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Abstract: *This is a longitudinal study of journalism undergraduates in the United Kingdom, which records how their views on the societal roles of the news media changed during their time in journalism education. Data were gathered from 653 students at 10 universities, who were sampled when they arrived to begin journalism degree programmes in 2002 and 2003, and from a sample of 212 students from the same programmes, surveyed in 2005 or 2006 shortly before they completed this education. This is the most extensive survey of its kind conducted in UK journalism education. Findings are compared with data from UK journalists, gathered by Henningham and Delano in 1995. In some respects, the data from students provide evidence that a distinct, UK journalistic 'culture' was already embedded in students' views when they began their journalism education. There is also evidence that in some respects during their education's timespan they grew closer to that culture, in terms of its characteristics recorded by Henningham and Delano. For example, data suggest that, overall, students became more likely to regard being adversarial and sceptical towards public officials and businesses as extremely important roles for the news media. Henningham and Delano noted that, when comparison was made with data from journalists in the USA and Australia, a higher level of support for such adversarial roles was a trait of UK journalists. Yet compared to those experienced UK journalists, the UK journalism students did not - even as their university programmes drew to a close - exhibit as much support for these adversarial roles, in terms of regarding them as extremely important. Also, data suggest that compared with that older generation of UK journalists surveyed in 1995,*

the students were less likely – both when they arrived on their programmes and shortly before they graduated - to support journalism roles concerned with addressing the widest possible audience and with giving "ordinary people" a chance to express their views on public affairs. The data indicate too that, during the timespan of their education, students' support for these two roles weakened.

Compared to the experienced UK journalists, the students were less likely to regard the analytical role and the investigative role of the news media as extremely important, though data suggest the students' support for the investigative role rose during their education. The study considers what factors could explain, as regards these perceptions of the news media's societal roles, why the students' views differed from those of the older, experienced journalists, bearing in mind that many such journalism students will already be represented in the new generation of UK journalists, and therefore are now contributing to the nature of the nation's journalism. The factors could include the students' youth, 'a generation gap' in social attitudes, a lack of "socialising", newsroom experience and the higher socio-economic background of the students. Reference is made to concern in the UK that the journalistic workforce is becoming more socially elite. The weakening of support among the students, during their education, for the news media role of addressing the widest possible audience may reflect an acquired recognition of market reality, in that there has been a rapid increase, in the last 30 years, in the UK of niche broadcasting, and a more general fragmentation of media audiences. Nevertheless, this apparent slippage in students' support for this role should - we argue – be of concern to UK journalism educators, if the social purposes of journalism are held to include providing a voice for, and addressing, all sections of society. The role of journalism education in forming journalistic values is discussed, including factors within that education which may have contributed to change in students' views over the timespan of their university programmes. The study notes that there were some discernible

differences in the views of students who were sure that after graduation they wanted to become journalists, compared with the views of those who were less sure. Students who had rejected a journalism career were excluded from the data analysed. Findings are contextualised by reference to international studies of journalism students and journalists. The questionnaire formats used in the survey of the UK students were those used by Henningham and Delano. These formats have also been used in international research into journalists, for example by Weaver and others.

Introduction

An ideal held by journalism educators is that, in addition to providing tuition in professional skills, they encourage students to reflect deeply on journalism's role within society and that – ergo – this will make those students who become journalists more able to contribute through that career to improving society. In many – perhaps most - journalism programmes at universities throughout the world, tuition in practical elements – e.g. news-gathering, news-writing, online and broadcast skills - is blended with a wider academic, "conceptual" education (Foote 2008), which may include, for example, study of the history of journalism, and of how sociologists or cultural studies theorists view the workings and effects of media organisations.

However, whatever the stated or generally implied aims of university journalism programmes, studies of journalism students' attitudes about journalism's societal roles remain rare - and so, if such aims embrace an intention to inform idealistically those attitudes, the success of journalism education in this respect has rarely been measured empirically.

Studies which have attempted to measure journalism students' attitudes exhibit mixed results. For example, in his 1974 study of students in the USA, Bowers (1974, p. 265-70) found a positive link between the number of journalism courses (i.e. modules) taken by students and

their tendency to think journalism was highly useful to society. Becker et al. (1987, pp. 29, 37-38, 49-50, 53-54, 185) in a study of journalism and mass communication undergraduates in the USA found little evidence that their experiences at university had much impact on their professional orientation, but that there were differences between sequence groups (e.g. specialisations in print or broadcast) in views on ethics. Schultz (2002, pp. 223-238), examining data gathered in 1992 and 1996 from U.S. journalists on conceptions of some journalism roles, compared the views of those with a graduate (i.e. what in the UK would be termed postgraduate) education in any discipline, those who trained in journalism/communication in graduate schools, those with a college (undergraduate) education in any discipline, and those who majored in journalism/communication as undergraduates. Some notable differences were found, but these four different education groups were, in general, very close in such views.

