

**JOURNALISM  
IN RUSSIA, POLAND  
AND SWEDEN  
— TRADITIONS,  
CULTURES AND  
RESEARCH**

södertörns  
högskola

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SÖDERTÖRN UNIVERSITY

## **Journalistikstudier vid Södertörns högskola**

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1. Journalist – och sen då? Gunnar Nygren, 2010
2. Ständig deadline, multimedia och twitter, Norwald/Wicklén,  
Hellström/Hansson, Forsstedt, 2011
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4. Journalism in Russia, Poland and Sweden – traditions, cultures and research,  
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**Gunnar Nygren**

## **1 The research project Journalism in change**

When the “Arab Spring” of 2011 forced dictators to resign, the old and often state-controlled media played only a minor role. Different kinds of new media were more important in informing and mobilizing the protesters –satellite TV channels such as Al Jazeera, Internet-based social media like blogs and Facebook, and mobile telephony services like SMS. It may not be correct to say that it was a Facebook revolution, but without these new cross-border and interactive forms of media it would have been much more difficult to mobilize people in progress towards democracy.

The Arab Spring is just one example of how changes in media systems can influence society as a whole. Information and communication technology (ICT) changes the conditions for all kinds of activity in society – for political processes as well as for the production of goods and services (Castells 1998, Norris 2000, Sennett 2008).

Journalism is no exception. Convergence creates new kind of interactive media systems, and also changes the conditions for old media such as newspapers, TV and radio. The media workplace is changing in the same direction as other industries – the workers have to be flexible, there are increasing demands on re-skilling and multi-skilling and commercial pressure is much heavier (Deuze 2007, Singer/Quandt 2009). However, at the same time ideals and values are sluggish and old ways of thinking clash with new demands in everyday work. Journalistic culture is perhaps stronger than many spokesmen for convergence assume (Fenton 2009, Witschge/Nygren 2009).

This development differs between countries and media systems, though there are both similarities and differences: globalization has created a convergence in journalistic orientations and practices in different parts of the world. Traditional western ideals of objectivity and impartiality seem to dominate many newsrooms, and there are many similarities in professional routines and editorial processes (Hallin/Mancini 2004, Hanitzsch 2007). There are also many differences among journalists in their ways of being professional, more as reflections of societal influence than from media organizations and professional norms. Journalism is still very national in many ways, still connected to history and political traditions (Weaver 2005).

Journalism has a double role in modern society. It is produced and used like other products and services in a market economy. But at the same time, journalism is one of the basic functions of political communication and democracy. It is impossible to discuss the problems of democracy without considering journalism and the media (Norris 2000). This is the basic reason for researching how journalists' professional culture, their thinking and daily work is changing – because this also changes the conditions for democracy.

### *Journalism in Change*

This is the first report from the research project *Journalism in Change* at Södertörn University, Stockholm. The project runs from 2011 until 2014, with the purpose of studying changes in professional journalistic cultures using a comparative perspective. The project includes three countries with different media systems, of different historical and political backgrounds and different size: Sweden, Russia and Poland. Professional cultures among journalists will be analyzed in relation to differences in societies and also in relation to different levels of change within the media systems.

The three countries have been chosen because they represent different historical backgrounds and political traditions. This design means it will be possible to analyze the changes in journalism that different types of societies have in common, and what kinds of differences can be connected to the characteristics of a society. The project has a multidisciplinary approach

with researchers in journalism, media sociology and political science taking part; researchers from Södertörn University, Moscow State University and the University of Wrocław in Poland work together in the project and on this report.

This comparative and multidisciplinary design provides the opportunity to analyze journalistic cultures in relation to different kinds of variables:

- Professional traditions in journalism and in the culture of the country.
- Political systems and political traditions from the past in relation to the media and journalism.
- The level of technological development in society, both among audiences and in the media system.
- Commercial demands as regards the media as an industry, economic pressure from owners and powerful groups.
- Globalization and European integration, cross-border ownership and new forms of cross-border media.

The basic question in the project is whether there is a process of convergence between journalistic cultures in different countries and how the above factors influence this process. Are journalistic cultures becoming less national and, if so, what is changing and what is not?

### ***Journalistic culture and the profession***

Culture is defined in many ways. In social and humanistic research, culture is a “whole way of being”, with shared ideals and practices in a group that separate it from other groups. A culture is socially constructed and is carried by the people living in the culture as both values and ideals, as well as tacit knowledge that is hidden in daily routines. So culture is not only a question of ideology, it is also visible in practice – in journalism it also materializes in working processes. In the words of the researcher Barbie Zelizer (2005):

For recognizing journalism as a culture – a complex web of meanings, rituals, conventions and symbol systems – and seeing journalists... as its facilitators offers a way to think about the phenomenon by accounting for its changing, often contradictory dimensions.

In news production, journalistic culture is visible on three levels – on a cognitive level (the way journalists see the world in, for example, selection of news), in professional ideologies and, at the performative level, in journalistic practices (Hanitzsch 2007). Journalistic culture is an arena where different ideologies and practices can compete and live side by side. It has some common traits, but also big differences; it can be visible from the global level to national journalistic cultures, down to cultures in different media companies.

The majority of the research into how journalism changes with media development is conducted in the US and Western Europe (Mitchelstein/Bozkowski 2009, Singer/Quandt 2009). The results are seldom related to differences in media systems and in journalistic cultures and it is often taken for granted that these results are valid in all kinds of media systems. There is a lack of empirical results in comparative research into changes in journalistic cultures. Most research on journalists is done at a national level, as for example the “The American Journalist” (Weaver et al 2007) and “The Swedish Journalists” (Asp 2008).

Comparative research on professionalization and journalistic culture is often based on this national research. Some exceptions are “The Global Journalist” with results from 21 countries around the world (Weaver 1998) and the World of journalisms project with results from 18 countries (Hanitzsch et al 2010). There are also some regional comparative studies that are relevant to this project and concern Central Europe. Some research argues for a stronger homogeneity and convergence among journalists, both nationally and internationally - due to commercialization and increasing editorial control (Donsbach 2010).

The purpose of this project is to make comparative analyses of changes in the journalistic cultures of three countries. We use similar methods and tools to make empirical data fit for comparative analysis. The notion of “journalistic culture” is deconstructed into three areas of research, i.e. three levels of analysis where culture is articulated (Hanitzsch 2007):

- At a *cognitive level* – the way journalists shape the world, the interpretation of news and news work in general.

- *Journalistic ideals* – beliefs and values about the role of journalists, the relation to external power and owners (political and economical), the relation to the audience and the role of journalism in a new media environment, professional ethics among journalists.
- *Journalistic practices* – daily work and what a journalist is supposed to do (multiskilling, news room organization), autonomy and decision processes (the degree of power in their work), norms and routines in their work (tacit knowledge), what the journalists think about changes to their work.

A fourth area is the *position of journalists in society*, the autonomy of journalists in relation to other groups. In this area, this research will provide an overview of professional institutions, such as media legislation and self-regulatory systems, journalism education and journalistic standards, unions and other professional associations. This is also a question of the degree of professionalization of journalism – or whether there is ongoing de-professionalization with unclear borders to journalism (Nygren 2008).

A collection of data in these areas means it will be possible to identify the common parts of transnational journalistic culture and common changes in journalism in different media systems, but also the differences between the three countries. It will also be possible to relate the results to national differences in history and culture, and to analyze the relationship between globalization and national differences.

One *hypothesis* is that there are a lot more similarities than one can easily see – changes in the position of journalism and globalization will also bring the professional cultures closer to each other. Daily work is done the same way and the financial demands look the same. Liberal ideals within journalism are getting stronger with market liberalism; a global media culture is emerging (Hallin/Mancini 2004).

A *counterhypothesis* could be the opposite – that the similarities are mostly on the surface. Other research shows that social institutions, such as journalism, are hesitant to abandon their conventions even in the “age of the net” when communication patterns in the society are changing (O’Sullivan/Heionen



2008). A professional culture is sluggish, and moves only slowly in spite of changes in its surroundings – technical, financial and political. Journalists are often seen as conservative; research shows that rapid changes also promote a defensive reaction as regards old values (Witschge/Nygren 2009).

### ***Different kinds of methods***

Both quantitative and qualitative methods are to be used in the project:

- A *survey* to approximately 500 journalists in each country. The sample will be the same in the countries and cover different kinds of media. The results will make it possible to analyze journalists' experiences and opinions about media development practices and journalistic values.
- *Interviews* with journalists of different generations in all three countries. There will be in-depth interviews with journalists around the ages of 30 and 60-65 in each country, about both values/ideals and about working conditions. The “generational design” will show both changes to and shared aspects of journalistic culture.
- *Journalists and the net* – a comparative case study of how journalists relate to the Internet, both as an alternative public sphere and as a way of interacting with audiences and sources.

The project has the following time schedule:

**2011:** During the first year the researchers worked on mapping of the changing professional roles of journalists, of journalists as a social group and the development of professional institutions. This work is partially presented in this report.

**2012:** During the second year most of the empirical data will be collected in each country in the three subprojects. The results will be analyzed and discussed in workshops.

**2013-14:** The collection of empirical results is finalized and the results are published in books and in articles for scientific journals.

The purpose of this first report is to provide a common point of departure for the project. In the report the researchers in the project cover different areas:

- Gunnar Nygren, Södertörn University, takes the perspective of professionalism and autonomy in finding a common theoretical basis for the project.
- Jöran Hök, Södertörn University, gives an overview of research about Swedish journalists and the roots of journalistic culture in Sweden.
- Boguslawa Dobek Ostrowska, University of Wrocław, presents some earlier research in Poland on journalists and their relation to the political system.
- Maria Anikina, Moscow State University, presents earlier research in Russia on journalists and how changes over the last 20-25 years have influenced journalism.

In coming reports, the results from the project will be presented as empirical work continues.

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**Maria Anikina**

## **2. Journalists in Russia**

First of all it is necessary to provide a general description of a journalist in order to understand the main things about the profession. There are diverse interpretations of this term, both theoretical and practical, but a sufficient one may be found in the legal definition of a journalist: “The journalist shall be understood to mean a person who edits, creates, collects or prepares messages and materials for the editor’s office of a mass medium and is connected with it with labor and other contractual relations or engaged in such activity, being authorized by it” (Law of the Russian Federation “On Mass Media”, 1991: art. 2)

This definition indicates the main directions for further discussion about professional journalistic culture, as it mentions different types of professional activity, the most important partners of a journalist and fixes the principles of collaboration between the journalist and other actors. All these influence the professional practice of a journalist and the conditions for professional activity, and will be taken into consideration in this article.

### ***Research tradition***

Before speaking about the figure of the journalist in different historical, social, political and economic conditions, it is worth briefly describing the methodological issues that provide a general frame for the discussion and assist in the proper understanding of former and contemporary journalistic cultures.

A solid arsenal of information was collected during the decades of developing media systems and media studies in Russia. There has been a

gradual cultivation of the sociological tools and methods used in order to define journalists and their practices and cultures. Nowadays it is possible to name diverse research methods and techniques, from expert polls, phone, face-to-face, online, e-mail interviews with practicing journalists to diaries and cards, etc. Thus the information about professions and professionals is gathered from huge variety of sources and, according to existing knowledge, the majority are “ordinary” journalists, media managers and future (or young) journalists – graduates.

The general contemporary scheme of sociological analysis takes existing Western approaches and could be presented as a three-part scheme. The first is the societal level, which provides an analysis of social, economic and political conditions, cultural and historical context and takes into account global trends seen from a “local” dimension. The second – organizational level – offers a view of the concrete structure (editorial office, newsroom, medium etc.). The third – individual – level of analysis is about the journalist as a person. Media systems and journalists’ cultures are seen from the viewpoints of senior managers, who are responsible for strategic planning and general running of the medium, junior managers who make concrete decisions concerning concrete problems or the functioning of proper desk and non-management staff (journalists themselves).

Modern research practices [Weaver, 1998; Hallin, Mancini, 2004; Hanitzsch, 2010] provide detailed descriptions of aspects relating to society and the media industry, and pay serious attention to the political culture in which the media system is constructed and functions. In the Russian, situation these aspects are also important because the country recently underwent a social and political transformation. This leads to the analysis of social types of media, the acute roles of the mass media in general and journalists in particular, to the search for diverse influential factors, possible interventions, the freedom of journalists’ work and existing limits etc.

### *The history of research on journalists*

The first Russian attempts to research journalists were made in the 1920s. At that time, the need to study newspaper staff was rooted in the necessity of providing editorial boards with qualified journalists. Two types of study were conducted during the decade: in the early 1920s, registration and statistical data collection took place on two levels – at the level of the Central Communist Party committee and at the level of professional journalism institutions. Sociological polls were conducted in the late 1920s. The aims of those research projects were to produce recommendations for editorial boards in order to improve the professional qualifications of journalists and to provide a typology of journalistic professions (such as journalists themselves, those who edit materials, those who work in typography, etc.) At that period, scholarly activity concentrated on the one hand on media content studies and, on the other, on defining the subject under investigation and on its deeper description.

Sociological research in the USSR in the 1930s, in general and in the field of the media in particular, was almost frozen. Statistical data on media professionals was collected but was off-limits to the public.

The revival of sociological research and public discussion took place in the 1960s. The first significant step in the development of media sociology in our country was the establishment of the Institute of Public Opinion at the “Komsomolskaya pravda” newspaper. It was a unique department at this popular newspaper, and was started by the famous Russian sociologist and philosopher Boris Grushin. As he wrote, “it was really the first wide attempt of the establishing of the institution of publicity, the establishing of civil society. Its basic characteristic feature was the appearance of the actors independent from the state. People began to express their opinion” [Discovering Grushin. Vol. 2, 2011]. This phenomenon is of great interest and importance for the sphere of media sociology at that time, which is why it is mentioned in this article. However, it dealt with the figure of journalist to a lesser extent than other research initiatives.

During the 1960s, research projects dedicated to journalistic staff in different regions and towns were conducted – in Leningrad there was one by a research group led by Kuzin, in Novosibirsk the same type of study was conducted by scholars headed by Parfenov, and Ülo Vooglaig conducted a study in the Estonian Republic.

Sociological interest in the field of journalism and the mass media also touched on the types of periodicals, e.g. local press (the Committee for Press financed the “Functioning of local press” project in the Ryazan region) or newspapers (e.g. central ones – *Literaturnaya gazeta* (Literature newspaper), *Pravda* etc.). The results of research were made public; the book ““Literaturnaya gazeta” and its audience” was published in 1978. During these projects, the social and demographic characteristics, educational level and specialization, professional orientations, ideas about the journalist’s mission, tasks and functions, the creative skills of media persons, their social and professional status, personal characteristics, etc. were methodologically researched by combined the filling in of registration cards and traditional questionnaires.

One of the biggest projects was constructed and conducted in 1969–1971. This was complex sociological research combined with media audience polls, publishers’ polls, content-analysis of materials and correspondence and journalists’ polls. This project was dedicated to studying the mass media in a big industrial town (Taganrog) and was conducted by the Faculty of Journalism, Lomonosov Moscow State University. Its author and the main organizer was also Boris Grushin. The studies – “Activity of mass communications as source of information” (B. Grushin and A. Shiryaeva) [47 *Pyatniz*, 1972] and “Mass communications as the channel of forming and expression of public opinion” (B. Grushin and V. Kazantsev) – represented an diverse range of journalists [Theory and sociology of mass media, 2010].

One of the conclusions of this project about media professionals was that the journalists’ opinions on the most important part of information activity were characterized as incomplete and contradictory. That gave cause to think about the professional consciousness of journalists, not only in a historical perspective but also as a whole, as one of the significant regulators of professional activity.

The poll also exposed that in the late 1960s, journalists did not think seriously about the mass media as a channel for expressing public opinion. One possible explanation for this was strong ideological influence and the forming of opinions in accordance with existing ideology. The situation changed insignificantly with the social and political transformations in the Soviet Union and Russia – the shifts became more evident in 1990s and 2000s, but even in modern conditions the role of the mass media as a channel for expressing public opinion is not its main role, according to studies of media professionals.

