More than a Cliché? Futureproofing Meaningful Notions of Professionalism in Journalism Teaching

Ato Erzan-Essien
University of Chester, UK

Abstract

Despite the existential challenge posed by a notion of professionalism within journalism both individually and organisationally, for many practitioners, it has become synonymous with good or even 'ethical' journalism practice. This has led to the contention that 'professionalism' is now an inherent component of a broader understanding of what constitutes 'quality' journalism. And although a paradigm of professionalism such as that alluded to in the Leveson Report might be effective within real world journalism practice, a pilot study demonstrates that when it comes to journalism teaching, identifying the contexts in which such a notion is understood appears to be problematic.

Introduction

Journalism professionalism has long been identified as integral to the broader concept of the culture of journalism itself - one which Hanitschz defines as ideas and practices used by journalists to give legitimacy and meaning to their work and role in society (2007). As a consequence, it echoes the broader historical context of the idea of professionalism itself being used to perpetuate a perceived entitlement and control of access to a special status (Larson, 1977), a level of knowledge, a commitment to public service, standards of behaviour and symbols of achievement (Barber, 1965, cited in Ahern, 1971). Ultimately however, the concept of professionalism can be understood as a social construct (Holroyd, 2000) which is a continually-changing process determined by contexts and agendas (Helsby, 1999, cited in Evans, 2008).

In an attempt to pivot a notion of journalistic professionalism around these concepts, Singer (2003) identifies three fundamental characteristics or specifically, dimensions of a profession a journalism practitioner might reflect, with the aim of furthering an understanding of what a journalist is and does.

The first of these characteristics is the cognitive, through which professionals seek to establish control over expertise as well as entry into their field (Stark, 1985, cited in Singer, 2003). The subsequent standardized body of knowledge equips aspiring professionals with the sense of superiority over the so-called ordinary person and therefore legitimises the social division of labour on which their continuing status depends (Larson, 1977: 46-47).

The second characteristic is the normative, that can be used to justify the profession's autonomy (Singer, 2003) and in turn, is typically expressed through self-regulation, because, so the argument goes, only professionals are qualified to assess and control their own ability to provide it - through the prescription of responsibilities of those inside the occupational group to those outside it (MacIver, 1966). This would usually be reinforced through codes of conduct, which, in the context

of the UK newspaper industry for example, would be the Editor's Code – this in turn provides the framework for ethics codes used by (currently) two print industry regulatory bodies – the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) and IMPRESS.

The final characteristic is the evaluative – where the nature of the professional service is defined by the professional community itself through the setting of its own standards of adequate practice. This is underpinned by an ideology that justifies such an approach based on the belief that it best serves the public interest (Daniels, 1973). Furthermore, it places greater emphasis on status than financial incentives which, as a consequence, reinforces its claim that self-regulation derives from an expressed commitment to public service (Barber, 1965). However, as Singer is keen to stress, no profession meets these characteristics fully.

Journalistic Professionalism and Normative Theory

This paper argues that of the three characteristics of journalistic professionalism outlined above, the most complete claim journalism has to professional status is to be found in the normative characteristic.

However, it is important to emphasise that the term 'normative' has two distinct but related meanings in this context. The first meaning refers to the sociological characteristic of journalistic professionalism. The second, is understood and articulated in the context of normative theory and relates to journalistic practice.

Therefore, what is taken as the starting point for professional practice - linking both meanings of 'normative', are the principles of acceptable media behaviour; in other words, the normative issues about what should be done and the ideal way for a media system to be structured and operated – that is, not *as it is* but *how* it should be (Baran & Davis, 2009).

McQuail (2010) takes a broadly similar approach to defining the role of ethics in any given construct of journalistic professionalism, asserting that it refers to the ideas of rights and responsibilities that underlie expectations of benefit from the media to individuals and society, that is, "…how the media ought or are expected to be organized and to behave in the wider public interest and for the good of society as a whole" (p. 162).

There is a link here to what Singer terms the 'journalistic theory of democracy' – the idea that a primary role of journalism is to provide information to citizens in order for them to take more effective participation in democratic processes (Singer, 2003). This approach is further reflected in the normative paradigm espoused by Hanitschz (2011) which is associated with a detached watchdog role and the dissemination of populist and political information. However, although it could be acknowledged that there is some merit in adopting a perspective that journalists have sought to specify norms of conduct, standards of practice and ethical guidelines as a way of meeting what is perceived to be democratic obligations (2003), it fails to account for the political and commercial realities of operating in an environment that has become increasingly dominated by audience-driven agendas, continually and further undermining the role of the journalist as gatekeeper – which in itself is a permutation of the idea of the need for internal controls on professional (Singer, 2003) or, in this context, perceived normative, practice.

