limited their use (e.g., restrictions on the type of equipment that can be used). If a reporter does not comply with those limitations, then a judge could sanction the reporter. Many courts employ a press officer to help reporters navigate the rules and

gather the information they need. The officer's responsibilities range from advising and credentialing reporters to advising judges on press matters. Some courts also appoint an outside media coordinator to oversee camera coverage.

In several states, such as Iowa, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Missouri, the media coordinator is not an employee of the court but a journalist appointed by a judge to coordinate requests from other journalists to cover court proceedings. In this study, we focus on media coordination in Missouri, where media coordinators are responsible for credentialing reporters, overseeing the use and location of media equipment in the courtroom, making all pooling arrangements, and ensuring that the expectations of courtroom decorum are met. Missouri's Court Operating Rule 16 (1995) defines the role of media coordinators, stating: "The judge and all interested members of the media shall work, whenever possible, with and through the appropriate media coordinator regarding all arrangements for media coverage."

What sets media coordinators apart from reporters covering the courts, or judges fulfilling their official responsibilities, is that they play a dual role. They coordinate media coverage and communicate to the court the interests of their fellow journalists, and they help the court regulate press activities. Sometimes, the media coordinators also cover the hearings they are coordinating.

Literature Review

The study of roles is a deeply researched area in sociology, but it is marked by some confusion (Biddle, 1986). Role theory includes a triad of main concepts: "patterned and characteristic social behaviors, parts or identities that are assumed by social participants, and scripts or expectations for behavior that are understood by all and adhered to by performers" (Biddle, 1986: 68). From those concepts emerge numerous conceptualizations of what

constitutes a role, but a point of agreement is that roles are negotiations between (1) an individual's perception of his or her role, and (2) society's expectations of the individual's role (Thoits, 1991; Charng et al., 1988; Biddle, 1986). A role is "a composite of occupational tasks and purposes that is widely recognizable and has a stable and enduring form" (Christians et al., 2009: 119).

Biddle (1986) identified five perspectives in role theory research: functional, structural, organizational, cognitive, and symbolic interactionist. We adopted the symbolic interactionist perspective that conceptualizes roles as "norms, attitudes, contextual demands, negotiation, and the evolving definition of the situation as understood by the actors" (Biddle, 1986: 71). This definition is consistent with the symbolic interactionism theory of human communication, which focuses on meanings and experiences derived from social interactions mediated by socially agreed symbols (Littlejohn, 1992). Thus, in contrast to functional or structural approaches, an interactionist theory focuses on the "individual's experience of conflicting expectations, not simply the existence of structure" (Stryker and Macke, 1978: 71). It grants agency to individuals who must negotiate multiple, usually conflicting, norms and expectations inside and outside the self (see Biddle, 1986; Stryker and Macke, 1978; Hicks, 2008).

Role Strain

Individuals interacting with society do not embrace only one role. Having multiple roles and a limited set of resources (e.g., time in the day) leads to difficulties in complying with some roles. Goode (1960: 485) called this *role strain*, the "difficulty in meeting given role demands." Individuals seek to minimize role strain by choosing whether to enter or leave a role relationship and by engaging in role bargaining or by weighing the price of a role performance (Goode, 1960). Some strategies used to minimize role strain are compartmentalization of responsibilities

and delegation of roles (Goode, 1960). The concept of role strain incorporates two problems: role overload, which occurs when a role's demands exceed time allocations; and role conflict, which occurs when one role requires prioritization over another (Sieber, 1974). These apply to media coordinators who work as journalists because they balance their dual roles within a limited amount of time, and one role might require prioritization over the other.

The concept of role strain has been studied in the context of mothers (e.g. Baruch and Barnett, 1986; Campbell and Moen, 1992; Claesson and Brice, 1989; Lois, 2006) and university researchers (e.g. Boardman and Bozeman, 2007; Evan, 1962). Women have multiple roles of being wives, mothers, and workers, while university researchers need to balance basic and applied research. A survey of single mothers found that role strain was related to working hours (role as a worker) and number of children (role as a mother) (Campbell and Moen, 1992). University researchers experienced role strain arising out of the research they want to do and the research they actually were doing (Evan, 1962).

In a study of mothers homeschooling their children, Lois (2006) found that the coping strategies Goode (1960) outlined influenced the experience of dual roles. Mothers who compartmentalized their roles experienced more burnout (Lois, 2006). However, mothers managed to cope with role strain by using strategies like delegation (assigning some tasks to their husbands) and role integration (using a less-structured approach in raising their children). Notably, a survey of 238 women found that having multiple roles was a prerequisite not for role strain but for wellbeing (Baruch and Barnett, 1986).