In the 1970s, the portrait of journalists was supplemented by new features that were linked to the future prospects for media professionals and the education of journalists. At that time, there was no discussion about media education in the modern interpretation of this term, only discussion concerning the education of future professionals. The areas covered by research during this period were the status, professional specialization and mobility of graduates, and supply and demand in the Soviet media system. The main focuses of the study were the tasks and principles of journalistic education, the stages of professional education, the directions and forms of education depending on the specific features of the medium, and the relationships between education institutions and editorial boards.

The Faculty of Journalism at Moscow State University organized educational programs for practicing journalists, which included lectures that discussed the results and conclusions of the studies, seminars in which the necessary methodological information and research approaches were taught in order to make journalists skilled and prepared for using sociological methods in journalistic work – e.g. techniques for audience analysis, use of press questionnaires, etc.

In the 1980s, work with editorial correspondence, relationships with the audience and freelancers, the role of sociological research in editorial practice, the effectiveness of media materials and texts became topics of research in Soviet media sociology. The Union of Journalists of the USSR and the Faculty of Journalism organized a postal poll of managers that represented



the regional party, youth and town papers, TV and radio stations. It is worth mentioning that, at that time, the result of methodological development was the functional “Journalists’ model” (that indicated the social and psychological features of a media professional) and a diary for respondents.

The 1990s began with fundamental changes in social and political life, followed by shifts in the media system. Social transformations and media development led to the appearance of new conditions for professional journalism and – furthermore – new spheres of research. Diverse media channels were studied; TV and radio research into “Prospective television and radio development” was conducted in 1990. One fourth of all journalists who worked in the information and social political departments of editorial offices at TV and radio stations, and experts representing public organizations, were questioned. Taking into consideration the acute social and political situation, research reports made recommendations concerning the development of the TV and radio segments of the media system.

From that poll, the issue of professional freedom and independence as the most important condition for activities became central. In the early 1990s, only one fifth of respondents considered themselves quite independent, half of the respondents mentioned certain limitations and another fifth spoke about the absence of necessary freedom. These data became evidence of the shift in professional consciousness, from the dominating tasks of ideological propaganda towards providing rapid information to society about ongoing events [Theory and sociology, 2010].

This increase in the local media’s significance inspired the new wave of local press research projects. New phenomena in the modern Russian media sphere with new forms of media establishment, etc., were to be researched. In 1991, the Ministry approved the complex regional study, “Local press and its forecast development” in the Yaroslavl region, where the media’s audience and the journalists working at municipal and regional newspapers were researched. It also covered a new figure in the Russian media system – the founder. This type of respondent was included in the sample for the first time in Russia.

The first international comparative studies of journalists became a feature of that period's new realities.

In 1992, the first Russian-American research was conducted into the professional orientation of journalists in the two countries. This was partly continued in 1995-1996 in collaboration with a research center at *Middle Tennessee State University* and had its main focus on media freedom.

This research clarified the high actuality of ethics and legal responsibility in Russian journalism and found a certain degree of instability in journalists' professional orientation, in comparison to American respondents. The typical feature for Russian media representatives was the dominant role of external limitations, legal requirements. etc. This distinguished between Russian and American journalistic practices – for instance, in the US journalists relied more often upon self-regulation and traditions.

International research activity and collaboration with scholars from different countries continued in the new millennium (see further on in the chapter). In the early 2000s, several polls of local journalists took place. In 2002, a research team appealed to 150 representatives of the biggest Moscow media organization, graduates of the Faculty of Journalism who were asked mostly about their professional journalism education, but also about the problems of routine journalistic work. Another research project, conducted by the Institute of Regional Press, involved only professionals from local media which narrowed the scope of the project. However, it was important as a pilot study that was useful for obtaining valid data for possible comparisons.

The results of that poll showed that the degree of influence and the list of actors that exert influence on journalistic practices have changed. The pressure of owners and different financial structures were named among other thing, such as power and administrative sources. It appeared that dependence on local authorities was very strong, especially in the situations of media that were established by structures affiliated with local powers.

Some recent studies aimed to describe the relationships between the media and its audience. In 2002, the Commission for Freedom of Information Access asked local media professionals about the satisfaction of audience information

needs. About 37% of the respondents said that local media complied with the audience's needs, but more than half did not agree with this statement. Despite this fact, determined by polls of active journalists, the level of trust in the mass media is still relatively high in Russian society.

To make a small digression, let's glance at general Russian media systems analysis that shows that: TV remains the agenda-setting medium in Russia and has the highest level of trust among Russian citizens. 79% of Russians chose television when asked about the communication medium that is of greatest importance in shaping political discourse and setting the political agenda for them. Radio is in second place (23%), newspapers in third (16%), and Internet media have 7% trust. [Public Opinion – 2009: 121]. Such a high rate of trust for television could be partly explained by technical reasons – it is the channel with the biggest coverage and which is used by the majority of people (94% of Russian citizens get information on current events in Russia and abroad from TV programs) [Television in our life, 2010]. However, it is necessary to note that the question of trust does not have a direct link with the problem of feeding the audience's information needs. The question of satisfying information hunger is very rarely asked together with the questions concerning evaluations of modern media and reflections on them. That is why reliable information could be obtained only from one source – from journalists.

### ***Journalists in contemporary Russia***

#### *The problem of figures and some reflections on the labor market*

One of the most complicated tasks is to describe modern Russian media professionals from a statistical point of view. In Russia there are several official structures that are responsible for collecting and presenting statistical information on the Russian population, on the stratification of society etc. Their classifications could be used as a proven and valid source for sociological analysis, but for the study of concrete and fairly restricted social and professional groups this classification approach does not work well – and this is true for Russian journalists. In describing the structure of working Russian population,

the Federal State Statistics Service uses quite wide groups and this confuses the situation; it offers a classification of employees in which journalists and/or media professionals are not mentioned separately.

Almost the same situation is found if we look at such a specific kind of national survey as the population census. The most recent one was in 2010 in Russia. Unfortunately it also does not provide scholars with specific and complete data on journalists. Today we do not have complete results, only general conclusions are made and general tables with demographic data on the Russian population are publicly presented. The previous census (2002) also demonstrates this<sup>1</sup>. Neither offer any specification or figures concerning the number of representatives of diverse professional groups (e.g. journalists). The only group in the census which could potentially include media professionals is described as follows – “Employees engaged with the preparation of information, with the making of documents and accounting and service”. However, this description is too wide and does not permit the extraction of any useful information or using the numbers.

In the circumstances described above, there are two possible ways to get concrete information.

The first, and the most logical, is to address the professional organizations (unions, associations etc.) for proven official information. It seems reasonable to expect that organizations of a national scope could operate with certain figures, but reality challenges us again. The *Russian Union of Journalists* has no overall national data base and no precise figures; calculations are managed at regional and local levels and are the responsibility of regional departments of the *Russian Union of Journalists*<sup>2</sup>. *The representatives of the Federal Agency on Press and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation do not possess reliable current statistical data in this field. General calculations made in the mid-2000s included approximately 150,000 journalists working in the media industry.*

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<sup>1</sup> Russian census of population – 2002. <http://www.perepis2002.ru/index.html?id=34>

<sup>2</sup> The subproject dedicated to data gathering from regional professional associations started in September 2011. The results will be included in the next version of the text.

*The second way* is to collect the data from secondary sources, basing the information on the media system's structure and the information on the media system presented by open and official sources (e.g. *Federal Agency on Press and Mass Communications* of the Russian Federation, *Ministry of Communications and Mass Media* of the Russian Federation, etc.). While the requests did not provide us with any visible results in order to construct a general picture of the professional group in terms of numbers, it was necessary to take some steps to get a general evaluation of the size of the journalists' population, beginning from the analysis of media system structure.

Primarily the description of Russian journalists as a group could be made on the basis of channels of information dissemination (according to the scheme offered in Lasswell's formula in 1948). In 2010, the Federal Service for Supervision in the Sphere of Telecom, Information Technologies and Mass Communications (ROSKOMNADZOR) fixed (registered and re-registered) 9,816 media (1500 items more than in 2009): 6,399 printed media, 3,230 electronic (and online media) and 187 news agencies.

The press segment demonstrates lots of figures, but they are not always proven. The official data of the *Federal Agency on Press and Mass Communications* of the Russian Federation says that in Russia, about 40,000 newspapers are registered. At the same time, the report indicates that there are only 5,000 socially and politically oriented papers (including regional and local periodicals). Nevertheless, all this production is presented on the market and influences the figures. Experts note that approximately 60% of the papers are published regularly, but there is no strict data. The subscription catalogue of the "Rospechat" Agency offers 366 newspapers (233 of national and 143 of regional scope). Another catalogue published by the Interregional subscription agency names 2030 papers (466 national ones). The remaining information is covered in shadow<sup>3</sup>. The revival of the magazine market took place in 2009-2010, but experts still emphasize that some trends are necessary to strengthen the magazine segment. In 2010, the most successful in the commercial sense and the most popular from the consumers' point of view were the products

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<sup>3</sup> For the details see Russian periodical press. Annual report. 2011.

of such publishing houses as Burda, Hachette Filipacchi Shkulev, Sanima Independent Media, Bauer Media, Sem dneĵ (7 Days), Za Rulem (At the wheel), Populyarnaya pressa (Popular press), Vokrug Sveta (Around the earth), Game Land<sup>4</sup>.

The online media are not as indefinite as they were in the mid-2000s. The general structure of information sources on the Internet is known and researched, giving scholars some certainty in their sampling. However, some difficulties still remain with calculations and precise definitions. Rambler's research project RuMetrika provides a review with some general figures and estimates that 3400 current sources represent the segment of online media. Another calculating engine, Liveinternet, indicates 4582 sources as online media. Thus, there is a difference but an approximate number is available for estimations.

The broadcasting segment, from statistical point of view, could formally be characterized by the number of active licenses. At the end of 2010, the register included 5,654 licenses (3,061 in television, 2,590 in radio and 3 in satellite broadcasting)<sup>5</sup>. The main federal television available for the majority of the audience (with some differences depending on the channel) are Pervyj (The First), Rossija 1, Rossija 2, Rossija K, Rossija 24, NTV, Ren TV, 5<sup>th</sup> channel (television company Petersburg), TNT, STS, Domashnij, TV 3, DTV, MTV, Muz TV, 7 TV, Zvezda, TV-Center (Moscow) and Mir.

This classification, which is based on technical media specifics, is better illustrated by official data; but of course it does not settle all the possible variants. It also excludes the major sources for typological analysis, using criteria like the thematic peculiarities of the medium, audience, forms of ownership, etc.

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<sup>4</sup> Russian periodical press. Annual report. 2011. P. 26.

<sup>5</sup> Radio broadcasting in Russia. Annual report. 2011. P. 10.

### *Some main traits*

When discussing the general division of labor and the professional duties of contemporary Russian journalists it is possible to analyze such types of professional activity as a) gathering information and investigation, b) news production, c) presenting and designing work and d) editorial coordination and management. This list takes into consideration traditional activities and ignores new spheres of professional, creative, civil and self-realization activities for media professionals. The survey of Russian journalists that was conducted in 2007-2008 within the World of Journalisms' project, gives us reason to conclude that the main activities are arranged between collecting of information, investigation and production of the news. This led to confirmation at an experimental level of the definition of a professional journalist provided by Russian law. The explanation of this fact also lies in the sphere of natural logic and common sense, because work with news and current information is the essence of the journalistic profession and takes a bigger part of the work than the rest two types (but only if we make quantitative estimations).

The relationship between Russian journalists and politics in general, reflects the relationship of the general Russian population to certain degree. According to open data, Russians are not deeply politicized and not strongly involved in political affairs. The level of protest that is typical of the Russian population has remained almost stable in recent years – more than 2/3 of citizens do not personally intend to support social protest movements and to participate in protest actions. In 2010, WCIOM found unwillingness to participate in protest campaigns in the answers of 68% of respondents<sup>6</sup>. At the same time, a similar idea was presented by the experts at the Yuri Levada Analytical Center. In a poll conducted in September–October 2011 almost half of Russian population (49%) did not link the intentions of politicians to the will of common citizens.

The survey of journalists that was made a couple of years ago showed that the professional journalistic community expressed its political interests in a slightly brighter way. More than half of the respondents in the WJS poll

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<sup>6</sup> <http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=459&uid=13561>

(53%) mentioned that that were interested or very interested in politics, while a minority stated that they were somewhat interested, slight or not interested. These approximate figures indicate the more active social and political position of journalists, but the degree of activity seems to be typical for contemporary Russian society, given the generally quite passive background, conditions of social uncertainty and weak social intentions.

In trying to define the place of Russian journalists' professional culture in a general context, it is beneficial to use a generalized research frame in which, for instance, "diversity is modeled in terms of three constituents: the domain of *institutional roles* refers to the normative and actual functions of journalism in society, while *epistemologies* are concerned with the accessibility of reality and the nature of acceptable evidence. *Ethical ideologies*, as the third domain, point to the question of how journalists respond to ethical dilemmas. The three constituents can be further divided into seven principal dimensions: Institutional roles are made up of the three components interventionism, power distance and market orientation, epistemologies are marked by the dimensions objectivism and empiricism, and ethical ideologies consist of relativism and idealism" (Hanitzsch, 2007).

Evaluating the data of the Russian poll of journalists conducted within the international project "The Worlds of Journalisms"<sup>7</sup> it is possible to consider Russian journalists young professionals. Professional experience in Russia, according to the data, in a significant number of cases is less than 10 years (63% of respondents). This allows us to mention some findings from other international Russian-Swedish studies in which future journalists – university graduates – express their opinions about the profession as follows: "Many students are pessimistic about the future and fear that journalism will be transformed into entertainment, PR, propaganda and 'bloggization'. This confirms that social and moral ideals are increasingly being made to run the gantlet; information ersatz can angle a real story. The answers from the Russian students show clearly that they understand the tendency towards instrumentalization that limits the autonomy of the profession in Russia, and

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7 <http://www.worldsofjournalism.org/public.htm>



how political and economical powers outside journalism use the media for their own purposes” [Nygren et al, 2010: 131-132].

Returning to the poll of Russian journalists, let’s say that generally such a perception of a profession leads to the spreading of a “universal journalist” idea. This statement is proved by the data – 75% of respondents cover different types of stories in their media. This situation is partly supported by the tendency to thematic universalization, which was typical of Russia for several years, and remains quite serious despite the activization of contradictory tendencies.

The third interesting feature of Russian journalism is professional devotion and strict affiliation to a medium. During the study, the majority (about 90% of respondents) declared that they “did not work for other media”. Of course, this could mean better financial and social conditions for journalists in comparison to the situation of their colleagues one or two decades ago. This could also point to the implementation of new business models and strict commercial agreements between journalists and employers. However, it is also necessary to make some corrections about the level of sincerity of responses which could influence the results; we should take into consideration that this rate could be lower. This assumption is, to a certain degree, confirmed by another research project. The study done within the frames of the project “Mass media in Russia and Sweden: comparative studies of professional cultures of journalists”<sup>8</sup> (2007-2009) presented quite a different picture and did not show such a strong affiliation of media professionals; this fact gave cause for further research and reflection on the character and specifics of Russian journalists. Nevertheless, there are some contradictions in the results of different surveys, but based on our results we can conclude that, in their practices, Russian media professionals show some general trends whilst reflecting specific national characteristics linked to media development and the social change of recent decades.

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.nordicmedia.ru/Russian-Swedish\\_project\\_eng.htm](http://www.nordicmedia.ru/Russian-Swedish_project_eng.htm)

The following table<sup>9</sup> presents the results of the above mentioned “The Worlds of Journalisms” project, concerning the main functions of media professionals as seen by respondents from different countries.

Nationality specifically influences the data as well.

TABLE 1.

