



UNIVERSITY
OF TAMPERE

This document has been downloaded from
Tampub – The Institutional Repository of University of Tampere

The permanent address of the publication is <http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:uta-201302201029>

Author(s): Pietilä, Kauko
Title: Professional Journalism : An Intermediary Social Practice
Main work: Intermediality and media change
Editor(s): Herkman, Juha; Hujanen, Taisto; Oinonen, Paavo
Year: 2012
Pages: 245-265
ISBN: 978-951-44-8963-1
Publisher: Tampere : Tampere University Press
Discipline: Media and communications
School /Other Unit: School of Communication, Media and Theatre
Item Type: Article in Compiled Work
Language: en
URN: URN:NBN:fi:uta-201302201029

All material supplied via TamPub is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, and duplication or sale of all part of any of the repository collections is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for your research use or educational purposes in electronic or print form. You must obtain permission for any other use. Electronic or print copies may not be offered, whether for sale or otherwise to anyone who is not an authorized user.

II. Professional Journalism: An Intermediary Social Practice

Introduction

Journalism may be something more than an occupation, namely one among an elite group of occupations, the professions. The high status of professions requires that they perform functions for the benefit of society as a whole, not just for employers or customers. Journalism, too, has been held responsible for a general function in social and societal life. Journalists occupy the intermediate position between the events that make up their stories and the recipients of those stories; in one sense or another, their stories mediate between the events and the public. Ideally and logically, professionals who perform general functions, intermediaries included, determine their operations independent of other parties. However, their autonomy and, consequently, their professional status have been permanently under a threat. The *bourgeoisie*, playing 'a most revolutionary part' in history, has tried, as was pointed out more than 160 years ago, to strip 'of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe' and to convert 'the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage labourers' (Marx and Engels 1972

[1848]: 465). At a later time, journalists, after having developed their intermediary function and achieved something like a professional standing, could have been added to the authors' list.

But trying to convert professions into wage labour is one thing, achieving it another. We shall see that professions, journalism included, had more resistance than the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* assumed. Professionalism has a long history, both as a word and as a practice. It seems to follow a path that first ascends from the beginning to a summit and finally starts to descend when afflicted by tendencies that gnaw at its roots. This trajectory is the subject matter in the second section.

The next section takes up journalism. Professionalism in journalism depends on a definite *type* of intermediation. The type – and journalism's professionalism – loses ground as journalism's position in the media world changes. The change endangers the very existence of the trade and the occupation. The final section concludes by speculating on a possibility to recreate journalistic intermediation in such a way that journalism's professional standing could be founded anew.

The trajectory of professionalism

The vocabulary and discourse of professionalism. The word *profession* and its derivatives did not exist always in language, nor did they always retain the same meaning. In Latin, the word stood for public explanations, notifications and registers (Oxford English Dictionary 2009). Its later secular meaning referred to public education and subsequently to occupations which applied the knowledge of some science. One of the word's current meanings is a calling or career, particularly one involving a long formal education (OED). The occupations originally conforming to this meaning were employments in the church, jurisprudence and medicine; the 18th century honoured 'the three great Professions

of Divinity, Law, and Physick' (Addison 2006 [1711]); a fourth was often added: 'the Profession of Arms' (Steele 2006 [1711]).

The discourse of professionalism has a developing vocabulary. The centre-piece is *profession*, a word that appeared at the dawn of modern times to denote a set of particular occupations. Adjectives, adverbs, verbs and further nouns were derived from the centre-piece over the course of centuries (Figure 1). The vocabulary and the discourse of professionalism seem to expand from bare bones into complexity, most rapidly in the half-century from the mid-19th to the opening of the 20th century.

A certain incongruity is related to the development indicated in Figure 1. Sociologically considered, professions are originally *communal* functions that are performed to realise some foundational values of the community. The development of the professionalism discourse (as reflected in the expanding vocabulary) can be taken to indicate a growing awareness of these communal functions. From its beginning in the Renaissance, the discourse gains breadth and depth at least until the first years of the 20th century, briskest in the last decades of the period. Where the spontaneous development ends, 20th-century sociology takes over. What else happens during the same period is the formation of the modern condition in which *community* retreats and gives way to the expanding *society*. These two developments do not easily agree with each other. If it is true that professions perform communal functions, then it looks as if awareness of these communal functions grows in pace with communal forms of life losing strength and societal forms becoming more powerful.

