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The Future Roles of Journalism: Where Does Ukraine Stand in Europe?

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ABSTRACT

The changing societal context of professional journalism has brought many challenges for 21st century journalism to the forefront. The transition from a sender-oriented mass media model to an interactive network model is still in progress, but there can be little doubt that journalism will have to adapt to the new infrastructural reality in order to avoid a deepening of the current crisis in journalism. In the news industry innovation is mainly defined in terms of technology and commerce and often the cultural component is missed. However, the transition to the network model not only requires new business models and platforms, but also a new balance in the various roles of professional journalism. Although research shows changes for the better, there are no clear-cut indications that in daily practice an ambitious restructuring of the goals of journalism has yet taken place. Instead, interesting new technologies are often used for achieving traditional ends: old journalism in new digital bottles. But journalism is of central importance to contemporary society and its future cannot be left to its current producers alone. In the process of renewing the culture of journalism, education plays a central role. Students will have to learn to master the essential routines of their future profession, but next to that it becomes more important that journalism students learn to critically reflect on the future role of journalism in society.

In this article the views of Ukrainian teachers on the roles of journalism are compared to those of their colleagues in other parts of Europe. It concludes that there are similarities, but also a divide.

KEYWORDS: Roles of journalism; Network model; Innovation; Journalism culture; Journalism education.

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Майбутні ролі журналістики в Європі: де Україна перебуває на тлі Європи?

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РЕЗЮМЕ

Змінний суспільний контекст професійної журналістики висунув багато проблем для журналістики 21 століття на перший план. Перехід від моделі ЗМІ, орієнтованої на відправника, до моделі інтерактивної мережі все ще триває, але немає жодних сумнівів, що журналістиці доведеться адаптуватися до нової інфраструктурної реальності, щоб уникнути поглиблення нинішньої кризи журналістики. В індустрії новин інновації в основному визначаються з точки зору технологій та торгівлі, і часто упускається культурний компонент. Однак перехід до мережевої моделі вимагає не лише нових бізнес-моделей та платформ, а й нового балансу в різних ролях професійної журналістики.

Хоча дослідження показують зміни на краще, немає чітких ознак того, що в повсякденній практиці відбулася амбітна перебудова цілей журналістики. Натомість для досягнення традиційних цілей часто використовуються нові цікаві технології: стара журналістика в нових цифрових пляшках. Але журналістика має центральне значення для сучасного суспільства, і її майбутнє не можна залишати на розсуд її нинішніх виробників. У процесі оновлення культури журналістики центральну роль відіграє освіта. Студентам доведеться навчитися опановувати основні процедури своєї майбутньої професії, але поряд з цим стає важливішим, щоб студенти-журналісти навчилися критично міркувати про майбутню роль журналістики в суспільстві. У цій статті порівнюються погляди українських вчителів на роль журналістики з поглядами їхніх колег в інших частинах Європи. Автор робить висновок, що є схожість, але також і розбіжність.

Ключові слова: ролі журналістики; мережева модель; інновації; журналістська культура; журналістська освіта.

Introduction

In most of Europe professional journalism has arrived at a crossroads. After several decades of growth in circulation, in viewers/listeners and in advertisement turnout, professional journalism finds itself confronted with an uncertain future. The essential question for news organizations is: can we move to digital platforms and after that continue on the old, familiar paths, or is a turn into a new direction required? In recent years many studies have suggested that a digital shift alone will not be enough to face the challenges. These studies consider journalism as being ‘disrupted’ (Nieman Reports, 2012). Therefore, it is believed that professional journalism needs to be ‘reconstructed’ (Downie and Schudson, 2010), ‘rethought’ (Peters and Broersma, 2013), ‘reinvented’ (Waisbord, 2013), ‘rebuilt’ (Anderson, 2013), ‘reconsidered’ (Alexander et al., 2016) and ‘rethought again’ (Peters and Broersma, 2017). According to Ryfe (2017), in the process of redefining journalism it is essential to look broader than the field of journalism alone. Using Bourdieu’s field theory, he argues that “detecting changes in journalism may require more attention to social fields outside the practice” (p.156). This article will more or less follow this line of thought by outlining some major developments that paved the way for the so-called network society, how they trigger the need for rethinking the role of journalism and what the task of journalism education could be or perhaps should be.