Role Accumulation

Sieber (1974) argued that the concept of role strain presupposes that having multiple roles is stressful, failing to consider that it could also be gratifying. Sieber (1974) classified four

types of positive outcomes from having multiple roles, known as *role accumulation*: 1) enjoying role privileges; 2) overall status security; 3) access to resources for status enhancement and role performance; and 4) enrichment of the personality and ego gratification. In many instances, individuals seek role accumulation. For example, the move toward gender equality called for women to receive a full range of role opportunities in a traditionally male-dominated society (Sieber, 1974).

An interview with 18 teacher-mothers found that their dual roles as mothers and teachers were complementary, resulting in a “net gain” because they were able to cope with role strain (Claesson and Brice, 1989). Hicks (2008) also found that prison chaplains mitigated role strain from their religious and correctional roles by engaging in “role fusion.” This concept recognizes that individuals cannot always isolate their roles. “Role fusion is an important mode of adaptation because the compartmentalization, deflection, or abandonment of roles is not always available to individuals as a strategy for dealing with strain” (Hicks, 2008: 416). This is consistent with role accumulation.

These theoretical assumptions clarify the experience of having multiple roles, and yet it remains unclear whether role strain or accumulation occurs when individuals possess multiple roles or whether there are role characteristics that allow or inhibit strain or accumulation. For example, a journalistic role is bounded by normative expectations that privilege autonomy. A journalist playing another role might experience that role based on normative expectations of his journalistic role, resulting in conflict.

Theoretical Framework

Studies have compartmentalized individuals with multiple roles as experiencing either role strain or accumulation, even if they recognize that a multitude of factors, some situational,

influence those experiences. But we can locate role strain and accumulation on a continuum of *role valence*: the former is a negative experience, and the latter is a positive experience. How individuals respond to their experience requires a parallel conceptualization. Goode (1960) talked about compartmentalization as a response strategy to cope with role strain. This is similar to role segmentation, as opposed to role integration (Ashforth et al., 2000). Segmentation occurs when there are huge differences between roles, meaning the roles are “mutually exclusive and perhaps even antithetical,” while integration occurs when there are no differences (Ashforth et al., 2000: 477). While many studies classify individuals into one or the other, segmentation and integration are located on a continuum; complete segmentation or integration is rare (Ashforth et al., 2000). But what determines whether roles are segmented or integrated?

In summary, role theory conceptualizes role identities as fluid and susceptible not only to norms but also to personal and social expectations. When individuals embrace multiple roles, their experiences vary—from pleasant to problematic and from clearly demarcated roles to fused roles. What we propose is a move away from dichotomizing the experience of multiple roles and toward viewing the experience on a continuum that depends on situational factors (see Figure 1).

Journalistic Role Conceptions

It is not surprising that the study of roles is an important area in journalism research. Social roles are considered an important dimension in defining the concept of a journalist (Peters and Tandoc, 2013). Efforts to account for influences on news also take into account the various role conceptions of journalists that are assumed to influence their outputs (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; Shoemaker and Vos, 2009). For instance, Donsbach (2008: 2605) argued that research on journalistic role conceptions “assumes that the way journalists understand their role will

influence considerably the way they interact with sources and make decisions about news selection and presentation.”

What makes this salient among journalists is how role conception might not translate to the corresponding role enactment, because news content goes through numerous channels before publication (Tandoc et al., 2012). This is the basis of gatekeeping theory: events transform into bits of information that must pass through numerous gates. Gatekeepers decide whether bits of information will make it to the next gate, until they become news items and get published (Shoemaker and Vos, 2009). A multitude of factors—at individual, routine, organizational, socio-institutional, and social-system levels—influence those gates and gatekeepers. Though many studies have explored role conceptions of journalists (e.g. Hanitzsch, 2009; Hanitzsch, 2011; Johnstone et al., 1976; Weaver et al., 2007; Weaver and Wilhoit, 1986; Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996; Tandoc and Takahashi, 2013), role enactment is an underexplored area (e.g. Tandoc et al., 2012; Mellado and Van Dalen, 2013).

Initial work on journalistic role conceptions discussed a dichotomy of roles, in effect implying that journalists conceive of just one role. Janowitz (1975) talked about the *gatekeeper* role, which emphasizes objectivity by separating facts from opinions, and the *advocate role*, which requires journalists to “participate” in the news-production process as an advocate for the powerless. This is similar to Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman’s (1976) dichotomy of a *neutral* or *participant* journalist. The most-cited typology of journalistic role conceptions is that of Weaver and Wilhoit (1986, 1996). They identified four journalistic roles: disseminator, interpretive, adversarial, and mobilizer. The *disseminator* role is similar to the neutral journalist; the *interpretive* role refers to providing analysis and interpretation; the *adversarial* role refers to

being adversaries of government and business; and the *mobilizer* role values the opinions of ordinary citizens (Weaver et al., 2007).