Ferdinand Tönnies gives us a clearer idea of the issue. He distinguished two forms of human life; one of them is organic. Organic life is lived in a community (*Gemeinschaft*), where occupations are practised as *professions* (*Beruf*). The opposite of community is society (*Gesellschaft*), in which life is lived as a *business transaction* (*Geschäft*; Tönnies 1922 [1887]: 134–135). *Beruf* is a communal function serving the needs of the whole; in society, people practise *Geschäfts* for

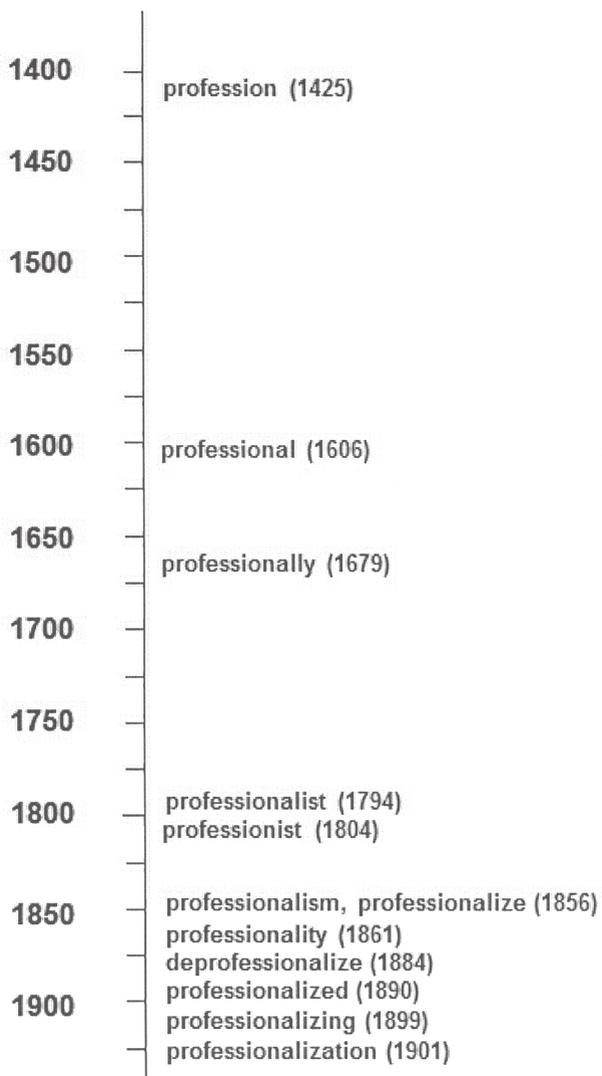


Figure 1. Formation of the professionalism terminology in English according to the *OED*

their own individual reasons. As *Berufs* are communal forms, and as communities tend to be overshadowed by societies, how should we understand the fact that the idea of profession, a communal construct, seems to evolve and gain an expanding verbal expression alongside the advancement of the modern *Geschäft* society?

The self-protection of society. Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* (1957 [1944]) investigates the process whereby Tönnies' *Gemeinschafts* are turned into *Gesellschafts* and human beings' shared life becomes organised through market exchanges. In this transformation, a civilisation is born which subordinates 'the substance of society itself to the laws of the market' (ibid.: 70). The change is problematic. If the market mechanism were the 'sole director of the fate of human beings and their natural environment, indeed, even of the amount and use of purchasing power' or money, this 'would result in the demolition of society' (ibid.: 73). Society could not 'stand the effects of such a system' if it were not protected 'against the ravages of this satanic mill' (ibid.). A double movement is created in which the market tends to expand while a counter movement tries to arrest this expansion. The market mechanism provokes resistance against itself, and this resistance operates to limit the market effects on the factors of production, labour, land and money (ibid.: 131).

This enables us to put the professionalism discourse into context. With it, society adopted, at first spontaneously and later more consciously, a self-defensive posture against the satanic mill of the market. The great transformation constrained *Berufs* into *Geschäfts*. To defend themselves as professions, occupations required and created a more advanced vocabulary and discourse; one of their designers was the sociology of professions. The question was of morality, of how anybody could even think of acting without first regarding one's own interest, in a world in which the form of life was no longer the performance of a communal function, but a business transaction. Sociology answered with a framework of communal values (Parsons 1952, Wolfe 1989: 201–204), and a modern ethos of professionalism was created.

The ethos of professionalism. The new formation was called the *social service professionalism*; its context was the ‘age of planning’ (Marshall 1939: 333–340). The planned object was society itself, and a key role in the project was acted by the state. The state initiated welfare programmes, whereby ‘the professions are being socialized and the social and public services are being professionalized’ (ibid.: 335). The social service occupations adopted ‘responsibility for social welfare’ and recognised their obligations to the professions, to the public, to society as a whole and to the state (ibid.: 333–336). The core ethos was to provide a service on the basis of a need rather than an ability to pay (Hanlon 1998: 49).

