

Themes and Critical Debates in Contemporary Journalism

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Edited by

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INTRODUCTION

A week before this book was submitted to the publisher, the 2017 Pulitzer Prize winners were announced. Nine journalists and five newsrooms were added to the almost century-long list of the best journalism in the United States. The awards are always a reminder that the public service gene is very strong in all good journalism. Great journalism involves curiosity, patience, dedication, meticulous reporting, lucid writing, distinguished criticism; it illuminates a significant and complex subject, captures events accurately as they occur, provides context, has a moral purpose, sound reasoning, and the power to influence public opinion in what the writer conceives to be the right direction...at least that's how the Pulitzer Jury defines the best of journalism today.

But what is journalism today? The old definitions of journalism are under fire; its occupational identity and importance to democracy, public life, and social justice are contested; the content, technologies, practices and cultural conditions of production of news are changing. Contemporary developments signal significant shifts in the ways journalism is practised, conceptualized and taught.

This book, written in the context of the World Journalism Education Congress (WJEC) held in 2016 at Auckland University of Technology, in New Zealand, offers a collection of essays on some of the key concepts, categories and models that have underpinned WJEC discussions about journalism research and pedagogy. The overall theme of the congress—integrity and the identity of journalism and journalism education across the globe—generated rigorous debate about journalism studies and the distinctiveness, subject matter, and the journalism curriculum today.

The congress theme has proved to be an excellent catalyst for rethinking journalism, and its ability to move the boundaries of civic discourse. The book maps the advantages and limits of exploring journalism in the light of key ideas that underpin its contemporary practice: citizenry, ethics, detachment, transparency, news consumption, metrics, innovation, professionalism and imagination. Each essay offers an informed perspective on the topic's conceptual foundation, current debates and its importance for understanding 21st century journalism examining its intellectual authority, place in society, norms that rule its practice, and pressures it faces in slicing the world into “all the news that's fit to print”. The book

aims to open the discussion by placing ideas about the work of journalism—producing, reproducing and naturalizing collective conceptions of reality—in a wider and deeper context of political, social, and occupational change.

Themes and Critical Debates in Contemporary Journalism starts with the critical examination of one of the most rehearsed professional pledges, journalism's provision of the information citizens need to engage in public and political participation. While this function persists, Geoffrey Craig argues (Chapter 1), the identity, scope and practices of the citizenry, as well as what it means to be informed, have changed: "The proliferation of expressions of difference that are captured in forms of differential citizenship place extra responsibility on journalists to engage in practices of listening and understanding so that they provide a full and fair portrayal of views and also interrogate the assumptions they bring to the reportage," he says. Donald Matheson (Chapter 2), examines journalism ethics in times of radical change, calling for journalists bringing more of their culturally-situated selves to the reporting, rather than claiming status outside cultural norms, when seeking to establish trust. Verica Rupar (Chapter 3) revisits journalism's professional ideology and the norm of detachment, to put forward the argument that the most powerful form of journalism is open, transparent and oriented towards a particular position that requires active engagement and social responsibility. Gregory Treadwell (Chapter 4) looks at the freedom of information regime and the ways it links journalism and its audience. He argues, "Together, they might just be able to ensure the transparency of the powerful."

What would happen if there was no news? ask Holly Cowart and Kim Walsh-Chandlers (Chapter 5). They discuss the possibility that incidental news exposure on social media has lessened awareness of general news exposure arguing that the environment in which news appears is perhaps even more a part of our lives than ever before. The increasingly complex "post-industrial news ecosystem" has interlinked news corporations and social media companies more strongly than ever, and they share the same interest in their most valuable property—the audience, explains Merja Myllylahti (Chapter 6). She argues that the intensified focus on metrics poses a fundamental question for journalism: Are journalists producing public goods and public service or just other sellable commodities?

The last three chapters expand discussion about journalism to journalism education and journalism research, engaging with the concept of professionalism in relation to innovation, the classroom turned into a newsroom, and imagination. Nico Drok (Chapter 7) puts forward a convincing argument: that in order to become centres of reflection and

innovation, journalism schools should no longer focus on journalism as it is today, but on the future of journalism. In that future, the key innovation will be to put the citizen, in his/her capacity as a potential actor in the public sphere, back to the centre of journalism. Katherine Reed (Chapter 8) looks closely at models of journalism education to pose related questions: when the means of producing and distributing information and stories are in the hands of everyone, how do we define the professional journalist as a distinct and invaluable, even incomparable entity? In other words, what do journalists trained for the profession know, and what functions can they perform that others can't? She argues for the greater presence of newsroom practitioners in faculty-run newsrooms.

In the concluding chapter of the book (Chapter 9) Stephen Reese, one of the keynote speakers at the World Journalism Education Congress 2016, brings together journalism, journalism education and journalism research. He advocates for the journalistic imagination, "a kind of scholarly outlook" defined by its simultaneous commitment to the normative concerns for the field, the openness of its methodology, and the prioritising of research around urgent social issues.