The crisis in journalism

The central role of professional journalism in modern society is so obvious that many people are inclined to take it for granted (Christians et al., 2009, p. vii). This does not only count for governments, politicians or the general public. It is also true for many scholars, as we have seen in the years of huge optimism about the potential of citizen journalism. During this period, that started with the birth of Web 2.0, the idea grew that citizens themselves (“the people formerly known as the audience”; Rosen, 2006) would take over control of the media and a new era had arrived: the era of “we, the media” (Gillmor, 2004). That optimism has gone again, and has been replaced by the conviction that we do need professional journalism that serves the public by

- providing an insight into important political, economic and socio-cultural conditions
- holding institutions and officials accountable,
- supporting citizens to make choices in societal and personal contexts,
- facilitating an open and respectful public conversation (cf. EJTA, 2020).

These are tasks for independent professionals and they should never be given in the hands of the state, of commerce or of amateurs.

However, professional journalism finds itself in a double crisis: a financial crisis and a functional one. The financial crisis concerns the diminishing reach of paid for mainstream news media. The interest for professionally produced news is going down, especially among the young (Newman, Fletcher, Schulz, Andi & Kleis Nielsen, 2021). This often goes hand in hand with a decreasing willingness to pay for news, which clearly is threatening the existence of mainstream news media, especially those in the private sector (Splichal & Dahlgren, 2016). The solution for this financial crisis is believed to be found in technological and economic innovations, like the fitting in of mobile platforms and the development of new business models. The functional crisis concerns the declining value of journalism for various groups and communities in society. Many people feel that they are not represented in the news. At the same time the reliability of journalism is questioned (Cf. Newman et al., 2021) and so is the relevance of journalism for democracy as well as for daily life. Blumler (2011, p. xv) has interpreted the two crises as follows: “One is a crisis of viability, principally though not exclusively financial, threatening the existence and resources of mainstream journalistic organisations. The other is a crisis of civic adequacy, impoverishing the contributions of journalism to citizenship and democracy.”

Within the news industry, these two crises are not always clearly distinguished. As a consequence, the causes of both crises are considered to be of a technological and economic nature. Therefore, the solutions are also looked for in the techno-economic sphere. This might work for the financial crisis (crisis of reach), but it is not enough to deal with the functional one (crisis of representation, reliability and relevance). What is lacking is a thorough reflection on the changing role of journalism in the context of the 21st century. More attention is needed for “the too often missed cultural component in explanations of the current crisis facing news, democracy and journalism in an age of digital media” (Franklin, 2016). To understand the importance of this cultural component, we should first consider the social field of public information and communication in which the current professional culture of journalism could develop: the mass media model.

Professional culture in the mass media model

The mass media model is based on a number of specific historical conditions that can be summarized as follows (cf. Briggs & Burke, 2002). In the course of the 20th century a mass audience emerged, on the basis of a rising general level of education, growing incomes and increasing leisure time. New printing and broadcasting techniques promoted large scale production and distribution of news. Applying these techniques led to a rising degree of capital accumulation, which functioned as a barrier to enter the news market and strengthened the trend towards concentration in the news industry. Professional journalism became a monopolistic supplier of a wanted and scarce good: news. These historical circumstances – mass audience, monopoly, scarcity – have had a strong positive impact on journalism in terms of turnover and growth. The mass media model has been the basis for the ‘golden age’ of journalism, the period of exceptional growth in the news industry during the second half of the 20th century. Picard (2013) has calculated that real income has grown with 300 percent between 1950 and 2000, which he calls: “the unusually lucrative moment of the late 20th century.”

The culture of professional journalism is rooted in this successful era. Over the years consensus grew about the core values of professional journalism, the trias journalistica: independence, objectivity and immediacy (cf. Weaver and Willnat, 2020; Hanitzsch, 2019). Independence is about practicing journalism free from manipulation, limitation or threat. Objectivity is about applying proven methods in order to be able to offer well-balanced and accurate information. Immediacy is about the fast dissemination of news about important events and issues, what most professionals see as the core of their journalistic work. These three interrelated values define the relation of professional journalism to three central concepts: power (independence), truth (objectivity) and time (immediacy) (Drok, 2019; cf. Ahva, 2010). They set professional journalism apart from public relations, fiction or propaganda (cf. Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007).

In the successful second half of the 20th century the professionalization of journalism advanced, for instance through codification (e.g. Code of Bordeaux, 1954) and the strong growth of the number of institutes for professional schooling in journalism. This reinforced the emancipation of journalism and contributed to the professional quality of journalistic work. However, a professionalization process can have its downsides. As the process advances, professional values and norms can become relatively autonomous and the profession can alienate itself from the rest of society (cf. Aldridge and Evetts, 2003).