Bjørnsen, Hovden, and Ottosen (2007, pp. 383-403), after sampling journalism students in Norway near the beginning and then near the end of their two-year programmes (by which time most were in the 23-26 years age range) noted that the ideals of watchdog journalism remained highly rated in their responses, but that there was some decline in the importance students placed on journalists having "a sense of justice", a finding which may indicate "a kind of reality-orientation", perhaps influenced by time spent in internship. In a longitudinal survey which sought to assess the efficacy of a media ethics course taught to U.S. undergraduates, including journalism majors, during the timespan of a semester, Plaisance (2007) asked them to rank a given set of values as guiding values for the media, and found that the average ranking for the value "civic-minded" remained unchanged.

Such studies suggest educators can take some comfort from data indicating that, at the very least, their students' idealism about the importance of journalism has not decreased. Wu and Weaver's (1998, pp. 513-29) study of journalism students in China, a nation with a restrictive

political system, found that these students held a more moderate, conservative view of the professional roles of journalists than Chinese journalists did, and that the further a student cohort had progressed in four-year programmes, the less importance students in it attached to all such professional roles as listed in the questionnaire used - and that therefore their journalism education had apparently not reinforced the importance of such roles.

Methodology

Our study of journalism undergraduate students in the United Kingdom seeks to record changes in their views and attitudes about journalism. Our method has been to administer a questionnaire to students as they arrive to begin such programmes, and then to administer a similar questionnaire to students in the same programmes shortly before they are due to complete their studies, i.e. around 31 months after the arrival phase. However, to state the obvious, any change in the views and attitudes of students will be the result of various factors, not just any direct influence in teaching. For example, the students would have been affected by *life-cycle* attitudinal changes, see below, as they progressed further into adulthood, in that 77 per cent of the students in the arrival sample were aged 18 or 19 whereas 81 per cent of those in the completion sample were aged 21 or were older. Our methodology was explained when initial findings from the 'arrival' data were published (Ball, Hanna and Sanders 2006), so we will not repeat all that explanation here. Ten UK universities offering journalism programmes participated in our survey, which was conducted with anonymity for respondents. Only students who said the UK was their home country were included. The arrival sample was collected in 2002 and 2003 – i.e. in two waves as, or soon after, students joined these programmes in each of these years. This sample was of 661 students, a response rate of approximately 79% of those enrolled on those programmes. The completion phase was also administered in two waves, in 2005 and 2006. Its response rate was 40 per cent, yielding a sample of 234 students. This response rate reflects that fact that it proved more difficult to

conduct the survey in its completion phase than in its arrival phase, primarily because whereas in the arrival phase the questionnaire was in most instances administered to cohorts *en masse* in induction sessions or in initial classes or lectures, cohorts completing the final year of these programmes need no induction and there is generally less *en masse* teaching and more individual projects. However, in terms of the number of students involved, our study remains the largest survey of UK journalism students yet conducted.

Both arrival and completion questionnaires asked: "Do you want to pursue a career in journalism?" This defined, in each phase, those who were "sure" they wanted to be journalists; those who replied "maybe"; and those who definitely did not want to be journalists. A notable finding – see Table 1 - was that whereas 75 per cent of students in the arrival sample were sure they wanted to be journalists, the proportion of 'sures' in the completion sample was lower, at 53 per cent.[1] We exclude, in analysis of the arrival data set out below, eight students who were "definitely nots", because this response showed these eight to be of a very different personality both from students in the completion sample, none of whom recalled being on arrival "definitely nots", and from the UK journalists whose views are cited from the Delano and Henningham survey, see below. Also, we exclude from analysis below of our completion data 22 students who were "definitely nots" in that phase – because these too seemed by that response to be of a very different personality from other students in that sample and from those journalists.[2]

Table 1 *Percentages (rounded) of students*
Question: "Do you want to pursue a career in journalism?"

	(original) Arrival sample n = 661	(original) Completion sample n = 234
Maybe	**23**	**38**
Yes, I'm sure	**75**	**53**
Definitely not	**1**	**9**

Table 2 *Percentages (rounded) of students*
Question: "What media sector is your career goal, where you would want to work for most of your career?"