Later work on journalistic roles recognized that even within the journalistic context, journalists can have multiple roles (Weaver et al., 2007; Weaver and Wilhoit, 1986; Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996) and that these multiple roles can coexist or conflict with one another (Christians et al., 2009; Glasser, 1992; Tandoc and Takahashi, 2013). For example, Christians and colleagues (2009) defined what they called a “collaborative role” of the news media that referred to collaboration between media and the state, something that might be viewed as inconsistent with a monitorial or radical role. However, the collaborative role becomes unavoidable under unusual circumstances, such as terrorism and war (Christians et al., 2009). Thus, the collaborative role can coexist with a monitorial role. But how do journalists manage multiple journalistic roles? It is possible that journalistic roles exist in a hierarchy. For instance, the disseminator role could be conceived as a gateway that leads to other journalistic roles. But role theory also suggests that people have multiple roles in multiple fields (Goode, 1960; Sieber, 1974). Thus, journalists have roles outside their organizational context, because they juggle their journalistic role conceptions with their roles as family members, citizens, volunteers, and so on. In the Missouri courts, media coordinators have dual occupational roles as journalists and coordinators.

Media Coordinators and their Dual Roles

Media coordinators in Missouri are accountable to their newsrooms and to the courts. In their dual roles, the coordinators could be on a continuum of defining their experience as positive or negative, reporting either role strain or accumulation. Because roles are understood as both a

conception and an enactment (Tandoc et al., 2012), media coordinators enact their dual roles in particular ways. For these reasons, we ask the following research questions:

RQ1. How do media coordinators conceive of their roles?

RQ2. How do media coordinators experience their dual roles?

RQ3. How do media coordinators enact their dual roles?

Method

We are journalism researchers exploring a phenomenon in the field. But we are also journalists, interacting with people whose work is familiar to us. Therefore, we began this research by reflecting on our own roles, backgrounds, and assumptions—a process known as *reflexivity* (Tracy, 2013; Brennen, 2013; Lindlof and Taylor, 2010). This refers to “the self-aware analysis of the dynamics between the researcher and participants, the critical capacity to make explicit the position assumed by the observer in the field, and the way in which the researcher’s positioning impacts on the research process” (Gobo, 2011: 22). This process enabled us to be careful not to impose our normative beliefs on how we interpreted our data from the methods we used.

Interviews

We conducted *respondent interviews* (Lindlof and Taylor, 2010) with nine media coordinators and five reporters who interact regularly with media coordinators. Seven of the interviews were conducted in person, while the rest were by phone (the media coordinators are based all around Missouri). The average interview lasted 45 minutes. Journalists are a peculiar group for interviews, because they are accustomed to interviewing rather than being interviewed. Committing them to a long interview was a challenge, too, because of the deadline-oriented nature of their work. Many studies based on interviews with journalists have attested to such

challenges (Attfield and Dowell, 2003; Besley and Roberts, 2009; Plesner, 2011). Our interviewees are identified by pseudonyms for the purpose of anonymity. We used criterion sampling (Creswell, 2007) to choose our participants. We excluded media coordinators who are not reporters, and we excluded reporters who have not interacted with media coordinators. We relied on a list of 43 media coordinators available on the Supreme Court of Missouri's website.

A media coordinator typically serves an entire circuit, but it is also possible for a coordinator to serve a single court, a portion of a circuit, or more than one circuit. Our sample included each type of coordinator. Rule 16 recommends that each coordinator designate one or more alternates to serve in the event the coordinator is not available. We did not interview alternates—we focused on the primary coordinators. We employed semi-structured interviews in which the interview guide contains standardized questions but the interviewer is free to deviate and ask follow-up questions (e.g. Plooy, 2004). Though we were limited by the number of people who agreed to participate in our study, our 14 interviews enabled us to achieve theoretical saturation, with the themes we discussed in the following sections sufficiently grounded in our data (Tracy, 2013; Lindlof and Taylor, 2010).

Observation

We observed two court proceedings where a media coordinator interacted with reporters. In both instances, we started our observations an hour before the hearing so we could observe the coordinator enact his role as he gathered with journalists outside the court. We also observed their interactions inside the court—before, during, and after the proceedings.