At the end of the century many stakeholders feared that in professional journalism such a process was going on. “Critics in and out of journalism agreed that journalists, like any other professional group, could become a conspiracy against the public” (Schudson, 1999, p.121). Independence evolved in the direction of a desire for full professional autonomy which included stronger detachment from the public. Objectivity evolved into the direction of the belief to be a neutral mirror of reality and truth. Immediacy evolved in the direction of a thirst to be first, which included a growing emphasis on getting scoops.

The majority of professional journalists became devoted to the disseminator role of journalism, that is: the role of the neutral and detached mirror of reality, whose main task is to spread information as fast as possible (cf. Weaver and Willnat, 2020; cf. Hanitzsch, 2019). The direction in which the colouring of the trias *journalistica* evolved – detachment, neutrality claim, scoop driven – threatened to widen the gap between the profession and the public. As Steele noted at the end of the 20th century: “The creation of a professional class of journalists may have produced an alienation between journalism and the public” (1997, p. 164). This is problematic for a profession that legitimizes itself on the basis of its democratic function and of its claim to act on behalf of the public (cf. Rosenberry, 2010).

A changing context

The society within which professional journalism operates, has changed in many respects over the past decades. These changes are manifold and sometimes contradictory, but they can – with some good will – be summarized by distinguishing four main developments: informatization, internationalization, individualization, and informalization (the 4 i’s; cf. Drok, 2016).

Informatization concerns the process in which digital information technology becomes all-pervasive, entering almost every aspect of public and private life. It facilitates the emergence of a new social infrastructure of public information and communication. It allows every individual or group to disseminate information on a large scale by themselves (citizen publishing) or via a professional news organisation (user generated content, co-creation). This new structure promotes ‘disintermediation’, the surpassing of journalism by public or private parties in their communication with the public. The main challenge for journalism is to develop a stronger and closer relationship with the public, one that is truly interactive.

Internationalization concerns the growing mobility of people, goods and ideas and the increasing economic and political interdependence between nations. Important issues in society, such as sustainability or security, become more complex and can only be understood and solved at a supranational level. At the same time globalizing trends lead to a revival of local identity and local community. It will become more important to connect the global and the local, according to the motto: “*life is global, living is local*”. The main challenge for journalism is to develop new journalistic genres and practices to deal with complex and long-term issues in a meaningful and constructive way, in order to avoid feeding news fatigue, cynicism or apathy.

Individualization concerns the process where individuals break away from traditional social structures and value systems. It stimulates cultural diversity and individual freedom of choice, but it can also strengthen fragmentation and polarization. The process of individualization has reinforced the diminishing interest for membership of civil society associations like the political party, the trade union or the church in many countries, especially among the upgrowing generation. At the same time there seems to be a growing need for new forms of collectiveness: large scale events flourish and communities thrive, virtual as well as geographical. The challenge for journalism is to meet the more specialized wishes of the individual consumer as well as the more general needs of citizens and society as a whole. Next to that, professional journalism might want to fill the public space that the erosion of the classical civil society institutions has left, by helping people to solve their collective problems.

Informalization is related to individualization, but the primary focus is on the diminishing of social distance, especially with regard to its vertical dimension. It can lead to lower levels of institutional and hierarchical trust. It affects the relationship between the general public on one side and elites, experts and authorities on the other. The authority of a professional – a teacher, a doctor, a journalist – does no longer automatically come with the job, but must expressively be earned. The challenge for journalism is to enlarge the trust of the public and to lay a new basis under its most important asset: credibility.

Journalism in the network model

Against the background of developments such as informatization, internationalization, individualization, and informalization, the network model is emerging (cf. Van der Haak, Parks & Castells, 2012). The network model has other technological, economic, and socio-cultural features than the mass media model. In the technological realm the network model puts an end to the one-way, sender-oriented communication pattern. It is characterized by a digital infrastructure that is built around nodes and the relationships between them, in which interactivity and connectivity are key concepts. In the economic realm the network model is characterized by the end of monopoly for both production and distribution of news. The news market evolves into a market with almost limitless suppliers, including aggregators, algorithms and audiences. Next to that, digitalization makes it very easy to copy, paste and share news. News and information scarcity comes to an end and turns into abundance. This has a downward effect on the price people are willing to pay for news. Many see news as something you get for free on your mobile phone. This disrupts the classic business model for news. In the socio-cultural realm the mass audience has fallen apart and has become fragmented. The mass audience is gradually being replaced by special interest groups as well as by communities that are focused on solving their shared problems.