Journalism followed the general trend. Professionalization was the concept ‘adopted to represent the factual change of journalist’s role in the 20th century as it was perceived by researchers’ (Nygren 2008: 10). We can discern here a self-protective movement. The professionalization of the trade was thought to ensure for journalism values other than just the market value. The motive behind the drive was the fear that the market value overrides other pertinent values. The early science of newspaper in Germany (*Zeitungswissenschaft*) was aware of the danger. It took for granted that the moral and cultural import of the press depends on the publishers’ business interests, yet ‘it is in the editorial staff’s nature to have to follow the highest interests of humankind, and in general they even believe in this. But *can* they do what they ought to?’ (Bücher 1922: 5). The science was concerned about the ‘fatal dualism between the entrepreneurial and the public interest’ (Dovifat 1925: 5). A remedy was suggested: journalists should be educated at universities (Bücher 1981 [1909]: 79–98). The hope was that universities turn out not just tradespeople but professionals.

Breakdown of the social ethos. Society’s self-defences depended on the classes threatened by the market mechanism, most notably on the working class (aristocracy was involved in its own way, see Polanyi: 154–156). When the class structure changed, the self-defences were fractured. A general understanding in sociology is that the ‘working class [...] is on the way out’ (Bauman 1987: 179, also Therborn 1999:

4, and Pakulski 2005: 175). The class on the rise is the *service class* (Goldthorpe 1982, Hanlon 1998: 43) or the new middle class.

The occupations of the service class look like professions; the practitioners are physicians, teachers, researchers, accountants, lawyers, engineers, civil servants and so on. But as the new class expands and rises to domination after the 1960s, the ethos of social service falls apart and is replaced by 'commercialised professionalism' (Hanlon 1998: 50). The relation of the sociology of professions to its subject matter also changes. The orientation (e.g. Parsons and Platt 1973) that supported professionalization recedes, and the newer scholars see the professions as occupations that are concerned essentially about their own interests and unjustified power (Sciulli 2007: 35–37).

The new spirit does not inspire the practice of occupations as *Berufs*; they should be taken as *Geschäfts*. The connection to public service is cut off, and we might speak of de-professionalization. Instead of providing a service to a need, it is essential to produce a profit to a business. The state withdraws into the background, and welfare projects are dismantled. Also journalism slides into decline, and a 'de-professionalization of the journalist's role' looms ahead (Nygren 2008).

Professional journalism, an anachronism?

The de-professionalizing turn in journalism. Although journalism may have had few other professional features, 'it has not been backward in formulating justificatory ideologies' (Elliott 1978: 189). One of the early notions was the idea of a *free press* 'forged in the long struggle between the bourgeoisie and the English aristocracy' (ibid.). The free press doctrine was counterbalanced by a theory of social responsibility (a self-defensive move). The responsibility of the press consisted of an obligation to provide 'society with a true, impartial account of its affairs' (ibid.: 190). In the same way as the medical profession adopted responsibility for the *health* of the population and the legal profession

for *justice*, journalism was burdened with the duty and trusteeship to take care of the *truth*. This spirit of professional journalism inspired a BBC editor to stress that journalists must give the recipients ‘the untainted information they need to make up their own minds’ (ibid.: 184). Journalists were to transmit, as intermediaries, the events in the sphere of general affairs to the public, truthfully or objectively.

This professionalism, based on a communal responsibility for the transmission of objective information about general affairs, lost ground as the class structure changed and new communication technologies appeared. As citizenship retreated and was replaced by middle-class consumerism, the professional ethos of journalism was eroded and began, as a *Washington Post* columnist titled his piece, ‘journalism’s slow, sad death’. What was passing was ‘not only a business but also a profession – the journalistic tradition of nonpartisan objectivity’ (Gerson 2009). The profession of journalism had involved a spirit of public service, and this had meant objective reportage. This was now vanishing. The profession became a business, and the public service turned into private. ‘The function of commercialized media is more and more determined by the customers’ demand of services and the owners’ expectation of profit’ (Hujanen 2006: 30). That is, *two* bourgeois groups collaborated to convert the man and woman of journalism into their paid wage labourers. Servicing the customers, even if publicly performed, is not the public service that ‘belonged, alongside with independence and ethicality, to the ideals of journalists’ professional self-understanding’ (ibid.: 31). Public service is a communal function; customer is a private person.

Servicing customers depends on knowing the clientele’s needs and desires. To address this need, media companies commission market researches which ‘more and more guide newspaper reforms and inform of desirable contents and suitable journalistic methods’ (Hujanen 2004: 38). Commoditized journalism has turned its back on the communal function that benefits the whole; hence, it is de-professionalized.