CHAPTER ONE: CITIZENSHIP

THE EVOLUTION OF CITIZENSHIP AND JOURNALISM

GEOFFREY CRAIG

The importance of journalism has always been linked partly to its role of informing the citizenry and yet the “simplicity” of such a role is considerably complicated by the fact that we are living today in a world that is characterized not only by extraordinary technological and media change but also by the increased prominence and political struggle over issues of political and cultural identity and expressions of difference. Journalists in newsrooms and journalism educators in classrooms have to develop skills relating to an ever growing and quickly evolving technological landscape—the technological “plasticity” of a mobile phone, the ability to locate and “read” complex bodies of information in data journalism, the technical details associated with the communicative potential of different kinds of social media. Equally, the pluralism of modern societies and the erosion of traditional value-systems mean that journalists, journalism educators and students need to have greater knowledge and skills to understand and negotiate political and social complexity. These two developments are related: the increasing volume and forms of communication, and the changing dynamics between media producers and “consumers”, help inform a more heterogeneous public life. The issue discussed here is how evolving understandings of citizenship can be mobilized to assist us to engage with such political, cultural, technological and communicative complexity and how they might impact on journalistic content and reportage. This complicated issue can only be sketched within the limits of this chapter but what I will do is provide an overview of the evolution of citizenship, presenting it through a schema that contrasts both: the singularity of citizenship—associated with the unified membership of a broad collective, namely the nation—with its more

plural expressions—where the rights of difference are claimed and celebrated; and also a “deep,” informed and participatory form of citizenship with a more “shallow,” monitorial citizenship. I will conclude with discussion of some ramifications for the practice and content of journalism with focused discussion on the importance of listening and understanding, and the constitution of the news.

Evolution and Types of Citizenship

Citizenship has always been a historically informed concept. Our ideas of citizenship have evolved with the historical concept of modernity, linked to the rise of the nation-state, processes of secularization, and a process of law that is indifferent to the social status of legal subjects. The evolution of modern citizenship was encapsulated in T.H. Marshall’s (1963) categories that noted: firstly, the rise of civil citizenship in the 18th century, characterized by the right to receive justice and exercise freedom of speech; secondly, the rise of political citizenship in the 19th century, characterized by the right to participate in the exercise of political power, manifested in various struggles over the franchise; and thirdly, the rise of social citizenship in the 20th century, which is expressed through the rights of individuals to access welfare and education. Marshall’s work has been subject to critique (Hudson and Kane 2000, Hartley 2010) but nonetheless it suggests the expansion and complication of the concept of citizenship and it also does prompt us to consider further developmental stages of citizenship.

We find this in the idea of cultural citizenship (Miller 2006; van Zoonen 2005) that in elementary terms refers to rights of being “included” across a broader cultural and political landscape. As van Zoonen (2005) has noted:

That seemingly nominal requirement is behind intense confrontations about national and minority languages or religions; about the validity and legitimacy of particular kinds of knowledges; about cultural heritage and protectionism; and about lifestyles, identities, norms, values, decency, and good and bad taste. (van Zoonen 2005,8)

Cultural citizenship, then, is manifested in various forms of “identity politics” that refer not only to particular expressions of difference—along lines of gender, race and ethnicity, disability, etc.—but also to niche publics organized around matters of style, sub-cultures, lifestyle and various forms of affiliation, ranging from the religious to the environmental (Hartley 2010). In his historical typology of citizenship, Schudson (1999) has also

recognized this “rights”-based citizenship, growing out of the social movements and cultural revolution of the 1960s. While cultural citizenship is similarly motivated as earlier “forms” of citizenship for inclusion in the broader citizenry body, it also, more so than earlier expressions of citizenship, “thematizes” difference, challenging the homogeneity of the status of citizenship.

Contemporary manifestations of citizenship are not only characterized by the promotion of difference, they are also increasingly more individualized and privatized, problematizing the classical delineation of citizenship as a generalized, public form of political subjectivity. This can be seen in the concept of DIY-citizenship. Hartley (1999, 2010) has claimed that such a form of citizenship is based upon a “radically decontextualized network of meanings which locate identity in the mediasphere” (179) and on claims to the right of individual “semiotic self-determination” (181). DIY-citizenship is based upon recognition of the way that digital technology and culture, manifested in online and social media communication, provide people with greater means of individual textual production and new forms of civic engagement. The contexts of digital technology and culture have facilitated an explosion of knowledge, increasingly freed from historically conventional institutional sites of knowledge production, producing what Henry Jenkins (2006) has termed a “participatory culture” and Stephen Coleman (2005) has termed a “conversational democracy”. DIY-citizenship, then, privileges *individual* forms of public engagement, but it also forges new, often informal, kinds of *public association*. Hartley’s idea of DIY-citizenship has nonetheless been subject to critique. Ratto and Boler (2014) have argued that his definition “appears to assume the problematic atomistic individual long associated with liberalism” and also that there seems to be little scope for difference between DIY citizenship and mere consumerism (11-12). Ratto and Boler posit a much more overtly political identity to DIY-citizenship that they state is “characterized by its emphasis on ‘doing’ and the active roles of interventionists, makers, hackers, modders, and tinkerers” (18). Ultimately, DIY citizenship is a flexible enough phenomenon to span a continuum “with one end representing the overtly political/interventionist and the other end representing those simply channeling creativity and a kind of poesis into everyday practices” (19).