The network model requires a new interpretation of the *trias journalistica*, the three core values of professional journalism: independence, objectivity and immediacy.

Obviously, independence remains indispensable whenever the state or the market tries to suffocate journalism’s freedom of investigation and expression. However, a detached and autonomous attitude with respect to the public should be replaced by an openness to connect and cooperate.

Obviously, objectivity in method (checking facts, valid, accurate, fair) must remain a distinguishing feature of professional journalism. However, the claim that the outcome of journalistic work is an objective and neutral reproduction of reality is hard to maintain in a pluriform society. It should be replaced by being transparent and showing engagement, as a new basis for establishing trust and credibility.

Obviously, immediacy will remain a defining characteristic of news, as the public wants to be able to continuously monitor the world that surrounds them. However, ultimately, much of the fast news will be automated or taken over in other ways, and professional journalists should focus more on slower forms of journalism, aimed at verification, investigation and problem-solving.

20 th Century <i>Mass Media Model</i>	21 st Century <i>Network Model</i>
<p>Infrastructure: Disseminative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One-way communication - Monopoly - Scarcity - Mass audiences 	<p>Infrastructure: Interactive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two-way communication - Many suppliers - Abundance - Communities
<p>Culture: Sender-oriented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Detached - Autonomous - Neutral - Scoop-oriented 	<p>Culture: Connective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attached - Cooperative - Engaged - Solution-oriented

Figure 1. From Mass Media Model to Network model.

The fundamentally changing context of professional journalism, summarized by the transition from the mass media model to the network model, is an extensive and complex process. Over the past years we have seen the emergence of many labels that try to grasp the new direction that journalism should take. To mention a few: communitarian journalism, conversational journalism, engaged journalism, interactive journalism, reciprocal journalism, constructive journalism, solution-oriented journalism, community journalism, citizen-based journalism, slow journalism, conciliatory journalism, conflict-sensitive journalism, care journalism. All of these express the need for innovation of journalism's culture, and a shift towards a journalism that has a stronger focus on slower and more supportive forms of journalism. Here lies an important task for journalism education.

Renewing journalism through education

As stated before, during the second half of the 20th century journalism was doing very well in many countries. Print circulation rose to a historic height in the nineties. Audience ratings and advertisers revenues peaked. Finding a job in journalism after graduation was relatively easy. The main task for educators was to closely follow the highly successful news industry by teaching students the tricks of the trade, together with some reflection on journalism's role in society and knowledge about political, social, economic and cultural issues. Being in this 'follower mode' was a rather comfortable position.

At the end of the century things started to change. The public's interest in the products of professional journalism started to drop and nowadays news media organizations and scholars alike worry about the future of professional journalism. For journalism education the status quo in the news industry can no longer serve as the indisputable point of reference. The function of journalism in society is changing and therefore journalism schools can no longer focus on journalism as it is today. They have to look beyond the status quo and develop a normative vision on the future role of journalism in society (cf. Zelizer, 2017). As Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng and White (2009) note:

At issue is not only what is the role of journalism in society but above all what this role should be. Such a perspective of the media's mission in democracy leads us to a normative level – beyond factual landscapes toward values and objectives (2009, p. vii).

The European Journalism Training Association (EJTA) has acknowledged this and taken 'Renewing journalism through education' as the central theme for its strategy. A key concept in that strategy is that of the 'reflective practitioner'. In this concept, two traditions within European journalism education come together: on the one hand the academic tradition, aimed at reflection and research on a meta level, on the other hand the vocational tradition, aimed at mastering skills and knowledge on the practical level. In the concept of the reflective practitioner both dimensions should be combined in a balanced way.

Journalism education can be perceived as a way "in which society can intervene to influence the development of journalism" (Curran, 2005, p. xiv). The current transition to a network society requires such an intervention, since "...journalism is of central importance to contemporary society and its future cannot simply be left to chance or its current producers alone" (McQuail, 2013, p. 197). In the process of adopting a concept of innovation that includes the culture of professional journalism, teachers play a crucial role. They have to pave the way for a journalism that fits the network model, not only in terms of technology and economics, but also in terms of professional culture.