Adding to journalism’s abject condition, the new communication technologies put journalism in danger even as a trade and an occupa-

tion. To interchange the elements in the *Washington Post* columnist's jeremiad quoted above (Gerson 2009): What is passing is not just a profession but also a business – an industry to make a living and a profit. The trade is dropping from under journalists' feet as audiences turn to new media, so publics contract, incomes diminish, staffs are reduced, stories become duller. Journalism appears as one of the smokestack industries whose disappearance has been both predicted (as by Bell 1973, Toffler 1981, and many others) and hoped for (see, for example, Lynch, who stated that the idea of 'a professional journalist who is merely an objective observer [...] will officially fade in the coming years' because 'it was a stupid fantasy that it should be like that anyway' [Lynch 2010]).

The promise and the threat of the social media. Stupid or not, the industrial modernity insisted that '[i]ndividuality under these circumstances must be replaced by categories', arrangements must be made 'to adjust the facilities and institutions to the needs of the average person' and concessions have to be made 'to mass requirements' (Wirth 1938: 17–18). If the individual wanted to participate in society at all, 'he [had to] immerse himself in mass movements' (ibid.: 18). Mass communication was an essential institution of this modernity, and an essential element of mass communication was the general public, a smaller or greater accumulation of individuals, all equal and independent of each other, all receiving the same message. It was the mass of mass communication.

The new communication technologies were received as liberations from this massed condition as 'user-centric, group-based active cooperation platforms of the kind that typify the networked information economy' (Benkler 2006: 357, Nip 2006: 218–224). Networking – and, by its side, participatory citizen journalism – allowed individuals 'to reorganize their social relations in ways that fit them better' (Benkler 2006: 367). They could have reciprocal relations that remained light and acknowledged freedom. They were given tools 'to loosen social bonds that are too hierarchical and stifling, while filling in the gaps where their real-world relations seem lacking' (ibid.). The stifling

bonds meant the ‘information environment dominated by commercial mass media on a one-to-many model, which does not foster group interaction among viewers’ (ibid.: 357). By means of the new media, people had the opportunity to produce contents for themselves (Miller 2005: 23); the practice was named ‘journalism by the people, for the people’ (Gillmor 2004).

The network communication by the people, for the people – ‘we the media’ is Dan Gillmor’s watchword – is for the most part essentially something other than journalism. Modern news journalism, the paradigm, means information mediation based on ‘nonpartisan and detached knowledge of important facts, meant to be shared by all’ (Hujanen 2004: 51). A precondition for this is that an intermediary exists who is not involved in the facts but whose concern is knowledge of the facts; this intermediary is the journalist. In communication by the people, for the people, no journalists are involved, and communication without journalists is not journalism but something else.

The new media of communication tend to oust journalistic intermediation. This does not mean an end to intermediation itself. The Internet may have a capacity for intermediation that exceeds enormously the older capacities. But the nature of mediation is changed. In the new media, mediation is not (as much as it used to be) a job for human beings such as journalists. Instead of humans, it is performed by *engines*. The Internet is a tremendous intermediary engine; people use search engines to find anything on the Internet; election engines are used to identify and choose candidates; there are engines within engines.

The changeover in intermediation from persons to engines is accompanied by another remarkable development: publics tend to disappear. Journalistic media had their relatively stable publics. Even though the Internet is an enormously wide, easily and instantly accessible public sphere, it is a public sphere without publics. This follows from a certain confusion of roles. In the new forms of network communication, the producers and consumers of content are in principle one and the same set of people. There is no particular group called

journalists, hence no complementary group called the public. These *identities*, which constitute reciprocally each other and were quite clear in the journalistic media, disappear. The participants in the new media of communication are all *individuals*.

The sociological and societal consequence of this alteration is significant. I indicated above that journalism, as a profession, was in the service of society's self-protection in the face of threats generated by the market. Journalism performed a two-sided function of assembling. On the one hand, it brought together, in its objective reportage, the world as it was currently happening; on the other, it called together a public otherwise detached from that world and put it into an observer's position. Journalism was a nexus where the scattered people congregated as a unified public to meet their differentiated world of the newsworthy, of notables and celebrities, of functions and offices, of events, actions and plans and so on, as collected by the journalists. This was making society visible, in a sense, both ways: differentiations and functions to the public, and the public to the former. A visible society is, in some measure, also receptive to steering.