	AUS	BRA	BUL	GER	IND	ISR	ROM	RUS	SPA	SWI	TUR	UGA
set the political agenda	25	24	21	21	41	39	27	35	18	24	55	51
influence public opinion	25	24	57	17	48	42	13	62	30	20	73	67
advocate for social change	37	53	28	23	61	49	49	29	44	31	80	87
<b>be detached observer</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>be watchdog of government</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>87</b>
be watchdog of business	67	51	36	72	60	40	25	32	44	55	74	57
support official policies	15	43	18	18	22	10	27	27	29	13	21	78
convey positive image	6	14	4	5	13	9	6	31	6	9	8	30
attract widest audience	40	19	43	36	71	44	31	53	30	38	53	61
<b>provide interesting information</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>56</b>
provide political information	79	99	86	98	79	77	79	71	71	95	90	94
motivate people	52	60	63	72	64	50	62	46	61	64	80	77

*Percent of respondents saying “extremely” and “very important”, N=1185*

Stronger intentions for forming and influencing public opinion that are typical for certain periods of the media system in our country are evident, as well as quite low intentions for checking government activity or advocating for social change or motivating people (in our minds this is linked to weak traditions in civil society and its institutions in Russia). At the same time, the urge towards attracting an audience could also be seen as positive in some cases.

Following the responses to other survey questions, the social roles typical of the Russian media in general, according to the journalists’ viewpoints, are educating, dissemination of values (85%) and dissemination of knowledge (65-75%), and the role of psychological support for people (60-70%)<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> The table representing the similarities of certain characteristics of journalists in different countries is taken from Dr. Thomas Hanitzsch’s report “Mapping journalism cultures across nations, organizations and professional milieus” made at the 58th Annual Conference of the International Communication Association (2008)

<sup>10</sup> Russian sociologist and philosopher Boris Grushin pointed out that the media could create certain emotional and psychological mood” of the audience and – further – the society. The influence on emotions and psychology could be exerted by means of media contents, agenda setting mechanisms, representation on the information, design etc. See: Mass information on soviet industrial town. Moscow, 1980. P. 87; Fomicheva I.D. Media Sociology, Moscow, 2007.

Several of the mentioned roles are closely connected to a group of social functions described by the sociologists and theorists – social development (60-65%), channel for social communication (55%), expression of public opinion (40-45%), public criticism (35-40%).

Answering the open question about significant and important professional standards, Russian journalists frequently named:

- objectivity
- impartiality
- honesty
- efficiency
- responsibility
- reliability
- accuracy
- precision

If all the journalists would follow this list and choose these standards for themselves in practice, the situation in Russian journalism would be next to ideal. However, it is necessary to take into consideration the existing obstacles and discuss limiting factors. Another open question presented the most serious influencing factors to be:

- editorial policy and unofficial censorship
- time
- the medium (channel)
- policy (in general)
- inner limits

From an overview of data relating to factors that influence journalistic freedom and which were obtained from Russian media professionals, it is possible to make several points.

It is important that the audience is the significant agent of influence for Russian journalists. More than half of respondents in Russia state that readers, viewers and listeners are very influential or somewhat influential in

terms of professional journalistic freedom. Moreover, audience studies and market research are the influencing factors for journalists. In the contemporary Russian media system development, when commercial logic and commercial interests strongly define the situation, it is notable that at the same time the media market faces deep segmentation based – among other criteria – on concrete and specific audience interests and consumer demand.

Respect for the source of information is still the characteristic feature of the contemporary Russian media sphere. To obtain the complete picture, it would be necessary to find the proper reasons and conditions for this; one of them is probably rooted in media law, which in turn also puts some limits on journalistic freedom, as the poll shows. Nevertheless, the source of information now appears to be a quite important actor that could define the limits of journalistic freedom.

At the same time, society in general does not attract journalists very much. Two-thirds of respondents are not concerned about the reaction of the communities covered. This indicates the weakness and vulnerability of journalistic professional position on the one hand and contradicts the perception of the audience on the other.

That professional ethics and company standards are factors of extreme importance or are considered to be very influential in daily journalistic practice, could be seen as a remarkable fact and as a positive characteristic of Russian reality. At the same time – as the data show – general principles are now more important for wider circles of media persons than the agreements and norms implemented at the editorial office.

A typical feature of modern Russian media reality is the strict limitation of daily practice caused by pressing news deadlines – this factor provoked complaint from the majority of respondents. Great information flows and strong competition in the media market means that journalists must produce their texts in a shorter time period and causes some tension.

The fact that company management and senior colleagues and editors are still influential actors seems to be explainable.

Among the less influential factors for Russian journalists are the low interference of friends and relatives or peer colleagues, etc. Nor do new technologies create serious barriers for media professionals. The weak and low influence of professional journalistic associations as noted by the respondents reflects the current situation, where participation in profession organizations sometimes has just a formal character.

It is worth pointing out that journalists express no obvious unity concerning censorship – the groups of those whose daily practice is limited by censorship and those who do not feel its influence are quite well represented according to the data. It is necessary to look at additional criteria to clarify the picture. Almost the same situation appears in the case of advertisers' influence; some respondents do not face any limitations, while name them as very influential.

During this poll, 14% of Russian journalists declared the absence of limits to their professional activity. This level is not very high, but could become a good starting point for the further development of independent journalism, though only if multiple external factors assist these positive transformations.

The new century presents a wide range of research questions and defines new research horizons. Information and technological development is leading to the widening of research scopes, the appearance of new thematic streams and the revision of methodological approaches in studies.

One of the evident research challenges touches on the above problem of statistics and tries to solve this problem. Another research question is in the sphere of comparisons between the professional behaviors of journalists who work in different types of media, representatives of diverse generational groups and groups of different levels of professional experience. These seem potentially fruitful, if we take into consideration the historical circumstances and perspectives. Finally, an interesting direction for research is the modes of professional behavior during the period of active development of information and communication technologies.

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### **3. Journalists in Poland – some previous research**

Until 1989, in-depth research on national media journalists was conducted mainly by the Press Study Center (OBP- Ośrodek Badań Prasoznawczych) in Krakow and at Warsaw University, but since the collapse of communism this area of study has been seriously neglected, primarily due to a lack of funding for empirical research. The situation for research in journalism is definitely worse than in the Czech Republic (Volek, 2010), Slovakia (Brecka, Ondrášik, Keklak, 2010), Romania (Coman, 2010), Estonia (Lauk, 2008, 2009) and Lithuania (Balčytienė, 2008), where this type of study has been conducted, despite high costs. Only a few authors undertook these studies in Poland after the collapse of communism. As a consequence, we do not know much about Polish journalists over the past 20 years of democracy.

Paradoxically, the first wide and in-depth analysis of Polish journalists was done by the American scholar Jane L. Curry (1982, 1990). The author covered many topics, such as journalism training, formal professional organization, the relationship with political elites, journalists as political actors, journalists in the era of Solidarity and martial law. The most important conclusions were linked to the role of journalists in politics. J. Curry formulated the opinion that Poland was an atypical case for the Soviet bloc states (1990:33) and that, despite the official ideology which regarded the media as instruments of the party, Polish journalists developed a strong professional culture during the communist period:

*(...) political pressures on journalism have served, in the long run, to expedite the professionalization process and strengthen the professionalism of Polish journalism (1990:37)*

J. Curry claimed that journalists in Poland were both highly politicized and highly professionalized. It seems possible to reiterate her opinion today, which is what we are going to try to show in this chapter.

Another significant piece of research was done by J. Olędzki (1998) within the framework of the ‘The Global Journalists’ project, directed by D. Weaver (1998) and Z. Bajka (1991,2000). A. Stępińska and S. Ossowski (2011) – representatives of a young generation of Polish scholars - have been trying to continue the study. It should be noted that in all three cases surveys were not conducted on a representative sample. J. Olędzki (1998:289-290) conducted direct interviews (face-to-face) in two stages in 1992 and in 1997 on a sample of 240 journalists from eleven selected major Polish newspapers. Z. Bajka (2000:44) carried out an online survey among 250 journalists, among whom the majority were under 30 years of age (53 per cent of respondents). A. Stępińska and S. Ossowski (2011: 18) commissioned a study via Pentor, an institute for public opinion research, which conducted 329 interviews. Despite the limitation of surveys (they were not representative), they allowed the researchers to notice certain characteristics and trends. The first conclusion concerns the profile of the professional group over the past 10 years.

Interesting findings relate to the issues of journalistic autonomy and the political involvement of journalists. J. Olędzki’s studies (1998:291) showed, on the one hand, that Polish representatives of the profession were more afraid that the media could be used as a tool of the government’s or president’s propaganda (62.6% in Poland versus 38.7% in the US) and for the political mobilization of society (58.4% in Poland versus 39.5% in the US). On the other hand, over 40 per cent of the respondents did not oppose party activism and the political involvement of journalists. Interestingly, the study by A. Stępińska and S. Ossowski (2010:21-22) showed that journalists noticed an improvement in their professional autonomy when compared to the situation fifteen years previously. They indicated “full freedom” or “some freedom” (65%) in 2009 in contrast to the 1990s (42%). The data may suggest that the pressure exerted by publishers, editors, owners, colleagues, and also political and economic pressure, has been limited. In the end of the 2010s, Polish



journalists were very satisfied (21.6%) or satisfied with their jobs (more than 70%) and regarded the media organization that they worked for as good. The respondents who were employed in the television stations were satisfied to a small degree, but it is impossible to conclude from the data what percentage of the respondents worked for public television and what percentage worked for commercial stations.

The tradition of the local press originated in the interwar period. In 1937, 576 papers were published (Dziki, 1996:84) and although they were highly politicized, they had an important opinion-forming function, as well as integrating local communities. World War II and the communist era completed the process of destruction of the local media system, which had been well-developed prior to 1939. The first post-war years meant stagnation. The local and regional newspapers were created in the 1960s by the Robotnicza Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza company, which guaranteed the stability of this type of press in Poland (Gierula, 2006: 82). The studies dedicated to journalists working for the regional and local press are relatively weak, but better developed than the research on national journalists in the past 20 years. A small group of authors, headed by W. Chorążki from OBP in Krakow, carried out interesting studies in Malopolska. The majority of empirical research comes from the University of Silesia, where this type of analysis was conducted for many decades by a team of researchers (M. Gierula, M. Jachimowski, S. Michalczyk, Z. Oniszczyk and others). B. Kosmanowa and R. Kowalczyk from the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan did similar studies on the regional and local press in Poznan and Wielkopolska. There are some rather descriptive publications on the press in Lublin (L. Pokrzycka) and other regions of Poland. There are no comparative studies across different regions in Poland, and there are no publications dedicated to professionalism and journalistic culture after 1989 from a local perspective.

In general, we still suffer from a serious deficit of research on national and local journalists in Poland. The research conducted by A. Stępińska and S. Ossowski, although extremely important and necessary, does not answer many questions. We hope that the authors will continue this project. A few

new projects, such as “Media Accountability and Transparency in Europe” (7th Framework Programme of the European Commission) implemented in the years 2010-2013 ([www.zksid.politologia.uni.wroc.pl](http://www.zksid.politologia.uni.wroc.pl)) and “Journalism in change. Professional journalistic cultures in Poland, Russia and Sweden,” planned for 2011-2013 ([www.zksid.politologia.uni.wroc.pl](http://www.zksid.politologia.uni.wroc.pl)) are a challenge for Polish scholars and journalistic studies in the country.

### ***Journalism in today's Poland***

#### *Socio-demographic characteristics of Polish journalists*

Z. Bajka claimed that at the beginning of the political and economic transformation 1989 there were about 11,000 journalists (1991:149-159) and ten years later there were 18,000 journalists (2000:42). The number of journalists and freelancers employed in the media decreased in 2011. We estimate that around 12,000 people worked in this profession at the this time. ([www.mediaact.uni.wroc.pl](http://www.mediaact.uni.wroc.pl)).

There are more women in the profession today (41%) than at the end of the 1990s (35%). Unfortunately, we do not have the data which presents the age structure. The research by A. Stępińska and S. Ossowski shows only the average age of respondents in each media sector. The oldest journalists work for news agencies (49 years old) and the daily newspapers (40 years old), while the youngest ones are employed in television (29 years old), radio stations (32 years old) and online media (33 years old).

More journalists have higher education (1990s: 78%, 2009: 84.2%), but the percentage of graduates in journalism decreased (from 45% in the 1990s to 31.6 % in 2009). It should be noted that this differs from the trends in some Central European countries, where more professionals with a degree in journalism work, e.g. in Romania - 78.4% (Vasilendiuc, 2010:190) and Slovakia – 39% (Brecka, Ondrášik &Keklak, 2010:128). However, it is much higher than in the Czech Republic, where only 19% of journalists have completed the studies (Volek, 2010:178). The majority of Polish journalists had more than ten years of experience in the profession. The longest experience was declared by respondents employed in the news agency (20 years) and the daily

newspapers (15 years). This contrasts with the experience of television journalists (3 years) and online journalists (5 years) (Stepińska&Ossowski, 2011:19).

The other characteristic is a membership of journalistic associations. About 25 per cent of Polish journalists declared a membership in journalistic associations in the 1990s (Bajka, 2000:48-49), but only 14.3% in 2007 (Stepińska & Ossowski, 2011:20). The studies by A. Stepińska and S. Ossowski showed that mainly older generation professionals were members of those organizations. This was lower than for Czech journalists, 19% of whom declared a membership of a professional association or trade union (Volek, 2010:178).

The structure of the population of Polish journalists is quite similar to the German one (MediaAct project). The majority of the profession's representatives are employed in the national media, which dominate the Polish media system. More than 50% of the population work for the print media (36.5% for daily newspapers and 19% for magazines), 21% of the journalists are employed in radio stations (12% - public stations, 9% - commercial stations), and 17.5% are linked with television (9% in public TV, 9.6% in commercial TV). Less than 4% of the population work for the online news media (Internet) and 2% of journalists are employed in the news agencies (table 1). There are not enough data to help estimate how many per cent of journalists are freelancers. Observation allows us to say that most of them work for the print media rather than for radio or television.

**Table 1: Structure of the population of Polish journalists**

MEDIA TYPES	Per cent
daily newspapers	36.54
magazines	19.27
public service radio	12.07
private commercial radio	9.17
public service television	7.92
private commercial television	9.61
online news media	3.34
news agencies	2.08
Total	100.00

Source: Author's estimate from April 2011

### *Labour division and professional duties*

Polish journalists are a varied population. There are celebrities there as well as recognizable and influential journalists, for whom the media strive and who attract high fees. There is a large “middle class”, and another large group - workers in the “media factory” who are often “nameless”.

Who among Polish journalists can be regarded as a model for others engaged in the same profession? K. Hadamik (2005:220) argues that the journalistic profession today is a mix of three generations: those from the interwar period, journalists working in the communist era and the generation that entered the profession after 1989. There are two types of journalists at the very top of the professional hierarchy. The first one consists of the most popular and noticeable television journalists, presenters working for the evening news programs and current affairs programs. They are not only famous for their brilliant analyses on TV, but they are also authors of analytical and critical articles or columns published in important newspapers and magazines. This group is represented by journalists who entered the profession in the 1980s, such as Monika Olejnik, and those who started working at the beginning of the political transformation, like Tomasz Lis and Kamil Durczok. The other group includes journalists writing for prestigious newspapers and magazines, well-known columnists and commentators such as the left-oriented Janina Paradowska, Adam Michnik, Jacek Żakowski, Daniel Passent, and right-oriented ones such as Paweł Lisicki, Bronisław Wildstein, Piotr Zarba, Michał and Jacek Karnowskis, who are associated with the titles that express their political opinions clearly. The pride of place in this group is reserved for the legends of Polish journalism - Ryszard Kapuscinski, Hanna Krall, Jan Nowak Jeziorański, Jerzy Giedroyc, Dariusz Fikus, Andrzej Wojciechowski. Most of mentioned journalists were nominated for numerous awards, and also granted the title as of the best journalists of the twentieth century.