Marshall’s schema represents an expansion of a nonetheless singular form of citizenship but this sense of singularity starts to break down with cultural and DIY-citizenship. The rise of these latter types of citizenship attests to the fact that citizenship is now seen as a more heterogeneous, diverse phenomenon. As Peter Dahlgren (2003, 159) has written, citizenship

is “now ... understood as a more plural and mutable form of identity that involves a sense of social engagement and belonging”. Or, as Plummer (2003) has more rhetorically observed: “We seem to have reached a point where a thousand citizenships are ready to bloom.” We have become more familiar in recent years with a range of citizenships, spanning cosmopolitan citizenship, sexual or intimate citizenship, corporate citizenship, and environmental citizenship, just to name a few. Wayne Hudson (2000, 24) has argued that these types of citizenship are encapsulated in the idea of differential citizenship that “emphasizes that political citizens have access to a vast diversity of citizenships which cannot be collapsed into a single inclusive uniformitarian citizenship”.

This proliferation of citizenships does not, however, represent an obliteration of the conventional, more singular and distinctly “political” form of citizenship that is associated with membership of a nation-state and indeed the legal and institutional securities of more conventional citizenship identity in contemporary democratic societies can help enable other citizenships to arise and flourish. Nonetheless, there can also be tension between more particular types of citizenship and a broader political citizenship as we see in the example of the recent controversy in North Carolina where LGBT people and supporters have protested against a law that was passed that required transgender people to use the type of public bathroom that corresponds to the sex that is identified on their birth certificate. As Hudson (2000, 24, author’s *italics*) has noted, the operation of contemporary political citizenship could be expanded “to address *how political citizens may be expected to behave across their citizenships*”.

The explosion in forms of differential citizenship is premised upon recognition that the “universality” and “impartiality” of conventional political citizenship, as it has been historically understood and practised, has in fact perpetuated privileges and facilitated injustices. Iris Marion Young (1989) has made such a claim in her argument for a *differentiated* citizenship where differences between citizens or groups of citizens are both recognized and taken into account in contrast to conventional understandings of a universal citizenship. Young argues that universal citizenship wrongly equates equality with sameness, emphasizing what people have in common in contrast to how they differ, and also applying rules and laws to all people the same way, indifferent to individual and group differences (250). She demonstrates that “universal” citizenship is actually constituted through relations of difference, occurring in a “realm of rationality and freedom as opposed to the heteronomous realm of particular need, interest, and desire” (253) and that this kind of distinction conflates “oppositions between reason and passion, masculine and

feminine” (253). She states, then, that we need to have a citizenship that highlights and addresses the “situatedness” of all citizens:

I assert, then, the following principle: a democratic public, however that is constituted, should provide mechanisms for the effective representation and recognition of the distinct voices and perspectives of those of its constituent groups that are oppressed or disadvantaged within it. (Young 1989, 261)

In addition to the situation that has just been sketched, where greater citizenship plurality and differentiation co-exists with an ongoing singular and more conventionally “political” form of citizenship, we also need to chart contemporary citizenship upon a spectrum of “depth” and “shallowness”. The informational complexity and plurality of information sources in digital culture that was alluded to earlier in comments on DIY-citizenship facilitates not only a more “individualized” form of citizenship but it also enables citizens to more easily acquire a greater “depth” of knowledge and expertise and subsequently to put such knowledge into practice as motivated, engaged citizens who are able to critique mainstream news media reportage and offer alternative accounts, and also challenge institutional sources of information more generally. Normative understandings of citizenship have always maintained that it is more than a form of political *identity* but crucially involves political *practices*, (and ideally more than the occasional vote every three or four or five years) and expressions of “depth” or “engaged” citizenship allow this to occur, as we saw in Ratto and Boler’s emphasis on the practices and agency of those engaged in DIY-citizenship. Equally, this form of “engaged” citizenship occurs within, and contributes to, a major structural transformation of the public sphere. As Bruns (2008, 67) has noted, we are experiencing “the slow, casual collapse ... of the one-to-many mass media of the industrial age, and [its] ... replacement with the many-to-many, user-led media of the networked age”. This new virtual public sphere gives rise to increasingly “niche” or “issue” publics where communities with specific problems or interests—the communities of a “differential” citizenship—can deliberate amongst themselves, and in turn take on leadership in broader public deliberative processes.

The “depth” or “engaged” form of contemporary citizenship is, of course, manifested in a range of activities and media practices across citizen journalism, blogging, social media, online advocacy groups, the open source movement, Wikipedia, etc. Through such forms of media “citizens themselves become actors in the play of political engagement ... they now directly contribute their own opinions and ideas to the debate”

(Bruns 2008, 68). End-users have become active co-producers—they have become “*producers*” (Bruns 2008, 72). This process offers a challenge to professional journalistic norms as we have “amateur” contributions, subjective reportage, a greater variety of narrative forms and a challenge of the conventional hierarchy of sources. The effects of this “depth” form of citizenship not only challenge journalistic hierarchies but hierarchies of knowledge and expertise more generally. Such a challenge, however, does not mean dissolution of the authority of experts but rather it increases their accountability to the wider public. Such a process is captured in the term “equipotentiality” which refers to a “belief that expertise cannot be located beforehand, and thus general and open participation is the rule” (Bauwens, cited in Bruns 2008, 71).