This is changed when professional journalism is constrained into retreat. With the rise of new network communications, a central mechanism of society's self-defence is dismembered. Its place is occupied by a dispersed condition, much like the market where actors are individuals and each pursues his or her own ends. As society's system of self-protection against the market becomes itself a market participant, society is once again exposed to capitalism's corroding influences. This is in evidence in the, as it seems, uncontrollable turbulence in the financial markets and in the growing resentment of populations whose embittered action against all sorts of estranged elites is in the homelands called – and despised as – populism; when originating from abroad, it is called – and hated and fought against as – terrorism.

Professionalism is eroded not just in journalism, but quite generally; one result is an interesting structural change. The personnel in the commercialised professions seem to be divided into two tiers, an upper and a lower stratum. A collection of studies about professionalism in

different branches shows without exception an intensified two-tier development in the working life:

- the medical profession evinces 'a process of splitting into more and less privileged groups'; an additional process is 'fragmentation' (di Luzio 2004: 443–444);
- universities and other higher education reveal a 'fragmentation of the academic division of labour [...] between project employed and tenured academics' (Hellström 2004: 515, 519);
- the legal profession is segmented into an elite and those outside the elite (Boon et al. 2005: 486, also Muzio and Ackroyd 2005: 640–641);
- in schools, the 'teachers' hitherto exclusive role in taking care of classes of children is to be 'opened up' to a subordinate group of non-teachers who receive 'considerably less training, remuneration and status' (Wilkinson 2005: 430); and
- in journalism, the upper grade is composed of the 'permanent well-paid journalists, the notables among the editorial staff, who as heads of the editorial office keep the production system going'; the underclass consists of content producers, interim employees, freelancers, sub-contractors and the newly graduated (Nygren: 63–64, Ursell 2004).

In journalism, the orientations of the two tiers may be significantly opposite. The higher layer tends to define the trade in terms of profit-seeking economic undertaking, while the lower stratum would base the occupation's legitimacy and authority on its 'assistance to democracy and citizenship' (Hujanen 2006: 34, 37). The latter group might have an interest to turn journalism's de-professionalization into re-professionalization – but what about its professional ideology?

The doctrine of objective reporting does not obligate any longer with its former vigour, and does not function as a source for journalists' self-confidence. The managerial layer in particular does not see any possibility to return to earlier modes of operation: 'In order to be interesting and significant journalism cannot mediate the same kind of information as in the past' (Hujanen 2004: 38, 43–46). The younger

strata of the population join in, indicating that: ‘We are not going to trust objectivity’ (Eaves 2009). Is there anything, then, on which the profession of journalism could be rebuilt?

A new situation, a new doctrine

The old doctrine becomes groundless. An occupation needs a generally valued goal in order to be acknowledged as a professional public service. Journalism, with its background in a class society in which class conflict was prevalent – ‘the long struggle between the bourgeoisie and the English aristocracy’, as in Elliott’s analysis – was justified by the doctrine of objective mediation of information. Objectivity is a choice to one who wants to maintain equitable relations to all parties of a conflict. Thus journalism, turning itself into a business enterprise in the condition of class struggles, moved to an intermediary position defined by disinterested objectivism as a guarantee of honesty, integrity and determination.

When the large economic classes, defined by contradictory interests and struggles for political power, were dissolved, and the class society was replaced by a panorama of almost endlessly fragmented smaller-scale individual and group interests, objectivism lost its positive functionality, revealed its negative aspects and turned from a solution into a problem. Objectivism namely objectified, even doubly. Objective journalism treated the reality under its observation as an object, and it took its public as an object of its informational action. It was analogous to school education, where ‘closely scheduled mediation of knowledge is more important than skills of problem solving and social interaction’ and where pupils are ‘objects of the mediation of information who are not supposed to define their own goals or to plan their own work’ (Kauppinen 2004: 28).

The negative aspects of objectivism aroused the renunciation mentioned above: 'We are not going to trust objectivity'. This problematic condition is reflected in journalists' talk about their occupation. The managerial level in particular is sensitised and requires journalists to produce stories to elucidate 'the meaning the events of the world have for the everyday life', and to turn out 'content that reflects people's needs and desires'. The goal is to 'enable citizens to participate [...] and to inform the decision-makers of their views'. It is imperative to look at the world 'from the ordinary people's point of view and not from the civil servant's or politician's angle, and the different perspectives must be connected and intertwined' (Hujanen 2004: 44–45). The last quotation from practising journalists identifies all parties of the journalistic configuration: the public (ordinary people), actors in the public sphere (civil servants, politicians and all other figures on the stage) and the connector in the intermediary position (the journalist and his or her medium). We can now start to define a professional doctrine based on these classes of personage.