Furthermore, the transformation of online journalism into an ever-increasing variety of manifestations over the past 20 years has also had an impact - to the effect that one of the key distinctions made between online and so-called traditional news media can be found in perceived standards of ethical behaviour. The differences are further compounded by those who argue against any moves to simply transplant normative (ethical) practice from the traditional sphere to online platforms, even if is seen as a good starting point for revisiting the fundamentals (Black, 1998: 16), because the latter is fundamentally different enough from the former for a compelling argument to be made for the introduction of bespoke guidelines (Deuze and Yeshua, 2001).

This also has the effect of justifying subversion of the journalistic ideals of individual practitioners to those of the news organizations they work for (Merrill, 1974; Soloski, 1989: 207; Birkhead 1986). And in the context of journalism education, this perspective is reinforced in Nel's (2010) study which suggests a narrow definition of those attitudes and practices closely linked to organisational expectations of what is professional.

But while the case for maintaining core journalism competencies at the centre of journalism education remains compelling (Deuze, 2007; Baines and Kennedy, 2010), on its own it is insufficient and relevant programmes need to offer greater flexibility to enable students not only to adapt and specialise (Nel, 2010) but also to develop greater efficacy in enhancing key transferrable skills. These would then enable emerging practitioners to thrive in an environment that demands competencies that go beyond the traditional skillsets inherited from their educators (2010). Overholser (2010) takes this further by replacing the concept of journalism with the idea of 'information in the public interest' to enable practitioners and educators to continue to be effective participants within conversations around the changing *modus operandi* impacting on an industry where the audience are both news-shapers as well as news-consumers. Taking this approach into the sphere of journalism education, it is argued, would help to ensure journalism's long-term survival.

Contemporary Normative Theory and Journalistic Professionalism

The concept of a normative theory for the media emerged out of an early 20th century attempt to make it more 'professional' through improvements to its respectability and credibility. This typically committed journalists to serve the public as effectively as possible and "uphold standards of professional practice" (Baran & Davis, 2009, p. 109).

Taking its cue from this point, normative theory would therefore attempt to provide answers to broader questions about the role of media in a given society and address issues concerning its day-to-day operation, such as the type of moral and ethical standards that should guide media professionals (Barran & Davis, 2009).

However, it would also be fair to say that, insofar as the UK context is concerned, because of the commercial realities of the environments within which most ('mainstream') journalism continues to be practised, in addition to the fact that a significant number of ethical codes are voluntary (the OfCom code that governs broadcast media being the exception), a failure to adhere to them would not necessarily lead to a loss of professional status (Black, Steele and Barney, 1999). It is also the case that thanks to relatively recent developments in English law in relation to the media, such as the Defamation Act 2013, as well as precedents being continually established through Privacy case

law, it has been indicated journalism ethical codes would be taken into consideration in judicial decisions regarding the publication of material perceived to be in the public interest (Banks & Hanna, 2018; Quinn, 2015).

Ultimately, the point is that the broadly accepted obligations journalists have requiring them to serve citizens can become conflated with the requirement to serve customers. This in turn bolsters the criticism of ethics codes ignoring the influence and, indeed, even power that commercially-driven corporate organisations have to drive journalistic practice and decision-making. Paradoxically, this leads to less concern about public service and greater focus on maximizing profits and satisfying shareholders (McManus, 1994, cited in Aldridge and Evetts, 2003).

And as a consequence, a further paradox is highlighted concerning an over-emphasis on the normative characteristic of journalistic professionalism having the potential to hinder the construction of ethical rules balancing the theoretical ideals and realities of the news production process because "an approach that adds practice to principle should be better prepared to offer rich media ethics scholarship and maintain real world relevance" (Joseph & Boczkowski, 2012).

In light of this, it is acknowledged that more specific types of questions might be required. These would include whether the media should do more than distribute content only driven by commercial considerations; for instance, does the media have an essential public service role that transcends the need to make a profit; should the media be involved in addressing social issues; is the media's watchdog role necessary or advisable? And what should be expected of the media during times of crisis? (Baran and Davis, 2009).

Alternatively, explanatory concerns could be raised about why action might diverge from normative expectations.

Theoretical framework: Social Responsibility Theory

The contemporary understanding of the normative paradigm is derived from Seibert et al (1956) who identified four models: The first two are the libertarian or free press model (which focuses on what the audience wants rather than what it needs) and the social responsibility model (which reflects the libertarian 'free market' principles but stresses the media's duty to promote democracy, truth and social justice). A combination of these two models are regarded as characteristic of Western liberal democracies. Then there is the authoritarian model – the idea that media must and should be subordinate to government and state control to maintain order (1956) and the communist – which is similar to the former but essentially based around the principle that the media should serve the interests of the masses - the working class.