It may be possible for the noted “producers” to exercise expertise in certain political, social or cultural arenas but such competency across all public issues is beyond the ability of most people, particularly in a digital culture where there is an ubiquity of information sources and corresponding proliferation of content that is continuously updated. This informational culture has thus also given rise, more so than ever before, to “shallower” expressions of citizenship where there is an ongoing surveillance or scanning of the news of public culture. This is a *monitorial* (Schudson 1999) form of citizenship. As Schudson observed, Walter Lippmann long ago was right (even if we don’t agree with his subsequent conclusions): “if democracy requires omnicompetence and omniscience from its citizens, it is a lost cause” (Schudson 1999, p. 310). This monitorial citizenship is a counter to, or perhaps a necessary complement of, the more focused concerns of a “rights-based” citizenship. Monitorial citizenship is not however a passive, disengaged citizenship. Schudson maintains that citizens should be “poised for action” if their surveillance triggers serious concern. Monitorial citizenship, then, is perhaps the reservoir of generalized civic potential, able to be mobilized when required.

Ramifications for Journalism

The question that follows is what ramifications does this historical evolution and critique of contemporary citizenship have for the practice of journalism and for journalism education? There is much that could be said, but I want to observe in particular that it seems to me that we are acutely conscious of the ways that new technologies and social media are initiating radical transformations of the industry and practices of journalism, and we are also acutely aware of the radical changes involved in the status and functions of the consumers of journalism, along with the

accompanying changing relations between these new “producers” and journalists, but this upheaval and transformation has perhaps not sufficiently flowed through to correspondingly renewed conceptualisations of citizenship. We may well be aware of the kind of historical evolution of citizenship that I have just referenced and yet a “residual”, normative idea of citizenship still persists, sometimes sitting uncomfortably in the contexts of the transformation I have just described.

One of the ramifications for journalism that follows from the overview of citizenship I have provided is the importance of *listening* and *understanding*. Listening and understanding become ever more important in a world where there are proliferating expressions of difference that undermine traditional value systems and notions of “common sense.” Of course, listening and understanding should be central to journalistic practice as reporters seek, gather and make sense of the different voices that are deemed relevant to news stories. News stories are animated not only by individual sources but also by the conjunction of different kinds of sources and opinions. It has been noted that listening is integrated into attempts to reform conventional journalism, as we see variously across peace, public and ecumenical journalism (Lynch 1998; Rosen 1999; Borden 2005; O'Donnell 2009) but more generally it has been claimed that journalists are not good at listening. Dan Gillmor (2009), for example, declares that:

Sadly, [listening] is not something most journalists do very well. We pay attention to the sources we interview, and to the people whose press conferences we attend, and to the rich, powerful and/or well-connected people who remain on the trade's semi-official radar. We don't pay much attention, however, to anyone else. (Dan Gillmor 2009, 5)

It has been widely claimed that journalism could do better in its reportage on marginalised communities, and that forms of “objective” reportage and a reliance on institutional sources contribute to a reproduction of social hierarchies and privileges. Journalists have been portrayed as “acultural” in that they render the dominant culture “invisible” or taken for granted while the culture and values of “others” is highlighted (Awad 2011).

Declarations of the importance of “listening” are important correctives to views that the interests of particular groups and communities can be addressed solely through the provision of “voice” in the form of different communicative channels and types of social media. Such a provision of voice is, of course, important, but we need to remember that the practice of citizenship is relational and the provision of voice needs to work together with effective listening and understanding. Equally, we need to distinguish

between listening and understanding. As Husband (2009) has noted, listening “is an act of attention, a willingness to focus on the *other*, to heed both their presence and their communication” but it is only a precursor to understanding which is “an act of *empathetic comprehension*, a willing searching after the other’s intention and message” (441, author’s italics). Understanding, in turn, must be associated with behavioural change, otherwise it can be limited to a mere commodification of the listener’s moral worth. For Husband (1996), this right to be understood is a necessary complement to the right to communicate—otherwise “the right to communicate becomes too easily a unidirectional and egocentric democracy of Babel”. Taking up the importance of listening for journalism, Penny O’Donnell (2009) observes that listening throws the responsibilities back onto the journalist and more substantively it also challenges the journalistic subjectivity that is brought to such communicative encounters: “journalism-related listening practices ... seek more than ‘empathy’ by foregrounding interactions outside individual/group comfort zones, that acknowledge and negotiate power differentials, and engage unfamiliar and/or hostile perspectives” (510).