The task redefined: bringing the public in. A task for the contemporary journalist is to bring in again the public that was exiled by journalism's insistence on objectivity. Particularly the upper stratum of journalists feels the need for a reorientation. They say that journalists should 'concentrate on issues related to people's own lives and create an interface to the readers' everyday' (Hujanen 2004: 46), and that they should produce compassionate journalism that 'looks from the bottom up' (ibid.: 48). To do this, they need sources and connections in the everyday that can be used to interpret expert information so that societal matters can be opened up with the ordinary people's narratives, words and views. The idea is that the 'intimate knowledge generated in the everyday, coupled with people's feelings and experiences, could be given [...] the status of expert knowledge' (ibid.: 51). Journalism of this kind would 'give resources to the public as citizens and empower them to participate in collective action' (Hujanen 2006: 31). Also, it would 'offer people facilities to get in on the act, to exert influence on events and to be heard' (ibid.: 35). A journalist is not up to the

professional task if he or she is satisfied to describe bureaucratic and ceremonial edifices and processes; what the job requires is to chart and make public people's experiences (ibid.: 37). It is 'important that journalists clarify the connections between political decision and people's experiences and feelings'; it is important that journalism 'becomes a nexus where the public and the private meet' (ibid.: 38).

The background for these requirements is the traditional media's anxiety about changes and developments that make social media a more proper environment for the generations whose impulse is to 'claim space for one's own *self* and to build up *one's own* initiative and *one's own* subjectivity' (Vähämäki 2009: 198–199). Journalism, however, which seeks to reconstruct itself as a profession, cannot content itself with this 'self', 'one's own' and 'subjectivity' because the larger framework of general affairs stays put anyway and cannot be reduced to an individual's self, own and subjective. In this condition, the trade might ask itself a question: How is journalism constituted as communicative action?

Yochai Benkler represents people who have a good time in the social media and detest the 'information environment dominated by commercial mass media on a one-to-many model' (Benkler 2006: 357). In their view, journalism is a system of *two constitutive elements*, one of them, the content producers (relatively few), sending messages in a one-way channel to the recipients (abundantly many). Can this view, and the corresponding reality, be made more balanced, egalitarian and participatory without giving up journalism?

One evident way is to see in journalism *three constituent elements* and to define it as communication originating from (1) actors in the public domain and proceeding, via (2) journalists, to (3) the public at large, *and returning back by the same route* (the 'returning back' in particular may presuppose that journalists have an innovative approach to their occupational skills and practices). What could be expected from up-to-date public service professional journalists in this setup is that they construct meetings or encounters in their media between the general or universal, represented by the public, and the particular,

represented by the identified actors in the public domain. In Jaana Hujanen's summaries quoted above, the top-level journalists spoke of politicians, experts, public servants and other actors and agents of the public domain, and contrasted them to people in general, people in their everyday and in their own lives, people at the bottom, ordinary people, citizens and consumers (Hujanen 2004 and 2006). The *general* or *universal* is on the latter side of this setup (because people on this side make up a public in which individuals are not separated from each other but are taken into consideration in general). The *private* or *particular* (that which has been differentiated and identified) is on the structure's former side and is composed of specifically identified human beings, groups, organisations, associations and other such objects; the journalists focuses on them general attention on behalf of the public.

If journalism followed the model of three elements, it would serve both sides of the configuration without being bound to either (this is to ensure its independence); it would mediate the particular to the public (by informing the public of the actors on the stage) and the public or general to the particular (by creating the public's response or reaction). A professional journalist would not only mediate the differentiated, structured and classified aspect of the world to the public, but would also deliberate on what can be done on behalf of the public and from the general point of view in relation to the identified actors of the public domain. Both functions presuppose journalistic skills, but the tools to perform the latter function may require more innovative effort.

Investigative journalism is an example of such a two-way journalism, but we do not have to go even that far:

Perhaps the simplest method for journalists to break away from the one-way flow of information that proceeds from public figures to audiences is to ask questions on the public's behalf. The modern media culture already 'incorporates a variety of institutional settings for verbal interaction in which the practices of doubt and disputation

are routinely relevant aspects of those setting's constituent discourse' and in which particular strategies are used by means of which one can manifestly 'be sceptical'. One such strategy involves 'the lexical format *you say X, but what about Y*' (Hutchby, 1992: 673–5). Practices of doubt, disputation, scepticism and interrogation could be practised in journalism on behalf of the public who, as a corporate body, can participate only through a representative.