These paradigms are further reflected on in the 'four professional milieus' identified in Hanitzsch's (2011, also cited in Ornerbring, 2016) study of journalists' values and notions of their societal role which are apparent across national and organizational parameters and articulated in an arena termed 'the journalistic field' (2011). This is grounded in the work of Bourdieu (2005) who characterized the structure of the journalistic field as "a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field… [containing] …people who dominate and others who are dominated" [Bourdieu, 1998, p.40]).

Hanitzsch utilizes this theory to devise a framework for the analysis of journalism as an arena to compete for the power to impose the dominant vision of the field (2011).

As a concept, Social Responsibility theory identifies journalistic standards that its proponents argue the media should aspire to uphold, including obligations to society and that ownership of it should be a public trust; it should be truthful, accurate and fair, objective and relevant; it should be free but self-regulating and follow agreed codes of ethics and professional conduct. It also asserts that there is a public interest in government intervention under some circumstances (McQuail, 2010, p. 171).

The origin of this approach appears to emanate from an ontological basis for freedom and responsibility put forward by William Hocking, one of the members of the (Hutchings) Commission on Freedom of the Press (in the United States): "Inseparable from the right of the press to be free has been the right of the people to have a free press. But the public interest has advanced beyond that point: it is now the right of the people to have an adequate press" (Hocking, 1947, cited in McQuail, 2010, p. 171).

Hocking's approach derived from a concept of positive freedom that diverged from classical liberalism which perpetuated a negative conception of freedom he saw as bankrupt and equated with an absence of restraint (Christians & Fackler, 2014). Positive freedom could therefore be considered "a mature state of decision making, free both from internal constraint such as fear and ignorance and from external constraints" (p. 334), such as government regulation.

Ultimately however, Hocking holds the state responsible for ensuring the liberty of its institutions - with education being the primary means of achieving this. However, he stressed that such an approach "must aid the development of a worldview and moral base" (p.335).

This remained a framework adapted more readily and, to a limited extent, more effectively in Western Europe and precipitated commissions and enquiries into the press and its practices in subsequent years in some countries – such as the United Kingdom's 1962 and 1977 Royal Commissions on the Press which examined its diversity and concentration with a view to maintaining the health of its democracy (Royal Commission Report, 1977, cited in Burnet and Rees, 1978). However, despite recommendations subsequently made to introduce measures limiting monopolization of the UK press, which was recognized by both commissions as a consistent threat to the very ideals they sought to uphold and the subsequent government legislation put in place in an attempt to ensure this, it has not proved effective (Curran and Seaton, 2001). Elsewhere in Western Europe, other schemes were introduced which aligned more closely with the positive freedom model proffered by Hocking, ranging from subsidies to assist publication launches, to grants and tax concessions designed to prevent their closures (Curran and Seaton, 2001). More recently, the European Union has robustly pursued large media conglomerates attempting to purchase swathes of media platforms across the continent (European Union, 2014).

This approach has also left its mark on the relatively recent Leveson Inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the (UK) press. Hocking had emphasised that positive freedom should not be used as an excuse for government interference or political intervention in media regulation, stressing its role as a "…'residual legatee' of last resort" (Christians & Fackler, 2014, p. 336). Lord Leveson also reflected this notion in his report's recommendations - describing a "backstop

regulator…required if either the whole of the press industry had failed to accept the principle of independent regulation [and] refused to engage with an independent regulator [which] would undeniably reinforce the need for some statutory system of standards to be put in place" (Leveson, 2012, p. 1793).

Journalistic Professionalism in the Context of Education

The sociological definitions of professionalism alluded to earlier expose further challenges when applied to journalism, despite consistent use by many of its practitioners to describe the excellence to which they aspire (Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996: 125). Indeed, there is a compelling view that in journalism education, the notion of professionalism is not only used as part of a socialization process but also as a marketing tool – to emphasize the specialist knowledge that both the discipline specifically and wider industry generally, use to bolster its claims to professional legitimacy (Singer 2003). But this cannot necessarily be said to apply just as equally to those practitioners working from online platforms, which draws talent from a much broader skillset than more traditional media, and operates in an environment that is as rapidly changing as it is unpredictable – coupled with a lack of tradition and provision for much opportunity to reflect (Lynch, 1998), this has led some to argue that journalists' self-perceptions of their status and their role are more important than fitting into a set of sociological citeria (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996).

Indeed, with the benefit of hindsight, Carey's (1987) observation that "the public will begin to awaken when they are addressed as a conversational partner and are encouraged to talk rather than sit passively as spectators before a discussion conducted by journalists and experts" (p.17, cited in Christians and Fackler, 2014), could be interpreted as a canny presage of the current online, social media-dominated environment which appears to have created the conditions for just that – in spite of what appears to be increasingly sophisticated incarnations of fake news and the widespread perception that more and more online participants explore and understand the world only within the comfort zones of their own social and ideological boundaries (Zuckerberg, 2018).