	Arrival sample n = 653	Completion sample n = 212
Television	**19**	**16**
Radio	**5**	**9**
Local/regional newspaper	**2**	**4**
National newspaper	**21**	**19**
Magazine	**28**	**29**
Internet	**1**	**1**
News Agency	**1**	**1**
Public relations/press office	**3**	**7**
Other	**1**	**1**
I don't know yet	**16**	**9**
Choice unclear/missing	**5**	**5**

Table 3 *Percentages (rounded) of students*
Question: "Which [one] of the following jobs interest you most?"

	Arrival sample n = 653	Completion sample n = 212
News reporter	**22**	**28**
Writing/producing features	**37**	**34**
Sports reporter	**20**	**18**
Other	**12**	**10**
Don't know	**5**	**1**
Not clear/no reply	**4**	**9**

Table 4

Percentage making response of "Extremely important"

Question: "The list below describes some of the things that the news media do or try to do. How important do you think each of these things is?"

	US journalists		Australian journalists	UK journalists	UK journalism undergraduates	
	1992 n = 1,156	2002 n = 1,149	1992 n = 1,068	1995 n = 726	Arrival sample 2002, 2003 n = 653	Completion sample 2005, 2006 n = 212
A: Get information to the public quickly	69	59	74	**88**	**86**	**76 ***
B: Provide analysis and interpretation of complex problems	48	51	71	**83**	**51**	**58**
C: Provide entertainment and relaxation	14	11	28	**47**	**23**	**15**
D: Investigate claims and statements made by the government	67	71	81	**88**	**64**	**75 ***
E: Stay away from stories where factual content cannot be verified	49	52	45	**30**	**21**	**21**
F: Concentrate on news which is of interest to the widest possible audience	20	15	38	**45**	**34**	**16 ***
G: Discuss national policy while it is being developed	39	40	56	**64**	**34**	**42**
H: Develop intellectual and cultural interests of the public	18	17	37	**30**	**35**	**38**
I: Be an adversary to public officials by being constantly sceptical of their actions	21	20	30	**51**	**11**	**29 ***
J: Be an adversary of businesses by being constantly sceptical of their actions	14	18	27	**45**	**10**	**25 ***
K: To set the political agenda	5	3	not asked	**13**	**10**	**7**
L: Influence public opinion	not asked	not asked	not asked	**not asked**	**13**	**2 ***
M: Give ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs	48	39	not asked	**56**	**54**	**40 ***

Sources of data on journalists - Weaver and Wilhoit (1996, p. 136); Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes and Wilhoit (2007, p. 140); Henningham (1998, p. 103); Henningham and Delano (1998, p. 153).

An asterix * denotes that the difference between arrival and completion data is statistically significant

In both phases the questionnaires included a question format in which the students were asked to assign importance to various journalism roles, with the response options being "extremely important", "quite important", "somewhat important", "not really important at all", "don't know." This format on role perceptions– see Table 4 - was developed in surveys of U.S. journalists (Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman, 1976, pp. 116-119, 230; Weaver and Wilhoit, 1986, pp. 112-124; Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996, pp. 133-147; Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes and Wilhoit, 2007, pp. 136-157, 177-179), and was used in Schultz's secondary analysis of such data, cited above. A similar format was used by Wu and Weaver in their longitudinal study of Chinese journalism students, see above.

Another element of our study has been to compare the views and attitudes of the sampled UK students with those of UK news journalists as expressed in data collected, using the same question format, in a survey carried out in 1995, which was conducted by telephone (Delano and Henningham, 1995; Henningham and Delano, 1998). See Table 4. As a basic premise, it can be argued that the importance assigned in 1995 by those journalists to each of the specified, journalism roles reflected elements of the culture at that time of fully "socialised" UK news journalists, in that the 726 journalists in that sample had a median age of 38, and because the median age at which they began their first regular paid job in journalist was 21. It is possible that that culture has changed since 1995, but that survey has not been repeated in the UK.

Characteristics

The gender ratio of our arrival sample of students was 58% female, 42% male, and of the completion sample was 62% female, 38% male. The gender ratio of the UK news journalists surveyed in 1995, was 25% female, 75% male.[3] In the arrival sample 48% of the students had spent some time in at least one newsroom, and 51% had not (seven students made no response to the relevant question). In the completion sample, 65% said they had, *before* they

arrived on these programmes, spent time with journalists at least one newsroom – and 92% said they had, in their programme's duration, spent such time in at least one newsroom. In most cases, for both samples, this was unpaid internship.