I also believe the issue of “differential” citizenship, and the politicization of practices relating to the “private” sphere, as captured in DIY-citizenship, have ramifications for how we approach the constitution of news and the operations of news rounds. The rise of differential citizenship and its expression through a range of different citizenships—such as multicultural, environmental or sexual citizenship—attest to the increased politicization of activities and forms of identity that were previously not marked as political. As such, we have not just experienced the breakdown of the singularity of the public sphere but also the broadening and complication of what constitutes the public sphere. John Hartley (1996) has written that:

The old-fashioned divisions between the public and private sphere, male and female cultural domains, politics and fashion, news and entertainment, have to be rethought in the context of the postmodern media. The traditional political sphere of politics has progressively been privatized, feminized, suburbanized and consumerized ... while the most important new political movements—e.g. environment, ethnic, gender, peace and youth movements—all originate in what used to be seen as the private sphere. (Hartley 1996, 145)

The fault-line between the public and private spheres is where many emerging forms of citizenship are practised and yet often journalism struggles to recognize such activity, and when it does, it struggles to

allocate it an appropriate place within the news and provide informed coverage and analysis. The historical distinctions between “hard” and “soft” news continue to reproduce a worldview where politics, public affairs, business, and international news are strictly delineated from important issues and cultural activities that inform the changing dynamics of modern everyday life, despite the ways that feminist theorists have highlighted the political and social importance of previously ignored subjects relating to relationships and sexuality (Lehman-Wilzig and Seletzky 2010), and despite the popularity of political satire television programmes, such as *The Daily Show* and *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*, that highlight the limitations of conventional journalistic reportage and the importance of the intersection between politics and popular culture.

Ethical consumption and sustainable living practices, part of an emerging form of environmental citizenship, are also examples where journalism struggles to report and assign meaning. Such “green lifestyle” news stories “don’t fit”: they are a lesser form of environmental journalism that has a global, structural and more “political” focus, and they sit oddly in the contexts of the consumer-oriented lifestyle journalism that occurs primarily in the weekend newspaper supplements. The people who engage in ethical consumption and sustainable living are not singularly “consumers” nor are they primarily “activists” and journalists sometimes have difficulty finding an appropriate form of subjectivity for such people. In this sense, generic distinctions between “hard” and “soft” news stories can prevent us from acknowledging and understanding how discussion about climate change issues are increasingly linked with the need for lifestyle change, and that “lifestyles” in this sense are not just about the domestic sphere but are also invoked in public policy innovations regarding issues such as city transport. Differential citizenship attests to the emergence of different ways of living and we require a journalism that is flexible enough to respond to such change.

Conclusion

Journalism in democratic societies is predicated partly on its provision of a public flow of information so that the citizenry can be informed and engage in public and political participation and while this central function persists, the identity, scope and practices of the citizenry have been changing and the nature of their political, social and cultural knowledge has evolved so that what it means to be “informed” is not as straightforward as it might once have been. While much is made of the more

“interactive” or “participatory” engagements news organizations now have with their readers, viewers and listeners, there is a tendency to continue to conceive of such audiences in terms of traditional, unified and distinct forms of public subjectivity. Despite this, the chapter has outlined the ways in which the category of citizenship has evolved, expanding the parameters of its political character, embracing more the relevance of cultural concerns, and facilitating more varied and individual expressions. The chapter has also highlighted how the equality of citizenship cannot be equated with “sameness” but rather such a quest for equality demands recognition of different rights and identity, and the reparation of injustices. The chapter has discussed the ways that contemporary citizenship can be exercised at the same time along differing “depths” or degrees of commitment, allowing individuals to develop specialized bodies of knowledge and engage in sustained forms of action while also continuing to monitor the vicissitudes of public life more generally. Finally, it has been suggested that there are some ramifications that need to be considered with regard to reportage and the constitution of the news. The proliferation of expressions of difference that are captured in forms of differential citizenship place extra responsibility on journalists to engage in practices of listening and understanding so that they provide a full and fair portrayal of views and also interrogate the assumptions they bring to the reportage. In addition, it has been noted that the changing ways in which individuals express their citizenship, increasingly across the domain of the private sphere and through practices previously not deemed to be political or civic in nature, also require journalism to recast the frameworks through which news is offered.

Note: This chapter was based upon a presentation for the “Journalism and an Informed Citizenry” panel at the World Journalism Education Congress. The author would like to thank his fellow panelists—Professor Kaarle Nordenstreng, Professor Ivor Gaber, and Associate Professor Kerry McCallum—for their contributions to the panel. The author also thanks Associate Professor Verica Rupar for the invitation to organize the panel, her feedback on this work and suggestions for further reading. As always, any errors or omissions are the responsibility of the author.