As a consequence, the impact of the internet on such notions of journalistic professionalism is unavoidable. Broddason (1994: 241) argued long before it became apparent to most that the gatekeeping function of journalists would diminish as newsgathering expertise became more readily accessible to the general public, consequently leading to a 'deprofessionalisation' of the field. Fast-forward a few years and Lasica (2001) was envisioning the personalization of news – which has since morphed from tailoring online tools enabling the consumer only to access the information they want to see, into algorithms that tailor information according to the consumer's online browsing habits, and developing into yet even more sophisticated algorithms capable of targeting online information at consumers based on personality types – due to an ability to garner information about *how* a consumer uses the web as opposed to *what* they use (or see) on the web (such as tracking an individual's eye movements) to predict character, personality and more recently, emotional state (Hardy, 2015; Hoppe, Loetscher, Morey & Bulling, 2018; Zuboff, 2019a). Such technological advancements effectively provide consumers with the opportunity to move beyond a focus only on information reflecting their worldview, to a consumption of media content that offers up a mirror to themselves. In turn, and more concerning however, is that the data

harvested from these latest algorithms are currently fuelling a new kind of commerce - a market specializing in trading predictions of consumers' future behaviour – in other words, 'behaviour futures markets' (Zuboff, 2019b) – the protagonists epitomized by the likes of the now defunct data firm Cambridge Analytica and its controversial harvesting of personal information from private social media accounts (Cadwalladr & Graham-Harrison, 2018).

But others, such as Dennis (1996), maintained the view that journalism's commitment to public service and its demand for practitioner expertise supersede these concerns and make it a profession for all practical purposes, therefore compelling a greater focus on practice itself rather than the environment in which it takes place (Singer, 2003). This reflects the generally established consensus that a journalist is committed to honesty, fairness, independence and respect for the rights of others – regardless of the technology or platform (MEAA, 2019) and additionally includes original reporting and writing, a commitment to truth over novelty or expediency as well as autonomy from commercial and governmental influence (Singer, 2003). Ultimately the nature of the professional activity and the determined norms under which it is conducted take precedence and in light of this, it would be fair to conclude that most journalists do consider themselves to be professionals with many of the attributes of a profession being relevant to their practice (Singer, 2003).

There is also a further, but an apparently contrary, consideration – of the view that taken in its entirety, the concept of journalistic professionalism – particularly of the type that might be taught on journalism teaching programmes, encourages a homogeneity that undermines a diversity of styles and approaches; epitomizing one of the defining characteristics and strengths of a thriving, free press (Glasser, 1992).

This is a perspective reflected in cultural studies that argues against the idea of journalistic professionalism – that practitioners are beholden to corporate interests and influences consequently leading to the assumption that journalism skills mirror a corporate agenda (Greenberg, 2007) with the journalism educator's agenda defined by the media industry (Chapman and Papatheodorou, 2004). This is therefore incompatible with the idea of critical reflection due to its "unquestioning approach to set rules" (2004) based on a competence model holding scant regard for reflection beyond nothing more than "a reconsideration of how better to apply the rules guiding journalistic practice in order to achieve pre-specified objectives." (2004)

Methodology, Research Design and the Challenge of Evaluation

The overarching aim of the study outlined in this paper is therefore to identify whether there are clear and viable notions of journalistic professionalism in current journalism teaching content and whether, as well as to what extent, it has any bearing on the development of notions of journalistic professionalism in undergraduates who progress to being full-time practitioners. More specifically, there is particular focus around how concepts of professionalism manifest themselves in the learning and teaching of journalism law and ethics.

The research design is focused around the framing of a theoretical concept of professionalism formulated from a response to the following questions:

- How is journalistic professionalism defined and measured in the context of journalism teaching and practice?
- Are current teaching models for law and ethics on undergraduate journalism programmes consistent with the development of journalistic professionalism in practice?

At the commencement of any analysis into notions of journalistic professionalism in journalism teaching, it must first be acknowledged that the act of engaging in evaluation is in itself a political statement and reformist in nature, which has the aim of developing initiatives that would help solve a 'social' problem (Pawson & Tilley, 1997).

Therefore, if an exploration based around accurately defining journalistic professionalism is approached from the prism of *the lack of a definition* being a social problem, the starting point for articulating a methodology robust enough for this study should be to establish why the perceived lack of clarity in the definition is problematic in the first place.

With a view to establishing a surer footing for the rationale underpinning this approach, a pilot study was undertaken with the aim of identifying whether key topics relevant to media law and ethics could provide a clearer construct of notions of professionalism than is currently available.