The students were asked about their family background in terms of the job(s) held by parent(s) or guardian(s). The findings show that these journalism students were much more likely to have a high socio-economic status than might be expected from the UK economy's employment distribution figures. Sixty five per cent of the students in the arrival sample and 67% of the completion sample had a professional, managerial or technical parental background as against around 37% for the population as a whole.[4] The rest of the students said their parental background was of a skilled, partly skilled or unskilled occupation. Below, we refer to students from professional, managerial or technical parental backgrounds as being from "higher" socio-economic backgrounds, and the rest as being from "lower" backgrounds.

Findings

As Table 4 shows, Delano and Henningham found that, as regards the proportion who made a response of "extremely important", UK news journalists exhibited stronger support for most of the journalism roles – as specified in this question format - than U.S. or Australian journalists did. This stronger support among UK journalists was particularly evident in respect of the entertainment role (C), the adversarial roles (I and J) and – as regards comparison of UK and U.S. journalists – in respect of the information-transmitting role (A), the analytical role (B), concentrating on news of interest to the widest possible audience (F) and discussing national policy (G). The UK journalists were also more likely than the U.S. or the Australian journalists to assign such importance to the investigative role (D).

In some respects, the data from the UK students provide evidence that a distinct, national journalistic culture was already embedded in their views as they began their journalism education, in that the level of support they expressed for some roles, in terms of the

proportion who made “extremely important” responses, was close to or broadly similar to the level expressed by the UK journalists. As regards role A, the level of such support in the students’ arrival data – expressed by 86% of that sample - was almost equivalent to the level of support expressed for it by those journalists. The completion data suggest that student support for role A diminished somewhat during the duration of these journalism programmes, but nevertheless the completion sample’s support for this role remained high. Also, 54% of the arrival sample expressed such strong support for role M – giving ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs, which correlates closely with the proportion – 56% - of those UK journalists who expressed such support for that role. Student support for role H - developing intellectual and cultural interests of the public – though lower in both arrival and completion data than for most of the other specified roles - was broadly comparable in both these samples to the level of such support for this role among the UK journalists.

In other respects, our data suggests that students were not, when they arrived on these programmes in 2002 and 2003, particularly imbued with the national journalism culture as it was recorded in 1995 by Delano and Henningham. But during the timespan of their journalism education students’ support for some roles was reinforced, aligning such attitudes more closely with that culture. The roles which acquired this increased support were the investigative role (D) and roles (I and J) - of being adversarial towards public officials and businesses. Those attitudinal changes were found to be statistically significant, based on 95% confidence intervals calculated using logistic regression with a two-column response (i.e. one column being the total of "extremely important" responses and the other the total of the other Likert scale responses, excluding "Don't knows"). Yet it should also be noted that in the completion data the level of such support for these roles – and of the roles B and G - still fell some way short of the importance assigned to these roles by the UK journalists.[5]

As noted above, student support for the transmission role (A) fell slightly during the timespan of these programmes. Support also decreased for the role of concentrating on news of interest to the widest possible audience (F), and the role of giving ordinary people a chance to express their views (M). These decreases were found to be statistically significant using the above analysis. In these respects, student attitudes seem to have moved away from characteristics of the national journalism culture as it was recorded by Delano and Henningham.

Discussion of Findings

Acquisition of UK journalism culture's attitudes

It should, of course, be no surprise that some journalism students, even as they arrived to begin their journalism education, exhibited some attitudes similar to those of experienced journalists. For aspirants to any career, there is a process of self-selection, in that aspirants gravitate towards a career which seems – at least from what they know of it - to suit their personalities.

Therefore the aspirants and those already in that career are likely to some extent to be from a similar range of personalities. Also, any journalism programme in a position to reject some applicants is likely, to gain or maintain a reputation of enabling students to become journalists, to select those applicants who seem most capable - from what is known of their attitudes, abilities, and understanding of what their nation's journalists do and of what employers require - of gaining such employment.

For example, the arrival sample of students assigned a high level of importance to role A - get information to the public quickly – and a comparatively low level of importance to role E - avoidance of stories where factual content cannot be verified. One explanation for these findings is that most students already had good understanding of the extremely competitive nature of the UK's national news media (Tunstall, 1996, p. 3), and therefore were aware of the profession's and industry's expectations in this respect. In these particular responses,

these students – apparently before their journalism education was underway - closely resembled the UK journalists surveyed in 1995. Wider, national cultural traits will, we can surmise, also have ensured some homogeneity of outlook between the students and journalists.