Throughout our fieldwork, we adopted the “observer as participant” stance (Gold, 1958). As we shadowed our participants, we made our roles as researchers explicit to them. They knew we were observing. Still, we developed a good rapport with most of our participants. One of

them gave us a tour of his company's building and offered to help us arrange an interview with an elusive target participant. Another invited us to his office to provide copies of forms he uses to coordinate court coverage. However, the limited occasions when we could observe them in action—our fieldwork was at the mercy of the courts' schedule—also limited our observations. From our jottings and raw notes, we wrote formal field notes which we used in our analysis.

Analysis

We employed the constant comparative approach, a common analytical strategy in grounded theory (Glaser, 1965; Corbin and Strauss, 1990). Qualitative scholars have adapted the analytical strategy even for studies not based on grounded theory. Tracy (2013: 202) defined the constant comparative approach as “a method of analysis used to compare data applicable to each code and to modify code definitions so as to fit new data.” The advantage of the constant comparative approach is its disciplined and systematic approach to analyzing data (Glaser, 1965; Lindlof and Taylor, 2010). First, we conducted primary-cycle coding, working individually to code the data line by line. This is the process of open-coding (Saldaña, 2009; Tracy, 2013). Second, we proceeded to secondary-cycle coding, again working individually, to categorize the first-level codes that emerged. This is the process of axial coding, and in this stage we were guided by sensitizing concepts based on our theoretical framework (Saldaña, 2009; Tracy, 2013). Third, we discussed the axial codes that emerged from our individual analyses to develop the themes, guided by our research questions. We discuss these themes in the following section.

Role Conceptions

We begin by exploring how media coordinators conceived of their roles. On the surface, they described their roles using similar phrases: “go-betweens,” “facilitators,” and “liaisons.” Being a media coordinator is unpaid work. In most cases, the journalists are asked by the courts

to volunteer for the job or they are volunteered by their news organizations. From the responses, two role conceptions emerged: being advocates for journalists and being officers of the court. Since we are integrating responses from both media coordinators and the journalists they work with, we identify journalists by referring to them, for example, as a TV reporter. Otherwise, the names refer to the media coordinators.

Advocates for Journalists

Some coordinators see themselves as advocates for media access to courts. They recognize the journalistic value of cameras in the courtroom. Appointing journalists to serve as media coordinators can safeguard that access. The role is to ensure that media access to courtrooms is maintained by keeping the system of access orderly and efficient. When the court leaves it to the coordinators to decide who gets into the courtroom, the coordinators celebrate this as a function of autonomy. An important structure that explains this role conception is the other role that coordinators play: They are journalists interested in access to courtrooms. The journalists who interact with the coordinators perceive this connection, too. They recognize that the coordinators understand media routines, so working together can save the journalists time and resources. TV reporter Scott Jones recalled a time when a few broadcasters recorded stand-up shots outside the court building, inadvertently capturing recording a number of jurors as they exited the building. The coordinator understood that broadcasters needed to shoot their stand-ups but also appreciated that the jury needed to be walked out of the building without being recorded. So the coordinator developed a compromise, letting the broadcasters do their stand-ups on the west side of the courthouse as the jurors exited from the east side.

Officers of the Court

Media coordinators also see their role as working for the court, facilitating requests for news coverage so judges need not bother themselves with such requests. Some coordinators even considered themselves officers of the court. As such, they would be bound by the rules of the court. David Moore said: “I’m an officer of the court, just like an attorney, although I am not an attorney. Still, it’s the judge’s courtroom, and the judge and the court marshals tell you what to do.” Journalists also recognize this degree of authority exercised by the coordinators. TV reporter Drew Ford said the coordinators tutor journalists in the rules, explaining them by email and in person. On one occasion, Ford said the coordinator spoke to a group of journalists before a proceeding began, and in that meeting the coordinator acted as part educator, part enforcer:

We were all sitting in the jury box, where they put us for the motion hearings, and [the media coordinator] stood in front of us and said, “You shouldn’t have anything on you, but if you do, leave.” He kind of went over the rules again. He was like, “If anyone has problem with this, well, you got to leave.”

Role Experiences

Those dual role conceptions (advocates for journalists and officers of the court) are seldom mutually exclusive. This leads to both positive and negative experiences (role strain and role accumulation) as foreshadowed by the theoretical framework we proposed. We first address the positive experiences.

Positive Experiences

Relationships. The media coordinators experienced positive relationships in general, although they sounded more confident about their interactions with court officials than with journalists. For example, Mark Johnson said:

I, through this position, have gotten to know judges on a first-name basis. We are not friends, we are not moving in the same social circles, anything like that, but I have gotten to know these judges. I think that most of them trust me as a guy who has integrity and a guy who will make decisions that not everybody will agree with but generally are the fairest decisions that could be made.