In contrast to other former communist countries in Central Europe, the generation of experienced journalists in Poland is not associated with communism, and their names do not have negative connotations. Young journalists consider them to be their masters, the best representatives of the

profession from whom they can learn and whom they can imitate. Only a few can reach the top - but what about the average Polish journalist?

A profound change was made in the structure of journalists after the collapse of communism in 1989. W. Sonczyk called this process a “personnel revolution,” because the concept of a “generational change” seemed too weak to convey the essence of the problem (2001:40). In just one decade, the number of people practicing the profession increased from 10,000 in the 1980s to 20,000-25,000 in the late 1990s. Full-time employment in the media was their primary source of income (Szot, 2010:213). A new political and economic reality, the transformation of the media market and the rapid development of commercial media offered new employment opportunities in areas linked with the media, such as press releases, public relations, advertising, online portals, etc. The market needed new staff and was able to absorb everyone who wanted to work in this profession - volunteers, enthusiastic professionals, amateurs, or even dilettantes (Sonczyk, 2001:40). This uncontrolled influx of individuals without a relevant education or professional competence into the profession was the consequence of too much openness, which - according to J. Zafubski (1997:89) - crossed the “security border”. Media owners, mostly commercial and local, employed young and inexperienced people, who were also at their superiors’ disposal.

Journalists’ generational exchange and the transformation of the profession resulted in journalists having problems defining their professional identity (Kowalska, 2005:70). The question that arises as a result is whom the journalist should serve: the publisher/broadcaster, the politicians or perhaps the public? The qualitative research conducted at the Institute of Political Studies PAN and Collegium Civitas in 2001 and 2002 (Kowalska, 2005:70) confirmed the division that exists in the population of Polish journalists - those who have high moral standards and write what is close to their heart, and those who write to order (Mocek, 2005:278-283).

The journalists who “have high moral standards” usually work for the media which are trying to maintain standards, have high demands and expect relevant professional skills from journalists. Opinion magazines, quality

newspapers, some radio and TV stations belong to this group. They offer jobs to the best journalists, sometimes offering very high salaries in order to outbid other competitive media. The owners of TVN and TVN 24, probably on the broadest scale in the country, rely on the celebrity strategy and employ the most popular Polish journalists. National radio stations, such as Radio Zet, Classic FM, Radio Tok FM or thematic channels, such as TV Business or Business TVNCNBC, place high requirements on candidates. It is very difficult to land a job with highly prestigious weekly magazines such as “Polityka” and “Tygodnik Powszechny”. A specific personnel policy is implemented by the editor of “Gazeta Wyborcza”, and the Holding Infor, which offers professional law and business press.

J. Mikułowski Pomorski analyzed an interesting aspect of personalization in contemporary journalism (2008:86). In his opinion, media personalization linked with well-known editors, publishers and journalists has begun to disappear. In this context, the information or the “news” is edited by impersonal teams from the media group such as Axel Springer (Ringier Axel Springer since 2009), Polskapresse, Bauer, etc. Only some media are able to keep their “personality”, behind which there are real people with names, voices and faces, such as Adam Michnik and Tomasz Lis on the one hand, or Tadeusz Rydzyk and Tomasz Sakiewicz, on the other.

### ***Relations to politics***

J. Curry claimed that the world of Polish journalists was a world of conflict (1990:73). The rise of Solidarity at the beginning of the 1980s brought with it not only new opportunities but also serious conflicts. Two groups of journalists appeared at the time – a group loyal to the communist party, and an opposition group which supported “Solidarity”. Both groups were heavily involved in the political process but – in J. Curry’s opinion – the journalists were professionals “*in the fullest sense of the definition given for the professionals of the West*” (1990:242). This deep ideological division is still visible among journalists today. A lot of them present their political preferences clearly; they express their opinions and moral values in a direct way.

On the one hand, we do not observe the phenomenon of political parallelism at the level of nationwide commercial TV and radio stations or in the case of "Gazeta Wyborcza", tabloids and opinion weekly magazines. On the other hand, public service broadcasting and a national quality newspaper "Rzeczpospolita" (2006–2011) do not fit into this scheme. In this case the notions of systemic parallelism (Jakubowicz, 2007c) and political instrumentalization seem to emphasize the features of the current Polish system.

Commercial radio and TV stations are autonomous in creating the contents of political and journalistic programs. They follow their own logic. Their reactions are definitely more similar to the media in the Liberal model. Support for political parties in those cases is rare, unpredictable, temporary, or it does not take place at all. A critical attitude to political actors that is defined as negativism prevails (Farnsworth&Lichter, 2008). In their case it is proper to talk about structural bias – criticism of all political actors. This criticism, sometimes very strong and often devoid of objectivism, can be treated as a kind of market strategy or the preferences of media owners, as in the case of RMF FM (1993–2007) which was owned by S. Tyczyński, who was against the whole political elite in Poland. Opinion polls show that public trust in certain politicians is low or very low (*Zaufanie do polityków*, 2010). In the 2006 polls, only 5 per cent of respondents indicated politicians as a group that serves public interest. At the same time, 40 per cent indicated that journalists serve the public interest and over 57 per cent defined them as honest, reliable and trustworthy. Such a high estimation for journalists and such a low one for politicians distinguishes Poland from many Western countries. It might affect the way the journalists themselves perceive political elites. Being able to maintain public support, they feel entitled to strong criticism of the whole political class. Negativism and media criticism are to help attract or hold viewers disappointed with politics. The difference consists in who gets criticized more strongly and more often and who gets criticized less strongly and less often.

This kind of partisanship, based on criticism of all political actors and of those who exercise power in particular, is present in many countries classified by Hallin and Mancini as corresponding to the Democratic Corporatist model, e.g. Germany and Sweden. It is defined as structural bias, which is more clearly seen in the horse-race pattern coverage than in the issues coverage.

In trying to maintain internal pluralism, the commercial media have long invited representatives of different political parties to comment on current affairs. However, their selection has been guided by the interviewees' popularity and attractiveness and, as a result, they chose the same politicians and experts. Generally, they emphasized the background, interpretation and opinion, but the interpretation and commentary dominated the information and report. In this context Polish journalism is closer to French and Italian journalism rather than to Anglo-Saxon or German, which is based on information, although in recent decades there has been a decrease in the amount of hard news and an increase in soft news, interpretation and opinion. On the other hand, Polish journalists working for private media are not as politically involved as Greek or Spanish journalists and media logic makes their behaviour and media coverage closer to those tendencies observed in the US.

Negativism and high exposure of aggression in political discourse is typical of the structural bias and the horse-race pattern coverage. This tone of coverage was especially dominant in the case of PiS and the leader of this party, but this was not an isolated case. J. Kaczyński was criticized in 46% and D. Tusk in 45% of the articles published in July 2011 in national daily newspapers (*Raport prasowy. Scena polityczna lipiec 2011*, 2011).



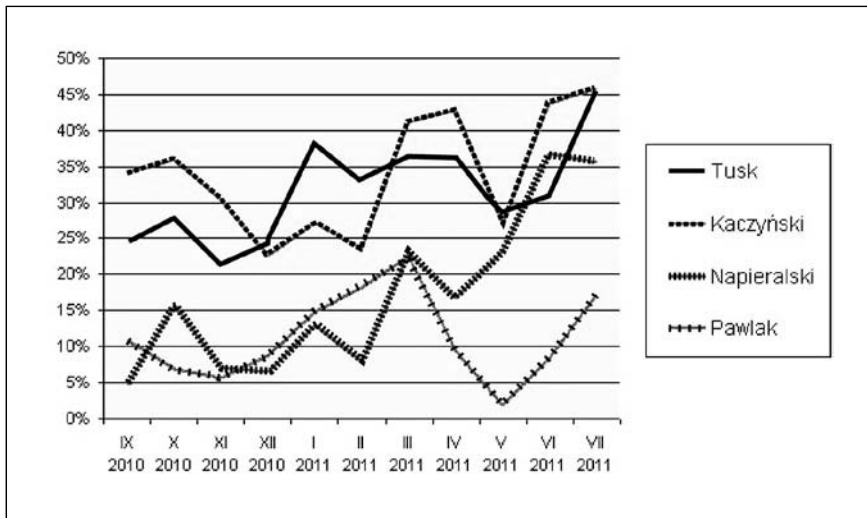


FIGURE 1. Negative coverage of Polish party leaders by national daily newspapers from September 2010 to July 2011 (percentage of articles)

Source: *Fala krytyki zalewa polityków, 2011*

It is important to emphasize that the media themselves are different when it comes to media coverage. Despite progressive tabloidization, TVN pays a lot of attention to political news, and tries to maintain high standards of journalism. TVN is not moving away from politics, and is making attempts towards the development of honest and fair news coverage. TV Polsat and RMF FM are typically commercial media where the direction of the development is determined by profit and the standard of news programs is rather low. In the case of these media, one can talk about the strategy of escapism and concentration on entertainment in their offer, and about marginalization of the news program. Radio Zet has recently joined the above group. Similar conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of the tabloids. “Fakt” and “Super Express” cover politics using the same media logic – economic results and profit instead of the party logic (Mazzoleni, 1987:85).

A specific place in the media system is occupied by two quality newspapers – “Gazeta Wyborcza” and “Rzeczpospolita”. Although both newspapers

have no formal relations with any particular political party, the level of partisanship in both cases is very high. Since its launch, “Gazeta Wyborcza” has opted for liberal values and supported the left wing of the political scene. “Rzeczpospolita” has been involved strongly in politics since 2006, supporting one political party – PiS and its leaders. The editors of these two newspapers have taken their places on the opposite sides of the political scene, which has resulted in a deep conflict between them.

A decade after presenting their three models of the media systems, D. Hallin and P. Mancini admitted that fundamental changes had occurred in the models. Political bias and political involvement, embodied by news “Foxification” (Wanta, 2008:112-113), appeared in the Liberal model in the USA; the quality of the news media was drastically lowered and so was journalistic professionalism. Traditionally politicized and publicly active media, which represent a high standard of professionalism in the Democratic Corporatist model, are gradually being supplanted by the *red top* tabloids, and the concentration of ownership and commercialization is proceeding. It seems that the Polarized Pluralist model, with its political parallelism and the state’s dominant role, is still unchanged. Still, there is no space for tabloids in the market, and politicized media owners affiliated to political parties stick to their views.

Summarizing this part of the analysis, it is essential to state that there is no simple answer to the question about the dominant kind of relationships between the media and politics and the level of journalistic culture in Poland (table 2). Journalistic professionalism, the main strategies for content building, the types of interests represented by the media, and political and ideological preferences are varied. In general, external pluralism is typical of the Polish media.

TABLE 2. Differentiation of journalistic professionalism in Poland

**Differentiation of journalistic professionalism in Poland**

Level of journalistic professionalism	Main strategy of content building	Media	Which interest	Political and ideological preferences
HIGH	Media performance principles	POLITYKA NEWSWEEK RZECZPOSPOLITA until 2006	Public interest Public interest Public interest	Left Neutral Neutral
MEDIUM	Entrenched journalism	GAZETA WYBORCZA RZECZPOSPOLITA since 2006 DZIENNIK (2006-2009)	Media logic Party logic  springerization	Left Conservative pro PiS  Conservative pro PiS
	Structural bias	TVN Radio Zet	Media logic Media logic	Negativism/Anti PiS Negativism/Anti PiS
LOW	Entrenched journalism	TVP PR1	Party logic Party logic	Pro PiS (2006-2010) Pro PiS (2006-2010)
	Extremely entrenched journalism	Gazeta Polska Radio Maryja TV Trwam Nasz Dziennik	Owner = party logic Non commercial	Conservative pro PiS Conservative pro PiS Conservative pro PiS Conservative pro PiS
	Structural bias	TV Polsat RMF FM Fakt Super Express	Media logic Commercial Tabloidization	Negativism Negativism Negativism Negativism

Source: Author

The Polish media system is now at a crossroads between the Liberal and the Polarized Pluralism tendencies. However, one can notice that when it comes to media coverage it also shares some features relevant to the Democratic Corporatist model.

It can be assumed that media digitalization and the development of newer technologies will foster the process of fragmentation. On the one hand, politicians will probably lose their domination over public service media, which are not likely to survive due to the number of offers but if they do, it is not clear what form they will take. It might soften the process of their politicization as politicians will not be able to control the contents of the digital media. Commercial media will probably leave the public sphere, with escapism becoming their most convenient strategy. On the other hand, it is also possible that fragmentation will occur. Even the smallest social groups might have their own biased media.

Finally, what is the future of the local media like? Their future is the biggest mystery. Maybe citizens will decide to take matters into their own hands and will replace the ossified media, which are often loyal to the local authorities, with their own teams that are aware of the community's problems. At this stage, all the options seem to be possible.

### ***Commercial pressure***

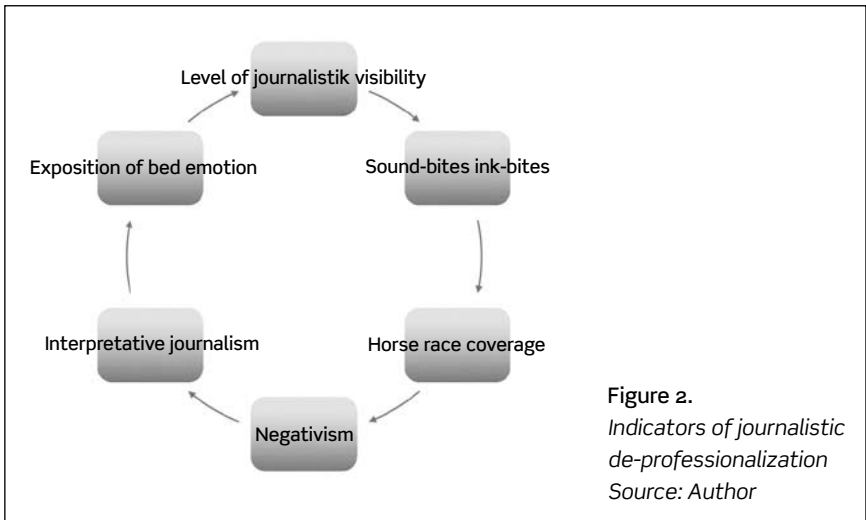
Political pressure is not the only problem in contemporary Poland. Freedom and independence in Central and Eastern Europe started in 1989, together with the liberalization and privatization of the media market (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2006:20; Dobek-Ostrowska&Głowacki, 2008:16-17). These fundamental changes resulted in strong competition among the media. Ownership concentration on the market started a few years later. Owners and advertisers put external pressure on the media and led them towards economic instrumentalization, which accelerated the process of tabloidization (Dobek-Ostrowska&Głowacki, 2008:16).

The owners with a strong economic position, such as Grupa Agora (although it was much affected by the financial crisis in 2008-2009), ITI (TVN), Polsat Cyfrowy (TV Polsat) or the owners of large radio networks – Bauer (Grupa RMF FM) and Eurozet Holding Company (Radio ZET), are more resistant to the pressure from advertisers than small local firms. However, what constitutes a real threat to journalistic autonomy is pressure

from the owner who employs and dismisses employees and who punishes undisciplined and sometimes disloyal journalists. Another threat to journalists is certainly the lack of economic stability, which is a result of employment contracts. Many of them do not have regular contracts, so they work on short-time contracts and are paid in a lump sum. Sometimes they are obligated to run their own one-person businesses and to sign a contract of specified work or a short-time commission with the media. They then have to wait a long time to be paid.

The results of the survey conducted by the OBP in Krakow in 1994 among the editors of print media (Pisarek, 1994:156) have interesting conclusions. The respondents considered the lack of skills in attracting advertisers (41.4 per cent) one of the most important problems they face at work. Only 13.7 per cent pointed to the poor knowledge of journalistic ethics, especially in the case of the dailies. In 2011, some of the respondents indicated not only “advertisers” but also “a fear of job losses”. Another problem mentioned in the survey was the fact that some journalists like “cash” and they are ready to do whatever editors or owners expect them to do (surveys for MediaAct project).