The first stage of this approach was therefore to identify how such notions might currently feature within the journalism teaching content itself. It therefore began with a conventional review of documents related to courses delivered and/or accredited by the two leading journalism training bodies in the UK – the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) and the Broadcast Journalism Training Council (BJTC).

The review was a deliberately broad attempt at describing a general phenomenon (Hseih and Shannon, 2005) prior to pursuing a more in-depth approach to establishing the proposed hypothesis on a more reliable foundation. In the initial study, the focus of the analysis was on the use of the term 'professionalism' and variant terms such as 'professional' in the participatory documents. It was envisaged that as a consequence, the study would later be replicated with a more systematic analysis involving content analysis and subseqent interviews of specified stakeholders from which more specific conclusions could be drawn (Rose et al, 2015) and meaning identified (Berg, 2009).

Data Analysis

In the NCTJ course information documents examined online, the only reference to the terms 'professionalism' or 'professional' was in general reference to two of the programmes – the Diploma in Journalism which is described as equipping trainee journalists with the knowledge and skills for professional entry level journalism (NCTJ, 2018) and the National Qualification in Journalism described as the industry's professional qualification that trainee journalists with a minimum of 18 months employment can take to achieve senior status as a journalist (2018). It is also described as "the NCTJ's professional senior qualification that examines all-round competence in a range of essential journalism skills." (NCTJ, 2018). Throughout all the documentation analysed, there is no definition of what is meant by the term 'professional' in the context in which it is used, nor are there any explicit examples or implications that might explain the term in the context in which it is used. This perceived absence of a clear meaning of the term is compounded in a reading of more detailed course documentation, including the qualification

specifications and programmes of study for the four core topic areas – the news report, news interview, media law and practice and   e-logbook – none of which mention the terms 'professional' or 'professionalism' or any other variant throughout.

The BCTJ course documentation on the other hand, refers to the term 'professional' on a number of occasions throughout its online course documentation, referring to members of its council as "professional journalists who advise and inspect the course" (BJTC, 2018). Another document describes one of the key roles of the BJTC as inviting training providers to "define their own educational and professional objectives against which they are judged" (2018). Other documentation describes the BCTJ as offering "a model of professional accreditation as being valued by industry and higher and further education instutions because it represents a benchmark of best practice and in setting the standards for multi-platform journalism training" (2018), and another document refers to the same model of "professional accreditation…against which potential students can judge prospective courses and those new courses seeking accreditation can measure their progress" (2018).

The results of the analysis pointed towards both sets of documentation appearing to reflect the hypothesis that there are no clear measurements for professionalism in key journalism teaching narratives.

Conclusion

The problem with defining clear notions of journalistic professionalism in journalism teaching is contrasted with the significantly clearer concepts of professionalism in areas of practice such as medicine or law which some sectors of the media industry historically sought to emulate (Singer, 2003). However, taking this approach would not be without its limitations, because unlike those sectors for instance, such a concept in journalism education would not include standards for training and licensing with "…media practitioners having less independent control over their work" (Baran & Davis, 2009, p. 111). This is most explicitly laid bare when examining the challenges of teaching ethics on practice-focused journalism courses such as those accredited by the NCTJ; which serve as a useful reflection of the ongoing tensions between the delivery of theoretical and practice-based disciplines within journalism education.

However, an alternative perspective as to why the problem of a definition of journalistic professionalism in journalism teaching is difficult to pin down, would be based on the proposition that if professionalism is defined within the ethical parameters set out earlier, it would be imperative for the methodological approaches relied upon for this study to attain a level of consensus on how ethics should be defined.

However, it has become apparent that one of the challenges in formulating a methodology for this research is the perceived paucity of adequate methodological approaches implemented in ethics research. A potential parallel to what could be found in journalism ethics research was highlighted in Randall and Gibson's (1990) review of 94 business ethics research papers which revealed full methodological detail was provided in less than half of the articles examined.

It would therefore be more appropriate to turn to a contemporary but arguably more generally applicable definition of journalism ethics as a reliable basis for this study. The first volume of Lord Leveson's report of the inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the press (2012) puts forward a definition of ethics that it states "…can be understood at a simple level, by reference to the choices available to a free press, where those choices may have consequences for the benefit or harm of others, whether individuals, groups or the public as a whole." (p. 81).

The report expands on this - explaining the choices are those by which journalists can exercise their freedoms in order to either fulfil or undermine their role in a democracy and that such choices fall within the framework of the law, even though these do not necessarily complement one another. It then gives examples of areas which would reflect the sort of ethical behaviour expected under the definition and argues that these further serve to re-emphasise that press freedom by itself is not enough to protect the benefits of democracy for which it is a prerequisite (2012), covering freedom of communication, accuracy, the protection of sources, holding power to account and respect for the individual the self-determination of others.