As we note above, as regards the investigative role (D) and the adversarial roles (I and J) the importance students ascribed to them rose to resemble more closely the higher levels of importance ascribed by the journalists to such roles. Although it is impossible to estimate to what extent this rise was caused by teaching on these programmes, a prime function of journalism education is, as we have already stated, to project students into journalism careers, and therefore to meet that profession's expectations of recruits. Educators want students to understand journalism's occupational practices and ideology sufficiently for them to know if they want such a career, and, if they do want it, for them to gain entry to it. In addition to any formal consideration of that ideology in lectures or seminars, there is likely to also be informal, "osmotic" – but nevertheless directly "socialising" - transmission of it during tuition in journalism skills, by those educators who are or were journalists. As has been noted by Splichal and Sparks (1994, p. 17), the education/training of journalists in a given society is closely related to the nature of its journalism.

Factors in the acquisition by many UK students, during their education, of traits from the nation's journalism culture probably included additional, direct "socialisation" during spells of newsroom internship arranged for them by their university or by students themselves. As we have reported elsewhere, analysis of the arrival data suggests that newsroom experience was statistically significant in more supportive attitudes towards the adversarial role (I) of the news media towards public officials (Ball, Hanna and Sanders 2006). We intend to examine the completion data for any such effect, though such analysis is complicated by the fact that

in the completion phase the proportion of students who experienced such internship was much higher, see above.

During their education the students' understanding of attitudinal norms among journalists was also likely to be have been acquired or reinforced by their ongoing experience as consumers of the media, experience which was – it is to be hoped – better informed as a result of that education.

Differences and divergence between students' and journalists' attitudes

Other factors offer explanations of why the attitudes of the UK journalism students – as expressed in perceptions of news media roles - differed in some respects, even in data collected in the completion phase of their journalism education, from the attitudes of those UK journalists. In considering these factors, we can note the general pattern – see Table 4 – that students, in respect of most of the specified roles, exhibited – when compared to those journalists – more moderate levels of support (though, in respect of one role (E), this does not indicate that the students were more moderate in attitude).

Limited "socialisation" Though most of these students had internship experience, we can surmise that this was not of sufficient duration - and in many instances, probably not sufficiently intense as an experience - to socialise them deeply into the UK journalism culture. For example, a student who in a professional newsroom begins to experience, and/or to witness or hear of, duplicitous or self-serving statements made by public officials and businesses is likely to appreciate more fully the professional frustrations which thereby arise for journalists and so may become more adversarially sceptical of such statements. Henningham and Delano (1998, p. 153, 160) suggested that a cause in the formation of such attitudes was the constraint which exists on media freedom in the UK because there is no 'First Amendment' legal climate. As noted below, the UK's libel laws, for example, are particularly harsh when compared with such laws in other democracies. But such adversarial

attitudes may need months or years of such frustrations to develop as a deep characteristic.

Different personality ranges There must have been differences between the students and experienced journalists as regards the range of personalities each of these groups contained, from what we know or can deduce about career motivations, career goals within the journalism field, and ability to enter or sustain any career in that field. Not all these students were sure they wanted to be journalists - see Table 1. As stated above, we excluded from our analysis the students who stated that they did not want to be journalists, but we included the 'maybes' as well as the 'sures'. Some of the surveyed students, even those sure they wanted a journalism career, will not have succeeded in entering it or perhaps did not remain long in it. By contrast, all the journalists in Delano and Henningham's 1995 sample must have been "sure" and able enough to enter the profession. In terms of personality, most of them were proved to be of a sufficiently good "fit" with that profession, in that most had been journalists for years. It should remembered too that Delano and Henningham's data on journalists perceptions of news media roles were solely from respondents they defined as news journalists. That survey did not include, for example, magazine journalists or journalists defined as working in "non-news" areas of the TV and radio sectors (Delano, 2001, p. 100). Yet in both the arrival and completion samples, the magazine industry was the media sector most cited by students as their career goal – see Table 2. So, from these considerations, overall differences in attitudes between the news journalists and the students should be expected.[6] Deeper statistical analysis is needed to explore further the evidence of distinct personality 'clusters' among the students. We have noted elsewhere, when referring to completion data from undergraduate and postgraduate UK journalism students, that the 'sures' in both sets were more oriented to a news reporter's role than the 'maybes' were - see the undergraduate data in Table 3 showing such orientation - and that as regards news media roles valued highly by the UK news journalists, cross-tabulation showed that students

oriented to news reporting tended to value most of these roles higher, in terms of the proportion valuing them as 'extremely important', than the other students did (Hanna and Sanders, 2009, p.7).