Strong competition among the media and a battle for audiences and advertisers are global problems that also affect Poland. These negative tendencies influence journalistic professionalism. Journalism becomes superficial, focused on scandals and sensations, slogans and simple expressions made by politicians in Parliament and on credulously used and unverified “ideological clusters” (Kowalska, 2005:78-79). In consequence, we can observe a process of journalistic de-professionalization, which is expressed by higher journalistic visibility, the shrinking of politicians’ sound bites and quotes, more negativism and exposition of angry emotions. Interpretative journalism and horse-race coverage become dominant in the news coverage of elections (Dobek-Ostrowska&Łódzki, 2008:235; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2011:120). (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.**  
*Indicators of journalistic de-professionalization*  
 Source: Author

**Conclusion**

Twenty years has not been long enough to develop permanent systemic features in Polish journalism. On the other hand, a period of two decades is long enough to gather sufficient empirical data to grasp general tendencies and directions of change.

Political parallelism has several dimensions which allow a researcher to determine whether or not it is present in a given media system. In addition, it is also possible to define a level and the form it takes. Dimensions of political parallelism include political bias, the degree of mass media partisanship, the degree of media-political elite integration, and the dominant model of relations between political actors and mass media. In order to diagnose the presence of parallelism one needs to confirm the presence of all its determinants. Our analysis showed that all political parties ruling after 1989 followed the party logic and aimed at media colonization. However, the development of commercial media with their strongly articulated logic turned out to be a serious obstacle to achieving the goal. Political instrumentalization concentrated in the area of the mainstream media, in the case of public service radio, public service television, and has also been observed in daily newspapers “Rzeczpospolita” (2006-2011).

Political parallelism has its roots in a developed party system, where political parties are strong and can count on both a loyal electorate and faithful media organizations that do not change their preferences each time elections take place. Polish political parties have a short history, and hence relationships or close connections such as those found in some Spanish and Greek dailies (not to mention Italy and Berlusconi's Mediaset), have not been created. In countries classified by Hallin and Mancini as belonging to the Polarized Pluralist model, the consolidation of the party system and the party rooting in society is higher. However, private media do not change their preferences each time elections take place, and public service media support the party that wields power or the one that controls them at a given moment.

The Polish media are very diverse in their relations with political actors. Some of them are very unstable in their sympathies, or are economically or politically instrumentalized. They give conditional and economic support to parties whose existence is sometimes shorter than the media presence in the market. Commercial nationwide media have managed to achieve political autonomy, but they have not managed to avoid economic pressure from the owners and advertisers. The market model (Croteau&Hoynes, 2006:39) has replaced the public sphere model, and media logic is dominant in this segment. Public service broadcasting turned out to be weak and lost the battle for independence. This was caused by the lack of strong professional ethics in journalists, who often joined post-electoral 'purges' and thus eliminated colleagues that sympathized with the party that had just lost the elections. Nowadays journalistic bias is an obvious element and does not raise any objections among representatives of the profession, who consider their political involvement an advantage. A similar attitude can be noticed among political elites who do not regard their control over public broadcasting service as something they should be blamed for. On the contrary – they sometimes think this is what a winner is entitled to.

After the fall of communism in 1989, no political parallelism, with all its features and qualities typical for Southern European countries like Italy or Spain, was created. The media are partisan, and other indicators of political

parallelism do not exist at all or are very weakly developed. In this context, it is definitely better to talk about the political instrumentalization of the media instead of political parallelism. The media are used by political actors if circumstances are favourable, e.g. public service broadcasting supporting the process of politicization. On the other hand, the media are used by media owners, which leads to commercialization and tabloidization. Maybe we should agree with P. Mancini, who claims that politically neutral media are history. Technology fosters fragmentation and, in turn, stimulates the development of committed journalism which is closer to political parties (*Polska śródziemnomorska*, 2011). In this context, the changes and development tendencies of the Polish media system are the same as in other countries and should not come as a surprise.

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Jöran Hök

## 4. Swedish journalism – a long struggle for autonomy

In Sweden and other Nordic countries, journalistic culture can be described as a strong belief system. Most journalists share the notion of autonomous, interdependent and impartial journalism, which provides citizens with the facts and information necessary to take part in common debate and decision-making; in other words, to promote democracy. Today, in a time of major restructuring in the media industry, journalists emphasise this position as it is a vital part of self-defence for their craft.

The concept of autonomy is contested, with different meanings in different settings. In international relations it could describe an unwanted situation for a nation without independence. In a mass media setting it usually describes the opposite: a goal connected to professional independence. It is not only a desirable social goal but also a vital internal goal; “fostering professional identity, boosting employee morals in periods of structural change and creating possibility for critical reflection” (McDevitt 2003).

The level of autonomy is a trade-off between different interests and the outcome of a long historical process. It is also a relationship that can be challenged. Journalistic autonomy is today perceived as threatened by changing conditions outside the work place, which condition *external autonomy*, as well as inside, which challenge *internal autonomy*.

### *The struggle for external journalistic autonomy in Sweden*

Several interconnected social phenomena are crucial to understanding the development and characteristics of Swedish journalistic culture.

- The first is Sweden's long history as a unified nation with a strong central administration and common laws.
- The second is the early political influences that resulted in the world's first freedom of the press legislation.
- The third is journalism's long, stubborn and persistent struggle for sustainable press freedom.
- The fourth is the early breakthrough of universal literacy, which enabled a rapid increase in newspapers throughout the country.
- The fifth is the prominence of the party system and the system's influence on media policies.
- The sixth - a more recent phenomenon - is the consistent commitment to independent journalism as a core professional ideal.

These factors paved the way for an autonomous journalistic culture. Initially they created an opportunity for autonomy in relation to state power (external autonomy) and much later the possibility of independence in relation to media company owners and political interest groups (internal autonomy).

Sweden is one of the world's oldest nation-states. Some of the key elements of the early nationalism of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were efforts to combat illiteracy and the dissemination of mass editions of books and newspapers. Liberal journalists were among the first to spread the idea of information freedom: free exchange of views, free elections, freedom of association and freedom for mass media companies.

Freedom for news media was not easy to achieve. It took decades of bitter feuds and was bitterly contested by state power, which was in the hands of a conservative monarchy. The first milestone was the Press Act, a law passed by the Swedish Parliament in 1766, the first of its kind in the world. The law was adopted by parliament during the Age of Liberty (1719-1772), when Sweden was experimenting with a new form of parliamentary democracy. The core of

the new press law was the right to free debate on vital social issues. A central principle was the abolition of state censorship. The Act made, however, two important exceptions: direct criticism of the monarchy or the Lutheran state church was not permitted.

However, after six years, the new law was put aside by King Gustav III, who made his power absolute. After this followed strong state regulation of books and news papers, which lasted for twenty years, until the king was assassinated in 1792. The death of the king gave new impetus to the movement for free speech. In 1792 the parliament decided on a new freedom of the press law that had strong similarities to the first one. This was confirmed in the new constitution of 1809 which included a new Press Act. This once again stated that censorship was not allowed. Responsibilities for example for defamation could be claimed only retrospectively.

The new Press Act was a victory for the growing liberal political movement. This was inspired by the democratic movements on the continent, especially in England, France, Germany and Denmark, but it was not secured until the mid-1800s. The new monarch, King Karl XIV Johan, recruited from France, was no friend of freedom of the press. Very soon the new regime decided on restrictions to the press laws. The state now required prior authorization for publishers of all periodicals (Holmberg, Oscarsson, Rydén 1983), which resulted in the exclusion of unwanted publishers.

The journalists resisted. Strengthened by the June uprising in France in 1830 and the movement for democracy in Poland the legendary newspaper man, Lars Johan Hiertha started the Swedish newspaper *Aftonbladet* in 1830. For the next twenty years, this newspaper was at the forefront of the liberal movement for press autonomy. The fight continued until 1850, when the authorities changed policy (Gustafsson Rydén 2010)

The victory over media regulation for the growing liberal movement in Sweden coincided with early industrialization in Sweden, which in turn favoured the nascent labour movement and its political party the Social Democrats. These two movements were both important pillars of a growing mass movement that demanded freedom of opinion, political democracy and popular education.

### *Party politicization of mass media*

Regarding the issue of press autonomy, it is important to note that independence was more implicit than explicit in the liberal press in the 1800s. Leading journalists were mainly against the autocracy and censorship, but they were not independent in relation to all political actors, in fact they were part of one wing of the political landscape (Leth 1998). We can describe this as high external autonomy for printed media, but low internal autonomy.

From the 1850s and onwards newspaper publishing became a central tool for all political actors. The Conservatives launched several new magazines, many with the direct support of the monarchy. Newspapers became a tool for winning the battle for public opinion, a mass audience broadened by urbanization and improvements in literacy.

If the phase before 1850 was a battle for a free press, the following period was characterized by the development of an increasingly polarized political press. For journalists, this meant that external autonomy (the right to act as a third state) was secured, but internal autonomy (independent journalists within the media companies) was an exception, especially in the overtly partisan newspapers.

When the Swedish Journalists Union was founded in 1901, the Swedish mass media was well into this politicized phase. Due to ongoing internal disputes and political divisions, the Journalists Union was not a factor to be reckoned with until after the Second World War. Working conditions were poor, wages low, the status of the profession was low and working conditions unsafe. Even if the partisan newspapers partly adopted a less party-directed journalism, internal autonomy was not achieved until the 1950's.

The first signal of a more independent journalism was the advent of Swedish radio in the 1920s, inspired by Britain's BBC. Audio broadcasting activities were regulated by a separate law. A company was founded which had the exclusive right to transmit radio until the 1980's. The same principles applied when television started in 1956, incorporated in the same company as radio (Hadenius/Weibull/Wadbring 2008). Commercial stations were not allowed, a policy which was enforced in consensus between state leaders,

the leading political parties and news media owners, the latter fearing competition.

When radio was introduced it was written into the statutes that broadcasting should be characterized by "impartiality and objectivity". This marked neutrality in relation to the party-political actors and from the start this was prominent in radio news broadcasts, which were introduced in 1937 (Leth *ibid*). However, investigative journalism was still rare. A few voices were heard, for instance in some opposition papers during the Second World War, when Sweden was formally neutral but submissive to Germany. Despite this, this position was more the exception than the rule. It took a long time for criticism of state leaders and politicians to be accepted by media companies and the establishment.

### ***Internal autonomy achieved – and contested***

During the postwar period, the vision of autonomy was strengthened, influenced by British and American press policies. The 1950s were characterized by the widespread closure of smaller local newspapers, but also by a general weakening of the party press. During the 1960s, the Journalist Union became a strong representative of the trade and television gave the trade more status. Academic journalism education courses were started in Stockholm and Gothenburg, and were later incorporated with Mass Communication departments at universities. Most Swedish journalists were educated at these institutes or on other courses. Educational Institutes and the Union emphasized the importance of free and independent journalism. The Swedish media system changed so as to be characterized by a relatively high degree of journalistic autonomy (Hallin/Mancini 2004: 174ff).

The last thirty years have been characterized by adaptation to international media standards. During the early 1990s private radio and television companies were allowed to enter the market. Sweden previously had two TV channels on an exclusive basis. This system was now challenged by the satellite channels and licensed TV companies.



As competition grew stronger, circulation figures for daily press slowly decreased from the 1990s and onwards. This trend has been extremely harsh for the single-copy tabloids, while regional newspapers have managed better. As a whole, the media industry has been characterized by growing concentration; fewer companies own a number of local and regional newspapers, even though they have different colours on the editorial pages. During the 2000s, Sweden has seen the start-up of numerous multi-production enterprises in which journalists work for web, print, radio and television – all within the same company. The expected explosion of free online newspapers has, however, failed to materialize. This market has instead been usurped and dominated by the established media companies (Nygren/Zuiderveld 2011).

The last decade can be seen as a period of uncertainty. In particular, there is uncertainty about funding prospects for the media when advertisers are streamed over to the Web, television and other channels. There are doubts among journalists about the ability of journalism to maintain its leading role in society, when challenged by weakening economic conditions and reducing staff numbers.

The independence of the journalists was closely connected to the ideology of impartial, reporting, mirroring or objectively describing events and processes which was articulated early in North American and British journalism (Schudson 2001). To be impartial, journalists also had to be independent in relation to the state and corporate boards and interest groups. An important conclusion of Schudson's review is that this occupational ideology prevailed as a result of a number of converging factors, among them changes in the political landscape and changes in identity and ethical codes within the profession (ibid).

### ***Some basic facts about the Swedish journalism landscape***

The bulk of the working press corps is organized in Swedish Journalist Union (SJF). There is no official registered number of professional journalists in the country as a whole, but membership statistics for SJF give an idea of changes in the work force. The number of members has fluctuated at around 17,000 since 1989, among them 13,700 active members and the rest being students and senior members.

To this figure, about 2000 journalists outside the union should be added, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics (SCB). The number of journalists in Sweden should therefore be around 15,000, but the figure is uncertain as many freelance journalists only work part time.

Most Swedish journalists work in daily newspapers. In 2005, 50% were occupied in papers publishing at least two times per week, 27% worked for radio and television, the majority in public service, 17% worked for magazines, 6% other (Edstrom 2008). As can be seen from the table below, the number of jobs in regional papers is still high. The number of jobs has declined in the tabloid evening papers and circulation has been halved in a decade. The number of those employed in television and in magazines (popular and trade press), and in the freelance sector has increased:

TABLE 1: *Workplaces (percentage)*

	1989	1999	2005
Freelancers	10.4	9.3	13.8
Provincial Press	34.0	33.8	27.9
Metropolitan morning papers	13.2	9.9	11.0
Metropolitan evening papers	8.2	3.9	3.8
Swedish state television	4.6	6.7	8.9
Swedish radio national	3.2	2.7	3.0
Swedish radio local	4.7	7.0	7.2
Commercial radio / TV	0.9	5.1	4.5
Journals	3.4	15.0	9.4
Others	17.3	6.5	10.6

(Source: JMG-survey quoted in Nygren 2008/b: 42)

There is no specific figure for those who work primarily with the web, but most people who work with such production are also active as writing reporters or radio and television reporters. In terms of age distribution, a shift has occurred over the past 20 years. In 1989-2005, the proportion of journalists aged 50 plus grew from 12 to 20%.

The proportion of women increased from 30% to 50% (Djerf Pierre 2007:24) during the last forty-year period. A gender shift has also been seen in terms of coverage areas. More women are now working with traditional "male" areas.

There has been a marked change within a period of fifteen years, although men still hold prestigious jobs more often. However, men and women perceive the issue of a gender-marked journalism in different ways. Half of the respondents in the JMG survey believe that men are favoured in the allocation of functions. Just as many believe that when more women got managerial positions the result was a broadened coverage: not only "hard" but also "soft" areas were reflected. (Monica Löfgren-Nilsson 2005).

### ***Recent studies on challenges to Swedish journalism***

Swedish mass media research has devoted limited attention to the study of working conditions and work processes for journalists. Although some research has been conducted in recent years, it has mainly concentrated on content studies, surveys and interviews. There are also some rare examples of ethnographic studies.

Swedish press history is documented in a comprehensive study under the guidance of Professors Karl-Erik Gustafsson and Per Rydén (5 books, in total 2000 pages), which includes Swedish mass media history from the 1600s to the present day. This work provides a very good overview of press freedom and the profession's emergence in Sweden. A summary report has been published in English (2010).

The first journalist survey was made in 1969, when 400 Swedish journalists were interviewed by students at the Journalist School in Stockholm. Several other comprehensive and recurrent surveys among Swedish journalists have been conducted since 1989 by the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism at Göteborg University. The results have been presented in several books, the most recent being "The journalists in Sweden," (2008). This anthology provides a unique indication of perceived changes in the press corps over time. The studies are not supplemented by interviews or participatory

observations, which is a limitation, but the magnitude and the repetition of the study provide important data.<sup>11</sup>

Some regional surveys have been made, for example, among journalists in Östergötland County in 2006 (Nygren 2008), among Swedish journalism students in 2010 and among 100 selected Swedish journalists in 2011 (Nygren, Degtereva, Pavlikova, 2010, and Nygren, Degtereva 2011). These studies provide a renewed indication of the perceived changes in working conditions and production processes.