Journalistic role conceptions are a key element in the study of the culture of journalism. They can be defined as "normative understandings of what journalism is and what it should do" (Mellado et al., 2017: xi). Over the past decades there has been a lot of research on journalistic role

orientations. As Hanitzsch and Vos (2018: 147) state: “No review of literature can do justice to the breadth of scholarly work on journalistic roles.” However, most of the studies have focussed on the view of journalists themselves (e.g., *Worlds of Journalism Study*). In recent years, a comprehensive study on the views of students of journalism – as being the future generation of journalists – has been initiated (*Journalism Students around the Globe*). But no large-scale study on the views of teachers has been done, at least not in Europe.

This is an omission, especially since the views of teachers are supposed to have an impact on the courses and curricula they develop. And these courses and curricula are supposed to have influence on the way new generations of journalists will define their role in society. This is an essential function of journalism education: “the discourse of journalistic roles is the central arena where journalistic culture and identity is reproduced and contested; it is the place where the struggle over the preservation or transformation of journalism’s identity takes place” (Hanitzsch & Vos, 2018: 151). It is important to find out how journalism teachers see the future of a profession in transition in terms of its roles in society. In this article I focus on the views of Ukrainian journalism educators on three important journalistic roles: Disseminator, Investigator and Mobilizer. These views will be compared to the views of journalism educators from other parts of Europe.

Methods

In 2018 a large-scale online survey was set out among the members of the European Journalism Training Association. In total, 1195 teachers from 28 European countries started answering the list of questions. In the process almost 15% fell out and 1010 respondents completed the questionnaire. For an overview: see <https://www.ejta.eu/publications> .

In this research, the respondents were asked to assess items that refer to the tasks of journalism. These items were derived from the extended literature on role perceptions and role orientations, especially from the *Worlds of Journalism Study* (<http://www.worldsofjournalism.org/>; see also Weave. & Willnat; 2012). To emphasize our interest in a normative view on the importance of the tasks involved, and not in an assessment of the factual importance of these tasks in actual daily practice, the word ‘should’ had been underlined in the introductory question: “We now would like to know your personal view on what the future direction of journalism should be. We are especially interested in what you think about the future importance of a number of tasks that professional journalists perform. Compared to today, in the next ten years the importance of the following task for professional journalists should become: 5.Much Higher 4.Higher 3.Same as now 2.Lower 1.Much Lower“

With the help of a Principal Component Analysis the following three journalistic roles could be constructed:

Table 1. Roles of Journalists.

Role orientation (Cronbach's Alpha for Europe)	Scale-Items
Disseminator (,799)	Get information to the public quickly Make each day as many stories as possible Concentrate on bringing the latest news Provide entertainment and relaxation Concentrate on news that will sell Treat the public as consumers rather than citizens
Investigator (,798)	Provide analysis and interpretation of current affairs Provide in-depth background information Provide information that people need to make political decisions Monitor and scrutinize government Monitor and scrutinize business organisations Monitor and scrutinize civil society organisations Expose Social abuses
Mobilizer (,726)	Promote social change Influence public opinion Set the socio-political agenda Give ordinary people a chance to express their views Motivate people to get socially involved Stand up for the disadvantaged Point people toward possible solutions for societal problems

In 2021 the same survey was set out globally. In total 1698 respondents from 50 countries from all continents started the questionnaire and 1520 completed it (-10%). At the same time the survey was set out in Ukraine, where 225 respondents started the questionnaire and 208 completed it (-8%).

Results

In order to compare the views of Ukrainian journalism educator on the future of the three main journalistic roles to the views of their colleagues from other European countries, we have divided Europe into five regions: North (N=317), West (N=286), South (N=349), East (N=286) and Ukraine (N=225). The North contains: Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The West contains: Ireland, United Kingdom, Netherlands and Belgium. The South contains: Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey. The East contains: Albania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Macedonia, Romania, Russia and Serbia.

Table 2 shows the mean scores on the three major journalistic roles (Disseminator, Investigator, Mobilizer) for the five distinguished regions. These are the mean scores on a five

point scale, going from much higher importance (=5) to much lower importance (=1), with same importance as now (=3) in the middle.

Table 2. Mean scores on three major journalistic roles.