Idealisation and reality In terms of the overall differences between the completion responses of the undergraduate journalism students and the journalists' responses, the general pattern is that the students were less likely to regard the specified roles of journalism as "extremely important." See Table 4. These differences may have arisen to some extent because (probably all) the students would have been encouraged, at least by some of their educators, to critique what journalists do and believe, and to consider to what extent what is generally stated to be journalism's societal roles is an idealisation, when in practice the profession's ability to fulfil such roles is, in the UK as in other nations, perennially affected by corporate policies, market forces and other limitations (including the prejudices of some journalists). Students may be able to make astute judgements in this regard themselves, as their internship experience and other knowledge of media industries accrue. Such "reality-orientation" may be one reason why, during the timespan of their education, students on the sampled programmes seem to have downgraded the importance assigned to role F - concentrate on news which is of interest to the widest possible audience - and role M - give ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs. Students may here have been recognising the market reality, made more pressing by the fragmentation of audiences in the Internet age, that commercially-owned journalism organisations have to survive financially by targeting particular demographic groups or other "niche" audiences. This reality may have been emphasised in teaching. So, we need in our analysis of data to consider to what extent respondents, when answering this part of the questionnaire, assess what in an ideal world should be the importance of the various news media roles, relative to each other, and to what extent they assess what each role's actual, concrete, relative value apparently is within the

news media – i.e. in terms of journalists' time and other resources which are actually spent on each role (or, as regards role E, are inherently conserved). It may be that, as groups, the UK journalists and the UK journalism students made different types of assessment in their responses. We note, above, that studies of journalism students in other nations made findings suggestive of "reality-orientation". The National Union of Journalists (2007) has reported that in recent years the introduction of new media technology in the UK has increased workloads in some newsrooms, leading in some cases to rising stress and longer hours. Such changed conditions may help explain the differences between the responses made by the journalists in 1995 and the more recent responses of the UK students, whose "reality-orientation" may have included witnessing such recent conditions during internship or learning of them in other ways.

Other emphases in teaching Journalism educators on these programmes may feel that their teaching was a key cause of why student support for news media roles D, I and J apparently increased. But emphases in teaching may have diminished the importance students assigned in the completion data to role A - get information to the public quickly. If so, perhaps this was because educators, while not disputing the value of speed in journalism, stressed that accuracy is paramount, in that employers are probably likely to display some patience with recruits as regards the acquisition of speed, but may have less tolerance – bearing in mind the UK's harsh libel laws – with applicants or recruits whose work is not sufficiently accurate. The nature of teaching may also explain why the data show that students seem to have persisted in a puritan attitude to the entertainment role C, which the UK journalists rated as more important than the students did. This is not a role of journalism which educators, in their concentration on imparting basic journalism skills, are likely to want students to experiment in to any extent which impairs the gaining of those basic skills. This difference between the students and the journalists may also arise because Delano and Henningham's

survey included journalists from the UK's mass circulation, "red-top" daily papers [7] which have a strong tradition of using, as part of their engagement with their readers, humour (and, often, e.g. in coverage of politicians and celebrities, ridicule) in news and features. But these newspapers do not offer many entry-level jobs, and their decisions on when and how to inject such humour are likely to be taken by senior journalists or editors. This is not an environment which many students will have experienced in internship. Also, our survey showed that students are more likely to read the "quality" and "mid-range" newspapers than the "red-tops".

Social background In some quarters there is concern that UK journalists are increasingly likely to be from prosperous social classes. Factors causing this include (Hanna and Sanders, 2009):

- the cost of 'pre-entry' education and skills training, at universities or elsewhere
- the *de facto* requirement of some media employers for would-be recruits to demonstrate their ability through unpaid internship which may last several months (in most cases, after their university education has ended) – a requirement which discriminates against those who cannot draw on parental, financial support
- low wages in journalism, which deter some of those whose families cannot financially support them in the early stages of careers
- some internships and some journalism jobs being secured through 'nepotism' and social networks, a phenomenon favouring the higher socio-economic groups over-represented in journalism employment