One particularly interesting study was conducted in 2006 with ethnographic studies at five newspapers, one radio station and three television newsrooms (Nygren2008a). The study focused on different aspects of the editorial processes of change and its impact on journalistic culture, such as technological changes. The studies particularly focused on the impact of the rapidly growing web-production, as well as on layout-driven news media processes and new radio technologies. Other key phenomena studied were the emergence of multi-reporters and different models of multi-channel publishing.

Annika Bergström, researcher at Göteborg University, has conducted research on the interaction between journalists and audiences on the web. Her work is connected to the concept of “Web 2.0”, understood as “new interactive web services and possibilities characterized by the freedom to share media content and to participate in its production” outside the journalist work place (Bergström 2008).

Valuable facts and reflections on the development of web journalism in Sweden can be found in works by Mikael Karlsson, who is a mass communication researcher at Karlstad University. Karlsson’s research in online journalism in Sweden shows that, to some extent, the role of journalists has changed. It is now open for a more “fluid journalism”, where reporters and users interact.

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<sup>11</sup> 70% answered (1102 persons). No less than 458 alternatives were given in the last survey, which was conducted in 2005 (Asp 2007). The survey was only directed to those working in mass media companies or as freelancers, specifically as journalists, not to “communicators” or in the “information sector”, who are no longer members of the Swedish Union of Journalists.

News on the net is changing in a continuous process as new data comes in from various sources, analysts and commentators, in which journalists no longer have a monopolistic role. Karlsson concludes that changes to the web have “put journalism under pressure”. But empirical studies do not suggest that we can speak of a “reorganization, upheaval or revolution”, he writes, as most of the content on the web is still published by journalists (Karlsson 2010:116ff, 142).

One professional development that has attracted attention in association with the development of web journalism is multimedia and multi-channel journalism. Multimedia journalists have skills that allow them to publish their work in both radio, television and at the web, as well as in traditional newspapers and magazines. In a recent book, Gunnar Nygren and Maria Zuiderveld, researchers at Södertörn University, have made case studies of multi-channel journalism in five Swedish media companies. The study shows that, in all of the companies, the “old” newspaper is still the hub of activity, but other “new” platforms such as local television and the web page are becoming more prominent. Many journalists within these companies are still sceptical about working via several channels. But there are incentives that encourage such work; online publishing is faster and provides space for new forms of storytelling (Nygren/Zuiderveld 2011:140ff)

Finally, the ongoing debate within the Swedish journalist and mass communication community is reproduced in a recent volume from Simo media research institute, published in the autumn of 2011 (von Krogh 2011). The debate in the spring of 2011 was whether there has been any great change in the role of journalists or not. The participants reflected the views expressed in international debate over the past ten years. This book is valuable as it refers to a conversation between commentators with different positions and perspectives. The research community is represented by a professor of journalism at the University of Stockholm, Sigurd Allern, among others. In a chapter in the book he joins those who do not see that there has been a fundamental change in journalism. He sees an important social role for journalism in the future; to survive the competition, journalism can provide

added value by being more reliable, credible and useful than other information providers on the internet (Allern 2011)<sup>12</sup>.

### ***Current data on changes in Swedish journalism***

Material from previous studies can provide clues to key developments in Swedish journalism over the past decade:

*Changes in practices.* The Swedish news media is exposed to increasing commercial pressures and increased competition due to decreasing circulation and declining advertising revenues. This was accentuated during the economic recession of 2008-2009. Newspaper management has also been subjected to increasing pressure from shareholders to increase profit margins. This development has affected daily work through the streamlining of the workplace and changes in work organization. Based on data collected in field by studying a number of editorial boards, Nygren (2008) notes five significant factors that are changing in day-to-day work:

- Economic factors are more significant. Competition for readers and viewers is more intense and therefore budgetary factors are more pronounced within the companies. The distinct boundary between the editorial board and the advertising department is now blurred.
- There is a heavier workload. Every journalist is working more multi-functionally each day: not only reporting, but also doing the photographer's job or sending a television or radio report. These functions were previously distinctly separate.
- The pace of production is faster. More material is produced in a shorter time – and with more updating. Daily newspapers' web pages are updated several times a day. Radio and television stations are producing more news programs each day.
- There have been changes in the way work is organized. Journalists are working more in groups and with distinct formats.

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<sup>12</sup> There has been an ongoing debate on the future of Swedish journalism in several fora, among them the Publicists Club (PK), the Swedish Union of Journalists (SJF) and its magazine "the Journalist", in the magazine "the Media World" published by the Press Owners Organization (TU) and also at the Institute for Media Studies (Simo), which is an independent institute.

- There is more interactivity with the readers. This is more pronounced – especially through web-sites, and almost every journalist now produces material for the papers or broadcast station’s website, where the public can more or less freely and continuously comment or complement the reports. A few journalists also have their own blogs, but this is still concentrated to a few reporters (Nygren 2008/a:15).

In the debate on the future of journalism, the users’ increasing role in news production has often been highlighted. It has even been suggested that this may replace journalism in the future. Bergström contributed to this debate through a questionnaire to a number of users. Analysis of the answers showed that there was a limited interest from “the audience” in participating in content creation for news sites. The persons who did use interactive facilities and content creation tended “to be yet another tool for persons already possessing substantial competence about society and political life and who are already busy in the online world” (Bergström 2008).

*Values and norms.* A hint of how the journalists view their professional role over time is another question in the JMG survey, which has been conducted on four occasions. This question was about the professional role and the respondents were asked to reflect on this statement: “A journalist should be or be able to...”. Respondents could use several answers, but the result clearly shows – over time - strong support for the watchdog role (Asp 2007):

TABLE 2: *Opinions of professional role in four surveys*

	1989	1994	1999	2005
Democratic watchdog	70	74	78	80
Simplify complicated events	65	72	77	76
Stimulate new thoughts and ideas	46	52	56	51
Criticize injustice in society	44	47	48	45
Give people new experiences	43	50	47	42
Neutrally reporting events	29	27	30	33
Mirroring majority opinions	22	22	22	19

One reflection made after the last survey in 2005 (quoted in Wiik 2007), is that there still is a strong feeling for critical inquiry as a central group ideology. This corresponds well with earlier works by Melin-Higgins (1996) who presented a study of the characteristics of journalists and Djerf-Pierre (2001) who produced an earlier report that drew on the 1999 survey.

A similar observation was made in a survey made of 100 Swedish (and 100 Russian) journalists in 2010, showing a very strong commitment in Sweden to the concept of independence for journalists to scrutinize those in power (Nygren/Degtereva 2011).

*Levels of autonomy.* There is sometimes a difference between what is discovered in a field study and what respondents answer when asked to describe their situation. In the surveys of Swedish journalists conducted by JMG, the Mass Communication Department at Gothenburg University (Asp 2007), journalists were asked if they have seen major changes in working conditions during the last decade. Most respondents answered that they perceived changes to be limited, but some differences were reported. In particular, there are less employees and the stress of daily work had increased (Löfgren-Nilsson 2007: 68-70).

TABLE 3: *Estimates of changes in conditions in the profession the last 5-10 years*

	Less	Minor	More
Stressful	7	36	57
Creative	29	49	22
Quality	32	45	23
Discussions on professional role	33	50	17
Audience contact	20	59	21
Independence	20	53	28
Independence	63	29	8
Work outside office	34	54	12

(Source: Löfgren-Nilsson *ibid.*)



Another survey, of editorial staff in the province of Östergötland in 2006, suggests that other journalists believe that the scope for independent work has declined. For instance, the journalists perceive that there is less time for research and data evaluation, that the workday is more controlled by the editorial board and that an on-line focus makes reporters stay in the newsroom and work less in the field (Nygren 2008/b: 97-98)

According to Nygren, these changing factors limit the possibility for criticism of sources and set a time limit for in-depth reporting; they can be seen as a de-skilling of the profession (ibid p. 151). In the JMG survey, most respondents stated that they still view work as being highly independent and creative. The respondents were referring to independence at the workplace.

In further research, it will be important to follow up surveys with in-depth interviews in order to get a closer picture of changes in daily work. It will also be important to conduct ethnographic journalism studies to depict and judge changes. Thirdly it will be important to operationalize changes to practices and norms which will increase or decrease the level of independence, so as to evaluate changes in the direction of either “de-skilling” or “re-skilling” and “de-professionalization” or “re-professionalization”. In turn, this will permit an assessment of whether Swedish journalism is facing more or less autonomy.

### ***The future of Swedish journalism – opportunities and threats***

While waiting for the results of the Journalism in Change project, it is possible to get some hints about the views of Swedish journalists on the current state of the craft, as well as about the future. The basis for this analysis is recent interviews (Nygren Zuiderveld 2011), as well as a compilation of recent debates among Swedish journalists and researchers made by the Simo research institute (von Krogh 2011).

The focus is on three categories:

- Perceptions of *economical and political changes* conditioning the future for journalism
- Perceptions of changes to *the professional role* of journalism in society
- Perceptions of changes in preconditions for professional *ethical standards*.

*Economical changes (1):* Researchers as well as professionals agree that the business model is under stress. Over the last ten years, circulation has decreased; there have been severe losses in revenue as advertisers have moved to other channels than newspapers and magazines. In total, this situation has forced media companies to make lay-offs and changes in media production, but also to search for new ways of making an income.

The economic crisis of 2007-2008 was most critical for evening newspapers and morning papers in the big cities. Regional papers were least affected, but have referenced predicted structural problems with mergers and rationalizations. The increasing concentration of the media sector has been presented as a threat to diversity. Concentration, rationalization and reuse of materials may also have implications for copyright and for the diversification of the profession.

The most urgent perceived *threat* in the future is whether companies will face seriously weakened economic conditions if advertisers prefer other arenas and whether there will be continued reductions in circulation, which will lead to continued losses in the form of fewer subscribers and fewer sold single copies.

The most commonly perceived *opportunity* mentioned in the debate is seizing the chance to renew the media market by (a) being open to creativeness and entrepreneurship and (b) being more reactive to suggestions and demands in dialogue with the audiences. A striking change is the news media's focus on feature journalism solely in the newspaper and "blue light" journalism on the web. The idea is not to lose paying audiences. The method used is the provision of a heavier and more qualitatively oriented journalism in the mainstream press and providing a limited news service to the public via web sites.

Nearly all newspapers now have fairly comprehensive web pages, but there are very few who manage to make profit from news services on the web.

*Economical changes (2):* Public service media (radio and television) is partly financed by licences, partly by state funding. There have been recent signals from the government about cuts in funding; leading politicians have said that they do not want tax payers' money to go entertainment programs on

television and radio, but only to traditional public service programs such as current affairs, documentaries and news reporting.

Since 1973, many Swedish newspaper companies have been granted state press subsidies. The main argument for this was maintaining a diverse media market and avoiding media monopolies. The government has several times declared that this will be cut, but so far there have been only marginal changes.

In Sweden, many small cultural and debate magazines have received subsidies since the 1980s. More recently, there have been signs that these subsidies will be reduced. Several cultural magazines have already seen their funding decline. The government has declare that they only want to financially support those who engage in traditional cultural coverage, such as literature and the arts.

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ECONOMIC CHANGES	
Threats	Opportunities
Business model under stress	Open up for creativity and entrepreneurship
Less funding for public service	Trying to make on-line reporting profitable
Reduced circulation	Finding new ways to make income
Advertisers leave for alternative channels	

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*Political changes:* One threat is the political pressure to curtail information laws, often with reference to protection for individuals. Steps in this direction have been proposed by a governmental committee which is tasked with studying the possibility to change the Freedom of Information Act. These proposals are still being debated and have not yet reached parliament. Prominent media representatives have already criticized the committee’s various proposals.

*Changes in the professional role:* The debate on the future of the professional role has been rather polarized. On one side there are critics of the mainstream media who claim that traditional journalism is already on its way to being replaced by social media, bloggers and grassroots (citizen) reporters. On the

other side, there are proponents of the “old” traditional journalism (not least representatives of the journalists’ union) who claim that qualitative journalism is needed more than ever due to the information chaos on the internet, as well as the unreliable and fragmented information resources provided by social media and the blogosphere.

One opportunity presented by both sides is that journalists adapt more to changing media habits and listen more to the audience’s needs and requirements, a position similar to that put forward by Polis, a media debate forum at the London School of Economics (Beckett 2008).

A vital function that is emphasized by representatives of mainstream journalism is that journalism is vital in evaluating and examining the noise made by the growing sector of resource-rich public relations firms, communications departments, advertising companies and strategic communicators. These proponents also emphasize the necessity of defending and developing journalists’ unique role in scrutinizing those in power to the benefit of society and the democratic system.

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CHANGES TO THE PROFESSIONAL ROLE	
Threats	Opportunities
The audience is leaving mainstream media for the internet and social media	To develop online reporting by using multi-media skills. To strengthen support from and dialogue with the audience

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*Changes in professional ethical standards:* One threat is that diminishing resources will result in less investigative reporting, which is a vital part of journalism’s ability to critically scrutinize those in power. Another threat is the risk of declining opportunities to critically examine and evaluate the flow of information produced by information officers, PR companies or interest groups.

One opportunity is the perceived increase in demand for qualitative reporting that is accurate and accountable. It is therefore necessary to strengthen capacity for analysis and in-depth reporting, as well as increasing cooperation with researchers inside or outside universities.

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## CHANGES TO ETHICAL STANDARDS

### Threats

More dependent on information companies as indoor work increases

Less resources for critical inquiry and for investigative reporting

### Opportunities

Dialogue with the public and more efforts in qualitative reporting: in-depth journalism, analyses and commentary.

Cooperation with research institutes and universities

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### *Conclusions and suggestions for further research*

Swedish journalistic culture has been characterized by two trends: an early strong desire for external autonomy, and a later one for internal autonomy. The political system (autocracy) loosened its strong opposition to critical news media in the mid 1800s, which allowed external autonomy. After 1850 there was a period of nearly a hundred years during which political parties held a steady grip on news media. It was not until the party political system gradually changed from the 1950s and onwards that internal autonomy was achieved, although there were trends in this direction earlier in some newspapers.

There are polarized perceptions of the future for journalism, in which one camp – highly critical to contemporary news journalism – declares the imminent death of the craft, and the other camp – representing mainstream media and the journalists' union – claims that journalism is needed more than ever as there is a growing need for qualitative reporting and critique.

In the current debate on the future of Swedish journalism, three crucial factors are highlighted in describing challenges to Swedish journalistic culture, the threats and opportunities in the contemporary Swedish mass media landscape in a time of uncertainty:

Firstly, there are *economical and political challenges*: the business model is under stress. Circulation in mainstream media has declined steadily. Advertisers have moved away from subscription media to local ad-funded media and to the internet. Government subsidies will probably be reduced. Voices have been raised to limit information freedom, for instance there is an ongoing discussion in which proposals have been made to curtail freedom of information laws, often with reference to protection for individuals.

There are also different perceptions of threats and opportunities to *the professional role* of journalism in society. One threat is that of the audience leaving traditional mass media for other information channels, whereas an opportunity is more demands for professional selection and analysis in the internet jungle.

Finally, there are different perceptions of changes to the preconditions for professional *ethical standards*. One threat is fewer resources for source critical reporting and too much dependence on public relations material, whereas an opportunity is more demand for in-depth journalism, analyses and commentaries.

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## 5. Autonomy – a crucial element of professionalization

The British reporter Robert Fisk describes his former self as naive on becoming Middle East correspondent for *The Times* 1979. This naivety can protect the integrity of the journalist, he concludes after covering nearly 30 years of wars in the region (Fisk 2005). In his 1200-page summary, *The Great War for Civilisation*, he declares that journalists try to be the first nonpartisan witnesses to history, to report on history while it is happening, so that no one can say “we did not know, nobody told us”. To fulfil this mission journalists have to protest against all kinds of power – “especially when the governments and politicians bring us into war, when they have decided to kill and that others will die” (Fisk 2005).