The coordinators were not as explicit when asked to describe their relationships with fellow journalists. Lisa Harris described her relationship with journalists as “neutral.” Kevin Adams said journalists had to be reminded of the rules, a practice he described as the hardest part of his job. Michael Walker thought he had good relationships with fellow journalists: “I think my relationship has been very good. They (journalists) may tell you something different, but I think mine has been very good.”

Role benefits. The media coordinators all recognized the benefits that come with being a media coordinator: to themselves, to their organizations, to the journalism industry, and to the court. These benefits influence how they view their roles. A few coordinators saw their role as educational, because it allows them to learn more about the judicial system. Mark said being a coordinator has benefitted him in his role as a newspaper editor:

I think just being connected to the courts to a certain extent, you do become more knowledgeable as to how they operate, some of the nuts and bolts of the proceedings that go on. In addition, you become familiar with judges who have divergent personalities and various demeanors...If you know a judge is a stickler for the letter of the law, and for following procedures to the nth degree, then you can advise your reporter....

A few of the coordinators acknowledged the benefit to their organizations. Linda Taylor said that when she was asked to be a coordinator, she cleared it first with the editors at her news outlet. Her editors approved the request in part because they considered the position beneficial to the organization and to the industry. For David, his editors volunteered him for the position because of the benefits they all acknowledged:

Since no one is paying you to do this, and it sometimes interferes with your real job, why are you doing this? And we’ve decided in the long run, being media coordinator helps keep the newspaper’s relationship with the court on a good, friendly, cooperative basis. So there’s so much in it that winds up being PR between the paper and the courts.

There is also the benefit to the industry, insofar as the media coordinators ensure access to courtrooms. Finally, for a few coordinators, designating a journalist as a coordinator rather than a salaried court employee is advantageous for the court, which needs to educate people about reporting procedures and routines. Lisa said:

I understand what another reporter needs, so I can ask certain questions to the judge or I can help facilitate the judge's request ... I just think it makes it easier because I have a better understanding of what other journalists are looking for as opposed to a court employee who may only know about what they read in the paper or what they see on TV, as far as how a local news operation works.

Power. The media coordinators all put themselves in the ambit of the court's power. The basic reason the coordinator position exists is to relieve the court of the responsibility to handle media requests. This takes the court off the front lines of mediating access, and some coordinators, in turn, feel a sense of power. Similarly, because they are not salaried employees of the court, some coordinators feel that they have power over the court. David said:

There is some benefit to my being independent. I don't go into the courthouse to talk to the judges as an employee of the courthouse over whom they have control. The only control they have over me is to say yes or no, or we don't want you to do the job anymore.

Media coordinators also experience power over fellow journalists, although the coordinators did not emphasize that power, and some were clear about the limits of their responsibilities. For example, David said even though he has worked for print, radio, and television, he is not technologically savvy. He absolves himself of any responsibility to fix equipment for journalists in the courtroom. Additionally, the coordinator position allows the coordinators to skip one of the gatekeeping layers that other journalists must pass through. Kevin said:

When I see the docket come out, I take a look and make a decision about what we're going to cover, and then I can send a message to (the court) directly, instead of going

through a media coordinator, instead of going through a coordinator like me. I am the coordinator, myself. Everyone else has to go through me, through an extra layer.

Power manifests in the most trivial of things, too. As we were arranging a field observation with Scott, a TV reporter, he sent us emails from the coordinator of that circuit. The emails outlined various rules, including a prohibition on cellphones inside the court building. Scott repeated that admonition in emails to us. During the court hearing, we observed that all the journalists complied with the cellphone rule. In contrast, the coordinator brought his cellphone inside the building. He left it in the judge's chambers and used it inside the courtroom after the proceeding ended. He walked freely throughout the building, outside the metal detectors where journalists and others had to pass through.

But not all experiences of media coordinators are positive. In the next section, we talk about negative experiences that move toward role strain.

Negative Experiences

Conflict between stability and flexibility. Court Operating Rule 16 governs camera use in Missouri courts. It also sets forth the responsibilities of media coordinators, who adhere to the rules as a way to maintain stability, a principle undergirding the judicial system. Courts, for example, are bound by previous decisions. The principle of stability is implicated in the invocation of court rules that govern the coordinator's functions. It is also present in the selection of media coordinators. The court appoints journalists who have stable jobs and have been living in the community for a long time, because constant turnover would require the court constantly to train new coordinators. The coordinators themselves also value stability. Indeed, they may disagree with certain rules but always defer to them.