If the media assume in full measure the role of intermediary, they do not just pass information from and about objects of public interest to the public but also aggregate and organize the public's retroaction. Intermediation through the mass media currently and routinely involves a sort of sociological weighing, namely a selection and presentation of events and people to the public. A next step ought to follow: the public's retroaction, preferably in excess of indications showing the public's mere presence. The retroaction can be questions, caution, suspicion, scepticism, evasion, irony, laughter, applause – whatever the public figures and actors reasonably, in the public's interest, deserve. An important problem relating to this is reported here (and a fair answer given): "One editor of a weekly newspaper wondered aloud, 'Who am I to decide what people are interested in?' – You're the editor, that's who" (Safran 2005: 23). (Pietilä 2011: 157–158.)

Journalism as sociation. What I have presented above brings to mind Anthony Giddens' reflexive modernity, where expert practices institutionalise everyday life, and everyday life and individual interpretations of meaning are introduced into the sphere of institutional order (Giddens 1994). Journalism, however, always involves more than individuals, namely great numbers. Normally the public or audience consists of a huge number of people, great in relation to the number – not insignificant in itself – of actors and agents who can be squeezed in the compass of journalistic public attention (about this, see Pietilä 2008). This disqualifies the category of the individual, and we need to think about journalism in a way slightly different from what Giddens

suggests. His contrast is between institutions, experts and knowledge on the one hand, and everyday life, individuals and meanings on the other. In journalism, the contrast is more appropriately between the whole as differentiated and the whole as a generality. Giddens' concern is the discursive formation of *knowledge*, whereas in the journalistic intermediation between the differentiated and the general, the question is of the formation of *society* (see Pietilä 2011).

The doctrine of journalism, as roughly outlined above, might call upon Niklas Luhmann, who defines society as a 'whole of experiences and actions that are present to each other and reach each other communicatively' (Luhmann 1981: 309). Society, accordingly, means a 'closure of communications that in an operative respect reach each other or take a relation to each other' (Krause 2001: 152). Society, in short, means communicative interaction. Essentially this is Georg Simmel's definition: Society exists when people start, or are made, to interact with each other (Simmel 1908: 5). If professionalism in general is a counterforce to market-based sociation, then, as a social scientist, I should counterbalance market-value with another value and goal, namely society, defined in Simmel's and Luhmann's sense. That would open up prospects for communication in general and journalism in particular, specifically an opportunity to see *communication and journalism not as taking place in society, but the other way round: to see society as happening in communication and journalism*.

In the sociological sense, journalism (although not journalism alone) makes it possible for very large numbers of human beings to interact: a lot of people as objects of public attention, even more people directing public attention onto them, and journalists in between mediating their relations to each other. The relations and interactions between public figures and the public can be regulated, within limits, by journalists, which means that journalism can still be a counterforce to market-based sociation, namely a domain in which sociation is guided by the idea of society itself.

References

- Addison, J. (2006 [1711]) 'Spectator no. 21', <<http://meta.montclair.edu/spectator/text/march1711/no21.html>> [February 26, 2010].
- Bauman, Z. (1987) *Legislators and interpreters*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bell, D. (1973) *The coming of post-industrial society*. New York: Basic Books.
- Benkler, Y. (2006) *The wealth of networks*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Boon, A., J. Flood and J. Webb (2005) 'Postmodern professions?', *Journal of Law and Society* 32(2): 473–492.
- Bücher, K. (1922) *Zur Frage der Pressreform*. Tübingen: Mohr.
- Bücher, K. (1981 [1909]) 'Vorbildung für den Journalistenberuf an Universitäten [Education of journalists at universities]', in K. Bücher, *Auswahl der publizistikwissenschaftlichen Schriften*, pp. 79–98. Bochum: Brockmeyer.
- Dovifat, E. (1925) *Journalismus und journalistische Berufsbildung in England*. Berlin: Verlag für Presse, Wirtschaft und Politik.
- Eaves, D. (2009) 'The death of journalism?', <<http://eaves.ca/2009/03/17/journalism-in-an-open-era/>> [April 23, 2010].
- Elliott, P. (1978) 'Professional ideology and organisational change', in G. Boyce, J. Curran and P. Wingate (eds) *Newspaper history from the seventeenth century to the present day*, pp. 172–191. London: Constable and SAGE.
- Gerson, M. (2009) 'Journalism's slow, sad death', <http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/11/28/the_strange_sad_death_of_journalism_99315.html> [April 23, 2010].
- Giddens, A. (1994) 'Living in a post-traditional society', in U. Beck, A. Giddens and S. Lash, *Reflexive modernization*, pp. 56–109. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Gillmor, D. (2004) *We the media*. Sebastopol: O'Reilly.
- Goldthorpe, J. (1982) 'On the service class, its formation and future', in A. Giddens and G. Mackenzie (eds) *Social class and the division of labour*, pp. 162–185. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hanlon, G. (1998) 'Professionalism as enterprise', *Sociology* 32(1): 43–63.
- Hellström, T. (2004) 'Between rock and a hard place', *Higher Education* 48(4): 511–528.
- Hujanen, J. (2004) 'Tiedonvälitystehtävän murroksilla', *Tiedotustutkimus* 27(4–5): 38–55.
- Hujanen, J. (2006) 'Yleisön palvelu markkinaehtoistuvan median journalistien itseyemmäryksessä', *Tiedotustutkimus* 29(2): 30–43.
- Hutchby, I. (1992) 'The pursuit of controversy', *Sociology* 26(4): 673–694.