The degree of autonomy is the crucial element of this professionalism. It made it possible for a reporter like Robert Fisk to cover the wars for *The Times* and later for *The Independent*. It is a kind of autonomy that politicians often try to restrict, especially during wars. It is the degree of autonomy that makes the difference between professional journalism and propaganda.

Autonomy is also a crucial part of the academic definition of the process of professionalization (Hallin/Mancini 2004). This chapter is an attempt to provide some theoretical background to the relationship between the process of professionalization and the degree of autonomy. Some of the key issues are:

- Professionalism and professionalization – two different notions.
- Professional autonomy on different levels – both external autonomy in relation to power in society and internal autonomy for journalists in the media company.



- Two perspectives on the use of the notion “professionalism” – from outside or from within the profession.
- The relation between political and economic pressure on the autonomy of journalists.
- How does media development influence journalists’ autonomy?

Media development is changing the journalistic profession in many ways. New journalistic practices are being developed; work processes are changing due to new technology and new channels, such as online journalism. The *Journalism in change* research project analyses these changes from the perspective of professional autonomy and the degree of autonomy found in different media systems. Is the degree of professional autonomy greater with new tools and new channels for communication, or is professional autonomy challenged by stronger pressure?

Some of these questions are discussed in the end of this chapter, and will also be researched in the upcoming parts of the project.

### ***Professionalization as an analytic tool***

First we need to make a distinction between the two closely related words professionalism and professionalization. The word *professional* is often used to describe a skilful person, a person producing something of high quality. Professionalism is something that journalists embrace or pursue as a description of quality in their work (McQuail 2005, Hanitzsch 2009).

The process of *professionalization* is something else – it is when an occupation gradually develops into a profession that has all the characteristics of an independent profession. This process is described in sociology, where research has mostly analysed classical professions, such as lawyers and medical doctors.

The sociologist Eliot Freidson has defined a profession as “a set of institutions which permit the members of an occupation to make a living while controlling their own work” (Freidson 2001:17). Professional logic gives control over the work to the professionals, in contrast to two other competing

kinds of logics – market logic which has consumer control and bureaucratic logic, which has control through rules and laws. The key question is the control of the work, the power to decide in daily work. In reality, these three kinds of ideal logics are mixed, and the question is what kind of logic dominates.

Freidson defines the elements of the ideal type of classical profession (pp 127-129):

- Specialized work, grounded in a body of knowledge and skill that is given special status in the labour force.
- A division of labour that is controlled by occupational negotiation.
- A sheltered position in the labour market based on the qualifying credentials created by the occupation.
- Training programs in higher education that are controlled by the occupation.
- An ideology that asserts greater commitment to doing good work than to financial gain, to the quality rather than the economic efficiency of work.

Together, these elements give a profession some kind of autonomy, both as a group in society and for the individual members. Being part of a profession gives the individual professional power in his or her work. A profession as a group has influence and power in society in relation to other social groups.

### *A century of professionalization*

Journalism is not a full profession, according to the criteria of Eliot Freidson. During the 20th century, journalism has developed into some kind of “semiprofession”, according to journalism research (Weaver et al 2007). Journalism has strengthened some of the elements of a profession – there is a specialized body of knowledge and formal training for journalists, there are professional standards and formal institutions of journalism in many countries, journalists struggle for independence and there is an ideology of journalism serving society (Shoemaker/Reese 1996).

In American journalism, professionalization was closely connected to commercialization. When the newspapers cut their connections to political

parties, the occupation of “journalists” became organized through a set of self-governing professional norms and practices (Schudson 2003). This group was also able to achieve some degree of autonomy from publishers.

In comparative studies of journalism, the degree of professionalization is one of the most important variables. In the analyses of media systems in 18 European and North American countries, Hallin and Mancini take professionalization as one of four variables. They focus on three dimensions of professionalization (Hallin/Mancini 2004:34-37):

- The degree of autonomy and the control over the work process.
- Distinct profession norms such as news evaluation, ethical standards and professional integrity.
- Public service orientation – journalism as a public trust and not primarily as a source for profit for the owners.

To summarize: Professionalization has been a key concept in journalism studies for the last 40-50 years, but more as a process than as a question of whether journalism is a full profession or not. Most researchers conclude that journalism can't be a full profession that requires some kind of licensing – it would contravene freedom of speech to demand a licence from those who want to express themselves in the media (Engblom 2001, McQuail 2005).

### *Different kinds of ideals and roles*

Even if the process of professionalization has been similar in many countries, this does not mean that professional norms and standards are the same. Comparative journalism studies have found both similarities and differences in journalistic values and roles. Different roles have been described as “active/participant” and “neutral/informative”, as well as a kind of “interpretative” role between these two options (McQuail 2005). These different roles are connected to national traditions and news cultures, for example American “objectivism” and a European continental tradition of commenting and a more literary kind of journalism. The researcher Jean Chalaby calls journalism an “Anglo-American invention”, when he describes the factual and information-

centred kind of journalism that developed in the US press, contrary to French journalism which is much less concerned with drawing a line between facts and commentary (Chalaby 1996, Schudson 2003).

Also other researchers have discussed the differences between the detached and non-partisan journalism in USA, and European journalism that is more involved in politics. German journalists have a greater desire to influence political processes, and a strong aspiration to increase their own participation (Hanitzsch 2009), in contrast to their American colleagues who are more neutral reporters. This can also be described as a difference between journalists who want to be active participants in social processes and journalists who prefer to be passive observers. Both these kinds of ideals can be regarded as different forms of journalistic professionalism. Also, the active participant journalist is seeking autonomy and working to serve society (Hallin/Mancini 2004).

On a global level, Weaver found some common ideals during the 1990s. The role of getting the news out to people as fast as possible is common to most journalists, but other ideals – such as being a watchdog over those in power – were not as common in the 21 countries researched (Weaver 1998). He found more disagreement than agreement on the roles of journalism in society, and the differences could be connected to political history and the current political situation. In the surveys there was some agreement among journalists in different countries on the importance of autonomy and on the protection of news sources, but in other areas there were big differences. Weaver concludes “no country or territory has a monopoly on professionalism among journalists” (Weaver 1998:479).

Since the 1990s, the process of globalization has influenced journalism around the world. New global media, like satellite TV channels and media websites, have confronted audiences with new kinds of journalism, and the question is how this has influenced journalism. Some researchers describe it as stronger influence on the Anglo-Saxon ideals of objectivity, separation of facts and comment and the ideal of the journalist as a distanced observer (Hallin/Mancini 2004).

This gets some support from a recent survey to 1 800 journalists in 18 countries to find “a general cultural understanding that is shared by most journalists around the world” (Hanitzsch et al 2010). However, there are still differences between a detached and neutral Western understanding of journalism and the more active promotion of values and social change connected to “development journalism” in developing countries and partly non-democratic countries. At the same time, the ideal of separation between facts and opinion among US journalists might be changing as they put stronger emphasis on interpretation in news coverage, for example on channels like Fox News. This means that the old “objective” American journalism may also be changing.

To summarize: Earlier research shows that journalistic ideals and values differ between countries. There is a change over time, where “western” ideals grow in importance, but there are still differences between media systems and countries.

But even if values and ideals in journalism differ, journalists in different media systems have a common striving for autonomy in relation to society (Weaver 1998). The question is how strong it is and how it is perceived among journalists.

### ***Professional autonomy on different levels***

Professional autonomy for journalists is hard to define. It is a question of relationships between the profession as a group and power in society (external autonomy), but also as autonomy for journalists in their daily work in relation to the media organization (internal autonomy). Autonomy on these two levels is related, but basically professional autonomy developed in the organization of work.

In general, professions developed as a result of the division of labour. Sociologists have defined two kinds of work specialization (Freidson 2001):

- Mechanical specialization: when the worker executes tasks decided by managers, a job with very little space for independent decisions.
- Discretionary specialization: when the process demands that the worker makes independent evaluations and decisions, a job with the potential for innovation and creativity.

There is no sharp line between these two kinds of specializations, many kinds of work have both. However, the latter often demands formal training, and the skill of these workers is a mix of codified formal knowledge from school/university and working knowledge from experience. This working knowledge can be both verbalized and a tacit knowledge that is not described in words. Professions developed from this discretionary specialization; autonomy in daily work was necessary for these kinds of professionals to be successful. This need for autonomy that is based in the working process has also been defined in journalism studies (Weaver et al 2007).

For journalism, autonomy was initially a question of *external autonomy* in relation to power in society (see also chapter 4). Development differed greatly due to historical circumstances. In countries with strong liberal traditions, newspapers could achieve an independent position early; for example in USA and Sweden at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In other countries with a tradition of a strong state and a more authoritarian rule, this external autonomy has been a much longer process; for example in Germany and Russia. Important issues in the struggle for external autonomy have been censorship and direct control by state power. But even if external autonomy is achieved, it is not given for ever: pressure from external powers to control the media can increase at times of crisis. The means of this control may be laws and regulations, financial pressure and expanding PR machinery (Schudson 2003, McQuail 2005).

*Internal autonomy* for journalism is about the position of journalists in relation to the owners and other departments of the media company. Historically, the party press in Europe created strong links between media owners, parties and political power. The journalist was supposed to share the political beliefs of the newspaper (Hallin/Mancini 2004). Internal autonomy can also be a question of financial pressure from owners and other departments in the company. “Market-driven journalism” can be a powerful constraint on internal autonomy for journalism when the “wall” between the newsroom and marketing department is broken (McManus 2009).

Internal autonomy for journalism developed with the commercialization of news and the break-up of the party press. Together with a strong (at least in

Western Europe) public service on TV and radio, the ideal of an independent journalist developed during the process of professionalization in the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. In Sweden, this is manifested in the general agreement between the Swedish Union of Journalists and the newspaper publishers, where the third paragraph states:

A member of staff may not be imposed upon to write against his/her conviction or to carry out humiliating assignments. When to decide what is 'humiliating', the Ethical Guidelines for press, radio and TV should be taken into consideration (General agreement 2010-2012)

This paragraph is very seldom used, but its very existence gives the individual journalist a certain degree of autonomy in relation to editors and the media company. It also emphasizes the strong link between internal autonomy, ethical standards and responsibility.

Having common ethical standards and guidelines is one important trait of a profession. In Sweden, these have developed within the profession since 1878, to strengthen the credibility of and public trust in the media and journalism. The Press Ombudsman and the Press Council still have a strong position in "legacy media", providing common standards for professional ethics (Weibull/Börjesson 1995), but ethical standards are not enough, as journalists must have the power to follow these standards. Without a degree of internal autonomy, giving the individual journalist power in his or her work, the journalist cannot be held responsible for following the ethical standards.

### *Two kinds of professionalism*

There are different traditions in research on professions. In the 1960s the emphasis was (in the Anglo-American tradition) on analyzing the specific traits that constitute a profession, such as mechanisms to exclude outsiders from the profession. In the last 20 years, the emphasis has shifted to the dynamic processes through which occupations gain professional status. Now the important issues are not whether a profession fulfils all the conditions of an ideal typical profession, but about how professionalism is used to

change and control an occupation. The process of professionalization is the most important: “the social process through which journalists struggle to claim professional status” (Schudson/Andersson 2009:90). Research on this approach also considers the influences of specific cultural and historical traditions in different countries (Tumber/Prentoulis 2005).

The British sociologist Julia Evett explicates two different perspectives that are adopted when discussing professions (Evett 2003):

- As a normative value system created and upheld by the profession itself, giving the profession a collective identity – a positive interpretation;
- As an ideology used as a mechanism for social order and discipline among professionals – a more negative interpretation.

The question is how the notion of professionalization is used in an occupation. Professionalization can come from *within*, when the professionals themselves can exert control and form the values and norms of the profession. But it can also be used by *outside* groups (owners, state and organizations) to change an occupation and to use professionalization as a system of control and discipline. The latter interpretation can replace bureaucratic control, and can be used by external forces to promote change in the profession (Evett 2003). In an analysis of the concept of professionalism in journalism, Evett and Aldridge (2003) conclude that the “professionalism” discourse is used as a tool to separate the producers from the product and that change is legitimized by referring to the “professional” nature of it. This can lead to arguments like “you have to do this job, because it is professional”. At the same time, the professionalism developing among journalists gives them their identity and belonging.

Journalism can be analyzed as an ongoing negotiation between these two sides of professionalism: between the *organizational* demands of standards, routines and goals for the media company and the *occupational* professionalism – values, norms and identity that are developing among journalists themselves (Örnebring 2009). These two sides of professionalism also relate to autonomy for the profession, both on an individual level and for the profession as a group



in media companies and in society. Autonomy for the individual journalists gets its strength from the occupational professionalism, the values and identity rooted among colleagues, whereas autonomy for the profession as a group can be based on a mix of both kinds of professionalism – both as a defence against pressure from outside and as a way of keeping the professional order within the professional community.

This dual perspective on professionalization can be used to analyze change – what kind of changes are motivated by organizational arguments (economical, technical), and what kind of changes are motivated by occupational arguments (to defend and strengthen professional values). And how are these kind of changes related to each other?

### *Autonomy under pressure in the daily work*

It is difficult to measure professional autonomy. In surveys it's possible to research the opinions of journalists on their autonomy, both perceived autonomy in daily work and more generally about influence in the newsroom. By comparing changes in time or in answers in different countries, it is possible to draw conclusions about differences in the perceived autonomy and evaluation of daily work among journalists.

Surveys among US journalists that ask questions about autonomy in their daily work have been conducted four times 1971-2002 (Weaver et al 2007). These surveys have covered all kinds of media and different areas of the US; the last survey in 2002 conducted telephone interviews with 1149 journalists. Two questions related to perceived autonomy, and both these indicators show a clear decline since 1971. The share of the reporters saying they have almost complete freedom to select stories has declined from 60 to 40 per cent, and the share that say they have almost complete freedom to decide the emphasis has declined from 76 to 42 per cent. But there are big differences between journalists – young journalists in big news organizations have much less influence over their work than experienced journalists in small newsrooms. Reporters in TV have less freedom than reporters in radio and on weeklies. Hallin/Mancini also noticed a decline in journalistic autonomy in the “liberal

model”, including the US, mostly associated with the increasing influence of business motives in media companies (Hallin/Mancini 2004).

There are also differences between countries and media systems. In the “Global journalist” project, less perceived autonomy is found in countries with less press freedom (Weaver 1998). These differences are clear in a survey comparing reporters in Russia and Sweden. In Russia, the reporters more seldom choose their own ideas for reporting, and they also talk of political pressure both from owners and politicians when choosing subjects, as well as how political pressure is a common obstacle to publication. But still, both in Sweden and Russia, the professional interest of the journalist is the most important factor in selecting subjects in daily work, according to the journalists (Nygren/Degtereva 2011).

There can be many reasons for decreasing professional autonomy for journalists. Weaver mentions some trends that are linked to greater financial pressure within media companies: the commercialization of news and the erosion of the wall between business and journalism. In addition, new media technology and the increasing speed of news work have an influence: “traditional professional values such as proportion, verification and relevance has given way to a perceived need to get an assertion into public circulation as quickly as possible” (Weaver 2007:73). In countries with limited press freedom, like Russia, pressure comes from political interests according to the journalists.

Another kind of pressure on professional autonomy comes from media development, and the fact that journalists now have to compete with other kinds of information and content on the net – social media, blogs and websites offering alternative pictures of news events. Journalists have to handle many kinds of interactivity with their audience, both regarding new types of sources and the audience as an amplifier of media content when it is re-distributed through social networks such as Facebook and Twitter:

Journalists in a network must acknowledge that they will retain power only to the extent they share it; without facilitating the broad exchange, and not merely the delivery, of information, they will find themselves increasingly irrelevant to the conversation taking place around them (Singer/Quandt 2009:141)

Professional autonomy is under pressure from all the challenges in media development and the network society's creation of new patterns of communication. However, it is also possible that media development can create alternative public spheres and a new kind of journalism that can strengthen autonomy for parts of the profession, whilst other parts of the journalistic profession experience a diminishing autonomy.