	North	West	South	East	Ukraine
Disseminator	2,42	2,52	2,68	3,00	3,11
Investigator	3,97	4,01	4,13	3,97	4,02
Mobilizer	3,40	3,43	3,44	3,86	3,96
<i>Average score</i>	<i>3,26</i>	<i>3,32</i>	<i>3,41</i>	<i>3,61</i>	<i>3,70</i>

The table shows that on average the Investigator role and the Mobilizer role should become more important, according to the teachers in all regions. The Disseminator role should become less important according to the teachers in North, West and South Europe, it should stay the same as now according to the teachers in East Europe and it should gain some importance according to the Ukrainian teachers. In all regions the Investigator role has the highest mean score, followed by the Mobilizer and the Disseminator role respectively.

These outcomes are influenced by differences in response style between the regions, which is a well-known issue in cross-national survey's (cf. Hofstede, 2001). The overall mean score in North and West is considerably lower than the overall mean score in East and Ukraine. The South is in the middle, but on the North-Western side. This pattern can be seen throughout the whole of the questionnaire. As a consequence, it is hard to decide which part of the differences between the regions reflects an actual difference in opinion and assessment, and which part should be ascribed to cultural differences between regions with regard to giving answers to closed questions on a given scale.

Therefore, the relative position of each of the three roles is given for each region (Figure 2). These are indexes on the basis of the average score (=100) of each region. Figure 1 shows a score below 100 for the Disseminator role in all regions. Next to that it shows that the Investigator role has the highest score in all regions and the Mobilizer role is somewhere in between. The desired shift from Disseminator to Investigator is very clear in North, West and South, respectively. The same shift can be seen in East and Ukraine, but far less outspoken. Next to that, the Investigator and Mobilizer role have almost equal scores in East and Ukraine, but not in the rest of Europe. In fact, figure 1 shows a kind of divide between North, East, West on one side and Ukraine, East on the other; especially, but not solely, with regard to the Investigator role.

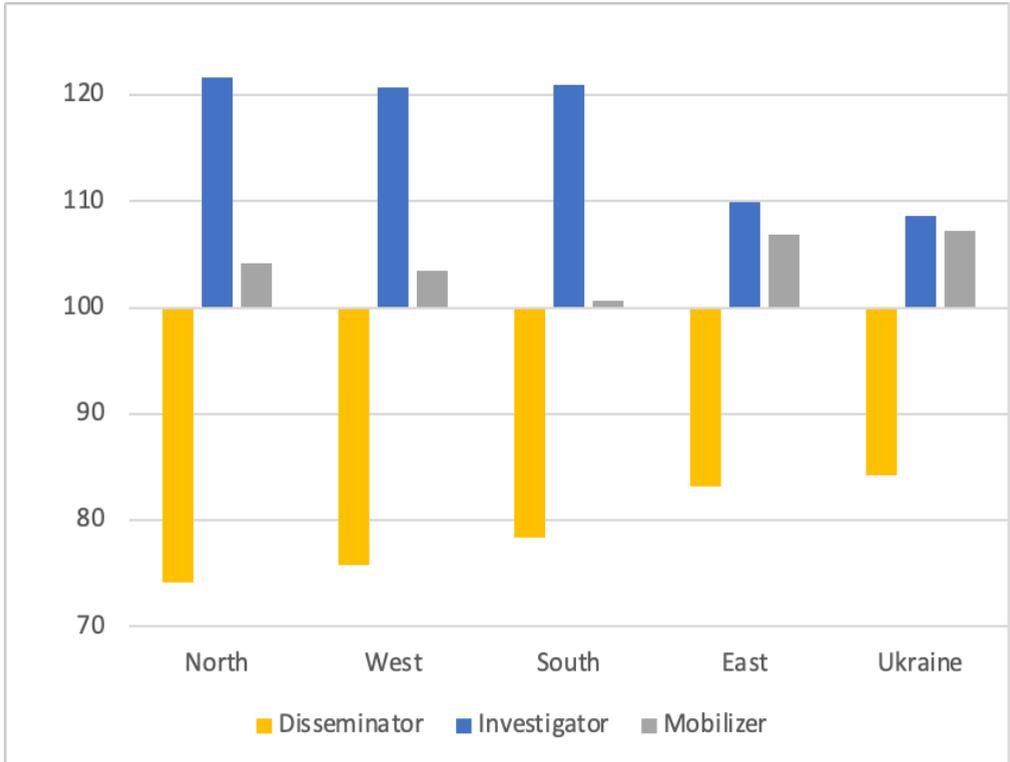


Figure 2. Relative position of each of the journalistic roles within each region (average score = 100).