Still, the coordinators have sought flexibility in the rules in response to changing technologies. An example is the use of Twitter in courtrooms. As a media coordinator, Ronald

Thomas believes people should be allowed to live-tweet court proceedings because it is not disallowed by Rule 16. So far, however, the judges believe Rule 16 must be rewritten before they can allow it. Ronald's recourse is to advocate for the inclusion of Twitter use in the ongoing attempts to revise Rule 16. This represents a desire for flexibility against the backdrop of the stability principle.

Conflicting interests. Media coordinators experience conflicting interests. They serve the interests of journalism by protecting and lobbying for access. But they also serve the interests of the court by enforcing the rules and policing members of the media. This experience is salient for the experienced coordinators, those who have served for a long period of time and have coordinated numerous court proceedings. Those aspects of their experience—length of service and frequency of performing the role—influence how they experienced conflicting interests by breeding familiarity and intimate knowledge of their roles.

An example that illustrates these conflicting interests was an incident involving a student-journalist who took pictures of the jury, in violation of the rules. The judge ordered her to come to the bench, threw her out of the courtroom, and wanted to issue an arrest warrant against her. The judge called Ronald, asking what punishment should be given to the student-journalist who was not aware of the rules. Ronald said:

I was torn at that point between being frustrated because the student-journalist put all our access in danger, you know, and she was doing it for a grade, and we were doing it every day for our public ... But then, you know, the journalists said, "Well, she was acting on instinct; she was a journalist." I can't be too critical about that.

Conflicting demands. Aside from conflicting interests arising from their dual roles, media coordinators also experience conflicting demands. This was salient for the coordinators who had to cover the same court proceedings they coordinated. David was unable to write stories once when he was coordinating a proceeding, and his newspaper had to use wire stories about it,

even though David was in the courtroom. David did not blame his coordinator position. Instead, he blamed the demands of his role as a journalist, because other big events were unfolding on his beat covering the legislature:

It wasn't the media coordinator job that got in the way. It was my real job as a reporter that got in the way, and reporters have to deal with that all the time. Not just court stuff, but there may be three hearings for the legislature going on at the same time that I'm trying to cover.

There are other coordinators who say they get to play their roles at separate times. Kevin, a coordinator and radio reporter, said one role ends when the other begins. Playing two roles is not difficult for him, he said:

As a radio person, I just go in and plug my recorder into the box to get the audio feed, and the coordinator's work is pretty much done before the hearing begins. I'm the one who decides who's going to be the pool, and all of the other stuff, and once I make those decisions and I've made it to the courtroom, I'm pretty much done.

The experiences of conflicting demands among media coordinators can be explained by the nature of their role as journalists. First, the coordinators usually need to ensure that everyone else is set up before setting up their own equipment to cover the proceeding. Second, most of the veteran coordinators are from newspapers, and their distance from the broadcast industry can minimize any perceived bias in their pool-camera selections. Ronald, a newspaper editor, believes the court considered that before offering him the position:

Television uses Rule 16 and uses the ability to have cameras in the courtroom more than anybody. To have a TV person holding the position was causing a little friction among the broadcasters. To put it in the newspaper guy's hands, I think, was a way to get away from that friction and create the appearance of less bias.

Role Enactment

The coordinators' enactment of their roles can be understood by considering how they resolve the conflicts they experience. Their conflict-resolution strategies include role segmentation, reliance on the rules, and exercising power. The processes themselves do not vary

among the coordinators, but how the processes are enacted does. For example, role segmentation might lead one coordinator to prioritize her journalistic role and another to prioritize his coordinator role.

Role segmentation. Though media coordinators conceive of two roles embedded in their role as coordinators, and they maintain their roles as journalists, they navigate their coordinator role distinctly from their journalist role. Linda separated her roles in her responses. She would start by saying “as a media coordinator” when referring to her role as coordinator, and then “as a journalist” when referring to changes that should be made to the rules. Chris Robinson made the same distinction:

As a media coordinator, I am filing a request for cameras in the courtroom and making the arrangements. That’s not journalism. That’s an administrative function, almost a secretarial function. As a journalist, I am covering. I am making decisions about what’s newsworthy, about what to put on our station, or what to put on our website.

Segmentation for some coordinators, particularly those who assumed the role recently, leads to the perception of an absence of conflict, because they prioritize one role over the other.

For example, Nancy Clark said:

I am more an advocate for the media than for the courts. We are all trying to help our own interest and, of course, the court officials are trying to do what’s best for the court. I am in a position of trying to argue the case for the media, so I don’t see any conflict there. If it comes down to that, my side is for the journalist.