Compared to the journalists surveyed in 1995 (Henningham and Delano, 1998, pp. 150-151) the students we surveyed were more likely to be from a "higher" social background. This fact may help explain why, compared to those journalists, the students, as regards ratings of "extremely important", exhibited a higher level of support for the "high-minded" role H -

developing the intellectual and cultural interests of the public - and a lower level of support for role F - concentrate on news which is of interest to the widest possible audience. Perhaps the elite social background of most of the surveyed students is also part of the explanation why such support for role M - giving ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs – was lower in the completion sample than in the arrival sample. These samples are almost identical in terms of the stratification of the socio-economic backgrounds of the students, see above. But perhaps students with elite social backgrounds, i.e. the majority in each sample, are more receptive than those from "lower" backgrounds to whatever influence(s) diminished the support for role M. In both arrival and completion samples, students from "lower" backgrounds, when compared to those from "higher" backgrounds, were more likely to see role M as "extremely important" and less likely to assign such importance to role H. However, further analysis is needed to evaluate whether these differences - and other apparent differences in attitudes as regards these "lower" and "higher" sub-sets - are of statistical significance.

Different generations As we state above, the news journalists surveyed by Henningham and Delano had a median age of 38, whereas the median age of the students in the completion sample was around 20.

Age-related differences in the attitudes of groups from particular age cohorts can be divided into two categories (Park, 2000, p. 2-4). One is *life-cycle* phenomena, i.e. attitudinal changes which accompany or follow changes in the objective circumstances of people's lives, of which chronological age is only one. Examples of other such *life-cycle* changes are entering the labour market (e.g. the start of "socialisation" arising from full-time employment in a newsroom), getting married, becoming a parent, etc. Another category is *generational* attitudes, i.e. attitudes acquired by an age cohort when those in it are young and which remain relatively constant over their lifetime, e.g. a habit of going to church. Analysis of attitudes in

these two categories is complicated by the existence of another, that of *period effects*, i.e. changes in a whole society's attitudes on some issues, which occur by 'contagion' over time, permeating all age groups alike.

As we have noted, when compared to the journalists the students exhibited a lower level of support for various roles of the news media. Their support was markedly lower in respect of some roles – B, F, G, I, J (and in the completion phase, M) - which, from the wording used in this questionnaire format, can be argued to particularly embody the ideals of journalists aiding debate in society as whole, helping to solve societal problems, acting as a watchdog against business and public institutions, and generally being a conduit for the voice of "ordinary people".

The findings of the lower support for such roles among the students may reflect differences in *generational* attitudes between them and the journalists, and also *period effects*. Many of the journalists in Delano and Henningham's survey matured in their careers during the fiercely polarised British politics of the 1970s and 1980s. During that time, for example, the British Labour Party still considered itself "socialist", unemployment reached high levels, and the neo-liberal Conservative governments led by the prime minister Margaret Thatcher acted to weaken the power of trade unions. That was a time of tense political confrontation between different sections of society. The students sampled grew into adulthood during the smoother, "New Labour" era when Tony Blair was prime minister, having led the Labour party into centrist ground in terms of policies and rhetoric, and when the economy was entering a boom. These students are of a generation which, the *British Social Attitudes* survey team suggests, may be less interested in politics than previous generations were, as regards cohorts aged between 18 and 25 (Park, 2000, pp. 10-12). Also, in 2006 this survey team found that since 2002 there had been in UK society as a whole a decline in support for core Left-wing values, with "a steep plunge both in perceptions of social injustice and in support for income

redistribution" (Johns and Padgett, 2008, pp. 207-209). However, that team also found that this decline seemed to be part of a general decline in core ideological values in that it was not matched by an increase in support for values associated with the Right. That team also found that there had also been by 2006 a decline in the UK in the *coherence* of individual belief systems, with citizens' values fitting less neatly into Left-Right categories then they once did (Johns and Padgett, 2008, pp. 219-220). Some commentators argue that long-term social changes have led to a decline in "class identity", with people being now more likely to think of themselves more as individuals; that competitive labour markets have developed where workers are encouraged to seek individual rather than collective advancement; and that because people are now less likely, e.g. because of television viewing, to interact with each other, people feel less of a sense of connection to wider society (Butt and Curtice, 2010, pp. 1- 8). So, these wider contexts suggest that this question format about news media roles - in so far as it draws, for example, on ideas of oppositional politics and that some groups in society need journalists to help them gain or retain a voice in public affairs - may well have resonated less overall with these (mainly) young students than it did with the journalists in 1995. We should also note, however, that our survey had another format question which assessed the extent to which the students saw a journalism career as "the chance to help people" (in general), and that the relevant responses of the "sure" students showed them in a better light than most of those journalists (Hanna and Sanders, 2007, p. 415).