This is a perspective on journalism ethics echoed by Pickard (2011) in his apt description of normative journalism practice as a 'public good' but in doing so roundly rejects the influence of the what is termed in the context of this discussion, the 'commercial imperative' (ie. The impact of operating within a commercial environment on ethical decision-making):

> "…it is an essential public service with social benefits that transcend its revenue stream. In its ideal form, journalism creates tremendous positive externalities. It serves as a watchdog over the powerful, covers crucial social issues, and provides a forum for diverse voices and viewpoints. As such, journalism functions as democracy's critical infrastructure" (p. 76)

Therefore it follows that the duties and responsibilites of the press follow on from the reasons underpinning a desire for a free press (Mendus, cited in Leveson, 2012).

However, Leveson endorses the argument that if press freedom is regarded as an end in itself, it becomes insensitive to the factors that underpin it in the first place, such as the aforementioned prerequisites as well as others, including rigour, balance and avoidance of conflicts of interest (Megone, cited in Leveson, 2012). But this is also problematic because "assuming that a process (a free press) will achieve a beneficial goal allows journalists and editors to fail to address carefully the question of what exactly that distinctive purpose is, or how it relates to other parts of the public interest." (Megone, 2012, and cited in Leveson, 2012, p. 83)

Furthermore, there is a public interest in press diversity and accountability, as well as freedom (Cruft, cited in Leveson, 2012) which in turn, goes hand-in-hand with responsibility (Megone, cited in Leveson, 2012).

Leveson uses this expanded definition of ethics to reinforce his overarrching point that ethical standards are consistent with press freedom and necessary for it to fully realise the value of such freedom (2012) and summaries it thus: "With freedom, rights and privilege therefore come choices, and with choices, responsibilities as to how they are exercised and with what consequences. With choices which affect the public sphere, come also public accountabilities" (2012, p. 85). But he

warns that although an ethical approach requires care and awareness, diversity and plurality, in the context of a free press operating within the framework of what is understood to be a democracy (ie. the Western model) this (would normally) take place in a highly competitive environment which in turn impacts on what would be perceived to be the public interest (2012).

However, the view that notions of journalism professionalism in journalism teaching, along with professional education in general, are inherently part of a socialization process as well as a marketing tool – to emphasize the specialist knowledge that both the discipline specifically and wider industry generally, use to bolster its claims to professional legitimacy (Singer 2003), could also indicate a level of an inherent, but as yet undefined and unaquantifiable quality which, if considered sufficient, equates content and structure with normative practice, or, industry standards – whatever those standards are perceived to be.

Therefore, any notion of journalistic professionalism at the very least, ought to reflect the view that an idealised perception of professionalism taught in journalism education continues to pivot around the reporter and his/her basic functions as a gatherer of news, evaluating information, production and distribution (Mensing, 2010). Or, from the perspective of significant numbers of students undertaking journalism courses, the experience of learning efficacy should emanate from the reproduction of established bodies of knowledge which they, in turn, would legitimately expect to be related to professional journalistic practice (Wright, 2012).

About the Author

Ato Erzan-Essien is a senior lecturer on the Journalism Programme at the University of Chester in the United Kingdom where he has taught since 2005. His prior experience as a practising journalist included working as a newspaper reporter and sub-editor at local and regional newspapers in the north west of England, before becoming editor of The Big Issue in the North magazine – a publication sold by homeless people across the north of England. A fellow of the Higher Education Academy, he is currently undertaking a research PhD examining notions of professionalism in journalism law and ethics teaching.

References

Ahern, J. J. (1971). An Historical Study of the Professions and Professional Education in the United States. Dissertations. Paper 1158. http://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/1158 Retrieved May 29, 2019.

Aldridge, M., Evetts, J. (2003). Rethinking the concept of professionalism: the case of journalism. British Journal of Sociology Vol. No. 54 Issue No. 4 (December 2003) pp. 547–564.DOI: 10.1080/0007131032000143582

Banks, M., Hanna, M. (2018). Essential Law for Journalists. Oxford: OUP.

Barber, B. (1965). Some Problems in the Sociology of the Professions. in Kenneth
S. Lynn and editors of Daedalus (eds) The Professions in America. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Berg, B. L. (2009). Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences. Boston: Pearson.

Birkhead, D. (1986). News media ethics and the management of professionals, Journal of Mass Media Ethics, 1:2, 37-46, DOI: 10.1080/08900528609358265

Black, J. (1998). Journalism Nethics. Convergence, 4(4), 10–17. https://doi.org/10.1177/135485659800400402

Black, J., Steele, B., & Barney, R. (1999). Doing ethics in journalism: A handbook with case studies. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Bourdieu, P. (1998). On Television. New York: The New Press.