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CHAPTER TWO:
ETHICS

JOURNALISM ETHICS
UNDER CONDITIONS OF DISRUPTION

DONALD MATHESON

In March 2015, the *Washington Post* Nairobi bureau chief Kevin Sieff reported from rural Nigeria on the country's landmark elections, the first time since independence that the presidency had peacefully changed hands. In addition to writing news stories and producing videos for the paper's website, he used Snapchat and Instagram to capture something of the mood of the areas he visited in the days before the vote. He told the Nieman Foundation later:

In a lot of the polling sites, because this is rural Nigeria, the ballot boxes never arrived and the polling materials never arrived...So I snapchatted some photos of people waiting outside — it was like 100 degrees — for the polling places to open. There was a little bit of news there. This is one of the most important elections in Africa. To be able to convey that news to people on the spot, and get reactions from people who might or might not read the real story the following morning, was very cool. It felt like I was reaching a totally different audience than I do with my stories. (Lichterman 2015)

Sieff's experiments with Snapchat are a good place to start because they are typical of a wider reworking of aspects of western journalism practice. Accompanying many of these experiments is widespread discussion not only of what succeeds as public communication, but of how and why these forms of reporting succeed. In the course of that discussion, fundamental questions about journalism lie just below the surface, which are both epistemological (dealing with the knowledge claims being made) and ethical (evaluating that practice as good or right for society).

A decade ago, a chapter pondering journalism ethics might have taken for granted some of these foundational issues, focusing perhaps more on moments that risked breaching specific social norms such as fairness and dignity—photographing dying people, intruding into privacy, lying to get the story. While those questions remain, the key ethical questions now require a different order of response and in particular a much broader view of ethics. Sieff was conscious that he was reaching audiences in different ways to a newspaper story and, to an extent, reaching different audiences who might not be newspaper readers. These users came with different expectations of the journalist—they chatted with him in ways that crossed professional-personal boundaries. His snaps were immediate, casual, intimate, personal and in doing so followed some of the logics of social media. “New friends,” read one snap of Sieff posed with 11 other men. The content he posted was refracted through his self, including his experience of the 100-degree (38°C) heat and made sense partly in terms of some sense of co-presence between the reporter, the US-based reader and Nigerian voter more than in terms of any specific factual nuggets. These are complex moves within the communicative practices of journalism. In Knight and Cook’s (2013, 132) terms, this is “a sphere that is not quite public, not quite private”, making it difficult to pin down what the public responsibilities of the journalist are, or indeed what ethical parameters the social media users following Sieff or the local voters might think those responsibilities should be. It is difficult to evaluate practice such as this using a traditional journalism ethics model that assumes news journalists report, independently and neutrally, the most important facts and ideas of the day that are in the public interest.

Instead, asking about the snapchatting journalist within an ethical frame requires stepping outside—and questioning—existing parameters. For Sieff this was not the “real story” yet it reached people. Old assumptions about the relationship of journalism to the world it reports, to the people reported on and the audience are somehow being confounded. Jennifer Brandel (2016), whose company provides technology to help news organizations engage with audiences, writes that a shift in journalism culture (her focus is on US journalism in particular) is required in the contemporary mediascape, and in particular a shift away from what she diagnoses as a systemic disdain for the audience. “[R]ather than toss content down at them from the mountaintop, hoping they’ll like it, share it, come back for more and maybe one day pay for it,” she writes, news organizations must “build meaningful relationships with the people they serve”. In this she joins a chorus of commentators, among whom one of the most vocal is Jeff Jarvis (2015), arguing that journalists’ relationships

with publics and with communities must be recast. Beckett (2011) describes an emerging “moral market” in qualities such as trust, authenticity, transparency and collaboration, qualities which depend upon the kinds of relationships and structures fostered by media producers. Such commentary signals the importance of extending discussion of the challenges that news media and journalism practice face well beyond the disruptive effects of emerging media platforms and media user practices into ethical domains and, on the flip side, extending ethical debate beyond the minimal ethics of reducing any harm that journalists do as they carry out their truth-telling ethos.

Anderson et al (2014) use the term “post-industrial journalism” to try to encapsulate a sense of the much less stable or coherent status of contemporary journalism within society and politics, which they analyse as both an economic and a cultural problem. They write: “The past 15 years have seen an explosion of new tools and techniques and, more importantly, new assumptions and expectations, and these changes have wrecked the old clarity.” This chapter seeks to be a little less apocalyptic by suggesting that the loss of clarity they identify has also opened up ethical debate within journalism, encouraging a significantly more reflexive practice. Markham (2009, 1), following the logic of Bourdieu’s field theory, argues that, “in a professional field, morality can only exist if it is supported by structures and mechanisms which give people an interest in morality”. That is to say, the symbolic resources that ethical claims and debate constitute must be used, instantiated in activities such as newsroom ombudsmen, editors’ blogs, readers’ panels, journalists’ tweets about their work or “fifth estate” bloggers (Dutton 2009), for them to have any purchase on journalistic work. Zelizer (2013) has commented that ethics has historically not had much purchase on a highly pragmatic and instinctive news practice that has been “impatient of any form of reflection that doesn’t contribute to a result or which may slow things down” (274; citing Brock 2010). Abstract codes of ethics have been something of a “sideshow”, she argues, for a practice focused on case-by-case and improvisory thinking. Ethical structures are much less a sideshow, however, when the implicit social contract between news makers and audiences is being reworked in new ways of doing the news and when journalists are working hard to defend and articulate their practice in the face of accusations of fake news or source capture. A gap in perception has opened up among news publics between the news and its telling, which journalists are struggling to close again and for which moral claims to truth, transparency, social justice and responsibility to community are becoming important tools. Journalistic impatience with reflection is still

less sustainable in a context of rapidly dwindling funding as social media giants absorb the majority of the advertising spend and news organizations scramble to adapt. Journalists, including Sieff and Brandel above, are increasingly conscious of, and seeking to justify, the forms in which their reporting takes place. As the “old clarity” vanishes, moral claims about the impact or purpose of journalism are at least as important as new business models in the attempt to re-engage audiences and to respond to attacks on journalistic modes of truth-telling. There is particular value in journalism scholars offering critical, ethical tools to evaluate experiments in media such as the *Washington Post*’s above and to provide further resources for journalists to engage, listen and respond to shifting societal expectations. This chapter describes some of these ethical tools, putting them into the contexts in which they are being used to address questions about the relationships of journalism to its worlds.