Further analysis shows that as far as Ukraine is concerned, this ‘divide’ is caused by differences in the assessment of tasks such as ‘providing in-depth background information’, ‘monitoring and scrutinizing business organisations’ and ‘monitoring and scrutinizing civil society organisations’, but not ‘monitoring and scrutinizing government’.

Conclusion

This research started from the idea that professional journalism is going through a phase of structural change. This change can be interpreted as a transition from working within the context of a mass media model to working within the context of a network model. Important aspects of this transition are the changing technological and economic conditions with which professional journalism has to deal. Within the news industry, and thus within journalism education, these changing conditions are the key topic in the thinking about innovation in journalism. If professional journalism is to survive, finding effective responses to these changing conditions is necessary.

However, it is not sufficient. The transition from a mass media model to a network model should not only be understood in terms of a structural, techno-economic change, but also in terms of a cultural change. Thinking about innovation should not only include the means, but also the goals of professional journalism. It should include reconsidering the journalistic tasks and roles of and find a new balance between them in the light of the changing context.

In several sociological traditions, the concept of the ‘role’ is crucial in the study of culture. On the basis of these traditions, journalistic roles have become a key element in the study of the culture of journalism (Mellado, Hellmueller & Donsbach, 2017). They can be defined as normative understandings of what journalism is and what it should do. The most important ways to acquire

and develop these understandings are education and socialization. There can be no doubt that students should learn to master the essential routines of their future profession, but next to that it becomes more important that journalism students learn “to critically reflect the current values and practices and possibly alter their own professional positions and work methods due to this reflection” (Ahva, 2013, p. 20).

Our research is about the views of teachers on future journalistic roles, values and qualifications from a normative viewpoint. The outcomes are supposed to inform Journalism educators as well as practitioners. It is meant to give them food for thought and reflection, and to compare their views with those of others. This should help them to put their own convictions into perspective. On the basis of the answers that the more than thousand responding teachers gave on questions about journalistic tasks, three role conceptions were constructed. Next, these role conceptions were associated with the regional dimension, for which Europe was divided into five regions (North, West, South, East, Ukraine).

Applying these roles in the regional analysis appeared to be fruitful. In all five regions the Investigator role got the highest mean score and the Disseminator role the lowest. In other words: teachers across the whole of Europe believe that the future of professional journalism lies – or: should lie – in the field of Investigative forms of journalism. It is interesting to know that among professional journalists themselves the Disseminator role is often the most popular one (Weaver & Willnat, 2012; Hanitzsch & Vos, 2018), although it is not always clear whether this is the result of a factual observation or a wished-for ideal.

Furthermore, it is interesting to see that teachers across the whole of Europe see a growing importance for the so-called Mobilizer role. Tasks such as ‘motivating people to get socially involved’, ‘pointing people toward possible solutions for social problems’ or ‘giving ordinary people a chance to express their views’, can be seen as building blocks for an emerging network culture of journalism, that is connective and constructive in nature (Haagerup, 2017; Hermans & Drok, 2018; Lough & McIntyre, 2021)).

Next to the relatively high level of consensus among the teachers from the five regions about the future importance of each of the roles, there are also interesting differences. These mainly refer to the Disseminator and Investigator role, and to North/West/South on the one hand and East/Ukraine on the other. North, West and South are so to speak relatively strong supporters of the Investigator role and relatively weak supporters of the Disseminator role, in comparison with the Eastern part of Europe and Ukraine.

Taken together, the outcomes paint an interesting picture of the views of journalism teachers across Europe on journalistic roles. Of course, we do not know to which extent the views of teachers on journalistic roles really translate into actual teaching. Not only because there can be a gap between normative ideals and daily practice, but also because teachers are not the only ones that have a say in what is taught. Nevertheless, as was stated before, in the process of renewing journalism through education, teachers play a pivotal role. The research programme on Roles, Values and Qualifications (EJTA, 2019; WJEC, 2021) can help to fuel the pan-European and global discussion among journalism teachers about journalism education and the direction in which it should move.

Obviously, countries differ with respect to the pace and extent to which they move in the new direction. Journalism is an ‘ism’, a belief system (Nerone, 2015). This means that views on what is good journalism and what is not are to a large extent culturally defined, dependant on time and place. Journalism should not be regarded as a statue, but as a garden. It is never finished. It needs ongoing maintenance and care, depending on the external conditions like the weather, the season, and the climate.

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