Bourdieu, P. (2005). The Political Field, the Social Science Field and the Journalistic Field.

Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field. Benson, R., Neveu, E. (eds). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity Press.

Broddason, T. (1994). The Sacred Side of Professional Journalism. European Journal of Communication 9 (3): 227-248.

Burnet, D. A., Rees, W. M. (1978) Press Freedom and a Journalists' Closed Shop: *Final Report of the Royal Commission on the Press. Industrial Law Journal*, Volume 7, Issue 1, 1 January 1978, Pages 54–56. https://doi.org/10.1093/ilj/7.1.54. Retrieved June 5, 2018.

Cadwalladr, C., Graham-Harrison, E. (2018, March 17). Revealed: 50 million Facebook profiles harvested for Cambridge Analytica in major data breach. The Guardian. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/mar/17/cambridge-analytica-facebook-influence-us-election

Chapman, J. and Papatheodorou, F. (2004). The Place of Critical Self-Reflection in Journalism Education: An Inquiry into Student Responses to the Theoretical and Practical Components of the Curriculum at Undergraduate and Masters Level. In Davies A. (ed.), Enhancing Curricula: Towards the Scholarship of Teaching in Art, Design and Communication in Higher Education. London: CLTAD, University of the Arts.

Christians, C. G. & Fackler, M. P. (2014) The Genesis of Social Responsibility Theory: William Ernest Hocking and Positive Freedom in The Handbook of Mass Communication Theory (eds. Fortner, R. S. & Fackler, M. P.). Chichester: Wiley.

Cruft, R. (2012). Witness statement from Dr Rowan Cruft, Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Stirling, Leveson Inquiry.
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140122192140/http://www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Witness-Statement-of-Dr-Rowan-Cruft.pdf. Retrieved September 17, 2018.

Curran, J. & Seaton, J. (2001). Power Without Responsibility: The press and broadcasting in Britain. London: Routeledge.

Dennis, E. E. (1996). Dennis: Journalism Is a Profession, in Everette E. Dennis
and John C. Merrill (eds) Media Debates: Issues in Mass Communication, 2nd ed. White Plains, NY: Longman.

Deuze, M. & Yeshua-Katz, D. (2001). Online Journalists Face New Ethical Dilemmas: Lessons From The Netherlands. Journal of Mass Media Ethics. 16. 273-292. 10.1207/S15327728JMME1604_03.

European Union. (2014). Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on media freedom and pluralism in the digital environment (2014/C 32/04). Official Journal of the European Union. Volume 57, 4 February 2014. doi:10.3000/1977091X.C_2014.032.eng

Evans, L. (2008) Professionalism, professionality and the development of education professionals. British Journal of Educational Studies, 56 (1). pp. 20-38.

Glasser, T. L. (1992). Professionalism and the Derision of Diversity: The Case of the Education of Journalists', Journal of Communication 42 (2): 131-140.

Greenberg, S. (2007). Theory and practice in journalism education. Journal of Media Practice Volume 8 Number 3. doi: 10.1386/jmpr.8.3.289/1

MEAA. (2019). FAQs about the MEAA Journalist Code of Ethics: History and background of the code of ethics. https://www.meaa.org/faqs-meaa-journalist-code-of-ethics/ Retrieved on May 29, 2019.

Hanitzsch, T. (2007). Deconstructing Journalism Culture: Toward a Universal Theory. Communication Theory 17(4):367 – 385. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2885.2007.00303.x

Hanitzsch, T. (2011). Populist disseminators, detached watchdogs, critical change agents and opportunist facilitators: Professional milieus, the journalistic field and autonomy in 18 countries. The International Communication Gazette, 73(6), 477-494

Hanitzsch T., Hanusch F., Mellado C., Anikina M., Berganza R., Cangoz I., Coman M., Hamada B., Hernández M. E., Karadjov C. D., Moreira S. V., Mwesige P. G., Plaisance P. L., Reich Z., Seethaler J., Skewes E. A., Noor D. V., Wang Yuen E. K.,
(2011). Mapping Journalism Cultures Across Nations, Journalism Studies, 12:3, 273-293

Hardy, Q. (2015, July 26). Using Algorithms to Determine Character. The New York Times. https://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/07/26/using-algorithms-to-determine-character/
Retrieved March 28, 2019

Helsby, G. (1999). Multiple truths and contested realities: the changing faces of teacher professionalism in England. In C. DAY, A. FERNANDEZ, T. HAGUE and J. MØLLER (eds) The Life and Work of Teachers (London, Falmer).

Holroyd, C. (2000). Are assessors professional? Active Learning in Higher Education, 1(1), 28-44.