Conclusions

Our survey's data seem to be robust, in that as regards the career motivations and career aspirations of these undergraduate students, the arrival and completion data have very similar patterns (for example, see Tables 2 and 3, and Hanna and Sanders, 2007), suggesting that these samples share a very similar range of personalities. Also, our longitudinal survey of UK journalism postgraduates, involving slightly older cohorts of students, showed they had

attitudinal characteristics similar to those of these undergraduates, and – like them – exhibited during the timespan of their journalism education a statistically significant increase in support for the adversarial role I and a significant decrease in support for the "concentrate om the widest audience" role F (Hanna and Sanders, 2008).

As we have noted above, Henningham and Delano discovered in 1995 that UK news journalists assigned higher importance to most of the specified, news media roles than journalists from some other nations did –see Table 4. A vigorous, competitive tradition of news journalism persists in the UK. Though the ethical standards of the nation's journalism workforce and the biased, political partisanship of some of its output remain controversial (as regards ethical standards, see, for example, Select Committee on Culture, Media and Sport, 2010), its sense of its own societal importance (even if to some extent this is self-idealised) must – we argue - help fuel the ambitions of UK news outlets to compete to produce "exclusive" material, including material in the watchdog tradition. In that such material helps to engage UK audiences in public affairs, these ambitions – among other attitudes held by UK journalists which Henningham and Delano (1998, p. 159) noted were "gung ho" – on many occasions serve the nation's democracy well. As we have set out above, the undergraduate students we surveyed assigned a lower level of importance to most news media roles, as specified in the questionnaire, than those UK journalists did. Also, as we have noted, it seems that during the timespan of their education, these students' support for roles F and M diminished. Both these roles are concerned with journalists engaging with broad swathes of society –see Table 4. As we suggest, several factors - including *generational* attitudinal changes - may have contributed to these effects. But we would argue that these findings should be of some concern to UK journalism educators, not least because such students are becoming a major proportion of the UK journalism workforce (Hanna and Sanders, 2007, pp. 406-7). We feel that our survey data may demonstrate some need for UK

undergraduate journalism programmes – to help reinforce the best elements of the national journalism culture – to have more exemplars of and other additional emphases on the importance of journalists helping societies to be just and to progress. These data suggest, we argue, that such exemplars should include further illustration of the importance of journalists reporting on, and engaging as audiences, "ordinary people" whose concerns may be marginalised in public affairs. That said, educators may need, to communicate best in their teaching, to know more of how their students think about social issues, not least because some educators – in that most are likely to be of a generation older than their students – may retain elements of an older ideological discourse alien to students' own experience of society and to students' own views about how social justice and progress can be achieved.

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Notes

1) For analysis of why some students changed their minds about becoming journalists, see Hanna and Sanders (2007).

2) Not all institutions had clear data on the proportion of students who had failed to progress to the final year of these programmes, or had quit them at an earlier stage. But from the available data, we estimate that 15 per cent of the total initially enrolled in the sampled programmes left them before graduation. From our own experience as educators, we surmise that in most cases such students had decided they did not want to become journalists.

3) This 1995 data, which related only the UK news journalists (Delano and Henningham, 1995, p. 8), was supplemented by a survey in 1997 of the nation's other journalism sectors. From these two surveys, Delano reported that 40% of the total UK journalism workforce was female. See Delano (2001, pp. 50, 249, 277). A later survey (which did not gather data on perceptions of journalism roles) suggested from fieldwork in 2001 that 49% of this workforce was female. See Journalism Training Forum (2002, p. 4). For other analysis of the gender

ratio among UK journalists, see Sanders and Hanna (forthcoming). In our arrival data from students, cross-tabulations of gender and support for news media roles found no strong statistical relationships, but we plan to examine the completion data for evidence of such relationships.

4) Some caution is necessary in these socio-economic comparisons between the students and the national population, in that these national statistics use the current Standard Occupational Classification whereas the students' survey used a previous version of this. These two classification systems are broadly but not entirely equivalent. The national statistics here are from Wilson and Green, 2001.

5) In Table 4, attitudinal changes found to be statistically significant are marked with an asterix in the completion data. The apparent rise in support for roles B and G was not found to be statistically significant

6) It should also be recognised that survey responses about career goals provide only a snapshot at that time of the heterogeneity or homogeneity of career ambitions within the surveyed group. For example, journalists whose work led them to be categorized in 1995 as news journalists when surveyed by Delano and Henningham may have previously or subsequently been 'non-news' journalists, e.g. working for magazines. Students in our samples who became journalists may subsequently have changed their minds about which media sector was their career goal.

7) These papers are dubbed "red-tops" because their front pages display their titles in red.

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