- Kauppinen, M. (2004) 'Opetussuunnitelmista luettua', Jyväskylän yliopisto, kasvatustieteen laitos. <https://jyx.jyu.fi/dspace/bitstream/handle/123456789/8784/URN_NBN_fi_jyu-2005166.pdf?sequence=1> [May 27, 2010].
- Krause, D. (2001) *Luhmann-Lexikon*. Stuttgart: Lucius & Lucius.
- Luhmann, N. (1981) 'Veränderungen im System gesellschaftlicher Kommunikation und die Massenmedien', in N. Luhmann, *Soziologische Aufklärung 3*, pp. 309–320. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Luzio, G. di (2004) 'The irresistible decline of the medical profession?', *German Politics* 13(3): 419–448.
- Lynch, C. (2010) 'What the reader elite means for journalism schools', <<http://thelynchblog.com/2010/03/25/what-the-reader-elite-means-for-journalism-schools/>> [May 18, 2020].
- Marshall, T. H. (1939) 'The recent history of professionalism in relation to social structure and social policy', *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 5(3): 325–340.
- Marx, K. and F. Engels (1972 [1848]) 'Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei', in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Werke* (vol. 5), pp. 459–493. Berlin: Dietz.
- Miller, R. (2005) 'Journalism returns to its (GRASS) roots', *EContent* 28(6): 22–27.
- Muzio, D. and S. Ackroyd (2005) 'On the consequences of defensive professionalism', *Journal of Law and Society* 32(4): 615–642.
- Nip, J. (2006) 'Exploring the second phase of public journalism', *Journalism Studies* 7(2): 212–236.
- Nygren, G. (2008) *Yrke på glid*. Stockholm: Stiftelsen Institutet för Mediestudier.
- Oxford English Dictionary* (2009) Oxford: Oxford University Press. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/entrance.dtl>> [February 4, 2010].
- Pakulski, J. (2005) 'Foundations of a post-class analysis', in E. O. Wright (ed) *Approaches to class analysis*, pp. 152–79. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Parsons, T. (1952) *The social system*. London: Tavistock.
- Parsons, T. and G. M. Platt (1973) *The American university*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Pietilä, K. (2008) 'Pro yleisö', *Tiedotustutkimus* 31(1): 38–52.
- Pietilä, K. (2011) *Reason of sociology*. London: SAGE.
- Polanyi, K. (1957 [1944]) *The great transformation*. Boston: Peacon Press.
- Safran, S. (2005) 'How participatory journalism works', *Nieman Reports* 59(4): 22–24.
- Sciulli, D. (2007) 'Paris visual Académie as first prototype profession', *Theory, Culture & Society* 24(1): 35–59.

- Simmel, G. (1908) *Soziologie*. Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot.
- Steele, R. (2006 [1711]) 'Spectator no. 152', <<http://meta.montclair.edu/spectator/text/august1711/no152.html>> [February 26, 2010].
- Therborn, G. (1999) 'The ruling class twenty-five years later', *Critical Sociology* 25(2–3): 3–5.
- Toffler, A. (1981) *The third wave*. Toronto: Bantam Books.
- Tönnies, F. (1922 [1887]) *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*. Berlin: Karl Curtius.
- Ursell, G. (2004) 'Changing times, changing identities', in T. E. Jensen and A. Westenholz (eds) *Identity in the age of the new economy*, pp. 34–54. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Wilkinson, G. (2005) 'Workforce remodelling and formal knowledge', *School Leadership and Management* 25(5): 421–439.
- Wirth, L. (1938) 'Urbanism as a way of life', *The American Journal of Sociology* XLIV (1): 1–24.
- Wolfe, A. (1989) *Whose keeper?* Berkeley: University of California Press. <<http://alk.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft9k4009qs>> [June 8, 2009].
- Vähämäki, J. (2009) *Itsen alistus*. Helsinki: Like.