Hoppe, S., Loetscher, T., Morey, S. A., Bulling, A. (2018, April 13). Eye Movements During Everyday Behavior Predict Personality Traits. Frontiers in Human Neuroscience. https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2018.00105 Retrieved March 28, 2018.

Hsieh, H-F., Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis. Qualitative Health Research, Vol. 15 No. 9, November 2005, 1277-1288.

Joseph, N., Boczkowski, P. (2012). From principle to practice: Expanding the scope of scholarship on media ethics, Ethical Space: The International Journal of Communication Ethics, Vol. 9, No 4 pp 16-26. Available at: http://www.communicationethics.net/journal/v9n4/v9n4_feat1.pdf [Retrieved March 11. 2018].

Larson, M. S. (1977). The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lasica, J. D. (2001, August 2). The Promise of the Daily Me. Online Journalism Review.: http://www.ojr.org/ojr/lasica/1017779142.php. Retrieved March 28, 2019.

Leveson, B. H. (2012). An Inquiry into the Culture, Practices and Ethics of the Press (Volumes 1 – 4). London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Lynch, D. (1998, January/February). Without a Rulebook. American Journalism Review. http://ajr.newslink.org/ajrlynch.html Retrieved March 28, 2019.

MacIver, R. (1966). Professional Groups and Cultural Norms (General) in Howard M. Vollmer, H. M., Mills, D. L. (eds) Professionalization. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

McManus, J. (1994). Market-driven Journalism: Let the Citizen Beware, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

McQuail, D. (2010). McQuail's Mass Communication Theory. London: Sage.

Megone, C. (2012). Witness statement from Professor Christopher Megone, Professor of Inter-Disciplinary Applied Ethics at the University of Leeds, Leveson Inquiry. http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140122192143/http://www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Witness-Statement-of-Professor-Christopher-Megone.pdf Retrieved September 17, 2018.

Mendus, S. (2012). Transcript of morning hearing, July 16, 2012, pp. 36-37, lines 22-2. Leveson Inquiry. http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140122203130/http://www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Transcript-of-Morning-Hearing-16-July-2012.pdf Retrieved September 17, 2018.

Merrill, J. C. (1974). The Imperative of Freedom: A Philosophy of Journalistic Autonomy. New York: Hastings House.

Mensing, D. (2010). Rethinking (again) the future of journalism education. Journalism Studies 11(4):511-523. DOI:10.1080/14616701003638376.

Nel, F. P. (2010). Learning from Layoff: What the experience of laid-off journalist can teach journalism educators. Paper presented at the 2nd World Journalism Education Congress, Grahamstown, South Africa.

Ornebring, H. (2016). Newsworkers: A Comparative European Perspective. London:Bloomsbury.

Overholser, G. (July 2010). Swimming in the ocean of social media. Rhodes Journalism Review 30.

Pawson, R., Tilley, N. (1997). Realistic Evaluation. London: Sage.

Pickard, V. (2011). Can government support the press? Historicizing and internationalizing a policy approach to the journalism crisis. The Communication Review, 14, 73–95.

Quinn, F. (2015). Law for Journalists. United Kingdom, Harlow: Pearson.

Randall, D. M., Gibson, A. M. (1990). Methodology in Business Ethics Research: A Review and Critical Assessment. Journal of Business Ethics, 9: 457 – 471.

Rose, S., Spinks, N., Canhoto, A. I. (2015). Management Research: Applying the Principles. Abingdon (UK): Routledge.

Seibert, F. S., Peterson, T., Schramm, W. (1956). Four Theories of the Press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press Should Be and Do. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Shoemaker, P. J., and Reese, S. D. (1996). Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content. White Plains, NY: Longman.

Singer, J. (2003). Who are these guys?: The online challenge to the notion of journalistic professionalism. Journalism, 4(2), pp. 139-163. doi: 10.1177/146488490342001.

Stark, R. (1985) Sociology. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Soloski, J. (1999). News Reporting and Professionalism: Some Constraints on the Reporting of the News. Media, Culture & Society 11: 207-228.

Weaver, D. H., Wilhoit, G. C. (1996). The American Journalist in the 1990s: U.S. News People at the End of an Era. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Wright, K. (2012). Educating 'rookies: might guided problem-based learning help first year journalism students begin to inter-relate theory and practice? Journalism Education, 1(2), 8-25.

Zuboff, S. (2019). The Age of Surveillance Capitalism. London: Profile Books.

Zuboff, S. (2019). Who is watching you? [Radio series episode]. In K. Hickman (Producer), Start the Week. London, United Kingdom: British Broadcasting Corporation. Retrieved March 27, 2019, from https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m0002b8l

Zuckerberg, M., (2017). Building Global Community. https://www.facebook.com/notes/mark-zuckerberg/building-global-community/10103508221158471/?pnref=story
Retrieved June 5, 2018.