Segmentation also leads to seeing the two roles as contradictory. For example, Mark considers himself an officer of the court. When his roles and the interests they serve compete, he prioritizes his coordinator role over his journalistic role, to the point that he avoids editing news articles about court proceedings that he coordinates:

I have been appointed and approved by [the court], and therefore I have a standard of objectivity, a standard of fairness that I need to adhere to ... If there is a court case that the media is keenly interested in, I turn our newspaper coverage over to my subordinate

editors and allow them to work the story, to edit the copy, so I don't have any involvement in the story from a journalistic standpoint.

Reliance on rules. When talking about camera access to courtrooms, the coordinators all adopt the position of an advocate for journalists. They also stand to benefit from access to courtrooms. But some discussed the need to balance journalistic interests with those of the court (e.g., to do justice, to protect the defendant's rights, to ensure the sanctity of the process). When journalistic and court interests compete, the coordinators defer to the rules that govern their role as coordinators. And they defer to the judge. Chris said:

If we ask for cameras in the courtroom, we obviously think it's newsworthy and that it's something we should be allowed to cover, but the judges make a decision about the interests of justice. And there is sometimes conflict, but I am inclined to agree with the judges who are looking out for the best interest of that court case and that defendant.

Discussion

As journalists, media coordinators have their own routines to follow and articles to write or edit. As coordinators, journalists need to quarterback the news coverage of court proceedings and maintain communication with the parties involved—lawyers, judges, and journalists. Having dual roles is an experience of conflict. What is different, however, is how the coordinators perceive and resolve the experience of multiple responsibilities.

Most of the coordinators, despite some role conflict, experienced more role accumulation than strain. They saw benefits in their dual roles, insofar as the roles complement each other, and having dual roles benefits their organizations, the journalism industry, and the court. This is consistent with what Sieber (1974) outlined as the four positive outcomes of role accumulation. First, having multiple roles allows for the enjoyment of role privileges. This could be as simple as not going through security when entering the courtroom. Second, having multiple roles provides a sense of status security, because one role can serve as a buffer for the other. The

journalistic role, in particular, can provide coordinators with a sense of security when dealing with the court. Third, having multiple roles provides access to resources for status enhancement. This includes being around powerful people. For media coordinators, this might take the form of developing relationships with judges. Fourth, having multiple roles can lead to personality enrichment and ego gratification. Some coordinators described the job as educational, offering them intimate knowledge of how a powerful institution works.

This does not mean media coordinators did not experience role strain. But we believe the experience of dual roles cannot be compartmentalized into either role strain or role accumulation. The experience of dual roles lies on a continuum from strain to accumulation, and because experience is fluid, depending on the changing demands and nature of each role, where one lies on the continuum can change. First, the experience depends on the nature of each role. For some, coordinating is not demanding, especially in courts where high-profile cases are rare. This allows them to prioritize their role as journalists. For coordinators who work on high-profile cases, it is different. Some prioritize their role as coordinators, a role memorialized in a rule and backed by the institutional authority of a court. Second, the longer a coordinator serves, the more familiar she is with the demands of the role. That means the coordinator will experience less internal conflict than one who recently assumed the role. Third, it is possible that individual differences influence the experience of managing multiple responsibilities arising out of multiple roles (e.g., the propensity to multi-task), an issue future studies should explore. These reinforce our theoretical argument that research on multiple roles should treat the experience of dual roles not as a dichotomy but as a continuum that depends on situational and personal factors.

A way to cope with role conflict is through role integration (Goode, 1960; Lois, 2006). But all media coordinators considered their dual roles to be segmented. What we found is that

role integration could be impeded by the norms that govern one of the roles (e.g., the journalistic one). The journalistic norm of autonomy could explain why so many coordinators navigated their dual roles in a segmented way. They have an inherent need to protect their journalistic role from their coordinator role. The coordinators were journalists before they were coordinators: Being a journalist was a prerequisite to their selection as media coordinators. Therefore, the coordinators apply the norms associated with journalism to their navigation of their roles as coordinators, as we saw in their references to the value of autonomy, even when discussing their role as media coordinators (e.g., autonomy from the court). The roles are segmented, but they inform each other, with the flow moving from journalism to coordination, rarely vice-versa. This has implications for the way we understand how journalists experience and enact their other social roles and how they balance them with their journalistic roles. For example, understanding how journalists perform their work during election coverage can benefit from understanding how journalistic roles interact with the role of being a citizen expected to participate in political life.