### ***Political and economical pressure***

What kind of constraints are there on the professional autonomy of daily work? The survey of US journalists from 2002 gives some answers (Weaver et al 2007). The results indicated four groups of limitations for the individual journalist:

- From agents outside the news organization, for example sources.
- Professional conventions that most journalists follow, like ethical guidelines.
- Lack of resources and commercial demands in profit-making media companies.
- Editorial policies and processes in the news organization.

In the US survey, the highest levels of perceived autonomy in daily work were found among reporters covering a beat (who have their own specialty) and reporters in small news organizations, mostly in weekly newspapers and in radio.

In Swedish surveys conducted in 1995 and 2005, journalists were asked if the influence on media content has changed for different groups over the last ten years. According to the answers, the influence of journalists had diminished significantly and the influence of advertisers, the audience and politicians had grown. Also internally, the journalists feel themselves to be losing influence in favour of the advertising department and the management of the company. Still, the strongest influence comes from the editors – both when it concerns editorial policy and daily decisions (Asp/Johansson 2007).

Both these surveys provide some clues about constraints in the autonomy of the individual journalist. There seems to be strong commercial pressure and limitations within the newsroom organization. There is also strong pressure

from outside, from sources and the PR industry; this influence has grown rapidly (Schudson 2003). The relationship between journalists and their sources is often described as a negotiation in which both parts have something to give and something to gain (Berkowitz 2009). When the power balance between the two parts of this negotiation changes, it will influence the results. Stronger sources reduce the autonomy of a professional journalist when he/she becomes more dependent on the sources.

### ***Political parallelism and autonomy***

The relation between journalism and politics has a long history. Many newspapers started as political voices for parties and movements, and newspapers in Europe are still labelled by political colours. Hallin/Mancini (2004) describe what they call a *political parallelism* that has been very strong in the European media systems. This system has several components:

- The media content reflects distinct political orientations.
- There are organizational connections between the media and political movements, for example in ownership.
- A tendency for journalists to be active in political life, alternative career paths shaped by their political affiliation.
- Partisanship in the audiences who choose the media closest to their own opinions.
- Journalistic practices with a more activist tradition and stronger emphasis on comments.

This kind of political parallelism has gradually become weaker in Europe, and at the same time journalism has become more professionalized. Ties between newspapers and parties are weaker in the western countries analyzed by Hallin/Mancini, and political influence on television has decreased with the growth of commercial television. However, this does not mean that political parallelism is dead – this dimension is still alive in different forms and levels.

In general, professionalization in journalism and political parallelism are in conflict with each other. But Hallin/Mancini also see a kind of

journalistic autonomy within a system of political parallelism; autonomy for the activist journalist within a system according to the tradition of European intellectuals (2004:41). So, there is no simple relationship between politics and journalism.

From an American perspective, Michael Schudson comes to the conclusion that commercialization encouraged professionalization among journalists when news became a commodity and not a political tool. Professional standards and practices were developed by commercial newspapers, giving them independence in relation to parties and politics. But commercialism also offers constraints for journalism, causing a conflict with professional values (Schudson 2003).

There is also a third possibility – a combination of strong political and financial pressure. The media system that is developing in China has a combination of strong political control in the media and strong commercial pressure in the media companies. In this kind of system, commercialization gives no freedom for journalism, at least in the area of politics (Schudson 2003:130).

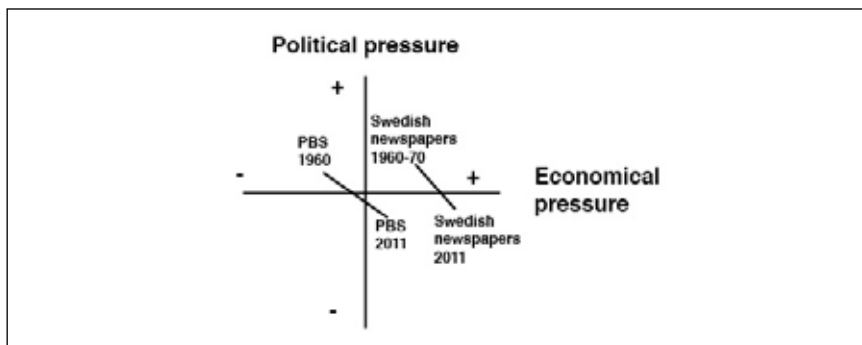
This is close to what the Russian researcher Elena Vartanova labels the “Eurasian media model” (2007). In this model, the media companies have to combine different motivations, both commercial demands and non-market goals that are defined by political elites. It is difficult for the journalistic profession to get support for their autonomy from any commercial motivation, and the degree of political parallelism is high.

### *Two dimensions of pressure on autonomy*

There are at least two dimensions to the pressure on professional autonomy for journalists – the political and the financial. If we combine these two dimensions it is possible to analyze the degree of professional autonomy. As an example, two kinds of media in Sweden are placed in the figure below and it is possible to discuss whether and, if so, how they are moving in relation to the two dimensions.

*Case number one:* The Swedish public service broadcaster (SVT and SR) has experienced reduced political pressure since the 1960s, but is in increasing competition with commercial TV and radio for audiences. This moves Swedish public broadcasting to a position in the lower right square.

*Case number two:* Swedish newspapers started with political pressures, but also as commercial companies. Their association with the political system is much weaker today than it was 40-50 years ago. However, the competition from other kinds of media is harder, especially regarding money from advertisers. This gives the newspapers a position with higher financial pressure, but less political pressure.



Some questions for the *Journalism in change* project cover how journalists in different media systems perceive their autonomy in relation to these two kinds of pressure:

- Financial pressure from owners and managers in the media company, demands for efficiency and profits, as well as pressure from external financial actors, such as advertisers and business organizations.
- Political pressure, both from within the media company (owners and political affiliation) and from outside sources in politics using PR and “spin doctors” to influence media content.

These questions will also be analyzed from the perspective of media development; are these two kinds of pressure changing because of media development?

## *A profession under pressure?*

Rapid media development influences the professional autonomy of journalists. There is a lot of research into how journalism is changing due to new media and new technology (Deuze 2007, Michelstein/Boczkowski 2009, Singer/Quandt 2009). A short overview based on this research shows trends that can both strengthen and weaken professional autonomy:

### • *Changes in journalistic practices:*

Internet and computer assisted reporting (CAR) gives journalists access to many more sources than before. It is possible to aggregate and analyze information on a scale never seen before, and this can make journalists less dependent on traditional sources.

- Multiskilling is the word that describes journalistic work in today's newsrooms. Journalists must do a lot of the technical production and be able to handle the whole process, including photography, editing and writing/producing. This can give the individual journalist greater control of the work process, but also a stronger focus on production and less on research and verification.
- The demands to produce are increasing, each journalist has to produce more and this limits research and working autonomy. Less of the work is outside the newsrooms; more is about recycling content already circulating in the content management systems (CMS).
- The labour market for journalists is changing in the same way as the rest of the labour market – more temporary jobs, outsourcing production to freelancers and production companies. This can make journalists more dependent on editors, but also gives strong journalists the ability to choose where to publish.

### • *Changing media markets:*

- In the media companies, the wall between newsrooms and business has eroded, and journalists work more in cooperation with other groups in the company. This can reduce the autonomy of journalism, but also increase

the influence of journalists when cooperating with other departments in the media company.

- Strong competition and commercial demands increase the need for effective production. This can make newsrooms more dependent on content produced by others, for example PR and other sources. The time for verification shrinks, especially in online journalism with constant deadlines.
- New media companies and new markets can increase pluralism in the media sector. At the same time, concentration and consolidation among media companies is reducing pluralism. This is both good and bad for professional autonomy, which can benefit from many channels.
- Unclear journalistic borders:
  - PR and communication is expanding, and many journalists partly work in this sector. This can reduce their autonomy, limiting their role as watchdogs.
  - Media content on the border between journalism and commercial messages is growing, with advertorials and product placement. For the audience it is often difficult to differentiate between journalism and other types of content.
  - New kind of content is developing on the net and in social media; some could be regarded as journalism but without professional values and ethics. The border between producers and consumers is blurred – who is a journalist on the net? At the same time a new kind of autonomy is growing on the net, but it is not necessarily professional journalism.

There is no simple answer to how professional autonomy is influenced by media development. The trends mentioned above are some aspects of change – some of them can strengthen autonomy, in other aspects it can become weaker.

A summary of this could conclude that there are differences between the autonomy of the individual and of the profession as a group. Individual journalists might gain from many of the changes, but for the profession the



borders become blurred with other professions and groups in media production. To answer this question, the profession as a group has to be analyzed.

### *De-professionalization or a changing profession?*

Many professions developed alongside modern society during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In “postmodern” society, professions are questioned: a professional identity might become weaker as the profession becomes more diverse, other groups enter the area of the profession and demands for economic efficiency and profits overrule professional values. This causes some sociologists to discuss a possible de-professionalization, in which the dominance of a professional logic is replaced by market logic. In this development, professional autonomy is weaker and professional control of the work to be performed is diminishing (Torstendahl 1989, Freidson 2001, Hasselberg 2009).

Is this also the case for journalism? A brief look at some basic traits for regarding an occupation as a profession provides some clues:

- The privileged position of journalists is, in many ways, becoming weaker as a growing share of the audience can actively use the Internet for publishing and searching for information.
- The division of labour in media companies is unclear when journalists are do most of the technical production and are also more involved in business decisions.
- Journalism’s professional institutions are becoming weaker as unions are losing members and ethical self-regulation is questioned (Nygren 2011).
- The public service orientation is under hard pressure from commercial demands on media companies.
- Basic journalistic values are still quite stable and most new journalists have a professional education (Asp 2007). However, new values are developing in, for example, verification in online publishing.

If we return to the traditional sociological description of a profession, it is easy to see that in many ways journalism has become harder to regard as a profession (or as a “semi profession”). The question is whether the process of

professionalization during the 20<sup>th</sup> century that has been thoroughly analyzed and described in journalism studies has reached a turning point – and become de-professionalization? Or is it just a change in the profession as it enters the “post-industrial” era?

Perhaps it is a question of what kind of professionalism we are talking about, the *occupational professionalism* among colleagues or the *organizational professionalism* coming from above in the media companies (Evetts 2003). Recent research with a sociological perspective on journalism has discussed how current trends in journalistic work change the relationship between the two kinds of professionalism – deregulation of labour markets, new forms of employment, technologisation of the workplace and de-skilling/re-skilling of journalists (Örnebring 2009). These trends can decrease autonomy and weaken occupational professionalism, but also strengthen the other kind of organizational professionalism.

It is also possible that professional values are strengthened when they are under pressure. For example, when journalists compete with blogs and other kind of sources on the net, they will be distinguished by their professional values and norms. Many journalists mention professional standards as the most important way of competing with other kind of information (Singer 2007, Witschge/Nygren 2009).

The conclusion is that the picture of an ongoing professionalization of journalism must be questioned. The profession is becoming more diverse and has unclear borders; professional autonomy is under pressure in many ways. This can be labelled de-professionalization, but be regarded a changing profession that is more adapted to a postmodern environment.

### ***Some points of departure***

The aim of the “Journalism in change” project is to research professional journalistic cultures in three countries with great differences – in size (both population and area), in history, in economic structures and in political traditions. The general differences between the countries will make it quite easy to find differences in journalism and the professional journalistic cultures.

More of a challenge is to identify similarities among the journalists in the three countries, similarities in how journalists experience media development and changes in their professional culture.

The perspective of this project is that of the journalist. When studying a professional culture, it is necessary to start from those who carry the culture in their daily lives, in their experiences and values. This research starts with daily work – work content, the tools being used and the amount of independence in the work. Basic questions concern the borders of journalistic work in relation to other groups inside and outside the media company. There are also issues of values and the relationship between values and ideals and the conditions for daily work. One question is the size of the gap between ideals and reality, and how journalists can bridge this gap in their daily routines (Ekström/Nohrstedt 1996). There are also questions of how autonomy starts in daily work, both about ideals relating to autonomy and how these ideals are perceived in daily work, as well as how they are constrained.

Research is focused on four areas:

- *Autonomy as an ideal.* Is autonomy perceived as an ideal among journalists? How strong is the ideal of autonomy compared with other professional values? Do the rules and tacit norms express a striving for autonomy?
- *Professionalization for autonomy.* Professional institutions and networks? How strong is the commitment to journalism, and relationships with other occupations? Division of labour and the labour market?
- *Pressure on professional autonomy.* How great is perceived autonomy in the daily work of journalists? What kind of pressure on professional autonomy do journalists experience in their daily work and for media companies in general?
- *Media development and autonomy.* How is professional autonomy influenced by media development, both in relation to an emerging networked society and in relation to changes in journalistic practices? Is independence weaker or stronger, both for journalists as individuals and as a professional group?

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These areas are analyzed from a comparative perspective – what is similar and what is different when we compare the three countries in the project? The design of the project, using three different kinds of societies, will make it possible to analyze what kinds of changes in professional cultures are similar and linked to media development, as well as what is different and connected to the media systems.

In the end, the question of professional autonomy is about how professionalization is developing in the media system – whether there is ongoing de-professionalization or whether the profession is simply changing and adapting to a network society.

The main perspective is that of journalistic culture. But there is also a second perspective in the project – the perspective of media systems. Comparative media research has constructed different kinds of models to describe media systems, and the question for this project is how results from the journalistic cultures relate to these models. For example, many researchers believe that the “liberal model” is gaining influence all over the world (Hallin/Mancini 2004, Hanitzsch 2010). Is that true of the three countries in the project as regards professionalization? Are there new models emerging in the melding of new technology, political traditions and media systems? For example, how should a media system with both a strong political parallelism and strong commercial pressure be defined?

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## The authors:

**Maria Anikina** is PhD in journalism at Lomonosov Moscow State University, Faculty of journalism. She works at the department of media sociology, and is also a participant in the project World of Journalisms. E-mail [maria-anikina@yandex.ru](mailto:maria-anikina@yandex.ru)

**Boguslawa Dobek-Ostrowska** is professor in political science at University of Wroclaw, Department of Communication and Journalism. She is also the editor of Central European Journal of Communication, and has participated in several projects in comparative media research. E-mail: [dobek@uni.wroc.pl](mailto:dobek@uni.wroc.pl)

**Jöran Hök** is PhD in international relations, and works as lecturer and researcher at Södertörn University in Stockholm. He has a long experience as journalist and is also researching the role of journalism in international conflicts. E-mail: [joran.hok@sh.se](mailto:joran.hok@sh.se)

**Gunnar Nygren** is professor in journalism at Södertörn University in Stockholm. His areas in research covers media development, changing professional roles for journalists and comparative media research. E-mail: [gunnar.nygren@sh.se](mailto:gunnar.nygren@sh.se)

Information and communication technology (ICT) changes the conditions for all kinds of activity in society – for political processes as well as for the production of goods and services. Journalism is no exception. Although this development differs between countries and media systems, globalization has created a convergence in journalistic orientations and practices in different parts of the world.

In the research project Journalism in Change at Södertörn University, Stockholm, we include three countries with different media systems: Sweden, Russia and Poland. This design means it will be possible to analyze the changes in journalism that different types of societies have in common, and what kinds of differences can be connected to the characteristics of a society. Are journalistic cultures becoming less national, and if so, what is changing and what is not?

In this first report we give a point of departure – a brief overview on research on professional journalistic cultures in the three countries. The report also makes an attempt to analyze strive for autonomy as a crucial part of professionalization in different kind of media systems.

Gunnar Nygren, editor, Södertörn, Sweden, Maria Anikina, Moscow, Russia, Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska, Wrocław, Poland, Jöran Hök, Södertörn, Sweden