Reconnecting the professional

To do that, it is necessary to distance the current moment from the “high modern” (Hallin 2006) moment of post-World War Two news media. Journalism ethics was dominated in that period by a professional ethics perspective that drew heavily on utilitarianism and on duty-based models. Ethics here could be glossed as the resources that a professional needed to guide her or his conduct in doing journalism in the best way possible. Consequently, ethics was largely individualised and focused on specific actions by that individual. What should the journalist do in a particular situation, weighing up the harms and benefits to the various groups affected? What are the competing duties of the journalist to those different groups? Within journalism this “professionalising project” (Curran 2013) can be thought of as shaped by two forces: firstly, management and industry training, which sought to produce efficient, responsible and regulated practitioners; and, secondly, the desire among news workers for greater autonomy (Örnebring 2009). Ethics became a compromise space in which codes of ethics, ethical instruction during journalism education and the meta-discourse of media accountability systems such as professional journals and media watch programmes (Bertrand 2007) worked to sustain industry self-regulation, a sense of professional self-determination and a degree of social status. For some critics, such as Aldridge and Evetts (2003), the professionalising discourse is connected to the journalistic mythology of the lone, heroic reporter that obfuscated the realities of commercialised industrial journalism. Journalism ethics has always, therefore, been open to criticism that it depoliticises practice and

disconnects it from structural factors, imagining a largely non-existent individualised journalist able to make considered ethical decisions based on professional norms that were far from secure when examined closely. For this reason Keeble (2001) begins his textbook, *Ethics for Journalists*, by foregrounding those structural matters and in particular the challenges that a rapidly changing, hyper-competitive news industry closely aligned to dominant ideas in society pose to the ethics of its workers.

Professional ethics has also provided justification for the liberal ideology that has shaped Anglo-American journalism in particular from its earliest days. Individual editors making rational and free decisions about the right intervention in public debate became merged in ethical discourse with the professional employee who had the autonomy to exercise freedom of speech. Particularly in newspapers, this ethical tradition has supported a minimalist stance on regulation, where news publications' responsible exercise of freedom of speech on behalf of the public trumped intrusion into private lives or breach of social rules or even the law. The New Zealand Press Council, for example (a self-regulatory body over most of the newspapers and widely-circulated magazines based in the country), states in its preamble that:

There is no more important principle in a democracy than freedom of expression. Freedom of expression and freedom of the media are inextricably bound. The print media is jealous in guarding freedom of expression, not just for publishers' sake but, more importantly, in the public interest. In dealing with complaints, the Council will give primary consideration to freedom of expression and the public interest. (NZPC 2016)

Thus, while the body defines itself as an independent forum where members of the public can resolve complaints against print (and some digital) news media, it does so in a way that privileges media freedom as a prime moral good. As a result, societal expectations are imposed only within bounds, contingent in particular on that imposition not unduly harming a public interest that in turn is defined in terms of the news organization's freedom of speech. Journalists are accountable to a largely abstract public, an entity that is partly brought into being by journalism's invocation of it. Ethics in these formulations can be something of a closed shop. Elsewhere, it should be noted, social responsibility theories have been more influential, particularly in broadcast journalism.

At the heart of the mixed liberal-professional model of journalism ethics lies the idea of independence. This term should be held distinct from the Kantian notion of moral autonomy, under which an individual is

morally obligated to act according to his or her own reasoned understanding of the right thing to do (Hill 2012). Independence means something conceptually simpler and more practical. It is not a basic capacity of reasoned people but a state of negative freedom, or the freedom from others' coercion. In journalistic terms, it is an aspired-to state in which journalists are not dependent on the state, powerful sources, advertisers or others (including perhaps editors) when producing their work. For Ward (2013) independence is what differentiates journalism from propaganda, because in the former the public interest, as defined by the journalist, drives the work, while in the latter an acknowledged or unacknowledged interest does. The term is perhaps made to do too much work, blurring the distinctions between structural freedom from external constraint, the will to think for oneself and the ability to produce objective accounts, and as a negative term it has little to say about what happens in the space of independence that it carves out. But that has also made it a versatile resource for journalists seeking to claim moral status as making their own decisions on what is right.