Finally, our results expand our understanding of the collaborative role of the news media. Christians and colleagues (2009) have argued that collaboration between the media and the state is sometimes the only option during unusual circumstances. But the media coordination function provides an example of a collaborative role coexisting with a monitorial role on a routine basis, with journalists designated as media coordinators collaborating with the court. This study can offer a fresh look at the collaborative role not as an anti-thesis to the journalistic norm of editorial autonomy but as a mechanism for journalists to carry out their monitorial role on the court. An informed understanding of journalists and their actions takes into account that journalists constantly and simultaneously balance multiple social and occupational roles and that

the balancing act depends, to a large extent, on how they conceive of and prioritize their journalistic roles.

A limitation of our analysis is our focus on dual roles, when role theory assumes a multiplicity of roles. However, we believe our focus on two seemingly contradictory roles presented an otherwise taken-for-granted analysis of situational and contextual factors that influence the experience of dual roles. A journalist's routine is usually flexible. A media coordinator's routine is at the court's mercy and governed by stable, inflexible rules. The experience of dual roles as a media coordinator is a fragile negotiation between the two.

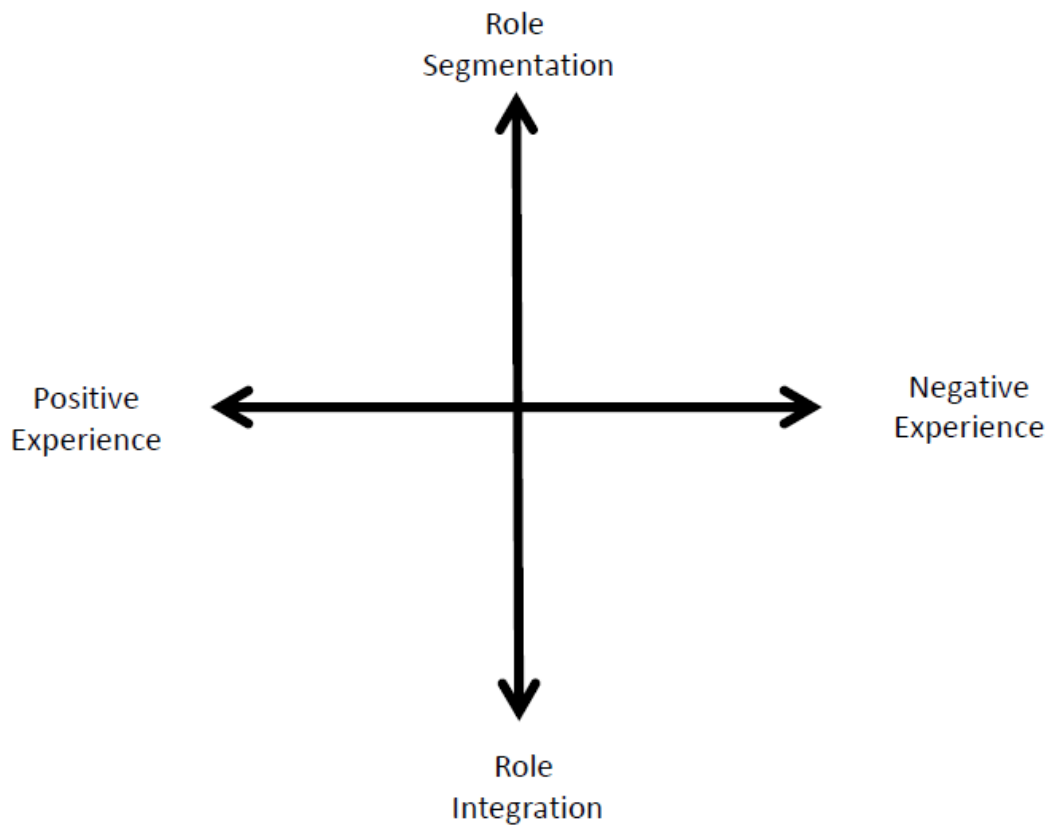
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Figure 1

Typology of Multiple Role Experience and Navigation



Note. We cross multiple-roles experience (from positive to negative) with multiple-roles navigation (from segmentation to integration).

Author Biographies

Edson C. Tandoc, Jr., is a Filipino Fulbright Scholar and a Ph.D. in Journalism candidate at the University of Missouri School of Journalism. His research focuses on the sociology of message construction. He has conducted studies on the construction of news and social media messages. His studies about influences on journalists have focused on the impact of journalistic roles and audience feedback on the various stages of the news gatekeeping process. His research has appeared in the following journals: *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking*; *Asian Journal of Communication*; *Journal of Information, Technology and Politics*; *Social Indicators Research*; *Howard Journal of Communications*, *Journalism Practice*, and *Journalism*.

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