As Brandel's comment cited above illustrates, there is a risk that modern journalism's justifications of its practices, whether in relation to news values or moral values, become disconnected from, perceived even as disdainful of, the people that journalists claim to serve. Koljonen (2013) draws on Bauman's (2001) notion of liquid modernity, in which a stable society built on the authority of the expert and the duties of the citizen has given way to a more consumerist mode of living, to explain new cultural conditions. However wider cultural norms are analysed, there is a wide consensus that journalism faces a task of reconnecting with publics who have, literally and culturally, moved on. From an ethical perspective, the dominant ideology of consumer capitalism is an unsatisfactory base to think through that task, for the consumer promise of personal fulfilment through purchasing is a thin, transactional relationship that says next to nothing about how public communication brings people together in ways that enrich their lives. The rise to prominence of a number of ethical theories of relationship, particularly relationships formed in public communication, can be understood as responses to that problem.

Community

In the US, the single largest contribution to journalism ethics has come in attempts to reconnect good journalism with the idea of community. Much of this work has built on the 1990s public journalism movement, which sought to position journalism alongside communities, serving their needs

rather than standing outside them. But its roots, as Allan (2010) describes, go back further to a deeply felt Deweyian pragmatism that grounds democracy in everyday communities of interaction and particularly in local forms of participatory democracy. In this view, the community is the source of democratic engagement and the legitimacy of power because it is here that people's concern for the collective good is based. Thus, McBride and Rosenstiel (2014) propose a rewriting of the third pillar of the Society of Professional Journalists code of ethics, "minimize harm," to a more concrete responsibility to tell the truth in terms of the needs of a particular community. "[M]inimizing harm is part of a greater contract with the members of a community that journalists serve and the sources they tap into to tell stories," they write. "It is a promise to act in the interests of informing a community and upholding democracy, acknowledging that the community itself has a substantial ability to contribute to the conversation" (5).

Critics of public journalism pointed out already in the 1990s (e.g. Glasser and Craft 1998) that there are risks in privileging concrete community over the more abstract public, including defining journalism in terms of a particular, bounded community rather than a public in which all have a stake and misrepresenting the interests of the news organization as if those were the interests of the community itself. Its great strength comes, however, when communitarian ethics is interpreted more broadly than representing the interests of a community but as the responsibility to perform community or to provide spaces for it to happen. This makes it an ethics of good communication, concerned often with the social good that communication across differences can make, rather than a conservative retreat towards particularism (that is, an ethics focused on what one's own group holds to be right). Plaisance (2005) seeks to combine communitarianism with a liberal commitment to the individual: "In the communitarian framework, the full self-realization of each individual, both as freedom-loving beings and as engaged members of a community, must be the underlying motive of all media policies" (294). This perspective allows journalism ethics to broaden its liberal remit to tasks such as fostering multiple and diverse perspectives in society and to bring them into contact with each other, drawing out the commonalities between them and enabling mutual understanding. More fundamentally, Plaisance, citing Christians et al (1993), sees the role of the news media as far more than reporting according to a set of ethical rules of what is appropriate but as fostering and modelling "moral agency," or the capacity to act with reference to a knowledge of what is right or wrong. He points to the *New York Times*' self-scrutiny and apology over its erroneous reporting of the

Bush Administration's claims that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction as an instance of the modelling of such agency.

At the heart of these ideas lies communitarian theorists' understanding of the self as constituted through engagement with others, and therefore the moral self as being also a social achievement. Thus the individual's pursuit of self-perfection through rational reflection is replaced by the pursuit of self-improvement through being part of social practices of reflection. A useful dictum is that moral identity is only found through others. Journalists cannot find their sense of ethical justification for their practices through a self-regulated professional code but only through working with other social groups. Ethics becomes about the process of communication, a communicative ethic, in Habermas' terms (1989), yet with an eye on ultimate goals of collective self-fulfilment. We are a long way from a minimalist ethics here of doing as little harm as possible while telling truth in the public interest, because the communitarian has a responsibility to bring people together. The *Guardian's* attempts to use social media to, in the words of its former head of digital engagement, "engage with readers over contexts of mutual interest, for mutual benefit" (cited in Knight and Cook 2013, 142), can be framed as ethical because the news outlet stands as a place where people are brought together in values-focused communication. A further, critical layer needs to be overlaid here, because simply including all in communication without acknowledging how shot through those relations are with imbalances of power will only perpetuate those imbalances. The *Guardian*, as its columnist Sarah Smarsh (2016) admonished it (and other mainstream media) over its reporting of Donald Trump's victory in the 2016 US presidential campaign, has a responsibility not just to the shared ideology of its readers but also to the social reality. Solidarity must, in Christians' words (see Christians et al 1993, 16), be universal, or at least pushed always outwards in a desire to understand and to engage with the views of those who voted for Trump in 2016 and those whose positions are so easily caricatured as angry poor white men. Indeed, Fraser (2000) would urge journalists to show solidarity precisely for those who feel marginalised and who are symbolically misrecognised and so subordinated by dominant social groups, recognising them instead as full members of public communication. Good journalism is here reframed as a matter of fostering good relationships within society. That may include relationships with specific members of the audience who are answering back on news websites or social media platforms but also the attempt to draw those audience members into relationships with others that serve wider goals of social justice.